

Challenges Faced By Teaching Artists

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From A Snapshot: State of Teaching Artists Fall 2105 Survey

Contact emails from website

Facebook Messages

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Much of the actual work is not reimbursed, e.g. training, background checks, planning, preparing supplies, writing lesson plans.

Prior to entering the field, it is not made clear how difficult it is to find and juggle work. This is essential information to know before entering this field.

To survive as a Teaching Artist, you have to diversify and work for multiple organizations. This is complicated to manage. This should be part of an introduction to the work.

The amount of juggling that has to be done, work in several organizations simultaneously.

Arts organizations do not guarantee, predict, or come to an agreement with an experienced Teaching Artist who has been working with the organization for a long time on a minimum amount of work or income for the coming year. Arts organizations should value experienced Teaching Artists and show their commitment through communicating with Teaching Artists in regard to a minimum amount of work and income that can be expected. There is no reward for professional growth.

The pay is extremely low for the hours put in unless you have a packaged product you can go in and do. Specialized integrated arts curriculum takes time and skill to create and the money just is not there for curriculum writing. Schools need education in the difference between a packaged product and integration. This should also include basic arts education for teachers.

Arts organizations do not discuss copyright issues with Teaching Artists. This is important when the artist is writing curriculum.

It is not possible to survive as a full-time independent contractor Teaching Artist with no benefits, no retirement, and no professional advancement for Teaching Artists within arts organizations. Arts organizations' obligations and expectations for Teaching Artists need to be open and mutually discussed within the field.

Benefits, raises, and seniority are not considered. This does not define a profession but a gig.

Extremely competitive.

Working as a Teaching Artist is a hustle. Much time is spent seeking work.

Important that structures for Teaching Artists are created for access to health insurance, retirement savings, sick leave, etc. The question is why has this not been done when health insurance, retirement savings, sick leave are important and provided to administrators in the arts organizations that contract with Teaching Artists. *(3)

There is no unified, agreed upon language about what a Teaching Artist is, what a Teaching Artist does, what is necessary to become a Teaching Artist, and what a Teaching Artist is worth. There is no credentialed pathway.

The profession, if it is that, is not taken as seriously as are other fields in education. As much is spent justifying the benefits of the work as in actually doing it.

It is difficult for schools to understand that Teaching Artists are very, high quality professionals. Schools need to think outside of the box around their staffing. Arts organizations need to communicate the professionalism of Teaching Artists by sharing research based benefits of a Teaching Artists' work, what works and move away from reinventing the wheel. Arts organizations continue to not reward the expertise and experience of Teaching Artists through advancement, health insurance coverage retirement, and rates reflecting experience.

Surviving solely as a Teaching Artist in today's creative economy is very difficult.

It is not easy to break into a field with no credentialed pathway, but once you have the right connections, work leads to more work, though no raises or guarantees of work. There are a lot of small Teaching Artist opportunities out there. A Teaching Artist just has to know where to look or who to talk to. Basic business skills are absolutely needed and should be part of all professional development, training, and education for Teaching Artists.

Teaching Artist should be compensated accordingly. Teaching Artists need to create art and further their own artistic practice in addition to working as educators. This has to be made clear to all entering this field and to schools. There are no formal standards for entering the field.

Principals are the gatekeepers. It is rare for a principal to have a clear understanding of art and the types and depth of the impact that Teaching Artists can achieve. Teachers often follow suit. This is now the hardest nut, in my opinion and an area where education is greatly needed.

My actual pay, in unadjusted dollars, is often less than what I was making when I first started out in the 1990s. Arts organizations that contract Teaching Artists continue to ignore that payment to Teaching Artists does not increase with experience and expertise, and it should.

Have to work very hard, believe in what you do, have tons of energy and be willing to go without health insurance, retirement benefits, and sick days.

Have to know all kids, communicate all the time (even when you teach once a week), but don't get the benefits of being able to buy into insurance or have retirement. Teaching Artists, also, do not have space in schools to work. Teaching Artists need to be part of the negotiations as the field addresses new challenges and paths moving forward.

Impossible to work with one organization and be able to support yourself. The organizations have to be really made aware of this. Organizations have to be made aware of the basic needs of a Teaching Artist and offer development and a path for experience to be financially rewarded through the organization.

No Teaching Artist makes enough money to survive in Oklahoma.

Theater arts and other arts undergraduate and graduate programs need to have more of a clear understanding of what a Teaching Artist is, that it can be a valid career path for a professional, there is a great need for business skills, copyright information, working as an independent contractor, and how to negotiate with arts organizations around the amount of work, fees, and fee increases with experience.

Where do Teaching Artists fit with M.F.A. programs?

Information is needed in how to train and develop into being a Teaching Artist, what professional competencies are needed. It is now just sink or swim.

Sustainability is a struggle. I love the flexibility but hate the financial insecurity.

No benefits or a union to represent you.

What do I have to do to become a Teaching Artist? What steps do I need to take?

How do I get work as a Teaching Artist in a non-traditional setting?

Is there some type of certification for a Teaching Artist? I keep looking and find there is nothing that addresses credentials and education.

I'm a NW Coast Native artist, singer, performer and storyteller. I've been working in the community teaching about my culture, doing art lessons, performing with my tribal dance group and reading my book. I'd like to expand my teachings to reach more communities. I'm so happy I found your website! Thank you for providing this resource!

I'm considering a career as a teaching artist and have found an organization where I can get training. Is there a way to find out if this is a good organization or how to find others that train teaching artists?

It is a side job, referred to as a profession that is hard with hours upon hours of prep, planning, original design, and long commutes. Arts organizations that contract with Teaching Artists, funding agencies, or the field do not acknowledge the realities of this work.

I often feel like I'm taking a hit for making work as a Teaching Artist work, being paid an hourly wage that is nowhere near what I'm worth, plus it's exhausting. BUT. I'd rather do this long-term and figure out how to survive doing it rather than do any other kind of work. There needs to be research based recognition of the benefits of the work, what it takes to do the work, and the financial value of the work by arts organizations, schools, community organizations, and funding agencies. As Teaching Artists become professionalized we need a credentialed pathway that is out there for all to refer to.

It is necessary to have a stable, at least part-time job in addition to being a Teaching Artist, to enable me to pursue teaching. I do not feel being a Teaching Artist alone would enable me to pay my bills and maintain any sort of quality life. Why is this never part of any conversation?

I think the only way to survive is to found my own organization and really create my own job based upon what I have learned working as a Teaching Artist.

What I earn isn't reflected in my skill set or education by the arts organizations that set fees.

Teaching Artists need more and varied opportunities for work, social service agencies, hospitals, directly connecting with their communities, and they need health insurance.

Difficult to survive only on being a Teaching Artist. My work tends to follow the grant cycle--I work seven days a week in the spring, the work winds down in the summer, and there is little or nothing in the fall.

Challenging because there are many people who want to do it and many are not educated in the work of a Teaching Artist. Teaching Artists need to give the profession credibility, expenses are rising while pay is the same as it was 5 years ago.

The hourly rates are irregular, and we are rarely paid for the true required time to create lesson plans and teach.

Working as a Teaching Artist is extremely stressful for little pay.

It is difficult to support a family. Benefit are not provided. Working as a Teaching Artist is still considered a second level discipline. The arts education field continues to ignore this. Is it because it benefits?

What with the self-employment tax that assumes you have inventory (that can be deducted), working as a Teaching Artist is not kind to those of us who provide a service for comparably very little pay. More education on basic business skills and working as independent contractors is needed. With all of the "professional development" and training offered and / or sold to Teaching Artists, we need to stop and assess what is actually needed to succeed and make a living in this field.

The longer it takes to professionalize Teaching Artists, the easier it will be for organizations to exploit them and to move on to the next shiny thing that comes along. Our work counts, and it can continue to be relevant, but we need to be more visible and more vocal everywhere. Thanks ATA.

With all of the studies now being done, the state and national conferences, where can I find a study on the career and financial benefits to a Teaching Artist for attending a Lincoln Center or Kennedy Center Institute, yearlong professional development training, or a graduate program?

Organizations can't afford and do not look for funds to provide benefits to Teaching Artists so that the out of pocket for health care etc., adds up. Organizations find that paying the out-of-pocket rate that accounts for these end-of-year costs is way above the going rate and will just hire someone who will do it for less. This is true nationwide, urban, rural, suburban.

Regarding Teaching Artist Rates, I have found it varies crazily, even in large cities like NYC. For example, a day rate in NYC for some schools/organizations is \$350, but when I was in residence for a few days at Frank Sinatra School, they could not authorize payment anymore than a non-certified substitute teacher (about \$80/day). In Long Island it has been, at some points, as high as \$600/day. I generally ask to be paid the median of what they would pay consultants, or at the bare minimum, more than a substitute would make (as they do not put in the huge prep we do). Things have been tight all over, and rates have dropped since 2007, and are only just beginning to creep back up. In a bunch of places, I have been making 10-15 dollars per contact hour, just because the organization has been a long-term affiliate or it's a project I believe in. Consequently, of course, I am behind in bills! That being said, I have heard whispers of improved funding and wonder what this will mean for Teaching Artists.

When I pitch to schools directly, I currently make somewhere between \$100-150 an hour with a 3 hour minimum of contact time. When I work through an organization, I command between \$75-100 an hour, and I specify that I need at least 2-3 hours contact time. I'm also getting a budget for "post-production" when it involves multiple iPads or computers and I have to edit audio or video content for final presentations. I encourage Teaching Artists to "stick to their guns," learn to negotiate rates and when negotiating rates keep in mind that one should always make their rates reflect their experience level and the work they've done to date.

The arts are not valued and neither are Teaching Artists unless you work for a thoughtful and knowledgeable community arts organization.

What you are not told: You must seek out your own opportunities because they will rarely be handed to you on a platter. Find out what unique skill you have to bring to the table and teach to your strengths. Be constantly hungry to learn new techniques to pass along to your students. Learn how to be a business-minded professional because you are your business. For none of these will you be compensated.

I love working as a Teaching Artist in after school programs. I wish it could be something that I could financially live off.

There still appears to be a lack of appreciation for the arts, still seen as " something for kids to do" but not acknowledged as important for learning and for kids to do and know about. There appears to be little concern for the working conditions of Teaching Artists and the environment in which they work. Sometimes your own work is an after thought.

Because of strong arts associations in Ohio, I am able to work. I also have developed a company of one that goes to community centers, after school events and festivals. In summers I operate drama camps in the parks and recreation centers. In this way I am able to make a living.

I would not have survived as a Teaching Artist if my husband had not had full time employment and health benefits.

It is hard to always need to search out and or create (and perhaps find the funding for) opportunities and cobble together a living working as a Teaching Artist. If arts education is important why hasn't this changed.

I think the experience with the arts is needed more now than in the past three decades, but there is little money available, and a reluctance to get off school time for it.

If I was just starting, I could not make it. Schools want to pay less and use us less. After so many years, I have a good reputation, but work continues to decline. I would not consider work as a Teaching Artist knowing what I know today.

Rates stay the same and unpaid mandatory work such as assessment, meetings, planning, and completing forms is on the rise.

There are many pros and cons. I have been working and surviving as a Teaching Artist for eleven years now in New York City. There are many things I'm grateful for (meaningful and often exciting work with inspiring creative young people, fun and thoughtful partnerships with many NYC public school teachers and other Teaching Artists and arts education administrators), and many things I struggle with (finding balance between my own creative projects and my creative projects with students, worrying about retirement, a desire for more growth/leadership opportunities as I become a more experienced professional in the field--that don't take me completely out of the classroom, a strange distance/misunderstanding sometimes between administrators and Teaching Artists--perhaps similar to the distance sometimes observed between principals and teachers, etc.).

More organizations have moved to an employee relationship with Teaching Artists due to government pressure. This needs to become a standard / only model. It came from the government though, not from the arts education field. NYC DOE has begun to actively encourage schools to deepen relationships with partner organizations, which has been good for everyone.

While I love working as a Teaching Artist and prefer it to being the full-time teacher at one school, it has become almost impossible to survive on only Teaching Artist work without a second or third source of income or a steady administrative job that allows for working as a Teaching Artist as well.

Teaching Artists need to come together to define, represent, and legitimize the field for Teaching Artists and we need to create a standard of excellence in the field. Doing so will build trust in the profession and lead to industry growth. Thank you for all you do ATA.

The pay scale is wonky and there are large gaps in work time.

It is not easy. Finding funding to support the work takes more time and energy than the work itself.

I feel blessed to work in an organization that values my perspective and input on how our students should be taught. I also get to work with other visiting artists from around San Antonio and they typically work at organizations that are not related to school districts. This seems to allow for more flexibility or and a need for several types of art related jobs. They are also more active in the local art scene than school district art teachers.

One of my frustrations is that classroom teachers often get "first dibs" on the after school classes, bumping those of us who are Teaching Artists for a living. I work in various settings with people ages 7-97 so I've had a lot of work. Some days I'm in 4 locations in a day though, and none offer benefits or a guarantee that my class will run again the following semester.

Buying health insurance through ACA is crippling to me in NY. The cost is overwhelmingly higher than what I paid when I lived in CA. However, CA did not have as much work to offer which was a large factor in deciding to move to NY.

I regret I made this choice for myself. I teach children and yet I can't afford to have my own.

The most challenging trend is the move to make Teaching Artists fit in to other institutions' programs. Thus, no longer does a school, for example, call and invite me to teach and ask what creativity I might have to offer; it calls and makes me create new curriculum that fits into its system. As a result, the preparation for each venue is more and more onerous.

In the first 20 years of Teaching Artist work, over 90% of my work was school-based. Now, it is distributed over a wide range of client organizations. Without the education focus (that carries with it the demands of standardized curriculum et al), I find my work is more focused on the art making with my clients. With the exception of those Teaching Artists that work for large arts organizations in places like NYC, the rest of us need to be more strategic about developing new sources of work.

There is a lot of work, but not a lot that pays what I would like to be making as someone with over 10 years experience and a masters degree. I've been consulting and teaching PD more because it pays better and doesn't require as much schlepping, but my heart is still in the classroom. I wish there was a clear path for how to be a stable and successful Teaching Artist with kids and a home, but I feel like I spend half my energy trying to figure out what my path is, never mind blazing it.

There isn't enough work, and the available work lacks the necessary benefits, to support living expenses. I am leaving the field.

Most importantly, the work is rewarding and enriching, benefiting the community and contributing to the quality of education in challenging times. Our work is imperative and the results are exceptional (i.e. Dream Yard project in the Bronx, among others). The stats are there--and clearly positive. Many of us would like full-time work, benefits and think that we deserve the acknowledgement of defined and permanent employment in a field where we excel.

This is not a field for the faint of heart or physically unfit. It is hard work that should be done by artists who are trained in this field. The work of Teaching Artists, however, is extremely undervalued and not advocated for. This is the paradox.

It is often very rewarding, but it is very hard work. A Teaching Artist needs to be versatile, flexible, very talented and able to deal with many kinds of people. A Teaching Artist needs to be able to create curriculum and have it change in an instant due to the circumstances or the people in the classroom. Every situation is different. Having a strong organization to support you is essential.

The goal is to always look for the rewarding connections between the work in the classroom and your work as an artist. In addition to working with the students, this is the best part of being a teaching artist.

You will need a spouse/partner that has benefits that you can be a part of. You will only find part-time work and have to piece your jobs together. This never changes.

Working as a Teaching Artist is not the main source of income. A Teaching Artist needs to be an organized administrator of their business to make it work. Organizations are not particularly supportive in terms of benefits and full time employment. Teaching Artists are pretty much on their own.

It is important to know that this work comes from the heart. It is a challenging field and there will be jobs, or programs, that are difficult to successfully execute. It is almost impossible to earn a living. There will be topics that aren't quite in your field of knowledge that you will be asked to teach, but if you love teaching then it is a fantastic way to spend your time. The work is important, so very important to the future of the next generation, but it is only successful when the Teaching Artist is fully invested in the work. This is what we should be working towards.

Working as a Teaching Artist is unpredictable. One year you will work every day, and another year, you'll have two days a week. It has to be paired with another income source.

Meet and chat with many other Teaching Artists about their experiences with the institutions with which they work. This is the best resource for learning about what can be expected in terms of treatment, benefits, communications, and pay! Also, in NYC, being a Teaching Artist can be tough on your body, lugging a lot of stuff around!

A Teaching Artist must know how to market themselves. It's a lot of hustle, very rewarding, and not too lucrative (at least in my geographical area). It is valuable to have a big heart for the work and be able to empathize with people. Creativity is a universal healing component. We have to get out of our own way sometimes and not control things to death. Children show us everything we need to know to stay on our A plus game. I think we need to be super comfortable in our own skin and really embrace the studio process as well as the classroom dynamic. The role of the Teaching Artist is as a resource. We can fill in where there is a gap. I love this work and love development and all the Teaching Artist Institute programs I completed from Arts Integration to Common Core. We have great Arts Council in Maryland. We are so lucky. Thank You.

To know the population you are going to work with and create/design a project where they will have fun. Encourage social engagement, foster empowerment, learn new skills, work with familiar and new art materials, challenge them creatively and cognitively to complete their art project.

The episodic nature of residencies and workshops is the hardest part of looking at working as a Teaching Artist as a professional career. This not only affects income, but also the ability to hone skills through experience. Teaching Artists agree to teach workshops months in advance only to be informed a week in advance that the venue doesn't have enough registrations to run the class.

Teaching artists are constantly looking for and applying for work. It's a cycle of always looking for new projects.

It is extremely difficult to keep a roof over your head, and the energy needed to accomplish your own work is not there. Working too many different time-consuming gigs does not cover the cost of living. Teaching Artists are the migrant farm workers of the educational system.

Do it because you love the work and you want kids to learn and grow and show their own work to the world. Do it because you still have a lot to learn about how to survive and make work and why. Don't do

it for the money. Have another income. Do it to stay relevant in the world, not just in your scene, not just in your game. Do it to connect with other artists across disciplines.

You need to care a LOT. This is not a support job to just make money. Teaching is difficult and beautiful and extremely gratifying but requires enormous amounts of learning, time, and can be incredibly frustrating as you bang your head against walls figuring out what works over the years and try to earn an income at the same time.

Working as a Teaching Artist is not as sensible or as lucrative as it used to be. My fees have barely risen over the years but my expenses have skyrocketed. Teaching Artists' fees don't go up with inflation in most places.

A Teaching Artist needs to be recognized and respected as any other professional. I am an artist first, a Teaching Artist second. I am a REALLY good Teaching artist. I've been doing this for 43 years, and I love it. But I don't like the way I'm being treated now, and I don't like that everything is put on the Common Core. I believe in thought; I believe that children deserve dignity and respect, and I bring that to the classroom, as well as the love of my subject. The children know that and respond in kind. I'm depressed because it's all different from when I started, even in the past 5 years. We have been successful and yet our success and experience is not a formal part of the educational system.

A Snapshot: State of Teaching Artists Fall 2105 Survey

270 Total Responses,

265 respondents worked as a Teaching Artist for the past 2 years

20 years and over:	74
15 to 20 years:	36
10 to 15 years:	32
5 to 10 years:	55
Under 5 years:	73

States in which respondents work

- New York
- Ohio
- Washington, D.C.
- Maryland
- California:
- Michigan:
- Massachusetts:
- Arizona
- Connecticut
- Wisconsin:
- Illinois:
- Pennsylvania
- Texas
- New Jersey
- Georgia
- Oregon
- Washington
- Maine
- Alabama

Alaska
Arkansas
Colorado
Delaware
Florida
Indiana
Minnesota
Nebraska
North Carolina
North Dakota
Oklahoma
Utah
West Virginia

Australia

Gender

Female	213
Male	56
Transgender	1

Education

High School	6
Some college	15
B.A.	105
BFA	39
MFA	29
Masters	60
Ph. D.	16

Income over the past two years

\$5,000 or under	36
Between \$5,000 and \$10,000	43
Over \$10,000	61
Over \$20,000	60
Over \$30,000	70

Has your work as a Teaching Artist increased or decreased over the past two years?

Increased	128
Decreased	142

A Snapshot: State of Teaching Artists Fall 2015 Survey

Compare Challenges "A Snapshot: State of Teaching Artists Fall 2015 Survey"

With:

2011 "Teaching Artists and the Future of Education"

http://www.teachingartists.com/images/RabkinN_Teach_Artist_Research_2011.pdf

Recommendations:

- Build Demand for Arts Education

- Make the Field Sustainable
"Teaching Artists can contribute to expand arts education far more broadly, but the field will be inherently unstable until pay, job security, and benefits are improved."
- Develop Arts Integration
- Standards and Provisions
"Teaching Artists do not appear to have direct involvement in their development."
"Welcome Teaching Artists into the national associations of arts educators."
- Assessment
- Professional Development and Certification
"Assure that Teaching Artist professional development – provided by arts organizations, higher education institutions, or by arts education service organizations – is grounded in the principles of good teaching, centered on meaningful questions from the field, hands-on, project-based, and social."

2010 Association of Teaching Artists Teaching Artists and Their Work Online Survey
<http://www.teachingartists.com/Association%20of%20Teaching%20Artists%20Survey%20Results.pdf>