

This year in the Community Engagement Fellows Project has been, for the generous part of the year, an enlivening and fulfilling experience. The generosity and intelligence of the other Fellows with whom I have worked has been inspiring. There were two primary benefits of being involved in this Fellowship. The first was the general camaraderie of developing relationships with other academics outside of my field and outside of Western. Our meetings were always lively as we discussed topics that spanned commonalities in the challenges and successes that we had experienced. We also shared challenges that were unique to our situations and places. People always listened carefully and respectfully. They also offered insights and asked questions that allowed me to look at challenges and short falls through new perspectives. I was able to see questions and insights I am not sure I would have seen had I been left to my own devices.

The second benefit was/ is that of moral support. There were a number of times during the planning, development, and implementation of my project when ideas didn't work, unforeseen challenges emerged, or other people got in the way of progress. During these times I would feel down. Not depressed, but certainly had the wind taken from my sails. It was at these times that the importance of working in the Fellowship cohort I found immeasurably valuable. Left alone I might have lost momentum and floundered. My fellows were always there and willing to offer ideas, thoughts, and stories that gave me the energy to continue. As an academic I can honestly say this kind of relationship is rare. In this group support is a common practice.

The CREATE project is, in and of itself, meant to be designed as a community engagement project. Students are charged to create arts based projects that integrate art into typically non-art oriented content areas. This year we had three projects conducted in Whatcom Middle School. Project one incorporated creating family crests to develop a sense of family and cultural pride among special needs students. They studied social studies, genealogy, family symbols, technology and art to create shields to represent their family history. Project two utilized digital storytelling through photography and research to help Latino and Latina students develop an understanding of their own culture and its place in American history and society. Project three has focused on At-Risk Middle School girls to build positive self-image and self-esteem through the art of mask making. This process has used standard counseling practices in cooperation with the school counselor and art therapy techniques.

At Shuksan Middle School the CREATE Scholar has been working with other Western students to integrate social studies, poetry, and visual arts to depict the middle school students' depth and breadth of understanding of social justice as it pertains to their own experiences.



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The CREATE Scholar at Windward High School has been working toward developing a public showing of student work which will be happening at the Western Gallery. This experience will give High School Art Students an opportunity to show their work in a formal gallery.

Thanks to a generous gift from the Dreier Family, the WWU College of Fine and Performing Arts and Woodring College of Education is now continuing into the fifth year of the **CREATE** program. With the moral support and shared ideas of the Fellows in my cohort I have been able solidify community partnerships with a number of organizations in the greater community. I will be working directly with the administration and counseling team at Whatcom Middle school to expand involvement of the CREATE scholars with the students at Whatcom. This partnership will provided the desired experiences for the CREATE Scholars but will help meet the increasing needs at Whatcom due to changing demographics in the city. As director of the program and with further contributions of my Fellows I will be solidifying the CREATE program at Western by:

Contributing to defining and expanding program vision

Facilitating further development of program rubric(s)

Facilitating development of program policies – including scholarship criteria

Facilitating development of course work through college and university curriculum committees (ACC)

Facilitating the expansion of the CREATE program to reach more students and include more faculty

It is my hope that continued relations with the CEF will make the last funded year of the CREATE program a more collaborative project and result in a sustainable offering that bridges a number of departments.

CREATE Program Purpose and Overview: History

One of the biggest barriers to education is that most education reforms are focused on assessing a narrow range of subjects that do not include art, theatre, music, and dance. It's become all too true that "if it's not tested, it's not taught." However, Western Washington University (WWU) believes the integration of arts not only helps, but also enhances, the learning of math, reading, and science. Interdisciplinary Art Integration can be defined as "curriculum and instruction that connects arts...with other academic disciplines (Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies...)" (Trent). Therefore, providing curricular and educational opportunities for WWU students who aspire to be arts educators to understand and integrate these principles into their teaching will result in students having a competitive edge in the market place. In addition, while entering the work force these students will truly be better able to assist the young people in their charge for a more complete and meaningful life.

We at WWU believe the arts benefit student achievement and that there is an interconnection of the arts between all content disciplines and teaching. Moreover, we believe integrating arts in education can serve as a link across all disciplines. For example, Faith Ringgold's art work, as shown in children's stories such as *If This Bus Could Talk: The True Story of Rosa Parks*, can be used to promote art, literacy, and social studies. It also provides (a) another way in which young people come to know the world and to share what they understand of their world, (b) promotes education goals associated with creativity, problem solving (especially seeing things from multiple lenses), and (c) critical (active) thinking. See for example the role of arts in cognitive development (Eisner, 2002), academic achievement (Critical Links, 2003), as well as the skills associated with citizenship (Leshnoff, 2003; Silver, 2003).

We, along with others, recognize that unless the arts are integrated into other areas of curriculum, we run the risk that one day there may no longer be art in our schools. Those young people for whom the arts can make education more meaningful will be left behind and as a result the quality of our education will continue to decline.

In order to help sustain the arts within the education of our school systems, WWU, along with the Dreier Family, have begun a pilot program for students who wish to become arts educators. One goal of the CREATE (Combining Research, Education, and the Arts with Teaching and Entrepreneurs) Program is to have a student cohort selected each year, to work with a group of faculty from across the

Combining Research, Education and the Arts
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university (the CREATE Team) with what it would mean, look like, and sound like, to integrate the arts into classrooms through various subjects. Further understanding is promoted through the CREATE students workshop presentations to regional schools at the third and fourth grade level and an intensive three week residences at the completion of their year with CREATE. Special attention will be paid to aligning with in-service teachers in these schools as a mechanism to provide them with practical tools for integrating the arts into education as well as helping them to sustain programs.

In the last *three* years we have followed student leads as we have created protocols and procedures within CREATE. We have found that the arts also have value when expanded into community based work as well as in schools and have used CREATE as a means of building three way relationships between Western, Schools, and other community organizations. We will continue to follow these connections thereby expanding CREATE into a truly collaborative effort of integrating art back into education and the community at large.

Doug Banner, Director
CREATE