



Teaching Artist Unity: Teaming Up to Move Forward

By: Beth Cooperman

Is teaching artistry a profession? What would it take to unite the teaching artists of New York City? How can a union for teaching artists be created? Are there resources to compare various teaching artist organizations' values, pay rates, or rate of hire?

These were just a few of the questions that were considered when a group of teaching artists got together to discuss the topic of summer employment. The New York City Arts in Education Roundtable TA Affairs Committee hosted a Teaching Artist Meet-up event at Urban Arts Partnership on March 5th for the purpose of unifying NYC teaching artists. Through the sharing of resources, experiences, and support, teaching artists explored how they can move forward as a profession. Despite the harsh weather conditions and subway disruptions, a group of dedicated teaching artists turned up to discuss the topics most important to them. Although many attendees were meeting for the first time, it was not long before everyone felt comfortable expressing their views.



In the first Roundtable Teaching Artist Meet-up, the participants yearned to create a tangible product where teaching artists can collaborate and educate one another. Social media is always a great start. A private [Facebook group](#) was created during the meeting as a place for teaching artists to share opportunities, thoughts, and support. This is definitely a step in the right direction to improve networking in the teaching artist field.

The use of the internet and social media has created many opportunities for artists of every discipline. One case in point for actors is [Audition Update](#), an innovative website that invites theatre artists in New York City to do something that was once considered taboo – to help out and support other actors. This website allows actors to post information and

ask/answer questions about specific auditions throughout the city. Also appearing in the website is a "Gig & Tell" section where actors review theatre companies with which they have had experience and a "Bitching Post" where actors can share frustrations. Audition culture has changed considerably since the creation of this website. Wouldn't it be fantastic if there was a similar resource for teaching artists?

In order to move teaching artistry forward, whether you believe that it is an actual profession or not, it is important to continue collaborating with others that hold the same passions and intentions. The TA Affairs committee plans to host one or two more meet-ups before the end of the school year with different topics of focus. In the near future, we hope to create monthly meet-ups. With the help of New York City Arts in Education Roundtable, we hope to move teaching artistry forward and enhance opportunities for teaching artists in the NYC area.



"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."
– Margaret Mead



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Beth Cooperman is a member of the NYC Arts in Education Roundtable TA Affairs Committee. She is currently a teaching artist at Urban Arts Partnership, NYC Children's Theatre, and Wingspan Arts. She is also participating in the advanced track of the Teaching Artist Training and Internship Program (TATIP) through Community-Word Project.