

Making Art Integral in the Classroom

A Project Presented to the Faculty of the School of Education

University of San Francisco

In partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of

MASTERS OF ARTS

In

TEACHING

By

Michelle Smart

May 2010

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Under the guidance and approval of the committee, and approval by all the members, this field project has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Children, students and adults all need art in their lives. Whether it is the radio we sing to in the car, the color we use to paint our walls or the art we decorate our homes with, art is something we all do and get great gratification from daily. I see the problem being that people commonly forget to recognize the value art holds in each of our lives. As adults we spend almost 80% of our day at work; children spend almost the same amount of time at school. With art being out of focus in our daily routines, why would we not make learning art in schools natural as well by adding the things that catch our attention, keep us focused and make learning enjoyable? Everyone loves art in some form, and children all love art in any form; by recognizing and amplifying the need for making art integral in the classroom is setting yourself up as a teacher to have a productive and knowledge driven classroom.

Statement of the Problem

The concept of making art integral in the educational classroom is not having enough teachers that have the art background or knowledge to feel confident in teaching art with everyday curriculum. Along with the lack of art knowledge in teachers, there is the high emphasis that teachers and students are feeling from standardized testing, structured standards and just finding the time and resources to make art integration in curriculum a thorough teaching technique (Souto-Manning & James, 2008). Not only does the lack of teacher knowledge effect art integration, but also not having art in the classroom can create environments where all students may struggle. Art can help those students with learning disabilities and second language learners through visuals and

engaging activities. It is up to the school districts or teachers to find compelling research that supports the benefits from art instruction. The district can then apply for a grant to have art integration workshops for their teachers, which would be a stepping stone in the process of integral art education in core curriculum. By creating this website, I hope that this can be a resource for teachers to use as support and guidance to the integration of art. Until schools and teachers recognize the benefits of art in the classroom, there will continue to be an uncertainty and grey zone in the face of making arts integral in the classroom.

Background and Need

A lack of art in the classroom is causing more harm than good. Children are being forced to learn in a nonconventional way. They are being expected to excel without the tools to learn in the ways that they are wired to retain knowledge. We are all not gifted in the sense to listen or read and understand the concept; many of us need a visual or hands on stimulation to retain information. Art being available in school districts is becoming a thing of the past or an idea for the future, but not necessarily something right now. For many years the arts have been included and then removed from school curricula (Bodenlos & Mack, 1997). Because of the lack of studies and knowledge of benefits in teaching the arts, there tends to be more questions left unanswered, thus creating a continual debate whether the arts should be a core in the classroom or not (Hurley & Eisan, 1997). Therefore, it is up to the teachers to be advocates for their students to make art an integral part of their everyday curriculum.

Although arts in the classroom may seem minor compared to the other subjects, it is this type of thought that has us where we are today. Unfortunately some have

looked past the fact that children need art in their lives to make them become more well rounded persons, receive higher test scores, comprehend curriculum better and to excel in hand eye coordination (Dickinson, 1997). According to Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory, there are seven different types of intelligences that are alike in all humans (as cited from Bodenlos & Mack, 1997). Two of the intelligences he discusses are the Musical-Intelligence and the Spatial-Visual Intelligence. Gardner believes that almost all humans are made up of at least two of the intelligences. Out of the seven intelligences, two of them have to deal with the arts. The musical intelligence and spatial intelligence according to Gardner's theory are just as important as Math, Science, English and Social Studies, but coincidentally enough schools still place the Music and Arts at the bottom of the list of importance in education (Bodenlos & Mack, 1997). Imagine the learning capacity of students if they were being taught to their intelligences and not necessarily to the textbooks.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project is to encompass a user-friendly web page for teachers to use. On the website, teachers will be able to access online lesson plans that integrate art, resources to help support the process of integrating art in the curriculum, and a teacher blog where teachers can communicate with each other on their trials and tribulations of making art an integral part of the curriculum.

I hope that this project will be an inspiration and affirmation to teachers of the importance of art in the classroom. I hope that through the website teachers can learn about various art workshops to attend and be motivated by other teachers who are adding art back into their curriculum to enrich and engage their students within the

standards. Not all teachers are going to be natural artists, but I hope that through this website teachers can feel confident making art integral in their classroom and gain an understanding to the importance of this intelligence needed for growth in students.

Project Objectives

Due to statewide budget cuts, schools are being forced to make cut backs where they can. Unfortunately to meet these demands, schools are eliminating the arts.

Teachers are now being given the additional responsibility to implement the arts into their daily curriculum, whether they are comfortable with the task or not.

For art to be made integral in the classroom by teachers, there needs to be quick and easy access, support, and resources for teachers to further grow their knowledge of the arts. The project objectives encompass a website for teachers, as a primary source, in order:

- To gain knowledge of art curriculum.
- To see an increase in discipline improvements in the classroom.
- To better their teaching strategies.
- To encourage teachers to make art integral in their classroom.
- To engage their students in current standards and curriculum.
- To communicate to other teachers in regards to art education.
- To gain ability to understand dramatic importance of art integration.

Additional project objectives were made for teachers in order to teach their students, as a secondary source, to:

- Be engaged in classroom and school objectives.
- Create a higher level of thinking and cognitive awareness.

- Be more inclined to pay attention in class.
- Be more inspired to succeed in education and other extra curricular activities.
- Build confidence academically and socially.

Definition of Terms

Although I recognize there may be some debate about the definition of terms presented, when reading this study the definitions stated will apply.

Integrate – To combine a new concept with an already existing concept to become a whole.

Integral – To add an already existing idea to a current idea, to become a whole once again.

Nonconventional – To learn in an environment which does not aim to the highest success of student learning.

Summary

Education has gone on a wild roller coaster of ideas and implementations through out history. Unfortunately we are in a time where schools do not recognize the importance of our children's learning processes and are instead driven by test scores and financial dependencies. At a time we see so low, it is hard to imagine things being better. When people are given fewer options, it is usually when you see the most creativity. It will only be so long before teachers are recognizing the need to explore and be creative in the classroom.

By incorporating the Teacher Website as a resource for teachers, I will be able to communicate with other teachers who may be struggling to engage their students or feel the need to raise their test scores as well. The webpage will serve as a continual support and guidance for those teachers who can respect the importance of fostering education for all students within each intelligence.

CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

Art in the classroom has not always been praised as a number one priority. Some believe that it is something that is more of a hobby than that of an educational resource. Unfortunately art has gained a bad rap for this, because art is fun and exciting and intriguing to do; should this not be an obvious reason to make it integral in the classroom? We are constantly taking courses and reading on how to make the curriculum relevant to our students, to keep them engaged and excited about learning, so why would we not add the freest form of learning by making art integral in your current classroom curriculum? Providing proper background and content, using art in the curriculum to make concepts clearer, is a win win situation.

The importance of clarity is crucial when discussing education, and in this case I want to clarify the word integrate. I feel that using the word “integrating art into curriculum” may not be the best choice of words in some circumstances. This idea was made clear to me through a teacher that said this would merely mean that I would like to see art introduced into curriculum as though it never existed in the first place. In some grade levels this may be the first time that art is being integrated into the curriculum, but in most cases I find the statement of never having art in the curriculum not true; art has until recently been apart of every day curriculum. Referring to Katz and Chard’s study (as cited in Souto-Manning & James, 2008), Reggio Emilia’s curriculum and schooling has been used in Europe for decades, whereas the United States did not adapt this technique until 1987. With the importance of art curriculum being recently accepted it is such a shame to see it brushed to the side so easily.

Importance/Benefits

Dickinson (1997) found that the human brain has a visual cortex that is five times larger than the auditory cortex. “Is it any wonder that students respond so positively when they have opportunities to learn through the visual arts? And is it any wonder that words alone do not reach all students? A picture indeed is worth a thousand words.” (p. 5).

The arts in education are such an essential part of learning, life, communication and culture. Imagine growing up in the world with out beautiful paintings to see, the energy of music or the emotion of theater. Life would be boring and dull; there would be no color, imagination, freedom or universal understanding. If this is not the type of world we want to live in, then why do we allow that to happen in our school districts? Everywhere else we are stimulated by the arts: we have television, radio, magazines and the Internet. People flock to these attractions and know everything there is to know about them; being able to see these positive forms of communication would seem to be a dead ringer for communication with our students in the classroom. When human beings are in environments that are positive, nurturing, stimulating, and encourage action and interaction, we flourish. These triggers stimulate the brain, which allows humans to learn, remember, problem-solve and create wonderful possibilities. These abilities allow for the brain to function at its highest capacity. On the other hand, if human beings are deprived of the abilities to use these senses, the brain may never be able to work to its highest capability (Dickinson, 1997). Integrating arts into curriculum is very important because it opens the doors for teachers to hone in on the skills and needs of each separate child.

With larger budget cuts and schools having to decide what is important and what is not for students, the most common extracurricular activities that are the first to go are art, music and sports programs: basically humanities. When we start taking these benefits away from students we start to see students act out, loose interest and confidence, and be subjected to stricter and more constraining tests. Children are creative beings and they need to be able to exercise these needs through art and education. According to *Task Force on Children's Learning and the Arts: Birth to Age Eight*, Goldhawk (1998, as cited in Souto-Manning & James, 2008) found the following:

Through the arts education, very young children can experience nontraditional modes of learning that develop intrapersonal, interpersonal, spatial, kinesthetic and logic abilities, as well as traditional modes of learning that develop mathematical and linguistic abilities, skills and knowledge. (p. 84)

Most students learn visually, physically and through example. "Drawing, painting, clay modeling, block building, dress-up, singing, and rhythms are valued learning tools" (Souto-Manning & James, 2008, p. 84). Because each child learns at a different rate and with different styles, some students may not need these resources to learn, but incorporating them is only going to cement the concepts clearer. With a knowledge of curriculum and students, I feel that we should start using the word 'integral' for art and curriculum more often. I would like to merely see that art is seen as an integral part of education in all subjects. It is something that was once separated and should now be brought back together as though it was never neglected in the first place.

In 1990 the National Endowment for the Arts decided that they too were interested in the benefits that art has on student learning. They sponsored a study to be done based on the relationship between instruction and experience in the arts and student performance on standardized tests of educational achievement (Fowler & McMullen, 1991). The study consisted of eight elementary, middle and high schools. Among the eight schools, six of the schools had quantitative data and the other two schools did not have quantitative data. The schools were selected based on an exemplary model approach that was created by the study team. The criteria is as follows: (a) open student selection, (b) multidisciplinary arts programs, (c) articulated program goals and objectives, (d) availability of quantitative data, (e) broad geographic and socio-economic representation, (f) representation of a range of elementary, middle and high schools, (g) representation of public and private schools, and (h) programs in operation for several years.

Quantitative and qualitative data was collected at the beginning of each site visit and during each site visit. The results were later compared and assessed. McMullen and Fowler collected data that included SAT scores, standardized achievement tests, self-esteem, reading and literacy scores, dropout and attendance rates, and teacher retention rates. The researchers also directly observed the school activities looking for direct evidence in the ways that art visibly affects the physical learning environment.

The researchers also collected interviews amongst administrators, faculty, students and parents to gather anecdotal information on the arts-education connection and whether or not the approach and effect are productive. The interview questions

asked about the current arts program, curriculum and assessment methods, facilities, teacher characteristics, school atmosphere, and student performance.

The findings from the eight schools that were part of the study found that there is a very strong connection between the arts and excellent education. McMullen and Fowler found strong evidence that the schools were transformed and renewed by the change from traditional curriculum to an art-based curriculum and model. The students and teachers that were observed during the study were engaged and excited about doing their work and being in school (Fowler & McMullen, 1991). In quantitative data analysis the schools in this study found that their test scores had higher than average test scores compared to that of other schools in their district. Standardized tests results compared favorably with those of students enrolled in more academically selective schools. Some of the evidence collected suggests that students with low to average academic preparation performed at a higher level in the arts-focused schools. The final evidence that the researchers collected was that students who are in these art-infused schools are more likely to improve their academic performance (Fowler & McMullen, 1991).

As clearly stated by Postman and Weingartner (as cited in Souto-Manning & James, 2008), “Children enter school as question marks and leave as periods.” This statement spoke to me when reviewing the methods that are used in classrooms today. There is so much emphasis on independent reading and writing that students are finding themselves competing for the best grade or answer in the class, while collaboration goes right out the window (Souto-Manning & James, 2008). Students are finding themselves feeling incompetent if they are unable to understand the instructions, afraid to ask for

fear of ridicule, and falling in the cracks to the system when afraid to speak up.

Allowing students to be creative, share, praise each other and appreciate the artistic view in every subject will only create happy, motivated and confident students now and for the future.

These concepts help cement the idea that art is a much-needed commodity, allowing me to see evidence that art is out there and people and students are fighting for it. It does benefit education and the future cognitive skills of students. Having support from schools that are fighting for the acceptance of art in education is very important to me as an art appreciator and a product of incorporated art instruction.

These studies were based out of the Seattle, Washington school districts and other well-adapted art-based schools. Each study showed impressive results in the benefit of art in curriculum. Green Lake Elementary School has dedicated a majority of its success to a strong curriculum and a school-wide multi-arts program with a full-time art specialist. In the studies reported through observation from the Principal of Green Lake Elementary school, there has been a visual difference in the discipline problems and the academic achievements continue to improve as a result of the strong support and use of art integration (Dickinson, 1997). At a middle school in Seattle, WA that is in a less affluent area, it has seen a significant increase in the California Test of Basic Skills by twenty to twenty five points by incorporating a supportive productive drama program and an "Eco-News" television program. The fourth and fifth graders improved their reading skills by more than two levels on the Macmillon Reading Inventory in 1995-96 through these positive programs at their school (Dickinson, 1997). Some people may argue that these test results are usually only seen in school districts where

students are more fortunate, but the Superintendent of a Massachusetts school district had only good things to say of a school where the students are economically disadvantaged, not very talented nor motivated students. “I am absolutely astonished--even dumbfounded--by your results” (Dickinson, 1997, p. 3), speaking about results in which the students had scored the highest in the state in the 1992 Massachusetts Educational Assessment Program (MEAP).

Returning art into an integral curriculum can help engage all students from every background; it is a language that we can all relate to. Because of the wide variety of students in the classroom now, it is important that we really pay attention to the demands that each person learns with. With 15% of people learning through auditory, 40% through a visual learning style and 45% of the people through touching, feeling and doing (Dickinson, 1997), we can see that the traditional style of teaching in a classroom through lecture is only reaching 15% of the students. What is the benefit of teaching when not even a quarter of the students are retaining what you are teaching? The point of teaching is to try to get through to as many students as possible in any way possible.

In 2007 a study was released by the Education Research Institute, which conducted art research in the Hsinchu area of Taiwan, Republic of China, to examine the relationships between the qualities of creativity, drawing ability, and visual/spatial intelligences amongst third grade students (Liu, 2007). The subjects for this study comprised of approximately 11,653 third-grade students from 99 public elementary schools in Hsinchu County and Hsinchu City, Taiwan, Republic of China. The final participant selection was based off of the results of the following measures; the *Milne-*

Kasen Story Pictures (a Test for Creativity) test, the *Young Visual Artists Checklist*, the *Portfolio Review Measurement*, and the classroom teacher's nomination of the *Milne-Kasen Visual/Spatial Intelligence Checklist* where a random selection of 427 third-grade students were given the tests. Based off of the results of the tests, the final participant selection was made by those who scored in the top 16% and those who scored in the lower 16%; the final sample included approximately 134 third-grade students who attended public school in the Hsinchu area.

Quantitative data was collected and compared. The data collection was slightly altered due to a time constraint; each student was assigned a 10-digit number from a table of random numbers. Half of the students in the top and bottom 16% were either placed in the morning group or the afternoon group for the administration of the tests. The researcher used descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages to summarize the preliminary measures that included the *Young Visual Artist's Checklist*, the *Portfolio Review Measurement*, and the classroom teacher's nomination of the *Milne-Kasen Visual/Spatial Intelligence Checklist Test* (Liu, 2007). Although all of the measurement instruments were American origin, all test results were scored with the consideration of the Taiwanese students educational development and were under strict supervision.

The findings from the approximate 134 third-grade students were based off of the three preliminary research questions; (1) What are the relationships between the scores of third-grade students on the *Milne-Kasen Story Pictures* test, the *Young Visual Artists' Checklist*, the *Portfolio Review Measurement*, and the classroom teacher's nomination based on the *Mile-Kasen Visual/Spatial Intelligence Checklist*? (2) What are

the relationships between scores of third-grade students on the *Milne-Kasen Story Pictures* test in terms of fluency, flexibility, originality, elaboration and self-image? (3)

What are the differences between scores of third-grade students on the *Milne-Kasen Story Pictures* test based upon the selected demographic factors of gender, community, age and time of test taking? As a result of the research examining the relationships among the qualities of creativity, drawing ability, and visual/spatial intelligence of third-grade students in selected elementary schools in the Hsinchu area of Taiwan, Republic of China, the researcher came to the following conclusions that there is a positive relationship between students' self-image as a young artist and their ability to produce high quality artwork. There is a positive relationship among components of creativity exhibited by children. There is a positive relationship between a child's creativity potential and their self-image of artistic ability and local educators' observations of students' artwork and classroom teachers' observation of students' art-related behaviors. A child's self-image as an artist is consistent with the perceptions of local art educators' Girls generally have a better self-image as young artists and, at the same time, also demonstrate more original ideals and apply more elaborate details in the artwork than boys. Students who live in a rural area generally demonstrate a higher creative potential than students who live in the city, suburban, or remote areas. Students who live in the city generally have more original ideas than students who live in rural, suburban, or remote areas. Nine-and half-year-old students generally score higher than their peers in the fluency sub-test. And finally, students generally exhibited more ideas in the afternoon (Liu, 2007).

To collect the final thoughts of the study, it has been concluded and confirmed that having artistic expression will assist parents, teachers, and art education policy makers in the development of an appropriate art education curriculum.

In the beginning we found the first sign of intelligence through cave drawings; without the ability to draw to communicate the story of their lives on cave walls, we may have never been able to know what life was like back then. Times really have not changed too much since then, as people still tag on the walls of buildings and we still continue to communicate through comics and art (Dickinson, 1997). The pricelessness of art returning in an integral classroom can only be seen through your own experiences as a teacher. You will see the differences in your students; whether they are integrating music, theater or art into their daily lives, there can only be a positive outcome. Music can help the brain with mathematical equations, drama with reading and confidence, and art with creativity and writing. Uncovering the natural intuitions into curriculum is only going to foster the already natural growth of learning and knowledge. As Dickinson (1997, p. 10) stated: “A life without the arts is a life of seeing without feeling, hearing only what is offered to us secondhand, touching without real contact.”

Teacher's Knowledge/ Student's Knowledge

As a student you believe that your teacher knows everything. Astoundingly to some, teachers are not given the gift when they graduate with the knowledge of everything; it is something that is continually gained through life, collaboration and study. A teacher is best when they can decipher the difference between learning through the act of teaching and through finishing a course on how to teach (Darling-Hammond, 1998). Being able to gain knowledge through discussions with other teachers, reflecting

on what you have seen in the classroom, studying and just being active in what you are teaching is going to make you a stronger, more reliable source for your students.

In the required subjects that are being taught, teachers need to have some background on what he or she is teaching. Whether it is the basics or how to make the basics more fun (in my case), it is returning art into an integral education. This task not only makes the teacher proficient in one or more subjects, but also adds the knowledge of the arts and how to make them an integral part of curriculum. Although it feels that a little art is better than no art, some people may disagree and think that if you are going to teach art to students that the teachers need to be well prepared. Having a volunteer, visiting artist or a parent teach art may not always be acceptable if they do not have the back ground in art production, aesthetics, criticism, or art history (Hatfield, 2007). This all depends on whether you are looking for the students to leave with vast amounts of background in art or if you merely want to let your students be creative and knock down any barriers in confidence or acceptance.

When we get up in the morning to get ready, a majority of us style our hair to what we think looks good and what is accepted in society. We choose the clothes that our peers approve and what we feel good in. We are in constant search for the approval of our family, friends, employers and teachers. Art with students holds these same values. Children and adults are quick to learn what can be done to attract or retract attention with their art. A lot of time students will create safe art: rather than branching out and interpreting with their own feelings, the student will create art that will be approved and accepted easily by others. By not acknowledging the need for individuality, the students do not create original art pieces or push themselves to try

more difficult techniques (Bressler, 1998). The unfortunate part is that the students are not being able to fully engage and appreciate art this way. When they are not taught how to ask questions about the art or partake in dialogue, they may just see the art lesson as a waste of time or boring. What makes art so magical is the opportunity to make a path for yourself. It is the one time that you can stand alone and be proud of what you have created. But before you can get to that level, you have to learn how to push yourself and not be afraid to interpret the lesson in your own way. Not following the teacher's exact directions in art is the one opportunity that students have to make their own masterpieces. This is what is so important for any teacher to be aware of before making art an integral part of their curriculum. No student should create an identical piece of art, even during the holidays. Each piece should reflect individuality and ownership.

Can a person who does not have any background or experience in art be valued and credited at making art integral in the classroom? When prompted this question you should find yourself thinking that yes, of course someone with little to no art background can incorporate art into their curriculum. In the study based on six individuals who were chosen because of their responses to integrating art in the classroom, they found that it does not matter what artist background you have. What matters are the attitudes that these teachers possess, the support and realization they see from their students when they add art to their daily curriculum (Oreck, 2006). They each took a liking to the differences in their students and they each invested themselves in workshops and seminars that taught teachers new and fresh ideas on how to make the same old curriculum interesting again. As cited from one of the teachers in Oreck's

research, “ We are in the entertainment business. Keep them interested. If you can keep them interested for 45 minutes you can do a lot. Or else they’ll turn the channel” (p. 14). This is exactly why I feel that incorporating art into your curriculum is so important, because students are only going to retain knowledge that they like and can relate to. Once you have lost them, they are gone and whatever you have to say goes right out the window. The purpose for choosing this study is to show the correlation between regular teachers and their desire to incorporate art into their day-to-day routines in the classroom. Not all the art that took place during this study had to do with the curriculum, some just had to do with stress release, relaxation or just having fun (Oreck, 2006).

The study held strong themes throughout its several year course. What started with hundreds of volunteers ended up with six teachers from New York who all had little to no training in the arts. The main themes of the study were: (a) characteristics and style of teaching, (b) their personal feelings on the subject of art, (c) how they used them on an everyday basis and (d) what their environment was like in the places they worked and lived at (Oreck, 2006). The six teachers all had similar feelings about the schools where they worked. They each felt there was no sense of freedom in the classroom and that everything they did was being timed and watched over. One teacher went to say that her principal would come into the classroom at 10:15am and if they students were not journaling that she would get written up (Oreck, 2006). Hearing stories like these teachers let me see the restrictions there have been in the process of making art an integral part of the curriculum. How can you be creative and inspirational when your every move is being timed and looked over? Well, these teachers went

against all those odds and took a risk for themselves and for their students. Within the time of the study four of the six teachers immersed themselves in one to two week art workshops and seminars that were available through a group call Art Connections (Oreck, 2006), while the other two teachers did little to no workshops, yet were still involved with the community in the arts.

The similarities that were apparent in the study were the positive commentary given by these six teachers during the study. You can feel the passion for teaching and enjoying their students' learning. Reading the way the teachers grew as individuals and in their appreciation of arts in the classroom was very inspirational and gave you the feeling that it can be possible with the right motivation. One teacher was sharing how important it is to make your curriculum relative and to being able to adjust your teaching style to those of your students. In one example she told her class that she understood that they don't just learn reading and writing through books, but her students learned it better through dance and music (Oreck, 2006). This realization is what makes a teacher want to come to the classroom everyday and see her students progress in the academics, arts and self-confidence.

The study was a reliable source for the support of integrating art in the curriculum. The research was done as a part of a mixed-methods project and consisted of questionnaires, background information and personal interviews. The questionnaire was given to teachers in grades K-12 in eleven school districts in five regions of the country (Oreck, 2006). What is amazing to me is the fact that the six individuals chosen were all from New York. Each had an awareness of the power of arts in the classroom and were eager to learn how to implement them. The study showed consistency and

extensive background on each individual, why and how they were chosen, and what was observed in the course of the study.

This research study was crucial to my project because it answered the question that is heard anytime you bring up art integration: “ I am not an artist, I can’t teach art.” This study proves that you do not need to be an amazing artist, or even an artist, to teach art, but what you do need is to have goals for yourself and for your students. If you feel that to meet your goals you can incorporate art, then what an even greater accomplishment. All of the teachers in the study had strong goals. “To have her students love reading and always carry a book with them, to slow down the students’ thinking to allow them to ponder and look.” Another was to have “their students be risk-takers, to collaborate and respect each other, to learn to focus and discipline” and the last was to “inspire unique imaginative thinking” (Oreck, 2006, p. 19). Listing these goals let you see the broad range of goals each one of these teachers had and how they felt they could reach their goals with their students while implementing goals in their classroom. All of us have a specific type of art we may prefer over the other. One person might prefer painting or drawing, while another may prefer music. What these teachers started with was what they knew and felt comfortable adding to their curriculum. Through time, art workshops and getting involved with the community art programs, the teachers were able to learn new techniques in their preferred subject and that gradually allowed them to branch out and become more familiar and comfortable with other genres of art (Oreck, 2006).

Teaching art with your curriculum does not always come naturally and instantly; it takes time, discussions, support, and encompasses trial and errors that are normal to discover what works with you and your students.

Teachers across the spectrum may have all felt, at one point, the heartache for their students as art programs were lifted from schools and the disappointment that art is out and more books are in. Maybe if art were considered more seriously, then legislation would approve qualified personal to teach art properly in the schools. A question that was brought to my attention in a journal article titled *Who Teaches Art? What is Learned?* (Hatfield, 2007) answers this question:

At this point one must ask what we really want for our young children, art enrichment or learning? Such a question is never asked in the area of reading. Do we want children to read or be enriched by trips to the town library? (p. 7)

This question is very interesting to me because I feel that even if a child learns how to read, they still need to learn where the library is, how to check out a book, the fact that there are FREE books to read and the privilege it is to be given a library card. I think that you need both of these tools to make a successful reader and/or artist.

Whether students are young or old, most students learn according to their classroom environment. If a student feels that the classroom is a threat, unsafe, or a judgmental environment, they are less likely to take risks in the classroom. "In a comfortable learning environment, young children are eager to try new things; as they play and experiment, they learn." Owocki (as cited in Souto-Manning & James, 2008, p. 84) stated that to make classrooms engaging, creative and exciting it takes a lot of work and a special person. Based on a survey taken for the study of this research article, he

found that of the 25 teachers taking the survey at the intercity school, all of the teachers found that art is an extremely important tool that can be used to engage students in curriculum. While almost all of the teachers taking the survey could see the importance of integrating art into their standard curriculum, more than half of the teachers felt unsure of how to use the arts in their curriculum, and if they were integrating arts they were having problems with classroom management and the restraints they felt as teachers to include all required materials from the state (Souto-Manning & James, 2008). The quantitative research that was accumulated in the study I felt did a remarkable job at ensuring itself credible. The study was done with 25 intercity teachers from the same elementary school. They each took part in a workshop taught by one of the authors of the article and were given an optional questionnaire, which all completed, and which was then typed up by a third party to create a non-biased response (Souto-Manning & James, 2008). The percentage response of the 25 teachers participating in the small study was then compared to a survey done by the general population through “Americans for the Arts” (Davidson & Michener, as cited in Souto-Manning & James, 2008). The comparing results showed similarities in the lack of teacher knowledge and experience for properly implementing art to enhance learning and development. In this case the inside study had the same results as the outside study. I felt that the results and information retained in this study is vital to my project because it pinpoints the reality of how crucial and positive integrative art programs can be in education. Amazingly, the fact that almost all teachers agree that art is an important tool in the aiding of remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating curriculum

(Anderson & Krathwohl, as cited in Souto-Manning & James, 2008) can better help students gain an acceptance of the material in a safe and non-threatening environment.

Art is something that can be taught to teachers to teach to their students. There are phenomenal web sites that can aid teachers in finding information about art and how to integrate it. There are workshops to teach teachers new teaching techniques, as there are students who may not always respond well to the traditional standards, and there are other teachers that you can talk to who can give you advice and inspirations to make a change to better teach your students through art. The only way to do these things is to want to be an advocate for your students. Learning does not stop once you get the degree. “The achievement of high levels of student understanding is dependent on highly skillful teaching and schools that are organized to support teachers’ continuous learning” (Darling-Hammond, 1998, p. 1).

What makes art such a difficult subject to integrate in a classroom or allow it to become a theme? Is it the fear from the teacher that he or she does not know enough art to do this? In reality the teacher probably does not have enough background, but this should not stop a good thing from happening. A teacher must be able to evaluate a student’s knowledge and be able to assess it properly. They should be able to identify their students’ strengths and weaknesses and be able to incorporate different teaching methods to each child’s needs. There should be an understanding that teachers will and can do whatever they need to do to get the point across to the student (Darling-Hammond, 1998). In the elementary grades, students seem to respond better with color and art. Being able to do some research, take a summer workshop, talk with other teachers and learn how to incorporate art into some of your curriculum is going to hit

home to some students and better cement concepts in others. As a teacher you need to be sensitive to all styles of teaching with your students; I would suggest art as a path to reach some of your students.

As a newcomer to the world into integral curriculum art you need to not be harsh on yourself. There is no need to be Picasso or Michelangelo; you just need to be driven, eager to learn, excited to teach and enthusiastic about your students. The job of a teacher is to never know everything, but to be willing to find anything. If you have the desire to learn how to integrate art into your curriculum, then there are numerous ways that you can achieve these goals. You need to know your abilities how to collaborate with your students, with other teachers, and how to work with the parents in the best way to support their children academically and emotionally. Anyone can teach art, maybe not as well at the beginning as a certified art educator, but in time you can learn through experience, working with your students and working with other teachers around you.

As a person first and teacher second, you are going to want to evaluate what and how you are going to implement art into your curriculum. Before you can learn how to make art integral in your curriculum you need to be aware of the different types of art genre you can teach out there. There is “Child Art,” which is original art works created by children; “Fine Art,” which is arts in different media created by established artists; and “Art for Children,” which is created by adults for children (Bressler, 1998). Each one of these genres of art has been part of two different research studies. Both were conducted in elementary schools, one for three years with the support of the National Endowment for the Arts and the other a four-year project subsidized by the Bureau of

Educational Research and the research board of Illinois (Bessler, 1998). In both of the studies, there was always a regular teacher as the control and then an art specialist teacher, and each teacher was observed in their day-to-day teachings.

In “child art” there was a dramatic difference in the styles of teaching. With the art specialists, the content that was taught to the students about art revolved around colors, shapes, vocabulary, lines, etc., while the classroom teachers’ content for “child art” was focused on the themes of holidays, seasons, and special events (Bessler, 1998). While this is not necessarily a bad thing, the teacher is creating limits for the students. They are not learning about shapes and how to use colors, and there is no sense of individuality. Instead they are coloring in a heart for Valentine’s Day or dipping an egg in dye for Easter, which is not allowing the students to step out and take a chance with their art. Instead they are, in a sense, copying what they see and know. There is a lack of discussion, interpretation and ownership to this type of art. In most cases, I can understand why art perceived the way that the classroom teacher taught as “child art” could seem like a waste of time. This is why it is important for the teacher to be properly educated in art so their students can gain proper techniques and frameworks for each activity and lesson involving art. Although each teacher may have taught the genre of “child art” differently, in each study both teachers used similar encouragement in a very generic way for the students (“I like it”), thus not being more specific to encourage continued use of vocabulary or technique for current or future art activities (Bessler, 1998).

In the genre of “fine art” instruction there was only one classroom teacher who portrayed the topic of “fine art” properly. While a majority of the other classroom

teachers merely used classical music as background music and used the famous artists' work as decorations in the classroom, this teacher brought in her favorite impressionist art and discussed what feelings and memories the art provoked in the students and her. Although this was a rare case, usually the "fine art" was left to the art specialists who find it easier to make part of their curriculum (Bessler, 1998). This section of the study inspired me because it allowed me to think how I could incorporate "fine art" into my teaching. At first glance it almost seems impossible, but in reality it is very obvious. Since teaching "fine art" deals with history, and we all know that students' attention span during lecture is minimal, while teaching history you can tie in "fine art." An example would be that while you are teaching about the Revolutionary War you could tie in the respected artists of that time and what type of music was being listened to or clothes they were wearing. If anything maybe they will be able to remember the dates and time periods better because they can visually and audibly be able to connect the concepts easier. This creates more avenues and more chances to remembering historical facts when it relates to what the students are interested in.

In the final genre, "art for children," these studies focused on the musical instruction aspect of art. The materials that were used by the classroom teacher and art specialists were the same. They each used what was available to them through music text books which were composed of folk songs and excerpts from classical music created for the use in schools (Bessler, 1998). There were two different types of "child art" depicted during the study. The first was in the school or classroom with the students as the performers, and the second was with the students being the audience to performers in or outside of the school (Bessler, 1998). A weakness in the student

performers was the lack of individuality because the content was being taught to the group as a whole. In the other part of the study there were groups of artists that would perform at the schools and have the students as an audience. A majority of the performances held high moral value and focused around school, which unfortunately left little to no time for commentary or reflection of the performance. It was pure entertainment and held not artistic value (Bessler, 1998). Occasionally a school would leave and see an out-of-school performance at the local cultural centers in which they attended operas, dance and theater performances that were produced for children (Bessler, 1998). In the observations made during the study, this was the most “authentic” example of “child art.” The students were enthralled by the performances and were able to interact with the artists in between scenes to answer questions and share experiences. In the end, both examples of “child art” lacked the guidance from the teacher to the students on what to see and hear from the performances. This in turn made it difficult for the students to gain any meaning from the performances (Bessler, 1998).

Although each study was done at length, I feel that there is a tendency to believe the study is valid because of the detailed descriptions and the ability to express to the reader a sense of being there. My only doubt in whether the study is valid or not is the broadness of the study. It does not say how old the students were, only they were in elementary school. Did they study the same class at school or did it vary each year? Also how did they choose the art specialists and the classroom teachers? Knowing the ethnicity and social status of the schools studied could vary the results as well. Other schools may have access to better art supplies and performances than other schools.

These studies are only representing a very small percentage, but in this case I feel that because there were three different art genres discussed that it allows for the possibility to reach all levels of status in most school districts.

I felt that this research article was important to my project because it organized the different types of art that can be taught in the classroom. It discussed how to teach art and what would be the best resource to teach them. Towards the end of the article it articulates that art needs to be taken more seriously in the classroom and at school by teachers, parents and students. But before students and teachers can take art seriously, there needs to be a personal space for art teachers. It talks about the fact that art teachers are almost always stuck with pushing their art cart from room to room and not having enough storage to place materials or unfinished art projects in (Bessler, 1998). This results in the lack of art being taught to the students in some schools. Some teachers do not want a mess in their class or the desks moved around; in return this takes away from some of the lessons that can be valuable in learning about art. An ideal situation would be to have an art room, just like the gym or library, but only aimed at art for the students. This way students can paint and do other art activities that don't have to mess up the classroom. Limiting the ability for students to produce art is holding back the process of getting teachers to make art an integral part of their curriculum. Educators can sometimes feel that it takes too much time to set up and clean up after art activities and a lot of the time they are just too messy. In a perfect world, maybe one day, but for now baby steps need to happen. Being educated in the values and purpose of art will transfer to the students through discussions and personal interpretations by each student.

Theme-Based

Themes are everywhere we look. They are in our houses, gardens, on our calendars, phones, lunch boxes, and hopefully in the classes we teach. Having recognition of how powerful the right theme can be helps make lesson plans and activities in your classroom more engaging, organized and stable for the students. Finding the perfect theme for your class is often harder than it may seem. The goal of any theme based curriculum is to make sure that the theme is interesting to the students, it is not limited in information or facts, and it encompasses many subtopics within the theme (Colasanti & Follo, 1992). Being able to work with other teachers to help integrate the theme into all subjects can be a very powerful tool in teaching core curriculum. When a proper theme is chosen, the transition from subject to subject can be very smooth for students, with the goal being to make sure each standard is met without having English, History, Math and Science be apparent to the students. The more that the students are engaged, motivated and having fun with the theme, the higher the chances are going to be that the students will retain the information better. “Carefully chosen theme studies integrate the curriculum in such a way that children no longer study isolated subject areas – the theme becomes the core of what children do in school” (Colasanti & Follo, 1992, p. 6).

To have a successful theme based curriculum you should find out what a majority of your students like. Maybe it is soccer; if it is, then try to find a theme-based idea that may involve soccer, sports or athletics. Choosing a theme for a class like flowers might be what you as a teacher likes, but your students are going to be bored and unable to relate it to their lives. “The focus of attention is always clear and relevant to

the children's lives" (Colasanti & Follo, 1992, p. 6). Personally, I would at the beginning of the year pass out a questionnaire and ask the students what their interests, hobbies and backgrounds are. This way you can evaluate what would be a good start for your theme based curriculum.

Theme based curriculum is desperately needed in classrooms. With the ever-changing times and responsibilities that students carry, teachers need to be sensitive to these needs. Jacobs (as cited in Colasanti & Follo, 1992) felt that:

The conventional methods of teaching and learning need to be changed to meet the needs of today's youth. Children today need to have an overall structure, a way of making sense of the influx of new information that they are faced with. This new knowledge too often falls between the cracks of traditional subject areas. (p. 9)

In elementary schools the primary focus of teaching is in the Language Arts. In a classroom not involving theme based curriculum, you might find a majority of the day teaching and studying possible independent reading and writing work with separate and less timely activities in Math, Science and History. Now, if you were to go into an elementary class utilizing theme based instruction, you may find a group working on all core subjects at the same time and not realizing that they are using these tools. Thematic teaching (Kidd, 1970) helps students stay focused and excited about what they are learning. Students can build confidence through strategies, feeling the need to have a purpose, and being able to relate the topics to their lives (Colasanti & Follo, 1992). Based on the study *The Voyage of the Mimi*, Colasanti and Follo (1992) evaluated their third grade class of 24 heterogeneous students from somewhat consistent backgrounds.

They were able to create a theme based curriculum that incorporated reading, science, writing, spelling, and social studies. Through a set of thirteen lesson plans the teaching team went so far as to create their rooms to match the theme the class was going to utilize for the next few weeks. When the study was complete the teachers were able to notice a considerable difference in the students abilities to work well in groups, speak well in front of others, increase their writing ability with topic interest, and gain in their thinking and learning skills. Of course this is a great personal example of how thematic teaching is a positive benefit, but the researchers neglected to assess the students' ability. There was not an assessment prior to the thirteen-week lesson nor an assessment at the end to compare results from the previous years. With the test being qualitative, I still feel that just saying they saw a difference is not going to convince the principal or supervisor to allow for all theme based learning techniques. I felt that this study was weak in the end result due to a lack of quantitative measures and was based off of observation. Referring to Caine and Caine's (as cited in Colasanti & Follo, 1992) neurological research stating:

A brain-based approach to teaching recognizes the brain's infinite capacity to make connections and to understand information and then organizes a program that maximizes that process. One of the factors in the brain's capacity to process information is that the brain searches for common patterns and connections. The brain has an extraordinary capability to detect patterns and to make approximations. The brain constantly searches for how things make sense, attempting to find meaning in all experiences. (p. 16)

Having referred to Caine & Caine's research multiple times resonates that thematic instruction works because it is laid out the same way that our brains interpret information. The report had creative ways to convince the reader the importance of theme-based instruction to students as an attention grabber that would engage students. I would have to say the report may not be completely valid, due to the lack of ending support.

Relating thematic teaching to my project was crucial to the development of returning art into an integral curriculum. The theme would be art in the classroom; it allows me to see how positive it can be to hold onto a theme for each subject. The students can anticipate what they are going to do next. The best part is that they often do not relate learning when they are having fun. The idea is to get students to see school as a fun, safe learning environment and that they have some control over what they are learning. Allowing students to have a say in what they are going to learn allows for respect of the subject they choose. As a teacher who wants to bring thematic instruction in the classroom, I feel a teacher needs to be perceptive and engaged with their students as well. Being aware of your students and their strengths, weaknesses and interests can help create a functioning and appealing curriculum.

“What is learned may reveal something that has been unknown or it may correct or expand what is already known” (Kidd, 1970, p. 1). As a teacher you need to be willing and able to take the time to become creative in your classroom. Whether your theme is dolphins for the week or Shakespeare, it is crucial to be aware of the power that themes can hold in the classroom. As Sunnie Kidd articulates in the above quote, regardless of what you are teaching, integrating themes in the curriculum is going to

make concepts clear and present to your students. In some cases if your students are already aware of the concepts in discussion, then it will create a relative connection within their lives. Relativity in the classroom is the connection of the academic and life skills that all teachers need to become familiar with. Whether it is connecting the students' math problems to their gas mileage or a reading that can be transposed to their own lives, relativity is interesting and can be used outside of the classroom as well.

An objective to teaching in themes and with student-relative subject matter is to aspire to see a growth and realization in the students understanding. As Sunnie Kidd states so clearly, when a student can take what they have learned and put it into their own words or their own examples, there is a very strong sense of intellectual capacity and confidence that emerges from the student who can make the connection. "I have come to realize that each participant must take up that which is presented in their own way. This way they make it their own" (Kidd, 1987, p.4). Helping make your students think this deep in your class is going to be laborious, but rewarding. When you are able to acknowledge that what your students have been taught will last further than the walls of the classroom, you can be rest assured that they will be conscious individuals and able to think beyond the next horizon.

With the help of themes in the classroom, it makes it easier to relate the subject matter to the students. For some of the younger students, art might be something that relates to them more so, whereas for others it may be sports. Getting students interested is half of the battle and once you have their interest, then you can start to plug in the content areas needed. In one study, two teachers became very creative and found a way to incorporate baseball with social studies (Edgington & Hyman, 2005). Their goal was

to take a dry subject with dry standards and make it meaningful and relevant to their students because like most of us, they realized that unless you have these aspects, learning does not happen very easily for most students.

Making the theme in your classroom evolve around art is a powerful concept that needs to be consistent and have many facets. Students each gravitate naturally toward their own learning concepts. They will pick up on some techniques, while leaving other techniques behind. As a teacher you have the ability to watch and perceive your students' ability to learning through different themes that emerge in the classroom. But once you have found the students "Experiential Expressions" the opportunities for learning are endless:

Experiential Expression are phases which illustrate how someone experiences and what that experience means. They are recognized by the way they identify a personal style of experience and reveal the way a person has taken up a particular meaning, the way it is lived. (Kidd, 1970, p. 2)

When a student can find out what their "Experiential Expressions" are, there can be a sense of confidence that is gained whether in art, the curriculum, or in life.

Realizing the themes that are available for learning is an open window with many opportunities to expand knowledge and interest in any subject or object.

Some critics may think that returning art into the classroom is a waste of time, unless it is taught by an art specialist (Hatfield, 2007). While some part of this may be true, this teacher is confident that a teacher can teach art without being a specialist. When you teach art to students, make sure that if you are doing a simple art project such as coloring, there is reasoning behind it and you are not having the students color just to

color. The importance of any theme based teaching would be to remember to incorporate what Sunnie Kidd (1970) called Thematic Amplification. In this process you will be magnifying the normal theme of art. An example would be a piece of sand: if you were to magnify the sand, you would be able to see it is made of tiny crystals. Use this same idea in art. Look at an idea of art in education and put a microscope to the idea of returning art to the curriculum and you will be able to see beyond art. You will see the ability in which art promotes a positive framework for the future comprehension for students in other subject areas. Art is not just satisfactory at the moment, but as something that will reside in their lives forever. "Expanding the attention can only be done through an effort, increasing the focus upon what is immediately given" (Kidd, 1970, p. 3).

As a teacher of course you want to be able to find a theme that your students can make their own to enhance their understandings. Making sure that this happens may not always be as perfect as a storybook ending. Some students may be so enthralled by the theme that they loose focus on what the task was in the first place. A way to continually confirm that your students are staying on task can be focused around a Reflective Synthesis (Kidd, 1970). In a Reflective Synthesis, the student will be taught the ability to understand the connection with a subject area, a theme, and possibly something relative in their life. After they have a strong sense of the connection between these, the student can then reflect on what they have learned, how they have learned it, and why they were able to comprehend what they have learned. "Re-turning to the original description re-grounds the developing aspects of one's understanding" (Kidd, 1994, p. 26). Being able to do this will resonate a strong understanding of the goals and

objectives of the lesson. This would be a great way to assess your student's ability to comprehend the material given in a thematic lesson. Knowing how you got an answer or reasoning is something that can be transferred to all aspects of education and life. You need to be able to reflect and look at what you have realized and the path that got you there. In this way it is a Reflective Synthesis.

Using thematic teaching can be time consuming for most teachers. Of course it is easier to teach from the book and just hope that all of your students understand, but what comes from thematic teaching that you do not get from anything else is the interest and energy from your students to want to learn more. Learning without realizing you are learning is a fun and unexpected way to remember and relate the lessons to your every day life. In the Eddington and Hyman article, they discuss that teaching the student's geography through the major league baseball teams and where they are located, may allow the students later in life to not refer to geography as coloring in maps or memorizing state capitals, but instead as the surrounding horizon of baseball teams.

Community

What do you think would happen if the arts were removed from our schools entirely? Would the artist community come together and help build a program for students to still be able to practice what they enjoy? It is no wonder that with any other extra curricular activity there is a sort of club or community organization that you can join to continue enjoying what you like to do. If you like baseball, you can play little league. You can play football in Pop Warner, or for soccer you can join AYSO. So why

is it that with the arts, it is hard in some communities to find any outside support for art, dance, music and theater?

Haroutounian (1998) discusses the power of community arts collaboration. This is an organization where the school-based art specialists and community-based art instructors come together to help foster the talented youth. With the familiar discussion of losing the arts in schools, Haroutounian's article gives support and acknowledgement to teachers, parents and students that there can still be art in their lives even if the plug gets pulled in your community. Because I value the importance of art being involved in education, community arts collaboration could possibly help out when art is not being supported in the school district. It can still give students an outlet and the possibility to advance in the arts. Not all students are meant to be doctors or athletes; some people need to be artists. I praise shows like "American Idol" because they are a non-profit that gives people a chance to advance in their specific artistic ability. That show is a more publicized version of what is discussed in the article. The purpose is to be aware enough to recognize the need to support the arts. Without this, we may miss out on the next Michelangelo or Beethoven.

In the article Haroutounian shared a story of a young boy and girl. They were each students who had been exposed to different art programs in their school. The young girl had been part of many plays and drama clubs, while the young boy had experienced a taste for music and could not get enough of it. In the young girl's situation her community held auditions to the public for a professional musical production, in which she was given a part and was able to keep her grades up all through school. She graduated with honors and went on to be a professional in theater.

The young boy was amongst many students who had the spark to want to know more about music. If it had not been for his teacher to recognize the need, he may have fallen through the cracks and never had the opportunity to blossom as an artist.

The awareness in a community to see the need for a collaborative community art program usually starts when there have been budget cuts that either shrink the art program or completely diminish it (Haroutounian, 1998). One of the first collaborative community art programs started in New York City during 1970 when all of the art programs in the schools had been cut. When this happened the community arts program came together with the help of a man named Elliot Feld and offered free professional dance instruction to all students that showed a future in dancing (Haroutounian, 1998). What Feld started has and will forever change the idea that if art is removed from the school systems, there is still hope for the arts. It proves the desire of the community to want to foster and grow the future artists of their community.

New York has continued to support the arts with school based art instruction and communication with community based art instructors. They were at it again in 1995 when they created a public school for dance (Haroutounian, 1998). It incorporated complete dance instruction for students who were beyond basic ballet and added an academic curriculum that supported the rigorous schedule of the dancers. In this way, the gifted children could develop their strengths in the arts with education and also a career in dancing. What Feld did years ago has made New York one of the most collaborative community art based supporters around. The example that Feld has fulfilled with the artists community in New York City can be spread through out the United States. Although some areas may not be as well populated as New York, the

amount of students that are not being given the opportunity to excel in the arts is everywhere.

Though these programs sound amazing and have the ability to foster our future artists, there are also some strings attached. In many of the collaborative community art programs, there are certain stipulations and measuring tools to decide what children have the potential to excel in the arts over others. This article does not go into detail on exactly what kind of measures they use, but they do mention assessing IQ tests, different written tests in their field of interest, and hours of observation (Haroutounian, 1998). Also, had it not been for the lucrative base that the New York art programs had to start their free art services with, they may not have been able to create such a wonderful program.

A part of me feels that students should not have the pressure that if their IQ test is not high enough that they cannot be accepted to the free training in the arts. A child does not necessarily have to be the Albert Einstein in the group to have a passion for colors, perspective, music and dance. What if the talent is not natural, but instead something that can be taught and practiced into a gift? I feel that even if a student is not a gifted artist, but still has the passion for it, shouldn't they be considered as well? According to the stipulations of these collaborative community art programs, you have to be an exceptionally gifted artist to have any time and energy spent on you for free.

Within each community, these collaborative community art programs can work in any situation. It all depends on whether the community artists and school based artists want to get together and offer students a chance to excel in the arts.

At the end of the day we need to look at what is best for our students. It is obvious that utilizing the resources to make art an integral part of your classroom is going to have only positive results in your classroom. Teaching in your classroom is a constant trial and error process. As teachers we have been trained to step back and evaluate a situation and then respond accordingly. So why is art such a scary concept to add? It has often times been unfathomable in some teachers' eyes. I would merely recommend trying it out, just like trying out the new technique to writing a short story or memorizing your multiplication facts. You may be surprised at the changes and engagement in your students when making art an integral part of your curriculum.

CHAPTER III

Project Development

With so many concerns and fears in education today, it may seem mediocre to some to be worrying about integrating art in the classroom. The way I see it is that there is always going to be something that is changing the face of education, and using that as an excuse for not incorporating art into your curriculum is the reason why we're in the position we are in now.

Being limited to no art in the classrooms, an added emphasis on the standards, and a demand for improvement on test scores is hindering students' natural ability to learn. It is up to the teachers to make a change in the way that they teach, so to help I created a website that gives teachers the resources to gain knowledge of art and how to make it integral in their curriculum. Through one study (Oreck, 2006), a group of teachers found out that incorporating art in their curriculum helped them reach their students more deeply. They learned what their interests and aspirations were allowing the teacher to take risks with their curriculum, which gained access to positive results in their classroom.

The process of creating a website for teachers was exciting and rewarding. It gave me an insight to how many people support the arts and are willing to share their ideas and stories with others. There is such a large community of educators who share the understanding of the importance of art in everyone's life, especially students.

The very first thing that I did was to begin to collect data from the first grade class that I was completing my student teaching in. The school that I was working at was an International Baccalaureate School, where their curriculum is laid out in six-

week unit concepts. Each unit has a concept that the students are to recognize and address on a daily basis. Inside each of these units are the necessary state adopted standards and enriched lessons and activities connecting the students with the world as a whole. Because of this program, the students are given the opportunity to express themselves and their understandings through art. Given the opportunity, I took many photographs of their artwork to incorporate in the website.

I used a program from Apple called iWeb 2008. This program made the process of creating my website easy. I knew that my focus was on art so I needed to have the background of the website be whimsical. I chose a template from iWeb and got to work. From looking at other websites online, I realized that it was very important to have teachers communicate with one another. There needed to be a support system in which a teacher can share their experiences or questions with other teachers (for example: “Is this normal or not?”). They needed a place to share their students art work, a place to locate amazing books that focus on art in the classroom, organizations for free student tours, magazines to enrich knowledge, and workshops that can help teachers learn how to integrate art in their classroom. What was interesting was that I did not find a website that incorporated all of these crucial needs for a teacher to incorporate art in their classroom. With this motivation I began the process to combine all of these elements into a website that would be easy to navigate and full of information that can be useful in the classroom and from which to gain professional development.

For my website I included a welcome page that has inspiring quotes, children’s art work, and a quick note to let viewers understand the purpose of the website, which is to better integrate art into curriculum. My next page is to let people understand what my

goal is for making this website. It gives a background about my feelings towards art in the classroom. Putting this information on my website will allow people to connect and relate to me as a teacher and person. Next, I felt that it was important to incorporate a page to show some of the art I have collected and created with students. It gives great inspiration and lets people see how creative kids are. I then created a page for people to gain access to lesson plan ideas and art workshops. This is something that will be continually updated as I run into other amazing art resource opportunities. Of course I had to add a link for podcasts and blogs. In this section I have listed many wonderful websites for people to access as outside support other than my website. I also have a running blog that I keep updated with responses to those who send in questions or comments. I then decided that I would incorporate different literature pieces that offer amazing lesson plans and support for those daring enough to make art integral in their curriculum. And lastly, I created a page that just has a few ideas here and there that I pick up from other teachers and or educators. It too is always changing and evolving as I meet more and more wonderful teachers with great ideas. The website was created for teachers and students to use as support and guidance towards integrating art into their curriculum.

CHAPTER IV

Project Evaluation, Conclusions and Recommendations

More art in the classroom sounds wonderful to all students and scary to a lot of teachers. Unfortunately this is where the problem begins: teachers not having enough background knowledge or resources to feel confident in teaching art with everyday curriculum. The purpose of the website is to give teachers the resources that they need to feel confident enough to make art integral in their curriculum and see positive results in their students' behavior and academics.

Project Evaluation

As we know, education is continually being faced with challenges to meet each of our students' needs. With strong emphasis on humanities and math, there seems to be little time for creativity and expression. Having readily available lessons, resources, and support need to be easily accessible for teachers to continue to make art integral in the classroom.

This project involved the development of a website which gives teachers the ability to:

- Gain knowledge of art curriculum
- See an increase in discipline improvements in the classroom
- Better their teaching strategies
- Encourage teachers to make art integral in their classroom
- Engage their students in current standards and curriculum
- Understand the dramatic importance of art integration

- Have students be engaged in classroom and school objectives
- Have students create a higher level of thinking and cognitive awareness
- Have students be more inclined to pay attention in class
- Have students be inspired to succeed in education and other extra curricular activities
- Have students build confidence academically and socially

All of the resources gathered for the website were researched or recommended by other teachers within my community.

On the website there are eight main tabs including: (1) Integrating Art - the home page (2) Why Art? - Information and background to support the purpose of the website (3) Art Treasure Chest - Compilation of student art work (4) Art lesson plans and workshops - Resources for teachers (5) Blogs and Podcasts - Resources for teachers to gain support from other teachers, place to post student art work, and information on how to create your own Blog or Podcast for your class (6) Supplemental Resources - Additional books and magazines filled with amazing lessons (7) A little extra - Lessons that I have incorporated that are used in the classroom (8) Comments and Suggestions - Email or blog posting.

This website is intended for teachers to use as a guide to making Art integral in their classroom, whether it be drawing, a field trip to the local museum, theater, music, and to further inspire creativity and personal expression. I hope that it gives teachers the sense of support and courage to bring art into their classroom. With guidance to starting up their own class blog, the teacher can post their beautiful work and share the success and receive feedback on their fun new integration. Each of the pages that was created

within my website have every intention of meeting the project objectives. By giving teachers easy access to finding resources where they can quickly and easily connect to their community for support, an up to date blog that will reinforce other teachers positive experience and being able to share how the students are responding to the art in the classroom is going to provide the most important results. Having a blog will allow teachers to share what is happening in their classrooms, thus cementing that concept of keeping art integral in the classroom is a very good thing.

Incorporated in the website there is a comment and suggestion link located on the 'Art Blog' page. This will allow me to hear from people and make changes accordingly to better aid art integration. Receiving feedback from fellow educators will allow me to better the website and present a positive resource for those who teach. I will also take into account comments and suggestions to ensure I am meeting my objective goals for the website. Through suggestions and comments I will be able to make appropriate additions and changes to the website ensuring to meet my objectives as a resources for educators.

Conclusions

The implementation of this project will be used for my future colleagues and myself in education. I will offer the website to all teachers, through email or flyers, allowing them to be given the opportunity to make art integral in their classroom.

I believe in giving teachers a resource in which support, communication, creativity and easy accessibility may bridge the gap of limited arts programs in the classroom. Through integrating art in elementary school classrooms, teachers have seen a visual difference in the discipline problems and the academic achievements of their

students, as classrooms continue to improve as a result of the support and use of art integration (Dickinson, 1997).

Through the making of this project I have learned a great deal. I have also learned that there are a lot of people who are equally as passionate as I am about art integration. I get so excited whenever I meet a teacher who is integrating art in their classroom and they look at me as if to say, ‘ I’d have it no other way.’ I am finding that not only teachers are involved and supportive, but parents also play a huge role in the development of art integration. Having parent volunteers, I have noticed, helps the process of gathering supplies, space, support and confidence. I have learned to communicate with people, share every and all wonderful ideas, and not to be afraid to try something different. This project has taught me a lot about who I am as a teacher and as a person. I want the best for each student I teach and to be able to give them the ability to learn in any and all ways they possibly can.

Recommendations

To further this project, a handbook or lecture could be developed for educators. With a handbook teachers would have something tangible to hold on to and use as a reference. The handbook would have the website address, a few lessons involving art integration, resources and testimonials for those who have had success in their classrooms. The lecture would be developed to speak to educators to motivate and inspire the use of integrating art in daily curriculum. It would give people the chance to ask questions and to speak to other educators that attend the lecture on their experiences with art integration. The lecture would provide resources and support for teachers who are interested in making art integral in their curriculum.

According to Gardner's Multiple Intelligences theory, there are seven different types of intelligences that are alike in all humans. Two of the intelligences he discusses are the Musical-Intelligence and the Spatial-Visual Intelligence. According to Gardner's theory, he states that the Musical and Spatial-Visual Intelligences are just as important as the other intelligences. But it is to wonder why schools still place music and arts at the bottom of the list of importance in education (as cited in Bodenlos & Mack, 1997). It is a valuable message that should be taken into consideration when budget cuts ask administrators to find ways to save money other than cutting the arts programs.

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APPENDIX

Project Title: Making Art Integral in the Classroom