



TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE TIME OF PANDEMIC ***Arts Education and Students with Disabilities*** **A Virtual Conference**

Organized in 2007, (as The Arts in Special Education Consortium), Arts for All Abilities Consortium provides means by which professionals and key stakeholders involved in Arts Education for students with disabilities in New York can share perspectives, determine needs, develop ways to meet them, and deepen practice and understanding. Our purpose is to bring together constituencies, and engage them in meaningful conversation and exploration in order to ascertain barriers to and opportunities for providing quality arts education to special education students.

www.ArtsSpecialEd.org

The Steering Committee meets on a monthly basis, collaborates on events, makes decisions on focus, goals and mission, and carries out the necessary tasks to succeed in reaching our goals.

Steering Committee

Stephen Yaffe, Chair
Lisa Dennett
Tobie Franklin
Elise May
Rachel McCaulsky
Maryann Polesinelli
Wema Ragophala

The Support Committee consists of individuals with a high interest in the goals of the Consortium, but without the time needed for participation on the Steering Committee. Support Committee members may take on individual tasks as needed for specific functions of the Consortium.

Support Committee

Adam Goldberg
Patricia Freer
Dena Malarek
Jordana Mendelson
Linsey Miller
Romy Nordlinger
Erica Rooney
Constance Stienon

If you are interested in joining the Steering or Support Committee please
send an email to info@ArtsSpecialEd.org



We wish to extend our thanks and appreciation to the following organizations and individuals for their support and help

New York City Department of Education, District 75, Citywide Special Education

New York City Department of Education, Office of Arts and Special Projects

Amanda McFee

Erica Rooney

Barbara Vaccaro

Emily Davis

New York State Council on the Arts

The Theresa Foundation

Arts for All Abilities Consortium is made possible by The New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.



This conference is made possible in part by a generous grant from the Theresa Foundation

Arts for All Abilities Consortium is a sponsored project of Fractured Atlas,
a non-profit arts service organization.



You can tag us at @arts_sped using the hashtag #PandemicArtsSpEd



**This Conference is Dedicated
– with great respect and in loving memory –
To**



Paul King
Executive Director of the Office of Arts
and Special Projects/NYC Dept. of
Education



Meryl Wittenberg
Visual Arts Teacher, P177Q
D75/NYC Dept. of Education

**They made the field a better place
and those who worked with them better people**



TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE TIME OF PANDEMIC Arts Education and Students with Disabilities

DAYS AT A GLANCE

Sunday, January 31, 2021

1:00-1:15PM **Welcome/Overview**

1:15-1:25PM **Why Now**, Mini-keynote, by Dr. Jenny Seham

Sessions

1:30-2:45PM

- Accessible Arts in the 21st Century
- Everyone, Everywhere, Everyday: Structuring Social-Emotional Learning and Building Community through Virtual Arts Engagement

3:00-4:15PM

- The Virtual Theatre Teacher's Tool Kit
- Reimaging Partnerships: How the Pandemic Changed the Nature of Partnering

4:25-4:35 **Why Now**, Mini-keynote, by Henry Renalus
Closing

Monday, February 1, 2021

4:00-4:15PM **Welcome/Overview**

4:15-4:25PM **Why Now**, Mini-keynote, by Amanda McFee

Sessions

4:30-5:45PM

- 'Being Dance' – A tale told for multiple arts disciplines and all abilities
- Collective Rituals: Acknowledging and Exploring Intentional Practices within Remote Classroom Facilitation
- Creating Interactive, Virtual Arts and Movement Programs for Students with Severe and/or Multiple Disabilities

5:50-6:30 PM **Next Steps – An Offer**
Closing



PLEASE NOTE that photographs & video will be taken throughout this conference. Your likeness may be used for documentation purposes, reporting, or appear on our website. No compensation will be received, given or expected by any party. If you have objections to having your photo/video taken, please turn your video off.



Day 1
Sunday, January 31, 2021
1:15 PM

Mini-keynote Address

Why Now

The first of three, mini-keynotes on why the Arts/Arts education provided students with disabilities are so important now, in this extraordinary time. From different and important points of view.

Speaker

Dr. Jenny Seham serves as Founder and Director of Arts and Integrated Medicine (AIM) and the Youth Empowerment Series (YES), at Montefiore Medical Center (MMC)/Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Bronx, NY. Her YES Art Gallery launches online in January, 2021. Internationally, she developed school-based Arts programming in Mexico, Honduras and Ecuador, and trained Dance companies for DanceMotion USA in teaching methods for students with disabilities around the world. A nationally recognized Thought leader at the intersection of Arts education and special education, Dr. Seham's writing includes: *Dance Education for Students with Disabilities*, Handbook of Arts Education and Special Education (2018).

Afternoon Sessions

1:30 PM

Accessible Arts in the 21st-Century

Technology has the power to build independence for ALL people. And it is the pathway upon which 21st-century learning must be based. It is more important than ever to build upon that structure. We will dive into multiple tools for Fine Art, Music, Dance and Drama and how they can be meaningfully integrated.

This includes tools for online content, screen recording, assessment, and student interaction. Even more importantly, we'll demonstrate how we have used these to empower all students. Students can become creators of their own pieces in partnership with classmates, families, and community Arts organizations during a pandemic in NYC.



Presenter

As a special educator and STEM Coach in NYC's District 75, citywide special education, *Sean Arnold* works with a broad range of students and educators. He is committed to reaching all students through innovative technology and practices. He shares his expertise at making learning personally meaningful, intrinsically motivating, and made for everyone. You can also find evidence of his work at BraveInTheAttempt.com.

He has received the ISTE Outstanding Teacher Award, ISTE Inclusive Learning Network Outstanding Educator Award, NYCDOE Excellence in School Technology Award, the EDxEDNYC Excellence in Technology Award, and many other accolades and certifications.

Everyone, Everywhere, Everyday: Structuring Social-Emotional Learning and Building Community through Virtual Arts Engagement

Creating meaningful connections during this unprecedented time requires that we rethink our approach to our Art, our students, our learning environments – and ourselves. How can Arts-based approaches lead us to view everyday objects as opportunities for creativity? How can Arts-based strategies help us invite everyone in the home into a learning experience? How can Arts-based mindsets transform remote learning by encouraging collaboration, exploration, and joy? Join Urban Arts Partnership's Everyday Arts for Special Education (EASE) program for an interactive experience and discussion of how we can use the Arts to grow and learn together even while we're apart.

Presenters

Melanie Goodreaux is a Master Teaching Artist with over 20 years' experience in Arts education and professional development, facilitating with some of the most prestigious institutions in NYC, including Teachers & Writers Collaborative, Creative Theatrics, Whitebird Productions, UAP, CUNY, and Girls Write Now. She is known for her highly creative techniques and warm, engaging, and innovative teaching style. She is the author of *A Poem as Big as New York City*, in which she adapted thousands of lines of NYC children into a single poem published as an award-winning book. She's been part of the EASE team since its beginning.

Erica Rooney is a Coach/Teaching Artist, poet, and licensed Art Therapist. For over 25 years, she has taught in public and private schools, HeadStart Programs and universities. Erica believes the home-school connection is a crucial though often underserved part of education. She has been a central voice in the conception and development of the Everyday Arts for Special Education program (EASE) and The Teaching Artist Training Institute (TATI), designing curriculum and facilitating Professional Development workshops. Erica enjoys drawing, working



with rust, playing the violin and writing. She holds an MFA in Poetry from Cornell University, an MPS in Creative Arts Therapy from Pratt Institute and is a founding member of Arts for All Abilities Consortium.

Lindsay Tanner is Senior Program Manager for the Everyday Arts for Special Education (EASE) program at Urban Arts Partnership. An educator, facilitator, theatre artist, and Arts manager focusing on participatory creative making and inclusive and responsive pedagogies, she has built K-12 expressive Arts programming for schools, Arts organizations, and therapeutic settings around the country. She was a graduate fellow for VSA Massachusetts (now Open Door Arts) and consulted for the Sesame Street in Communities initiative to build trauma-informed early childhood systems of care. Lindsay holds an Ed.M. from the Harvard Graduate School of Education and a B.F.A. from NYU.

Afternoon Sessions

3:00 PM

The Virtual Theatre Teacher's Tool Kit

This workshop will be presented jointly by EPIC Players and Kaiser's Room. In the workshop we will explain and demonstrate how to create an accessible and inclusive virtual theatre environment and give educators tools to utilize the technology and do this effectively. We will teach games/activities through participation that teachers can use in their virtual classrooms and discuss how they can make these games more accessible for students.

Presenters

Travis Burbee is the Associate Artistic Director of EPIC Players – a non-profit, neuro-diverse theatre company dedicated to creating professional performing arts opportunities and supportive social communities in the Arts for persons with developmental disabilities. He has directed *She Kills Monsters*, *Peter and the Starcatcher*, *The Little Prince*, *The Tempest*, and *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown*. Travis also heads up EPIC's in-school education classes and performances. He has taught Acting and Theatre for over six years to people of all ages and abilities, worked in District 75 classrooms and written Theatre curriculum for the NYC Department of Education.

Nicole D'Angelo is an EPIC Player and also works as EPIC's outreach coordinator. She is an actor/musician based in northern NJ and can be found music directing and playing piano and woodwinds in pits across the tri-state area. Nicole is a fierce advocate for artists with disabilities, and particularly those who are Autistic like she is. Outside of performing and advocating, Nicole also teaches music and musical theater to students of all ages. Favorite roles with EPIC Players include Audrey in *Little Shop* and Tilly in *She Kills Monsters*.



Stephane Duret is the Founding Director of the non-profit organization KAISER'S ROOM, which offers Arts programming to individuals with cognitive, developmental, and intellectual disabilities. Inspired by RED KITE: ROUND-UP, a show he did with Chicago Children's Theatre, and working closely with a little boy named Kaiser, Stephane is proud to bridge his passions and bring this type of programming to NYC. As a performer, Stephane was last seen as the Swing/Lola cover in the Broadway production of *Kinky Boots*.

Reimagining Partnerships: How the Pandemic Changed the Nature of Partnering

The pandemic has forced us to re-evaluate meaningful relationships to meet the unique needs of students, families, teachers, related service providers, and administrators across NYC's District 75, the public school district serving students with severe and/or multiple disabilities. These needs encourage increased flexibility and have caused us to reexamine the social emotional needs of everyone involved. What have we learned? Come with us on a journey to see how two organizations, EPIC Players and the Museum of Modern Art, have worked to reimagine partnerships and community outreach during this time. Let's explore how we can move forward together!

Presenters

Amanda McFee is the Coordinator of Arts Education for District 75. She is responsible for providing professional development for the Arts disciplines & Arts integration, developing student programs, creating partnerships within the NYC Arts Community and supporting family engagement. She specializes in accessible instruction for students with moderate to profound global disabilities. She believes that the Arts give opportunity for students to expand communication and socialization, develop motor skills, and increase problem solving abilities. She has been a guest presenter at the International Society for Technology in Education, Arts for All Abilities Consortium, the LEGO National Championships, and other conferences worldwide.

Carrie McGee is the Assistant Director for Community and Access Programs in the Department of Education at The Museum of Modern Art. She and her colleagues have won international respect for their unique efforts to make MoMA's extensive resources, collection and programs accessible to visitors with disabilities and older adults. She is responsible for developing programming for visitors with disabilities and the implementation of museum-wide accessibility initiatives. She also teaches gallery and studio-based programs for diverse audiences, including a seminar at MoMA for medical school students from Columbia University. She has presented extensively in the US and abroad on accessibility and inclusion in museums. In 2009, Carrie coauthored *Meet Me: Making Art Accessible to People with Dementia*.

Aubrie Therrien is the Executive Director of The EPIC Players, a nonprofit theater company dedicated to creating neuro-diverse opportunities and communities through the Arts. She holds a BFA in Theater from Longwood University and a Masters of Public Health from NYU. She is a passionate advocate for inclusion in the Arts and was recognized as *New Yorker of the Week* by



News One New York for her work in the field. Aubrie, along with the EPIC Players, were opening bell ringers at the NYSE and speakers at the UN on empowering women and girls with autism through the Arts.

Mini-keynote Address

Why Now

4:25 PM

Speaker

Henry Renelus has been principal of 75Q721-The John F. Kennedy Jr. School in Elmhurst, NY, for six years. Mr. Renelus has created an indelible and positive climate within and across the school organization of 721Q. He is conscientious and, along with the various constituents, focuses on students' academic and social-emotional learning outcomes. This focus significantly contributes to the acceleration of learning for students and a school climate where all staff place students at the center of their decisions. Mr. Renelus believes the arts play a significant role in the development of his students. Whether it's visual arts, music, or dance, students at 721Q gain energy and essential life skills from the arts.

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Day 2
Monday, February 1, 2021
4:15 PM

Mini-keynote Address

Why Now

Speaker

Amanda McFee is the Coordinator of Arts Education for District 75. She is responsible for providing professional development for the Arts disciplines & Arts integration, developing student programs, creating partnerships within the NYC Arts Community and supporting family engagement. She specializes in accessible instruction for students with moderate to profound global disabilities. She believes that the Arts give opportunity for students to expand communication and socialization, develop motor skills, and increase problem solving abilities. She has been a guest presenter at the International Society for Technology in Education, Arts for All Abilities Consortium, the LEGO National Championships, and other conferences worldwide.



Afternoon Sessions

4:30 PM

'Being Dance' – A tale told for multiple arts disciplines and all abilities

After the pandemic initially cancelled Music and Dance programming for students with vision loss, classes came back online and an innovative approach to teaching The Nutcracker Ballet captured the attention of the students and of the NY Times

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/06/arts/dance/teaching-nutcracker-to-visually-impaired.html>.)

'Being Dance' is for everybody, as it examines the engagement of students in online learning through multiple Arts disciplines, multi-sensory experiences and collaborative teaching methods. The Nutcracker story is only the prelude in a presentation that provides many compelling examples of how we can expand upon best teaching practices: what was lost and what was found during the pandemic.

Presenter

Dr. Jenny Seham serves as Founder and Director of Arts and Integrated Medicine (AIM) and the Youth Empowerment Series (YES), at Montefiore Medical Center (MMC)/Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Bronx, NY. Her YES Art Gallery launches online in January, 2021. Internationally, she developed school-based Arts programming in Mexico, Honduras and Ecuador, and trained Dance companies for DanceMotion USA in teaching methods for students with disabilities around the world. A nationally recognized Thought leader at the intersection of Arts education and special education, Dr. Seham's writing includes: *Dance Education for Students with Disabilities*, Handbook of Arts Education and Special Education (2018).

Collective Rituals: Acknowledging and Exploring Intentional Practices within Remote Classroom Facilitation

Virtual classrooms require additional efforts to build community and engage students. Strong opening and closing rituals can help us do both by offering a moment to ground students in their bodies, spaces, and emotional states - leading to more engagement and stronger class community. In this interactive workshop we'll share some of the background around rituals, what purpose they serve in our work, connections to Healing Centered Practices and collectively explore a variety of virtual rituals we have found to work for multiple ages, disabilities, and Art forms.



Presenters

Dani Criss (she/her) is affectionately known as Dani Criss, The Artist; a multidisciplinary artist, cultural Arts educator, and community organizer hailing from Durham, North Carolina, now based in Brooklyn, NY. With a passionate perspective driven by her roots and studies of the African Diaspora, her work is filled with an educational, energetic, & freeing experience for all. Using movement and knowledge as the source to obtain liberation while discovering ancestral connections within their liberative practices. Teaching Artist and Educator throughout the tri-state area including Brooklyn Arts Exchange, ArtsConnection, Mark Morris Dance Center, and Nassau Community College. www.danicriss.com

Sarah Dahnke (she/her) is a choreographer, multimedia artist and educator. She holds a Dance performance degree from Oklahoma City University and a masters from Tisch School of the Arts at NYU, where she studied the intersection of performance and technology. She is a teaching artist of Dance and Moving Image, working with organizations such as Hubbard Street, New York City Ballet, BRIC, Lincoln Center, and ArtsConnection. A multi-disciplinary artist herself, Dahnke teaches Choreography, Filmmaking, Animation, and other media and performance techniques within curriculums that guide students to tell their own stories.

Kyla F. McKoll (she/her) is a Theatre practitioner and Arts educator. She's worked in Arts education as a Teaching Artist, Administrator, Professional Development facilitator, and Curriculum developer since 2005. Her specialties include working with students with disabilities, early childhood education, Theatre, Creative Movement, and Puppetry. She currently works for ArtsConnection. Kyla was part of the team that developed Everyday Arts for Special Education (EASE) and is working on Growing Inclusivity for Vibrant Education (GIVE). She holds a B.A. in Theater & Performance Studies and an M.A. in Educational Theater.

Creating Interactive, Virtual Visual Arts and Movement Programs for Students with Severe and/or Multiple Disabilities

Interactivity has been a huge challenge for remote learning. How do we forge connections with our students in an asynchronous and synchronous learning environment? In this presentation we'll explore ways in which our teaching artists have utilized technology to promote interactive learning in the virtual space, create community, assess student understanding and increase positive interactions despite physical distance. The session will focus on strategies for Visual Arts and Movement classes for elementary-aged students with disabilities in District 75, the NYC public school district serving students with severe and/or multiple disabilities.

Presenters

Tishawn Gonsalves is an artist and art educator. She focuses on creating multi-sensory and cross-disciplinary curricula and projects that combine Art education, environmental science and cultural food politics. Utilizing a multitude of creative, pedagogical methods to expose



students to a variety of artistic practices and promote inclusion in Art education. Pratt Institute Visual Art, MA in Early Childhood Education and Curriculum Development. She is a Visual Arts educator and is continually expanding her repertoire in order to teach other disciplines within the Arts.

Angelica Janabajal Tolentino, aka Babay L. Angles, has led workshops with emerging educators regarding the use of critical pedagogy, responding to compound trauma within urban environments, and provided self-care strategies for educators working within high needs communities. She has designed and led youth participatory action research projects and Art/performance Theatre residencies utilizing anti-oppression models of teaching. Since 2018, she has worked with Marquis Studios to provide movement residencies tailored to meet the needs of elementary to high school aged neuro-diverse students as well as students with various physical challenges. Most recently, Angelica has developed and adapted asynchronous programming for District 75 classrooms serving students with severe and/or multiple disabilities.

Next Steps – An Offer

A look at, suggestion and offer for *What Now*.

Presenters

Susan Abdulezer is a writer and documentary filmmaker. She explores technology to mine new narrative pathways. After winning the international Computerworld/Smithsonian award for Innovation in Technology in the area of Academia in 1996, Susan created an interactive installation in the Smithsonian Museum of American History Information Age Exhibit.

As a contributing editor to *Converge* magazine, Susan has written feature articles about extraordinary educators and technologists including Seymour Papert and Vinton Cerf, exploring the story of the digital landscape itself, from the emerging exhibition and creation of Arts online, to the personalities and strategies of Digital Storytellers. Susan has taught, coached, and created films for District 75, the Special Education district in NYC, for 43 years.

Stephen Yaffe is an arts and education consultant, evaluator and former professor. His professional development (PD) has been praised as "brave, visionary, smart" (Corp of Public Broadcasting). He's mentored classroom teachers, teaching artists and arts administrators in inclusive practices nationally, served as the VSA/The Kennedy Center Teaching Artist Fellows coach and provided PD to those working in the field of disability on five continents. Stephen is a co-founder and the Chair of the Arts for All Abilities Consortium, the 2018 VSA NYC Arts Advocate of the year, and serves on the Arts Committee to the Panel on Educational Policy (PEP), New York City Department of Education.

Closing
6:30 PM