

HIGHER ORDER THINKING SCHOOLS NETWORK  
strong arts arts integration democratic practice

SUMMER 2013 • ISSUE 02



Former HOT Schools principals discuss career long best practices at the 2013 HOT Schools Summer Institute

## THE SUMMER INSTITUTE AS REHEARSAL

—Jackie Coleman, Teaching Artist

This year marked my 7th HOT Schools Summer Institute. Being an educator and an artist I have observed there is nothing more difficult than leading professional development for educators and artists. Expectations are high. When you bring 80, 100, 200+ skilled and talented people together to offer professional development, the odds are good there are times the sessions are a review of something heard before by someone. There's no escaping it. It's all fresh and exciting the first time but why go back year after year? Because that's what we do as artists: we **rehearse**, and **rehearse** and **rehearse**.

So as in **rehearsal**, I attend the Institute with an open mind and an open heart ready to hear repeated ideas for the first time. I go to rekindle friendships, engage in challenging discussion of best practices, network with educators and artists and to find space for creativity and reflection. This year I observed artists in action, experienced a sharing of creative approaches and walked away with

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## Ahhh... September... School Days Begin Again

—Bonnie Koba, Director, HOT Schools

June is bittersweet for that begging summer wind and protégé soldiering on. Yet, so is September for the bright and eager faces falling in and summer's kiss goodbye. Summers and students – treasures all. On behalf of Amy, Christopher, and myself, please accept this great big Welcome Back! We hope you have returned replenished and recharged, and wish you a safe and joyful school year filled with wonder, creativity, and great accomplishment.

## The Art of Integration

—Smith Mowry, Site Coordinator, Columbus Magnet

What would Bud Abbott be without Lou Costello, Ginger Rogers without Fred Astaire or Paul Simon without Art Garfunkel? Individually, they each have a place in pop culture, but collectively they are iconic. What is integration without the arts? Yes, integration can be successfully implemented by connecting curricular topics to technology, writing or math, but integration of the arts provide students with a more profound avenue to create, understand and accomplish.

At Columbus Magnet, teachers not only say they integrate, they really do. Movement, music and visual arts are everyday occurrences. Imagine learning about the planets by rotating and revolving through a forty-foot wide solar system. Imagine rewriting lyrics of Fun's "Some Nights" so that they are about the Westward Expansion. Imagine organizing a fully functioning market that sells fruit, vegetables and bread while learning about accounting, advertising, and the process of Farm-to-table. At Columbus Magnet the educational belief is that students learn better when they do what they learn.

Intense arts Integration is not an easy process. It begins with an entrenched belief in the HOT Schools philosophy. Students have a voice in

the process of inventing, performing and responding. Currently, fifth grade students are integrating aspects of light, such as refraction, reflection, transparency and absorption through dance choreography. Meanwhile, others are writing lyrics to demonstrate their understanding of opaque objects.

This fall, students will take part in the National Football League's *Play 60*. The program, heavily promoted in First Lady Michele Obama's *Let's Move* initiative, encourages children to exercise for 60 minutes a day. How will we integrate, you ask? Students will script mini plays to foster learning about the importance of exercise and healthy eating habits. Students will also write poems and songs, draw, paint and sculpt original art about exercise. We will also celebrate Classical Music Month at an All School Meeting where students will listen to and appreciate the music of Mozart, Schubert and Beethoven by dancing, drawing and playing musical instruments.

Arts integration is infused into the philosophical fabric of Columbus Magnet School. Like Lennon and McCartney, the harmonic partnership expands the minds of younger generations.



# BACK TO THE FUTURE—STILL LEADING THE WAY

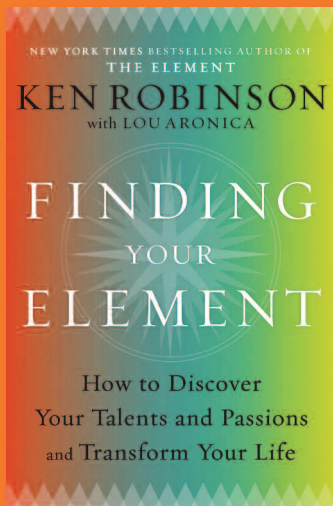
2013 HOT SCHOOLS SUMMER INSTITUTE Photographs by Bruce Sumner





## HOT RESOURCES

**FINDING YOUR ELEMENT:**  
*How to Discover Your  
Talents and Passions  
and Transform Your Life*



**KEN ROBINSON**  
with **LOU ARONICA**

"In Sir Ken Robinson's view, our approach to education has, for decades, stifled children's potential innovation and creativity. Now, he believes, we are in a position like never before to create highly individualized teaching strategies that could allow many more children to tap into their potential."

Viking/Penguin Books

## Democratic Practice in Play

—Amy Traggianese, Site Coordinator, Samuel Staples



During the spring of 2013, Samuel Staples' 5th grade teachers participated in DEMOCRATIC PRACTICE IN PLAY with artist and educator Christopher Eaves—a 3-day professional development provided as part of the HOT Schools Optional Services. DEMOCRATIC PRACTICE IN PLAY makes use of structured improvisation to provide a context in which students learn to interact in a socially competent manner in school, outside of school and when adult guidance is unavailable. Having our teachers learn how to lead students through structured improvisation was exactly what we needed to help students better solve real world problems.

Christopher began by introducing the teachers to structured improvisation technique and how it may be used throughout the students' school day. He then guided the teachers through the entire model. First, the teachers created fictional characters. The teachers then, while portraying their characters, acted out skits involving social issues such as peer aggression and exclusion.

After the teachers practiced and reflected, it was time to experience the model with the 5th grade students. The teachers helped the students to create characters, families and communities. The students then role-played decision making and taking responsibility for their characters' decisions. They quickly understood the theater vocabulary and enthusiastically engaged in the complex social situations that were generated.

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Next Issue: Earth paintings at John C. Daniels

### The Summer Institute as Rehearsal *continued*

cutting edge information—especially about the upcoming Common Core assessments and connections with the arts. One of the most engaging parts of the **rehearsal** process is what happens just outside the **rehearsal** hall itself. This year at the Institute I was surprised to find professional relationships deepened while brushing my teeth! In the dorm's bathroom getting ready for the day, I unexpectedly spent the next 45 minutes in conversation with a colleague that left us wondering together where do we go in our work now from what we **reheard** yesterday.



The “Center for Creative Thinking” is an *empty space*

In addition to being a teaching artist I am also an administrator for a school district in CT. At the time I attended the HOT School Institute this year one of my biggest personal struggles was navigating a transition into a new physical space in my office setting. I felt stuck energetically in my workspace and not sure how to shift that. During the Institute I **reheard** talk about *creative space* - or maybe it was making space for creativity and I flipped it to resonate for me. Either way after engaging with the arts, discussing education and dreaming about what's next I decided I wanted to make room in my work space for this open thinking and communication to continue. When I returned to my office, despite the half-packed boxes and piles of files, I pulled a table into the center of the space and labeled it the “Center for Creative Thinking” and asked colleagues not to leave things on this table. You could bring things to the table but you always had to clear it away and literally leave an *empty*

*space* when you left. I felt creativity flow back into my administrative mind. I knew empty space was required for creativity whether figuratively or literally.

Now as I reflect back on my 7th HOT School Institute and the impact it had on me I am not surprised. After every **rehearsal** process draws to a close there is always something left behind. A part of me altered forever. And depending on my life at the time that something changes. This year the Institute gave me the much needed space for creativity and reflection. I look forward to what's in store for me next year.

### Democratic Practice in Play *continued*

Referring to this arts integration model, John Brakeman, a Samuel Staples 5th grade teacher said, “DEMOCRATIC PRACTICE IN PLAY engages and evokes student excitement as they learn better ways to behave in the outside world. Students choose strengths and weaknesses for their characters. They're then able to use those characteristics to decide how to respond to various situations. Role-playing improvised scenarios allows students to practice ways of addressing real-life issues.

The students may also assume roles of historical characters or characters in books. This model can be used in many content areas. Some of the students who are typically shy have a voice when we work, play and learn through this model.”



Lincoln Middle School students in a tableau of exclusion

## Grow Joyfully, Playfully, Artfully

—Sheryl Hershonik, Principal, Worthington Hooker

For me, and especially this year, the HOT Schools Summer Institute awakens the sense and need for play in the classroom, in thought, and in the work day. As a third year participant, the Institute provided me with opportunities for thinking, experimenting, taking risks and getting to know my staff in a much more enlightened way. I was reminded that I should never underestimate the power of play or the strength in silliness. It opens the mind, releases the spirit, and invites change and growth.

Nourished by Cheryl Hulteen's track on creative classroom culture and Christopher Eaves' track on building collective capacity, these themes resonated throughout the conference and affirmed that culture and community is essential to engaging staff and students in the process of creating their space for learning. As a principal I have to be able to allow teachers to create their own worlds in their classrooms. I must know each of my teachers as a person, what they require in order to grow, and provide them with the support and resources they need so that they may do the same with their students. My staff is my class to differentiate for in order to see them produce their best work. I observe, question, and revel in what they and their students create.

Higher Order Thinking Schools and arts education are a powerful vehicles that provide access to learning for all students. It doesn't drive students to learn, it draws them to the learning. Students work each day to discover how they learn best. Through music, movement, art, writing, theater, laughter, and play students uncover their talent, release their imagination and are better able to connect to their learning. The arts bridge students to the academic world, ground their learning in something of value to

them, and excites them to pursue learning because they are curious, not because they have to! Pretty powerful stuff.

So when I think HOT, I think of joyful learning and the satisfaction that comes from working through a process and creating an environment in which all students can learn, recognize their intellect, and contribute to the academic community. I look forward to working with my teachers, supporting their ideas, and watching our students learn and grow, joyfully, playfully, artfully.

A Mathematical Mural (detail)



The 8th grade Algebra honors class at Worthington Hooker School created a mathematical mural inspired by the Hartford born artist Sol Lewitt—a founder of conceptual art. Lewitt often wrote instructions for an artwork and others, by following his instructions, actually rendered the art. Students, using Lewitt's method, wrote a series of instructions using systems of linear equations and inequalities and then created a mural by following those instructions.





Art Farm's circus arts at John Lyman

### HOT SCHOOLS DIRECTORY

**Alcott Elementary School**  
Wolcott

**Columbus Magnet School**  
Norwalk

**Gaffney Elementary School**  
New Britain

**High School in the Community**  
New Haven

**Integrated Day Charter School**  
Norwich

**Jack Jackter Intermediate School**  
Colchester

**John C. Daniels School**  
New Haven

**John Lyman Elementary School**  
Middlefield

**Kinsella Magnet School**  
Hartford

**Lincoln Middle School**  
Meriden

**Martin Elementary School**  
Manchester

**Pleasant Valley Elementary School**  
South Windsor

**Samuel Staples Elementary School**  
Easton

**Worthington Hooker School**  
New Haven

**Bonnie Koba**  
Director

**Amy Goldbas**  
Associate Director for Programming

**Christopher Eaves**  
Associate Director for Professional Development

## I Opened My Heart to HOT

—Suzy Jorsey Balay, Artist & Parent, John Lyman

HOT Schools encourage students to take chances and embrace areas outside of their comfort zone. Me being asked to write an article for this newsletter is definitely HOT. As a fiber artist with a creative mind that weaves all over the road, I usually avoid expressing my thoughts in writing. But here I go, because in the HOT School rubric, parents matter. As the link between our children's education and the community, we have an important voice.

My introduction to the HOT Schools Summer Institute came in 2008, the summer before my youngest child, Hanna, entered kindergarten at John Lyman Elementary. When I was asked to co-chair John Lyman's cultural arts committee, along with Cindy Satton, I was excited about the idea of the Summer Institute. A week away from the house without my kids? Please, I love my home and family but this would be five stimulating days with adults. Sign me up!



Hanna, Suzy and Chris Balay at John Lyman Elementary School

I arrived at the Institute knowing only the John Lyman staff and Cindy. Every moment, from 7:15am to 10:30pm, was filled with activity and emotion. By the end of each evening my brain and body were exhausted—in a good way. By the end of the week I left with hugs, tears of fulfillment, at least a hundred new friends, and a better understanding of the mission and components of HOT Schools.

I was placed in a morning track that was perfect for me. David Rau, from the Florence Griswold Museum, led a group of teaching artists with enthusiasm and dedication. We created books, played theater games, documented, acted out, and reviewed our efforts. We exper-

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*I Opened My Heart to HOT continued*

imented with all the elements of a teaching artist residency, both giving and receiving. It was such a thrill to see talented people working together to better our schools' futures. We emerged with many new skills in our artistic toolboxes.

Each afternoon featured a different workshop. We made masks and transformed our selves into animals. We painted self-portraits by the Connecticut River and our diverse portraits were combined to form a massive mural of our HOT community. I mixed in a little science and made a pinhole camera. The experience of creating art and capturing a moment of our collective history was awesome. We saw the fantastic ELLA, a new musical based on Ella Fitzgerald's life.

Fascinating keynote speakers had me on the edge of my chair. I was a sponge soaking up everything the Institute had to offer. Oh, and as an added joy, we seemed to be eating all the time. Creativity is hungry work!

At the end of the week the Town Meeting took me by surprise. "Oh, you want me to get up on the stage at Hartford Stage and perform in front of everyone, with a group of people that I just met on Monday? No, no that's not me." Contrary to most people's impressions, I'm a bit shy. Well, I thought about Hanna, my five year old. At John Lyman she would be expected to be willing to try this. If Hanna was going to be speaking on a stage, then I could do it too.

Using all that I learned that week, I stood tall on center stage, raised my arms up high and sang out a chant to a drum. In doing so I opened my heart to what truly is a Higher Order Thinking way of life. Just imagine where we would be if all the world thought HOT!

**2013–2014 HOT CALENDAR****THU, SEP 19 Fall TAC Planning Mtg**

9AM-3PM Green Street Arts Ctr, Middletown

- Please confirm the names and grade levels of participating teachers by SEP 16.

**FRI, OCT 4 Principal & Site Coordinator Mtg**

9AM-3PM CT Office of the Arts, Hartford

**FRI & SAT, NOV 1-2 HOT Schools Mini-Institute**

9AM FRI - 4PM SAT Heritage Hotel, Southbury

**FRI, NOV 8 HOT Orientation**

9:30AM-3:30PM John Lyman School, Middlefield

**WED, JAN 8 Spring TAC Planning Mtg**

9AM-3PM CT Office of the Arts, Hartford

- Please confirm the names and grade levels of participating teachers by DEC 20.

**TUE, JAN 14 Site Coordinator Mtg**

9AM-3PM CT Office of the Arts, Hartford

**FRI, JAN 24 Principal Meeting**

9AM-3PM CT Office of the Arts, Hartford

**APRIL Principal Retreat**

Date &amp; Location TBA

**TUE, MAY 6 Site Coordinator Meeting**

9AM-3PM CT Office of the Arts, Hartford

**FRI, MAY 16 Principal Meeting**

9AM-3PM CT Office of the Arts, Hartford