



National Arts Policy Roundtable

BRIEFING BOOK **Executive Summary**

The Briefing Book was prepared by the Americans for the Arts
Department of Policy and Research for the 2007 National Arts Policy Roundtable

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Executive Summary

Message from the Co Conveners:

**Robert Redford, Chairman, Sundance Preserve,
Robert L. Lynch, President and CEO, Americans for the Arts**

This is our second Americans for the Arts National Arts Policy Roundtable at Sundance convened on the topic, *“Thinking Creatively and Competing Globally—The Role of the Arts in Building the 21st Century American Workforce.”* We established the Roundtable in 2006 on the premise that the arts are critical to our society—and that every American should have an opportunity to participate in all forms of the arts. This year’s Roundtable focuses on the role of the arts in developing the creativity and innovation skills necessary to succeed in a global workplace. In selecting this topic, we join with the growing number of private and public sector voices, concerned with whether our country is prepared to meet the challenges of a new global economy—leaders who are calling for a re-examination of how we prepare students to succeed, and indeed thrive, in the workplace and society of the future. We believe that the arts are a key component of meeting this challenge.

Message from the Chair:

Marian Godfrey, Managing Director, Culture and Civic Initiatives, The Pew Charitable Trusts

This year’s topic stems directly from the imperative given to us by participants in the 2006 inaugural Roundtable which focused on the future of private sector giving to the arts in America. Recent reports have identified workforce preparedness as a key challenge to US global competitiveness—and cite critical thinking and “Creativity/Innovation” as increasingly important emerging skills. Many reference the need to reinforce the role the arts play in developing 21st century skills. Our goal for the Roundtable is to generate specific, actionable policy recommendations during our gathering at Sundance, and to proffer them to the appropriate leaders in both the public and private sectors. Three distinguished authors, Sir Ken Robinson, Dr. Paul Houston, and Dr. Hamsa Thota, with policy expertise in creativity and innovation, education and business, have written opinion essays to help launch the discussion. We are the first to consider the preliminary data from a new research partnership among Americans for the Arts, The Conference Board and The American Association of School Administrators, to help us better understand what definitions of creative and innovative employees are currently in use by senior corporate executives and Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent-level school leaders. Finally, we have gathered existing data and research, and conducted focus groups of industry professionals to provide the latest evidence on this topic, in order to use this information to help launch new strategies and efforts, designed to bring the full force and potential of the arts to this growing societal challenge.

Members of the 2007 National Arts Policy Roundtable

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NAMM - The International Music
Products Association

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Director, Apple Education
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The Americans for the Arts National Arts Policy Roundtable is an annual forum of national leaders who serve at the highest levels of business, government, philanthropy, education, and share a willingness to meet and recommend policies critical to the advancement of American culture. The Roundtable was established in 2006 on the premise that the arts are critical to our society—and that every American should have an opportunity to participate in all forms of the arts. Co Convened by Americans for the Arts and Sundance Preserve, the Roundtable is the pinnacle convening of more than 100 meetings sponsored annually by Americans for the Arts through its National Arts Policy Network. The inaugural meeting of the Roundtable took place at Sundance Preserve, October 26-28, 2006.



2007 Topic: Thinking Creatively and Competing Globally—The Role of the Arts in Building the 21st Century American Workforce

The 2007 National Arts Policy Roundtable focuses on the role of the arts in developing the creativity and innovation skills necessary to succeed in a global workplace. It builds upon the recommendations of the 2006 Roundtable, which focused on the future of private sector giving to the arts in America. Workforce preparedness is increasingly cited as a key challenge to US global competitiveness in numerous research and policy forums. However, a growing number of these studies have suggested that the current mode of academic preparation taking place in schools is insufficient in order to compete and succeed in the new global economic environment, especially in developing the essential skills for the 21st century, including critical thinking, and creativity and innovation. Many of these studies reference the need to reinforce the role the arts play in developing these skills; yet, in many key policy forums, discussion of the arts as part of basic building blocks in developing a globally competitive workforce has been notably absent—even as emphasis on the issue has increased.

Can creativity be cultivated without creation? And, if the larger societal goal is to ensure America continues to grow a creative and innovative workforce, then what role can, and will, the arts play in achieving this?

To provide the context from which the right questions could be developed, and policy options explored, Americans for the Arts undertook a year long investigation of the topic, which consisted of conducting a scan of reports and studies from a variety of sources both domestic and international; holding a series of national forums and focus groups; commissioning three essays which explore the topic from the education, business and international perspectives, and; launching new research CEO attitudes on creativity and innovation in partnership with The Conference Board and American Association of School Administrators.

Summary of Findings: The Skills Employers Value

“This is a world in which a very high level of preparation in reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, science and history and the arts will be an indispensable foundation for everything that comes after for most members of the workforce. It is a world in which comfort with ideas and abstractions is the passport to a good job, in which creativity and innovation are the key to the good life, in which high levels of education—a very different kind of education than most of us have had—are going to be the only security there is.” (Tough Choices or Tough Times—A Report from the New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, National Center on Education and the Economy, 2006)

Research and Policy Reports

The 2006 report, *Are They Really Ready to Work?*, issued by The Conference Board, Partnership for 21st Century Skills, Corporate Voices for Working Families and the Society for Human Resource Management, recognizes business leaders’ acknowledgement of the importance of “Basic Knowledge/Skills” to educating students who will eventually move into the future workforce. These skills include English Language (spoken); Reading Comprehension; Writing; Mathematics; Science; Government/Economics; Humanities/Arts; Foreign Languages; History/Geography.

However, employers interviewed in the study also value “Applied Skills” as critical to success, including, Critical Thinking/Problem Solving; Teamwork/Collaboration; Leadership; Creativity/Innovation; Lifelong Learning/Self Direction; Professionalism/Work Ethic, and Ethics/Social Responsibility. In fact, employers in the survey indicated their belief that over the next five years, applied skills will surpass basic knowledge on the combined list of skills that respondents say will increase in importance—with Creativity/Innovation ranking among the top five.

In a paper prepared for the American Council for the Arts 1994 conference on “Arts Education for the 21st Century American Economy”, Arnold Packer cited ways in which the arts contributed to the “workplace know-how” deemed essential by the Secretary’s Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) Commission, of the US Department of Labor:

- Experiences in the arts teach skills that can be transferred to the workplace, among them... interpersonal skills such as teamwork...and working with other cultures;
- Knowledge of the arts enhances effective communication, and communication is more effective when it draws on the power of the arts to convey meaning. In the information age, ideas and information can profitably draw on visual, dramatic, musical, and bodily elements;
- An “artful approach” improves problem solving. High-performance firms strive for quality work and search for the kind of creative solutions that an arts education helps students understand and work toward.¹

Recent empirical studies across the globe have shown promising signs linking the impact of an arts education on applied skills. In 2006, Scottish Executive Social Research published “Arts and Employability,”² which investigated the effect of an arts education on later employability by examining longitudinal data of 11,699 young people. Among the several intriguing and empirical findings include:

- The rate of employment appears higher among young people leaving school at a later stage who took arts subjects, compared to those who did not take arts subjects.
- Students who took at least 2 arts subjects at standard grade tend to have a higher rate of employment than those who took only 1 arts subject.

The data also show that taking arts courses in school benefits occupations that do not require secondary education:

- Among young people leaving school at the earliest opportunity, employability is generally higher for those that had studied arts subjects,
- Students leaving school...having taken arts subjects are less likely to find themselves in a negative labor market position 3 years later, compared to the average young person leaving school early.
- Young people that had studied music or graphic communication are amongst the most employable of those that leave school at the earliest opportunity.

The report further states: “...*The clear link between drama and music and high levels of confidence is an important and positive finding...young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds gaining confidence at school, as demonstrated by drama or music students, are more likely to enjoy higher salaries and enter professional or managerial jobs.*”

Defining Creativity

One of the challenges in an investigation of how the arts impact the development of a new generation of workers is the obstacle of defining creativity itself. The growing concern for a creative and innovative 21st century workforce has encouraged researchers to define why and how creativity is important to business and how it can be cultivated.

But what is creativity? Can it be cultivated or is it an innate gift? How will it be used by the 21st century workforce?

The economist, Richard Florida, has demonstrated the importance of the creative class to all sectors of the economy. His work, among others, has given rise to numerous commissioned analyses of the creative economy, the creative workforce, creative communities, and the role of creativity in business.

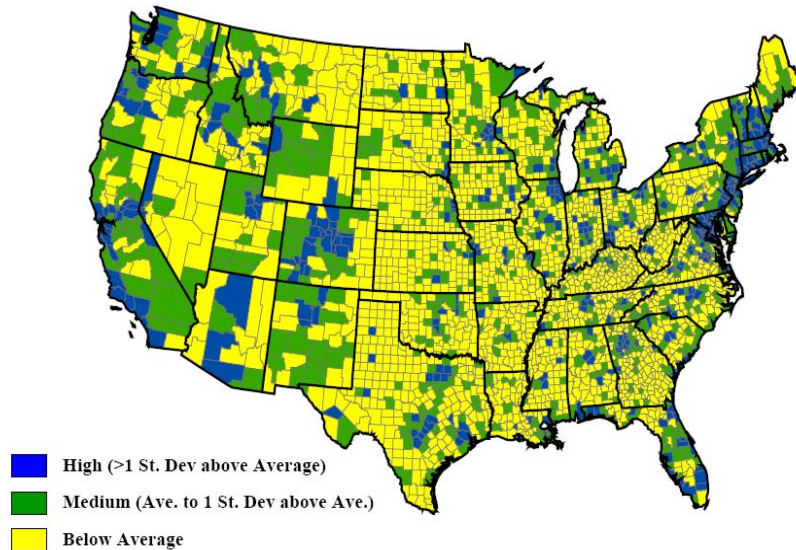
The Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City developed a Regional Asset Indicators Project to map the America's creativity, hoping to affect strategies for private, public, and nonprofit regional development.³ The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service and the U.S. Department of Labor even refined Florida's measures further to create a detailed database of the creative requirements of more than 1,000 occupations, from painters to tire builders.

They define creativity as "developing, designing, or creating new applications, ideas, relationships, systems, or products, including artistic contributions."⁴

The USDA's classification system contains many occupations in sectors not intuitively associated with the creative economy (see "tire builder"). Thus, the USDA's system both demonstrates the creative economy's complexity as well as highlights its problematic terminology—and the fact that creative workers are in demand in every industry.

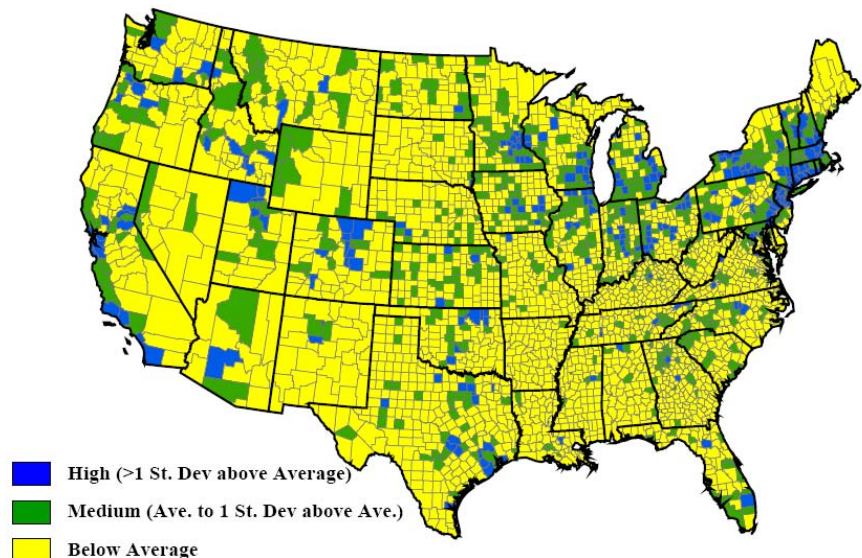
Different sectors have very different uses and demands for creativity. Policy-makers need a nuanced understanding of creativity in order to create policy that effectively engenders creativity and innovation in business.

Creative Workers



Special Thanks to David McGranahan and Tim Wojan, USDA-ERS for use of these data.

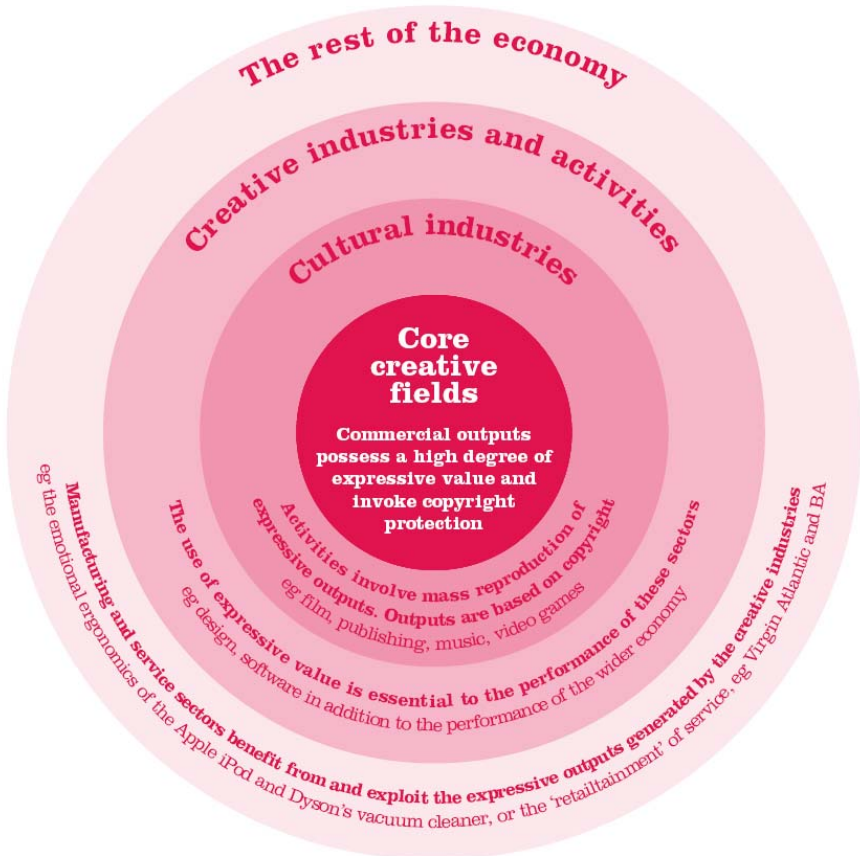
Average Number of Patents Per Capita, 95-99



Source: USPTO, April 2000

The U.K.'s Work Foundation's study on the creative industries presents a model that reflects the different demands and uses for creativity in different business sectors. The diagram below is based on the findings in "The Economy of Culture" report, prepared for the European Commission, and breaks down the importance of creativity to different industries, from the core creative industries to the overall economy.

The central "core creative fields," like film-makers and software writers, fundamentally depend on creativity for their output, while the "rest of the economy" benefits from creativity without directly participating in creative behaviors. In other words, the model shows how artists impact the performance of agricultural companies by stimulating culture, which informs design, that's reflected by the packaging and marketing tactics used by agricultural companies to stimulate sales.



The creative members of all industries depend on one another, driven by the creative core, for innovation.

Educating for the 21st Century Global Workforce

Historically, America has held the reputation for producing highly imaginative and innovative minds—in the creative as well as scientific and high tech industries. Advanced industrial nations like India, China, and many European countries have begun producing high quality engineers, scientists, and technological innovators—and, at significantly lower operating costs. The crucial question, posed by the American Management Association, is “will U.S. companies be able to attract top talent from abroad in coming years? And, even if they can, will it be less expensive and more efficient to just create innovation facilities in other nations and utilize the talent there?”⁵

The answer, they say, is that America must be able to do things other countries cannot.

The U.S. government has responded to the education dilemma with two main initiatives, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), and the America Competes Act, which focuses on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) subjects. The authors of NCLB suggest that business leaders “recognize that the goal of *No Child Left Behind*—every child reading and doing math at grade level by 2014—is essential to ensuring our future competitiveness and the quality of life of all Americans.” Advocates of the America Competes Act call for boosting our young people's skills in the STEM (Science Technology Engineering Math) fields, in order to meet the demands for more creativity and innovation in the 21st Century.

While improved academic achievement is positive, schools are complying with the law by spending more time on the “required” (*i.e.*, nationally tested) subjects and reducing instruction on other subjects by an average of 31 percent.⁶ Effectively, this narrows the skills taught in schools that, consequently, may not even be the most valuable for employers in the new economy.

Those who challenge the NCLB and STEM focus, argue that the laws crowd out other vital subjects and applied skills—and will eventually do more harm than good to the United States’ fragile edge in creativity and innovation. As the Wall Street Journal cogently argued in a recent article: “...*these enthusiasts don't understand that what makes Americans competitive on a shrinking, globalizing planet isn't out-gunning Asians at technical skills. Rather, it's our people's creativity, versatility, imagination, restlessness, energy, ambition and problem-solving prowess.*”⁷

In 2003, Chinese Education Minister Zhou Ji declared China’s educational rigidity had resulted in Chinese children lacking creativity and experience. In its quest to cultivate more creative talent, China is developing an arts curriculum that requires compulsory courses in music and fine arts in all primary and junior secondary schools.⁸ In 1999, the Director-General of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization developed an international network of experts and practitioners to strengthen educational arts and creativity programs around the world. In 2006, they created a road map for arts education for promoting creativity and innovation in the 21st century, stating, “...*the main challenge in modern education is to make the greatest number of people inventive, capable of personal creativity and able to adapt mentally, while preserving their own identity and cultural values. The foundations of creativity lie in artistic activity, which in turn is upheld by the cultural and family traditions that surround every child as he or she grows.*”⁹

Examining whether our current educational priorities will lead to desired results is critical to our understanding of the challenges, needs and competition in the 21st century economy grows.

How Are Other Countries Responding to the Global Creativity Challenge?

The following is a partial list of the international policy initiatives identified as part of the investigation:

United Kingdom The Work Foundation: In April 2006, The Work Foundation began a three-year, £1.5 million research program to provide greater insight into the social, corporate and political consequences of the changing economy. The sponsors include corporate leaders such as Rolls-Royce, Microsoft, PriceWaterhouseCoopers, Merck; Departments for Health, Enterprise, Business and Regulatory Reform, Innovation, Universities and Skills, as well as Culture, Media and Sports; EDF Energy, and the BBC.

Scotland Major national education policy developments include *National Priorities* (2000b), *Determined to Succeed* (2003) and *Ambitious Excellent Schools* (2004b), which are aimed to foster creativity amongst young people, continue to be objectives shared with major national education policy developments.

The Netherlands Our Creative Capacity: Created in 2006 by the Ministry of Economic Affairs, the Culture Ministry, and several arts institutes, it strengthens co-operation between creative and other industries; stimulates private sponsorship and investment in arts and culture; optimizes exploitation of intellectual property; boosts export of cultural products; and improves management of cultural institutions and businesses.

China-Britain Partnership CHINA-UK: Connections through Culture: A joint initiative between the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS), the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the British Council with support from the Scottish Executive. The program supports cultural organizations in both countries leading to increased exchange of cultural product between China and the United Kingdom.

Taiwan Cultural and Creative Industries Promotion Team: A guiding council to promote developments of the Cultural and Creative industries was set up by the Executive Yuan, with the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Council for Cultural Affairs, Ministry of Education, and the Government Information Office. This team coordinates programs for the purpose of promoting developments of the Cultural and Creative Industries.

Singapore Creative Industries Development Strategy: A national plan to develop Singapore into a vibrant creative Asian hub. Enforced by the government organization, Creative Industries Singapore, the ministry's goal is to double the percentage of GDP contribution of the creative cluster by 2012. Industry-specific blueprints have been formulated and several cross-sector initiatives have been launched.

Australia Australian Research Council's Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation: Provides integrated solutions to structural, conceptual and policy problems. The Centre's research outcomes across six program areas will improve industry, government, education and creative services.

Latin America The Convenio Andrés Bello: CAB has been working on a draft Methodological Handbook for the Implementation of Satellite Accounts for Culture, to define the contribution of cultural industries to the economy by implementing cultural measures in the national accounting and statistics system.

India Organized by UNESCO's Bangkok office, a Senior Expert Symposium in February 2005 brought UIS, the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), WIPO, the World Bank, and the Asian Development Bank together to approve the Jodhpur Consensus that lays out a common approach to developing a conceptual framework for cultural industries in the region. This project is endorsed and supported by the Spanish International Development Cooperation.

Perspectives from the Field

The following are highlights from 2006-2007 convenings, conducted by Americans for the Arts as part of its National Arts Policy Network, which focused on the role of the arts in developing critical workplace skills.

- **2006-2007 MetLife Foundation National Arts Forum Series**—The Series, Arts and Workforce Development, examined the diverse roles the arts play at various life-stages. The results of 42 forums, with over 2,300 participants across 20 cities, suggest that a tipping-point is potentially close at hand, with factors increasingly converging on the importance of the arts in workforce development, and in creating arts-rich educational systems that support it. Among the suggestions given to move from opportunity to action, include: (1) Studying effective models for integrating disciplines; (2) Engaging legislative and policy-making entities to affect pro-arts change, and; (3) Electing strong arts candidates to school boards.
- **National Arts Policy Roundtable Resource Seminars**--Additional perspectives were generated by two Resource Seminars with private sector funders and representatives from national arts and education service organizations. Participants reviewed and responded to the preliminary investigation findings, and agreed that even though many corporate leaders grasp the value of hiring creative employees, the overall private sector has yet to internalize this principle. The discussants argued that skills highly valued by employers—including adaptability, problem identification and solving, and high communication intelligence—are enhanced by the arts, yet expressed their concerns over the difficulty of transforming current thinking on this topic.
- **New Research**--Expanding upon findings in the 2006 report, *Are They Really Ready to Work?*, Americans for the Arts, The Conference Board, and the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) are partnering on new research to clearly understand how senior corporate executives, as well as superintendents and other school leaders, define creativity and the ability to innovate when looking at students as future members of the workforce. The final report will include specific practices adopted by businesses and school districts to identify and enhance creativity skills. Preliminary data will be presented to participants at the Roundtable, with the final report being issued in December along with the results and findings of the Roundtable meeting.
- **Opinion Essays**-- Americans for the Arts commissioned three opinion essays from internationally recognized experts on the topic in order to provide a “big picture” perspective. The writers include Dr. Paul D. Houston, executive director of the American Association of School Administrators; Sir Ken Robinson, Ph.D., global consultant and expert in the field of creativity and innovation in business and education, and; Hamsa Thota, Ph.D., Chairman and President, Product Development & Management Association.

Endnotes

- 1 Arnold Packer, "Meeting the Arts Standards and Preparing for Work in the 21st Century", September 16 -18, 1994, pp.9-12.
- 2 "Arts and Employability." Scottish Executive Social Research, 2006.
- 3 <http://www.kansascityfed.org/home/subwebnav.cfm?level=3&theID=9602&SubWeb=12>
- 4 <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Data/CreativeClassCodes/methods.htm>
- 5 "The Quest for Innovation: A Global Study of Innovation Management." American Management Association, 2006.
- 6 NCLB at 5 years.
- 7 Finn, 2007.
- 8 "Art Education in China(II, III)" China Education and Research Network. Accessible via: www.edu.cn
- 9 Links to Education and Art International. "Road Map for Arts Education." United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. 2007.

**The 2007 Americans for the Arts National Arts Policy Roundtable is supported by
Davis Publications, Inc. and The Ruth Lilly Fund of Americans for the Arts.**