



Grantmakers in the Arts  
2004 Conference

## DANCING WITH DIFFERENT PARTNERS

### Proceedings from the Conference

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### A NEW APPROACH TO DISCUSSING THE BENEFITS OF THE ARTS

This panel will share the results of a RAND study commissioned by the Wallace Foundation to better understand the benefits of the arts. The study, "Gifts of the Muse: Benefits of the Arts and How They Are Created," includes a review of the empirical literature on the subject, a broad range of theoretical literature on cognitive, behavioral, community development, and studies of aesthetics and the creative process. The presentation will discuss the effects of the arts on individuals and communities; clarify the process by which those effects are transmitted, and relate types and frequency of participation to these effects. The study recommends a new approach to discussing arts benefits and explores the policy implications of such an approach.

*Session Organizer:* Michael Moore, *director of arts programs*  
*The Wallace Foundation*  
Ann Stone, *evaluation officer, The Wallace Foundation*

*Presented by:* Michael Moore  
Ann Stone  
Elizabeth H. Ondaatje, *social research analyst, RAND*

*October 20, 2004, 10:00 a.m.*

**MOORE:** When we started this particular study, we began talking with our colleagues from around the country, other members of the grantmaking community and foundations, and began sharing with them early drafts of the call for the study. We were inviting them to join in our research effort as overseers to help us think about this study in ways that would make sure that it is complete and answered key questions. We had the question in the back of our minds, what would this mean and what would it take to make this really practical and useful?

There is a large list of people who helped in that and I just want to mention a few of them. Sue Coliton at the Allen Foundation, Diane Kaplan, and Janet Sarbaugh.

I'm going to single somebody out for a very significant contribution and that is Frances Phillips. In the early part of our conversation, she said, "Michael, this is really great. If we're going to involve RAND in this, can't we look at the intrinsic benefits to the arts? Can't we look at those things that the arts do that we know nothing else does?"

Such an obvious question. Such a question that, the impossibility of being able to do it was discounted and not considered. Frances placed that back on the agenda as a very, very important piece, and you'll see that in the study this afternoon.

Thank you all enormously. I will be excited to hear from you how this gets used. We are going to be kicking off in January, with much larger communications efforts and city tours. Your dialogue back and forth is going to be very critical to that.

One piece of that is a survey that we're going to ask you to fill out and bounce back to us. My colleague Mary Trudell, who is in our communications area, is going to circulate an email sign-up so we can have a great listserv.

**STONE:** Thanks, Michael. I'm glad to see so many of you here this morning and in a moment Liz Ondaatje who is a member of the RAND team that conducted the study will be giving us some highlights from the work. As you can see, it's titled "Gifts of the Muse: Reframing the Debate about the Benefits of the Arts."

The Wallace Foundation commissioned this work over two years ago and the report itself will be coming out this winter. I think I speak for RAND, and I know I speak for Wallace in saying we're really interested in hearing your feedback after you see this presentation. We have a large

communications effort that we're going to be rolling out and getting your reactions to what resonated, what seemed surprising, who you think is going to find something of particular interest, is going to be really helpful for us.

So we have a section of time after Liz presents, where we'll have questions and discussion, but if you don't get a chance to comment at that time, please buttonhole any of us afterwards and let us know what you think. Also you have multiple opportunities to give us your names, and we'll communicate with you by email when the report comes out.

Before Liz begins her briefing, I want to take a few minutes to talk about the goals for the study, and why we felt it was important to commission this work in the first place.

The study has two main goals. The first is to improve our understanding of the range of benefits of participating in the arts. The second is to explore the linkage between different kinds of arts participation activities and different kinds of benefits.

Now the context for the first goal is the fact that over the years there have been numerous studies and many claims about very particular benefits of participating in the arts. These range from cognitive and behavioral improvements for individuals to economic gains and building social capital on the community level.

And besides coming from a range of different sources with varying levels of credibility, the studies and claims remained largely fragmented. They weren't brought together in any place that we could find, in a synthesized fashion where you could assess them as a group and be able to get a sense of the full range of benefits of the arts and how you think about them as a whole.

By bringing these various strands together and trying to take a more holistic view, it was our hope that this study would be able to contribute insights above and beyond what you could get from the more narrowly focused studies.

It's not to say the narrowly focused studies aren't important, because they are, and we actually need more good quality ones. We were going for the holistic view.

The second goal, the one about exploring the linkage between the different kinds of arts participation activities and the different kinds of effects, was to address the claims about the effects that didn't seem to differentiate what was produced. It seemed a false assumption and



something that a lot of folks would come to on their own if they heard this. I can't imagine that all arts activities are going to lead to this whole menu of benefits. It's more reasonable to think that there are certain kinds of activities, or maybe certain kinds of aspects of the participation process or the experience that lead to the different effects.

So, the second goal of the study was to try to bring some analytic clarity to this issue of how and why arts participation might lead to different kinds of impacts.

Those were the two goals for the study. As for the approach, RAND took a very wide-ranging, comprehensive approach to its collection and synthesis of relevant knowledge on this topic.

They drew from empirical studies on the benefits of the arts, and by empirical I mean studies that are based on data and observation.

Second, they looked at disciplinary knowledge, the key fields in the social sciences, so behavioral psychology, cognitive psychology, community development and so on.

Very importantly, they looked at the writings on aesthetics, the philosophy of art, art criticism, and insights from the humanities along with those from the social sciences.

As a former researcher myself, that is so unusual for a policy research institute to draw not just from the social sciences but from the humanities, and I think that's what contributes to some of the real richness of this work.

You can imagine that with the enormous frame of knowledge that's going into this, what a challenge it's going to be for Liz to present this information in a brief overview. If you find this interesting, we hope you make an effort to look at the full report when it comes out this winter.

This is going to be on RAND's website, [www.RAND.org](http://www.RAND.org) and our website [www.wallacefoundation.org](http://www.wallacefoundation.org).

So, now let me introduce you to Liz Ondaatje. Liz Ondaatje is a social research analyst at the RAND Corporation. Liz has been at RAND since 1987 and over that time she's worked on a wide variety of social policy and national security issues.

Liz has been a major contributor to RAND's growing body of work in arts and culture. She worked on studies of the performing arts and the visual arts that were sponsored by the Pew Charitable Trusts. She worked on a study of

the media arts sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation. As far as work that the Wallace Foundation has supported in the past, she was a contributor to the work on building participation in the arts, an ongoing project that examined the changing roles and missions of state arts agencies.

She has also been a major contributor to this work. With that let me turn it over to you Liz.

**ONDAATJE:** Thank you Michael and Ann. As they said, I'll talk to you today about some of the work we've been doing over the last two years that builds on our earlier work and participation.

And by we, I want to underscore Michael's acknowledgement of my coauthors Kevin McCarthy, Laura Zakaras and Arthur Brooks on this study. I also want to acknowledge Michael and Ann and the others of Wallace who have been a great team to work with. I will really miss Michael; I'm looking forward to working with Nancy. But without getting all teary, we just want to, from RAND, say thank you and good luck in the next stage.

I'll start by giving you our central thesis. Our central thesis is that over the last decade and a half, there has been a dramatic shift in the way that people talk about the arts and about the benefit of the arts in particular. The shift is understandable because the arts community has been faced with a host of challenges and competing for people's time and funding and policymakers' attention in an increasingly competitive environment.

The arts community has responded with an instrumental approach to advocating about the benefit of the arts. By instrumental I mean the benefits that are a byproduct of the arts experience as opposed to something fundamental or innate to the experience itself. For example, piano lessons for brain development, versus the intrinsic benefits which are inherent in the experience, they're the point of it, they're part of it. The joy of reading would be intrinsic, but reading to build a vocabulary would be instrumental.

We argue that this approach really is misguided and that we need a new approach. The key elements of our approach are that we recognize there is a wide range of benefits of the arts, and they create benefits in a complex variety of ways.

We highlight the intrinsic benefits, not just the instrumental benefits, and recognize that some of these intrinsic benefits have more than just a private value, that they can have a public value. We build on an appreciation partly based on our



earlier work of why people get involved in the arts to begin with.

I'm going to start with a bit of background and highlight the key elements of the instrumental approach and tell you what we think some of the problems are and why we need a new approach. I'll give you some implications, both for policy and in general.

So let me start with the policy context. Over the last fifteen years the policy debate has changed in several ways, and this change was driven in part by recession putting pressure on state and federal budgets, and on skepticism about government programs and a movement toward greater accountability.

The culture war raised a whole series of questions about the arts. There are issues that weren't really even debated in the 1960s and 1970s, in those boom years.

So the combination of these and other factors put arts supporters on the defensive, and made advocates think that they had to talk about these broader public benefits.

So what did they do? Borrowing from concepts all over the social sciences, they tried to show how the arts produced benefits in education and economics, and in youth behavior, things that they felt that legislators and educators and policymakers and others really cared about.

They distinguished between those benefits which are private and those that have public value. In fact there's a growing literature in support of this instrumental approach, as Ann mentioned. I'll give you some examples of some of these in a moment.

This literature is found all over the place, as Ann said, and not necessarily in fields that are focused on the arts. There's not a real, focused arts benefits discipline per se.

This compartmentalization has two consequences. One is, it's hard to get your hands around it whether you're a researcher or an advocate or anybody in the arts community, because it's scattered across a lot of academic disciplines.

Second is that there's no common approach or common theory that ties it all together.

As a result we found that it tends to offer more evidence for the presence of effects rather than explanations for why they occur.

I'll summarize briefly four categories of benefits that Ann mentioned. The two of individual

level, cognitive, attitudinal-behavioral, and at the community level, social and economic. As I speak of each of these I'll talk about the types of benefits the literature addresses, the types of arts participation involved, and the types of populations that they studied.

As the name applies, cognitive benefits refer to performance in school. They talk primarily about the acquisition of basic skills and success in school, such as improved test scores, learning to read, learning to write, improved creative thinking. Not surprisingly, these studies are focused largely on preschool and school aged children and they're looking at early arts exposure experiences.

The second category is attitudinal and behavioral benefits. We looked at these together, thinking of attitudinal change as a step toward behavioral change.

Some studies looked at the way the arts change attitudes such as self-efficacy. For instance, mastering a dance or a piece of music, gives me that sense of being able to accomplish something and possibly be effective in another sphere.

Others look at intermediate factors, by which I mean general school skills or life skills for pro-social behavior or school performance. That could be things like greater self-discipline, teamwork, learning to listen to criticism and then change as a result.

Others looked at actual changes in behavior, reduced drop-out rate, higher attendance, bonding with the school or a group that somehow engages a student.

Shifting out from the individual to the community level, I'll first talk to you about the social level benefits.

This literature looks at the arts as a way to bring people together, to connect people, to build social bonds and social capital, the kinds of things that Robert Putnam talks about.

It also talks about the arts as a means of revitalizing community. The populations that these studies looked at are largely adults or community residents. By communities, they could be referring to a neighborhood or an ethnic group or a community of interest, for example, people who all share a common interest in a particular museum or an outdoor painting.

The focus on the adults is partly because they are talking about community cohesion and developing a community identity. But also about



the kinds of skills that are required for community building, identifying leaders and organizational infrastructure and organizational skills.

This is interesting because there's a lot of really unexplored and interesting territory. It's a very small and emerging literature. It's one of those great concepts that translates from discipline to discipline. There are still a lot of things that are interesting to look at here.

For the most part what they've looked at are very focused community arts-based studies like Alaka Wali's work, which is really interesting, but very focused on a few groups that were meeting in church basements.

Stewardship is interesting because a lot of the skills and activities involved in stewardship are about the things that we do to change the community, whether it's getting that space from Parks and Recreation and learning to work across different types of groups, or figuring out who's going to be the leader and who's going to run the rehearsal or the meeting or who's going to organize the docents. These acts of stewardship are also directly related to the social benefits.

The fourth category is economics, and here the literature is better developed. There's a whole field of cultural economics and mechanisms by which the arts produce benefits. This isn't surprising because economic impact is where a lot of the work has been done on the benefits of the arts.

It looks primarily at three things. It looks at how the arts are important for the economy in terms of jobs and spending and tax revenue. It looks at the way that the arts can enhance economic development, for example, revitalizing a downtown or helping to turn around a neighborhood.

It looks at how the arts attract certain types of workers or companies that a city might want to attract. Yesterday there was a seminar on this topic of Richard Florida and the creative class. They're talking about entire populations, not necessarily the people who participate in the arts.

**STONE:** Can I interject one thing? These lists of categories or of benefits, this part is looking at what is in the empirical literature and what is discussed there. Which populations are in those studies and what the benefits actually are, can be much broader.

For instance, for cognitive benefits, the studies happen to focus on children because they study kids in school taking arts education. It's not that

adults don't also have cognitive benefits. This is just saying that when you look at the studies that are somewhat rigorous, this is the picture, the checkerboard that's being presented.

**ONDAATJE:** I'm giving it to you at a pretty high level, I hope you don't mind, and there's plenty of detail behind all of these that we're happy to share with you either later or in our report. It has an appendix, so for the masochists, or like all of us who are research-obsessed, you can read the appendix.

Anyway, as Ann said, that is a thumbnail sketch about the benefits in this literature, giving you an overview of that instrumental approach. What's wrong with this approach? We think there are a couple of things.

The first major problem is, as Ann and I have both mentioned, there are some shortcomings in this literature in terms of methods and rigor in terms of that compartmentalization by discipline or by benefit and by taking these concepts from all over the academic map without integrating it and telling us how it all works. They've been criticized as such recently.

In some ways the bigger issue is that the benefits discussed are all instrumental, yet we all know that what really drives involvement is enjoyment and pleasure, the intrinsic benefits.

By trying to make that distinction between the private benefit and that broader public benefit, we feel that it fails to capture a whole range of ways that the arts can produce benefits. I'll elaborate a bit more on that in a minute. The point being that just because it's something pleasurable, enjoyable to me, it doesn't mean that there couldn't be broader public spillover effects.

One other problem is that the approach doesn't tell us how most of these benefits are linked to participation. The link isn't clear in three ways and Paul DiMaggio talks about these as the three fallacies.

The first is that there's an implicit assumption that all forms of participation can lead to these benefits, and whether it's hands on or attendance at opera, it really doesn't distinguish among the different types of participation.

The second one is that it really leaves open the whole question of whether the effects are the same, regardless of the different populations. So whether it's an immigrant population or children or youth or adults, it really doesn't distinguish among the different types.



We need to ask would all of these have the same effect? How much participation do you need to get these sorts of benefits? There's almost an assumption of linearity in that if you participate, the benefit goes up in direct proportion. But it doesn't address the actual level of involvement required to get the benefits.

Finally, we all know there are other ways of producing these benefits. The instrumental approach doesn't tell us what's special about the arts, what's the comparative advantage. If you could build a sports complex or have more tutoring or gardening clubs or karate classes and get the same sort of benefit, then we really haven't made the case for the arts.

These are the problems that we see and considering all of this, we argue that there is a need for a new approach.

What should this new approach look like? First I'm going to talk to you about the intrinsic benefits and the ways that the benefits produce public and private value. Then I'm going to make those connections between participation and benefits and tell you what we think those links are. Finally we've got to answer that important question of what's special about the arts? What's unique?

As we heard earlier, the instrumental approach leaves out a whole class of benefits that are central to the arts experience. What are some of those?

First there's the immediate effect, there's the captivation with the work of art that can transport you, or take you away from your everyday life, or it can be an imaginative experience. It can be pleasurable, but it may not be. It can be painful or unsettling or tragic. But there's that immediate impact.

In addition to those immediate effects, there are the kind that over time through continued involvement, you develop expanded capacities for empathy or different ways of seeing the world. The arts provide this different perspective on the world, not the logical and rational perspective. They can help you understand people who aren't like you, or periods of time in history that you wouldn't have known.

Finally the arts can provide intrinsic benefits at the community level as well as the individual level, these shared experiences that can draw people together. For communities, it can help them influence the way they see themselves, or one particular group's own identity.

Given the importance of the intrinsic benefits, it's really unfortunate that they have been so marginalized in the public discourse and in research, and yet it's understandable. There's the fear that they just wouldn't resonate with audiences in policy circles and funding circles that the arts community were talking to.

Partly it's because in this environment of measurable outcomes, the intrinsic benefits are intangible and they are difficult to define. Partly it's because of that distinction between the private benefits and the public benefits and thinking of these as of exclusively private value.

We're arguing for a much more comprehensive approach with a fuller understanding of how both the intrinsic and the instrumental benefits, not just the instrumental benefits, can contribute to the broader sphere. To do this we developed an organizing framework to look at the different ways that all of these types of benefits can contribute to the broader public.

They do this in three ways that are called private, private benefit with spillover, and public benefit.

Private benefits are those that accrue primarily to individuals, and I'll give some examples in a minute to try to flesh this out.

Then there are the private benefits with public spillover effects. It does something, it enhances me personally, but it can also have desirable effects on society generally.

Then there are the public benefits that accrue primarily to communities. Let me give you some examples so we can see how this works.

As I said, private benefits are primarily private value. That could be something like a test score that helps the individual, makes the individual feel better, but it doesn't necessarily have a larger effect. It doesn't necessarily demonstrate improved learning in other subjects.

On the other hand learning how to learn can make more effective learners so that does have this public spillover effect.

Similarly with the intrinsic benefits, there's again the enjoyment that I get from a piece of music or from a great performance, but it's unclear that it helps anybody else. Unless there is some change in the way that I think about things, or develop more tolerance or empathy, you don't necessarily have anything spilling over to the broader public.

But there are benefits, both instrumental and intrinsic, that do have these spillover effects. For



example, somebody who practices and performs well has a great sense of accomplishment, but it can also give them that feeling that they could be effective elsewhere. This self-efficacy that Michael mentions is critical to a person's ability to feel effective elsewhere, as well as a step to behavioral change.

Then there are those benefits that clearly act at the community level, like economic growth or development of social capital, but as I said you can have the intrinsic benefits that act at the community level as well. These communal experiences perhaps commemorate events that are important to a particular group or a community.

This is a way of depicting a range of benefits, at least conceptually. If you really want to understand how the arts affect both individuals and communities, you need to think about how the arts create public and private value across this spectrum.

The third problem with the instrumental approach is that it doesn't describe how the benefits are created and how to link participation and benefits.

Let's start with what we know about participation. What does the literature tell us and what have we learned in this study?

The literature tells us that the world is divided primarily into three groups: those who almost never participate; those who occasionally participate; and those who frequently participate. The critical difference is between the occasional and the frequent.

They differ not just in terms of their rates of attendance, but they differ in terms of the things they like, their knowledge, their competencies, their motivations. So the occasional participant will ask, will I do this again? Whereas the frequent participant will say, how and when will I do this again? In other words they've internalized their motivation.

We also know from the literature that early exposure is key, it's much easier to get people involved if they started young.

But the literature doesn't tell us how to move people from the occasional to the frequent. Anyone who's seen our earlier RAND model in the participation decision knows that we didn't get far in that one, and that really became important to us this time. We've done a lot more work in expanding that difference from not just the initial participation decision, and maybe even

the subsequent ones, but the ones that keep you going back and back. I have a little depiction of that at the end if you're interested.

We argue that the intrinsic benefits are what drive people from one level to the other, that they are the key to the sustained involvement. The person's really got to like it, has got to enjoy it to keep going again and again, or doing it again and again, or giving again and again.

When you participate frequently you develop knowledge or skills or competencies, understanding that they increase your intrinsic benefit.

So why is sustained involvement so important? As I said, it's because that level of benefit, both intrinsic and instrumental, really depends on the level of involvement.

For example I made the distinction earlier between the private and the private with spillover effects, using the arts to develop empathy or to build social capital that occurs in stages. They're the kinds of benefits that you're really not going to get just from participating once in a while or once or twice, only through this ongoing sustained involvement.

Let's look at that relationship between involvement, participation and benefits. There are at least three models that you can use to consider these: Model A; Model B; Model C.

Model A is that linear relationship I talked about where the benefits go up in direct proportion to participation. The classic example of this would be an economic impact in which the size of the effect is really a function of, say the number of tickets sold. It doesn't matter whether it's ten tickets sold to one person or ten people buying a ticket each, in terms of the economic effect it's the same.

A lot of people think that a lot of the benefits work this way. Or at least it appears to be the case in some of this literature.

But we think Model B is much more typical of how participation and benefits relate. There's the initial investment. Then you develop the skills and competency and greater involvement after which the benefits can really take off.

I'll give you two examples of these. One would be for behavioral change, which as I said involves a series of steps from developing some positive attitudes, and self-discipline; getting more involved, maybe finding mentors; developing a sense of self-efficacy which we said is so



important, and which you're not really going to get in just a single or few experiences. They build one upon the other.

Social capital works in much the same way, and community building. You start with that interaction among people, you have shared experiences. The same people might come together again and again, developing bonds and bridges and trust and reciprocity. We need all those ingredients for social capital.

If you want to move from social capital to actual collective action for community change, you need the organizational skills and the infrastructure and leadership. You need that intra-group cooperation from arts groups to non-arts groups. This kind of community change that the instrumental approach talks about, does require that ongoing high level of involvement.

For the third Model C, which we include almost for completeness sake, it's to acknowledge that if somebody has a bad experience, a series of bad experiences, their participation could drop off pretty quickly. Dragging a kid who has a miserable time, or putting anybody into an art experience that they are really not equipped for, such as music that's far too experimental for their level of knowledge, are a couple of any number of ways you can put people off.

There are at least three different ways that we can think about this. These are notional and where the inflection points are and what the shapes of the curves are, we don't know. But we believe that Model B is the best one to relate participation to benefits. What it shows you is that by and large, to get the kind of benefits that we're interested in you need the sustained involvement.

What does it take to get that sort of involvement? Early exposure and education are keys to lifelong participation, but not everybody gets that, and that doesn't necessarily tell us what gets you to that next level between occasional and frequent.

People probably aren't going to keep going with this promise of getting smarter or getting more disciplined or getting richer. We can learn from the marketing and leisure literature that the reason people keep going back to the same restaurant or shopping in the same place, or doing the same activity again and again, is really a function of the quality of the experience.

The quality of experience is largely about getting engaged. We think there are two aspects to this. On the one hand there's the mental and emotional engagement; and then on the other there's the

social engagement. These may be familiar to many of you, but here's what we mean.

On a scale looking from disengaged to fully engaged, I'll give you some examples of the different levels of engagement.

First we've got the time filling, where you're basically just killing time, people are filling the seats, but they're falling asleep. They're really not involved. You've probably all been there. Just hopefully not right now. *[Laughter]*

There's the type where you can really relax through the arts experience, you know, sort of drifting off with a piece of music, almost like last night where we could just enjoy the music, but were also relaxing more generally, not being fully engaged.

At the highest level Csikszentmihalyi talks about how there's an optimal experience in which the person is so fully engaged by this ideal match of their skills and the challenge before them, that they're almost lost in time and they're in what he calls the "flow" experience.

People can get involved obviously for social reasons as well, and you can think about levels of social engagement in similar ways, from doing something by yourself – reading or listening to a recording – to doing something in parallel where everybody's watching the same production, but not necessarily interacting, to being engaged jointly, perhaps playing a duet or walking through an exhibit and talking about it with a group of people.

Up to this highly communal experience where you really feel the power of the group and people in choirs talk about this often, or playing in bands, or even serving on a board, where you really feel the power of the group experience.

You don't necessarily have to have high levels of engagement on both scales, you can have one or the other. They both determine the quality of experience, and as we said it's that quality of experience that's the key to continued participation.

As we know, you can have high levels of engagement in all sorts of activities. Similar scales could be applied to sports, or religious worship, or any number of things. This doesn't necessarily tell us what's unique or what's special about the arts. Why are the arts unlike other activities? What's their comparative advantage?

Here's the way we're thinking about it. Art is a communicative experience and it





works in different ways than other types of communications. We often don't think about it in this way, but it is a special form of communication. I'll tell you what I mean.

By looking at this full cycle of artistic expression and participation, we can start to understand how certain effects could be created, starting with the individual artist.

The artist has insights and intuitions about the world or human nature. And the artist also has that ability to express their ideas or their perspective in some medium, whether it's language or sound or movement or images.

They create this work of art, and this work of art then communicates to an individual in that direct aesthetic experience. It's been called a frozen bit of potential communication that can communicate across cultures or across long periods of time.

Often that experience can be shared with others. People can get involved in the discourse or the interpretation, all as part of this appreciation process.

The cycle keeps going, with the public discourse and the public reaction to the work of art, which can then, in turn, influence the creation of new works.

We think this process is unique to the arts. Moreover it is a communicative process which is unlike other forms of communication. It's dramatically different from the way we normally communicate with this natural science model of knowledge which deals in the abstract objective world of reason and neutralizes feelings, as opposed to the arts, which communicates with emotion and feeling and that direct experience.

In this sense, art as communication affects you in different ways. Communicating through that direct experience makes the arts a particularly useful and different form from other experiences. This is in part what we mean by that intrinsic experience. It's that personal and that particular that draws you in, that perhaps you identify directly or you're affected emotionally.

This is also why it's very tough to quantify or measure any of these in an instrumental approach.

Before I talk about the implications of this and the work that we've done, I'll just quickly summarize our key points.

The arts community has looked for a way of justifying the arts in this competitive funding

and policy and entertainment environment, and it's adopted this instrumental approach, in which the arts are good for all of these non-arts benefits that society values.

We've argued that this approach has weaknesses, it relies on uneven methodologies, and it's not based on a strong foundation of research. It fails to underscore the importance of the intrinsic benefits. It ignores the way both intrinsic and instrumental benefits can contribute to public value. And it doesn't link the benefits to participation adequately.

We need a new argument, or a new approach. Here's what we think the key elements of the approach should be.

First, a recognition of the full range of benefits. There are at least two different kinds of benefits, the instrumental and the intrinsic, and they both have private and public value.

We need to recognize the importance of intrinsic benefits, they are the key to getting people involved, and they are the key to sustaining their involvement. They are just basically important in their own right. It's critical in whatever we do to incorporate the intrinsic benefits in the discussion of the benefits of the arts.

Third, I talked about sustaining involvement as being the key to these higher levels of benefits, so we're linking participation and level of involvement with the level of benefit.

We think engagement, mental, emotional, and social engagement, is critical to sustained participation.

Finally our approach is based on an understanding of the unique quality of the arts, as a communicative experience that differs in some fundamental ways from other types of activities to produce the benefits.

What's the implication of all this, the big So What? Where do we go with policy? What do we need to do based on this new approach?

We think there are three things that need to be done. First, we're not saying that there aren't instrumental benefits, indeed there are. But there are real limitations to how we've gone about showing them, and if you want to make an argument in support of the arts, you really need to address these limitations.

Until we as researchers or funders, or policy makers, or advocates address these limitations the argument won't have a solid foundation.



Secondly and more important, we need a better vocabulary, a better way of talking about value and about intrinsic benefits, and private and private with spillover, and public. I'm not pretending that we've solved it, I just feel that this is an area where we need a lot more attention, everyone together.

Third and most important, we need a new emphasis in arts policy because by and large the focus has been on supply and funding for supply. If we build it, they will come. But we think that's wrong, and to get people involved, and to get these benefits of the arts, we need to focus on demand and to build demand.

We see two steps in this. First is building early exposure, focusing policy attention and funding and research on the gateway of early exposure by promoting high quality, sequential skill-building arts education for all children, especially in communities where they don't have a lot of resources and maybe not a lot of art.

But that's not enough, because we also need to make sure that people make this transition from the occasional to the frequent. We need to build opportunities to get people more involved, to promote higher levels of engagement, because ultimately we're arguing that focusing on these aspects of demand for the arts will be the best way that we can distribute and accrue the benefits of the arts that we all care about.

There are a lot more details in the report that's coming out soon, and in the meantime I'm quite happy to answer questions or open it up for discussion, and thank you for your engagement.

**AUDIENCE:** You mentioned that there were a number of things that you were studying. I'm curious to know, did you do brain research, research on parenting?

**ONDAATJE:** Brain research yes, parenting no. But both would be interesting.

To back up a bit, one thing we do know is that there is a certain passing down of cultural capital, and Bourdieu talks a great deal about the French ruling and intellectual families with high amounts of cultural capital, tend to pass it down. To that extent, yes, we looked at it. But anything more in depth in terms of the literature on specific parenting skills, no we haven't done that, but it would be really interesting.

**MOORE:** I think one of the great and exciting additions of having this map is allowing us to look at where there are holes that we can focus on.

This will come as no surprise to anyone, the intrinsic benefits resonate with people across every sector. One of the most surprising things is that particularly in the area of economic impact, we thought, well, that didn't resonate with the general public. But certainly we can talk to opinion leaders and that will resonate. It didn't, they really talked about the intrinsic benefits. Actually, business people talked about the intrinsic benefits.

**AUDIENCE:** I was just wondering if you're positing arts as a form of communication, if you were going to be adding to vocabulary to slide out to the limit at the three circles. You've had some descriptions of what left-brained knowledge, or language might be, just a very few words about right-brained language. I think that that would be very helpful to have more words in this vocabulary.

When I looked at this circle diagram, I thought, oh gee, it's impressive but I don't really see the word "creativity" there. You have put that in a earlier stage. And yet that's where we often go back to.

One of the things that falls out of that for me is how there are a lot of similarities. A science approach would say, what is the problem, form a hypothesis and research and try to find a solution. The artist would say, I have to go create the problem first.

**ONDAATJE:** And then resolve it.

**AUDIENCE:** This visioning kind of thing, so that act of creation also has an element of motivation that is really different. I don't see that motivational piece captured in your language and I think that might speak to the car salesman, because artists create, whether people stand around and go, yea, or they go will you ever clean up your room? And they still do it.

I think there's a benefit in that. There's something different and unique in that. I don't know whether that falls in your study.

**AUDIENCE:** Two things: It struck me when I looked at the arrow, I'd be more comfortable if they were horizontal. There's some mutual feedback. Even in a communal activity, like a theater, you retreat back into individualism, self-reflection, and maybe a feedbacking around them. That parallels the other piece.

In Kay's concern, I'm also more comfortable with the idea that you want to support supply as well as demand. When you say "rather than" my heart grows cold on behalf of the artist.



As the discussion goes forward it seems to me that what we're saying is, I don't think we can argue that the intrinsic values are unique, or that the extrinsic values are. But what might be the overall point is the combination of the intrinsic and the extrinsic together is the unique capacity of the arts. You can have an ecstatic reaction to the car or whatever, but it doesn't necessarily build your cognitive learning like the theater does. So it may be that the overall point is both, rather than either one should be.

**ONDAATJE:** Right, the integrated approach.

**MOORE:** That's an important point. The fact that they're co-created makes it even more absurd that we would only talk about the instrumental values.

**ONDAATJE:** Right. And in fact we even had a whole thing in there about the joint production function, but of course then I'm getting more RAND-like than audience friendly. *[Laughter]* But that's a very good point, thank you.

**AUDIENCE:** On the arrows, just to throw this out, is there a difference between people that consider themselves extroverts and introverts and how they feel about those arrows too? Because those of us that are extroverts may say, it's that collective, together, versus those that are introverts that might want to say they have to have that private experience.

**ONDAATJE:** Right. Exactly. They in fact would be unlikely to get so engaged. You're right. They might not get mentally and emotionally engaged because they're in a group. In fact they could find that very disconcerting. Whereas, they'd be much more likely to get mentally and emotionally engaged if they're just with one or two people. That's a good point to make too.

**AUDIENCE:** I think the intrinsic/extrinsic point is really important because with the instrumental studies, we can take that onto a group. We can take it from, we build a theater, we build the restaurants around it and there's the economic benefit and an economic benefit does this to cities and this to countries and this to businesses and this to governments. We can play it out on a very global kind of analysis of benefit.

As we look at this we're really talking from a very deeply personal internal side that grows out into something. What will serve us best is to take the argument a little bit further. Jerry's going there when he talks about the kind of families who will have better relationships because they went to the Getty Museum for a day together or something like that.

Not using the word "social capital" because we're talking to ourselves, it's a code, it's a belief, it's taken a while to really understand. But what does it mean to a community or a town, or a place where people are coming together and voting? Or where we actually have risen to a different sense of enlightenment through an ecstatic experience or a reflective experience that makes our city work better?

Could we find a small town in France where everybody goes to the arts a lot and talks about how everybody votes? I don't know where you find examples where we've achieved the nirvana that we're all hoping to inch toward. But I think that describing how it plays out would serve the argument very well.

**ONDAATJE:** I think the social capital example is a good one, because then you can actually talk about the steps and the causation between people coming together again and again. Maybe they're all in the same class, and then maybe they're trying to put on a play together. So then, help me with my lines and I'll help you with yours. There's an exchange of favors and that reciprocity and the building of the trust.

There are some very specific steps that we know are the building blocks of social capital. We know from other work that the amount of social capital in a community makes it a healthier community, it sort of lubricates them. So there are some very specific things that can be looked at further. It's just not much is being done yet.

As I said, we really needed that theory of community change in place first before you try to insert the arts in it.

**AUDIENCE:** One of the great functions of this piece is corraling so much of the instrumental research that's been done by individual funders in individual states. That's a tremendous value just to see it organized from some altitude. I think it is going to be really important and great.

Another great thing that this study is going to do is give us all some ideas on how to raise the bar on the instrumental research that we've been doing by necessity, that we will continue to do by necessity.

So, a caution and then a question. The caution being, I hope we collectively, as we use this report, can find a way to talk about improving the instrumental research and research that has gone before, while acknowledging its importance, and while still making it available as a platform for discussion, for advocacy, and for policy dialogue. Because there are a lot of resources



and a lot of intellectual capital that have been created so far.

So I'm hoping that we collectively do not undermine that as we look forward to improving our research practice.

My question to you is, having looked exhaustively at all of the research to put together this framework, can you preview some of the advice that you will have for future research studies, either on the intrinsic or on the instrumental side? What should we be thinking of, as we're designing studies now or setting research agendas?

**ONDAATJE:** That's a great question, and I have two answers. One I think you could probably tell, some of the criteria that we would put forth as improving the standards of research.

You don't want to throw that whole body of work out, because there's some value in it. In some cases, the arts was on the margins of a lot of disciplines. Even James Catterall has talked to us about not getting the top-notch people focusing on it.

Similarly, without the strong arts discipline, in some cases was the issue that fell in the cracks. Arts education is a perfect example of that and someplace where, on the second part of your question, is a great new thrust for new kinds of work based on some of the thinking that we've got to date.

In terms of the methodologies and the rigor, not over-generalizing from a small sample, having a theory of change that you're testing or proving, all of those sorts of things.

As for new directions in research, I could come up with a bunch. I talked about that social benefits research. There's something interesting in here and it's going to cut across. It's going to speak to a lot of different things and it ties into self-efficacy and it ties into the sense of collective efficacy. I'm getting goose bumps because I'm really, really interested in it, which tells you something about me.

All these points that you've been making about the intrinsic benefit and bringing it out into the policy discussion, and how we can do that better. For example, somebody was asking, what are the words? What's the language? How do we talk about it? That will come from that.

As I said, arts education for cross-disciplinary learning, arts education for the multiple intelligences. Arts education for, you know,

just being a person who understands and can continue to understand the arts.

I have two other things. One is that Michael and Ann mentioned that we've done the study on the performing arts and the visual arts and the media arts, and I'd like to do that volume on the literary arts. I think there's something interesting that we might learn by looking at that discipline. And raise your hand if you think that. *[Laughter]*

You made a point earlier about that nonprofit versus commercial versus unincorporated informal sector. That's a really interesting distinction that we try not to make in this. Because I don't think that we're only talking about the nonprofit world—we're not. We're talking about the experience, I don't think we need to distinguish whether it occurred in the for-profit or the nonprofit sector.

The informal sector, that unincorporated sector, where we know from other research that that's where a lot of Americans are experiencing their art and doing their art, we know very little about it. That is not an easy thing to do. I don't actually have a plan, but I know it's a need.

I would like to think more about the nexus, not just for this, but across the disciplines, that nexus between the nonprofit and the commercial, and then the nonprofit, commercial and informal. That's my wish list.

**MOORE:** Thank you. Your critique and comments and input are also enormously valuable, so thank you for that.

END

