

**A Community-Wide Collaborative Approach to  
Teaching Contemporary Art**  
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Code: T1

Key-topic: The Art of Thinking

The objective of this workshop is to provide ideas, action steps and realistic program goals for educators who have a desire to provide their students with contemporary art and cultural learning experiences outside the classroom. (35)

The following workshop proposal is for art educators who are interested in providing their students lessons about contemporary art and culture using existing resources in their communities. By outlining the successes of ARTcation, a community wide collaboration between educators and arts and humanities organizations within Grand Rapids, Michigan, which has served 8,000 students within the past two years, educators will have a good understanding of what it takes to organize, design and implement exciting learning collaborations between themselves and arts organizations within their communities. (119)

**First part of the presentation will highlight ARTcation.** ARTcation is a community wide collaboration between arts and humanities organizations that utilizes downtown Grand Rapids, Michigan as a learning laboratory. By combining organizational resources and expertise, ARTcation provides students with free programming that supports multi-sensory learning experiences and active curriculum investigations within contemporary art. The Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts has contributed significantly to the success of ARTcation, but we could not have achieved the level of success we did without collaborating with our fellow cultural organizations and art educators. And what better way to teach students about contemporary art than to use existing resources as well as a rapidly growing facet of contemporary art, the process of collaboration? (238)

**Second part of the presentation will outline how art educators and arts organizations in their communities can create similar art education programs for their students.** (263)

Start with the Big Idea: Identify what part of your art curriculum is broad enough thematically to align with themes or ideas presented in exhibitions at local art museums or galleries. (294)

Find a small group of other educators who will contribute and collaborate with you  
Decide on your themes/learning objectives/method of assessment, etc.

Research your local art museums, galleries and other cultural institutions – what exhibits are coming up, how do those relate to your themes?

Approach these institutions, their education staff and discuss ideas and methods for collaborating. (353)

**Presentation Equipment Needs:** projection screen to show a PowerPoint presentation.

**Mission Statement...**

The Urban Institute for Contemporary Art (UICA) is Michigan's largest contemporary arts center and a dynamic, multidisciplinary laboratory for the advancement of the art of our time. UICA initiates conversation in response to visual art, music, film, literature, dance and performance art featuring regional, national and international artists – groundbreaking work that might not otherwise find a venue in Michigan.