

January/February 2019

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Students create and share art about what makes community thrive.

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THRIVE! Burlington City and Lake Semester Art Exhibition

An interview with Andy Barker, Project Director.

What is the Burlington City and Lake (BCL) Semester?

BCL is a new semester-long learning experience for a diverse group of Burlington High School (BHS) juniors and seniors that uses the city of Burlington as a classroom and curriculum. It's an effort to connect several big goals: empower students through real-world learning, innovate within our schools in line with Act 77, and strengthen our community. The basic program design is that students meet in the city every other day, from City Hall to Lake Champlain to the Old North End, while exploring themes of community, citizenship and sustainability through hands-on projects. We launched our pilot program this Fall, with 23 students who live in just about every neighborhood in the city. Second semester began last week with a new group of students.

What was the THRIVE! art event?

THRIVE! was a student-led community art celebration with muralist Mary Lacy that featured an original work of outdoor, large-scale projection art. Each student in the City and Lake Semester created a piece of 2-D artwork that responded to the question of *what it takes for a community to thrive*. The pieces were looped together and projected on the facade of the Old North End Community Center and, later, Burlington High School. More than 200 people of all ages came to the premiere where students presented their artwork and their learning at a big reception.

Why was an arts component important to include in the City and Lake semester? How did the partnership with Mary Lacy come to be?

We incorporated the arts in our semester plans for several reasons. For one thing, the arts are an important part of Burlington's cultural identity and they contribute to the city's economic vitality. Burlington has a vibrant creative economy. It also complemented our units on City Systems, Lake Champlain and Community health in the form of a hands-on learning experience. But maybe most of all, we designed our pilot semester looking for great partners to collaborate with— adults and organizations in our community who might engage our students. When we met Mary Lacy, we knew we wanted to find a way to work with her. First of all, her art is a beautiful presence in Burlington— many people know the spectacular hummingbird mural she painted across from City Hall Park. She is also a great student and practitioner of socially-engaged art. She has been all over the country working with communities to make art that inspires and unites people. Mary joined us many times this Fall as we learned about Burlington, so we really got to know her well. That relationship was a key to the depth of partnership we were able to form with her. With Mary's inspiration, we realized that a public art project could be a great culminating project for our pilot program from a thematic perspective. THRIVE! offered a powerful platform for students to reflect and respond to everything they had learned about what makes a community thrive.

For more information and to read student reflections, visit the [Vermont Arts Council blog](#) about the THRIVE! event.

THRIVE! Continued

What was the most powerful takeaway from the project with Mary Lacy?

Every student came away with a different understanding of the importance of art in the community. Mary told us a story about how she gave up art in college because she thought it was kind of selfish and disengaged from important issues in the world. Then she found artists like Theaster Gates and Edi Rama who were using art to transform communities in profound ways. Many of our students went on a similar journey. Some were not interested in art at the outset; several students declared they had no artistic talent. But through the process of this project, with mentoring from Mary and from peers, everyone created a piece they were proud of. Even more important, the THRIVE! event brought people together — literally hundreds of people from across the city.

In what ways was student art used as evidence of their learning? How are the art proficiencies connected to the course?

We are using student portfolios to assess the Applied Research component of the City and Lake Semester program in our pilot year. Students collected evidence of their learning towards two of Burlington's Graduate Expectations (GX). Some students chose the Creativity and Curiosity GX, and some did use their artwork and their written reflections about the process of creating this artwork as evidence. We did not make reference to the Visual Art proficiencies specifically, but this project would be ideal for this application. Perhaps in a future semester we will collaborate with Art faculty, award Art credit and make reference directly to these proficiencies.

Based upon the student feedback and engagement this semester, how will you plan to integrate the arts into future semesters of Burlington City and Lake?

That's a hard question. The short answer is that every semester is going to be different, shaped by the students, what's happening in Burlington, and which partners we work with. We are eager to work with Mary Lacy again and she is eager to work with us. Students feedback about this project was very positive. So it's clear that an arts project can be a terrific culminating option in a real-world program like ours. Maybe someday we will even offer an arts-focused semester program!

Book Recommendations

[If I Understood You, Would I Have This Look on My Face?: My Adventures in the Art and Science of Relating and Communicating](#) by Alan Alda

Veteran actor and director Alda turns his attention to the world of social science in this breezy overview of work conducted at the Alan Alda Center for Communicating Science at Stony Brook University in New York. Citing the center's research, he explains how improvisational games, empathy exercises, and storytelling tools can help anyone get better at communicating, listening, and relating everywhere. "Alan Alda is a man with a mission. He began with a passion to help scientists communicate with a lay audience, then realized that the skills and insights of improv that he'd learned as an actor could be transformative for everyone for whom communication is essential." —Deborah Tannen, #1 New York Times bestselling author

[Sketchbooks: The Hidden Art of Designers, Illustrators, and Creatives](#) by Richard Brereton

From sources of inspiration to process, the collection offers a rare glimpse of how 42 of the world's most exciting illustrators, artists and designers think and create. Alongside each visual entry is a short essay by its owner, detailing his or her relationship with keeping a sketchbook. [Sketchbooks](#) is from British publisher [Laurence King](#), who brought us the series [100 Ideas That Changed Graphic Design](#), [100 Ideas That Changed Film](#), [100 Ideas That Changed Architecture](#), [100 Ideas That Changed Photography](#), and [100 Ideas That Changed Art](#). Adapted from [Brain Pickings article](#) by Maria Popova.

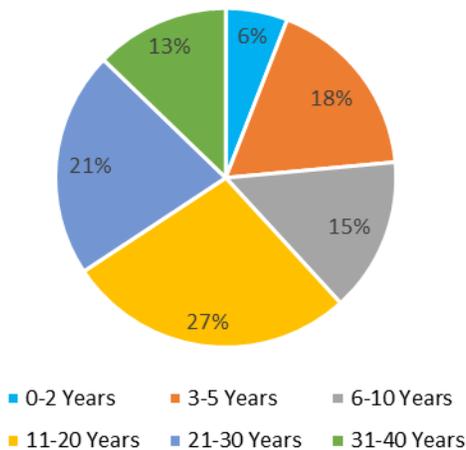
Results from Informal State of Arts in Schools Questionnaire

102 Vermont arts educators completed the *Informal State of the Arts in Schools Questionnaire* this fall. The purpose of this questionnaire was to gather a snapshot of what Vermont school arts programs look like. Questions addressed topics such as contact time with students and educator professional needs. The questions were designed for school-based arts educators. The intention was not to exclude other roles in arts education, but an effort to collect information about school-based arts programs. The link was shared via the Agency of Education Arts Listserv. Participants filled it out voluntarily. An overview of the results is shared in this issue of the Arts Newsletter, starting with a snapshot of who participated, access and opportunities for arts educators, and lastly, challenges and considerations when supporting and delivering arts education to Vermont’s students. Results specific to elementary, middle, and high school will be shared in a subsequent issue.

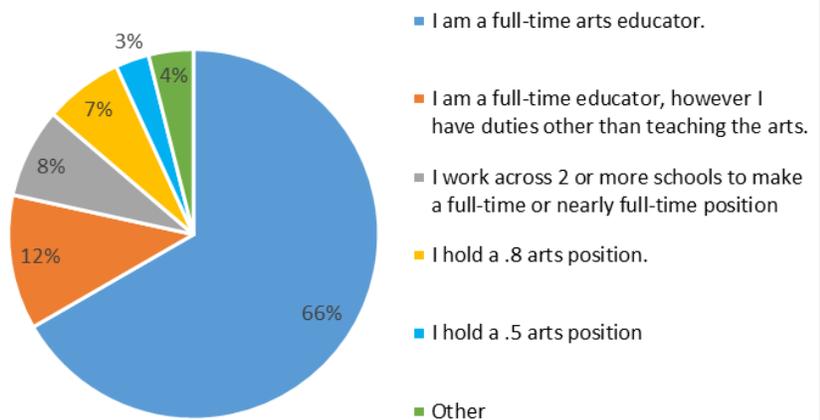
Who completed the questionnaire?

Arts educators from all five of the arts disciplines, and from every corner of the state, completed the questionnaire. There was an even spread of PreK-12 arts educators. Two dance teachers, five media arts teachers, ten theater teachers, 36 music teachers, 60 art teachers contributed to the result shared here. 52% of respondents replied “true” to the statement “I am the only arts teachers for my discipline in my building,” reinforcing the reality that arts teachers reach every student in a school and shoulder the full responsibility of designing and delivering arts education. The pie chart on the right displays how many years the respondents have been in the classroom and the one on the left displays the types of teaching positions available to arts educators.

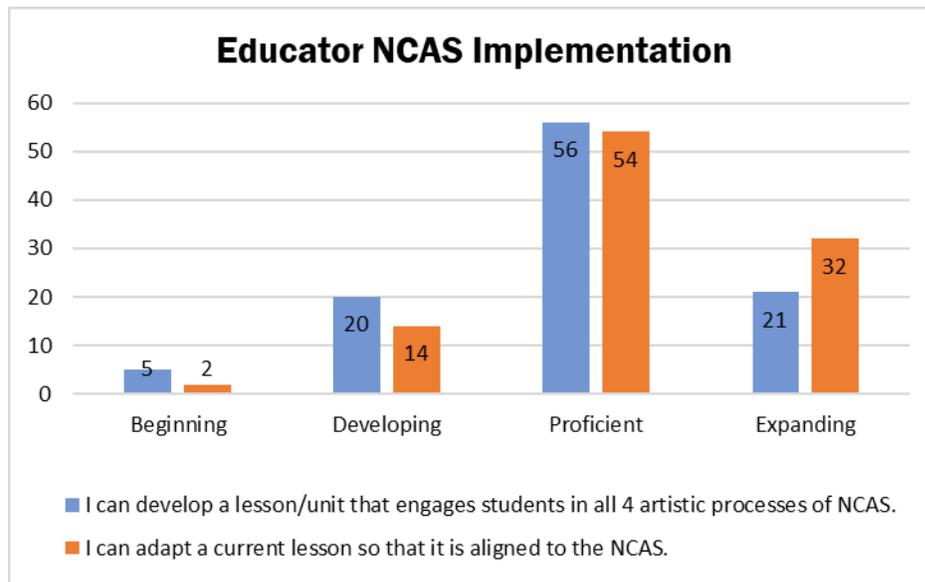
Years in Education



Arts Educator Teaching Positions in Schools



In response to the statement “I have access to enough arts-related professional learning,” only 43% of respondents selected “true.” These data might call into question whether it is an issue of funding or the limited opportunities for arts-specific learning. The five most important professional learning topics that were selected by respondents in descending order were: 1) Proficiency-based learning in the arts classroom, 2) Designing assessments for the arts, 3) Arts advocacy, 4) Aligning K-12 curriculum to the National Core Arts Standards (NCAS), and 5) Benchmarking student work and improving assessment tools. As shown by the bar graph on page 4, arts educators are feeling confident in their ability to implement NCAS. NCAS was adopted in the spring of 2016 and expected to be implemented in Vermont schools during the 2017-2018 school year, so it is commendable that arts educators have reacted so quickly to the change. 25% of respondents placed themselves in the beginning or developing columns, so there is still work to be done. This reality is reflected in many of the short answer responses shared on page 4 about the need for opportunities to align curriculum and coordinate efforts.



Results Continued

In the *Informal State of the Arts Questionnaire* answers to the question “What else do you think needs to be considered in regard to school arts programs?” provided some insightful and revealing comments from arts educators. Common themes emerged and echoed the *Five Fundamental Resources* found in the [Opportunity to Learn Standards \(OTL\)](#) for art, dance, music, and theater: *Curriculum and Scheduling, Staffing, Materials and Equipment, Facilities, and Safety*. *Curriculum and scheduling* was the clear stand out as the category of most concern. Additionally, arts educators shared the need to consider arts advocacy and instructional practice when determining the success of arts programs.

Comments from arts teachers regarding Curriculum and Staffing included: “The need for more vertical alignment and collaboration.” “Time in our district to meet with someone who can help us align our district curriculum (or lack thereof) with the NCAS.” “As an elementary arts educator it would be nice to have time to meet with other elementary specific in our own district to align curriculum.” Respondents expressed a desire to work with colleagues to “break down curricular walls in a meaningful way.” The additional challenge of the reality of scheduling was brought up, “most elementary school arts teachers see students for one block of time, once a week. How do we balance teaching, creating, and assessing in such a short amount of time?” Another challenge that was observed was, scheduling equitable access to and opportunities in art and music.

Instructional practice considerations included comments about providing opportunities for authentic individualized art creation (not cookie cutter art) and also space. The reality of sharing a classroom can send the unintended message that the arts are “not valued or taken seriously.” “It is more difficult for students to learn in a nontraditional space or a space that constantly has people coming in and out for lunch, other specials, assemblies, PT/OT services, etc.”

Additional issues that arose were in regard to Arts Advocacy and Educational Equity. One respondent observed, “How valuable the arts are in bridging achievement gaps—which is on all school’s minds.” They shared Paul Gorski’s [Principles of Equity Literacy](#) chart, pointing principle nine and to the arts as a strategy for improving student engagement. Another respondent reiterated a need to gain strategies for advocacy, “Arts education should be leading the charge in 21st century skills and proficiency-based models.” Within pages 4 and 5 of the [previous issue](#) of the AOE Arts Newsletter more information about OTL standards is shared as well as requirements for arts education in Vermont schools as outlined by the Education Quality Standards.

World's Top Artists Create Affordable Art on Post-It Notes for Show

The [Giant Robot Store and Gallery](#) in Los Angeles, California held its [14th annual Post-It Show](#) last month. The Post-It Show is a fan favorite because it makes the art extremely affordable and accessible. Over four hundred artists are challenged with Post-it notes as canvases (roughly 3,000+), and they are for sale for only \$25 each. [Audrey Kawasaki](#), [Stella Im Hultberg](#), and [Yoskay Yamamoto](#) are among the list of esteemed artists this year, as well as Pop Surrealist painter [Luke Chueh](#), *The Simpsons* creator [Matt Groening](#), and so many more. Artists like [Sean Chao](#) aren't afraid to adhere clay sculptures to their Post-its. [Danielle Krysauses](#) collage and [David Horvath](#) graces his with the lovable *Ugly Dolls*. The entire walls of the gallery are lined in Post-its. Hyperrealism, pointillism... it's all fair game. It's no wonder that art enthusiasts look forward to this show all year. "It's a fun tradition as well," said Eric Nakamura, the owner and operator of Giant Robot's Universe.

Nakamura expands on the importance of Post-Its as an untraditional but perfect canvas. When the gallery walls are covered in the small pieces, they turn into a patchwork quilt of creativity. When a buyer brings a piece home, it's the chance to own a high-quality piece at an entry-level price. It's also an important way for children to see that anyone can be an artist. It allows all to be inspired and shows the next generation that art is within reach.

Nakamura says, "I think Post-Its are great since they're ubiquitous items that people doodle on and at the same time provides a great medium that confines but at the same time challenges. Have you seen what people are doing on a 3x3" piece of paper? It's nuts."

This year, Kawasaki painted her ethereal figures onto the tiny canvases and they lasted mere minutes on the gallery walls before they were sold to grateful fans. Kawasaki said about the show: "I think the Post-It show is a great way to provide super affordable art to fans who might otherwise not get the chance to acquire one. It's also such a great way for the hundreds of participating artists to come together in this unique and quirky way." Adapted from [My Modern Met article](#) published on December 8, 2018.

Events and Announcements

First Steps in Music with Orff Schulwerk: Sing, Say, Dance, Play

Music-COMP is pleased to offer two great options to learn about First Steps in Music with Orff Schulwerk, led by Betsy Greene, President of Feierabend Association for Music Education and Burlington music educator. Take the 1-day workshop to learn about integrating First Steps with Orff, and have the option to take the follow up 2-credit online course and dive even deeper into this wonderful approach to music education. In the hands-on workshop, you will learn classroom-ready activities which follow the eight-part workout from First Steps in Music and integrate the Orff approach while gaining a better understanding of how to integrate these two approaches during the full day of class. If you choose, continue with online meetings to learn how to lesson plan using First Steps in Music with Orff Schulwerk and to develop your own integrated activities to use in your teaching while earning 2 graduate or PD credits. 1-Day Workshop: \$75, 1-Day Workshop plus 2-Credit follow up online class: \$900

- January 26, 2019 from 8:30-5:00 PM at Champlain Elementary School, 800 Pine Street, Burlington, VT with a snow date of February 2, 2019. [Register for Burlington course or workshop.](#)
- March 23, 2019 from 8:30-5:00 PM at Main Dunstable Elementary School, 20 Whitford Road, Nashua, NH with a snow date of March 30, 2019. [Register for Nashua course or workshop.](#)

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Events and Announcements Continued**Vermont Theater Educators Collaborative Conference**

The inaugural Vermont Theater Educators Conference will be held January 29, 2019, with a snow date of January 31, 2019, at the Flynn Center for the Performing Arts in Burlington, VT. This gathering is being offered to those involved in theater education in Vermont schools. The goal of this conference is to celebrate theater education in Vermont, connect over shared needs, share ideas and resources, and foster a spirit of collaboration in the theater education community.

[Register for the conference.](#) Contact spalmer@maplerun.org, egalliganbaldwin@u32.org, or emily.titterton@vermont.gov with any questions.

Vermont Arts Learning Target Bank In-Person Work Sessions for Art or Music

In this work session visual art or music teachers will learn a process for unpacking the National Core Arts Standards into learning targets and receive an introduction to the Vermont Arts Learning Target Bank, which contains learning targets that can be used for both instruction and assessment. Participants will learn how to use the learning target bank to 1) build proficiency scales and 2) how to use the learning targets to build assessments and assessment tools. Finally, participants will explore the Model Cornerstone Assessments as examples of NCAS aligned performance assessments. Time will be provided for whole group learning, discussion, and collaborative work time in breakout groups. K-12 art and music educators welcome. Space is limited. [Learn more and register for Vermont Arts Learning Target Bank In-Person Work Session\(s\).](#) All sessions will be 9:00 AM- 3:30 PM unless otherwise noted. Contact Emily Titterton at emily.titterton@vermont.gov or (802) 479-1378.

- Music Work Session on January 30, 2019, Vermont Agency of Education, Barre, VT
- Art Work Session on February 6, 2019 at Burlington Electric Company, Burlington, VT
- Music Work Session on February 7, 2019 at South Burlington Public Library, VT
- Art Work Session on February 8, 2019 at the Vermont Agency of Education, Barre, VT

Modern Band 101 Training by Little Kids Rock

[Register for Modern Band 101 Training.](#) Free, full-day professional learning opportunity for music educators. March 27, 2019 at Mount Mansfield Union High School in Jericho, VT Little Kids Rock will provide you with tools and resources to bring student-centered, culturally responsive, and inclusive music education to your students. Modern Band workshops are designed to provide you with the skills, curriculum, and network to successfully run a [Modern Band program](#). Modern Band is a new, school-based music program that utilizes popular music as its central repertoire. Styles that are studied include Rock, Pop, Reggae, Hip-Hop, Rhythm & Blues, Electronic Production, and other contemporary styles as they emerge. [Learn more about Modern Band.](#)

Studio Night for Educators at Burlington City Arts

Come spend an evening exploring the tools and equipment in BCA's Print and Drawing and Painting studios with fellow teaching artists and K-12 educators. Participants will have the opportunity to express their own creativity, as well as discuss ways to bring lessons back to the classroom. Innovative reflection and assessment strategies will also be presented. Artists and educators from all disciplines and levels are welcome. [Register for Studio Night for Educators and see the current list of offerings.](#) Thursday, March 21, 2019, 5:30-8:30 PM with instructors Kate McKernan and Kiersten Williams. \$25/\$22.50 BCA members.

We're on the Web!

See us at:

<http://education.vermont.gov/student-learning/content-areas/arts>