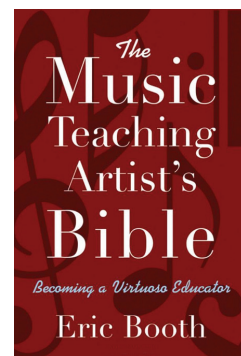


The Music Teaching Artist's Bible: Becoming a Virtuoso Educator

By Eric Booth, Oxford University Press, 2009



Eric Booth, one of the nation's leading teaching artists and teaching artist trainers, presents the vital elements of how to enhance the work we do in his book, *The Music Teaching Artist's Bible: Becoming a Virtuoso Educator*. Whether a person is a teaching artist, arts specialist, artist educator, resident artist, general music teacher, Orff specialist, integrated arts specialist, or any of the myriad of arts educator's jobs, Booth's book, is a meaningful and practical resource for the preparation of any practitioner in arts education.

Helping to bring structure to the contextual conversation of a teaching artist, Booth uses the term, arts learning ecosystem, giving a more inclusive name to arts learning and opening the confines of a schooling definition of arts education.¹ Booth explains the six strands of the arts learning ecosystem: (1) arts appreciation, (2) skill building within an art form, (3) aesthetic development, (4) arts integration, (5) community arts, and (6) extensions. Booth summarizes the significance of understanding these strands by explaining in his extension strand:

I mentioned earlier that the most common gig I am asked to do with businesses is teach "creativity but no art." They want the business-certified goodies of creativity-competitive advantage, profitable innovations—their future depends on it, but they don't want to gunk it up with the gooey irrelevancy and emo-

Eric Booth unravels the weighty relationships between arts and learning.



tionality of the arts. I can deliver it, staying under the "art" radar with activities that tap art skills without naming them. How glorious it will be when we need not apologize for the word, and Americans think of art as powerful, relevant, and fun.²

The Music Teaching Artist's Bible: Becoming a Virtuoso Educator is in eight parts. Part one, "Context," explores what a teaching artist is and does. Part two, "The Overlooked Essentials," focuses on the structures of arts learning. Part three, "Learning to Be a Teaching Artist," explains the "doing" of the job of a teaching artist. Part four, "The Fundamentals of Working in Education Settings," explores the workings of school environments. Part five, "Current Challenges," explores the hot topics in arts learning such as assessment, arts integration, and the reflection and feedback loops. Part six, "Bringing Teaching Artistry into Performances," explores audience engagement. Part seven, "Expanding the Roles of the Teaching Artist," explores the other roles the teaching artist has. Part eight,

"Beyond the Borders," explores the real life situations and dreams of arts learning and learners.

Of particular note in this useful book, Eric Booth unravels the weighty relationships between arts and learning. In about thirty-six pages of part three, Booth explains not only what a curriculum could look like and how it can be implemented, but the ever important topics of an entry point, "what does 'better' look like, and what it means to mentor and be mentored. These three aspects of being a teaching artist are illustrated in the *Growing the Capacity of Artists that Teach* rubric on pages 109–116. This rubric was created by educational directors from performing arts organizations in November 2003 and is something that could be utilized with all disciplines and can be used as a self-assessment/reflection diagnostic, observational assessment, teacher evaluation, or be used within a program evaluation. Booth suggests that "one of the benefits of [this] rubric is that [it helps] teaching artists assess their own work and guide their own development—and talk with greater precision about their work to peers and colleagues. After all, good educators have skills—not just magic, charisma, or luck."³

Another truly pertinent component of the book is part five: "Current Challenges." Booth does a first-rate job exploring current teaching and learning issues. Topics such as assessment, arts integration, the use of feedback, and reflection are put into useable, practical

1. Eric Booth, *The Music Teaching Artist's Bible: Becoming a Virtuoso Educator* (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2009), 19.

2. Ibid, 25

3. Ibid, 107

4. Ibid, 267

terms in a table on page 163. The table shows the alignment between the types of tools used for reflection, artistic goals, and what the artistic learning looks like. This table applies to all educators and all disciplines.

Overall, Eric Booth takes a practical and holistic approach to explain the context of the teaching artist's job both philosophically and pedagogically.

Only Booth's words can explain our job as practitioners in arts learning:

Teaching artists empower learners to create symbols that hold the great truths in their lives, and to connect with the spirits of others through them. Teaching artists provide access to the greatest truths of the human spirit through the symbols artists have made for them. This is

the responsibility and opportunity of teaching artistry. May we find joy in this lifetime of chances to let what we love as lifelong yearners be what we do.⁴ ■

Gerry Petersen-Incorvaia is a site administrator at the Arizona State University Preparatory Academy.



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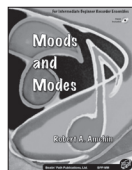
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