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Community Narratives: Initiating an Arts Integrated Curriculum in Public Education

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**COMMUNITY NARRATIVES: INITIATING AN ARTS
INTEGRATED CURRICULUM IN PUBLIC EDUCATION**

by

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The following individuals read and discussed the thesis submitted by student Amber R. Powers, and they also evaluated her presentation and response to questions during the final oral examination. They found that the student passed the final oral examination, and that the thesis was satisfactory for a master's degree and ready for any final modifications that they explicitly required.

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DEDICATION

To Kathleen Emma Powers, teacher, grandmother, and mentor.

I aspire forever to walk in her shoes.

And to my father, Shawn Powers, who told me life is an adventure

as long as I choose to live it.

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ABSTRACT

Teachers have power to implement a constructive learning environment through team teaching and aligned instruction where schools can benefit from stronger bonds between students and teachers while providing a learning environment responsive to both academic and social needs. Thus, utilizing a mixed model of art education and standard core curricula can provide students with effective creative-thinking processes to support instruction, and empower students.

This project proposes a model of integrated arts curriculum into public education at the high school level. Arts integration can produce more learning possibilities while informing a community of solutions to larger problems through project-based curriculum design, and visual literacy.

The method used to explore arts integration in practice, was to build a curriculum between visual arts and literature at a public alternative high school over one semester. The course was titled *Community Narratives*, using the idea of community as a topic for inquiry-based learning and the use of the constructivist method, developed to include teacher-student cooperation while defining learning goals.

Students taking the course were aware of their participation in a pilot study and given full explanation as to why the class was constructed in such a different manner. Most students were inquisitive and engaged, knowing they were part of something bigger, while other students felt outside of their comfort zone, never having opportunity to think about their own learning. However, when students realized they were allowed to participate in the process of building the curriculum, they began to feel more secure in expressing their own opinions and ideas.

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CHAPTER I

Personal Introduction

After graduating from Nampa High School in 1998, I attended the University of Idaho the following fall semester. I graduated in four and a half years with a Bachelor of Science in Art Education (K-12). I completed my student teaching at Skyview High School with Dan Kruse and Gary Olson, two seasoned teachers with diverse and effective teaching styles. Back then, my teaching experience included substitute teaching in the Nampa and Meridian school districts, and later, returning to Skyview High School to teach with my mentors for the 2004-2005 school year.

The following year I worked in the special education department as an educational assistant (EA) because the school district decided they needed to reduce the budget for the arts. I learned a great deal about special education and began to think about the structure of public high schools.

Teaching Philosophy: The Old Ideals and New Ideas

It is recommended by many four-year colleges that teachers create a living teaching philosophy; a document that periodically addresses the changing beliefs of a specific teacher throughout their career. As a fledgling teacher I had certain standards set in place before I even knew what they meant. This is a portion of my most recent teaching philosophy before I began the graduate program at Boise State University:

Aside from academic reasons, education is inseparable from the social, economic, and political facets of life. Schools are expected to maintain social order, serve as sites to solve civic problems, advance technology that produces competent workers, and prepare citizens to participate in the global community. As a teacher, I recognize the additional responsibility of education to prepare students to be independent learners and creative thinkers. Independent, creative thinkers make better workers and citizens with a greater propensity to express their political opinions. And how do we create independent thinkers....ones who can learn on their own...ones who are motivated? My most recent answer to this problem is aligned curriculum....Through discussing the value of respect, future citizens will overcome the barricades of prejudice and hatred. Though this may seem idealistic, it is something that I strive to instill within all the students I have the pleasure to teach. Teaching is my way of battling injustice bred by ignorance in the world...a world where one person can make a difference.

After reviewing the above words I realize I am still of the same mind, yet have the insight to refine my idealistic demands of an art educator. I know there is a tether between education, politics, and society. I know being a teacher, regardless of academic emphasis, has a pivotal role in preparing students for the future. I simply did not realize I was preparing students for a future I cannot fathom. I did not know the so called “tether” was a life line, or a desperate, connective need for possible learners in the classroom.

When I became immersed in education as a high school teacher, I could not help but notice how the arts influenced students to use higher brain capacity (at least for those who were willing). The above idealistic model for democratic education (education for building citizens) was based on information I was told, not the wisdom gained from experience. Now, with some experience, I believe schools serve a greater purpose than simply churning out product for the workforce. I started to question my teaching philosophy: *What does it mean to participate in politics and how do our schools act as sites to maintain social order? What are we doing to find solutions to these democratic ends?* I want to be a better teacher. I want to provide more than simply teaching students color theory, value scales, and to simply “be good.”

Though I still believe that schools are working on solving social/political problems, it is possible to achieve these educational goals by focusing directly on our students. I want to help students apply their knowledge practically, creatively, and with elegant meaning for their own lives specifically as an *art educator*. How can we reach the goals of creating life-long learners and participating citizens through *the arts* within the art classroom and by infusing other high school subjects with artistic, tangible experiences?

Meaningful learning has a certain poetry or aesthetic that drives a student's desire to learn for themselves. Learning *is* beautiful and curiosity is our birthright as humans. Though we have to learn the practical aspects of living (taxes, insurance, job interviews), we need humanistic learning experiences to help us connect to *life*. Learning through the arts (visual art, dance, theater, music) builds the connective tissue between creativity and logic. As ligaments connect muscle to bone, making body *movement* possible, art connects expression to facts, making *choice* possible. Students need to have the power to make educated, thoughtful choices for their lives, especially in public schools where choices and the study of living is haunted by state-wide testing and performance standards. As an art educator, I will investigate, experiment, and implement new ways of creating connective and integrated learning opportunities for students while continuing to experience these learning moments myself along with my students and my fellow colleagues.

While working as an EA in Special Education, my job was within the resource room helping students study and complete tests in their general education subjects. After a time, I entered classrooms to observe students with special needs in their general education classes. These visits inspired me to remember some concepts from math, science and history as I

observed the teaching styles of other educators. I decided, as teachers, we have a rare opportunity to expand our curriculum by taking the time to visit other classrooms within our schools.

I looked forward to my observational visits because I could not wait to learn all the things I had forgotten in high school and discover new concepts. The thought of learning along with students as a teacher became very intriguing. Has the idea of learning from colleagues dawned on other secondary teachers? Why do teachers fail to visit classrooms outside their area of expertise? I can imagine the idea has occurred to many secondary educators yet I understand a teacher's schedule is very busy and we need our prep time for work. Though, once in a while, would it hurt to take a glance? Would a science teacher come and visit the art room? What if the math teacher went every once in a while to check out language arts? Thoughts like these kept brewing in my mind, and I decided I was going to do the best I could to make connections with my colleagues when I finally had a secure teaching position.

The next fall I finally landed a full-time art position at Caldwell High School. I was so overjoyed I could hardly hear the comments from acquaintances asking if I need a bullet-proof vest or if I was afraid of the drive-by shootings. I heard all about Caldwell's bad reputation since I was in high school. Supposedly, the town was full of gang members, drugs, and violence. However, I chose not to give these rumors a second thought because I could not wait to get into my classroom and start teaching.

I had so many grand ideas. I knew I wanted to teach relevant and meaningful lessons to all my students. They were going to have great learning experiences in my class. I was going to become acquainted with each student and discover how to reach every single one of them and

give them the motivation and desire to become excited about learning. Most first year teachers feel this sort of beginner's zeal as they prepare for their first solo encounter with students. I tried not to give up hope as forty teenagers walked into my classroom every fifty-five minutes each day, but I did become overwhelmed. How can one person do all this?

As time went by I started to fall into a routine. I taught the basics. Most of my units were founded on the elements and principles of design. I relied on what my mentor teachers taught me as far as "survival skills." Yet I always felt I could be doing better. I wanted to create real learning experiences for students. And I did not forget my dream of experiencing what the rest of the school had to offer. So, I started to venture out of the classroom.

First, I went to the science classroom. I took a pad of paper and a pencil and sat down in a desk among the rest of the students. I vaguely recognized what was on the board as I felt the eyes of a couple sophomores questioning my presence. "What are you doing in here Miss?" they asked. I said, "I'm about to learn about physical science...what are you doing in here?" They chuckled, yet still bewildered, one asked, "But Miss, you're the art teacher. Why do you need to know about science?" I had to choose my words carefully because it was a crucial question. I said, "Because I think it is very interesting and I am here because I want to be." That seemed to satisfy him as he turned around and the lesson began.

The lesson was all about chemical reactions and after the inspiring lecture and notes from the teacher; we formed groups to discuss how to balance chemical equations. I did not remember much about this, so I found myself asking the students in my group to teach me. As we discussed, those students felt like experts because they knew something an adult did not, and the adult (a teacher no less) was genuinely listening to them and learning from them.

This was too great. I had to try more. Soon I was in the literature department remembering *The Great Gatsby*, and then I was down the hall in P.E letting the students help me remember how to throw a football. I had to visit history, Spanish, choir, and math. I was actually having fun and the opportunity to learn with students outside my classroom energized me. I got to see the school (students, teachers, administration) in so many different contexts. Inspired I wondered, why can't we allow more time for this? Why can't we collaborate with our students? Why can't we start crossing some boundaries by learning and teaching together? And how can I use my strengths in *the arts* to help make this happen?

Curricular Anatomy: Schools are Alive

Art does not exist in a vacuum. There is a reason why art is considered a *humanity* credit in most high schools. Art is a living, breathing subject capable of addressing everything we experience in our lives from large social/political issues, historical references, personal reflection, and discovery. Art asks questions. Art is academic, standing on its own as a separate curriculum within a school, yet having great potential to enhance and expand the rest of the secondary curriculum by giving difficult learning places a breath of life for struggling students.

As the heart pumps blood through our bodies, delivering cells necessary oxygen, art can feed students the connection they need to grasp a plethora of concepts applicable to *living*. We as teachers need to build on the visual tools we utilize to create an avenue for real visual literacy. Visual art is the platform where teachers have the chance to inspire students to read what they *see and experience* in history, science, math, etc...

I went to the drawing board. I am only one person. How can I make these big changes? How can I inspire my co-workers and supervisors to move in such a direction? Maybe if I could *show* them. Therefore, I created a visual journal to reflect in metaphor my ideas about integrating our curricula. To gather data for my journal, I turned to fellow teachers, asking them for insight on the use of visual art in their classrooms. This was the spark of the ignition: getting teachers to talk and begin the conversation. I found that teachers were implementing art media in the form of sculpture, collage, video, etc., within certain lessons periodically throughout their curriculum in minimal ways. Once I found this information, I began to create my visual journal based on how each teacher utilized art in their classroom, while illustrating that together as a professional body, we could plan *art-making* as a deeper connection to meaningful content, concepts, and students' personal experience.

Schools must be built out of living connective tissue; a metaphor for learning as a way of life in a future with unlimited possibilities. Therefore, I decided to create my visual journal based on the theme of human anatomy. I see secondary teachers as a “body” of professionals and the students as a “student body.” And since secondary teachers are specialists in their specific field, I designated certain pieces of human anatomy (macro and microscopic) metaphorically to each high school subject. (see Appendix B).

As I built my visual journal, now titled *Curricular Anatomy 101*, I agonized over its ambiguity and poetic nature. I thought it needed to be more “academic” and “straight- forward.” However, I realized that any artistic endeavor must comment on something. Even if the work is completely non-objective, someone reads it by humanizing what is seen. This is why art is the heart and the “blood system in the curriculum.” With this realization, I felt assured knowing that

I can communicate through a specific combination of words and images to propose ideas that integrated high school subject matter in a philosophy of life.

I was very careful in gathering my data. I could have created my journal pages based on my own knowledge, defeating the purpose. I needed to know what teachers were doing presently in their classes to accurately represent my plans of integration. I wanted to know the content they were covering, and if visual art had any role in executing their lessons. Also, I wanted to know their insight on “learning across the curriculum,” “project-based learning”, and “aligned instruction.” I chose teachers I had a good working relationship with, knowing they would be receptive to my ideas. My first response was from the math teacher, Udo Lutes. He said, although he was not using visual art at the time, he used lesson plans on fractals and tessellations in the past. Lutes explained: “Team teaching, I think, is when several teachers working with the same group of students talk and collaborate about what the students are doing and learning to try and meet more needs of the students and try to tie the curriculum together so the students can see how one class relates to another.”

Chad Knee, economics teacher, gave great insight into facilitating constructive methods from a real world perspective. He said, “Sure, I can teach supply and demand, but I don't go into depth with that. I find it more effective to teach students something they can use...such as, how to pay bills, deal with fate, and how their income and position affects their lives.” In his classroom students have the opportunity to apply and gain jobs, manage their bills based on their income, go to court, help the homeless, and truly act-out the responsibility required for adulthood. This gave me the idea to run a working gallery within the school; each student taking

on a specific role: curator, docent, artist, public relations. What better way to teach, but to let them experience!

I spoke in depth with the literature and theater teacher, Shelley-jeane Soule, about collaborative teaching. Last summer we created an integrated curriculum on visual art and literature titled “Community Narratives.” Chapter IV will discuss this project in great depth (see Appendix A for the written curriculum). In response to art integration Soule said, “Team teaching or aligned instruction reduces the work for both the teachers and the students while increasing the effectiveness of instruction. When teachers have less work that they must do, they have more time and energy to pour into making each student’s learning experience a positive one. Teachers can focus on areas of expertise as well. This improves the quality of the instruction for the students.” I could not agree more.

This summer Soule and I plan to create more integrated connections between her lessons and my own. I am interested in involving students in installation art work which lends itself to performance and drama. The fall play will be a dramatic piece titled *A Shayna Maidel* by Barbara Lebow, based on the Holocaust. We want to raise awareness about this time in history by creating a visual space that students can enter months before the opening night to prime them for the experience. Although this is still in planning progress, we want to feature Kathe Kollwitz as an artist from the time. We will include her artwork within the set and possibly use elements of it in the installation piece as well as ideas gleaned from our fellow colleagues involving ways that other subjects can contribute to the Holocaust theme.

While speaking with the science teacher, Tina Watkins, we related chemical reactions to relationships between people and color theory. I can see a complementary collaboration between

myself and Watkins where we can plan and reflect together in a position of educator and learner, empathizing with students and sharing our work generously. Watkins' take on art integration is: “To have a well-rounded student, teachers need to teach across the curriculum and connect subjects often. We also need to be sure to relate subjects to the student's life.” By relating chemical reactions to relationships, I believe the concept can “hit home.” I can't wait to make more connections with art and science.

I am reaching out and I will continue reaching until I make contact and see the essence of my ideas manifest in the lives of others. Education can be directed thematically between classroom teachers and artists in residency by planning and reflecting, sharing vocabulary, blurring the classroom boundaries, and creating an “endeavor” for learning instead of pushing students through single-subject areas. Together we can connect lines of understanding between our curricula, building a web, or rather a *net*, to catch those who are “left behind.” We can catch them by banking on their strengths. We can design a pedagogy capitalizing on our capacity for crossing boundaries between student and teacher, school and community, knowledge and application.

Canyon Springs Alternative High School: United We Can...

For the last two years I have taught at Canyon Springs Alternative High School. Canyon Springs Alternative has existed for many years, but at the beginning of 2010, Canyon Springs expanded from eighty students to three-hundred students, requiring a new building and more teachers. It was not in the district budget to hire a new staff, so Caldwell High teachers had the opportunity to make a “voluntary” transfer to the new Canyon Springs Alternative School. If

teachers did not volunteer, then the administration planned on making some “involuntary transfers.” My transfer was *voluntary*.

Switching to Canyon Springs was a difficult decision, but one of the best decisions I have made for my career. I work with a smaller staff, less students, a principal, Anthony Richard, who cares deeply for the arts as well as building a premier school for underprivileged students, and a group of teachers who believe in creating a safe learning environment for all students. Thankfully, most of the teachers I interviewed regarding integrated arts voluntarily transferred to Canyon Springs with the hope of starting a new beginning for teaching and learning in the district. I truly feel Canyon Springs will be an ideal site to pilot an integrated arts curriculum with genuine support from administration and like-minded colleagues.

CHAPTER II

What is an “Arts Integrated Curriculum? And Why do We Need It?”

“Arts integration is a strategy for learners investing in their own development.”

--Renaissance in the Classroom

Public education needs to change. Changes in society are already occurring at an accelerated rate. How long will it take for public education to match student necessity for living fulfilled lives in a diverse world with a dynamic future? Adherence to authority, time schedules, and memorization are no longer of great importance to the work force. The old model of education works well in preparing students for factory work in an industrial economy. We live in an age of information and digitization. The speed of technology is nearing instances when time exists in seconds versus hours. At this pace, the traditional model of public secondary education is outdated in preparing students for a future educators can no longer predict or comprehend. Public school teachers need a means to prepare students for an unknown future and must find ways to address a multitude of life experiences so students can navigate the world they will inherit.

The problem with the traditional model of education is not a measure of “bad teaching.” It is an issue of departmentalized curriculum. Within this model, secondary public school students are left to their own devices when making meaning and discovering connections

between separate content areas and applicability to their lives. Students need to gain a better vision on how content learned in school can become useful knowledge for them now and in their future. Pushing college education and stressing the need for higher paying jobs, though important, is not enough motivation for students. They need relevancy now. Students need to know how higher education can help them realize their potential by learning for the sake of curiosity. Economic autonomy simply is not enough to convince them to jump through hoops to graduation. Traditional education teaches that learning is simply a means to an end versus a lifelong process full of creativity and fulfillment.

How can educators approach the problem of educational reform? Integrated arts curriculum is an upcoming formula promoting live-long learners and creative thinkers. Integrating curriculum involves collaboration among teachers blurring the lines between their specific content areas to assist students in finding connections between subject matter and themselves as individuals. Integration promotes reasoning skills, discussing “big ideas,” cooperative learning, and multiple problem solving.

Introducing *the arts* to integrated curriculum expands on the above ideas by adding humanism to learning. The arts supply more avenues for students to utilize multiple intelligences while providing a scope for culture, history, and social issues. Arts integration allows deeper exploration of students' creative-thinking abilities and self-expression, establishing connection to meaning and relevancy. Art offers life experience to content areas, initiating student awareness of metaphors, relationships, and beauty within learning and living.

An integrated arts approach to curriculum within secondary schools will help future citizens respect diversity, challenge the status quo, work collaboratively, and feed the

community. If teachers can find ways to implement a constructive learning environment through team teaching and aligned instruction, schools benefit from stronger bonds between students and teachers while providing a learning environment responsive to both academic and social needs.

Integrated Learning v. Discrete Learning

How is integrated learning better than discrete learning? Despite all I learned about the benefits of integrated curriculum, I faltered when asked such a simple question. How do we know blending subjects and “project-based learning” could outreach our present educational model? The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) states we must standardize and hold students, teachers, and administrators accountable for student success on mandated tests. Data is needed to drive education forward. Testing has its benefits and test results are easily measured and used as proof of learning. Yet standardized testing has forced many teachers to make the test results an ultimate teaching goal instead of teaching students how to make educated choices and to think creatively. How do we know engaging students in multiple subjects at once produces better results than teaching one area at a time? Can we find ways to quantify such data? Will integrated learning efforts affect standardized test scores?

Students need to be a part of their own learning process to become life-long learners. Although education has made many leaps, public schools are still missing the most important factor in producing learners: the ability to teach meta-cognition (thinking about one's own learning). How do we teach the power to apply knowledge to complex situations in the lives of our students outside the comfort zone of passive learning, bred by our latest educational model?

First we have to think of ourselves as individuals. How do we learn differently? Then we need to think of schools as a collective, how do we learn together? How do these two types of learning work in tandem: truly a democratic notion. With “discrete” learning we are missing the point. We are learning alone among a body of other individuals teaching alone. What is the purpose of a traditional public secondary school structure when everything is so separate and sanctioned within time and content? Is that how the world works? Are public secondary schools a model for teaching assembly line workers? Am I to teach only one answer? What about thinking? What about creativity? I can see that our educational structure does not fit the demands of our working world because so many students resist their own education. People may say the drop-out rate has to do with extenuating factors such as economic background, behavioral issues, lack of funds, but I think it is a fundamental issue of changing the flow of a secondary school. Where do teachers reside within the school? How do students move through the building? How do teachers and students engage each other? And how does this arrangement benefit students for engaging our world?

I know I cannot ignore the question of how an integrated curriculum is superior to our current model in secondary schools. I wish I had undeniable proof. However, I do know that the current model is not giving all of our students motivation for life-long learning and success. Something needs to change. All I have is observation and reports on experience, belief, and definitions of arts integrated curriculum as *one solution* to improve education for our future citizens.

Integrating the Arts

Before one can examine what an arts integrated curriculum looks like, it is helpful to know the definition of an integrated curriculum. According to Burnaford, Aprill and Weiss (2001), co-authors of *Renaissance in the Classroom*, arts integrated curriculum is part of a much larger framework where teachers seek connections between their own teaching processes and content. An integrated curriculum is based on “finding problems and asking questions” as well as a “conscious negotiation between the learner and the community.” (p. 6).

A misconception of an integrated curriculum is simply connecting content as an instructional philosophy in the classroom. A truly integrated curriculum requires making connections in as many directions as possible based on the student's prior knowledge and what they desire to know. “Integration deepens instruction by bringing skills, media, subjects, methods, means of expression, people, concepts, and means of representation to the service of learning” (Burnaford, 2001, p. 7). This form of learning requires a student to study a concept or problem from many angles. Memorizing facts will not serve them well now or in the future. Instead, students get to ask the questions and help drive the curriculum in a direction relevant to them while learning required standards. Integrating curriculum gives students the chance to use their skills to engage in activities that require a greater depth of understanding unlimited to one field of content. Students need to be engaged in this way to survive a world where they must know how to think, how to create, and explore.

In an *arts* integrated curriculum specifically, learning is project-based. Project-based lessons require the presence of the arts because art education is about problem solving and asking questions. Arts integration provides the strengths of creating and reflecting on art forms,

created by students or by others. These forms include the entire art spectrum (visual, dance, music, theater, poetry, etc...). An art teacher or guest artist within the school can help the classroom teacher find depth and breadth in their content area through the vehicle of the arts.

For example, the Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE) was founded in the early 1990s as a school improvement network for Chicago schools. At the time, Chicago schools lacked any access to the arts other than through minimal professional arts organizations that provided opportunities for schools in small ways such as gallery visits and residency programs. However, these efforts did not reach the larger school curriculum. Therefore, local artists, art teachers, and classroom teachers began to facilitate long term partnerships in the hope of authentic arts learning within Chicago public schools, known as an *elegant fit*.

“An *elegant fit*,” according to Burnaford (2001), “implies that separate pieces of the curriculum have been brought together to create a new and more satisfying whole” (p. 25). In other words, teachers can integrate their instruction by modifying teaching processes to help students engage in the art forms presented to them. “The arts are ideally suited for unifying curriculum because they help give a form and shape to knowledge” (Burnaford, 2001, p. 25).

Currently, CAPE works diligently integrating arts across the curriculum for twenty-three Chicago public schools, thirty-three professional arts organizations, and eleven community organizations (Burnaford, 2001, p. 26). CAPE has inspired me as an art educator to grow from the concepts of “project-based learning,” Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligence model (it's not how smart are you....*it's how are you smart?*), and the idea of the *elegant fit* when looking for links across the curriculum.

In Boise, Idaho, Amy Nack, artist in residence, Tara Kennedy, Foothills School of Arts and Sciences art teacher (grades 6-8), and the Foothills School literature teacher offer a great example of how a CAPE partnership can flourish locally. Amy Nack, a local print-maker works in conjunction with The Idaho Commission on the Arts as an artist in residence, available to classroom teachers for the sake of arts integration. It is her job to promote herself as an artist within the classroom. She came in contact with Tara Kennedy while working on a printmaking project for the Hemingway Symposium held in Sun Valley, ID. Nack has worked in art education most of her life, and knows the importance of bringing art students into the light. She proposed a project to Kennedy involving the Foothills School students in the Hemingway Symposium. Kennedy loved the idea and convinced the literature teacher, along with the principal at Foothills School. Kennedy was able to write a grant to allow Nack to come into her classroom as the artist in residence with non-toxic supplies for photo process printing, recruiting help from teachers and parents alike. Kennedy and Nack sat with the students as the literature teacher used the Socratic method (a pedagogical technique in which a teacher does not give information directly but instead asks a series of questions) with students to discuss Hemingway's short stories. The three teachers facilitated discussion between students about the stories and allowed them to discuss specific imagery, themes, and connections to their lives forming the “big idea.” Nack felt it was her job to take note of the imagery students identified while helping them find connections between the literature and later creating a print that authentically expressed themes within the literature. During the process, Kennedy made sure students were thinking deeply about the imagery they chose and why it was relevant. Then Nack took them through the print making process to create seven prints deeply illustrating the work of Hemingway.

Because Nack has connections with Rediscovered Books, a local bookstore, students were able to display their prints and sell them to patrons. Also, Nack took their prints along with the prints she made with a print exchange group (a group of 12 artists) to exhibit at the Hemingway Symposium in Sun Valley. Later, Nack sent the student work along with the print exchange portfolio to Central Michigan University because she feels it is important for student work to be viewed by many. Nack stated “It is nice, but not enough, for work to be seen by the school and the PTA. Students are artists and their work deserves to be viewed on a broader scale.”

Amy Nack is currently working on two more residencies in Boise, Idaho including a poetry/printmaking project at Victory Academy and a math/printmaking workshop at Jefferson Elementary.

Need at the Alternative High School

Over seventy percent of students at Canyon Springs High School are on free and reduced lunch. We are not allowed to charge school-related fees because of students’ social-economic backgrounds. We are a Title One school, meaning we have a large low-income population and therefore meet the requirements to receive supplemental funds from the federal government . Though the funds are helpful, they only apply to certain areas of instruction. Therefore, teachers and administration at Canyon Springs are faced with the challenge to give our at risk students the best quality education possible.

Why does this particular population of students need an arts integrated curriculum? Most of our students go home to assume the burden of teen parenthood. Some are homeless. Most are

below the poverty line. School seems like an afterthought in the insanity of their lives.

Therefore, when we integrate the arts into the curriculum, it is not only for students with a talent for visual art, it is also for students who are not accommodated with many experiences and learning opportunities at home. Students at Canyon Springs are faced with the difficult task of bridging school and other aspects of their daily lives. We can help them build such bridges through self-expression.

Canyon Springs High School is an alternative school. Usually “alternative” comes with a bad connotation as a site for problem students. However, most students do much better in a smaller school setting because they receive more attention from teachers and administrators, attention they may not be receiving at home.

All students who attend Canyon Springs are there for a reason. Whether it be a discipline issue, attendance problems, or trouble with focus, students need extra support and new ways to connect with learning. And though an arts integration program would benefit any school, it is most needed at an alternative school because students can receive assistance in finding their strengths and further assistance in using those strengths to support them in areas where they struggle.

Don't Fear the Naysayers

While speaking with colleagues and the administration, I encountered some common issues exhibiting fear of change. Change is not easy. It requires work and I am very blessed to have a principal who fully supports the idea of change for the better, specifically regarding integration and collaboration.

Recently in our staff meetings at Canyon Springs, we have discussed the notion of teachers visiting other classrooms to gain perspective on the entire school. Many teachers are excited for the idea; however there are some who are wary of visiting other classrooms (let alone integrating any curriculum). Here are some of the worries and concerns I found when covering the ideas of collaboration, integration and arts integration with other teachers. I see these concerns as hurdles in the process of making schools more effective for future citizens.

“I don't want to be judged by my colleagues.”

This is something I can understand. I would not want another teacher evaluating me and finding ways to pick me apart, yet focusing on negative aspects is not how team-teaching and integrated curriculum works. Teachers should be able to visit another teacher's classroom simply to learn, not to judge. I understand not every teacher in the building is going to see eye to eye, however teachers can find ways to connect curriculum for the sake of student success. If we are so busy worrying about judgment, I am afraid we are missing the entire purpose of our profession: *student learning*.

“It is too much work.”

Change requires work. Especially at the beginning when navigating collaboration. I realize many teachers feel they work too much for little money, and I agree with this statement. However, if we start working together, we can help carry the burdens we endure as teachers while enjoying the success from sharing our strengths. Alone, one teacher is faced with the

daunting task of making standards and content relevant and meaningful to students. When teachers work together, integrating their curricula and teaching styles, we have many more possibilities of detecting and applying students' prior knowledge and interests than we do alone by matching standards and teaching objectives.

“There are too many kids.”

There are creative ways to manage space if teachers are willing to help each other think outside of the box. I understand how integrating curriculum, especially arts curriculum, can be a scheduling nightmare because of the need for different work areas, fitting two classes into one classroom, and having plenty of available resources. Soule and I managed to negotiate this problem with other teachers who were willing to share extra desks and chairs. And although space was tight, we found ways to make our classrooms work by allowing students to sit on the floor in a circle or arranging the desks in special ways based on the lesson for the day. We had to take particular time to practice classroom procedures such as preserving and utilize supplies, set-up, and clean-up. Students have to be more mindful of personal space and as teachers we helped enforce mutual respect for peers and materials.

“There is not enough money.”

It seems a lack of money is usually the case in most schools. Here at Canyon Springs we are not allowed to charge fees for anything including art supplies. Most students are on free and reduced lunch, so when Soule and I needed funds for our Art and Literature class, we sought

other means to fund our class expenses. Soule and I found a helpful website, titled Donor's Choose, (see Appendix C) which was very accommodating when requesting supplies in advance. For immediate supplies, a generous family (The Hawks) donated six hundred dollars of materials for the art department, which we used for the Art and Literature class. Not everyone has the luxury of knowing someone who is willing to donate so much to a school, so grant writing may be common at first. However, I believe once our integrated programs begin to flourish at Canyon Springs, we will be able to find more local business willing to donate supplies for our cause as well as grants provisioned through the Idaho Commission on the Arts for artists in residency and classroom resources.

“Teachers are too possessive of their areas.”

I hope to inspire teachers to venture out of their classrooms by exploring the rest of the school with their students and fellow colleagues. It may seem as though teachers are too possessive of the content they teach and the physical space they inhabit. Teachers can become very comfortable with their own process and pace as they move through their curriculum and classrooms. Sharing curriculum and classrooms refers back to the issue of *change*. Teachers who are willing need to find others of like mind and show other colleagues what can result when teachers are willing to blend their rooms, their teaching styles, and subjects.

“Art isn't simply a tool to support other subjects because it can stand on its own.”

I have always felt very strongly about this statement. In the past I would have agreed

because I believe the arts are crucial to public school curriculum as any academic subject. However, over the past seven years of teaching, I realize that art can be an effective way to support other classes because of its flexible, creative, and encompassing nature. Art can help students explore a subject in greater depth and it can assist them in making connections between themselves and knowledge.

Because art is so versatile and broad, it can support core curricula while sustaining the strength to stand on its own as a legitimate academic subject. I believe that art can and *should* function in both ways for public schools to fully utilize its great potential for student success. Art can share its wealth.

CHAPTER III

Integrated Arts: A Literature Review of Current Research

More and more studies in art education are exploring an integrated approach to the arts for the purpose of authentic learning experiences in K-12 settings. Many of the articles reviewed discuss the importance of art integration in schools, but lack specific methods of measuring its value. According to Mason, Steedly, and Thormann (2008) “current literature supports a positive relationship between substantive arts involvement and social, cognitive, and artistic development, most of the data are qualitative in nature. Few studies have provided quantitative evidence” (p. 36). In later years more data may be acquired for quantifiable proof of the effects of curriculum integration on student success rates.

The following review of literature supports the need for art integration in schools. Art integration is based on the theory of constructivism set forth in the early 20th Century where students were seen as individuals and their learning was closely connected to their culture in interactions with others (Marshall, 2006, p. 18). This review will survey the development of an art integrated curriculum, the influence of postmodernism and contemporary art on learning, how art integration can benefit a diverse group of students, assessment models suited to integrated lessons, and relationships between art integration, democratic education, and public school reform.

Developing an Art Integrated Curriculum

According to Smilan and Miraglia (2009) in their article *Art Teachers as Leaders of Authentic Art Integration*, the rationale for an integrated art curriculum is our society's economic strength coming from creative production of information (p. 40). The authors believe a student's ability to interpret, apply, and see possibilities is crucial to society and culture in the future. They propose it is the role of the art teacher to develop creative-thinking opportunities for students throughout the curriculum.

Because of the flexibility, depth, and breadth of the arts, art educators and researchers are moving away from a traditional art education model to one that address visual literacy and learning through the arts. Traditionally, art education is based on simply building skills, techniques, and knowledge in art production, and later in history, aesthetics and criticism (Stephens & Walkup, 2000, p. 5). According to Stephens and Walkup (2000), the most effective art lessons transcend the traditional classroom and contribute to ensuring meaningful thought for students in the future (p. 13). Daniel and Stuhr (2006) suggest that an integrated approach to art education requires an inquiry-based method of creating curriculum that develops students holistically as life-long learners (p. 10).

Art education is moving toward a comprehensive approach where specific themes and issues are explored in an inquiry-based curriculum designed for the sake of relevancy and meaning-making (Daniel & Stuhr 2006, p. 6). This form of curriculum requires a “big idea” or theme to guide effective questioning and research broad enough to cover multiple disciplines. Daniel and Stuhr (2006) suggest that curricula should be constructed *with* students instead of *for* students to improve relevancy (p. 6). Teachers can find broad themes relevant to students such as

personal identity, freedom, social structures, and the environment, using these themes as springboards for brainstorming meaningful topics with their students (Popovich, 2006, p. 34). Stephens and Walkup (2000) refer to these topics as “enduring concepts,” timeless ideas students will remember and reflect on in their future (p. 4). Once key issues within the enduring concept have been established, it is important to guide the brainstorming process by developing “essential questions” to help students make deeper connections between the key issues within the enduring concept (Daniel & Stuhr, 2006, p. 8). Essential questions should be open-ended, allowing for multiple responses and the development of new questions (Stephens & Walkup, 2000, p. 15).

Brainstorming enduring concepts can reach across many disciplines. For example, Popovich (2006) reports on a seventh grade lesson based on the enduring concept of overpopulation that incorporated issues in social science. Students were able to create informed artwork on the subject using linear perspective to draw buildings representing living conditions of overpopulation in the future. Also, this lesson took the artistic element of space and connected it to the idea of living space, or lack thereof. This lesson continued to build on concepts from science regarding the environmental concerns of overpopulation and how it could be depicted through landscape drawing (p. 34). Any results from lessons like these must originate from questioning and research through sketching, journaling, and class discussion. Examples of research evidence include visual journals, process journals, and library research (Popovich, 2006, p. 35).

The Influence of Postmodernism and Contemporary Art

Because the traditional approach to the arts is outdated and the call for connection between ideas is popular in art education research today, art teachers are naturally faced with the concept of postmodernism and contemporary art. In her article *Substantive Art Integration = Exemplary Art Education*, Julia Marshall (2006) states art curricula should focus on contemporary art as a means of focusing on concepts and ideas behind art-making versus aesthetic pleasure or pure form (p. 17). Because current artwork usually interrogates human culture and global issues through many styles and media, contemporary artistic *practices* need to build technical and conceptual skills congruently, keeping meaning-making as the primary objective, by quoting images from visual culture, and teaching a broad range of techniques and media (Marshall, 2006, p. 18). Contemporary art is about mixing old ideas and current ideas to create new combinations and concepts, which address the issue of postmodernism in art and art education leading to discourse in contemporary curriculum. According to Karen Popovich (2006) in her article, *Exemplary Content, Curriculum, and Assessment in Art Education*, curriculum should be based on visual culture in order to reinforce a postmodern approach to teaching art. This reinforcement occurs as students focus on multiple truths in cultural diversity, interdisciplinary knowledge, and the explosion of technology (p. 35). Popovich (2006) explains that placing less emphasis on “high art” in the traditional sense and more importance on popular art that addresses visual culture is an important aspect of our postmodern society (p. 35). In other words, in our ever-changing world, students need to see that art is not just for artists but as

a way to experience and understand their cultural environment and how humans exist on a global level.

Benefits of Art Integration for Diverse Learners

In the article, *Impact of Arts Integration on Voice, Choice, and Access*, Mason, Steedly, and Thormann (2008) discussed art-based learning and the impact it had on students with disabilities and accommodated-learning needs. While art education enjoys a positive relationship between arts involvement and achievement, most special education experts are hesitant to implement a completely integrated arts curriculum due to the lack of quantitative evidence supporting its effectiveness (p. 36). Every classroom teacher must accommodate different cultures, languages, learning needs, disabilities, and socio-economic backgrounds. Fortunately, an integrated arts curriculum can easily scaffold success for all students while fostering connections between many levels of understanding.

An integrated arts curriculum provides opportunities for students with disabilities to develop their own unique voice while encouraging choices in accessing information and expressing concepts (Mason, Steedly, & Thormann, 2008, p. 41). As an example, Gregorie and Lupinetti (2005) promote diversity through the arts in both their classrooms. Although Gregorie's work primarily focuses on music and the arts in special education while Lupinetti centers her studies on English language learners and the challenges they face in her ESL (English as a second language) program, they can discuss ways of using the arts to promote student comprehension and connection in both their areas of expertise (p. 159). Obviously, the accommodations that ESL students need are much different from the accommodations required

by other special education students, yet integrating the arts can provide new avenues of communication and collaboration for these differentiated students and teachers (Gregorie & Lupinetti, 2005, p.160).

Assessment

Evaluating student art can be a difficult task without a specific reference point. In the spirit of an integrated arts curriculum and inquiry-based learning, many authors suggest authentic ways of assessing students throughout the lesson versus testing at the end. Popovich (2006) suggests assessment, being a natural element in the teaching and learning process, should involve both teachers and students (p. 37). Allowing students the opportunity to reflect on their own learning is important in a curriculum that requires students to think creatively. Mason, Steedly, and Thormann (2008) believe when students have the opportunity to reflect on their own learning during the creative process, they become more effective learners (p. 44). Such evaluation is also known as *formative assessment*, where evidence of student learning is found in interviews, journals, sketchbooks and conversations (Popovich, 2006, p. 38). Formative assessment helps students and teachers become aware of prior knowledge, what was learned in class, and what has yet to be discovered. When students are involved in this process, they feel ownership of their learning while reducing apprehension of judgment from their teacher. Stephens and Walkup (2000) recommend a pre-assessment for all lessons so teachers may become aware of specific educational strengths and weaknesses with their students. Teachers who use this model will inevitably make informed decisions that in turn guide proper instruction (p. 14).

Educational Reform: Grassroots and Democracy

It is an age old struggle for art departments to survive during public school turnover in authority, staff changes, and paradigm shifts where “sharpening” the curriculum usually means to “shave” the “extraneous” subjects, such as the Back to Basics movement in the 1980s. Therefore, it may seem lofty to speak of arts integration when schools are struggling to keep the arts from extinction. In *Creating and Sustaining Arts-Based School Reform*, Noblit, Corbett, Wilson, and McKinney (2009) describe the A+ Schools Program set in place over the last eight years in North Carolina public schools. The authors state, “unlike some forms of art, which seek to separate themselves from everyday life, the A+ Schools Program sought to engage everyday schools in creating an unusual reform initiative” (Noblit, 2009, p. 8). The reform initiative was to implement arts integrated curriculum and collaborative teaching as a way to reinforce concepts and enhance the school-wide curriculum in response to accountability, standardized testing, and overall student learning. Although there is no evidence on whether the A+ Program elevates standardized test scores, teachers who work within the program noted that students have doubled in overall achievement and growth with arts instruction over traditional instruction (Noblit, 2009, p. 18).

The A+ Program began with visionary, Ralph Burgard who closely observed arts-based schools in North Carolina and Georgia. In the early 1990's, the idea was developed in discussions between activists and educators (Noblit, 2009, p. 20). The program has faced many funding troubles as Republicans reduced spending and established high-stakes testing programs. Despite this short-fall, A+ Programs continued to move forward through local community

support and external funding sources, such as The Kenan Institute, a philanthropic organization in North Carolina (Noblit, 2009, p. 21).

In 1995, A+ provided an opportunity for teachers, artists, and community members to plan arts integrated curriculum mapping, networking across many schools, away from the thumb of state pressures in education. Gerstl-Pepin, who wrote a history of the A+ Program, believed it had created an alternative arena to discuss educational reform with elements of a grassroots movement “....for citizens to come together to dialogue and to strategize about how to reform and improve schools” (Noblit, 2009, p. 20).

With all the arts must face to survive within a school under the yoke of NCLB (No Child Left Behind) and the age of accountability with high-stakes testing, A+ Programs show promise in the survival of the arts in public schools, on its own as an academic subject, but also as a means of providing a better education throughout the entire school, district, and community. A+ Schools require teachers and staff to collaborate, while reaching the community to invest time and funds for the success of its children. School districts that promote arts integration like the A+ Program are schools built for the people, by the people. To quote Amy Gutmann political theorist and author of *Democratic Education* (1987), “...a school board may establish the curriculum,[yet] it must not dictate how teachers choose to teach the established curriculum, as long as they do not discriminate against students or repress reasonable points of view” (p. 82).

In the late 1990's, Jim Beane, an expert in curriculum integration, noted within the context of democratic education, “[integrated curriculum] seeks connection in all directions” (Burnaford, 2001, p. 6). And because arts-integration moves many people to work together toward a common goal, while encouraging discussion, non-repression, and the sharing diverse

ideas, it values the notion of democracy. Beane believes arts integration is truly about social integration, stating that, "...teachers who use [this] approach make concerted efforts to create democratic communities within their classroom" (Burnaford, 2001, p. 7).

Conclusion and Recommendations

This literary review has provided a summary regarding the importance of integrating art across the curriculum. It illustrates a need for creative thinkers, for helping students with special needs connect to concepts and language, and for a new means of assessing collaboratively. Also, it covers arts integration as educational reform from a grassroots level in response to NCLB and the age of accountability, indicating reform does not "trickle-down" from the top, but grows from the "roots" of society.

It seems that such integration happens naturally when students are required to begin an art project by thinking of an issue that affects them on a larger scale such as personal identity, freedom, environmental concerns, everyday heroes, etc. By developing an integrated arts lesson, teachers and students are prompted to consult history, literature, math, and science. More importantly, students become motivated to dig deeply within themselves as teachers intensify their instruction to formulate questions and opinions about the local and global community. Further study should be pursued on this subject to better implement an integrated art curriculum in the most effective way within our public school system.

CHAPTER IV

Arts Integration Project at Canyon Springs *Community Narratives*

Breaking Ground: First Step in Arts Integration

Shelley-jeane Soule, the literature teacher, and I worked to create our vision of integrating visual art and literature for many weekends over the summer of 2011. We discussed team-teaching for two years before the project came to fruition. We wanted to find a way for students to steer their learning needs in an environment where they could learn literature through creative projects. As teachers we did not prefer to stand in front of the room filling students with *our* knowledge. We sought to act as guides, helping students discover and understand content through experience and inquiry in the form of “constructivist theory.”

Stemming from Jean Piaget's work in the 1970s, “constructivism is built on the foundation that students are not merely ‘empty heads’ that can be filled with knowledge dispensed by well-meaning teachers and carefully crafted curriculum packages. Rather, learning is an active process whereby the student must be actively involved in the creation of his or her own knowledge through active interactions with the phenomenon” (Marcum-Dietrich, 2008, p. 83). Soule is very familiar with this theory and strives to use its applications in her classroom as much as possible. When discussing constructivist theory, we found it had much in common with ideas of integrated curriculum because both require projects where students are working to build their own questions and big ideas in an active, collaborative manner.

Collaboration: Art and Literature (An Elegant Fit)

Soule and I worked together to devise a fully integrated arts curriculum for Art and Literature. We spent the summer and many Saturdays planning before we presented our ideas to Anthony Richard, Canyon Springs principal, for the fall of 2011. In this context, *fully integrated arts curriculum* meant we would both be in the classroom with all the students at the same time.

Canyon Springs functions in an accelerated fashion. Students are able to complete courses missed, because we operate on a quarter schedule where students take four classes every nine weeks; each class lasting ninety minutes per day. Soule and I thought a class like Art and Literature would benefit the students if it could last for an entire semester instead of one quarter. Because we work for a principal who values the idea of collaboration and supports the visual arts, we were allowed to take the entire semester with our class of thirty students.

We were each assigned a section of fifteen students. This amount of students could easily switch between classrooms for isolated instruction. Although this way seemed like the easier route, we felt it was best to support and guide the students simultaneously for a truly integrated curriculum. At times all thirty students, Soule and myself would meet together in Soule's room for reading, writing and presentations, and other times during the semester, we all met in my room for production and studio work.

Therefore, our first problem was space and lack of furniture. We needed to locate more tables and chairs. Luckily our colleagues at Canyon Springs were willing to donate some tables and we managed to find fifteen folding chairs in the basement. Although relieved to find furniture, space was tight in both our classrooms. Later Soule decided to move her desks to the

walls as students sat on the floor in a circle facing each other, creating among them a great sense of community and equality.

As we planned our lessons, Soule and I needed to find the best way to align state curriculum standards while creating a new space for learning involving both our visions. We looked at our objectives and decided we had to collaborate on the “what” before we could plan on the “how.” Soule wanted to teach the art of storytelling while I wanted to teach how visual art is a set of symbols communicating new language. We decided we were dealing with language in different ways and concluded “metaphor” was our vehicle in teaching the *Community Narratives* course. Yet we still needed to decide what type of stories and metaphor we wanted to cover and explore with visual art. What would be the most important to students? Although we wanted to touch on American and classical literature, we sought to find stories and poetry that students could relate to closely. For example, we chose to use song lyrics as a form of poetry so students could choose lyrics and gain personal meaning from studying. Also, we found popular imagery to help students relate to meaning in visual experience in everyday life.

Program Purpose: Classroom Community

Here I will share our argument for the *Art and Literature: Community Narratives* course, first presented to our principal and peers, starting with the following questions: Why integrate art and literature when studying community in the form of narratives for high school students at risk? Why look to community as a platform for curriculum and why strive to create a new learning environment at Canyon Springs High School.

Art and literature are two inseparable concepts. Art is literature and literature is “artful.” Words alone cannot express our vast experiences; therefore integrating the curriculum between the visual arts and literature creates a holistic, enriching learning environment.

High school students, especially those at risk, need more outside assistance to help them make connections between their own experiences and the world around them. We believe alternative high school students will benefit the most from an arts-integrated course, based on their own communities, to help them find connections to their place in time and location. These connections generate a sense of belonging and a means to express feelings and opinions about where they are, who they are, and the impact they have upon their multiple communities.

The Art and Literature course is not a means to accomplish the simple transfer of information. Instead, we propose a teaching/learning style that is based on storytelling. Each of us can tell stories in so many ways. The more media we utilize in the process, the stronger the connections we create between experience, communication, and imagination.

Owen Flanagan (1992), a consciousness researcher at Duke University, states in his book *Consciousness Reconsidered*: “Evidence strongly suggests that humans in all cultures come to cast their own identity in some sort of narrative form. We are inveterate storytellers.” (p. 198) Learning through storytelling creates a circle that will inspire and empower our learners. Storytelling leads to voluntary inquiry, higher order questioning, and an increased desire to narrate personal stories. Humans tell the stories of their lives every day. Account by account, we build narrative through conversation.

Unusual demands require unusual measures. We are excited to immerse our alternative students in the alternative education they deserve. We believe success generates success

exponentially when sound pedagogical practices in the classroom are supplemented by rich infusions of hands-on experience. Our students must experience input from primary sources in order to generate multi-rich reactions and artistic responses. Field trips, visual /literary journals, group portfolios, presentations, music, role-play, poetry readings, multiple intelligence- based evaluations, picture books, film, community art instruction, and the use of modern technology are merely some of the modalities we must use to render student experiences rich and meaningful.

Through various forms of art, literature, and technology, students will explore and respond to historical influences upon their community through traditional and contemporary viewpoints with the guidance of art and literature educators. This course requires participation, reflection, and collaboration with peers, teachers, and community members. As educators we are required to guide students to track personal roots, to define a sense of place, to explore the scope for their future community, and how each individual student may influence such possibilities.

Community Narratives Unit I: Connecting the Self to Visual Symbols and Poetry

During the first unit, students explored their sense of self by studying symbols and poetry made by others while finding ways to create their own symbols, visual images, and poetry for deeper understanding of themselves in connection to the world around them.

Before we could start the lessons within the unit, Soule and I wanted to create a sense of community with the students at the beginning. So, for the first three days of the semester, we conducted theater games to help them become more acquainted. These games included trust walks, untangling hands, lining-up according to age, improvisational games, etc...

At first students seemed resistant to playing the games. When asked why they were hesitant, students explained they did not want to look “dumb” in front of their peers. Soule and I made sure to play the games with them showing them we can act as “dumb” as we want. It appeared to help the students relax and have fun with the games. After a couple days, students were willing to converse, even if they did not know each other before taking the class. This developing security among students was very helpful when moving directly into group work and presentations.

Palm Readings

Lesson one of unit one began with the study of symbols across many cultures. Soule and I began with the study of symbols, helping students see the meaning of visual metaphors at the beginning of the course. We asked students why a circle might represent fertility. Why not a square? How does something visual describe something unseen?

At first we found that most students had great difficulty with the concept of metaphor in general let alone visual metaphors. So we began with some simple pictographs on the white board for students to examine such as the symbols for play, stop, and rewind on a DVD player, the male and female symbols for the restroom, and symbols for parking, walking, stopping, and “no.” Students began to get involved by pointing out symbols they recognized and volunteered some of the symbols they have seen in life to the list.

Later, we encouraged students to think about who created these iconic symbols in the first place? How does one project something so universal and easy to understand? Why would a “square” mean *stop* for a DVD player, while an “octagon” means *stop* for drivers? We asked if

symbols could be sexist, indicating how restroom symbols differ from the genetic symbols for male and female. The conversation became quite interesting between a few students discussing what certain shapes and colors meant and why they could be assigned to specific emotions and people.

While some students were caught in the discussion, raising many points and questions, Soule and I observed students outside of the conversation. We knew we needed to keep a close eye on our quiet students because we did not want to let them slip through the cracks. This is a problem most teachers face in their classrooms and we sought to address the issue of shy students versus outspoken students without silencing some while intimidating others (especially when teaching a class on community and storytelling). But before we made any sudden moves, we decided to see how the students interacted in small groups.

At first, Soule and I assigned the students to groups of five based upon alphabetical order, discouraging any cliques or comfort zones within the classroom. Although the theater games helped break the ice, students always prefer to sit in familiar company. The new groups allowed students to dialogue with different people.

Before each group was a set of symbols from various cultures, systems, and time periods. Within their groups students reviewed their given symbols, chose five symbols, and discussed their meaning with the group. We asked them to answer the following questions:

*How do the elements of design help to portray a certain feeling or meaning within the symbol?

*Do you agree with the given interpretation of the symbol meanings? Why? Why not?

*What are some of the symbols you see in your community every day?

*Why do we need symbols in society? What would happen if we did not have symbols?

We were happy to see most quiet students engaged in the smaller group discussion. Some groups needed help with focus because they had difficulty with interpretation. Having both Soule and I in the room was very useful because we could both roam the classroom engaging various groups, helping them formulate questions they could answer for themselves. Some students simply needed validation in their own opinions and a reminder that there was no right or wrong answer. Many students have been programmed to think there are only black and white answers at school. It was our goal to reach the “gray area” by helping students believe in their own opinions and to assist them in providing reasoning for their views.

After presenting findings from their symbol packets, students made individualized symbols representing their own lives and personalities. The ground students used was a symbol within itself: a traced cut-out of their own hand, unique and personal. We chose this idea because students would get to write and draw upon an image of their own palm to tell the story of who they are through symbols and verbal presentation.

Researching Poetry and Personal Reference

In this lesson, Soule took more responsibility in teaching the students about metaphors in poetry. She and I both read our favorite poetry out loud to the students theatrically while we sat in the circle of her classroom lit by a small electric lantern glowing in the middle. We chose the circle and used the light as a way to create an environment of story time. Controlled firelight has

a way of calming people as a source of heat, but also a gathering place to tell news and relate legends as the tradition of the fire circle in Native American cultures.

As we read our poetry, students sketched and wrote notes in their comp books, and at times they closed their eyes and listened. The room was silent, save for our voices and a low drum beat in the background from Soule's computer speakers.

For the rest of the week students spent time in the computer lab searching three websites recommended by Soule, finding poetry by American and classical poets. At first, students seemed leery of this assignment. Some said, "I don't understand this stuff, I don't think that deeply. I just think in a regular way." Carefully, Soule and I asked students what it meant to think deeply while we moved like hummingbirds around the computer lab, helping each student to dip into their own ideas and develop connections to the literature.

The lights began to ignite for many students and they poured over poems from Edgar Allen Poe to T.S Elliot and Walt Whitman. Then we encouraged them to find lyrics they found important to their lives. And amazingly, students seemed to have an easier time interpreting those lyrics after testing themselves with poetry they thought they would never understand. Like skiing the backside of a mountain and then later gliding down a groomed ski- run, they were ready to share around the "campfire" and each student read their chosen poem, or lyrics, aloud with as much drama as Soule and I did the first day of the lesson. We were officially excited to move to the visual representation of their findings.

To start, we taped brown butcher paper to the walls of the classroom and gave the students bits of chalk pastels to draw symbols from their musings inspired by sketches and quotes they gathered from the poetry readings in their comp books. The symbols and drawings

lit by the light of our little “campfire” looked like a cave wall from a vibrant, colorful dream. The students worked quietly as they drew large colorful glyphs and patterns based on what they heard. We hung their work in the hallway as an exhibition called “The Writing on the Wall.” With careful supervision, students walking down the halls could add to the wall if they wished, however most viewers simply looked and commented. The halls of Canyon Springs had never demanded such colorful attention bell to bell from students, teachers, administration, and visitors.

Oyster Shells

This was the culminating project of the quarter. It was time for students to take the poetry, song lyrics, symbols, and personal commentary to an advanced visual realm. Soule and I discussed the possibilities for the project at length until we collaborated with our school librarian, Bret Fowler (teacher, author, and book maker). Fowler spoke of a writing assignment he did with his students called “oyster shells.” For this assignment students wrote in length about their outsides, the way they felt the world saw them as people. The next part of the writing had to do with the way that students felt on the inside, the way they felt as souls.

Soule and I marveled at the idea of the project and the prospects for visual literacy and introspection. Yet we felt we needed to discuss how the idea of “oyster shells” connected with community narratives. Finally, we concluded if a person does not know themselves, they will never understand their belonging within a community because knowing oneself is crucial to understanding another, or possessing *empathy*.

Satisfied, we decided the project was ready to propose to the students by way of a pizza box. Pizza boxes have an outside, an inside and a way to fasten those two aspects together, a perfect ground for creating “shells.” Soule and I visited many pizza places in town asking for clean pizza box donations for a Canyon Springs art project. Many businesses were willing to give at least ten boxes to the cause. At the end of the afternoon, we had enough boxes for the whole class to create their visual “oyster shells.”

Students poured into my classroom the following Monday morning eager to immerse their hands in art supplies. Soule and I distributed the pizza boxes to each student and asked for attention. Students looked up in bewilderment and interest as we talked about the plight of an oyster and how it has the ability to make pearls. Before we started, we asked if any students knew where and how true pearls were produced. Some students raised their hands stating they knew they came from oysters but when we asked how, they were uncertain. We explained when a grain of sand manages to infiltrate the oyster’s shell, it causes great pain to the creature. And from this great irritation, the oyster creates mucus to soften the sand's abrasive edges. And the more the oyster smooths out the painful, sharp points of the sand, the more the edgy grain rounds out, becoming a pearl. This of course is an old metaphor for pain transforming into something beautiful, however most of our students had not heard this idea, so we discussed what the oyster and the pearl means for a personal life. How do our hardships make us stronger and grant us the ability to produce something beautiful? How do the things that happen outside of us affect our insides and how do we as individuals effect our environment?

To begin, students textured and painted their pizza boxes using tissue paper, Mod Podge and acrylic paint. Students were advised to use colors that best symbolized them on the outside

and on the inside. While their paint was drying, we asked students to consider a few questions in their comp books to guide them in the creative process:

*How can I use words and images to accurately describe the way people see me on the outside versus the way I see myself on the inside?

*In what ways do my experiences shape my perspective on myself and others?

*How do the words and imagery that I use to illustrate myself relate to one another? Do they support each other? Do they contradict each other?

*What do the words and images symbolize? How will the elements and principals of design support these symbols?

*Is there a theme to the outside and inside of myself? Are they very different or similar? Why?

Once students had the chance to reflect on the above questions, they began to integrate their found poetry, song lyrics, drawings, photos, and personal writing into collage pieces on the outside and inside of their boxes.

Students spent at least three weeks on this assignment because it required a great deal of thought to apply visual and poetic metaphors as a way to describe parts of themselves that most students did not usually have the opportunity to express. Some students required more coaching than others while thinking of ways to represent themselves by finding connections between the writing, pictures, media, and symbols.

From the beginning, students understood they would present their projects to the class as their quarter final. Students needed to describe the process they endured as they created their oyster shells while demonstrating how they connected visual images and symbols to their poetry

and other writings. Students had a difficult time with the presentation because the project was so personal and most did not have much experience with public speaking. Soule and I began to worry we might be asking too much of the students. Therefore, we decided to contact Bret Fowler seeking advice about his lesson and oral presentations. He suggested it would be best to give students the opportunity to speak in front of the class at least once a week, giving them needed practice for large presentations such as our final. We decided that providing students with the opportunity to speak to the class would be a weekly event in small ways for the following semester.

Community Narratives Unit II: Connecting Communities and Ideas of Social Justice

The second unit differs from the first because it emphasizes the study of community outside of the classroom, family circles, and the self. First we carefully ventured into our own “backyard” studying the culture of Canyon Springs High School and the culture of its surrounding community in Caldwell.

One group of students decided to study the different “cliques” they noticed at Canyon Springs. The group made a list of cliques they believed to exist at school and discussed reasons why certain students flocked to specific areas during lunch and between passing periods. They asked each other why cliques exist in the first place and if such groupings are positive or negative for the school environment. Soule and I took time to ask them which cliques get along with one another and which were repellent or antagonistic toward one another. After many

discussions the students made a commitment to sit alone at lunch for one day and observe the different cliques within the cafeteria and school grounds.

The next day they convened and shared their findings. Then they made a greater commitment for the rest of the week to interact with students outside of their comfort zones. The following week the students created a presentation based on how they felt from day to day during their time of infiltration. Each student was encouraged by their peers to question whether or not they flocked to their own “clique.” Soule and I could not mask our pride while observing how dedicated these students were to their experiment. Most students would never agree to sacrifice the precious time they have with friends at lunch for any academic reason, let alone share their findings with the class as they became aware of their own comfort zones.

The conclusion of the group and the class as a whole was that the word “clique” had the reputation of meaning exclusive or “stuck-up.” They realized that many stereotypes were placed on certain groups of friends who interacted because of similar interests or neighborhood ties. This realization surfaced when students finally asked themselves if they belonged to a clique and if they were stereotyped by others. Most students were willing to talk about “cliques” at school but were very unwilling to associate themselves with any one stereotypical group.

When asked if they would start spending lunchtime with different students than usual, most said that although they were not opposed to meeting new students, they would rather interact with the groups they felt most comfortable with because those groups gave them a sense of family within school. We later established there is nothing wrong with having a safety net of friends to discuss common interests as long as the group did not exclude or hurt others.

Further in the semester, Soule and I proposed a glance at community through the scope of social justice. Students were introduced to cultures and events around the world from the past and present. The themes in this second unit included prejudice, racism, discrimination, bullying, genocide, and other social injustices and atrocities. Students had the opportunity to compare and contrast their own community to places and people in other parts of the world.

At first I was concerned about the heavy nature of the topics we chose to teach and how the students might react to the material we had prepared to share with them. We made it very clear to the students that it was not our intention to scare them or depress them, but to show them how people are capable of affecting their fellow humans in negative and positive ways.

My Many Faces

This lesson was the first major lesson of the quarter addressing the way people interact differently within certain settings in everyday life. To help students anticipate the lesson, Soule and I performed a number of silent improvisations wearing blank masks to hide our facial expressions, forcing us to depend on body language to express a certain drama between two individuals. Students had to guess what they thought was happening in the scene based on our characters' physical persona. For example, in one scene we portrayed a mother consoling a daughter who became injured on the playground. Students revealed their ability to empathize with our body language. They could interpret within the scene there was a mother and a very young daughter who had been hurt *without* seeing any facial expressions to reveal pain, empathy, or love.

After presenting a few scenes ourselves, we asked for volunteers to wear the masks and perform their own scenes. We helped them design some scenarios and they performed them as well, if not better, than we did by expressing feelings, age level, gender, and social station through nothing but body language and response to one another.

Next we distributed a basic domino mask printed on both sides of a page. On each side of the mask students were asked to portray two different sides of their personality they exhibit to the world. For instance, they could make one side a face they would show their grandmother and the other side a face they commonly showed to their friends. Some students resisted the idea and said they only had one face and they were always themselves no matter what the circumstance. Soule and I then asked deeper questions regarding how they conduct themselves in public versus how they might act around a feeble loved one. The discussion continued with questions such as: Is it okay to have many sides to our face? Is it lying or is it a matter of respect to change the way we speak and act in different settings? What does it mean to have a professional self, a loving self, a casual self, a joking self, etc...?

Many students began to reject this concept, expressing in great length that we were asking them to be “two-faced” or charlatans. We pushed a little further by asking the students to think about the masks as different hats or outfits instead of a way to hide. We explained that in some cultures a “mask” was not necessarily a thing to hide behind, but a portrayal of a different spirit within ourselves, a piece of us that we may not always allow to surface. We asked them more questions: Would they need to change who they really were inside to be a professional? Would they act the same as a father or mother as they would a friend? Is a chameleon still a chameleon even if it changes color to blend with its environment? When is it okay to blend in

and when is it best to stand out? We facilitated a deep discussion about the definitions and differences between a persons' *nature* and a persons' *demeanor*. The former being who a person is at their very core versus the latter, the person they may be on the surface, responding and reacting to the immediate environment.

Students pondered the above questions and following class discussion in small groups and independently within their comp books. The next day the majority of the class still seemed bewildered at the assignment. Soule and I had to think quickly to make the subject matter more effective and accessible to the students. Therefore, we asked them to design one side of the mask to portray how they felt on the *best* day of their lives. On the other side, they needed to reveal what they might look like on their *darkest* or *saddest* day of their lives. This approach on the lesson seemed to drive the point of nature versus demeanor home with an emotional angle, and students set to work on their masks immediately.

Once their masks were finished, students formed pairs and interviewed each other. Before we let them begin, Soule and I modeled the interview process, using very generic questions, with masks of our own. Soule interviewed me if I was a joyful person. Then she asked me the same questions as if I were a sad person. Students could see the change in my demeanor even if I answered the same questions with the same words. Then we switched roles, and students could see how she changed from one demeanor to the other. They were ready for an opportunity to try the same scenario with their own masks.

After the students went through the interview process together in small groups, we asked them to write in their comp books about how a person can seem like a “bitch” or an “asshole” or “hyper-active” or “depressing” depending on what may be effecting them at the time. In

different ways students came to the conclusion that everyone has extenuating circumstances in their lives, and it is important to refrain from judging a book by its cover or a person by the way they “wear” their face.

Maybe the lesson did not go exactly how Soule and I planned, however we were able to remain flexible and successful in morphing the lesson toward a workable teaching moment for students to realize people do not always act in a constant way. Most students could see how it is beneficial for us to withhold judgment until we give a person a chance to reveal their true nature.

So what does this have to do with “community narratives?” Soule and I had hoped this lesson would help students recognize and discuss a broader scope of language outside of spoken words. We can “speak” with our faces, our bodies, and our tone of voice. All forms of communication contribute to a scaffolding that supports, promotes, and nurtures a community within all its many facets. Therefore, helping students understand how to read all types of communication will help them function and contribute more effectively within and among all aspects of their own community.

Exploring the Art of a Community: Field Trip Adventure

This was an exciting lesson because the students had the opportunity to visit the Boise Art Museum for *Comics at the Crossroads: Art of the Graphic Novel* exhibition. Terra Feast, Curator of Education at the Boise Art Museum (BAM), was more than willing to collaborate with Canyon Springs in creating a thorough tour of the exhibition as well as a studio experience afterward. We were very pleased to find that the BAM was able to pay for our bus transport to

the museum as part of their Outreach Program. Soule and I, as well as other teachers, plan to take advantage of this every year.

Students were very excited to go on the field trip. Some had never been to Boise before, so we wanted to see how many places we could show them before we were expected at the BAM. Soule and I decided exposure to local and public art would inspire students to consider the beliefs and ideals of a community, such as “Freak Alley” by the Boise Mural Project in downtown Boise. Next we treated the students to coffee and hot chocolate at Tully’s Coffee (out of our pockets, yet worth the smiles once inside from the cold outdoors). The trip included a short view of the capitol building, and finally we let them explore the Anne Frank Human Rights Memorial before visiting the BAM.

Before the day of the trip, Soule and I wanted to give students a chance to anticipate all the places we planned to visit. Therefore, we asked students to break into groups, assigning them one of the places we planned to visit on our itinerary; the Boise Capitol Building, Freak Alley, Anne Frank Memorial, and BAM. Each group researched the site they were assigned and shared their findings with the rest of the class. Students consulted the internet and considered other sources such as books, magazines, pamphlets, and personal interviews from people who live (or have lived) in Boise.

Then the groups found a creative way to advertise for the field trip to help each other anticipate the event. One group created a poster advertising the BAM event using one of the comic images sent to us by Terra Feast for the *Comics* exhibition. Another group created a pamphlet for the Anne Frank Human Rights Memorial from pictures and information they found on the internet. For “Freak Alley”, students performed a news cast where they interviewed a

student and two teachers who had seen the large murals in the past and reported on its history from the beginning to its present theme. Students found three pictures of the alley murals and reported on how those particular murals addressed the current theme of “freedom.” The last group advertised for the Boise Capitol by doing a small history lesson on the building itself, its original architects, including some trivia and specific visitor attractions of the building.

On the day of the trip, students required permission slips, a “B” grade or better in the class, and visual journals ready to document the trip. Students were already preparing for the following “Visual Journalism” lesson by documenting their field trip experience on the unbound signatures (folded papers) of their handmade books.

We began at the Boise Capitol building and students marveled at its architecture and size. Most students on the trip had never seen our capitol building in person. The large Christmas tree was standing lofty and centered in front of the grand steps, glittering with electricity in the morning light. We gave students just enough time to take pictures of themselves in front of the tree and upon the large steps. Students reflected in their journals on information we learned in class and what they were seeing directly before them.

Next we visited “Freak Alley.” Many students could hardly sit still when they first encountered the big murals off of Bannock Street. They pointed and exclaimed when they saw the murals familiar to them from the classroom presentation. We allowed them to take their time, browsing through each alley, taking pictures for their journals, copying quotes, and sketching what they saw while commenting on how each mural successfully or insufficiently expressed the idea of freedom.

The Anne Frank Human Rights Memorial was an exploratory experience for students. Soule took time to give a brief history of Anne Frank and why this memorial was dedicated to her life. Students had time to read the quotes and listen to recorded commentary as they took pictures and recorded findings in their journals. Students kept calling to me from different places within the memorial to show me their findings and ask questions about what the quotes meant. Soule and I shared many moments with students discussing ideas about being human and the rights we deserve regardless of race, gender, sexuality, or creed. Students were moved and I was touched by their attentiveness and empathy toward the chiseled meanings within the walls.

Then the grand finale: The BAM tour and studio experience. Prior to the trip, Feast, Soule, and I discussed the integrative possibilities for the *Comics* show with the Art and Literature course, anticipating many connections. How does a picture speak a thousand words? How do artists and writers make these connections accessible to readers? How do artists and writers work together? As Feast took the students through the gallery, I watched them *look*. I saw them record ideas within their journals, raise their hands, and devour displays with their eyes.

Later during our studio time, Feast asked the students to create their own comic based on the concept of insects being the size of humans. The students eagerly grabbed paper, pencils, pastels, and ink as they went to work using specific techniques, frames, and “gutters,” where implied action happens in comic art. Feast explained the concept of “gutters” through a historical example portraying how people did not understand what happened to the sun after it went down, so they “filled in the gaps,” by creating stories, just as gutters between frames in comics. She asked the students how they might fill in the gaps for things they do not understand.

As students pondered the answers to these questions they were exposed to a world of myth-making and creation.

Comics can help students build confidence in their own interpretation of visual images and creative writing. Once students grasped this ability at BAM, they were asked how much information they wanted to give their viewer within each frame and how much they wanted their viewer to guess within the gutters (the spaces between each frame). Students started to realize the power they had as comic artists because they could decide how much the viewer becomes part of the story. We asked students: What will you let the viewer/reader infer (or conclude)? How much do we *infer* in everyday life? And how are comics a way to help us understand the interpretation of all visual art? Students began to wonder how much it would take to create an effective comic or maybe the beginnings of a graphic novel while slowly realizing that they can ask questions and ponder about *all* types of visual art.

When it was time to leave, students thanked the staff and Feast for their graciousness. Feast said, “Canyon Springs students were interested and good at picking words to describe works of art...they were enthusiastic and well behaved. Students were easily engaged in gallery conversations. We value questions at the BAM and Canyon Springs students had questions...questions that started conversations.” I think Feast could see how much our students yearned to see something new and how much they desired to experience the world outside of their familiar surroundings. I am thankful our trip was possible.

Visual Journalism

When this lesson started, students were fresh from the field trip to Boise and the BAM. Students started documenting within the signatures of their visual journals on the field trip and could not wait to bind these pieces into books. However, before they had a chance to start binding, Soule and I wanted them to choose a theme from the trip to help them find focus for their journals. Students asked if their theme had to come from the trip or from a theme they wanted to explore from other aspects we studied within the Art and Literature class. We gave them the freedom to choose, and the journals began to take form.

Some students chose to look deeper within the Holocaust for their journal based on what they saw at the Human Rights Memorial. Others chose to focus on the meaning of super heroes represented in everyday life found at the *Comics* exhibition at BAM. Some decided to cover bullying and other forms of injustice within the school environment (relating to some quotes they found at the Human Rights Memorial, the social “clique” experiment, and Freak Alley's freedom murals).

As students took time to brainstorm, Soule and I created guidelines and grading criteria for the project. Several students struggled with determining a theme for their journals. In response, Soule and I created a topic list based on class discussions including: racism, the Holocaust, heritage, prejudice, civil rights, culture, discrimination, social justice, and cliques.

Students mulled over these themes and decided to either choose one theme for their journals or address multiple themes based on how they felt about their own experience within a community. Then we asked them specific questions such as:

*How does your chosen theme(s) relate to you personally?

*How will you address these issues? What pictures will you use to portray these issues?

Why?

*Find at least one poem, two songs and three quotes that address your theme(s) to add in your visual journal.

*What will go on each page? What is the sequence?

*Can you break your theme(s) into “sub themes” so they are easier to comprehend?

*How will you recommend change for the better of society in your journal?

Students contemplated these questions as they began to decorate their covers and bind each signature together using a basic Coptic stitch. Soule and I worked with students individually to help them discover literature, images, and connections within their journals. At first, students felt frustrated because we did not tell them exactly what to do with the project specifically. They were nervous about making a statement on their own involving any social issue. But as we spoke with them, asking them careful questions regarding issues they felt something about, students found they had an opinion with plenty of reassurance that they would not be judged for expressing their opinions within our classroom. As students researched their themes, they started to compile references using color, texture, and found artifacts to represent their feelings on injustice and social change.

For their final assignment, students did not have to present their journals. We thought this was best since most of their work was very personal. Instead, we simply asked them to write a short statement about how their journal relates to their own community and how it could help inspire themselves and others to make positive changes for the greater good. Students reviewed the final writing with their peers and made comments to one another. It was a grueling process

in ways, but Soule and I felt it was very important for students to listen and respond to one another.

Although the end seemed rushed and students felt they had to work way too hard, most of them returned after winter break demanding their journals. They wanted to show their family and friends what they had learned and crafted. Some students asked if they could take the class next year, admitting they needed more chances to think “outside of the box.” I felt fulfilled with these statements. As did my colleague. We are currently making plans to do to teach Art and Literature again. This next time around, Soule and I wish to make more plans in advance for guest speakers, events off campus to attend, and museum exhibitions. By planning our lessons around the community, we will be able to make better connections between what students are learning and what they will get to see happening around them. We hope that planning our curriculum in this way will help initiate a stronger dialogue between Caldwell and Caldwell students.

Also, Soule and I plan to reach out to the middle schools and elementary schools to give our high school students the chance to teach as they learn about their community and culture. We have had the opportunity to watch some our high school students interact with elementary school students at our school carnival this year and it was amazing to see how patient and attentive they were toward the younger age groups. We believe this will be a win-win situation for all of Caldwell School district.



Figure 1. Palm Reading Example 1



Figure 2. Palm Readings Example 2



Figure 3. Oyster Shell Production



Figure 4. Shell Example 1



Figure 5. Shell Example 2



Figure 6. Shell Example 3



Figure 7. Shell Example 4



Figure 8. Shell Example 5



Figure 9. Shell Example 6



Figure 10. Pearl Example 1



Figure 11. Pearl Example 2

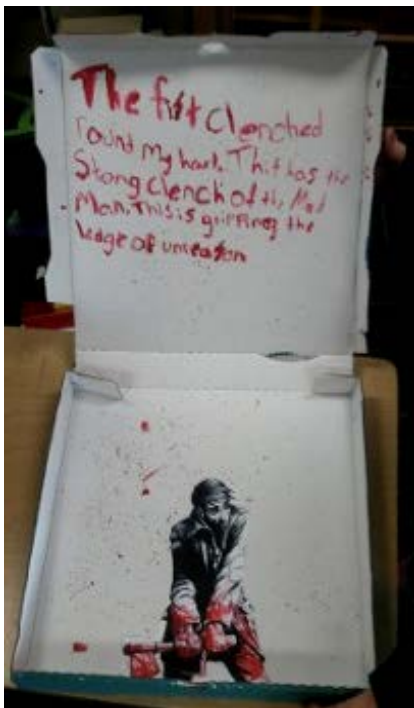


Figure 12. Pearl Example 3



Figure 13. Pearl Example 4



Figure 14. Hard at Work



Figure 15. Many Faces Example 1



Figure 16. Mask Interaction



Figure 17. Many Faces Example 2



Figure 18. "Tully's Coffee" Intro to Boise



Figure 19. "Freak Alley"

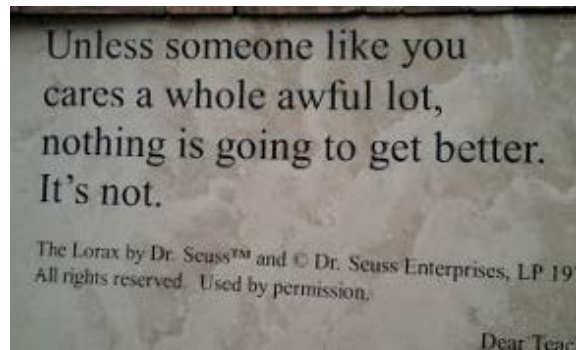


Figure 20: Human Rights Memorial



Figure 21. Studio at the BAM 1



Figure 22. Studio at the BAM 2



Figure 23. Studio at the BAM 3

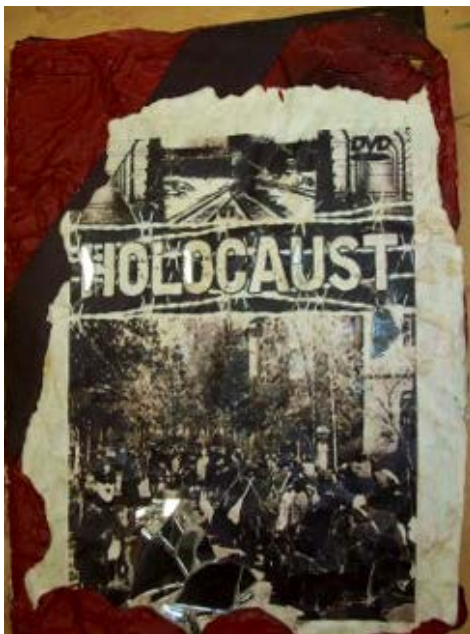


Figure 24. Journal Cover 1



Figure 25. Journal Excerpt 1



Figure 26. Journal Cover 2



Figure 27. Journal Excerpt 2



Figure 28. Journal Cover 3

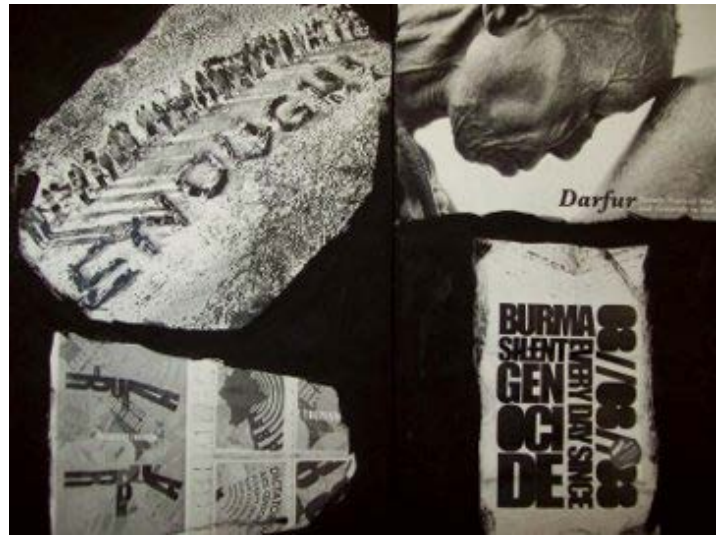


Figure 29. Journal Excerpt 3



Figure 30. Journal Cover 4



Figure 31. Journal Excerpt 4

CHAPTER V

Summary

In this chapter I will reflect upon the *Art and Literature: Community Narratives* project at Canyon Springs High School. I will discuss the exit survey students answered at the end of the semester and the findings I gleaned from their comments. Later I will examine my recommendations for other teachers interested in facilitating an integrated arts curriculum within their school and I will describe my personal reflections upon the integrated arts experience. Also, I will include considerations on arts integration from two of my colleagues from Canyon Springs High School.

In the fall of 2011, literature teacher Shelley-jeane Soule, and myself as the art teacher, began the first integrated arts curriculum at Canyon Springs High School. The course was titled *Art and Literature: "Community Narratives."* We chose "community" as a scope to view the many social issues we wished to cover within the course and utilized many methods for creating a classroom community with the students at the beginning of the semester to ensure a safe working environment. We observed students working together and presenting findings to one another. Students had many experiences exploring the ways they personally relate to their own community. The projects during the first quarter involved their personal response to symbols, poetry, storytelling, and myths, as well as class cooperation and discussion on different sub communities within the larger community of Caldwell, Idaho. Students explored reasons we are different and yet, the same. Soule and I emphasized the expression of students' opinions

regarding how communities are built, what makes them unique, why diversity is important, and why we need communities in our lives as human beings.

During the second quarter, students studied how communities can be effected by major social issues such as poverty, genocide, civil rights, racism, and prejudice. Soule and I encouraged students to use the knowledge they gained about themselves and their own community during first quarter to understand the injustices of cultures from other parts of the world and different time eras. These experiences included a trip to Boise and the Boise Art Museum, social experiments within Canyon Springs, researching human behavior, and studying places in the world where human beings live in constant threat of losing their freedom and their lives. Students were able to apply knowledge to many collective projects ending with a visual journal for personal reflection addressing social themes they wished to explore in greater depth.

Soule and I discussed in depth the outcomes of our pursuit in helping students connect with their world. We thought deeply about continuing the Art and Literature project at Canyon Springs. Our project came with many hurdles and difficult moments where we had to find out our own truth and stretch our own ideas. It was not easy. We were confronted with many questions we could not answer. We were not even sure whether we wanted to try the project again because of the amount of work, preparation, and daily attentiveness. However, we understood that work, preparation, and attentiveness is what our teacher careers are made of and we strive to make this project a continuing experience for our students, ourselves, and OUR community.

Exit Survey

Although this exit survey was intended for the benefit of Soule and myself, I thought it helpful to include the results from the survey while reporting on information useful toward the following school year. We made sure the survey was anonymous so students could express their true opinions about the *Art and Literature* course, supplying genuine feedback. These results are not quantifiable and should only be used as a way to gauge future alterations within the curriculum for next year. Eventually, I would like to create a survey involving parents, finding data we can closely study for the better understanding of student and community needs within an arts integrated curriculum.

Findings

When asked if students felt combining literature and art was helpful in learning about both subjects most students said “yes.” Although many students said art made the class “more fun” some students could understand how visual art supports Literature by giving a new perspective on both subjects. One student stated, “I felt I understood the things we were learning better because I could use both pictures and words together.” Another student said, “In my opinion, the art helped me understand literature more because I was able to tie them together to find new ways of seeing the world.”

As we reviewed the surveys, we came across some similar answers to the question: If you could change anything about the class what would you change? Twenty percent of the

students thought it would be helpful to the class as a community if we kept the same students throughout the entire semester. Because Canyon Springs works on a quarter system, most our original students had to change classes second quarter to earn the amount of credits they needed to graduate. It was our intention to keep the same students for the whole semester, but unfortunately we had to let them go for the above reason. As we lost some students, we gained many newcomers to the class second quarter, which caused a shift in the community environment. Soule and I carefully helped the veteran students engage the new students in establishing a different classroom community, yet with the same democratic values.

This shift, which at first seemed frustrating, gave us as teachers a great opportunity to teach students how an existing culture can either reject or embrace new-comers. Teaching immediate tolerance to a community we helped build was a lesson we did not anticipate, although we believe it made a great impact upon our students when we could compare our classroom community to the “New World.” I was fascinated to see how a small classroom shift could bring on a great understanding of our country in the past and in the present. The quarter change initiated discussions not only about immigrants in the past, but about “illegal aliens” and what it means to be a “land of opportunity.”

How did the “old students” react to the new? On the exit survey, one student said, “We needed to keep the same classmates because without them there it felt different and uncomfortable.” Another student stated, “You guys needed to keep the same students because it was hard to get along with the new people.” Although it was a difficult transition, the element of new students provided Soule and I a chance to adapt our lessons toward understanding and

accepting others not only within our classroom, but in many areas of the world, and directly within the United States.

The loss of prior students and the addition of others gave the remaining grouping a platform to teach the values and customs within our classroom community as well as a calling to bestow charity, tolerance, and responsibility upon their peers. Maybe the lesson did not “hit home” with every student because change was very hard for some of them, especially when we had ample time to build a safe learning zone first quarter, not unlike most established groups, cliques, or countries. However, the influx of new students was a perfect setting to teach the morality behind changes within a community by creating a solid lesson based on anti-prejudice, pluralism, and acceptance in society.

Recommendations

My recommendations to educators who wish to facilitate an integrated arts curriculum within their schools should consider the following:

Support

It may be difficult to “sell” the idea of a fully arts integrated course to your principal because of time, space, and scheduling issues. Also, since art supplies are expensive and the need for variety of tools and resources is extensive for an integrated arts course, it is very important to gather support from administration and staff members in your building.

- △ Make sure you and your colleague(s) have a well-planned curriculum outline and ideas on how to manipulate space and scheduling to present to your principal and school

counselor before you meet with them to request clearance for the arts integrated course.

- ✧ Plan a budget for needed materials and resources and submit it to the administration at least a semester in advance. This will allow you enough time to plan for writing grants, creating fund-raisers or finding donors if your school does not have enough money for your projected budget. *Donors Choose* is a great website to get specific supplies by many people wishing to donate to education (Appendix C).
- ✧ When planning your learning spaces, make sure to speak with your colleagues in advance about locating extra chairs, tables, and scheduled computer lab time for student research. Also, if planning a field trip, it is important to fill out the proper paper work for approval and transportation needs as soon as possible. Seek out local support from community outreach programs.

Theme

When beginning the preliminary planning for an art integrated course, it is critical to select a theme to help you and your colleagues find a scope to view the way your subject matter aligns. Finding the *elegant fit* or “big question” for your standards and teaching objectives can be a daunting task. Remember that an “elegant fit” requires that separate pieces of the curriculum form a dialogue to create a new and more complicated whole, which may in turn sow more questions for ongoing learning possibilities.

- ✧ To find an *elegant fit*, select a theme that you know will be relevant and meaningful to the students at your school. Start by asking questions and pin-pointing “big ideas” within

each of your separate curricula.

- ⤴ Be an information provider to students but not a “testifier”. Allow students to discuss their opinions in an open forum. Ask questions and acknowledge all ideas as a facilitator.
- ⤴ Have a large space to draw out your plans by using brainstorming mechanisms such as spider graphs, Venn Diagrams, and KWL charts (what we know, what we want to know and what we learn) to help you and your colleagues visualize your thoughts and curricular connections.
- ⤴ Sometimes it helps to think inductively by starting with a project idea you and your colleagues want to teach and allow the ideas to blossom into a much bigger concept. Keep a journal and take detailed notes of your thoughts.

Flexibility

As teachers we already understand how important it is to have a plan. Yet our plans always require a certain malleability to customize the delivery of our teaching for individual students. Flexibility is even more important when implementing an arts integrated curriculum because you have much more to balance and manipulate when working closely with colleagues outside of your own classroom.

- ⤴ Compromise is key. You and your colleagues may not always see eye to eye on issues such as discipline, grading, and teaching style. Communication is very important while teaching an integrated course.

- △ Keep in mind that you might not be able to get all the resources you need and space can be tight. It is important to be willing to find new ways of solving problems while the course is in session.
- △ When trying something new in teaching, one can never predict how students may react to certain lessons, classroom settings, and to one another. Be willing to change the steps within a project or lesson to help meet the target objectives in the best possible way for each student.

Assessment

What are the best assessment methods in an arts integrated course? My best advice is to try them all. Data-driven education is important for teachers to be able to change their teaching styles and objectives based on what students have learned or have not learned at the conclusion of the course. This information is gathered from a *summative assessment* or “end-of-course exam.” Though this might benefit teachers and future students, it does not help the students who are presently taking the course. Therefore, *formative assessment* is critical to a project-based, integrated class based on constructivist theory.

Formative assessments can be anything from an in-process critique, portfolio presentation, artist statement, or class discussion. The major difference between a summative assessment and a formative assessment is that one is executed at the end, and the other is implemented “in process.” Unlike summative assessments, formative assessments give students

the chance to make corrections and be responsible for their learning before it is “too late.” Both types of assessments need to occur for the sake of teacher and student success.

- ⤴ Give students the opportunity to critique the work of their peers briefly in the middle of a project or portfolio creation. This is called an “in-process” critique where teachers and peers can give constructive criticism to students before the project is due, guiding their decisions and giving them room to think about their own reasoning.
- ⤴ Allow students time to practice speaking in front of their peers before giving a presentation on findings at the end of the quarter. Students need to have more exposure to public speaking so when they share their ideas during a summative assessment, they can feel assured and prepared.
- ⤴ Give students time to silently reflect in a journal about their work in an introspective manner so they have the insight to participate in an in-process critique or a presentation.
- ⤴ Use an end-of-course exam to find what students learned for the sake of data-driven planning. Also, give an anonymous end-of-course survey to see how students *feel* about what they have learned and take their feed-back into consideration for preparing the next course. Understanding what students have learned as far as knowledge and seeing what they have accomplished with new wisdom (the application of acquired knowledge) is equally important for improving an arts-integrated curriculum.

Meeting Change

Change is never easy. Especially in a large system such as public schools. As a teacher introducing new strategies, changing the way an entire school functions such as arts integration may come with some friction from teachers and staff. Therefore, I would recommend revisiting Chapter II under the subheading *Don't Fear the Naysayers* to help you find ways to respond to negative comments toward the changes you are proposing within your school.

Also, it is helpful to expand beyond your own school building to blend ideas with other entities such as a community college, local artists, historians, and community members. Ask a clerk at the grocery store, your family physician, or your next door neighbor about your ideas. You may not get a desired response, however you never know where you may find a fresh perspective on your own community if you are willing risk the search for innovative ideas.

Reflections from My Colleagues

In conclusion of the project, I have included reflections from my colleagues to illustrate the importance of many voices responding to the idea of an arts integrated curriculum. In the spirit of integration and collaboration, I felt it made sense to add their reflections because without them, my dream for a new learning environment within public high schools will never reach fruition.

Reflection by Shelley-jeane Soule: Literature Teacher

Amber Powers and I have been collaborating teachers for more than six years. We joke to the students that we “share a brain cell,” but the truth is that we share many more brain cells than

just one. I believe this deep understanding of each other provided the best platform for effective collaboration. We both believe that students must have genuine opportunities to cultivate their ideas through creative expression. I propose that this is perhaps the only way to truly generate higher order thinking in high school students.

Our passion to provide a non-judgmental, protected, creative place for our students to express their legitimate opinions and emotions led us to Art & Lit, the class we co-taught in the Fall of 2011. We already knew we were collaboratively-compatible from previous forays into each other's classrooms. We felt our individual teaching styles complimented each other and worked well to bring out the best in each student. We believed that the disciplines of Art and Literature followed close parallel paths and that by emphasizing the parallels we emphasized the whole. We also believed that by using alternative approaches to learning a concept, the preconceived barriers to understanding would crumble. In addition, Amber's profession is art and her hobby is Literature. My profession is Literature and my hobby is art. We were destined to work together.

Our collaboration would never have been possible without the support and vision of our principal, Anthony Richard. His deep appreciation for both of our disciplines, and his trust in us as professionals, allowed this collaboration to become a reality. We had free rein over every aspect of this class and the full support of administration. Without these, our efforts would not have been nearly so successful.

We fell into the "One Teach, One Drift" style of co-teaching, not unlike the ebb and flow of ocean waves. If the introductory lesson in a unit followed the art path, Amber would teach and I would drift around the classroom to maintain classroom control and to answer any questions

that arose. If the lesson emphasized a Literature concept, I would teach and Amber would drift. I learned that she is much more gentle and complimentary than I am and that the students respond much more quickly to her approach than to my straight-forward bluntness. I learned a lot and am channeling Amber in all my classes now. The “One Teach, One Drift” approach also provided a safety net for us as teachers. Either of us could signal the other when we were at a loss for words and know that the other would pick up the instruction without a hitch. It’s that “sharing-a-brain-cell” thing.

Our collaboration wasn’t without its pitfalls, however. I believe that we would have been able to achieve even more amazing results if our enrollment had remained the same between the first semester and the second semester of our class. We had no idea how closely our students from the first semester were bonded until the new students arrived the first day of the second semester. Two girls almost came to blows because one old student didn’t appreciate the flippant attitude one new student was displaying. Our shared brain cell alarmed, and we quickly introduced a separate assignment for the new students and moved the old students into another classroom. I worked with the new students, while Amber heard the old students describe just how important our “non-judgmental, protected, creative place” was to each of them. What incredible validation for us as teachers! Our dream had become a reality and our reality was a success!

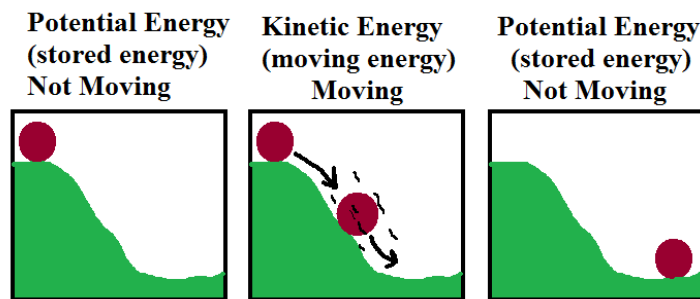
Reflection by Tina Watkins: Plans for Science/Art Integration

I teach science in the Caldwell Idaho School District; I started teaching Physical Science (physics and Chemistry) at Caldwell High School in 2004 and later moved to Canyon Springs

Alternative High School to teach Physical Science, Biology, and Geology two years ago. I have always incorporated some level of drawing in my science classes, but not always. That changed when I met Ms. Amber Powers, the new art teacher.

When Ms. Powers approached me about using art in the science class, I was all ears. We sat and discussed the ways children and teens learn and the importance of visual examples and hands on actives. After our conversation, Ms. Powers visited my class many times and together we came up with several art projects to go hand-in-hand with the science lessons I was teaching. The changes were small at first: add a drawing to a vocabulary word, draw and label important charts and figures, and draw maps with keys, etc. It didn't take long for me to see a huge difference in student comprehension and the rise of their test scores.

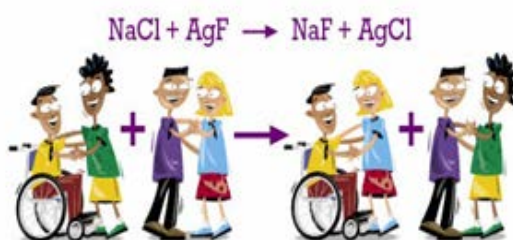
I went back to Ms. Powers with a list of concepts and key terms the students were having trouble with. She helped me set up some lessons and activities that would help the students. Physics is sometimes hard for students to understand because the subject deals with moving objects, but by breaking each step down into a drawing or picture, they were able to absorb the information piece by piece and put the parts together. An example of this is distinguishing potential energy from kinetic energy.



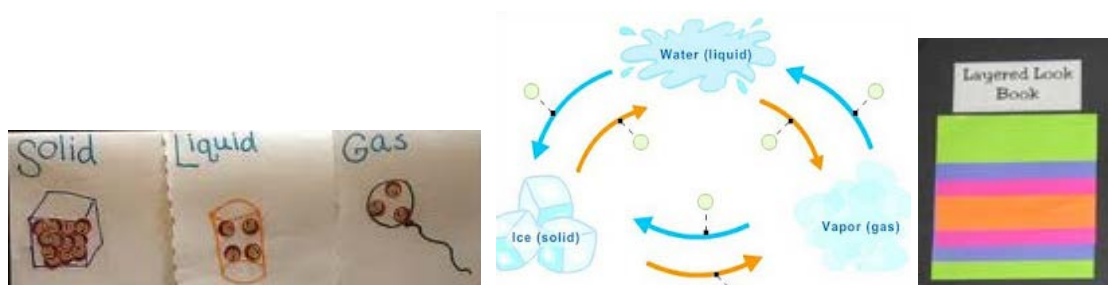
Ms. Powers and I also talked about how to help the students understand the parts of an atom by having the students build the atom themselves with beans, beads, marshmallows or pom-poms while using a key to identify the various pieces. Some of these projects were so beautiful, they could be called the “Mobiles of Science Art”. Ms. Powers called it an “installation.”



Also, we discussed the use of illustrations to teach chemical reaction types in Chemistry. The following example is a simple single displacement reaction, but the illustrations make the concept of switching out one element for another much easier to understand and remember for most students.



With the Help of Ms. Powers, I was able to connect with many other science teachers via the internet and share ideas. Some activities can be used for numerous concepts such as foldables, comic story break downs, and illustration webs. The examples below have to do with the properties of matter and change of state (phase).



Together, Ms. Powers and I, have come up with many activities that I am so excited to try with my students. I plan to do moon logs that will double as a cartoon flip books, computer animation for the element family traits, and painting and drawing of the evolution of Darwin's finches, to name a few ideas.

Ms. Powers and I have a dream to integrate a Forensic Art/Science class next year. WE hope to include suspect sketching, blood splatter analysis , drawing and analyzing crime scenes, and so much more within the course.

I fully embrace the visual/kinesthetic learner that requires using their hands to create a vision of science while they learn, thanks to Ms. Powers. I will continue to use art in my lessons and teach through the integrated approach. I plan to continue to consult with Ms. Powers on any future learning difficulties my students may have and how art may help them.

Reflection on School Anatomy

As most grand projects begin, my dream for the facilitation of arts integrated curriculum within schools began with one thought, a thought with great conviction and hope: *that all human beings within a public school could harness their strengths to support their own learning while helping others realize their own potential.* As an artist I thought of a metaphor to illustrate my

deep desire for meeting the learning needs of everyone within the place I worked, including students, teachers, administration, staff, and the greater community. The metaphor came to me in the form of human anatomy, our bodies, and our connection with *being*.

As a child, my father had many anatomy books and I remember pouring over them, fascinated with how our body systems work together to make our lives possible. I thought anatomy was incredible engineering, almost poetic in the way it represents how much we need our organs, fluids, and systems, just as we need community, love, and belonging in life. I am afraid many of us may be able to recognize we cannot live without our organs, but we forget how much we need each other to survive.

When I began the Master's program at Boise State University in the spring of 2009, I created a visual journal representing a public high school as a human body, designating certain parts of human anatomy to specific content areas. By showcasing each subject, I sought to illustrate the idea that *schools are alive* and though each subject is vital, the parts cannot exist without the whole. The subjects represent the lines we must read between to find the meaning of our existence. Through this vision I realized, teachers need to share their expertise, unifying learning experiences, so students may find a connection between what they are learning and who they are as individuals connected within a society of other individuals, and thus becoming a collective structure of human consciousness.

As an art educator, I see the need for a connection in student learning not only between subjects, but between themselves and their peers, and their teachers as a community. I believe teachers can have the chance to be learners themselves in an arts integrated curriculum model by allowing students and their colleagues to become their teachers, *our* teachers, through enriched,

collaborative experiences. Working together is not always easy, but it tests our character and helps us become better examples for our students and our community.

Dreams for the Future: CAPE Schools in Caldwell

On my own, art has enriched my life because it gives me an avenue to ask questions and explore the world around me in creative and expressive ways, always learning, always searching. I cannot keep this perspective to myself. Understanding life through the arts must be shared and I am in a prime position to provide these learning opportunities for students and teachers alike in the form of a *discussion*, never a *lecture*. It is my dream to be a learning creator, facilitator, and perpetuator. I believe we can make this happen in Caldwell, Idaho with the idea of a “CAPE,” “A+” school skeleton. It is a beginning.

Art and Literature is only the first step in creating an arts integrated program at Canyon Springs High School. With the great insight and support of my principal, Anthony Richard, I have volunteered to head the committee for arts integrated curriculum at Canyon Springs, helping the transformation toward a cutting-edge example for other school districts to follow nation-wide. I have learned a great deal from the example of the A+ Program in North Carolina and the CAPE Schools in Chicago. If it can happen in these growing areas, I believe that success can be won here at a small, low-income school in Caldwell, Idaho with the help of my colleagues and community, working diligently to establish valuable connections for the arts and life-long learning. I am currently communicating with local artists, The Caldwell Center for the Arts, The College of Idaho, The Idaho Commission on the Arts, and The Caldwell Chamber of Commerce

to help generate support for our program at Canyon Springs and to create an arts collective for both students and community members to participate in the arts year round.

Conclusion

Throughout my entire life I have known teachers are capable of amazing feats. And when banded together, I know such a link will only strengthen our ability to create a better world. We need to find ways to celebrate our differences while also reveling in our unity:

United we can...closed-minded we crawl.

The Art and Literature course gave our students a chance to expand their experience beyond a typical classroom. During the first unit, students where challenged to study their own learning styles and encouraged to begin viewing themselves as not only valuable individuals, but as part of a greater community. As the class progressed to the second unit, students had established classroom norms, customs, and values they later compared to those values of our nation and our world. It became apparent that students bonded by investigating collaboratively the many issues facing them within their own community and globally. They were able to work well with each other after much practice, while learning how they think and how their differing viewpoints matter through shared writing, speaking, observation, and artistic expression. In the end, students in Art and Literature began to see how important communication is for a healthy community to prosper in culture and beauty.

I hope these words have reached you in a way that will help you find artistic and educational connections in your community and to create a vision of a more harmonious and exciting future. Here is to our children.

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APPENDIX A

**INTEGRATED ARTS CURRICULUM:
Art and Literature: “Community Narratives”**

Amber Powers

Boise State University

Community Narratives Unit I

(Connecting the Self to Visual Symbols and Poetry)

Unit Objective

Students will have the opportunity to explore their sense of self by studying symbols and poetry made by others while finding ways to create their own symbols, visual images and poetry for deeper understanding of themselves in connection to the world around them.

Lesson 1: “Palm Readings”

Teacher(s): School: Subject: Grade Level: Duration:	Amber Powers and Shelley-jeane Soule Canyon Springs High School Art and Literature 10-12 One week
Stage 1: Desired Results	
Standards:	
9-12.VA.1.1.1 Identify representative visual works of art from a variety of cultures and historical periods.	
9-12.VA.2.2.8 Demonstrate collaborative and interpersonal skills by working productively with others, while producing works of art.	
9-12.VA.3.1.3 Demonstrate how the elements and principles can be used to solve specific visual arts problems.	
9-12.VA.3.3.2 Apply various symbols, subjects, and ideas in one's artwork.	
10.LA.2.2.2 Define the purpose and audience of a variety of communication formats (e.g., essays, letters, user manuals, lab reports, websites)	
11.LA.3.1.4 Match format to purpose and audience	
12.LA.2.1.3 Clarify an understanding of text by creating outlines, notes, annotations, charts, and/or diagrams	
Essential Questions for Students:	
Review symbols from different cultures and time periods.	
Choose five symbols and discuss their meaning with your group.	
How do the elements of design used to build the symbol portray a certain feeling of meaning?	

<p>Do you agree with the website's interpretation of the symbols meanings? Why? Why not?</p> <p>What are some of the symbols you see in your community every day?</p> <p>Why do we need symbols in society? What would happen if we did not have symbols?</p>
<p>Knowledge and Skill (Learning Targets):</p>
<p>WHAT (Content Objective): <i>"I will be able to create my own symbols based on the elements of design to share the story of my life with my group."</i></p>
<p>HOW (Language Objective): <i>"I will trace my hand and use the cut-out as a canvas to design my symbols to tell my life's story carefully choosing types of line, shape, color and values. I will then present my work to my group explaining my thought process behind my choices."</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Stage 2: Learning Activities and Materials</p>
<p>Anticipatory Set: Show students a 10-15 symbols. Some they should recognize, some they may not. Ask students the above questions, facilitating a class discussion about symbols and their meanings.</p>
<p>Process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Students will get into groups of 4-5. Each will receive a packet of symbols from history and other cultures. * Students will discuss on their own what the symbols mean and why. * Students will trace their hands as a symbol of their lives to use as a canvas for their "life story maps." * Students can brainstorm on how to use the elements of design to create symbols to represent important events in their lives. (Remind them that they placement of their symbols, color, and size is a symbol in itself). * Group members will one at a time read each other's palms to see how close they can get to the true life story of each member.
<p>Student Materials: Card stock, pencils, scissors, erasers, markers, pens, and colored pencils</p>
<p>Teacher Resources: Projector, 10-15 symbol examples, and symbol packets (see appendix),</p>

Stage 3: Assessment Evidence	
What will be assessed?	How will it be assessed?
<p>Critical Thinking Skills: What are the most important events, people, and places to me? How can I represent these in a symbol form? Which elements of art (specifically) will assist</p>	<p>Originality of symbols, understanding of thought process and meaning behind symbols, group presentation, and final reflection in comp books</p>

me in creating these symbols?	
Quality work: Does my work appear complete? Did I take time and effort to create a visually appealing piece? Does my work appear intentional vs. haphazard?	Time spent in class, effort in clean, thoughtful symbol designs, careful treatment of materials, complete work.
Cultural awareness: What cultural influences affect the symbols I created? How do these symbols relate to my heritage? My ethnicity?	Identification of cultural influences including popular media, final reflection.

Lesson 2: “Researching Poetry and Personal Reference”

Teacher(s):	Amber Powers and Shelley-jeane Soule
School:	Canyon Springs High School
Subject:	Art and Literature
Grade Level:	10-12
Duration:	One week
Stage 1: Desired Results	
Standards:	
9-12.VA.1.1.3 Compare and contrast the historical, social, and environmental contexts that influence artistic expression.	
9-12.VA.1.2.3 Relate the trends and movements in visual art to other disciplines in the arts and humanities.	
9-12.VA.2.1.2 Construct meaning and support well-developed interpretations of works of art with evidence.	
9-12.VA.3.1.7 Locate and use appropriate resources in order to work independently, monitoring one’s own understanding and learning needs.	
10.LA.2.1.1 Synthesize the content from several sources on a single issue; compare and contrast ideas to demonstrate comprehension	
11. LA.2.3.3 Analyze the ways in which the theme represents a view or comment on life, using textual evidence to support the claim	
11. LA.2.3.5 Evaluate the aesthetic qualities of style, including the impact of diction and figurative language, on tone, mood, and theme.	
11.LA.1.8.2 Use context analysis to determine the meanings of unfamiliar and multiple-meaning words from American literature	

Essential Questions for Students:

How are the song lyrics like poetry?

Think of some specific song lyrics that mean something to you. What makes them meaningful? How do they relate to your own life?

Who wrote the lyrics to the song? What time era do they come from?

Do you think that poetry from the past is still relevant to people today? Why? Why not?

What other art forms from the past can we still relate to today?

Classic poetry is classic for a reason. What does that mean?

Knowledge and Skill (Learning Targets):

WHAT (Content Objective): *"I will be able to research song lyrics, classic poetry, and teen poetry in terms of the meaning at the time it was written and how it is relevant to me personally."*

HOW (Language Objective): *"I will be able to read classic and teen poetry to myself and speak it to my peers to find meaningful content. I will research artwork that relates to this poetry from the same time era with the help of my teachers and peers."*

Stage 2: Learning Activities and Materials

Anticipatory Set: Read students personal or classic poetry based on visual images and other forms of art such as music, dance, and theater. Help students to see the connections between the symbolism in the words and the symbolism in the other forms of art to help them make connections. Facilitate a class discussion using the questions above.

Process:

*Students will have the opportunity to go to the computer lab to research poetry on acceptable sites.

*Students need to find two classic poems and one poem written by someone their age in the present day.

*Students must be sure that each of these poems strikes them as interesting for a particular reason.

*Once students have found their three poems, then they need to find information on the poets, the time era of each poet, where they live(d), and any other relevant information.

*Students can find artwork, music, and performance art that happened during the same time each poet was writing. Something relatable is preferable.

*Students will share one of their poems with the class and the other works of art that pertain to its meaning.

*Teachers and students can add information they know to help the student make relevant

connections.
Student Materials: Library/Internet access, printer access, comp books
Teacher Resources: Projector, pictures, poetry, videos, etc. (whatever applicable).

Stage 3: Assessment Evidence	
What will be assessed?	How will it be assessed?
Critical Thinking Skills: How does this poetry relate to the time/place it was written? How does it relate to me?	Evidence of further research and exploration through discussion and introspective writing.
Quality work: Did I find all three poems required? Was I able to find legitimate information on each poet and a relatable work of art to help illustrate its meaning?	Time and effort spent in the computer lab. Pictures and poetry captioned with titles, authors, artists, time period. Explanation of how the writing compares to the art.
Cultural awareness: What other art can I find from the time period, or outside the time period, that relates to the poetry? What was going on socially, politically, and spiritually at the time?	Evidence of more connections made through personal writing and presentation to small groups.

Lesson 3: “Oyster Shells”

Teacher(s):	Amber Powers and Shelley-jeane Soule
School:	Canyon Springs High School
Subject:	Art and Literature
Grade Level:	10-12
Duration:	Two-Three Weeks

Stage 1: Desired Results
Standards:
9-12.VA.1.2.1 Compare art forms that share common characteristics.
9-12.VA.1.2.2 Analyze a visual art product or art performance that integrates media, processes, and/or concepts from other performing arts disciplines.
9-12.VA.2.2.5 Show respect for personal work and work of others.
9-12.VA.3.3.1 Plan and produce a work of art applying media, techniques, and processes with skill, confidence, and sensitivity.

10.LA.2.3.4 Compare works that express a universal theme and provide evidence to support the views expressed in each work

10.LA.3.2.2 Sequence ideas in a cohesive, meaningful order.

12.LA.4.1.2 Write original creative works including prose and poetry

12.LA.4.4.2 Write responses to literature that demonstrate an awareness and appreciation of a variety of authors' styles.

Essential Questions for Students:

How can I use words and images to best describe the way people see me on the outside versus the way I see myself on the inside?

In what ways do my experiences shape my perspective on myself and others?

How do the words and imagery that I use to illustrate myself relate to one another? Do they support each other? Do they contradict each other?

What do the words and images symbolize? How will the elements and principals of design support these symbols?

Is there a theme to the outside and inside of myself? Are they very different or similar? Why?

Knowledge and Skill (Learning Targets):

WHAT (Content Objective): *"I will be able to create an 'oyster shell' by creating and gathering words and imagery that represent the way the world sees me and the way that I see myself."*

HOW (Language Objective): *"I will use a pizza box as the beginning of my 'shell.' I will design the outside as I believe that others see me and the inside as I see myself using found poetry, quotes, and imagery as well as my own words and drawings. I will collage these images together in readable, meaningful ways."*

Stage 2: Learning Activities and Materials

Anticipatory Set: Springing from Lesson 2, show students an example of an "oyster shell" project made from a pizza box. Ask the students what they think the person is on the outside and how it relates to them on the inside. See if they can infer who the person might be, or what they have been through. Show another example that is strikingly different so students can see the broad possibilities for the project.

Process:

*Start by doing a demonstration on the art of collage using tissue paper and Mod Podge for a textured background (students can use other materials for texture adding as much or as little as

they desire).

- *Next demonstrate how printed images can be collaged into the background seamlessly by tattering the edges and matching color with glazes of paint.
- *Show students that they have a plethora of possibilities for adding lettering and other images with paper folding, metallic markers, colored pencils, glitter, yarn, etc...
- *Students must use a least two poems they found in Lesson 2 as well as their own imagery and found photos.
- *Finished products may be sprayed with fixative for a protective layer.

Student Materials: Pizza boxes (donated by local pizza places), scissors, glue, paper, tissue paper, markers, colored pencils, paint, Mod Podge, yarn, ink, glitter, etc....

Teacher Resources: Internet access, printer, copier, camera, etc....

Stage 3: Assessment Evidence	
What will be assessed?	How will it be assessed?
<p>Critical Thinking Skills: How do people see me on the outside? How do I see myself on the inside? Are they similar or different? Why? How do the poetry, quotes and images for the “oyster project” help to represent these ideas? How do the words and images relate to one another?</p>	<p>Deep understanding of poetry and its connection to the chosen images. Ability to express the thought process and reasoning behind certain artistic choices. Final presentation to class and teachers.</p>
<p>Quality work: Does my work appear complete? Did I take time and effort to create a visually appealing piece? Does my work appear intentional vs. haphazard? Is my work creative?</p>	<p>Time spent in class, effort in clean, thoughtful symbol designs, careful treatment of materials, complete work.</p>
<p>Cultural awareness: Is my culture represented in the project? If so how? If not why? Where did my found words and images come from? When I added my own images and words, what inspired me?</p>	<p>Identification of cultural influences including popular media in final presentation and reflection.</p>

Community Narratives Unit 2

(Connecting Communities and Ideas of Social Justice)

Unit Objective

Students will be exposed to cultures around the world from the past and present dealing with prejudice, racism, discrimination, bullying, genocide, and other social injustice. Students will have the opportunity to compare and contrast what they have learned with their own community in a variety of ways.

Lesson 1: “My Many Faces”

Teacher(s):	Amber Powers and Shelley-jeane Soule
School:	Canyon Springs High School
Subject:	Art and Literature
Grade Level:	10-12
Duration:	One-Two Weeks
Stage 1: Desired Results	
Standards:	
9-12.VA.1.1.1 Identify representative visual works of art from a variety of cultures and historical periods.	
9-12.VA.1.1.3 Compare and contrast the historical, social, and environmental contexts that influence artistic expression.	
9-12.VA.3.2.4 Select and utilize visual, spatial, and temporal concepts to enhance meaning in artwork.	
9-12.VA.3.2.1 Choose purposefully between visual characteristics of a variety of media and use these to communicate one’s own idea.	
9-12.Spch.6.2.7 Deliver narrative presentations that narrate a sequence of events and communicate their significance to the audience.	
11.LA.2.3.5 Evaluate the aesthetic qualities of style, including the impact of diction and figurative language, on tone, mood, and theme.	
11.LA.2.3.2 Analyze how voice and the choice of a narrator affect characterization	
12.LA.2.3.4 Analyze the ways in which irony, tone, mood, symbolism, and the “sound” of language achieve specific rhetorical or aesthetic purposes	
Essential Questions for Students:	
Do I act differently around certain people? Why? Why not? (Do you act the same way in front	

of your grandmother as you do your friends? How about your boss, your teachers, a police officer...)?

Have I noticed others changing their tone of voice, word choice and facial expressions in different situations? How so? Do people act different around those that they do not know?

Why do we change our faces within the many communities we live in? Is it lying? Or is it surviving? Is it out of courtesy?

Knowledge and Skill (Learning Targets):

WHAT (Content Objective): *"I will be able to create a reversible mask based on how I act around two very different communities in my life."*

HOW (Language Objective): *"I will design both sides of the mask using symbols, colors, textures and expressions that represent two sides of myself. I will then act out situations with my classmates using body language and words to support the meaning of the mask."*

Stage 2: Learning Activities and Materials

Anticipatory Set: Act out two scenarios with for the student with one teacher being the mask wearer, and the other representing different types of community members such as “church vs. lunch at school” or “best friend vs. grandmother.” Allow the students to react to each scene and follow up with the above questions. Help students brainstorm about the different communities they live in and their demeanor (or face) might change between those communities. Next show students some masks from different cultures and ask them what the purpose of those masks may represent. Why are they worn? How is that similar to changing our demeanor?

Process:

*Start by showing students some finished masks so that they can see a variety of possibilities. See if students can guess the “demeanor” of the person who would wear that particular mask.

*Next give students a paper template to start sketching ideas for their masks. (Masks can be very elaborate, made from paper-mâché or plaster to as simple as paper and yarn).

*Help students choose symbols to support the demeanor they wish to represent with each mask.

*Once finished, students will choose a partner and act out two scenarios for the class using their masks. Encourage students to use their body language and tone of voice to help support their ideas.

Student Materials: paper templates, pencils, colored pencils, glitter, yarn, glue, feathers, tissue paper, paint, found objects, etc...

Teacher Resources: mask examples, scenarios for students, Power Point showing examples of different communities.

Stage 3: Assessment Evidence	
What will be assessed?	How will it be assessed?
Critical Thinking Skills: What is a demeanor and how does mine change? Why does it change? Can changing my “face” be helpful or harmful? How can I represent this visually and verbally?	Ability to represent demeanor through symbols, the elements and principles of design, metaphors, body language and vocal tone.
Quality work: Does my work appear complete? Did I take time and effort to create a visually appealing piece? Does my work appear intentional vs. haphazard? Is my work creative?	Time spent in class, effort in clean, thoughtful symbol designs, careful treatment of materials, complete work.
Cultural awareness: Is my culture represented in the project? If so how? If not why? How does demeanor and actions change across cultures (what is appropriate in one place may not be in another...why?)	Identification of cultural influences including popular media in final presentation and reflection.

Lesson 2: “Exploring the Art of a Community: Field Trip Adventure”

Teacher(s):	Amber Powers and Shelley-jeane Soule
School:	Canyon Springs High School
Subject:	Art and Literature
Grade Level:	10-12
Duration:	One –Two Weeks

Stage 1: Desired Results

Standards:
9-12.VA.1.1.2 Outline the history and function of a particular visual art form.
9-12.VA.2.1.3 Critique works of art employing appropriate arts vocabulary.
9-12.VA.2.2.4 Demonstrate appropriate behavior while attending and/or participating in arts events.
9-12.VA.3.3.3 Use the creative process (brainstorm, research, rough sketch, final product) to create and critique a work of art
12.LA.3.3.2 Add relevant details and delete irrelevant or redundant information
12.LA.3.1.1 Generate ideas using a variety of strategies

12.LA.3.3.3 Use transitional words and phrases to clarify meaning and improve organization

Essential Questions for Students:

How do we view our heroes?

How is reading a graphic novel or comic book different than reading a comic book?

What effect do outside murals have on a community?

What is the difference between graffiti as vandalism vs. graffiti as art?

Where would be a good place in your community for a mural? What would it be of and why?

Knowledge and Skill (Learning Targets):

WHAT (Content Objective): *"I will be able to prepare for and attend a field trip to the Boise Art Museum and the surrounding area to view art and culture."*

HOW (Language Objective): *"I will research the Boise Capital, Freak Alley, The Anne Frank Memorial and the Boise Art Museum "Comics Tour with my group by reporting on websites, pamphlets and fliers on each site. Then I will have the opportunity to visit each place on a field trip to Boise, documenting my experience in my visual journal."*

Stage 2: Learning Activities and Materials

Anticipatory Set: Present a landmark in the community that has some significance/impact on the local culture. Show pictures and tell the history of this particular landmark. Then ask students how it represents who they are and where they live. Ask them to discuss the purpose of art and architecture within a community. Why is it important?

Process:

*Ask students to get into groups of four and assign each student a site for the field trip (Boise Capital Building, Freak Alley, Anne Frank Memorial, and BAM).

*Each student will research the site they were assigned and then share their findings with the rest of the group. Students may use the internet, but should also consider books, magazines, pamphlets, and personal interviews from people who live (or have lived) in Boise.

*Then the group will find a creative way to advertise for the field trip to help each other anticipate the event.

*On the day of the trip students will have to have permission slips turned in and visual journals ready to document the trip.

Student Materials: Internet access, articles, pamphlets, fliers, poster board, paint, folded paper and clips (for visual journals....see Lesson 3).

Teacher Resources: Pictures, printed history and research for community landmark, etc...

Stage 3: Assessment Evidence	
What will be assessed?	How will it be assessed?
Critical Thinking Skills: What did I learn about Boise as a community by looking at the sites from the field trip? If I was to take someone on a field trip in my community where would I take them and why?	Evidence of learning should be apparent in their advertisement pieces with a depth of knowledge about all four locations and how each location affects the community.
Quality work: Does my work appear complete? Did I take time and effort to create a visually appealing advertisement piece? Does my work appear intentional vs. haphazard? Is my work creative? Does my work evoke excitement and wonder?	Time spent in class, effort in clean, thoughtful symbol designs, careful treatment of materials, complete work. Peer reaction to student work. School community reaction to student work.
Cultural awareness: How does culture shape a community? How does art help to change a culture or upkeep a cultures traditions?	Identification of influences of culture on art and visa verse should be found within their visual journals through artifact finding (photos, drawings, writing, etc...).

Lesson 3: “Visual Journalism”

Teacher(s):	Amber Powers and Shelley-jeane Soule
School:	Canyon Springs High School
Subject:	Art and Literature
Grade Level:	10-12
Duration:	Two-Three Weeks
Stage 1: Desired Results	
Standards:	
9-12.VA.3.1.5 Plan, record, and analyze a body of work through keeping an artist’s journal or sketchbook.	
9-12.VA.3.2.1 Choose purposefully between visual characteristics of a variety of media and use these to communicate one’s own idea.	
9-12.VA.3.2.5 Create a body of work that develops a specific theme, idea, or style of art.	

9-12.VA.2.2.6 Write an artist’s statement that describes a series of works (background information on the artist, artists and movements that were influential to the works, and the significance of the body of work).

10.LA.3.5.2 Share writing with intended audience.

11.LA.2.3.3 Analyze the ways in which the theme represents a view or comment on life, using textual evidence to support the claim

12.LA.3.4.2 Edit for correct punctuation, spelling, grammar, and usage errors.

12.LA.3.3.6 Conference with others to improve writing

Essential Questions for Students:

Choose one or two themes that we have discussed in class this quarter:

Genocide	Bullying	Communities
Racism	Holocaust	Heritage
Prejudice	Civil Rights	Culture
Discrimination	Social Justice	Cliques

How does this theme relate to you personally?

How will you address these issues? What pictures will you use? Why?

Find at least one poem, two songs and three quotes that address your themes to add in your visual journal. Make sure you have pictures to help illustrate each set of words.

What will go on each page? How will you address the theme? Can you break your theme into “sub themes” so they are easier to address?

How will you recommend change for the better in your journal

Knowledge and Skill (Learning Targets):

WHAT (Content Objective): *"I will be able to create a visual journal based on my findings from the all the previous lessons in Art/Lit, from the field trip, and life experience to address and explore a social issue I find most important."*

HOW (Language Objective): *"I will design my visual journal using images from photos, internet and my own drawings as well as artifacts from the field trip and poetry/quotes."*

Stage 2: Learning Activities and Materials

Anticipatory Set: Give students a worksheet to help them formulate and brainstorm a theme for their visual journals. (see appendix) Provide students with images of visual journals made

by previous students or book art professionals. Ask students to discuss how a book can be a work of art and hold a discussion about the difference between holding a book and reading it, versus reading something off the internet. How is it different? Help students see how they can make their point about their chosen them through many senses.

Process:

- *Ask students to fold three pieces of drawing paper together to create a “signature.” Demonstrate this process as the students work so they understand vocabulary and assembly. Students will repeat this process to create as many signatures required.
- *Once signatures are folded, ask students to measure out their card stock covers and fold them.
- *Ask students to organize and number their pages so they can leave space for a title page if desired. Students may need to reorganize their pages as they begin to design their journals.
- *Encourage students to wait until the end to decorate their covers so they can make an informed decision about its design based on the contents of their journals.
- *When ready, demonstrate and assist students in binding their journals by piercing holes correctly, waxing their thread, and sewing the spine with a “Coptic stitch.”

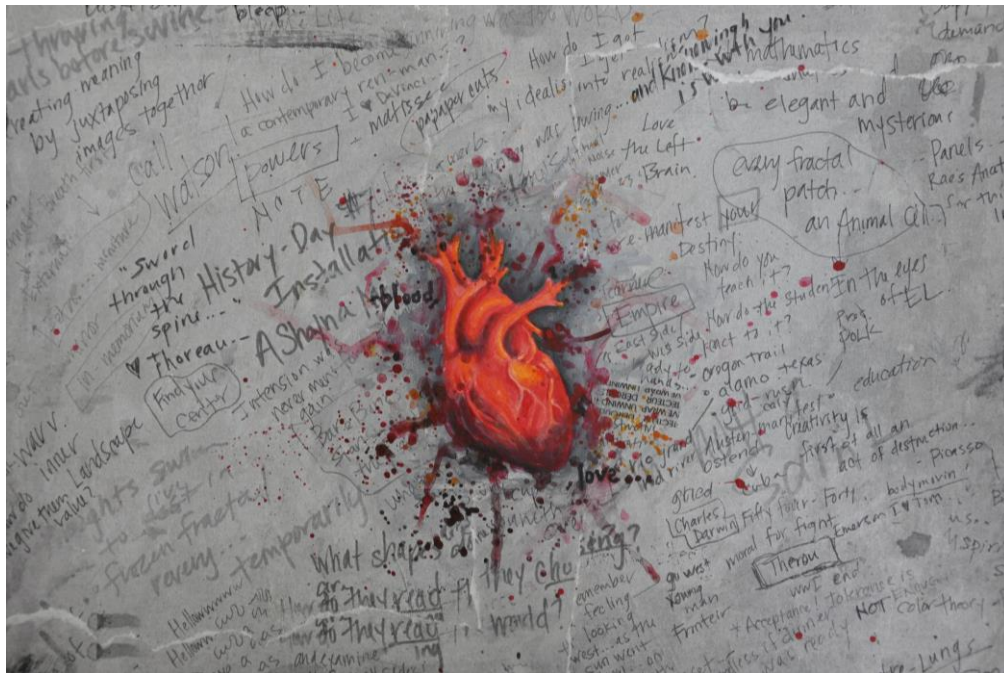
Student Materials: drawing paper, card stock, pencils, colored pencils, glue, Mod Podge, paint, brushes, glue stick, string, glitter, tissue paper, scissors, embroidery floss, curved sewing needles, duct tape, etc...

Teacher Resources: internet access, printer, copier, scanner, camera

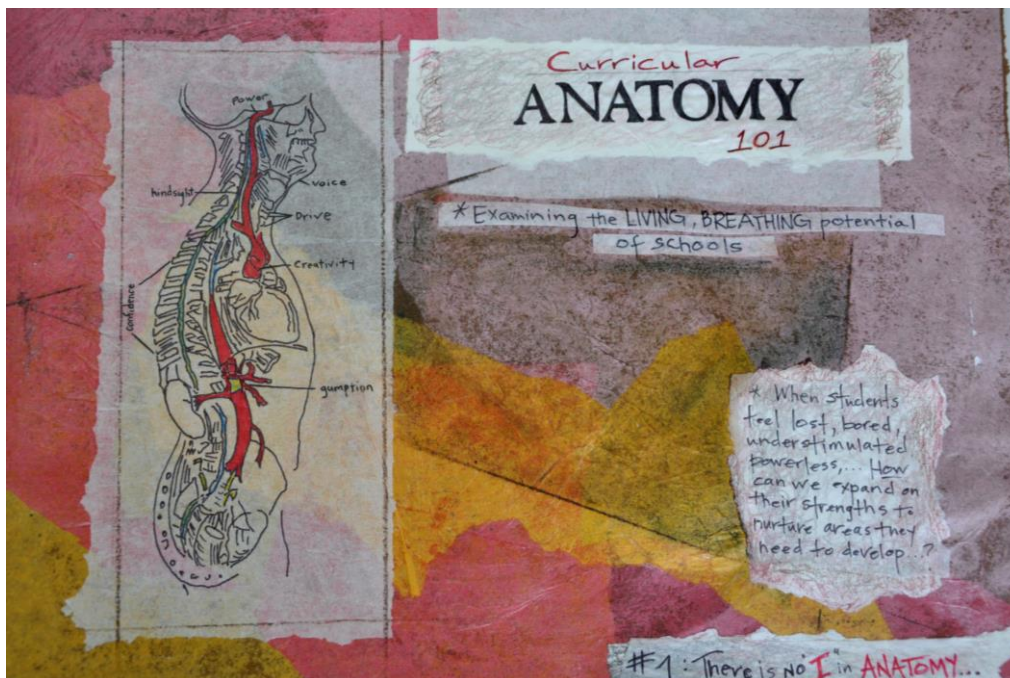
Stage 3: Assessment Evidence	
What will be assessed?	How will it be assessed?
<p>Critical Thinking Skills: What are some social issues that I face in my own community specifically? What did I do to address those within my journal? How did my pictures and artifacts relate to the poetry and quotes I added?</p>	<p>Evidence of connections between class content, field trip sites and personal experience.</p>
<p>Quality work: Does my work appear complete? Did I take time and effort to create a visually appealing piece? Does my work appear intentional vs. haphazard? Is my work creative? Does my work evoke excitement and wonder?</p>	<p>Time spent in class, effort in clean, thoughtful symbol designs, careful treatment of materials, complete work. Peer reaction to student work. School community reaction to student work. Final presentation to class</p>
<p>Cultural awareness: How does culture shape a community? How does art help to change a culture or upkeep a cultures traditions?</p>	<p>Identification of influences of culture on art and visa avers should be found within their visual journals through artifact finding (photos, drawings, writing, etc...).</p>

APPENDIX B

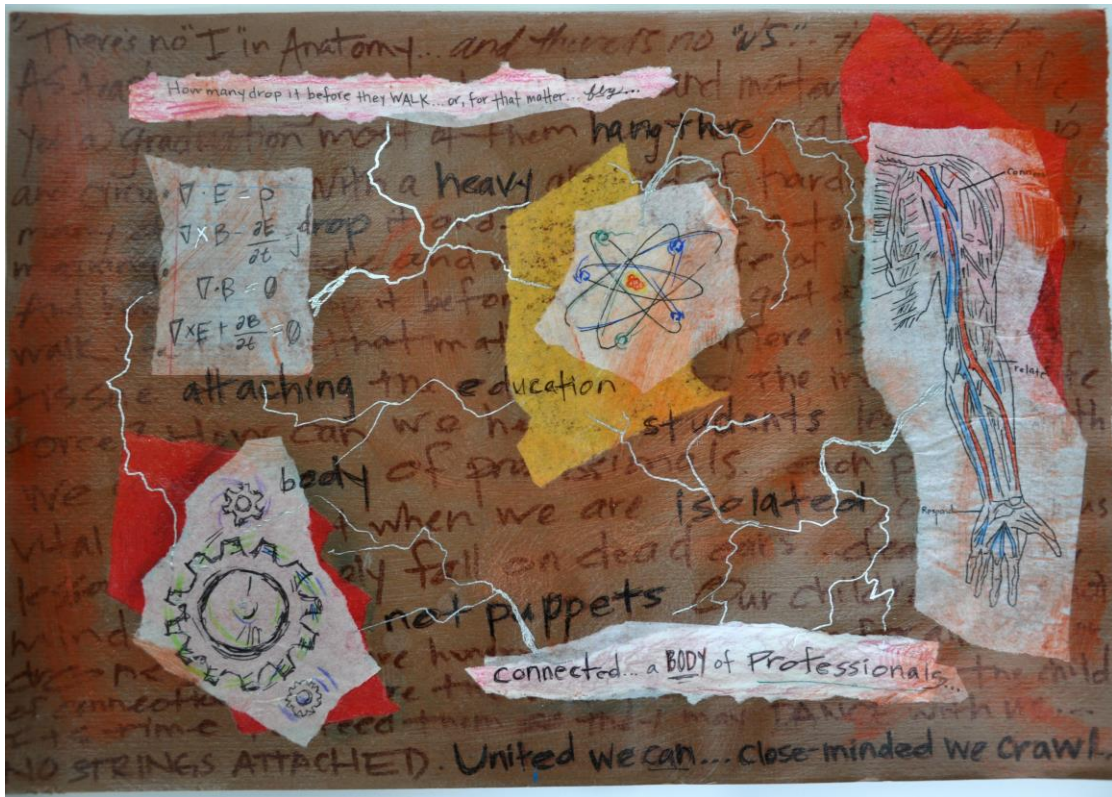
Visual Journal: *Curricular Anatomy 101: Examining the Living, Breathing Potential of Schools*



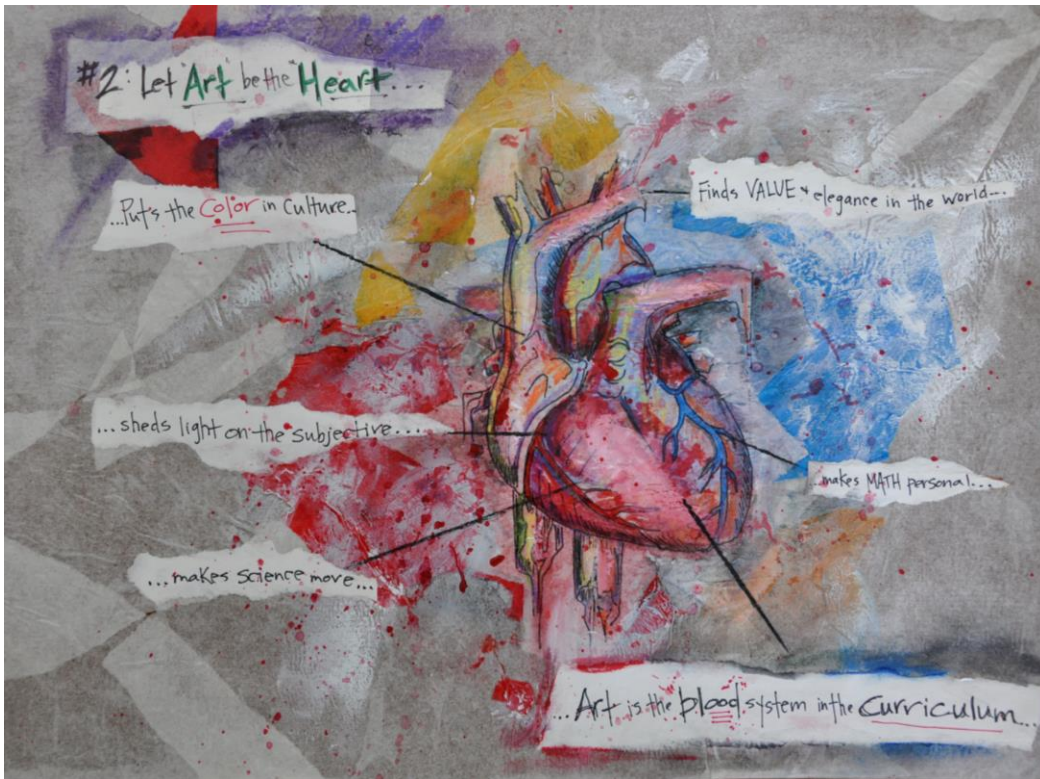
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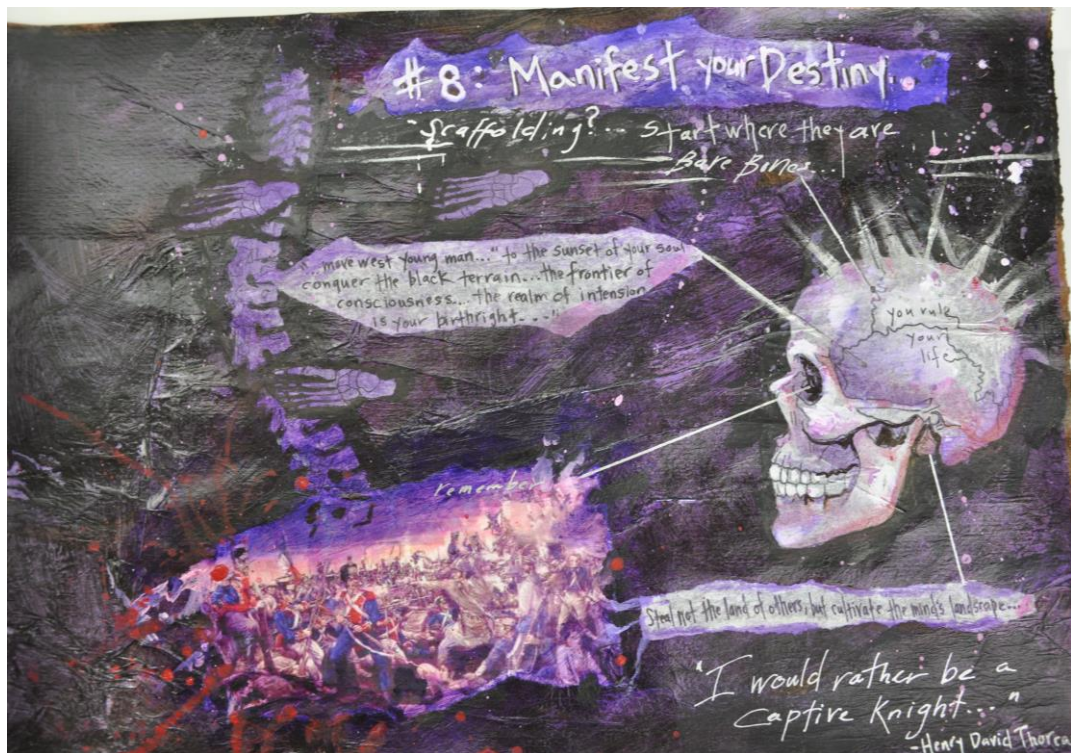
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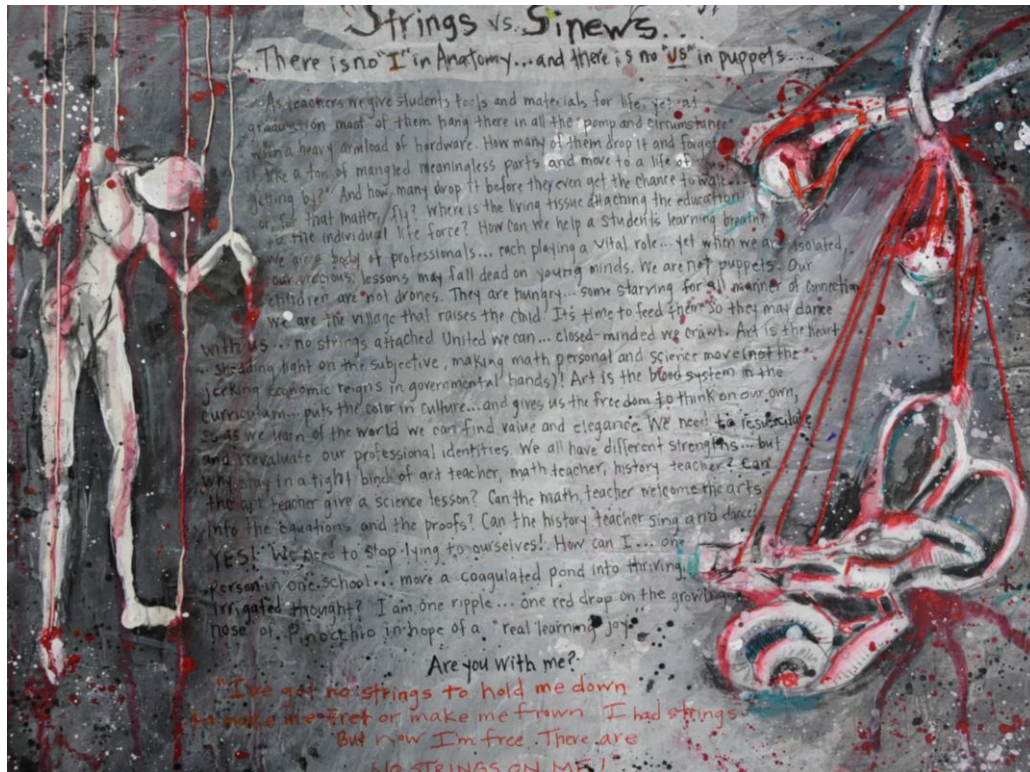
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APPENDIX C

RESOURCES

Donor's Choose - "DonorsChoose.org is an online charity that makes it easy for anyone to help students in need. Public school teachers from every corner of America post classroom project requests on our site, and you can give any amount to the project that most inspires you."

http://www.donorschoose.org/?cc=google_national&lc=donors+choose

Poets.org - "Since the Academy of American Poets launched Poets.org in 1996, the site has been one of the leading destinations for poetry online. Poets.org the most popular publicly-funded poetry website, with tens of millions of visits each year."

<http://www.poets.org/>

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum - "The Museum promotes the responsible teaching of the Holocaust through a variety of resources and programs to help the nation's educators increase their knowledge of Holocaust history and implement sound teaching strategies. Education outreach programs provide teachers with quality Holocaust education, incorporating accurate history, appropriate pedagogy, classroom strategies, and teaching resources."

<http://www.ushmm.org/>

CAPE (Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education) - "CAPE's unique approach to enhancing education with the arts better engages students, improves their understanding of class material, and boosts their grades. CAPE even commissions long-term research to show that integrating art into education continually improves students' critical thinking, self-esteem and confidence."

<http://www.capeweb.org/>

Arts for All (A+ Schools Online Handbook) - “This handbook is divided into 7 chapters. Each chapter includes a section on Lessons Learned, Promising Practices and Useful Tools. The Your Turn section at the end of each chapter offers reflective questions to help you map your next steps. Print an entire chapter by using the printer icon in the upper right corner. Where you enter this resource depends on your own goals and circumstances.”

<http://handbook.laartsed.org/models/index.ashx?md=4>

eHow (Coptic Stitch the Directions) - “Many artists and bookmakers use a Coptic stitch to bind the pages of their books together. The stitch is sturdy and strong enough to hold many pages together, including a cardboard or leather cover.”

http://www.ehow.com/how_6147819_coptic-stitch_-directions.html

BAM (The Boise Art Museum) - “The mission of the Boise Art Museum is to create visual arts experiences, engage people, and inspire learning through exceptional exhibitions, collections, and educational opportunities.”

<http://boiseartmuseum.org/>