

# Arts Management in the US and Russia: Pedagogical Aspects

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## Abstract

The paper is about the pedagogical approaches in the arts administration programs in the US and Russia. For future cultural managers an understanding of culture and the arts forms one of the bases of intellectually engaged activity, enriches and sustains lifelong learning, and cultivates the capacity for empathetic and relational thinking. The cultural management pedagogy must offer students a rich array of educational instruction, programs, and opportunities across communication and arts disciplines.

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In 2006, Corina Şeteu published *Another Brick in the Wall: A Critical Review of Cultural Management Education in Europe* [1]. The book is named, somewhat ironically, after the 1979 Pick Floyd hit song “Another Brick in the Wall,” a protest song against rigid schooling. The best-known line in the song is, “We don’t need no education.” While the author does not argue against cultural management education, she does raise critical concerns and serious questions.

In her book, Ms. Şeteu writes that “the time has come to address cultural management training from a “transversal perspective, highlighting the main interactions between ‘cultural management’ as a *teachable* discipline and the multitude of actors that this domain is dependent on and interrelated with” [1, p. 11]. There have been conflicts and variances among educational domains and disciplines; among various European regions and nations; among educational infrastructures, and between Eastern and Western Europe and North America.

In order to assist programs in structuring and reviewing their curricula, the Association of Arts Administration Educators has published a set of program learning outcomes and standards [2, 3].

In summary, the standards state that students completing a program should have the following skills and understandings. They will comprehend:

- The nature of the creative process; how art and the artist function in society
- The economic, political and social environment for the arts
- The local arenas in which arts organizations exist
- The importance and potential of technology
- The impact of demographic diversity and multiculturalism
- The ethical issues confronting arts managers
- Basic business skills: accounting, financial management, organizational theory and practice
- The financial and legal needs and realities of arts organizations
- Financial and audience development, strategic analysis and planning;
- The production and presentation of art
- Marketing strategies and outreach programming for the arts
- Resource development for the arts
- The legal, ethical, and policy environments for the arts
- Leadership in complex organizational environments including the dynamics of working with boards, organizational structure and staffing, and working with artists and other constituencies
- The international environment for the arts and the impact of the global economy
- The application of research methodologies to the field including the ability to conceptualize, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate data

Arts management and administration are fundamentally concerned with the creation, production, dissemination, and stewardship of creative expression. While the daily activities of an arts organization may focus on “managing” that process – through systems, controls, resources, and directed action – the larger purpose of the organization is to encourage artistic expression and experience to flourish for both private and public benefit. Regardless of their art form or sector – commercial, nonprofit and voluntary – arts managers must keep art at the core of their endeavor. Intrinsic to arts administration

What is remarkable is that virtually every program has a different pedagogical approach to achieving these standards and there has been little

systematic effort to determine whether or not students completing these programs have achieved the standards set by the AAAE.

For future cultural managers, an understanding of culture and the arts forms one of the bases of intellectually engaged activity, enriches and sustains lifelong learning, and cultivates the capacity for empathetic and relational thinking. In and out of the classroom, cultural management pedagogy must offer students a rich array of educational instruction, programs, and opportunities across communication and arts disciplines.

What does this all mean for pedagogical practice day-to-day? To paraphrase famous educator, John Dewey, the secret in education lies in respecting the student.

We are convinced that teaching cultural management pedagogy must have a strong experiential component. We support the idea that students should be learning by doing; getting more practical experiences and understanding how management principles function in arts and cultural contexts. We believe that students must engage with practitioners. Discussions with practitioners in the classroom and outside of it greatly benefit the educational process and give students a chance to see actual practices from different perspectives. Learning opportunities must also be created outside of the classroom. Visiting art organizations, creating and undertaking study surveys, and attending special conferences or seminars all enrich the learning process and help students to become more motivated in their studies.

Active learning and the use a variety of methods to encourage discussion and interaction on the issues that a course presents are imperative to effective pedagogy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In keeping with our commitment to experiential learning, our students in both the USA and in Russia are assigned to engage specific subjects through simulations and through the analysis and presentation of cultural management case studies.

In order to facilitate the organization of study, it is important to use different kind of technology. For example, web learning and video or special computer games in the classroom raise students' interest and reflect different forms of creative process.

We also believe that students must experience and understand the cultural context and practices of different countries. In a global environment, it is critical that students see that various and different political, economical, and cultural backgrounds are an important basis for successful learning and ultimately for successful management practice. For example, students obtain a broader outlook on economic concepts through learning about a variety of cultural policies, political practices, and market trends in countries beyond their own national boundaries. Such experiences help students to realize how differently the same cultural management concepts

work in various countries and regions including European, American, post-soviet, and Asian countries.

Beyond understanding the challenges of cultural administration in an arts institution, acquiring the specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes of at least one arts or media discipline is vital for students studying cultural management.

Regardless of nationality, all graduates from cultural management programs should know the history and the formal structures of their field of study. We would further argue that they must be well-read in the literature of their field. Finally, we are committed to the idea that students must know not only the structure, values, traditions and trends of their field, but also the ethical standards of their discipline and chosen profession.

In its preparation of our cultural managers, it is vital that our pedagogical practice support the arts as they promote social and intellectual change, and as they conserve human knowledge and artistic achievement. It is our belief that the arts enhance the emotional and intellectual growth of students by teaching, in particular, the following skills: critical thinking, creativity, writing, and communication. And, that we must incorporate these skills into the teaching and training of cultural managers.

- **Critical thinking** enables students to develop, in a reflective and deliberate manner, solutions to intellectual, technical, social, and political challenges. Students who are able to think critically can engage the world more fully, and recognize and navigate current intellectual and social issues confronting human beings in today's complex world. For cultural managers, this is imperative.
- **Creativity** enables students to imagine the world as it has been lived, as it is currently experienced, and as it might be lived in the future. Creativity plays a crucial role in human development, in complex thinking, and in the solution of intellectual challenges. Students engaged in cultural management must understand not only operations management and cultural policy, but also that they are fostering the work of artists. And, that our global cultural heritage reflects the best and most important things that have been thought and said and made by human beings.
- **Writing and communication skills** enable students to state their ideas clearly and articulately in the public sphere and in private life. These skills are vital for global citizens in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as they negotiate on-going discussions of national cultural values and the relationship of those values to the values of other peoples and other nations in an international arena.

An understanding of the culture and the arts forms one of the bases of intellectually engaged activity, enriches and sustains lifelong learning, and

cultivates the capacity for empathetic and relational thinking. In and out of the classroom, cultural management pedagogy must offer students a rich array of educational instruction, programs, and opportunities across communication and arts disciplines. Using both traditional discipline based methodologies and metrics for aesthetic, ethical, and cultural literacies. Learning then is a collaborative effort not only between students and individual faculty, but also among and between the students and faculties of their learning institution.

Learning is a holistic experience, and therefore, the entire cultural management learning experience – curricular, co-curricular, social, and institutional – must be designed to promote student learning outcomes.

As leaders and as educators, we believe that part of our pedagogical responsibility is to provide students with a strong network of teachers, counselors, fellow students, and mentors that assists them in making a successful transition from the world of study to the world of work.

If one accepts this premise, then sound educational practice requires that we assess students using both traditional discipline-based methodologies and metrics for aesthetic, ethical, and cultural literacies. Learning then is a collaborative effort not only between students and individual faculty, but also among and between the students and faculties of their learning institution.

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