In Praise of Romance

RENA UPITIS
Queen's University

I think I've read too many mission statements. Or, more to the point, I've read the same mission statement too many times. These days, each mission statement promises an education of quality. I have yet to see an institution aspire to mediocrity, although the word mediocre leaps to mind for a good number of institutions that claim to provide a "quality education." In fact, I don't ever want to hear the words "quality education" again. Nor do I want to hear about "excellence," "high measurable academic standards," or "skills for a changing world." I don't care much for the words "rigour," "exceptional programs and facilities" or "commitment to the global community" either. These phrases have lost whatever meaning they might once have had, and perhaps even more important, measures of so-called success for such goals as "excellence" or "commitment to the global community" are often wanting. Indeed, the overall feeling that one is left with, after reading such mission statements, is that they are cold, that they dull our collective capacity to live and learn with joy.

I have, on occasion, read mission statements that have caused me to pause. For example, the College of Fine and Applied Arts at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign lists as one of its goals (after the inevitable "quality education and teaching excellence") "the creation of visual art objects, music compositions and performances, theatrical productions, dance choreography and repertory, and ... the design of sustainable architecture, landscapes and plans that nurture communities." This goal, among others, is in

Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies
Volume 1 Number 1 Spring 2003

support of the "commitment to elevate and sustain the study of the arts as both a necessary mode of understanding and a vibrant expression of human experience" http://www.faa.uiuc.edu/mission.html . Although the strategic priorities listed after the University of Illinois mission statement have the familiar goals of providing students with "skills to thrive in a changing world" and are peppered with familiar phrases such as "long-term fiscal management" and rewarding "outstanding performance," this mission statement was nevertheless different enough that it held some surprises. As I was reading, I found myself wondering if the same flavour of university mission statement could be written for other faculties, or even for whole institutions, where the discipline focus was not specifically on the arts.

While I have referred to university mission statements thus far, university mission statements are not unlike the mission statements that one sees for elementary and secondary schools. With few exceptions, (one of which will form the focus for the latter part of this paper), schools also claim to provide teaching excellence for a changing world and profess to create inclusive communities where students will become productive and successful members of society. Here are a few such statements, pulled haphazardly from a five minute session on the Internet:

> The mission of Abingdon High School is to achieve and maintain a level of excellence as a community in order to ensure the success of every student. Ensuring the success of every student requires students that are receptive to learning, teachers committed to the success of all of the students, and all parents supportive of the educational process. Ultimately, our mission is to prepare students to become productive, thinking members of society.
> http://www.wcs.k12.va.us/schools/high/ahs/visandmis.htm

> Faculty, students, and parents of the Hackettstown Middle School are guided by the principles of knowledge, respect, diversity, cooperation, responsibility, and communication. As a learning community we are dedicated to attaining a mastery of basic skills and developing a broad background of knowledge in a variety of disciplines. We encourage and foster respect for property, ourselves, and others regardless of ethnic, racial, or socioeconomic differences, as we prepare our students for an ever changing world.
> http://www.gti.net/hackboe/ms/mission.html

> The students, staff, parents, and the community believe that a quality education is a fundamental right of every child. All children will receive the respect, encouragement, and opportunities they need to build the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be successful, contributing members of a changing global society.
> http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/schools/parklandms/missionstatements.html

Many schools with mission statements such as the ones listed above also hold achievement on standardized tests as their primary measures of success. This reliance on scores on standardized tests is not surprising, given

the premium that is placed on achievement measures by governments and the general public alike, and given also that other arguably more important outcomes are also those that are the most difficult to name and quantify. That is, it is not difficult to ascertain whether a child can spell "house" or "tree" or "fidelity." However, it is much more difficult to determine what meaning those words might have in the life of any given child. Of course, the spelling of words like "occasion" and "systematically" is the thing that will determine, for some children, what kind of education they will receive. In some jurisdictions, decisions about program resources and funding are being driven, more and more, by achievement scores on tests that don't do much more than the spelling tests of days gone by. "High stakes testing," as it has come to be called, is high stakes indeed—the lower the scores, the lower the funding—precisely the opposite of what needs to happen. That is, in some American states, extra funding has been extended to those schools where students achieve the highest scores on achievement tests for mathematics and language—probably not the places where additional financial resources might have the most impact.

One of the most accessible definitions of high stakes testing and its consequences is given in the context of the American Educational Research Association Policy on High-Stakes Testing in PreK-12 Education, where it is stated:

> Many states and school districts mandate testing programs to gather data about student achievement over time and to hold schools and students accountable. Certain uses of achievement test results are termed "high stakes" if they carry serious consequences for students or for educators. Schools may be judged according to the school-wide average scores of their students. High school-wide scores may bring public praise or financial rewards; low scores may bring public embarrassment or heavy sanctions. For individual students, high scores may bring a special diploma attesting to exceptional academic accomplishment; low scores may result in students being held back in grade or denied a high school diploma.
>
> These various high-stakes testing applications are enacted by policy makers with the intention of improving education. For example, it is hoped that setting high standards of achievement will inspire greater effort on the part of students, teachers, and educational administrators. Reporting of test results may also be beneficial in directing public attention to gross achievement disparities among schools or among student groups. However, if high-stakes testing programs are implemented in circumstances where educational resources are inadequate or where tests lack sufficient reliability and validity for their intended purposes, there is potential for serious harm. Policy makers and the public may be misled by spurious test score increases unrelated to any fundamental educational improvement; students may be placed at increased risk of educational failure and dropping out; teachers may be blamed or punished for inequitable resources

> over which they have no control; and curriculum and instruction may be severely distorted if high test scores per se, rather than learning, become the overriding goal of classroom instruction.
> http://www.aera.net/about/policy/stakes.htm

So what would a mission statement look like that didn't embrace the language and goals of high stakes testing? What kinds of dispositions rather than "knowledge outcomes" might be cultivated in an educational setting, whether that setting was a pre-school program or a graduate level university course? What would mission statements and curricula look like if teacher and student alike were to strive for beauty, where teaching and learning might be best characterized by romance—by the excitement, fear, ambiguity, flexibility, uncertainty, sensuality, newness, struggle, exploration, and surprise that accompany romance? Notions like these that might be associated with romance, in every sense of the word, are also integral to artistic expression. Throughout the remainder of this paper, I will explore the notion of romance as embodied by the work and the lives of practicing artists and embraced by one system of schooling that is the antithesis of what schools are becoming in the high-stakes environment.

Lessons of Engagement

Over the past decade, there has been a proliferation of articles, position papers, and research studies reporting the benefits of an education rich in the arts. Such benefits include greater motivation to learn on the part of students (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997), the development of the imagination (Greene, 1995), and increased student creativity, lower drop-out rates, and enhanced social skills (Catterall, 1998; Luftig, 1995). Some researchers have also been quick to report higher academic achievement for students involved in the arts, partly in an attempt to justify a place for the arts in the mainstream curriculum (Deasy, 2002; Fowler, 1996). Of course, it is exceedingly difficult to establish cause and effect relationships between the arts and achievement in other subjects because it is hard to isolate the effects of the arts from other variables that affect the complex lives of individual students (Jones & Zigler, 2002).

The emphasis on the arts and achievement in other subjects begs a bigger question: why would one want to link these arts and achievement? By suggesting that the arts might serve as ways of enhancing performance in other subjects, there is a danger that the arts will not be valued for their distinct contributions to education. As Winner and Cooper argue, "Advocates should refrain from making utilitarian arguments in favor of the arts [because] as soon as we justify arts by their power to affect learning in an academic area, we make the arts vulnerable" (2000, pp. 66–67). While the

claims that have been made over the past decade have no doubt been partly in response to the high-stakes testing mentality that appears to be driving so many current educational movements, the arts have greater lessons to offer than the so-called utilitarian benefits.

What, then, are the distinct contributions that the arts might make to the education of students at all levels? At the same time that some scholars have been making utilitarian claims for the arts, others have been arguing about the importance of the arts for experiencing the joy of creation, cultivating the ability to attend to detail, developing tolerance for ambiguity, and learning ways of expressing thoughts, knowledge, and feelings beyond words (Eisner, 1974; Greene, 1995; Howard, 1992). The arts are about developing dispositions and sensibilities as well as technical skills for the production of creative work. In addition to the dispositions that I mentioned earlier that whirl around the presence of romance, the arts also teach us that nuance matters, how to make judgments in the absence of clear rules, that human purposes and goals are best held with flexibility, and that some activities are self-justifying (Eisner, 2002). Surely these are the kinds of dispositions that ought to be nurtured through the course of schooling.

Human beings have, of course, understood the intrinsic values of the arts since the early days of Western civilization. Other civilizations have probably known these things for even longer. Dissanayake (1988) described how art in the earlier indigenous societies was inseparable from daily life, whether the society was marked by hunting, herding, fishing, or farming, and whether the art was part of ritualized ceremonies (e.g., accompaniments to changes in the seasons, ceremonies to ensure group success, rites of passage) or whether the art was embedded in objects of practical necessity—objects such as stools, paddles, pipes, spearthrowers, calabashes, weapons, house walls, and door frames. Dissanayake also explained how in some societies "the observance of ritual permeates the whole of life in aesthetic ways so that [the society's] existence is referred to by the anthropologists who describe it as itself a work of art. In such groups it is difficult to separate art from the life that contains it" (p. 45).

And what of earlier forms of Western civilization? Here is what Herbert Read had to say, in 1943, about Plato:

> It is surely one of the curiosities of the history of philosophy that one of [Plato's] most cherished notions has never been taken seriously by any of his followers.... Scholars have played with his thesis as a toy: they have acknowledged its beauty, its logic, its completeness; but never for a moment have they considered its feasibility. They have treated Plato's most passionate ideal as an idle paradox, only to be understood in the context of a lost civilization. The thesis is that *art should be the basis of education* (Read, 1943, p. 1, emphasis added).

Eisner claims that it is time for schools to do precisely what Plato espoused. As he puts it, those committed to arts education "have not asked for enough." (2002, p. 6). He goes on to say, "When we are asked how much time the arts should receive in our schools our answer should be clear: All of it. When teaching goes really well, all fields are taught and experienced as art forms" (2002, p. 6).

Certainly, there have been periods in the history of Western civilization when the arts, and the lessons are learned through the arts, have been more highly valued. For example, the arts enjoyed prominence in various ways during the Renaissance. I find it of interest that Leonardo da Vinci was granted a position in Milan in his capacity as a musician, although the services he also offered included those of architect, painter, sculptor, and engineer. The Nobel Prize winning chemist, John Polanyi, related how Leonardo da Vinci, arguably the greatest figure of the Renaissance, was left by his sponsors quite free to do science so long as it did not cut into his time for painting (Polanyi, 1990). One wonders if da Vinci were living now, if he would be permitted to do his art so long as it did not interfere with his science—an equally bizarre restriction, for it is, of course, one that feeds the other. Indeed, some would argue—and I would agree—that mathematics and science, at their best, *are* art. We hear mathematicians speak of the beauty and elegance of a mathematical proof and the importance of aesthetic elements in the pursuit of mathematical understanding. Indeed, it is with sheer delight that I note that a Canadian Mathematics Symposium titled "Mathematics as Story," sponsored by the Fields Institute for Research in Mathematical Sciences, is scheduled to take place in June of 2003. The focus will be on exploring mathematics through the arts and technology; Ellen Dissanayake will be a keynote speaker at the event.
http://publish.edu.uwo.ca/george.gadanidis/story.htm

We hear scientists speak of the joy of discovery, and of beauty, too. At a conference I attended in Ottawa in 1999, one group of researchers was describing and illustrating the complexity of the forehead of an ant as revealed by synchrotron light, and in that description, focussed more on the beauty of the object rather than on the technical aspects of the findings (Doyle, 2001).
http://marymount.scdsb.edu.on.ca/projects/saskatoon/synchrotron.htm

These kinds of expressions of the fruits of mathematical and scientific discovery are not the ones that are best measured by standardized tests and, yet, are the very expressions that seem to give life to the work itself. So, while I quote Herbert Read and give the example of Leonardo da Vinci to bring to the forefront the ways in which we presently undervalue the arts and their unique contributions to the human intellect and spirit, this is not, I repeat, about valuing one subject over another. Rather, it is about imagining how the beauty and romance of the arts can be extended to the curricu-

lum as a whole, with the result of enlivening schooling to the extent that students are, to paraphrase Maxine Greene's words (1995), wholly awake to the world.

I have come to think of these qualities of romance and beauty in learning as signs of true engagement. Following the work of Csikszentmihalyi (1997) and Noddings (1992), for example, engagement in learning can be characterized by the involvement of the learner in physical, emotional, cognitive, social, and even transcendent or spiritual ways with the subject matter at hand (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; Noddings, 1992). Csikszentmihalyi describes this transcendent dimension as "the very real feeling we have after an aesthetic encounter that some kind of growth has taken place, that our being and the cosmos have been realigned in a more harmonious way" (1997, p. 25). While I believe, like Eisner (2002), that these forms of engagement are possible in all subjects, I am convinced that they are most readily accessed through 'romantic' involvement in the arts.

Whitehead and Dewey, Romance and Artistic Expression

Nearly a century ago, Alfred North Whitehead spoke of knowledge beginning with the stage of romance, where the learner is intrigued by the novelty of the inquiry, and where explorations are guided by the immediacy of the materials and questions at hand. This is followed by a time of precision, where, in Whitehead's words, the "width of relationship is subordinated to exactness of formulation" (Whitehead, 1929, p. 18). Finally, Whitehead speaks of generalization, where the concepts and principles honed during the stage of precision are applied to other areas. And then—and here is the most important part—the cycle begins again, *within the learner*, as he or she returns to romanticism with the "added advantage of classified ideas and relevant technique" (Whitehead, 1929, p. 19). The cycle begins again within the learner, not at the bidding of the teacher or at the timing of the test or at the beginning of the new curriculum unit. While some scholars might argue that Whitehead's rationalist model can no longer be defended, given that much of our knowledge is distributed in ways that are external to the learner, it is nevertheless intriguing in that Whitehead appears to have recognized the importance of a romantic spark—some form of engagement with ideas, at least—as a necessary condition to learn.

The notion that meaning is made both within and outside the learner, that is, through relationships with symbol systems, people, tools and objects of various kinds was undoubtedly recognized by Dewey. At the turn of the last century, Dewey claimed that four things were important to children: "conversation; … inquiry; … making things;… and artistic expression" (Dewey, 1900/1956, p. 47) Dewey described in detail how children's

first impulses to learn are through play, through movement, through the imaginary worlds of "make-believe" (p. 44). He observed that the instinct for investigation or inquiry grew out of the "constructive impulses," noting how there is "no distinction between experimental science for little children and the work done in the carpenter shop" (p. 44). He argued that, carefully channeled, these combined instincts, namely, to investigate and to make things, could lead to substantive and deeply embodied learning. Dewey spoke of the expressive or artistic impulse in children as being the full manifestation of the instincts to construct and communicate. He further claimed that in situations where the artistic impulse was nurtured in "full, free, and flexible" ways, meaningful relationships and patterns were learned and artistic work was produced (1900/1956; 1934).

It is long past time for us to imagine education and curriculum that was driven by artistic expression, by making things, by inquiry, and by conversation. I cannot help but believe that these are the very things that drive meaningful and beautiful and romantic learning at all levels—from the early years through to the pursuits that adults engage in throughout their lives.

Lifelong Learning and Waldorf Education

I have had many occasions to ask groups of adults assembled at conference presentations or in professional workshops to think about the following set of questions. First, I ask them to think of something that they love to do—a hobby or a passion, something that they might teach others about, something that they continue to learn about in a variety of ways, no matter how hard the struggle. Once a particular pursuit has been brought to mind, I ask if that pursuit is something that is associated with the arts, the body, or the natural world. Nearly everyone indicates that the pursuits that intrigue them as adult learners are, indeed, somehow related to the arts, the body, or the natural world—the very things that Dewey identified (particularly if the notion of "making things" is extended to the physical activities of sport and recreation). When I then ask members of the group to raise their hands if the thing they identified was something that they learned about at school, very few people respond in the affirmative. Why are the things that intrigue us most in our adult lives not amongst the subjects and activities that we encountered in all of those years of schooling?

I would further suggest that the kind of learning that has meaning—for adults and children alike—is that kind of activity which is marked by discernment over simple black and white decision-making, that which involves contemplation, and that which is marked by what others have termed "reverence" (Miller, 2000). This emphasis on reverence is perhaps best encapsulated by the Waldorf approach to schooling. Waldorf education was devel-

oped by the Austrian philosopher and natural scientist, Rudolf Steiner, in the early years of the 20th century, partly in response to the devastation of World War I. The first school was established in Stuttgart, Germany for the children of the workers in the Waldorf-Astoria cigarette factory with the goal of providing an education for the masses that would ultimately result in a social order that led to less damaging ways of resolving conflicts. In establishing the first school, Steiner insisted that the curriculum be an ambitious one, and that it would embody the "three forces" of imagination, a sense of truth, and a feeling of responsibility (Oppenheimer, 1999). The first North American Waldorf school was established in 1928; there are now close to 1000 Waldorf schools worldwide, with over 150 Waldorf schools in the United States, and approximately 25 in Canada.

One of the phrases most often quoted to describe the mission of Waldorf schools is this: "Receive children in reverence, educate them in love, let them go forth in freedom." Further, Waldorf education is touted as education for the head, heart, and hands—that is, there is emphasis on intellectual growth, human relations and civility, and the creation of artistic and utilitarian objects—the very emphasis on conversation, inquiry, making, and artistic expression that Dewey espoused. Some have characterized Waldorf schooling as embracing the best of traditional and progressive features of education (Oppenheimer, 1999). Another way of characterizing the essence of Waldorf schooling, in contrast to other types of schooling, is that the teachers aim to prepare students for citizenship rather than preparing students for work.

WOODEN TOYS:
ADD IMAGINATION
AND STIR

What does a Waldorf school look like? The environment is filled with natural light, plants, wooden and woolen objects, and soft, muted colours. The toys in the Kindergarten and Grade 1 classrooms (see above) are nondescript wooden objects or featureless creatures made of cotton or wool,

with the idea in mind that it is the imaginations of the children that add the meaning and the story to the objects in the course of their play.

The curriculum of Waldorf schools is arts-based. By this I mean that the traditional subjects and skills are approached through artistic means or sensibilities, especially in the early grades. For example, in Grade 1, the letters of the alphabet are taught through drawing and story. In Grade 3, multiplication tables are taught through complex movements and rhythms and through the use of chant. In fact, in the early grades, the so-called "core" subjects are de-emphasized; children do not learn to read until Grade 2 or 3 (although there is a strong oral culture and many reading related skills are built in the early years). Textbooks are not used until Grade 6; rather, the children have "main lesson books" in which they create their own records of what they have learned with their teacher (a teacher who may stay with them through eight years of elementary schooling). There are no grades given until Grade 8.

"R"(IS FOR ROMANCE)

The arts and "handwork" are also taught as separate subjects and form a large part of the overall curriculum. By the end of Grade 8, students in the Waldorf system will have learned watercolour painting (beginning with wet-in-wet techniques introduced in the pre-school), form and perspective drawing, colour theory, and beeswax and clay modeling. They will have been immersed in singing, pentatonic flute playing, as well as learning to play stringed instruments, wind, brass, and percussion. Handwork activities, again beginning in the very early years, include knitting, crochet, sewing, cross stitch, weaving, toy making, and woodworking. Gardening is also a central activity, as is a variety of physical activity, including eurhythmy (a movement system developed by Steiner) and cooperative games. Most children in Waldorf elementary schools will also have instruction in two additional languages (most often Spanish, French, Japanese or German). And the telling of stories, ranging from folk tales, nature stories and fables to stories from the Old Testament to Norse and Aboriginal stories, is a central

part of the curriculum. The description of the *Mathematics as Story* symposium described earlier, includes the following observation:

> We think in terms of stories, we understand the world in terms of stories, we learn by living and accommodating new stories, and we define ourselves through the stories we tell ourselves.
> http://publish.edu.uwo.ca/george.gadanidis/story.htm

This description was not written to justify the use of stories in Waldorf schooling, of course, but it may well have. There is a centrality to story-telling that crosses educational contexts.

In an extensive article in the *Atlantic Monthly*, Oppenheimer (1999) explored the long-term consequences of a system of schooling where story-telling, art, and handwork are central to the work of the day. He quotes Peter Nitze, a graduate from the Rudolf Steiner School (and, as Oppenheimer points out, also a graduate of Harvard and Stanford, and presently a global-operations director of a company which manufactures aerospace and automotive products) as stating, "If you've had the experience of binding a book, knitting a sock, playing a recorder, then you feel that you can build a rocket ship—or learn a software program you've never touched. It's not a bravado, just a quiet confidence. There is nothing you can't do. Why couldn't you? Why couldn't anybody?"

GRADE 1
KNITTING
BASKETS

Many educators, scholars, and journalists have written about Waldorf education in recent years, as the movement has grown exponentially since the 1980s. One of the best sources of articles, written both from those outside of Waldorf education and those from within the tradition can be found at http://hem.passagen.se/thebee/waldorf/links1.htm . In addition, there are a number of sites describing Waldorf Education within a particular geographic

region. The website for Waldorf schools worldwide (English) is located at http://www.waldorf-schule.de/frameset2.htm , where the schools in 55 countries are listed. Countries also have their own webpages that give a sense of how Waldorf Education is adapted to suit regional and cultural sensibilities. For example, http://home.mweb.co.za/fe/fedwald/ describes the preschool, primary, secondary, and tertiary Waldorf institutions in Africa, while http://www.awsna.org is the site for Waldorf schools in North America (AWSNA). The AWSNA site has a detailed "Frequently Asked Questions" page that outlines the Waldorf curriculum through the grades and also addresses other features of the schools http://www.awsna.org/awsna-faq.html . Another particularly comprehensive "FAQ" page can be found at http://www.fortnet.org/rsws/waldorf/faq.html . The observations of Edgar Beem, a writer for the *Boston Globe*, contrasts Waldorf schools with the mainstream in the following way:

> As public school systems increasingly push for higher academic standards and exit exams in response to political demands for accountability and improved performance, Waldorf schools are serenely charting a very different course. What they seek to offer their students is not necessarily greater academic rigor, more individual attention, or a competitive advantage but what might best be described as an education with soul (Beem, 2001).

The Waldorf system is not without controversy and tension, both from the perspective of those outside the system and within. The practice of having the same teacher for eight grades, for example, has drawbacks if the teacher is not able to adjust to the changing needs of the children as they grow older, or if there are some fundamental clashes of personality that do not serve the situation well. Some have questioned the claim that Waldorf schools are non-sectarian, pointing to the requirement that teachers study the anthroposophical roots upon which Steiner based his methods. There is a group of critics of Waldorf schools that claim that anthroposophy is not a philosophy but a cult-like religion, based on the premise that the humans can "contact the spirit world," and that Waldorf schooling is a thinly veiled attempt at inculcating children into anthroposophy (Ruenzel, 2001). Still others have questioned the wisdom in delaying the reading process until children are eight or nine or even ten years of age, claiming that children can be unduly disadvantaged by such as system, especially if a child has challenges such as dyslexia (Oppenheimer, 1999).

There is no perfect system (and I have yet to find the perfect romance). And even with its imperfections, it may well be that a system of schooling that is guided by a more arts-based approach, such as that embraced by the Waldorf schools, rather than one that is formulated by standards and testing might, paradoxically, lead to the very outcomes that many outcomes-driven educators and policy makers claim to value most. Or it may be that

students in Waldorf schools experience success because there is a coherence in the method. That Waldorf teachers believe in *something* might be the bigger issue, rather than the particular, and sometimes esoteric, beliefs around child development and anthroposophy. In fact, there is evidence that schools with a coherent system of values and practices create positive results and dispositions, even where the criteria include performance on standardized measures (Darling-Hammond, Ancess, & Wichterle Ort, 2002). Probably not entirely coincidentally, however, some of the features of the high schools described by Darling-Hammond and her colleagues include teachers working more closely with students by having fewer teachers over a longer period of time, keeping students together for several years, having a focus on what has been termed "authentic pedagogy," and having a focus on interdisciplinary methods—all features that are prevalent in Waldorf schooling as well, albeit in an environment that does not emphasize performance-based standardized assessment.

Conclusions and an Invitation

Glenn Gould once stated that "the purpose of art is not the release of a momentary ejection of adrenaline but rather the gradual, lifelong construction of a state of wonder and serenity." One wonders if this state of wonder ought not to be one of the goals of schooling as well. To return to my opening observations, namely, that the mainstream mission statements for schools and universities might be dulling our collective capacity to live fully and joyfully, it is possible that our institutions would be more effective places for learning if there was more attention paid to the lessons of engagement embedded in artistic pursuits.

I leave the reader with some questions to contemplate. These are not merely rhetorical questions, for they are the kinds of questions that I ask myself nearly every day as I struggle to thrive in an institution where being a "quality leader … [setting] standards of excellence" is front and centre in the vision, and where I and my colleagues have been ineffectual in convincing our closest peers that the arts should be central to education. So I find myself wondering, what would it take to make school learning, indeed, institutional learning at all levels, feel like the learning that we undertake when no one is watching? When no one is testing us? When the learning is romantic, engaging, frightening, and ambiguous? When the curriculum is arts-based? When teaching emphasizes reverence? When success is discerned by the presence of beauty? I am convinced that these are the kinds of learning that endure. Is there any reason that these kinds of learning can't be a central part of schooling?

References

Beem, E.A. (2001). The Waldorf way. *The Boston Globe*, April 15, 2001. http://www.boston.com/globe/magazine/4–15/featurestory1.shtml

Catterall, J., Chapleau, R., & Iwanaga, J. (1999a). *Involvement in the arts and human development: General involvement and intensive involvement in music and theater arts.* The Imagination Project at UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, University of California at Los Angeles.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1993). *Talented teenagers: The roots of success and failure*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1997). Assessing aesthetic education. *Grantmakers in the Arts*, *8*(1), 22–26.

Darling-Hammond, L., Ancess, J., & Wichterle Ort, S. (2002). Reinventing high school: Outcomes of the coalition campus schools project. *American Educational Research Journal, 39*(3), 639–673.

Deasy, R.J. (2002). *Critical Links: Learning in the arts and student academic and social development.* Washington, DC: Arts Education Partnership. http://www.aep-arts.org

Dewey, J. (1900/1956). *The child and the curriculum and the school and society.* London: The University of Chicago Press.

Dewey, J. (1934). *Art as experience.* New York: Putnam.

Doyle, R. (Ed.) (2001). *Renaissance II: Canadian creativity and innovation in the new millennium.* Ottawa: National Research Council of Canada.

Dissanayake, E. (1988). *What is art for?* Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Eisner, E.W. (1994). *Cognition and curriculum reconsidered.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Eisner, E.W. (2002). The state of the arts and the improvement of education. *Art Education Journal, 1*(1), 2–6.

Greene, M. (1995). Releasing the imagination: Essays on education, the arts, and social change. New York: Teachers College Press.

Howard, V.A.(1992). *Learning by all means: Lessons from the arts.* New York: Peter Lang.

Jones, S.M. & Zigler, E. (2002). The Mozart effect: Not learning from history, *Applied Developmental Psychology, 23*, 355–372.

Luftig, R. (1995). *The schooled mind: Do the arts make a difference?* Center for Human Development, Learning, and Teaching, Miami University, Oxford, OH.

Miller, J. (2000). *Education and the soul: Toward a spiritual curriculum.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Noddings, N. (1992). The challenge to care in schools: An alternative approach to education. New York: Teacher's College Press.

Oppenheimer, T. (1999). Schooling the Imagination. *Atlantic Monthly.* http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/99sep/9909waldorf.htm

Polanyi, J.C. (1990). Remarks made at the tenth anniversary of the Killam prizes for science, 1990.

Read, H. (1943). *Education through art*. London: Faber & Faber.

Ruenzel, D. (2001). The spirit of Waldorf education. *Education Week*, June 20, 2001. http://www.edweek.org/ew/ewstory.cfm?slug=41Waldorf.h20

Whitehead, A. N. (1929). *The Aims of education.* NY: Macmillan.

Winner, E. & Cooper, M. (2000). Mute those claims: No evidence (yet) for a causal link between arts study and academic achievement. *The Journal of Aesthetic Education, 34*(3–4), 11–75.