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Integrating the Fine Arts Across the Elementary Curriculum

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Integrating the Fine Arts Across the Elementary Curriculum

Abstract

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Honors Research Project
Spring 2000

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Introduction

I began my research with the intention of discovering in what ways elementary teachers incorporate the fine arts across the curriculum. For those teachers who do, I wanted to know where they learned how to do so, and how their students respond to the integration of the arts. I have a strong personal connection to this topic. The fine arts always have been an integral part of my life, which I attribute to my education: my teachers introduced me to the arts and fostered my love of the arts. From an educational standpoint, I began to wonder how teachers incorporate the arts, in order to learn ideas and approaches that I might adopt as a future educator.

My original proposal was to explore the arts across the curriculum as a means to learn how educators incorporated the arts as part of the overall education of their students. I had some concerns that the special programs in arts would be eliminated when budget cuts occurred in school districts. How could teachers then sustain the arts education and experiences in their classrooms? While I followed through with my plans to explore why and how the arts can be incorporated, I chose not to focus on schools that had eliminated the fine arts as “specials”. Although this remains a concern, schools that have eliminated the arts are not the only elementary programs necessary to address. There is no such thing as overexposure to the arts, so even those students who are fortunate to experience special art, music, drama, and dance classes in their schools could benefit from an integrated arts curriculum within the classroom as well.

The Literature on Arts Integration

Two years ago, I began to explore the resources, journal articles, and current references that addressed the fine arts within elementary curriculums. I intensified this literature search in the early phase of this project. Unfortunately, there is not a lot of relevant scholarly material available. Statistically, involvement in the arts for even four years increases standardized test scores (Kupferberg, 1999). Hansen (1999) found that the incorporation of music heightens a student's mathematical and spatial skills, patterns, rhythms, and intervals. Other studies have shown that participation in the arts produce well rounded and creative people (see bibliography in the appendices). This belief in the value of arts integration is also acknowledged by the Illinois State Learning Standards, which require educators to include the fine arts within the elementary curriculum. The standards detail specific fine arts goals for early and late elementary school children (see appendix).

Methods of Study

Despite the lack of research supporting my assumptions about the importance of the fine arts, I knew that many educators shared my views. Consequently, I turned from a literature search to a focus on a few educators as my primary resources for this project. This involved open-ended interviews and field observations.

I began my research by conducting conversational interviews (Burgess, 1988 and Rubin, 1995) with a kindergarten teacher, two second grade teachers, and one fourth grade teacher. These educators teach at a local elementary school that serves a high percentage of minority students as well as students from low socioeconomic classes. I

transcribed and examined the interview data (see pages 13-17) for themes in common, as well as outstanding themes.

With the permission of the four teachers interviewed, I observed the arts curriculum in action in their classrooms over the course of six weeks at random times for a total of 15 hours. I thought it was important to observe at unannounced times so that the teachers would not feel obligated to incorporate the arts where they normally would not.

Findings and Discussion

Each of the teachers whom I interviewed reported incorporating the arts in several ways. Additionally, they all reported that their students responded enthusiastically when the arts were embedded in the curriculum.

Background and Experience

From the interviews with these four teachers, I learned that none of them had any background in the fine arts prior to teaching. Those who had been teaching for several years and had developed detailed systems for pulling off a production were self-educated. None of them attributed their arts incorporation to college courses or the influence of other colleagues. None of them had experienced performance at a professional level or had studied performance in school. One of the teachers, Mr. Dodge, had performances reading his original poetry and short stories after becoming a teacher, but outside of that, these teachers were amateurs in the field of fine arts performance.

Despite this lack in their professional preparation, each teacher worked to enhance their students' experience of the arts. They integrated the arts for their students, based on their perceptions of the positive benefits for the children throughout their years

of teaching. The teachers' artistic efforts were demonstrated in their acting as musical directors, choreographers, actors, singers, and songwriters. Although their own talents with respect to rhythm, tonality, and dramatic abilities varied, the teachers reported and I observed that, their students responded with gusto. The students sang loud, danced hard, and recited clearly when their teachers involved them in various arts experiences.

Constraints

Although it was not my original intent during the interviews, I learned how these four teachers' practices were affected by the politics of their school and interfaculty communication. For example, when I asked the teachers what constricted their ability to incorporate the fine arts, they all agreed that the only element working against them was time. Mr. Dodge, the fourth grade teacher explained that state imposed standardized tests and district-imposed test score standards made him devote more time "teaching to the tests" than he would like. He hadn't yet found a way to incorporate the fine arts into testing strategy and content knowledge! State and nationally imposed learning standards are sometimes, then, one element of public education that may hinder the integration of the arts throughout the curriculum.

Despite the perceived constraints, Mr. Dodge did incorporate the arts in the way he set up the physical environment of the classroom. He selected just a few pieces of well-known works of art to display on the walls instead of the usual posters and student work. He believes that the artwork gives students something to think about, and is also aesthetically pleasing. He pointed out the symmetry of his wall hangings, desk arrangement, and plant displays. He believed that this artistic symmetry provides peace

of mind, and emotional ease for his students as they worked.

Community and Collaboration

I noted a strong sense of community and collaboration in this particular elementary school, demonstrated by the communication between the “special” arts teachers and the “regular” classroom teachers. When interviewed, teachers responded that they relied on the art and music teachers to help pull off their productions. In addition, the music and art teachers gave their time to students to help them learn vocal selections for the next play, to accompany class musical productions, and to help create innovative set designs and back drops. This community effort supported students’ participation in productions of which they could be proud, that their parents enjoyed, and that gave their teachers credit for working as a team.

Interestingly, this "team effort" did not extend the sharing of ideas and experience among all classroom teachers. When first asked, two of the teachers interviewed were skeptical about sharing their ideas with me, as well as their colleagues, because their ideas were their own. I couldn’t help but wonder were each of these teachers to share their ideas and successes with just two colleagues, if they might have a school full of classrooms that incorporate the arts. This led to my own desire to share what I had learned with my own peers, thus the mock in-service I led for future educators on April 4 at Illinois Wesleyan University.

The response of these pre-student teachers to my presentation suggests the value of sharing original curriculum ideas among teachers. The Illinois Wesleyan University curriculum students involved themselves fully at the mock in-service. From their evaluations I learned that some of them had not previously thought of plays as fine arts

material. Similar to the teachers I interviewed, some IWU students did not view many of my curricular ideas in the category of fine arts. Several had not thought of playing recorded music and movement as fine arts curriculum. Most, however, mentioned how they came to realize the ease with which they could, as teachers, incorporate the fine arts in their curriculums, as a result of the in-service. Each student noted that they had been introduced to several ideas, methods, and materials that will be relevant to their teaching.

Arts in Action

As I entered Mrs. Cartwright's classroom, the children were excitedly thumbing through their scripts. Mrs. Cartwright was trying to regain their attention so that she could explain the "play process" to them. Mrs. Cartwright told her students to keep an open-mind as they listened to a cassette recording of the patriotic play they had just received. As the children listened to the tape they tried to sing along even though it was apparent that they were doing all they could to read the words and turn the pages fast enough. By the end of the recording the children were standing up and improvising dances that corresponded with the strong rhythms in each song. Mrs. Cartwright assured her students that it would be a successful show and that they would each have a special part.

Many of the ideas I shared at the in-service came from not only interviews, but also my observations of teacher practices. The children responded enthusiastically when their teachers incorporated the fine arts. Many activities were innovative and creative, and served as a hiatus from what is sometimes a monotonous daily work routine. The children relaxed and thoroughly enjoyed the arts incorporation.

During interviews, Mrs. Anderson, the kindergarten teacher described herself as incorporating the fine arts throughout the day in every subject area. I was doubtful, until I reflected on the observations from her classroom. Each time I observed (unannounced), the children were listening to music during journal writing, or dancing to get their

wiggles out at transitional times, singing along with songs that coordinated with learning the alphabet and more.

In Mrs. Buckley's and Mrs. Cartwright's classroom, I observed children's rehearsals of a patriotic themed second grade play. I was able to follow them from the time they received their scripts, as they struggled through the songs with the cassette recorder, and as they developed "crushes" on certain characters as they chose their roles.

Mr. Dodge, the fourth grade teacher, reported during the interview that he rarely incorporated the arts in his curriculum. Yet, I observed several incidences where the arts were an integral part of his pedagogy. For example, he had his students memorize and recite poetry, and he frequently sang and used comedic performance as his anticipatory set when teaching language arts and social studies as well as math.

From all my observations, I learned that the arts are easily incorporated at all elementary levels and that students respond enthusiastically. When I shared my observations with the four teachers they learned that they were incorporating the fine arts unintentionally as well as intentionally.

In-service Reflection

As I reflected on my presentation of the in-service to the pre-student teachers, I realized how much I learned about addressing a group, getting the group involved and most importantly how education students view the fine arts and their experiences with the incorporation of the arts. Additionally, the feed back from the students on their evaluations and in their reflections was informative.

When addressing the students at the in-service, I learned that enthusiasm, and visual aids were very important. I was very excited to present, so the enthusiasm came

naturally, but some of my visual aids could have been better. I had prepared several handouts that I think were helpful and will be useful for the pre-student teachers in the future, but one of my posters was not large enough for all of the students to see. I hope that this presentation will be the first of many so that I can alter my visual aids and experience the pleasure of group participation again.

I found it to be exhilarating when the students got involved in the activities that I brought to share. It was fun to see adults getting into kindergarten level dances and songs. Although, they laughed at themselves at the beginning, they eventually loosened up and seemed to enjoy participating. I was gratified as I saw the pre-student teachers enjoy the activities. As a result, I was ensured that students of varying ages would also enjoy participating!

The most important lesson that I learned at the in-service was from the participants. Many of them admitted that they had not seen the integration of the arts in the classrooms where they worked, but then again, some of them did not consider plays and background music as fine arts integration. I think that I successfully portrayed the ease in which the arts can be incorporated and how fun it can be if the teacher is willing to take a risk.

After reading the pre-student teacher's evaluations of the in-service, I learned on a personal level how the students felt about my presentation and what they knew about the arts. Most of the students were extremely complimentary and stated that they could envision themselves incorporating the arts examples that I provided. Several of the students mentioned that they had not thought of particular activities as the arts such as role plays. After the in-service they realized that they had in fact seen those activities,

which they had not classified as the arts, executed in the classrooms where they were observing.

Furthermore, the reflections that the students wrote concerning the arts integration that they observed or that they incorporated at their field placement sites were beneficial to me in that the students seemed to have a heightened awareness of where and how the arts are easily incorporated. I was pleased to learn that the students made great efforts to incorporate the arts and that most of them were proud to share their successes.

Overall, I was extremely pleased with the outcome of the in-service. I learned a lot of valuable presentational skills as well as where pre-student teachers stand on their knowledge of arts activities and rationales for incorporation. Finally, the evaluations and reflections allowed me to learn about the students present on a personnel level. My awareness of the education student's knowledge of the fine arts as a standards based subject area was broadened.

Implications

It is vital for elementary educators to find the time and motivation to incorporate the fine arts across the curriculum. The fine arts act as a vehicle to enhance any lesson in any subject area. The arts provide an opportunity for those students that do not excel in traditional academic areas to shine. When the arts are integrated effectively, children are able to perceive a connection between music, dance, and drama and our world. The fine arts can provide a way to bridge gaps between various cultures in a curriculum setting. I cannot say whether or not what I found in my research on the practices of local elementary school teachers is true of the majority of educators. I undertook this project,

however, in the hope that more teachers will provide children with the opportunity to express themselves creatively through the arts.

Given what the teachers said about their lack of professional preparation in the fine arts, it would suggest that teacher educators should offer materials and coursework on the fine arts in their classrooms. If teacher education students experience the integration of the arts from the beginning of their educational careers, perhaps their future practices will be positively affected. Teacher educators need to provide the resources and opportunities for their students to observe the arts being incorporated within other subject areas so that students can witness relevant links between the arts and their subject area and/or grade level.

On a personal level, the arts have always and will always be a part of my life. I was fortunate to be exposed to the fine arts early on at home. My parents fostered my love of music, dance and drama by spending countless hours in the car, and dollars on private lessons and rehearsals. I know that not all students have this opportunity. As a result, I will cultivate an atmosphere in my classroom that encourages the exploration of and experimentation in the fine arts. Whenever I am asked why I want to be a teacher, I reply that teaching allows me to incorporate everything I love the most into one career: people, music, dance, drama, performance, and learning.

References

Burgess, Robert G. (Ed.) (1988).

Conversations With A Purpose: The Ethnographic Interview In Educational Research. In R.G. Burgess (Ed.), Studies In Qualitative Methodology Volume (pp. 137-155). Greenwich, Connecticut: JAI Press Inc

Rubin, Herbert J. and Irene S. (1995).

Qualitative Interviewing the Art of Hearing Data London: Sage Publications

Observation Dates and Times

February 3, 2000 9:00-10:15 Kindergarten

February 4, 2000 12:45-1:45 Kindergarten

February 10, 2000 9:00-10:15 Kindergarten

February 11, 2000 12:45-1:45 Kindergarten

February 21, 2000 2:30-3:15 Second Grade

February 23, 2000 1:15-2:00 Fourth Grade

February 24, 2000 9:00-10:15 Kindergarten

February 25, 2000 12:45-1:45 Kindergarten

March 2, 2000 8:45-9:30 Second Grade

March 3, 2000 12:45-1:45 Kindergarten

March 7, 2000 1:45-2:05 Fourth Grade

March 8, 2000 1:00-1:25 Second Grade

March 8, 2000 1:30-3:00 Second Grade

March 9, 2000 9:40-10:10 Fourth Grade

March 20, 2000 2:15-3:00 Second Grade

March 23, 2000 9:40-10:10 Fourth Grade

March 24, 2000 12:45-1:45 Kindergarten

Total: 15 hours over 6 weeks

Emily Gilbert
Research honors Proposal
September 14, 1999

The Benefits Of Children Learning Through The Fine Arts In Elementary School.

I am interested in researching and collecting data on the benefits of children learning through the fine arts by collaborating with Wesleyan's faculty and elementary school teachers that I have worked with in the area. The current problem is that many districts are cutting fine arts programs from elementary, junior high, and high school programs due to funding. I believe that art, music, theater and dance are essential to completing a well-rounded education. I am also a strong advocate of the benefits that the fine arts provide for those students who do not excel in regular classroom academics (i.e. math, science, English, social studies, etc.) I feel we are denying our youth an opportunity to succeed by eliminating fine arts programs. Finally, the fine arts provide a healthy outlet for all students as the competition for grades, careers and graduate studies become more intense.

I would also like to explore the benefits of incorporating the fine arts into elementary classrooms. I realize this feat would be virtually impossible in junior high and high school because of time constraints, but most elementary classrooms are perfect environments to foster an appreciation of the fine arts. This would be essential especially if the fine arts are cut from certain districts due to budget cuts. I think it is fair to say that most elementary classrooms already encourage the visual arts, but few use dance, music or theater to educate, when in fact these three elements typically evoke enthusiastic responses from elementary students. It gives young students an opportunity to own and create some aspect of their education in this rigidly constraining educational society.

January 25, 2000

Dear Principal,

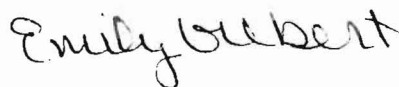
As I embark on the second semester of my senior year, I have decided to do honors research. My application and proposal for research took place last semester while I was student teaching. I have my heart set on researching the importance of teacher perspectives and teacher practices regarding the integration of the fine arts throughout the elementary curriculum. My research supervisor is Dr. Robin Leavitt chair of the Educational Studies Department at Illinois Wesleyan University.

As I began looking for articles to inform my project, I realized that some data collection in the form of interviews and classroom observation was necessary. Thus, I am writing to ask your permission to approach a few teachers who I know avidly incorporate the fine arts. I would also like your suggestions as to who else you think would be willing. I have Mrs. Halsey, Mrs. Koch, Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Vesper, and Mrs. Hensley in mind.

I would, of course, fulfill any research protocol necessary to complete my work in a professional and legal manner. After the initial interviews I would like to observe each teacher's incorporation of the fine arts in the classroom and if possible I would like to take pictures of the children engaged in educational activities.

Through my research I hope to explore creativity development, ways to foster creativity in children, and how the fine arts are incorporated across curriculum. Thank you so much for your time and please let me know if this is feasible to do this project with Bent teachers. If further information is needed let me know. Perhaps we can discuss this project in person at a convenient time for you.

Sincerely,



Emily Gilbert

(309) 556-2656 x37
egilbert@sun.iwu.edu

February 2, 2000

Dear Principal,

I spoke with Sally Tucker early this week. She mailed a necessary form, which I completed and mailed back. She suggested taking pictures, deciding specifically which I would like to use, and then employing your help as well as the teacher's help to decide whether I should contact a particular family about using a specific picture.

I have written letters to Mrs. Halsey, Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Peek, and Mr. Bussin to ask if they would be willing to participate in a conversational interview with me. I listed several times that I am available and hopefully we will begin scheduling the interviews immediately.

I have also included a "script" of what will take place in our conversational interview. I attached a copy for Sally Tucker as well. Once again, thank you for your time, input, and support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Emily Gilbert".

Emily Gilbert
(309) 556-2656 X 37
egilbert@sun.iwu.edu

February 2, 2000

Dear Mr. Dodge,

I am devoting second semester of my senior year to honors research. My application and proposal for research took place last semester while I was student teaching at Bent. I will be conducting research that explores how teachers incorporate the fine arts across the curriculum in elementary classrooms.

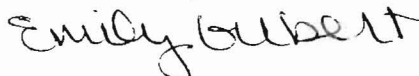
I have discussed the project with Mrs. Slagell and have had it verified through Sally Tucker. I had a good idea of what teachers to target initially because of what I have seen you do at Bent and Mrs. Slagell recommended those that she was certain had incorporated the fine arts.

I am writing to ask you for a bit of your time (30 min. - 1 hour). I am hoping you might be willing to engage in a conversational interview with me. Your interview would serve as the main basis of my paper and research. I am simply interested in how you incorporate the fine arts in a variety of subject areas and what encouraged you to do so.

If you are willing, I would love to set up a time to observe your class engaged in a fine arts related activity at a later date. Depending on your preference, I would of course use pseudonyms for all of your students and you as well, unless you would prefer to be credited for your work.

If you are willing to assist me, Please select a time and date from below that would work for you. If none of the provided times work, suggest one and I will do my best to accommodate you. If you are not interested just indicate that on this letter. Please return this letter to Jamie Halsey's mailbox with my name on it. If you have any initial questions feel free to contact me at any time. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Emily Gilbert

(309) 556-2656 X37

egilbert@sun.iwu.edu

Feb. 14 3:30

Feb. 16 3:30

Feb. 21 3:30

Feb. 23 3:30

Feb. 28 3:30

Mar. 1 3:30

Introduction: As you know, I am researching how teachers incorporate the fine arts across the curriculum in elementary education. I have set up this interview because I know that you have to some degree, incorporated the fine arts into your classroom teaching. I am curious to learn just how you educated yourself to do so and how your students seem to respond.

Just so you are aware, any student name mentioned will be replaced with a pseudonym for documentation. If you share ideas I am happy to credit them to you unless, you would prefer that I use a pseudonym for you as well. I will provide a transcription of the main ideas of this interview to you so that you have the opportunity to edit or clarify your points. I will also be happy to provide you with a final copy of my research paper.

Possible Interview Questions:

- Do you intentionally incorporate the fine arts into your classroom and curriculum?
- Do you view the fine arts as a separate subject area?
- What subject areas lend themselves to incorporation of the arts?
- Can you give me some examples of how the arts are incorporated on a normal day?
- What are some "special" fine arts activities that you have done with your students?
- How do your students respond to activities that involve the arts?
- Where did you learn how to incorporate the arts into curriculum?
- What resources do you use for ideas as to how to incorporate the arts?
- What advice would you give a new teacher about how and why the arts are important to education?
- Do you think that the particular grade level you teach lends itself to the arts more so than another grade level might? In what ways?
- Are there any district imposed standards that require you to incorporate the fine arts? Do the standards limit your ability to do so? Are there any other constraints?

Conclusion: Thank you for your time, honesty, and support of my research. I truly value your input and will keep you posted with the progress of my paper. As I mentioned I will be happy to give you a copy of the final product and will be in touch to let you review what I surmise to be your main ideas. If you are willing, I would be very grateful if I could come in and observe an activity in your class where the fine arts are incorporated. Would you be willing to let me come in and observe at a prearranged time to witness the incorporation?

Do you intentionally incorporate the fine arts into your classroom curriculum?

P- Sometimes my incorporation is intentional; however, I tend to do it without thinking. Music mostly at the beginning of the year, and no drama except if we are retelling stories.

Bu- Yes I do, but I did not realize I did until I stopped to think about how I did it for this interview. I think it is really easy to do. Here are some examples, I use The Greedy Triangle to combine literature with geometry and art. Children are then given the opportunity to create. I think many the fine arts come into the way you set your classroom up. If you notice, I have a lot of plants to give the room a homey feel. I think that environment is a big contributor to the fine arts.

Br- Yes.

H- Yes, I intentionally incorporate the fine arts. In Kindergarten I take a very multifaceted approach to learning and try to incorporate all of the learning styles. The arts are just part of my curriculum, I do not have to make them fit!

Do you view the fine arts as a separate subject area?

P- I think it should be integrated. I have been teaching ten years, it was easier to incorporate the fine arts until about three years ago before theme unite were done away with. The adoption of a new language arts series has allowed me to incorporate the arts again because it allows themed units to submerge.

Bu- This is selfish, but I think that it is important for the arts to be separate because it gives the teacher release time. Additionally, many teachers are not comfortable teaching art and music.

Br- A little bit. I do think it is important to take the time to develop the skills that they are learning in music, art, and apply them to the classroom. If the skills are not nurtured and developed, they are lost.

H- The arts are a major subject area for me, but they are not separated from my curriculum they are part of it. I consider my students to be engaged in fine arts activities throughout the day, not just at a specific time or lesson. We do a lot with music and the children are exposed to different types of music during every work period. Classical during journal writing helps the children focus and relax.

What subject areas lend themselves to the incorporation of the arts?

P- Language arts lends itself the most to incorporation because it is open-ended and has room for creativity. However, I do a science unit on potatoes that integrates music and art.]

Bu- Geometry lends itself well to the fine arts as I showed you with The Greedy Triangle. Congruent shapes on graphs and things of that nature are good to implement the visual arts. Language arts is my second choice for integrating easily. I do a unit on Elvis where the children do things like put 25 Elvis songs in alphabetical order and whoever finishes first gets to pick a song and I play it, or they put the words to the first line of an Elvis song in order correctly grammatically and then he sings that song. Once a month the children choose a poem, read it, write it, memorize it, and perform for the class. This activity encompasses all four of the L.A. skills.

Br- Reading, Language Arts, Social Studies, Science

H- I feel the fine arts can be integrated in any and all subject areas. I find that my students are much more interested in an activity that I approach with music or dance.

Can you give me some examples of how the arts are incorporated on a normal day?

P- At the beginning of the year, I use songs to review short and long sounds. I have a tape and songbook with movements to accompany. Daily- not too much unless it is part of a unit. Chicka, Chicka, Boom,

Boom has a tape of the story being rapped that we listen to almost daily, it is a special treat. The children request it and look forward to it. The recent hype with teaching reading through environmental print could be considered artwork- I think.

Bu- On a normal day we recite the creed as a class, read poetry, recite poetry sat the end of each month, practice the times tables in rhythm which targets the kinesthetic and audio learners. We also do Readers Theater where, if the story lends itself the students can read allowed from the book in a theater forum.

Br- I use songs if they go with my curriculum. We do a lot of art projects. I sometimes play music in the classroom; quiet music for work time and the music of the play we are working on quietly so the children learn the words as they work.

H- We do a lot of music and movement activities. The students really hang onto knowledge attained through music (words, letters, sounds, etc.). I use a lot of singing to teach basic Kindergarten level concepts and skills. We also work hard at expressing ourselves through dance, drama, music, and visual arts. Allowing children to experience all the modes of expression, they communicate through their preferred mode.

What are some special fine arts activities that you have done with your students?

P- At the end of each year we do Alice in Wonderland. The script I use was originally intended for junior high students, but I have done it with 5th, and 3rd graders. It is a 30-minute play all of the children sing, dance and have speaking parts. They also make the backdrop. They begin working May 1st and have to be completely memorized by the time of performance. They use cassette recordings to help learn the music. The music teacher also helps during part of her time with the students. I assign the parts based on personality and ability. The children know ahead of time that there is to be no complaining about the parts. I also make it clear that it is imperative for the children to be at the performance. They have to have a signed permission slip that they will be there to get a part. I have never had a student not show.

Bu- When I taught third grade I did a Christmas play with the kids where they wrote the script, one student directed and they performed for their parents. 20 min. long.

Br- I do several plays throughout the year with the kids. We do a Christmas, Thanksgiving, Patriotic Program, and a fairy tale that ties to the curriculum. All of these plays have music involved as well. We also do word story plays throughout the year. We sing a lot during language arts and use rhythm during math. For the big productions, we use cassette tapes with and without words. We do have an accompanist for the show; we have had guitarists and harmonica players as well.

H- We sing everyday during calendar time and the children get a chance to sing a solo, dance solo in a dance off, and display their artwork in the weather journal.

How do your students respond to activities that involve the arts?

P- My students love the arts. At the beginning of the year, they really thrive. As the year goes on, they tend to think it is not as cool to sing and act, but they still love it whether they let on or not!

Bu- They like the arts. They love the multiplication tables with rhythm and they jump at art projects.

Br- They are very positive about the arts. One reason being I let them choose their own parts for the plays, they have to finagle it out with reason. We rehearse in the afternoon after they are already tired and have worked hard. It allows them to leave feeling good about themselves and what they are doing at school. I do not think the arts are fluff. I view our plays as reading activities where comprehension and logic are imperative. Like any anticipatory set, the fine arts are a good vehicle to grab their attention. If the lesson has a catchy intro, like a song, they are excited. It also helps stutterers; they stutter less when they sing. Struggling readers begin to excel as they learn to follow along through a song. Also, the visual arts help with fine motor skills that lead to better cursive.

H- It is my job to help the children by nurturing and helping them to develop the valuable skills that the arts teach-self-expression. They learn to observe, discuss, analyze, and interpret when they engage in these activities.

Where did you learn how to incorporate the arts into your curriculum?

P- I was a teacher's aide for three years before becoming a teacher, she incorporate the arts, that is where I learned how initially. I learned a little bit about it in undergrad at ISU. I also rely on teacher books.

Bu- I learned to incorporate in undergrad we took music, art, and drama for elementary education majors. Dancing Hearts is a book that combines the arts with literature that children love. Due to time, I do not get to use the activities as much as I would like. There are original plays and songs in the book that accompany literature.

Br- As for resources, I have copied everything throughout my years of teaching as I see it. I just stuff files full of anything that might relate. My patriotic play is an original, all of the others are Michael Brent plays- they are really good. I do a lot of mini-lessons with my plays and encourage the children to do finger plays throughout the year. The patriotic play is called American Perfect Harmony I have recently added a Native American twist to it. It consists of songs and mini speeches. For example there will be a short speech by "Martin Luther King" followed by, "We Shall Overcome"/ speech by Sitting Bull followed by "My Country 'Tis Of Thee".

H- Working in a Kindergarten classroom everything is meshed together to provide continuity for the children. It just comes naturally to me. Kindergarten classrooms lend themselves easily to integrated lesson/themes where the fine arts can be easily incorporated.

What resources do you use for ideas as to how to incorporate the arts?

P- Kimbo Education "There's Music In Colors" by Willy Strickland and James Earl (record)

Bu- See creed, "Do Something For Somebody Else", Dancing Hearts.

Br- I but the right to the plays we do. Rely heavily on all that I have accumulated through the years.

H- I read a lot of journals and professional literature. I am also always looking for ways to broaden my students cultural awareness and appreciation for the arts (most students have little or no exposure to the arts) by attending teacher workshops and community events. The more I know about the arts, the more I will have to share with them.

What advice would you give a new teacher about how and why the arts are important to education?

P- It is important to meet the needs of the children. The arts are a perfect vehicle for that. The children respond well. The arts give them an opportunity to shine. The arts appeal to different types of learner, and provided a break in their heads. Gives those a chance that do not excel in regular academic subject areas.

Bu- The set up of the room is vital. Greenery. First expression of value placed on the arts is evident in how the room is set up. Artwork hung in classrooms gives the children something to think about and it opens their minds so they can have it become a part of their persona. A teacher has to sacrifice himself and his finances for the first few years so the children benefit.

Br- Let the children explore creativity. Have it available to them and encourage their interest. Make learning fun, by incorporating the arts.

H- The arts are vital because they are a means of self expression. I have witnessed students in my room that will not respond orally, yet will respond through movement or drawings. The fine arts enrich their lives and contribute to their esteem. "Children respond to gestures and movement before they react to spoken word. They understand and explore sounds before they learn to speak. They draw pictures before they form letters. They dance and act out stories before they learn to read." (Fowler 1997)

Do you think that the particular grade level that you teach lends itself to the arts more so than another grade level might? In what ways?

P- K-5 should do it. Fifth graders need it and like it even if they try to act too cool. Bring it to their level; in fifth grade do a patriotic musical that relates to U.S. history. Become a character and do a narrative.

Bu- I am a writer and have only become one since I started teaching. Because of my example and performance of my stories, my students are modeling me and writing stories of their own to perform for the class. I used to do Monday Moonlight Mysteries it brought my original works to life for the kids and they seemed to look forward to it. I have only taught 3rd and 4th grade, both seemed to lend themselves well to the arts. If I can do it, I think it can be extended to 5th and 6th as well. Beyond 6th it seems to be lost and the middle school teachers do not seem to care.

Br- Second grade is a good starting place for the incorporation of the arts. The children are becoming better readers and you can do a little more than you might be able to in K-1.

H- Definitely! I am disappointed that as children get older the fine arts instruction seems to decrease. Children are not allowed to freely express themselves anymore.

Are there any district imposed standards that require you to incorporate the fine arts? Do the standards limit your ability to do so? Are there any constraints?

P- There are not necessarily impositions for classroom teachers to meet benchmarks; it is required of the "special" teachers. The benchmarks may be coming because I do not yet have them in my binder! There is no pressure that one has to incorporate the arts, but I do. The only limitation is time. Our curriculum does lend too much time for extras. It has to be incorporated not separate.

Bu- I do not think so. Allow yourself to be as creative as you can be. You are the boss so incorporate all you want.

Br- Statewide it is required. The benchmarks are left to the specials teachers to fulfill. Time is a big issue and the building layout as well. The gym contains the stage so rehearsals cannot take place during the day because P.E. takes priority. The principal supports it and the PTO loves it because it makes us feel more like a family. I am right brained myself so I find time to fit creative time into my curriculum.

H- There are district ELO's that are pretty basic. For example, a visual art ELO is to identify the elements of shape, color and texture for Kindergarten. Identify the difference between fast and slow tempos in music. The students get P.E. once a week, music 2x. It seems that some teachers think that the fine arts are covered in those short class ties so they do not have to teach the arts in their classrooms.

April 4, 2000

Mock In-Service Outline: How Teachers Incorporate the Fine Arts across the Curriculum.

Introduction:

- ✓ *Imagine the most enthusiastic child that you have ever met in one of your field placement sites- Now become that child!*
- ✓ *I am here today to share with you the research that I have done throughout the semester. I am an elementary education major with a concentration in music/theater. I have spent this semester conducting an honors research project that explores how teachers incorporate the fine arts across the curriculum, how students respond and the beneficial effects of doing so.*
- ✓ *I began my research by conducting four conversational interviews with local teachers. I interviewed 1 Kindergarten teacher, two Second, and one Fourth. After transcribing and coding the interviews which we will talk more about later, I observed a variety of activities in their classrooms at random times of the day.*
- ✓ *Before we begin, I want to share a quote with you that a teacher shared with me when I interviewed her: show poster.*

Activities:

- ✓ *Before we start in with our activities, I want to give you some background on why Illinois requires the fine arts, where the standards come from and why we have them... see web site highlight.*
- ✓ **Kindergarten:** *Get everyone up and moving with Jim Gill's "Fourteen Dances", discuss the educational benefits of the song and fit all into the ISBE standards. ~26.A, 26.B, 27.A1b. Next do the R-E-D book and listen to tape as an alternative for those not comfortable to sing. ~26.A1d, 27A.1b. Read the Seed Book and ask for ideas that would highlight drama- describe what I did with class. ~26.A.1b, 28.B.1b, 27.B.1 I will not make you all reenact the story. Finally, one of the newest implementations into Kindergarten standards and goals is each child being able to recite the twelve months of the year-why not make it fun??? Do you all know the Macarena? Stand up and join in!!*
- ✓ **Second Grade:** *explain the play processes discussed by both teachers and their approach (note cards, all learning all parts, reading enhancement, etc.) Show script and discuss practices that I witnessed. Introduce the second grade color song and pass around all resources as they listen encourage them to write down for their own use and knowledge. Where do plays fit in with early elementary standards? Plays: 26.A1b, 26.B.1b, 27.A.1a, 27.A.1b. Color Song: 26.A.1c*
- ✓ **Fourth Grade:** *Hand out a copy of the fourth grade creed to each person and recite as a group. Explain that this teacher wrote it and his students are given several opportunities throughout the year to recite the creed to their classmates.~(Late Elementary) 26.A.2b, 26.B.2b, 27.A.2a. Show and share ideas from the dancing hearts book and send around as a resource to write down- it is all done for you so if*

you are creatively challenged just open the book!! ~all standards are met through this book.

Interviews and Answers:

- ✓ *I want to share with you some of the outstanding answers that I got from the local teachers during the interview process. ~ read highlighted answers and questions.*

Current Events/Journal Articles:

- ✓ *To back up my research I have found several articles in the newspaper within the past year. This is a current issue of importance. These are just a few of the articles that I came across here's what they have to say....*

Conclusion and Closing:

- ✓ *Thank you for your participation and enthusiasm. Please take the time to fill out this evaluation. It is of great importance to me and my research. Do not feel obligated to do it now. If Dr. Floriani is willing, you can hand them back to her on Thursday and I will get them from her then.*
- ✓ *I hope that you learned something new today and if noth9ng else you had fun. Remember, every time you incorporate the fine arts you are giving a child a chance to be creative, express, himself, and to excel in area that in an area that will make him feel unique and successful!!*
- ✓ *Pass out a quote to each person as a parting thought!*
- ✓ *Any questions or stories to share???*

Current Events/ Quotes Concerning the Integration of the Fine Arts.

“The latest research proves that a healthy dose of the arts makes kids better readers.”

This article details a dance troop known as Whirlwind. It discusses how the troop teaches first graders to twist their bodies to understand phonics and they teach fourth graders how to make movies in their minds to improve reading comprehension.

“Students in the program improved their reading skills 33 percent more than other fourth graders in the same school, according to a study released in October 1997.

During 10 weeks of creating movies in their heads, students improved reading comprehension by 12.1 months, compared to 9.1 months by other fourth graders.”

Making the Grade. By Shirley Barnes Chicago Tribune May 31, 1998 Section 13

“ Music courses may not turn students into musicians; but, on the other hand, chemistry classes don’t necessarily make them chemists, either.”

This article reviews the budget cuts in the 1980’s that caused several schools to cut music and the arts from their academic programs. The author mentions the ripple effect that music has in improving student’s academic success in other subject areas.

“In 1998, according to the Educational Testing Service in Princeton, N.J., students with four or more years of study in the arts outscored students with six months or less of arts instruction by a combined total of 82 points on the verbal and mathematics section of the SAT.”

*The New Sounds of Success in School. By Herbert Kupferberg Parade Magazine
February 28, 1999*

“Circuits for math reside in the brain’s cortex, near those for music. Music lessons may help develop spatial skills.”

The article reports on the way that a child’s brain is hard wired for music, math, and emotion. It mentions how learning music is like riding a bike, in that, once it is learned the ability is never lost, and will therefore be beneficial throughout life.

“Last October researchers at the University of Konstanz in Germany reported that exposure to music rewires neural circuits.”

Your Child's Brain By Sharon Begley Newsweek February 19, 1996

“Ideally, music education should be made a part of other subjects like social studies, language skills, and art.”

This article is full of suggestions for parents as to how they should help enhance their child's life by introducing music early on. The article also gives simple steps to take to make sure that a child is obtaining the best music education available in school.

“Because it is non-verbal, music does not force disadvantaged children to struggle with language or cultural differences.”

Showing Your Child the Wonder of Music By Kitty Waikart and John J. Mahlmann
PTA Today May/June 1995

“Drama had to wait until they learned how to read.”

This article focused on Farragut a Chicago Public High School on the South side of town. The teachers who are highlighted are new/young teachers that piloted a fine arts studio at the high school. The article explores the issues that they had with budgeting, gang rivals, and academic ability. The result was positive for the students and teachers as it resulted in an original script that addressed pertinent issues to the teens.

The Taming of the Cru By Barbara Mahany Chicago Tribune Thursday June 18, 1998

“Perhaps we neglect to help the child onto the path of creative activity because of our own feelings of artistic inadequacy.”

This journal article is about the great importance of the arts. We think of a work of art as a free self-expression, however, artwork takes a great deal of self-discipline. The author states that there is an intrinsic connection between the two. She also mentions the importance of a teacher being patient and open minded when a child is being creative.

“Art must become an everyday experience and activity for the child, leading her to the study of art history, the study of musical instruments, acting out drama, writing poetry composing music, etc.”

Self-Discipline and the Arts By Lilian Bryan The NAMTA Journal Vol. 23, No. 1 Winter 1998

“ Without music in education, in fact all the arts, we risk graduating young people who are “right brain damaged” – thus America has embarked on a half-brained approach to education.”

This article opens with a letter to President Clinton from a concerned music educator.

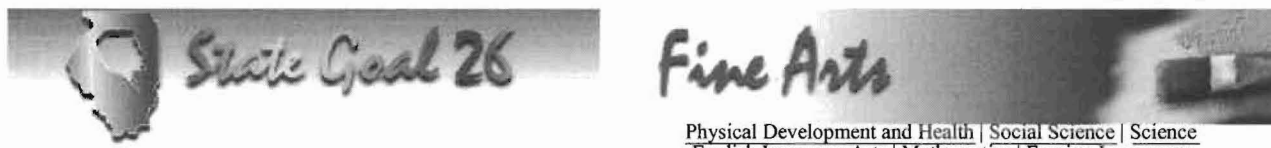
The educator is worried about music programs being cut from education. He uses statistics of test scores and previous studies to support his plea for more funding for the arts. President Clinton responds with a general letter thanking the educator for his concern.

*American Education: A Half-Brained Approach By Kenneth Raessler
The Music Educator January/February 1996.*

“Many educators believe learning the structure of music helps children develop math skills. After all, music is based on patterns, rhythms and intervals.”

This particular article credits schools throughout Chicago land for their innovative ways of incorporating music across the curriculum. For example, it mentions the study of pitch and acoustics through physics, music composition as a computer science, and more.

*Studying Music Early on Helps Children to Learn By Karen Hanson The Star Newspaper
December 5, 1999*



Physical Development and Health | Social Science | Science
 English Language Arts | Mathematics | Foreign Languages

STATE GOAL 26: Through creating and performing, understand how works of art are produced.

Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3	Goal 4	Goal 5	Goal 6	Goal 7	Goal 8
Goal 9	Goal 10	Goal 11	Goal 12	Goal 13	Goal 14	Goal 15	
Goal 16	Goal 17	Goal 18	Goal 19	Goal 20	Goal 21	Goal 22	
Goal 23	Goal 24	Goal 25	Goal 26	Goal 27	Goal 28	Goal 29	
Goal 30	Intro	Illinois Learning Standards	ISBE Homepage	Search			

Why This Goal Is Important:

Students acquire skills to produce and perform dance, drama, music and visual art. They learn to use media, tools and technologies. They learn to shape ideas and emotions into sounds, images and actions. As students create and perform their own artworks and review the works of others, they become more imaginative, strengthen their problem-solving skills and learn to respond to the creativity of others. Creating and performing are at the core of the fine arts. Students also learn about the role of the artist (e.g., dancer, painter, actor, director, scriptwriter, musician).

As a result of their schooling students will be able to:

Learning Standards	Early Elementary	Late Elementary	Middle/Junior H
A. Understand processes, traditional tools and modern technologies used in the arts.	26.A.1a Dance: Understand that the body is the primary tool of dance and identify secondary tools (e.g., pictures, visual aids, words, props and recordings). 26.A.1b Drama: Understand the tools of body, mind, voice and simple visual/aural media and the processes of planning, practicing and collaborating used to create or perform drama/theatre. 26.A.1c Music: Identify a variety of sounds and sound sources (e.g., instruments, voices and environmental sounds). 26.A.1d Music: Relate symbol systems (e.g., icons, syllables, numbers and letters) to musical sounds. 26.A.1e Visual Arts: Identify media and tools and how to use them in a safe and responsible manner when painting, drawing and constructing.	26.A.2a Dance: Describe processes (e.g., conditioning, practicing) used to prepare the body as a tool of dance and how visual aids, stories, poetry, props, music and technology are used for performance of dance. 26.A.2b Drama: Describe various ways the body, mind and voice are used with acting, scripting and staging processes to create or perform drama/theatre. 26.A.2c Music: Classify musical sound sources into groups (e.g., instrumental families, vocal ranges, solo/ensembles). 26.A.2d Music: Read and interpret the traditional music notation of note values and letter names. 26.A.2e Visual Arts: Describe the relationships among media, tools/technology and processes. 26.A.2f Visual Arts: Understand the artistic processes of printmaking, weaving, photography and sculpture.	26.A.3a Dance: Describe actions, types of accompaniment, lighting, costuming and props (e.g., reordering and re-influencing the expressive dance). 26.A.3b Drama: Describe the primary tools (body, voice) and the support (costumes, scenery, props, make-up, sound) to create or perform through acting, playwriting, designing a drama or theatre activity. 26.A.3c Music: Describe processes involved in conducting and performing. 26.A.3d Music: Read traditional music notation repertoire. 26.A.3e Visual Arts: Describe the choices of tools/techniques and processes used to create effects in the arts.
	B. Apply skills and knowledge necessary to create and perform in one or more of the arts.	26.B.1a Dance: Perform basic locomotor, non-locomotor movements and traditional dance forms and create simple dance sequences. 26.B.1b Drama: Demonstrate individual skills (e.g., vocalizing,	26.B.2a Dance: Demonstrate control, coordination, balance, elevation and accuracy in rhythmic response and awareness of choreographic form. 26.B.2b Drama: Demonstrate actions, characters, narrative skills,

<p>individual skills (e.g., vocalizing, listening, moving, observing, concentrating) and group skills (e.g., decision making, planning, practicing, spacing) necessary to create or perform story elements and characterizations.</p> <p>26.B.1c Music: Sing or play on classroom instruments a variety of music representing diverse cultures and styles.</p> <p>26.B.1d Visual Arts: Demonstrate knowledge and skills to create visual works of art using manipulation, eye-hand coordination, building and imagination.</p>	<p>actions, characters, narrative skills, collaboration, environments, simple staging and sequence of events and situations in solo and ensemble dramas.</p> <p>26.B.2c Music: Sing or play acoustic or electronic instruments demonstrating technical skill.</p> <p>26.B.2d Visual Arts: Demonstrate knowledge and skills to create works of visual art using problem solving, observing, designing, sketching and constructing.</p>	<p>storytelling, improvising, memorizing scripted material supported by simple audio effects and personal background knowledge needed to perform in drama/theater.</p> <p>26.B.3c Music: Sing or play music representing diverse cultures and styles.</p> <p>26.B.3d Visual Arts: Demonstrate knowledge and skills to create 2-dimensional and 3-dimensional works of art (e.g., film, animation) that are realistic, abstract and decorative.</p>
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[To the Top](#)

April 2, 2000

Dear Mrs. Anderson,

I would like to formally thank you for all of your help with my research and your valuable input. I truly appreciate that you openly shared your ideas and that you trusted me with your resources.

I want you to know that the quote that you shared with me, "Children respond to gestures and movement before they react to the spoken word. They understand and explore sounds before they learn to speak. They draw pictures before they form letters. They dance and act out stories before they learn to read." (Fowler 1997) became an integral part of my in-service and will be ever present in my future classroom.

Thank you again for all of your time and for allowing me to come into your classroom to observe your students exploring and learning through the incorporation of the fine arts

Sincerely,

Emily Gilbert

Brown 2:15 - 3:00

- completion of math w/ geometric shapes
having shaped cylinder, pyramid, box
rectangle, square.
* group work

- math NBE study of corners
children work independently at desks
* children go + up and move to
check e/o's work.
+ take checking very seriously.
teacher used.

children wear a variety of paper
and cat in the hat / Dr. Seuss hats.

- Mrs. Brown got scripts out & children
said ~ music things "we're doing
another play."

"remember when we get plays we learn
it & practice before we pick parts"

- no scripts for program so start now.

- learn songs now.

- "we won't butcher the program at the end
maybe now" 😊

They all smiled when music started.
children really followed along &
tried to read.

* stand for NBE's anthem
& pledge

told history of anthem.

~ they will learn the Irish jig in p.e. and music cheers about dancing w/ girls.

- Brainstormed what they know about potatoes on potatoe papers on board.

- cursive writing hand book

X's have and then on their own.

The Polar Express wrote paragraphs

on fav. part of story w/o giving away too much info.

all stories compiled

Thank you for letting me present my in-service to your class today. I hope that you will take the time to fill out this anonymous evaluation. Please turn it in to Dr. Floriani by Thursday April 6. I truly appreciate you being a great audience member and your participation! -Emily Gilbert

1. How have your thoughts about the incorporation of the fine arts across the curriculum been influenced by today's presentation and research findings?

I realize that incorporating the fine arts can be very easy and are important in helping students learn.

2. Describe one fact about the fine arts in conjunction with curriculum that you did not know before?

I ~~had~~ knew that fine arts instruction increased intelligence but I didn't realize to what extent

3. Which of the ideas presented today do you think you might use as a teacher?

I think the sing-a-long books were a great idea. Also performing stories that students have read in class

4. Which of the ideas did you not find useful?

All were useful

Thank you for **letting** me present my in-service to **your** class today. I hope that you will **take the** time to fill out this **anonymous** evaluation. Please turn it in to Dr. Floriani by Thursday April 6. I truly **appreciate** you being a great audience member and your participation! -Emily Gilbert

1. How have **your** thoughts about the incorporation of the fine arts across the curriculum been influenced by today's **presentation** and research findings?

- Yes- I think that you did a good job of presenting the fine arts as a vehicle to learn other subjects instead of having to learn how to teach specific elements of the fine arts.

2. Describe one **fact** about the fine arts in conjunction with curriculum that you did not **know** before?

I was not aware that many teachers are actually in favor of the fine arts! I haven't had such experiences with my cooperating teachers.

3. Which of the **ideas** presented today do you think you might use as a teacher?

IF I were in a younger grade, I think that the Jim Gill song is a great way to learn academics, etc.

4. Which of the **ideas** did you not find useful?

Thank you for letting me present **my** in-service to your class today. **I hope that** you will take the time to fill out this anonymous evaluation. **Please** turn it in to Dr. Floriani by Thursday **April 6**. I truly appreciate you being a great audience member and your participation! -Emily Gilbert

1. How have your thoughts about **the** incorporation of the fine arts across the curriculum been influenced **by** today's presentation and research findings?

I think that incorporating the fine arts will be easier than I originally anticipated.

2. Describe one fact about the fine arts in conjunction with curriculum that you did not know before?

as little, as playing music in the background is incorporating the fine arts

3. Which of the ideas presented **today** do you think you might use as a teacher?

I might use the idea of plays to incorporate all of the fine arts, even at the younger grades.

4. Which of the ideas did you not **find** useful?

I thought all of the ideas & suggestions were very useful.

Thank you for letting me present my in-service to your class today. I hope that you will take the time to fill out this anonymous evaluation. Please turn it in to Dr. Floriani by Thursday April 6. I truly appreciate you being a great audience member and your participation! -Emily Gilbert

1. How have your thoughts about the incorporation of the fine arts across the curriculum been influenced by today's presentation and research findings?

today's presentation has heightened my knowledge & appreciation of incorporating fine arts in every grade level/subject

2. Describe one fact about the fine arts in conjunction with curriculum that you did not know before?

How easy it is to bring fine arts into curriculum

3. Which of the ideas presented today do you think you might use as a teacher?

The Dancing Hearts book by Martha Brady and other activities are great possibilities and lend each of the themselves to even more ideas

4. Which of the ideas did you not find useful?

Nothing touched upon today was NOT useful ☺