

**ARTS IN EDUCATION ALUMNI STUDY:
SUMMARY REPORT**

Alison Rhodes & Steve Seidel

Consultants: Cindy Quense, Matt Miller, Scott Ruescher
Shari Tishman, Lorielle Mallue & Patricia Palmer

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AIE ALUMNI STUDY: SUMMARY REPORT

ABOUT THE SURVEY

Background

At the start of this study, the Arts in Education Program (AIE) at the Harvard Graduate School of Education was celebrating its 10th year. Between 1996 and 2005 264 students graduated from the program. At several intervals, the AIE staff has gathered basic information on alumni of the program, namely updated contact and employment information. While this information was useful in tracking alumni, it provided little of relevance in relation to understanding the professional experiences of our graduates. With a decade of alumni out in the world, we found it important to study in depth what their experiences have been and the ways in which the program has prepared them for work in the arts in education.

Goals

The survey served multiple purposes, including:

- To inform the evolving design of the program
- To provide our current students and alumni with far more specific information about the nature of work in the arts in education
- To gain a better understanding of the nature of the impact our graduates are having on the arts in education
- To help us think about the nature of alumni relations
- To find out whether there are changes we should make in the program's relationship with alumni
- To construct a "map" of the various jobs/roles/activities in the arts in education

Survey content

To address these goals, an online survey was developed and distributed to alumni. It included sections on the following:

- Basic information (e.g., graduation year, whether current work is arts related, additional education post graduation)
- Work history since graduating from AIE
- Job satisfaction
- Professional opportunities and experiences (e.g., leadership, innovation)
- Professional development experiences
- Perceptions of the AIE program in light of experiences post graduation
- Views on how the program could better support alumni

Respondents were not asked to reveal their identities. Anonymity was determined to be crucial in ensuring a high likelihood of honesty in responses. In addition, the only question which was mandatory to answer was graduation year. Since all other questions were optional, response rates vary among different questions.

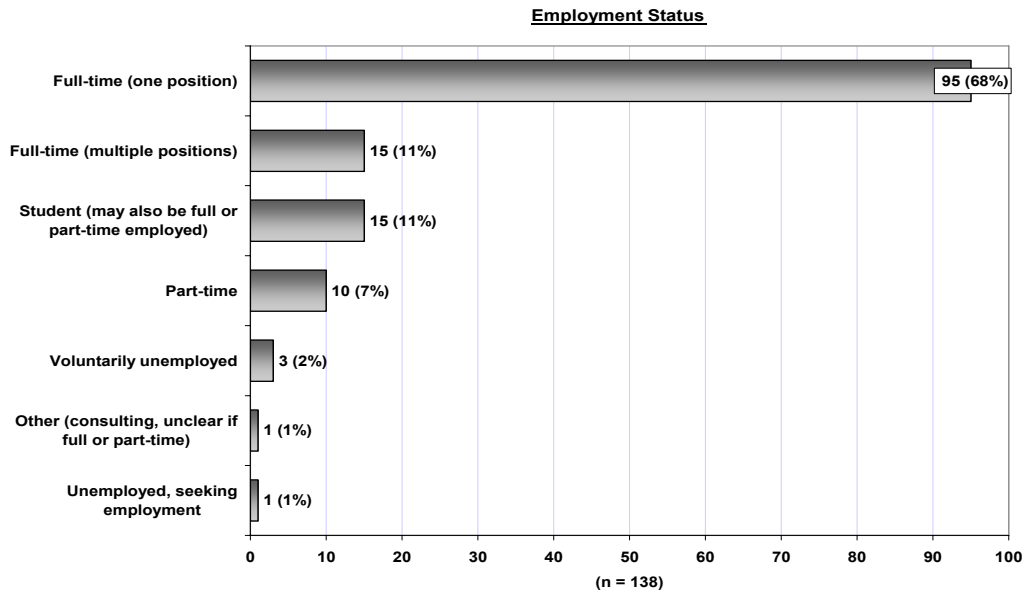
Response rate

Of our 264 alumni who graduated between 1996 and 2005, we had a **54% response rate** (142 alumni). This included a response rate of between 56% and 67% for each class year, with the exception of the 1996 (40%) and 2002 (31%) cohorts.

WHERE ALUMNI ARE NOW AND HOW THEY FEEL ABOUT IT

Employment status

As shown in the chart below, there is a very high rate of employment among our respondents. 79% of respondents (n=138) are employed full time. Only 1 respondent reports being unemployed and seeking employment.



Types of jobs held by alumni

The range of work settings and job roles that alumni hold seems quite broad. Of the 126 alumni who reported on their current work (title and setting):

- 29% work in **non-profits** (e.g., directors, program development, research, PR).
- 24% work in **schools** (e.g., teachers of grades pre-k through high school, administrators).
- 18% work in **universities** (e.g., professors, lecturers, research, development).
- 13% work in **museums** (e.g., education, development, curatorial).
- 9% work in **for-profit** organizations (e.g., director, research, program development).
- 6% are **self-employed** (e.g., artist, writer, arts residency, daycare provider).

Salary

- 77% (n=89) of respondents make less than \$50,000 per year.
- Only 1% (n=89) make above \$100,000.
- Despite what seems a relatively low average salary, only 36% (n=131) report being somewhat or very dissatisfied with their salaries.

Benefits

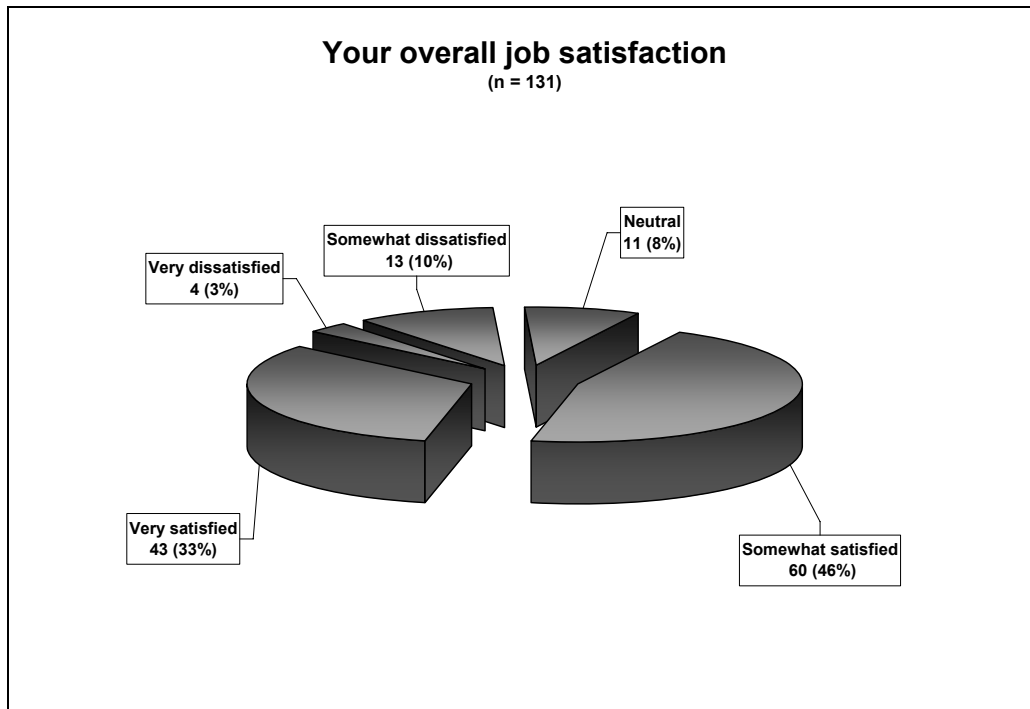
- 76% (n=128) of alumni receive health insurance through their jobs.
- 64% (n=131) of respondents are satisfied with their benefits.

Opportunities to support learning in and through the arts

- 71% (n=131) of respondents feel they have regular opportunities to support learning in and through the arts.

Job Satisfaction

Alumni seem quite satisfied with their work. 79% report being somewhat or very satisfied overall with their jobs.



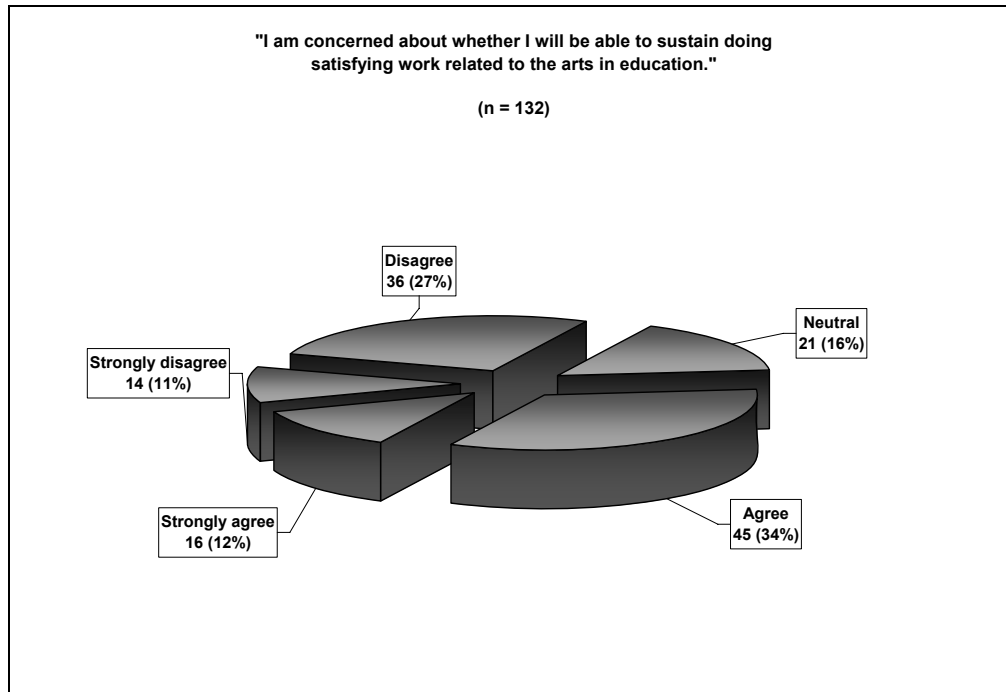
We also asked alumni to report their level of satisfaction with specific aspects of their work, including: workload; time to do their job; opportunities for career advancement; job security; the relationship with their supervisor; their relationship with colleagues; their relationship with clients/constituents/students; their ability to influence decisions that affect them; and opportunities to work on interesting projects.

At least 61% of respondents were somewhat or very satisfied with all aspects of their job that we asked about, with the exception of salary (49% are somewhat or very satisfied), opportunities for career advancement (46% are somewhat or very satisfied) and the connection between pay and performance (43% are somewhat or very satisfied). These were the only categories of job satisfaction where the majority of respondents reported feeling neutral, somewhat or very dissatisfied.

The areas where respondents seemed most satisfied were relationships with colleagues (89% are somewhat or very satisfied), relationships with clients/constituents/students (90% are somewhat or very satisfied) and opportunities to work on interesting projects (84% are somewhat or very satisfied).

Concerns about sustaining satisfying work

One of the most puzzling results from our survey was related to sustaining satisfying work. When we asked alumni to state their level of agreement to the statement, “I am concerned about sustaining satisfying work in the arts in education,” more respondents than not expressed concern (46% agree or strongly agree and 38% disagree or strongly disagree).



We are not sure why more are concerned than not. Perhaps it has to do with their low salaries, with a lack of opportunities for career advancement, or with the connection between their pay and performance since alumni seem less satisfied with these aspects of their work. It could be personal—e.g., individuals who are turning their focus from their professional life to raise children. It could be reflective of the recent trends in education toward emphasizing high stakes testing, basic skills and standards based curriculum, and cuts in funding for arts based learning. Or it could be a combination of these things or something else entirely. This would be an interesting area to pursue further in a focus group or through interviews.

Opportunities to do innovative work

73% of respondents (n=132) agreed or strongly agreed that they have had opportunities to do innovative work related to the arts in education post-graduation.

Examples of such opportunities for innovation included:

- Curriculum and course development in various work settings (e.g., classrooms, museums, organizations)
- Founding, managing, and developing programs within various settings (e.g., classrooms, museums, organizations, arts organization/school partnerships)
- Shaping an organization’s structure, mission, or practice
- Developing research or assessment programs
- Arts practice or artist residencies
- Library/museum exhibition planning and design

Opportunities to work in leadership roles

79% (n=131) of respondents also report having opportunities to work in leadership roles post-graduation.

Examples included:

- Heading up, managing, or leading program development within organizations
- Advocacy and sharing approaches through writing for publication, presenting at conferences, or public relations work
- Teaching, mentoring, or professional development
- Organizing events

Alumni's examples of leadership were coded to see whether leadership was demonstrated (1) within their workplace, (2) within the broader community or field, (3) both within the workplace and in the broader community or field, and (4) the example was unclear. To give you an example consider how two responses of alumni who work in museums were coded:

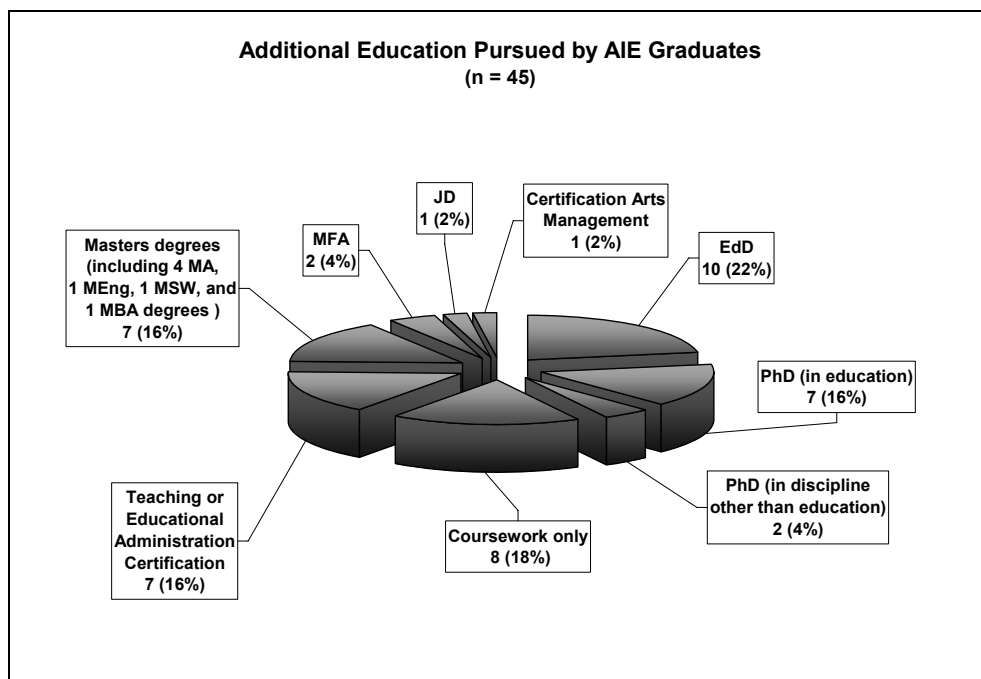
- One who shows leadership within the workplace says:
“I oversee a department, so I manage a staff, fundraise, organize events, write for publications, develop new project ideas, etc. on a regular basis as part of my job. Currently, I am coordinating the design/renovation of a new studio space for our museum.”
- Another shows leadership both within the workplace and more broadly:
“I am responsible for my budgets, I assist with grant writing (we have a development department), I run museum-wide staff programming meetings, and I oversee several staff positions. I am invited to present to colleagues at national and regional conferences, board meetings and annual meetings.”

As the chart below shows, alumni (n=81) appear to be shaping the arts in education both within their workplaces as well as in the broader field.

Alumnus shows leadership...	Number	Percentage
Leadership within the workplace	34	42%
Leadership within the broader community or field	16	20%
Leadership both in the workplace and broader community	27	33%
Context of leadership is unclear	4	5%

Additional education pursued by alumni

45 alumni pursued additional education post-graduation. The chart below shows the types of education pursued:



The majority of respondents said they pursued additional education to advance careers in the arts in education, in the arts (e.g., studio based), or in education more broadly (e.g., school leadership, teaching, policy).

Of those alumni who appear to be moving into a different field (e.g, law, business), most remain committed to supporting the arts in education in some capacity. For example, the individual who obtained a JD reports doing pro bono legal work related to the arts.

REFLECTIONS ON THE AIE PROGRAM

What alumni gained from the AIE Program

76% (n=129) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the AIE Program prepared them well for their work post-graduation.

When we asked alumni to share how the AIE Program was helpful to them in their jobs, 71 out of 101 respondents indicated that a main strength of the program was in making them “reflective educators.” This means:

- It made them more clear and thoughtful about their orientation, lenses, attitudes, values, and understanding of the field.
- They have a greater understanding of the landscape of arts in education, a way to articulate and advocate for their beliefs and a more analytical and critical lens for viewing education.

For example, one alumnus described her learning in the program as follows:

“The AIE Masters program did a great job of opening my eyes to issues in the arts and arts education. I now see the Arts in Education as a deep and complex topic, one of great importance in my life and in the lives of my students. I am better able to think about the arts, justify the arts, and communicate with parents and students about the arts.”

Alumni also credit the program with helping them obtain leadership positions and with obtaining more meaningful work:

- 68% (n=129) of respondents agree or strongly agree that the AIE Program helped them obtain leadership positions in their work.
- 73% (n=128) agree or strongly agree that the AIE Program helped them obtain more meaningful work.

Satisfaction with the AIE Program

95% (n=128) of respondents agree or strongly agree that they are happy they attended the AIE Masters Program.

We also asked alumni what their most and least valuable experiences were in the AIE Program. For most valuable experiences alumni responses included:

- Relationships with colleagues and faculty
- Flexibility of program to pursue courses of interest within and outside of the HUGSE
- Meeting leaders in the arts in education field through the lecture series
- Particular courses, assignments, and readings

Some of the least valuable experiences that alumni listed included:

- Lack of opportunity to apply theory/lack of ‘hands-on’ or ‘studio-based’ applications
- Lack of courses offered in the arts
- Length of program (too short)
- Particular courses, assignments, and readings

ALUMNI RELATIONS

How can AIE support alumni?

Alumni were asked how the AIE program could better support them. The three most commonly listed requests were: to have a directory with alumni's contact info, job, and region living (and to know whether alumni in different regions are interested in networking/being contacted); to have more networking opportunities; and to have a site that posts jobs by region and/or field. Two ways to address these requests (as well as more specific related requests) would be:

- Online network (in the style of friendster or myspace): This network could allow alumni to post profiles (job titles & setting, region where living, interests, professional skills/expertise, interested in networking for) which could be used to connect alumni for the purpose of collaborations, finding jobs, going to arts events, etc. The online network would also enable alumni update their contact information as they move/change/grow, and alumni living near each other could connect. The site could serve as a venue to post: curriculum or program ideas and to advertise shows, exhibits, workshops, conferences, jobs, and AIE/HUGSE events.
- Alumni Events: Could be small scale meetings (alumni breakfast), work-alike meetings, workshops, regional, or larger scale conference or summer institute/yearly AIE event.

Opportunities for alumni involvement in the AIE Program

Alumni were also asked what opportunities for involvement with the AIE Program they would like to see developed. Responses included:

- Opportunities for alumni to speak with current students about their work or have students shadow them in their work
- Panel our roundtable discussion format—current students can ask questions to alumni
- Students partner with alumni over breaks or match current students with alumni in the field through the FEP program
- Meet with prospective students—e.g., recruitment of students (especially for students of color); Offer info. sessions for prospective students at HUGSE or graduate school fairs