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Proposal Title:

Curriculum Unbound: The Minor Role of the Arts in Education – curriculum

Description:

This presentation will look at several examples of unbinding in the arts and education as both literal performative gestures and as a metaphor to explore the role that arts-based invention can play in reconsidering learning across curriculum boundaries. Starting with art historian Barbara Stafford's extensive exploration of the complementary relationships across the arts and sciences I will draw from Deleuze and Guatarri's theorizing the role of critique through a minor literature to illuminate strategies for provocative partnership through arts in education.

British Columbia's ongoing efforts to develop 21st Century learning innovations represent a single example in Canada of the many school systems internationally learning to shift away from a 'stapled' curriculum where information and learning have been institutionally predefined. Information technologies have unbound teaching resources by providing limitless access to gestures, images, sounds and words to creative students and teachers with good questions. To the extent that the arts and arts education have focused on invention or composition, these creative workers share a long history of instructive strategies for nurturing the kind of independent questioning that is emerging as a central value in current school innovation.

The idea of provocative partnerships invites arts and educational organizations to recognize that authentic collaboration requires each partner to blend critical self-awareness and collegial respect to allow shared goals to emerge. The challenge is that full engagement in arts/education partnerships will mean that both parties will be changed by the encounter. Short-term infusions of art cannot change school culture. Rigid definitions of accountability imposed by the district or province cannot accommodate the kinds of innovation implied by 21st century curriculum reform. This paper will discuss the central role for school arts specialists in brokering provocative partnerships among the schools and arts community.