

Joy2Learn Foundation (Winter 2017)

The Joy2Learn Foundation is focused on and committed to the integration of all facets of the Arts into the classroom, grades K-12, with the purpose of enhancing and complementing the education process. The Foundation creates web-based arts education material of the highest quality for students where arts education and discipline foster creative thinking and aid in the comprehension and retention of the core curriculum, such as English, social studies, history and math. Furthermore, a strong program that incorporates and integrates the arts into the curriculum can raise school attendance and improve test scores.

Accordingly, the Joy2Learn Foundation enlists world-renowned artists to present their work in unique and compelling ways that can inspire both teachers and their students. These e-Presentations are captured on videos, which are available on the www.Joy2Learn.org website. Teachers find new approaches to their standard curricula using the lesson plans and video presentation that are available on the site. And, students discover the joy of learning when the arts spur their engagement.

Starting in 2000, the Foundation, a 501c3 non-profit corporation, has developed and spread the word about its media-rich arts education program, which is modeled on Leonard Bernstein's seminal 1950's educational television show Omnibus, and incorporates modern, interactive web-based technology. The concept was also vetted with experts in the fields of education technology and arts education. Among those consulted were Professor Elliot Eisner, School of Education, Stanford University; Mike Blakeslee, Associate Executive Director for Programs, National Association for Music Education (MENC); and Professor Sam Reese, University of Illinois School of Music. The overarching recommendation from these experts was to use web-based interactivity with material covering the four art forms, music, dance, theater and visual arts, as well as to focus on the study of artists, artworks, artistic concepts and vocabulary, along with historical context. The goal from the beginning

of this innovative concept is to provide free access to the highest quality arts content for schools everywhere across the United States.

In designing the e-Presentations, the Foundation chose the approach of linking the artistic content with other academic areas. That is, tap dancing can help students learn math, and a discussion and performance of Greek tragedy can capture the imaginations of students in an English class, while expanding vocabulary, and strengthening writing skills or improving oral presentations. Furthermore, the interactive elements help students feel they are getting to know the artists and understand the art forms by hearing personal stories and explanations of the technical aspects of the discipline, its evolution or history, and how the artist was inspired to pursue the art form. The interactive elements include puzzles, games and other online student projects.

Joy2Learn received funding from the AT&T Foundation and from the California Department of Education to create two e-Presentations featuring Actor Hector Elizondo and Pianist Alan Gampel. Once completed, the e-Presentations were introduced to several schools in New York and California. Dr. Susan Lowes of Teachers College of Columbia University evaluated the teacher and student response to the Joy2Learn concept across these schools. She reported favorably, encouraging the continuation of the basic program design. During platform and content upgrades and the creation of additional video presentations and resource materials, an advisory group helped shape the content and guide the professional development materials for teachers. These advisors included Sharon Dunn and Don Doyle, directors of arts education in New York City and Los Angeles respectively, and state arts education supervisors Dale Schmid, New Jersey, and Marsha McCaffrey, New Hampshire.

Joy2Learn obtained funding from the Entertainment Industry Foundation, Mattel Corporation and Ford Foundation to create two more e-Presentations with trumpeter and composer Wynton Marsalis and tap dancer and choreographer

Gregory Hines. In 2003, upon completion of these presentations, Joy2Learn commissioned a formative feasibility study to assess the pedagogical quality of the web site, funded by the Rockefeller Foundation and Carnegie Corporation. In this study, Dr. Robert Horowitz of Columbia University pointed to the unique quality and usefulness of the materials. He had specific recommendations for Joy2Learn directors that they could apply to teacher lesson plan materials and teacher training

Joy2Learn then received grants from the United States Department of Education and the Norris Foundation to create two visual arts e-Presentations that feature painter Elizabeth Murray and sculptor Richard Serra. The funding was also used to create lesson plans and incremental activities.

In 2008, arts education consultant Hollis Headrick worked with the Center for Children and Technology (an affiliate of Banks Street College) to evaluate Joy2Learn and develop a strategic plan for the Foundation. This was funded by a grant from the Ford Foundation. One outcome of this evaluation resulted in a series of professional development pilot programs for the Burbank School District (CA), directed by the education division of the Los Angeles Music Center, and for the New York City public schools, held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, directed by the New York City Department of Education.

In 2011, Joy2Learn commissioned a leading New York arts consulting agency to study marketing and distributing web-based presentations. This study led to a partnership with the Kennedy Center. In fact, the Center's arts education website www.artsedge.kennedy-center.org now hosts several Joy2Learn presentations. And, two senior faculty at Lesley University, whose teacher training and certification programs include more than 50,000 K-12 school teachers among their alumni, developed an online course for Lesley alumni about creativity in classrooms, using the Joy2Learn presentations.

Joy2Learn has a modest operating budget, an executive director and a small board of directors. This approach has successfully produced and distributed free, high-quality web-based e-Presentations and lesson plans to schools. The Foundation now seeks to address its short and long-term goals.

Short-term goals (2017-2018) for Joy2Learn include:

- Updating the Joy2Learn website and closed captioning on all e-Presentations.
- Establishing partnerships with several teacher-training institutions.
- Creating 2-3 professional development programs with evaluation/assessment components and a system of self-sustaining teacher-managed PD sessions.
- Adding one member to the Board of Directors to constitute a 9 person board.
- Hiring an executive director, responsible primarily for development and dissemination.

Long-term goals (2018-2022) include:

- Hiring two staff members.
- Creating a national program of professional development of teachers.
- Producing further e-Presentations of world-renowned artists that will ensure access to high-quality arts education for future generations of American children.