Pearl Greenberg Award Lecture

“Each time I facilitate a community-based art course or research project I think about Pearl and my peers doing this work.”

KEY WORDS
Award
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I am deeply honored to be selected as the first artist-educator to receive the Pearl Greenberg Award for Teaching and Research in Art Education. I had the good fortune to meet and work with Pearl when I was a doctoral student at Teachers College, Columbia University in 2000. We met as part of the planning committee for the International Society of Education through Art (InSEA) World Congress scheduled to take place in New York City in 2002. One year into our planning, 911 happened and the hotel we contracted for the congress was decimated—as were our spirits. It was a challenging time, (we seem to be experiencing a lot of those lately) and we feared that the international art educators who planned to attend would be fearful of coming to New York City. Thankfully we still had a year to prepare and the outpouring of support we received from colleagues around the globe was astonishing—most everyone who planned to attend before 911 happened decided to come.

I got to know Pearl and her passion for quality art education for all ages. I talked with her about my dissertation research on arts-based intergenerational learning and she encouraged me to become a member of the Committee on Lifelong Learning. I have been a member ever since and have served as the secretary, treasurer, and chair of the committee.

When I joined the Committee on Lifelong Learning 20 years ago, membership had dwindled and indeed for many years we had small numbers. Around 2005 more scholars were writing about community-based, and intergenerational art education in school, community, and museum settings. We noticed more people were engaged in art education

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research with older adults and intergenerational learning, and our membership began to grow.

This growth led us to consider better ways to promote the Committee on Lifelong Learning and meet member needs, including publishing venues for lifelong learning research. With that in mind I created an eye-catching logo for the committee and founded a peer reviewed journal, the International Journal for Lifelong Learning in Art Education, published annually, which I am proud to say will soon publish its fourth volume.

Twenty years ago, when I was conducting my dissertation research, there were very few scholarly publications on art-based, intergenerational learning. In addition to Pearl’s work, Angela La Porte (2000) published an article, “Oral history as intergenerational dialogue in art education” in Art Education Journal on her dissertation research which I referenced in my dissertation. I met Angela at the 2002 InSEA World Congress when she attended my session and that meeting resulted in my first publication in 2004, “Artstories: Exploring intergenerational learning connections through narrative construction,” a chapter in her edited anthology, Community Connections: Intergenerational Links in Art Education, and spawned a lifelong friendship.

I looked forward to connecting with Pearl, Angela, and new members like Susan Whiteland, and later Liz Rex, Jenny Urbanek, Christine Woywod, Andrea Elliot, Priscilla Lund, Liz Langdon, and Deborah Wall (to name a few) at the annual Committee on Lifelong Learning business meeting at NAEA conventions. I recall Angela and I participating in the “Aging Monologues” performance Pearl created and reprised for the 2007 NAEA conference in Chicago. The “Aging Monologues” developed from survey research Pearl conducted with participants aged 21 to 96 over the course of nine years (Greenberg, 2007). She asked respondents two questions: “What are your earliest memories as a child?” and “What are your thoughts on aging?” (Greenberg, 2007, p. 3). From the 150 responses she collected, Pearl developed a script based on quotations from her research. Angela, Pearl, Maureen Roberts, Murray Greenberg (Pearl’s husband and staunch supporter), Maureen’s husband, Jack Ready and I performed the dialogue.

Each time I facilitate a community-based art course or research project I think about Pearl and my peers doing this work. Over the past 20 years, I have conducted artstories research, intergenerational community-based art projects, in New York, Washington, D.C. Richmond, VA, Charlotte, NC, Nicaragua, San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, London, UK and Edinburgh, Scotland.

Artstories is a term I coined to describe both my art and research practice. Artstories are:

• Shared oral histories, performances, collaborative written identity pieces and/or visual illustrations (forms of narrative) that examine life themes related to psycho-social development.
• A concept and age integrated arts learning curriculum theory conceived of as a means of creating more inclusive and empowered communities through arts-based narrative co-inquiry (story sharing).

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- Exhibited, read, and performed for others as a means of furthering multicultural understanding through art and story sharing.
- Community arts-based educational research projects that examine the ‘storied’ nature of learning, how narrative co-inquiry enhances the social and moral education of youth, and creates sustainable learning partnerships between schools, communities, and arts organizations. (Lawton, et al, 2019, p. 35)

In 2019 I co-published a book, Community-based Art Education Across the Lifespan: Finding Common Ground, based on my research and written with two colleagues I had worked with. In the book, I posit a theoretical framework for conducting community-based, intergenerational art education research. As someone with a love for acrostics, the framework suggested is based on an acrostic of the word, “erect” meaning to construct or build.

E.R.E.C.T.ing Frameworks to Build Partnerships
- The five guiding principles of the E.R.E.C.T. conceptual framework suggest a best-practices model for organizing, planning, implementing, and assessing CBAE experiences that build upon community assets. These principles are part of any well-considered CBAE project:
  - Educational. CBAE provides teaching and learning opportunities for all stakeholders, artist-educators, and the broader community through art experiences, while also promoting narrative co-inquiry, the public exhibition/sharing of understandings and knowledge gained, and art skills, processes, and products.
  - Reciprocal. Stakeholders in CBAE establish common ground whereby the contributions and voices of everyone involved are equally heard, appreciated, and considered. Reciprocity is key to developing rapport and trust, valuing diversity and inclusion, and building connections across communities of difference to further understanding and/or meaningful change.
  - Empowering. Involvement in CBAE and narrative co-inquiry creates opportunities for self and communal empowerment and efficacy.
  - Collaborative. CBAE programs are designed as collaborative creative experiences in which each stakeholder has a meaningful role to play, shares their knowledge, and cooperates in a mutually respectful manner toward the accomplishment of personal and collective goals.
  - Transformational. Well-planned CBAE experiences allow for the possibility of an empowering event (Lawton, 2004) to occur that may lead to personal, communal, and societal transformation for the overall benefit of individuals, the community, and broader society. (Lawton, et. al, 2019, p. 11)

Each of the Artstories projects I have developed has met at least three of the five and, in most cases, all five of the guiding principles listed above. As a lifelong learner, I plan to continue this work and add to scholarship on art-based intergenerational learning and creative aging.

Thank you again for this amazing honor. As Pearl would say, quality art education should encompass learners from “womb to tomb” in formal and informal settings rather
than focus solely on k-12 learners. As an older adult myself now, I appreciate this perspective even more.

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References