Arts Integration in Elementary Curriculum

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CHAPTER ONE ARTS INTEGRATION

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Source:
Markey, D. (2014). The case for integrated arts in the classroom. *Washington Parent Magazine*.
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The Case for Integrated Arts in the Classroom

David Markey

I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.

Confucius

What is Arts Integration?

Arts integration is the blending of the visual, performing and media arts into other content areas-generally those that have traditionally carried more "weight," such as English language arts (ELA), mathematics, science and social studies. There is some difference as to how, and to what degree, the arts are integrated into these core subjects; some practitioners engage solely in professional development for classroom teachers while others work with students during in-school residencies. It is commonly accepted that students gain an understanding of the skills and knowledge of each content area that is richer and deeper because of engagement in both.

What does Arts Integration Look Like?

The arts integration classroom tends to be one of lively activity, engagement and peer-to-peer interaction. There are times when students are at their desks prepping for an activity or processing a concept, but generally they are creating and exchanging ideas, turning their thinking into action and then sharing their work with their peers. An example of arts integration in practice might be using the strategies and techniques of creative drama to teach the concepts of story sequencing, understanding character motivation and to increase students' vocabulary in a 2nd-grade classroom. The concept of "Tableaux," the creation of "frozen pictures" using the students themselves, is widely used to distill pivotal moments in a story to their essence in order to gain understanding of major plot points and differing perspectives. Music, movement and visual art might be used to enhance understanding and offer the opportunity for students to explore the content through another medium. The opportunities for crossover are extensive.

While integration may be a more natural fit in the areas of ELA and social studies, there are also tremendous opportunities to unwrap math and science concepts using the arts. In recent years, Imagination Stage worked with the arts-integrated schools that were part of DCPS's Catalyst Project initiative under former chancellor Michelle Rhee. I partnered with a 7th-grade science teacher to enhance knowledge in the area of life sciences. We identified the gaps in student understanding, and I developed a trio of arts integrated lessons using acting exercises and music to help engage students in the content and shore up their knowledge gaps. What happens in these cases-and in so many other case studies that have been done in arts integration settings across the country-is that the learning experience begins to mirror the way in which young people exist in, and engage with, the world. In my 7th-grade classroom, the students were better able to grasp the scientific concepts by engaging in physical and group activities that helped them understand and remember those concepts. When they were retested, there was an overall marked improvement in their ability to be able to name and define terms in the content area.

Why Arts Integration?

It is in the active participation of the learning experience that we remember and understand the content. We become part of the learning experience rather than being passive recipients sitting on the sidelines. To use an acting term, if our super-objective is to bring young people to understanding, how do we both motivate them to want to achieve this outcome and how do we help create a road map to aid them on their journey? In my 12 years of integrating the arts into school curricula in a variety of rural, suburban and urban schools, I have seen the profound and lasting impact it has had on a diverse population of students and classroom educators. I have seen students connect to core curricula concepts through the arts in ways that have amazed their teachers, peers and themselves. Students who may carry an "educational debt" from one grade to the next suddenly find an entry point to content and are empowered through their participation. They are encouraged to bring their own experiences and opinions to the mix in order to make meaning of the content.

The value of an arts-integrated education is not limited to communities of students who are performing below the desired national norms. I have seen students who are able to navigate the traditional systems of education build more sophisticated inductive reasoning capacity,

resilience, persistence and understanding of the world beyond their own. Motivation to learn becomes intrinsic rather than driven by punitive consequences or the promise of good grades. Excited and engaged students tend to have better attendance figures and more positive behaviors at school. Teachers are also helped by engaging in such a process. Just as students are required to bring themselves and their experiences to the content, so too must teachers be willing to take risks in their classrooms and learn alongside their students.

The Pressing Need for Arts Integration

The economic woes of the past six years have refocused the spotlight on the scope and systems of education and on how we must find ways of guaranteeing America's place in the 21st century global economy. Author Daniel Pink has identified an economic shift from the age of information to the age of conception in our world. This has profound implications for how economies and education systems must morph. The new Common Core State Standards (CCSS) framework that many states have now adopted shows evidence that working in a less compartmentalized way helps to foster cross-curricular connections and the understanding that learning is multifaceted. The three arts integration model schools in Montgomery County are wonderful examples of how developing all aspects of students' education through the arts leads to success, as well as national accolades for achievement. Savoy Elementary in Anacostia is one of eight national schools that were chosen by the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities to receive school improvement grants, revitalizing their students' education by infusing the arts into all aspects of instruction and learning.

While there are pockets of individuals and schools using arts integration around the country, there is currently little overall change in place that would make arts integration part of the fabric of teacher training, classroom instruction and school culture. Engagement in arts learning and arts integration opportunities not only fosters creative capacities that seed the great ideas of inventors and entrepreneurs, but also nurtures the development of well-rounded human beings with the capacity for empathy, generosity of spirit and leadership-all vital skills for the 21st century.

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CHAPTER TWO THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

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Source:
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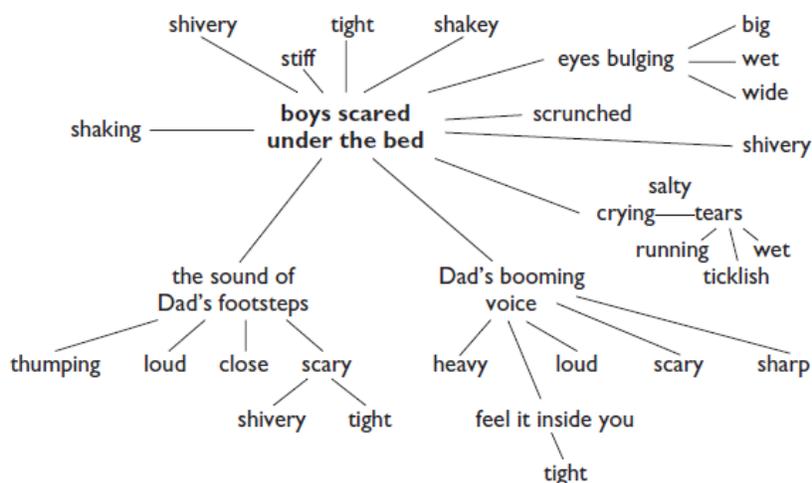
Arts Integration in the Classroom: Reflections on Theory and Application

Daniel R. Sheinfeld

Karla Kelly's second-grade class is gathered around her as she prepares to read to them.1 The story,"The Pudding Like a Night on the Sea," (Cameron, 1981) will evoke vivid sensory images in the children and associated feelings of delight, fear, and happiness. But Kelly is about to do much more than simply read to her class. As a participating teacher in Erikson Institute's Arts Project, she is engaging them in the first steps of an arts-integrated activity that will help them achieve a deeper level of understanding and retention of the story. The activity will contribute to the development of reading comprehension skills that will help the students to derive meaning from their reading for the rest of their lives. That's the purpose of arts integration: to enhance learning outcomes for children by making artistic activity an integral part of the learning process in traditional academic subjects, such as reading, writing, math, science, and social studies. Arts integration is distinctly different from arts transference, which says that young learners can apply the skills they develop in purely artistic endeavors to enhance their learning in other disciplines without explicitly connecting the arts to learning in the other subject. Back to the class for a moment. Before she starts to read, Kelly asks her students to "listen carefully with your eyes closed. See the pictures that come into your mind as you hear the story. What movements do you see and feel? What sounds do you hear? What do you smell and taste? Think about the feelings that the characters have in the story and how *you* feel about what's happening in the story." Kelly asks her children to raise their hands whenever they experience a major inner image of what is happening in the story. As the children report their images, she writes them on the board for everyone to see. For example: "Making the pudding," "Wanting to taste the pudding," "Tasting the pudding," "Boys scared under the bed," "Their dad pulls them out." When the story is finished, they will choose the four or five images that they feel are most important to remembering the story and together they will create a *sensory web* of each of the images (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Sensory web of "Boys Scared Under the Bed"

shivery • tight • shakey • eyes bulging — big / wet / wide
stiff • scrunched
shaking — **boys scared under the bed** — shivery
salty • crying — tears
running \ wet
ticklish
the sound of Dad's footsteps
Dad's booming voice
thumping • loud • close • scary
heavy • loud • scary • sharp
shivery • tight
feel it inside you
tight

The web will help the students build a bridge to artistic activity by articulating the sensory and emotional qualities of the images they experience. Often, as in the sensory web shown here, the children's external view of the setting and the characters' behaviors, as well as an inner view of the characters' perceptions and emotions, is reflected in the web. Both of these perspectives are aided by the students' emotional identification with the characters. After making the sensory web, Kelly's students will arrange their images into a sequential order and discuss the cause-and-effect relationships among them. Students will divide into small groups, and each group will use their sensory web to create a short dance that expresses the image. Finally, each group will perform their dance in the order in which it appears in the story. In this example of an arts-integrated activity, students have the opportunity to direct their learning far beyond simple story comprehension. They are asked to draw upon their own inner sensory images and emotions as they relate to the experience of the characters in the story. They are asked to sequence their images and to consider cause and effect. They then express those images through rhythm and movement in the order that they occur in the story sequence. The result is a much deeper understanding of the story and a development of imaging skills and habits that will carry into their future reading. Arts integration activities seem promising for several reasons. First, artistic activity is enjoyable for most children, and motivates them to engage more fully with the subject matter at hand. Second, by combining several modes of learning, arts integration increases the probability that learning will occur. Not only do the different modes of learning complement and reinforce each other within each student, but a wider range of students is reached, owing to differences in learning styles and types of intelligences. Third, arts integration requires students to reflect more deeply about the details and relationships within the text. And finally, artistic activity encourages and strengthens students' inner sensory imaging of the text and their emotional engagement with the text, both of which contribute to greater retention and understanding.

Does It Work?

Intuitively, we would conclude that arts integration activities should result in significant academic development. But does the research bear this out? Several meta-analyses show that drama integration tends to have strong positive effects on student achievement. Podlozny's (2000) meta-analysis showed that drama-integrated activities had a greater effect on measures of reading achievement, writing, and oral language than did non-drama activities carried out with control groups. Results tended to be strongest when the drama activity involved dramatizing a plot sequence, in contrast to other types of drama activities.

Previous meta-analyses by Kardash and Wright (1987) and Wagner (1998) also show significant relationships between drama integration and various areas of reading and language development. We also see some significant effects of arts integration activities on academic learning in an evaluation of the Chicago Arts Partnership in Education (CAPE), whose arts integration repertoire included visual arts, drama, dance, and music. The CAPE evaluation, designed and administered by an outside evaluator, matched 52 CAPE schools with 52 non-CAPE schools. The CAPE schools outperformed the non-CAPE schools in academic testing. Further, the test results gap between the two sets of schools widened during the six years of the program evaluation, from 1992 to 1998 (Catterall & Waldorf, 2000). In contrast, Harvard researchers Ellen Winner and Monica Cooper conducted a meta-analysis of 19 studies that dealt with the effects of arts integration on reading achievement as measured by standardized tests (2000). They concluded that arts integration seems to have no greater or lesser effect on standardized reading test scores than other methods of teaching. They arrived at similar results with a set of 12 studies that dealt with the impact of arts integration on math scores as measured by standardized tests. The Harvard analysis, however, tells us nothing of the specific content of the arts integration activities, nor anything about the learning theory on which the activity designs were based. These limitations suggest an important point. Without a specific set of parameters to define high-quality arts-integration activities-parameters that are firmly grounded in one or more theories of arts integration-we cannot draw conclusions about the efficacy of arts integration.

Toward a Theory of Arts Integration

To better understand how arts integration activities can affect classroom learning, it may be useful to step back and frame the discussion by examining arts integration theory as it relates to the development of reading comprehension skills. Most current theories of

> **Arts integration activities**
>
> Arts integration activities can take many forms. These are just a few examples:
>
> • Sketching images of characters, settings, and events as they arise in one's mind while reading
>
> • Painting a mural of the conflict and resolution of a story
>
> • Dramatizing the dynamics of an atom, including speculations about how the protons feel about their relationship with the neutrons, and why
>
> • Drawing an insect in its setting, from several angles
>
> • Creating music to express major events of an era; e.g., the 1960s

reading comprehension start with the proposition that readers construct *mental models* of a text in their minds as they read and after they have read. These inner mental models are derived from a combination of variables: the reader's engagement with the text as given; the reader's purpose and mode of engagement with the text; the personal meanings that the reader brings to interpreting the text; and the ways that the reader habitually organizes meanings in his or her mind. Hence, the end result is each reader's relatively unique mental model of the text, rather than a one-to-one replication of what is written. This widely accepted theory is known as the constructivist perspective on reading comprehension. Within the constructivist perspective, two lines of theory have strongly influenced our work in arts integration-imaging and causal network.

Imaging Theory: In the recent book *Imagery and Text* (Sadoski & Paivio, 2001) the authors describe "dual coding theory" (Paivio, 1971, 1986) as it applies to reading. The theory states that we code the language of a text through two separate systems: the verbal system and the imagery system. As we decode and interpret words on a page, we experience meaning in the form of language, or associated language, and in the form of inner sensory images, such as mental pictures, sound images, tactile sensations, imagined smells, tastes, temperature, weight, and inner experiences of movement. We also frequently experience emotions associated with language and with images. As a result of coding the meanings of the text in our verbal system and our imaging system, we organize our mental model (memory) of the text around sensory/ emotional nodes, each of which is made up of images, associated emotions, words, phrases, and the meanings attached to all of the above. Thus, according to imaging theory, our mental model of a text is made up of these sensory/emotional nodes and the relationships among them. Significant evidence to support imaging theory is found in studies of induced imagery and studies of reported imagery and emotion while reading. For example, in studies carried out at the 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th grade levels by a number of researchers, students who were instructed to image the

text as they read scored better on retention and understanding than did control groups who were not instructed to image the text (Gambrell, 1982; Gambrell & Bales, 1986; Kulhavy & Swenson, 1975; Pressley, 1976).

In other studies, reported imagery and reported emotion experienced while reading correlate significantly with each other, and both, in turn, correlate with literary understanding (Goetz & Sadoski, 1996; Sadoski & Paivio, 2000). Through her work with remedial readers, Nanci Bell (1991a, 1991b) concluded that her students' greatest deficit was their relative inability to form a "Gestalt image" (imaged whole) in their minds while reading. She writes, "The gestalt is the entity from which the interpretive skills of identifying the main idea, inferring, concluding, predicting, extending, and evaluating can be processed" (1991b, p.14). Bell developed a system of instruction in which students start by imaging words, then sentences, then paragraphs, and finally entire pages. She reports significant advances in the reading comprehension ability of remedial readers who utilize the imaging system (1991a).

Causal Network Theory: The second theory of reading comprehension posits that, when reading narrative texts, readers tend to retain the story events that they causally connect to other events. Further, the events in the text that have the most causal connections to other events are the ones that readers are most likely to retain (Trabasso & Van den Broek, 1985; Fletcher & Bloom, 1988). These are also the events that the reader is likely to rate as important (Trabasso & Sperry, 1985) and the events that are retrieved most quickly in the mind of the reader (O'Brien & Myers, 1987). Most causal connections that enter the reader's mind are inferred while reading (Graesser, Singer & Trabasso, 1994). The reader may construct causal relations among clauses that are adjacent in the text, or among statements that occur in quite different places in the text. If we compare imaging theory to causal network theory, we see that both involve mental nodes and relationships among them. In imaging theory, the reader's resultant mental model is made up of sensory/emotional nodes and the relationships among them, which could be causal, thematic, or something else. In causal network theory, the mental model is made up of events and the causal connections among them. Both theories are plausible and are supported by research. Further, the two theories connect with each other to a significant degree. It is reasonable to assume that the construction of cause-and-effect relationships in the mind of the reader frequently involves imaging. The imaging may take the form of visualizing, viscerally experiencing movement and transformation, hearing sounds associated with cause and/or effect, etc. Bell (1991b) concludes that "individuals who cannot grasp or create gestalts (images) from language generally have difficulty with the concept of 'cause and effect.'" Perception of cause-and-effect relationships is also likely to evoke emotional responses in the reader. This can happen for a number of reasons:

1. Visceral experiences of movement are frequently experienced emotionally. Both experiences occur in the same region of the body.
2. Many cause-and-effect relationships involve an impact on a character's emotions, which, in turn, engages the emotions of the reader through identification with the character.
3. Cause-and-effect relationships often involve outcomes that the reader either desires or dislikes.
4. As Dewey (1934) points out, emotion infuses andic, or something else.

If imaging and emotion are frequently involved in the process of constructing cause-and-effect relationships in the reader's mind, it is likely that image and emotion remain as part of the

memory of the cause effect relationship. There are also significant points of non-convergence between imaging theory and causal network theory. Causal network researcher Van den Broek reports that causally connected events, while very important in memory and recall, account for only 50 percent of the statements remembered from the narrative text in his study. The other 50 percent of the recalled statements are of three types: events that have "an emotional or graphic impact" on the reader, "setting statements," and "statements that refer to the overall theme of the text" (Van den Broek, Rohleder & Narvaez, 1996, pp. 185-186). The first two of these (events that have an emotional or graphic impact, and setting statements) fall in the realm of inner sensory imaging and/or emotional response. Building on Van den Broek's analysis, noncausal nodes are as important as causal nodes in story recall, and many of those noncausal nodes seem to involve imaging and emotional associations. These are important concepts when considering the design of arts integration activities.

The Artistic Process

So, how do we join the artistic process with the reading process? Research has shown that imaging and emotional associations play an important role in reading comprehension and recall. We find that imaging and emotional associations are equally important in the artistic process. The arts are, above all, expressions of our feeling life-our sensory images and our emotions.

In Susanne Langer's terms, "The function of a work of art is to symbolize experience, that is, to formalize and convey ideas of sentience and emotion" (1957, p. 179). The artistic process involves a spiraling interaction among four modes of action:

1. Playfully engaging and responding to stimuli through one's senses and emotions
2. Transforming and organizing these responses into rich, multisensory inner imagery
3. Expressing the imagery through external representations such as a painting, poem, dance, or dramatic enactment
4. Evaluating and re-formulating the artistic expression throughout (Scheinfeld & Steele, 1995)

The process is, above all, exploratory and reflexive. The artist continually moves back and forth among the four facets of the process.

Summation of Theory

It seems useful, then, to join imaging theory and causal network theory with each other and with a view of the artistic process. Sensory imaging, emotional response, and perception of cause-and-effect relationships all contribute to text construction and recall. Imaging theory and causal network theory overlap in that the reader's perception of cause-and-effect relationships is also likely to be attended by imaging and emotional response. Similarly, there is a vital connection between the artistic process and imaging theory. The artistic process, since it pivots on imaging and emotional response, has major potential for bringing out and strengthening the reader's imaging and emotional response propensities. This, in turn, contributes to the reader's long-term ability to construct texts.

A Theory-Based Intervention

From 1991 to 2000, the Erikson Arts Project worked collaboratively with K-8 teachers in Chicago inner-city schools to explore a variety of forms that arts integration might take in the curriculum. The main focus of this work was strengthening the development of reading comprehension skills through the integration of visual arts, drama, dance, and music into reading instruction. Building on the theoretical propositions above, the arts-integrated activities were based on the interaction of the following components:

1. Inner sensory imaging by the reader, especially multisensory imaging
2. Emotional responses of the reader
3. Reflection on cause-and-effect relationships
4. Reflection on global sequential relationships (sequencing the whole of the text)
5. Language from the text expressed in written and verbal forms
6. Oral and written language that comments on the text
7. Artistic expression

The integration of these seven parameters characterizes an overall learning process in which artistic activity plays a prominent role. One of the arts integration activities we employed, for example, is called The Emotional Journey of a Character. It is typically done in grades 3-8, and in a modified form in the early primary grades. After having read and discussed a book together, the class is divided into groups of four. Members of each group decide on the four strongest emotions experienced by a main character in the story. As part of this process, they return to the text and revisit the passages from which they had inferred the emotions. Each student in the group then selects one of the four emotions as his or her special focus and internally recreates (activates) that emotion by recalling its occurrence in the text, by recalling the events that led to it, and by connecting the character's emotion to similar emotional experiences in his or her own life. While sustaining their selected emotions within themselves, the students create abstract lines to represent the emotion, trying to match their inner experience of the emotion with one of the lines that they are making on the scratch pad. As they experience the emotion in their body, they try to let it flow out through their hand, into the pencil and onto the page. When a student succeeds in making a line on the scratch pad that feels like it resonates with her inner experience of the emotion, she redraws the line in a larger size on an 8 x 11 sheet of paper, using colors that she associates with the emotion. Next, the student inwardly images the event in the story that triggered the character's emotion, explores her own feelings about the event, and, on a second sheet of 8 x 11 paper, makes a drawing of the triggering event. When the drawings are completed, the students in the group mount the four abstract emotion drawings on the upper half of a large sheet of butcher paper from left to right, in the order in which the various emotions occurred in the story. Below each abstract emotion drawing, they mount the drawing of the event in the story that triggered the emotion. The students then write the name of the book and character at the top of the butcher paper, the names of the emotions underneath the emotion drawings, and descriptions of the triggering events underneath the event drawings. Finally, each group gives a presentation to the class in which they explain their character's emotional journey and discuss why the particular events triggered the particular emotions. They also discuss how closely they think their sequence of character emotions comes to portraying the plot of the story.

In constructing The Emotional Journey of a Character, students are engaged in a wide range of learning processes. They are empathically projecting themselves into the characters' emotions with the help of their personal connections. They are inwardly imaging the emotions and the triggering events. They are reflecting on cause and effect and sequencing events.

Finally, they are communicating their ideas through drawing, color, writing, and verbal discourse. They also are analyzing the relationship of the emotion sequence to their model of the story plot. The activity includes six of the seven design parameters for arts integration. Element number 5, though not part of the original activity, could be added by including verbatim quotes from the text that describe the triggering events. Some arts-integration activities place an emphasis on developing skills around the local constructions of the text, such as the cause of a character action or emotion, immediate physical cause, etc. Other arts integration activities place the emphasis on global relationships; e.g., plot, conflict and resolution, patterns in the text, or message of the story. Some involve both, as in the case of the emotional journey activity. The distinction between local and global, while useful for planning skill-building activities, may only be a matter of emphasis. Local interpretations are often far-reaching in previous parts of the text; for example, bringing to bear a character's goal (inferred from recurrent indicators in the text) to explain a specific action. Conversely, most global constructions are built upon local constructions. Complex arts-integration activities, such as the ones described above, are most successful when they are preceded by focused lessons in the arts skills that are utilized. In the case of the emotional journey activity, the students had previously learned how to represent a character's emotions abstractly through line and color. In the case of the dance activity in Karla Kelly's second-grade class, the students had received lessons in imaging and in interpreting sensory and emotional qualities through movement.

Demonstrated Benefits

From May 1997 through May 1999, the three elementary schools participating in the Erikson Arts Project's arts integration network showed significant increases in ITBS reading comprehension scores. At these three schools, the percentage of children reading at or above grade level increased by an average of 11.8 percentage points. The average gain for Chicago Public Schools elementary schools as a whole during the same period was 5.3 percentage points. In other words, the average gain for the Erikson Arts Project schools was more than twice the average gain for elementary schools across the system. While such gains are important, perhaps the most important contribution of the Erikson Arts Project-as well as of the meta-analyses cited in this paper-is to stimulate reflection on future research regarding the effects of arts integration on academic development. If we want to use arts integration research to guide educational policy, we should bring more precision and differentiation into the process of evaluation. Specifically, researchers should:

1. Articulate and develop arts integration theory in depth and breadth; for example, incorporate a range of perspectives such as imaging theory, causal network theory, concepts of the artistic process, and others.
2. Design and implement arts integration activities that are thoroughly grounded in the theory. Both the theory and design of activities should be shaped to fit the strengths and limitations of each art form. They should be directed explicitly to different types of texts

(e.g., narrative vs. expository). And they should take into account the developmental levels of the student participants.

3. Carefully evaluate the outcomes, using a variety of measures and asking the same tough questions as those posed by researchers such as Winner and Cooper (2000) and Podlozny (2000)-not whether arts integration has an impact, but whether arts integration has a *greater* impact on students' improvements in reading and language than other methods of teaching.

A systematic approach that joins theory, design, and evaluation is likely to lead to major advances in arts-integrated practice and to the refinement of theory. Such an approach could tell us with considerable precision which arts integration methods result in greater academic growth than traditional teaching methods. It also is likely to result in our learning more about how to promote students' artistic development in the context of arts-integrated learning.

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CHAPTER THREE MUSIC

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Music and Learning: Integrating Music in the Classroom

Chris Boyd Brewer

Resonating With Our Learning

> "Music is the electrical soil in which the spirit lives, thinks and invents."
> --Ludwig van Beethoven

We all know how greatly music affects our feelings and energy levels! Without even thinking about it, we use music to create desired moods-to make us happy, to enjoy movement and dance, to energize, to bring back powerful memories, to help us relax and focus. Music is a powerful tool for our personal expression within our daily lives-it helps "set the scene" for many important experiences.

Throughout time, people have recognized and intentionally used the powerful effects of sound. In the 20th century the western scientific community has conducted research to validate and expand our analytical knowledge of music. This research supports what we know from personal experience: Music greatly affects and enhances our learning and living!

Research continues to be conducted to provide helpful guidelines for our intentional use of music, especially in the classroom. This article, based on extensive research and experiences, will provide you with successful and valuable guidelines for incorporating music into the teaching and learning environment-applicable to all ages and educational settings.

Bring Education to Life with Music

How is it that for most people music is a powerful part of their personal life and yet when we go to work or school we turn it off? The intentional use of music in the classroom will set the scene and learning atmosphere to enhance our teaching and learning activities. Plus, using music for learning makes the process much more fun and interesting! Music, one of the joys of life, can be one of the joys of learning as well. The following pages give you suggestions for when and how to use music during your teaching or training. With these techniques, you, the teacher, can orchestrate a classroom environment that is rich and resonant-and provide learners with a symphony of learning opportunities and a sound education!

Music helps us learn because it will-

- establish a positive learning state
- create a desired atmosphere
- build a sense of anticipation
- energize learning activities
- change brain wave states
- focus concentration
- increase attention
- improve memory
- facilitate a multisensory learning experience
- release tension
- enhance imagination
- align groups
- develop rapport
- provide inspiration and motivation
- add an element of fun
- accentuate theme-oriented units

What Are Specific Ways Music Can Be Used in the Classroom?

Here are three areas of teaching where integrating music can be highly effective. For each intent, there is a rich repertoire of classroom techniques that can be used simply and easily by anyone-a brief example is given in each. These techniques work for people of all ages and from many societies. The very young, teens and adults will experience an increase in their effectiveness and joy of learning from these uses of music.

- **Learning Information**
  Music can be used to help us remember learning experiences and information. In Active Learning Experiences music creates a soundtrack for a learning activity. The soundtrack increases interest and activates the information mentally, physically, or emotionally. Music can also create a highly focused learning state in which vocabulary and reading material is absorbed at a great rate. When information is put to rhythm and rhyme these musical elements will provide a hook for recall. Here are three ways we can use music to help us learn information:
  - **Active Learning Experiences**
    Music will activate students mentally, physically, and emotionally and create learning states which enhance understanding of learning material. For example, play music with an association for your topic in the background while reading a concise summary of the important information. The more interesting and dramatic, the more easily the information is remembered. In a social studies class, I have read Chief Joseph quotes and a brief synopsis of his tribes' famous journey toward Canada while playing native music in the background. This introduction to the "Last Free Days of the Nez Perce" is powerful and memorable because the music helps students to appreciate the experience and set the mood. To activate information physically, play upbeat music during a related movement activity or role-play. For example, while learning about the flow of electrons in electricity, I play Ray Lynch's *Celestial Soda Pop* while we create a classroom flow of electricity. Some students are stationary neutrons and protons while others are moving electrons. When we add "free electrons" like a battery would, the electrons begin flowing and voila! We have an electrical current! Ray Lynchs' upbeat music keeps us moving and makes the role play more fun.
  - **Focus and Alpha State Learning**
    Music stabilizes mental, physical and emotional rhythms to attain a state of deep

concentration and focus in which large amounts of content information can be processed and learned. Baroque music, such as that composed by Bach, Handel or Telemann, that is 50 to 80 beats per minute creates an atmosphere of focus that leads students into deep concentration in the alpha brain wave state. Learning vocabulary, memorizing facts or reading to this music is highly effective. On the other hand, energizing Mozart music assists in holding attention during sleepy times of day and helps students stay alert while reading or working on projects.

- o **Memorization**
  Songs, chants, poems, and raps will improve memory of content facts and details through rhyme, rhythm, and melody. Teaching these to students or having them write their own is a terrific memory tool!

- **Attention, Attitude, and Atmosphere**
  (The Three A's) Preparing for a learning experience can make the difference between lessons well-learned and just passing time. Certain music will create a positive learning atmosphere and help students to feel welcome to participate in the learning experience. In this way it also has great affect upon students' attitudes and motivation to learn. The rhythms and tempo of musical sound can assist us in setting and maintaining our attention and focus by perking us up when we are weary and helping us find peace and calm when we are over-energized in some way. Here are two ways to use music for attitude, attention and atmosphere:
  - o **Welcoming and Attention**
    Background music is used to provide a welcoming atmosphere and help prepare and motivate students for learning tasks. Music can energize lagging attention levels or soothe and calm when necessary. Simply playing music as students enter the classroom or as they leave for recess or lunch totally changes the atmosphere. Depending on the music, you can enliven, calm, establish a theme or even give students content information with content-songs!
  - o **Community Builders**
    Music provides a positive environment that enhances student interaction and helps develop a sense of community and cooperation. Music is a powerful tool for understanding other cultures and bonding with one another. Selecting and playing a classroom theme song, developing a classroom "ritual"-such as a good-bye or hello time that uses music, or other group activities with music are ways to build lasting community experiences.

- **Personal Expression**
  Music is the doorway to the inner realms and the use of music during creative and reflective times facilitates personal expression in writing, art, movement, and a multitude of projects. Creation of musical compositions offers a pathway to expressing personal feelings and beliefs in the language of musical sound. Here are two ways music can help us express ourselves:
  - o **Creativity and Reflection**
    Background music is used to stimulate internal processing, to facilitate creativity, and encourage personal reflection. Playing reflective music, such as solo piano in either classical or contemporary styles, as students are writing or journaling holds attention for longer periods of time than without the music. In one study, students wrote twice as much with music than without!
  - o **Personal Expression Through the Musical Intelligence**
    The creation of music expresses inner thoughts and feelings and develops the musical intelligence through understanding of rhythm, pitch, and form. Writing songs related to content allows students to express how they feel about issues brought up in historic incidents, social studies topics or literature. Students can also create an instrumental

"soundtrack" with simple rhythm instruments that auditorily portrays a particularly important scientific discovery, a poignant historical event, or the action within a novel.

The Musical Echo

As you begin to resonate with your new musical classroom experiences, you may find transformations occurring in other aspects of your life. Your students may share with you wonderful experiences occurring in their lives because of doorways which were opened through the inclusion of music in the learning process. When this happens, celebrate and bless the connections to life meaning that has occurred. Everything that we do as teachers has echoes and reverberations that contribute to the whole of life. If there are no echoes it may mean that what we are teaching has less meaning than we thought. Expect and enjoy the miracles that occur!

Learning Theory and Music

Educational theorists have long sought answers to the question of how we can best teach students to learn well. Models for teaching have evolved and will no doubt continue to be developed. Some of today's' leading learning technologies embrace the use of music to assist in learning. Nearly all methods can be enhanced through the use of music. The guidelines provided in this book can help teachers and trainers learn how to use music no matter what learning methods are being used. Special note is given here to three successful learning models in which the use of music is particularly relevant.

The Multiple Intelligences

In 1983 Howard Gardner, psychology professor at Harvard University, presented his Multiple Intelligence theory based upon many years of research. Promoting the concept that intelligence is not one entity but that there are many different forms of intelligence, Gardner has awakened a revolution in learning. Multiple Intelligence teaching methods recognize eight (though there may be more) forms of intelligence: visual-spatial, linguistic, logical-mathematical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, musical, and most recently naturalist. Multiple Intelligence teachers strive to broaden students' familiarity and skill levels in each area.

The Multiple Intelligence teaching model emphasizes education for understanding rather than rote memory or the mimicking of skills. Practical hands-on skill development is coupled with factual knowledge and the ability to apply skills and information in real-life situations and make meaningful contributions to society.

Development of the musical intelligence can be greatly aided by the use of music throughout the curriculum. In addition to learning about musical elements and how to create music, the musical intelligence involves developing an ability to respond to musical sound and the ability to use music effectively in one's life. As a musician who has taught general music in public and private schools I can speak to the value of having students hear music throughout the school day as a means of increasing musical intelligence. The more students listen and respond to a variety of music, the more they will know about music on a personal, real-experience level, the deeper will be their understanding of why people throughout time and around the world create music, the greater will be their ability to use music productively in their lives, and the more eager they will

be to develop their musical skills because they will understand, appreciate and enjoy music more!

As a music teacher, I can say that the methods for using music in the classroom not only enhance the learning process but also contribute to the development of the musical intelligence.

Accelerated Learning

In the 1960's, Dr. Georgi Lozanov and Evelyna Gateva researched ways to increase memory abilities including the use of music in the classroom. Their successes caught the attention of the world. Teaching techniques developed from their creative experiments and today we have a solid format for effective multisensory and whole brain learning called Accelerated Learning. This book does not describe the full philosophy or method designed by Lozanov. It will, however, draw upon the knowledge of music in Lozanov's method to share successful ways of using music for learning.

The use of background music during lectures, vocabulary decoding, or group readings is a cornerstone of Accelerated Learning techniques. Two methods for using music, designed to create very different but equally effective learning environments, were developed through Lozanov's methods. They are called concerts. The Active Concert activates the learning process mentally, physically and/or emotionally while the Passive Concert is geared to place the student in a relaxed alpha brain wave state and stabilize the student's mental, physical and emotional rhythms to increase information absorption. Both teaching methods result in high memory retention. Used together the two concerts provide a powerful learning experience.

Another component of Accelerated Learning techniques is the recognition that the learning setting and student comfort level with learning is of great importance to student success. Lozanov's methods included using music as students enter the classroom, leave the classroom and during break times to help establish a positive learning atmosphere.

Turning Music on in Your Classroom

You will find many ideas that feel comfortable and exciting to you in this book. You will probably also find techniques that do not resonate for you. Keep in mind that you do not have to use music in all the ways presented here in order to be effective in enhancing learning through music. The addition of even one music technique in your classroom will add richness and improve the learning process. My suggestion is for you to begin your musical journey by incorporating one technique that resonates greatly with your teaching style. When you have mastered this use of music in your classroom, go on to explore a new method. Your students enthusiasm and response will be a guideline and incentive for future ideas and uses.

Music for Learning Suggestions

Focus and Concentration Music

Play as background music while students study, read, or write to:
· increase attention levels
· improve retention and memory
· extend focused learning time
· expand thinking skills

- *Relax with the Classics*. The LIND Institute. Accelerated Learning research indicates slow Baroque music increases concentration. It works!
- *Velvet Dreams.* Daniel Kobialka's exceptional music-favorite classics such as Pachelbel's Canon at a very slow tempo.
- *Celtic Fantasy.* Kobialka uses the warmth of Celtic music played slowly to facilitate relaxed focus.
- *Music for Relaxation.* Chapman and Miles. Quietly sets a calming mood.
- *Baroque Music to Empower Learning and Relaxation*. The Barzak Institute uses slow and fast Baroque era music to hold attention.
- *Mozart and Baroque Music*. The Barzak Institute. A useful compilation with 30 minutes of Mozart and 30 minutes of Baroque music.
- *Mozart Effect: Strengthen the Mind Enhance Focus with Energizing Mozart*, selected by Don Campbell.
- *An Dun*. Calming the Emotions Chinese music that actually does calm and appeals to all ages.
- *Accelerating Learning.* Steven Halpern's music assists learners in focus and is good background for reading-free-flowing and peaceful.

Creativity and Reflection Music

Play as background for activities such as:
· journaling or writing
· problem-solving or goal-setting
· background for project work
· brainstorming

- *Pianoforte*. Eric Daub. This thoughtful classical piano music sets the tone for introspective creativity and processing. Excellent!
- *Medicine Woman I or II*. Medwyn Goodall gives us music to delve into deep thoughts and meaningful feelings.
- *Oceans*. Christopher Peacock. Motivating and great team-building music.
- *Mozart Effect: Relax, Daydream and Draw*. Don Campbell's collection of reflective Mozart for gently enhancing creativity.
- *Fairy Ring*. Mike Rowlands' touching music in a classical style. Long cuts hold the mood. Good for reading with important information or stories.
- *Living Music and Touch*. Michael Jones uses solo piano music to encourage reflection.

Welcoming Music

Play as background for entries, exits, breaks. Use to:
· greet your students
· create a welcoming atmosphere
· set a learning rhythm
· expand musical awareness

- *Dance of the Renaissance.* Richard Searles. Delightful music of 15th-17th century England. This upbeat music appeals to all ages.
- *Emerald Castles.* Richard Searles. Pleasing sounds of the Celtic countries played on acoustic instruments.
- *1988 Summer Olympics.* Various rock songs from the Olympics that inspire.
- *Celtic Destiny.* Bruce Mitchell. Dynamic instrumental Celtic music. Stimulating with a variety of paces.
- *Sun Spirit.* Deuter. Delightful flute music that energizes melodiously.
- *The Four Seasons.* Vivaldi Beautiful melodies to set a warm mood no matter what the season.
- *Boundaries.* Scott Wilkie. Relaxed jazz to set an easy-going learning pace.
- *Echoes of Incas.* Ventana al Sol. Joyful South American melodies and rhythms open the door to learning.

Active Learning Music

Use for a sound break or movement activities to:
· increase productivity
· energize students during daily energy lulls
· provide a stimulating sound break to increase attention
· make exercise more fun
· encourage movement activities

- *Tunes for Trainers.* An all-in-one CD with categories of Fun Stuff, Energy Break, Brainstorm, Quiet moods and more.
- *Jazzy Tunes for Trainers.* A versatile compilation with lively background music for a wide variety of teaching and training activities.
- *Earth Tribe Rhythms.* Brent Lewis. This wonderful rhythmic music is played on 20 tuned drums for both rhythm and melody. Great for any movement activities.
- *Best of Ray Lynch.* Ray Lynch. A classic electronic and acoustic recording that adds fun and interest. Useful for topic associations.
- *Funny 50's and Silly 60's.* Old songs that are just plain fun like Purple People Eater, Wooly Bully and more.
- *Hooked on Classics.* The beat that doesn't quit! Great for body and brain wakeups.
- *Earth, Sea, and Sky.* Nature recordings. Provides a variety of sounds.
- *Best of World Dance Music.* Hopping happy music from everywhere. Some vocal and some instrumental.

Sound Directions for using music to enhance learning!

"Take a music bath once or twice a week for music is to the soul what water is to the body."
--Oliver Wendall Holmes

Here are sound directions on how using *Relax with the Classics* in the classroom for focus, concentration and memory.

Relax with the Classics from the LIND Institute

These slow, Baroque selections are between 55 and 80 beats per minute. Research has shown that this music will help you maintain focus and concentration. It assists you in reaching the

alpha brain wave state, a state which enhances learning and memorization.
Use this music

- o during writing or reading activities
- o with Passive Concerts in Accelerated Learning teaching and training (for more information, see Music for Learning, by Chris Brewer)
  Pachelbel's Canon in D is especially useful for synthesizing and summarizing activities (such as the Overhead/Power Point Review form of Passive Concerts)
- o during tests, goal-setting
- o for mind-calming exercises
- o to relax

Tips for Memorizing Words, Terms Facts (Passive Concert):

- o Select text important to the content such as explanatory information (text from a book or reading), words and their definitions, or a metaphorical story.
- o Ask your participants to sit comfortably and give them time to settle in, close their eyes, sit back, etc. Let them know they will be hearing music for a minute or two and then you will begin your reading.
- o Begin the music and let it play for a minute or two. Then begin to read your content information slowly and in a calm voice that is loud enough to be heard above the music. The music and your voice should be about equal or your voice should be slightly louder. If reading words and definitions, pause for a mental count of 4 between sets of words. Keep your reading to 30 words/definitions or 3-5 minutes or text-less for young students.
- o When you have completed your reading, allow the music to play for a minute or two after you have finished speaking, then slowly turn the volume down on the CD player.

Tips for the Overhead/Power Point Review:

- o Place the overheads or PowerPoint used in your unit lesson in the order in which they were first presented or go back to your PowerPoint presentation visuals to where you want to begin. Colors and images on the visuals also help memory.
- o Explain to students that they will be reviewing the information learned in your unit by reviewing the presentation visuals. Let them know that there will be no talking during this review, only music.
- o Ask students to sit comfortably and give them time to settle in and relax.
- o Begin the music and display each visual for approximately 7 seconds, slightly longer if the visual is complex (visuals should not include large amounts of text!). Continue to display visuals until all have been seen. Let the last one remain on the screen for slightly longer, turn off the projector and let the music play for another 30 seconds. Slowly turn the music down to signal the end of the review.

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Exploring the Benefits of Art in Elementary Education

Ashley Flory

Beneficial Art. I have always felt that I have had some connection to art on some level, since I was a child. I can remember trying to prolong art assignments in elementary school for as long as I could. I preferred not to go on to math or social studies because I would rather spend my time working on art and creating something that I was truly satisfied with and proud of. Frequently I would not entirely complete art assignments and I would feel slightly uncomfortable about them being displayed on the classroom wall. I am sure that to my teachers and the majority of my fellow students art time was merely that, a brief period of art lasting no more than twenty-five minutes and when it was done it was done, but I longed for it to last an entire day or more.

Being exposed to art often throughout my college experience has really made me come to understand that there are many positive outcomes possible. Younger children are typically more apt to enjoy drawing and coloring and are usually not resistant to being exposed to art. From the time that children are barely beginning to go to school the use of art materials helps them to become more aware of and comfortable with their surroundings, both physically and mentally.

I worry that art is disappearing from too many classrooms, particularly outside of the younger grades in elementary school. I observed in a fourth grade classroom for two months in which there was no art instruction, and its absence was horrible. I know that art can enhance children's learning and for many children can provide a healthy outlet from traditional teaching methods as it did for me. Art is not a component of the state standardized tests that are given every year and so it is vanishing from the classroom.

Art in the elementary classroom has great beneficial effects on student learning by stimulating the multiple intelligences present in a typical group of students. Art activities can serve as a bridge to understanding for students; in addition, art has the potential to act as therapy for students with emotional issues. During early development, students who have difficulty verbalizing ideas can use art as an alternative way to express themselves. With the current emphasis on standardization and high stakes testing, art has lost a place in the curriculum, to the disservice of the students emotionally and cognitively. Unfortunately, a typical classroom teaches primarily to visual and auditory learners while leaving others by the wayside. Effective use of art in the classroom can bridge learning across all of the multiple intelligences and benefit all types of learners.

The multiple intelligences tend to be neglected in a typical classroom environment. Linguistic and visual learners tend to be the students that thrive best in a traditional classroom environment. If curricula only address those two intelligences a great percentage of students are placed at a disadvantage. Art in the classroom can be used to bridge instruction to many of the less frequently addressed intelligences. The bodily/kinesthetic learner can be reached through performance. Musical learners can create songs for concepts or work to a beat. Most of all, though, art in the classroom makes learning more fun and therefore more meaningful to students.

Students Need Art. This project originated from my observations in various elementary level classrooms. I noticed that in higher grade levels art tended to be less utilized than in lower grades. From my personal viewpoint it seemed that this deficiency was detrimental to the learning environment. I found that students who had difficulty expressing themselves verbally or through writing could express themselves magnificently through illustration. This was particularly evident at the kindergarten level. Over the past three years I have done over one hundred hours of observation in elementary classrooms and have noticed the effectiveness of art in instruction. My goal is to examine the importance of this neglected area of education.

The following paper is organized into three main sections. In the first section I will discuss how art helps bridge understanding of difficult subjects. Next I will discuss how No Child Left Behind (NCLB) has crippled the art curriculum to the detriment of students. Therefore, in this project, described in the third section, I will show how young students can use art to express themselves as an alternative to verbalization.

Wise Eisner. Thus far in my research, I have found a considerable amount of evidence to suggest that art's influence on children helps them to better succeed academically. There is definitely a correlation between students' involvement with art and their overall academic success. There are many important elements of a child's cognitive development that are enhanced by art. Elliot Eisner, a major advocate for the arts, created a set of examples of the importance of including art in schools called: Ten Reasons to Teach Art. These reasons are listed in Eisner's book entitled The Arts and the Creation of Mind (2002). One of the most important reasons listed is one that states: "The arts teach children to make good judgments about qualitative relationships. Unlike most of the curriculum in which correct answers and rules prevail, in the arts it is judgment rather than rules that prevail" (Eisner, 2002). This is undoubtedly one of the biggest life lessons of all and it can be well taught through art.

Instilling this quality in children at a young age will help them in becoming more successful adults. Being able to make good judgments is an essential life skill as it is necessary in the workforce, the home and in society in general. Having the ability to use good judgment lends itself to good decision making. Art has the ability to teach essential life lessons and so it too should be an essential subject at all levels of education.

Elliot Eisner has long been recognized for his role not only as a teacher, but also as an advocate for the inclusion of arts in education. I think that what I learned most from Eisner's ten criteria as a whole is that they help to show how students have the ability to attain success not only inside

the classroom, but in the world as well. Leaving art out of the curriculum only has the potential to hurt students' chances later in life.

Art as presented by Eisner seems to improve the social attitudes of children. Opening the idea of creativeness and alternativeness to a child allows for greater levels of acceptance and understanding. I think that it is important for students to know that not everyone thinks exactly alike and that alternative approaches to a problem are a good thing. Students will come with their own mix of learning patterns which can either be accepted or regarded as incorrect ways of thinking.

Absence of Art Encourages Standardization. As teachers we are not raising robots. NCLB assessment is a means of molding students into standard, diligent, and ultimately unthinking individuals. If we do not embrace the teachings of Eisner and take into consideration the benefits of incorporating art we are only setting students up for failure. Allowing for multiple perspectives early in education helps promote understanding and acceptance of others while also helping to create a desire to learn. I do not think that it is healthy for teachers and students to have to fear the classroom because of the current mandates that are in place. While the problem of NCLB has yet to be solved, it is still important to take into consideration the positive outcomes of integrating art with every other subject.

Recently I have learned one major benefit that art provides. Initially when I first became interested in this subject, I felt that I wanted to describe art as a form of communication. When I watch a Kindergartener draw or paint or create in any way through art, there is something that happens that does not ever happen with any other class activity. It is like witnessing a surge of creativeness; art seems to come more naturally for young children. At the age of only four or five years old, most students are not very advanced in their writing ability. However, with art, children are able to communicate without having to be very proficient writers. If they can successfully communicate something through art they will be more inclined to want to learn how to communicate that same message through writing. Art stimulates their minds and encourages them. This can probably be traced back to the fact that there are no defined rules with art; there are no guidelines. You cannot draw something the wrong size or paint something the wrong color and kids are very accepting of art because art is accepting of them.

Deborah West, an elementary school teacher, discusses art as a language in her article "An Arts Education." She suggests we view art as a special kind of language. It may take the form of language as we know it, as in a formal critique, or it may be in the form of visual images. Either way, the language of art, similar to what Pond stated, is an effective means of communication. Art encompasses what is tangible and what is imagined, thus balancing realistic representation with abstraction. As artists, young children need to develop the symbolic tools of literacy in the visual arts (West, 2000).

West is explaining something I myself experienced but always found difficult to express in words. The way kids could light up when starting to draw, and the way they automatically gravitated toward an engagement with their artwork, was directly in response to what art generates for them. Art seems to help the student with their own comprehension of their

surroundings as well as to communicate their feelings to others. From my observations, I have collected student drawings that demonstrate great artistic ability, but limited writing ability. Students might not understand the imaginative and literal interpretations of their art, but there is actual substance to it. A student might draw what looks like a tree, but incorporate unrealistic colors because of their own preference. Art allows students to simply express themselves in a medium that is an alternative to verbal or written communication.

The proof is in the pudding. When thinking about the question "Why is it important for my child to learn about art?" I can imagine all sorts of arguments for why art should be left out of the curriculum, but of course know that none of these arguments are valid. These arguments exist within the minds of very ignorant people who probably lacked the privilege of experiencing art when they were children themselves. Art is a gateway to other areas of learning. Through art, children are exposed to math and science. I know that art is often overlooked for all the benefits that it does have simply because people do not realize what art has to offer. Susan Striker argues that "We tend to compartmentalize different subjects and think of art as being quite separate from writing or mathematics. Children are learning scientific and mathematical facts as they work with art materials; removing or subtracting clay as they model, adding on when they create constructions, experiencing balance as they build" (Striker, 2001). Art in itself is separate from other areas in that it is the only subject that can branch itself out to so many other subjects that require the very same skills. However, while there are many similarities between art and its neighboring subjects, it should still be regarded as something completely special all on its own. Art should be appreciated as it provides so much for young learners.

Joan Bouza Koster also makes the claim that art lends itself to other areas of learning. In her book, Growing Artists: Teaching Art to Young Children (2005), Koster promotes the view that "Art and other curriculum areas are interrelated. Art enhances learning in other subjects, and activities in other curriculum areas extend learning in art" (Koster, 2005). Art truly brings out the best in children as it opens their minds to everything else around them. The application of art to other subjects provides a safety zone for students to fall back on when they are struggling or to excel in when they understand. In part due to the manner in which art is graded and judged, students are more willing to take chances with art inclusive projects when incorporated in the classroom. Teachers tend to grade art more leniently and students know this. Incorporating art across the curriculum can lower inhibitions and put students more at ease in particularly challenging subjects.

While art provides another language for children as well as being applicable to various other subjects, it also aids in physical development. Robert Schirrmacher argues that "Art activities provide experience and practice in developing and refining gross motor or large muscle skills. Art involves physical and manipulative activity. While easel painting, children use their entire arms and upper torsos in making large, sweeping motions with paintbrushes" (Schirrmacher, 1998). Art helps to facilitate muscle formation. Other forms of art also incorporate physical activity. Performance art helps students by engaging their bodily-kinesthetic learning styles. Increasing physical activity helps encourage memory retention as well. When students perform

in the classroom, not only are they developing physically, but they are also increasing the chance that they will remember and learn more effectively.

Art Influences Student Behavior. Students I observe generally vary in their classroom performance. Students in classrooms incorporating frequent art activities tend to participate more in class. I typically see more students volunteering to answer questions in classes that promote art. When art is left out, the students are generally more reluctant to answer questions. I think this can be explained at least partially by some of Elliot Eisner's insights. Eisner argues that exposing kids to multiple perspectives through the use of art helps them to become more effective problem solvers. While most subjects heavily emphasized in schools do not allow for more than one correct answer, educators still expect students to answer questions correctly with ease. However, it has been my observation that teachers are often too critical of student answers and some children are genuinely afraid to ask questions. I believe that in art- friendly classrooms where multiple perspectives are presented more openly and frequently, children are more likely to want to voice their opinions. Children are likely to be more productive and have higher success rates if they are encouraged to participate. Part of this success can be attributed to good questioning strategies, but also the inclusion of art in the classroom places emphasis on the correctness of multiple perspectives.

Clearly there is an abundance of benefits to be had by students of all ages. While I would like to focus on younger children and their connection to art, I would also like to emphasize that art should be continued throughout a student's schooling. Art stimulates the mind, provides a means of transition to other subjects and builds on physical development. Art truly serves as a building block as it leads to a student's enhancement in the classroom and later in life. Exposure to art and artistic expression contributes to the development of well- rounded individuals. For this reason, as a future teacher, I plan to utilize every opportunity to incorporate and integrate art into my teaching.

Multiple Intelligences for All. Instruction based on Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences has been a staple in classrooms for several decades now, but with the shift towards high-stakes testing, the focus on Multiple Intelligences has been getting pushed aside. So much concentration and emphasis have been given to test-taking skills and addressing the massive curriculum that teachers simply cannot take the time to include any art projects or activities that might focus on the less-taught intelligences. These areas are not areas that can be tested and they are consequently not on any state tests. Precious instruction time is not therefore "sacrificed" for some of these essential areas of understanding and students are suffering. Because the required curriculum is so large, teachers are pressured to move as quickly and efficiently as possible through the grade-designated material. Because of this, the arts and consequently Multiple Intelligences-related instruction are cut.

Unconventional Experimentation. In one instance, a school has seen the benefit of incorporating multiple intelligences into instruction and applying it to standardized testing. In one Maryland school, they decided to incorporate multiple intelligence teaching practices school wide as a constant tool for learning. Their results were excellent. Jan Grenhawk, a teacher at the school notes:

In one year our students' scores on the Maryland Performance Assessment rose by 20 percent. They [the students] remembered information more accurately and were confident enough to use it to solve problems….They demonstrated a flexible approach to problem solving. They were taking traditional pencil-and-paper tests, but using a variety of strategies to complete them. Even students whom we did not consider strong readers or writers were able to use strategies we taught to write good answers. (Grenhawk, 1997)

Multiple intelligences strategies that were taught helped students achieve more than simple memorization and re-gurgitation; students learned how to be true problem-solvers and critical thinkers. The interactive and varied approaches taken toward education helped students apply their knowledge on the standardized state tests. This inclusion, stressing among other things the importance of art, allowed students to actually learn instead of to memorize and forget.

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was enacted in 2001 after a strong push from the Bush Administration. The aim of NCLB is to make all students show proficiency in math and reading by 2014. NCLB enforces standardized testing as a way of assessing student and school progress. This approach is criticized by those who believe no single testing method is ever appropriate for all-or that accurate assessment is impossible when a single measure is emphasized in this manner. Under NCLB, schools face reprimands when their students are not performing at "acceptable" levels. Many students who are presented with standardized tests are second-language English learners and may lack the ability to perform successfully.

In one particular case reported last year, involving Bailey's Elementary School for the Arts and Sciences in Virginia, students were rated as performing under state standardized testing requirements. The teachers and district administrators for Bailey's argue that reformed testing protocols would more accurately show student achievement levels. Teachers at Bailey were given district approval to supplement testing with "work portfolios" in place of reading tests to assess their ESL students. The portfolios were given to a sample of 169 students. Of these students, 97% passed, meeting federal academic goals (US News & World Report).

Improper assessment through the implementation of NCLB seems to indicate that standardized testing is not effective. Standardized assessments tend to test only the basic knowledge aspect of Bloom's Taxonomy. None of the higher levels of learning are really assessed in the process. This high emphasis on testing is not really relevant to the real world. Students are not learning the skills that are needed for entry into the workforce. Schools are being judged as in need of improvement when in reality it is NCLB that needs to be reformed. Students and teachers alike are suffering. Teachers are being seen as incompetent and not qualified to teach their students required skills. They are forced to modify their teaching in a way that prepares students for testing. The arts are regarded as "frill" aspects of the curriculum and unnecessary.

NCLB claims to be benefiting education by attempting to help struggling students, but clearly it is not doing so. Additionally, at the same time that it is not helping students in need it is taking away from students who are viewed as performing above average. Gifted students are ignored while their fellow classmates are "helped." The focus of NCLB is trying to get failing students to

pass standardized tests and therefore prove that teachers and schools are competent as a whole. However, NCLB is only hindering the school system as well as the students who depend on it.

Hypocrisy of No Child Left Behind. NCLB has continued to prove that it is not contributing to the success of our schools. It is seen as an enemy to many teachers and future teachers like myself. Schools must expect the unexpected from their students since NCLB requires that every student is passing standardized tests in every category for their schools to be safe from reprimand. If a school's test scores are deemed too low the school is labeled as underperforming and further action can be taken if the school does not improve.

Welcome Diversity. We happen to live in a country that is full of very diverse individuals. Many families chose to leave their own countries in the hopes of finding better opportunities here in the US. Many students have not had much previous academic success due to the conditions of their former school system. We are supposed to be the welcomed change and yet for many immigrant families it must seem like we are perpetuating failure.

Bring on the Tests. An article in NEA magazine used four schools' data to show that NCLB is doing nothing but hurting our schools and hindering our students. The standardized testing agenda that comes along with NCLB is supposedly aimed at helping students and schools as wholes to progress. For students at Napa High school in California, the tests are helping them to fail.

Many students at Napa High are arriving after leaving their country and culture behind, speaking their native language. It should not be expected that these particular students will easily pass any sort of English proficiency exam, but it is. Scores of the entire school are then lowered because students who could reasonably be expected to fail are failing.

This particular high school has been honored with awards for student achievement in dance, music and journalism classes, and has been deemed a distinguished school. However, the effort of the school's teachers and students is being completely ignored when students from foreign countries are being unfairly tested. Katy Howard is an English Learner (EL) teacher at Napa High and says that many of her students come from Mexico and are tested very early after arriving at the school. Howard claims "they're tested too early. They're tested the minute they arrive. Probably 60 percent of my students are not even proficient in Spanish." (NEA Today January 2008 issue). It seems ridiculous that a school that can be recognized as distinguished and praised for its efforts to incorporate music, dance and journalism so effectively can still be labeled as a school in need of improvement.
When the arts are utilized in the classroom they can have nothing but positive outcomes. Creative approaches to teaching have proven to be more effective than standardized teaching and testing.

Unfortunately there is a great deal of political strife involved in the administration of the education system. I can only hope that some serious action takes place soon to better the current situation. As a future teacher I am concerned for the wellbeing of the students that I will end up teaching. The multiple intelligences truly need to be implemented in the classroom: all students

learn differently and it cannot be expected that all will flourish with the close-minded values of NCLB in place.

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CHAPTER FIVE P.E./MOVEMENT/DANCE/DRAMA/PLAY

SELECTED READING

Source:
Moore, M. (2004). Using drama as an effective method for teaching elementary students. *Eastern Michigan University Digital Commons*. Retrieved from: http://commons.emich.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1112&context=honors

Using Drama as an Effective Method for Teaching Elementary Students

Mandie M. Moore

Introduction: Getting Involved

"Tell me, and I'll forget. Show me, and I may not remember. Involve me, and I'll understand" (An Old Chinese Proverb). I remember reading this quote at some point during my college education and thinking that there was much truth to it. Too often I sat through lecture after lecture wondering how I was going to remember all this new information. That was until I took my required U.S. Government course. This professor (whether he knew it or not) taught us using drama. The entire class was involved in a simulation of the government, in which we took on roles of real people. In school, social studies was never my favorite subject. I think that it may have bored me so much that I never bothered trying to understand it. For the first time, I was involved in learning social studies. From this point on, I decided that when I teach my elementary students, I would involve them.

I learned how I would involve my students after taking several communication and theatre arts courses. A study by Kaaland-Wells in 1994 showed that "teachers who had taken a college drama course were more likely than the others to feel that it should be a part of all teacher training, and they were more likely to view it as effective" (Wagner 12). My passion for children and teaching inspired me to do further research into this method. I wanted to reach the students as my professor did for me and bring them to a higher level of understanding of the topics I teach. My belief is that knowledge is power and students should love to learn. While I feel that all of the arts can be influential learning tools, drama is especially powerful. Betty Jane Wagner, an educator who has worked closely with and shared many ideas with Dorothy Heathcote, an expert in the field of drama in education, asserts her opinion of drama. "Drama is powerful because its unique balance of thought and feeling makes learning exciting, challenging relevant to real-life concerns, and enjoyable" (9). As educators, if we are not providing a fun and meaningful learning environment for our children to learn, then we are not doing our jobs.

Research indicates that using drama in the classroom as a means of teaching helps students learn academically, socially, and developmentally. "The use of drama as a tool for teaching is not new. Historically, both drama and theatre have long been recognized as potent means of education and indoctrination. The ways they are used today, however, are new, and they differ in a number of respects from the ways they have been used in the past" (McCaslin 271). Arts advocates and educators have recently started to explore the use of drama as an integrated way of learning the curriculum. I strongly believe that the arts should be employed in every classroom. It can reach

students who otherwise couldn't be reached, and challenge students who have already grasped the concepts.

Drama provides a fun means of learning. It brings the affective back into the classroom, an institute where emotions and learning are categorically divided. Recent brain research proves that emotions are linked with learning. When we connect to the concept emotionally, we will have a better understanding of it. When we teach using the arts we are linking prior experiences with new stimuli. Teaching using drama brings emotion and learning together. Most importantly of all, using drama to teach in the elementary classroom gets students involved and gives them the power to have a key role in their education. Jeffrey D. Wilhelm, who wrote the article, "Drama is Imagining to Learn: Inquiry, Ethics, and Integration through Drama," writes, "Through drama, students became a part of the learning process rather than mere observers or inactive receptacles of the rich experience of learning; in this way, their learning was deeper, more sustained, and infinitely more complex" (1). This paper will demonstrate the validity of using drama to teach students and the elementary curriculum. Through research of the arts, drama in particular, and a close look at how people learn, one can attest that teaching using drama can enrich the classroom environment.

Purpose of Research

"We conduct research in order to understand our field, to learn how to become more effective teachers, and to explain to those outside our field why we use drama as a way to educate students" (Wagner 1). The purpose for researching drama in education is to determine whether using drama is an effective method for teaching elementary students. The research will demonstrate to educators and the like, why they should integrate drama into the elementary curriculum. This paper will not attempt to advocate drama as the only method of teaching, but rather as a supplement to traditional teaching methods. Through further examination on recent brain research and how people learn, one can conclude that using drama can be a successful way to teach elementary students. All educators can employ the method of using drama to teach all subject areas. Children learn in different ways, so an effective teacher will employ many different teaching strategies in attempt to reach all of his or her students.

Today's elementary classroom is very much controlled by the state. It is an age of standards and benchmarks. "Brain-based research validates that learning is individually specific. This implies that standardized materials, instruction, and practices may actually diminish or inhibit learning" (Lawson 2). The specific curriculum benchmarks and standardized tests provide very little leeway for teachers to deviate from. Since funding for the schools depends on whether the students meet standardized test score requirements, many educators find themselves teaching to the test. This can cause educators to cover a significant amount of information over a short period of time. This will result in students gaining a large quantity of knowledge with very poor quality. This exact phenomenon is proven by a study done by Preston Feden and Robert Vogel who compared textbooks in the United States to those in other countries:

According to one study, math textbooks in the United States cover 175 percent more topics, yet German students outperform American students in math achievement. Why? The answer is that

the human brain can only absorb so much information at a time. By concentrating more on less information, students are better able to retain and use knowledge (2).

Research on drama in education will inform future and present elementary school teachers the benefits of maintaining a drama- integrated classroom.

What is Drama?

Drama is the act of using the imagination to become someone or something other than yourself. It can take one any place to any period of time. It is only limited by the imagination, the participants' fear of risking, or the leader or teacher's set limitations. Richard Courtney, a professional in the area of drama in education defines drama as, "The human process whereby imaginative thought becomes action, drama is based on internal empathy and identification, and leads to external impersonation" (vii). Courtney believes also that "life is a drama." Humans are always acting and improvising. When we meet someone for the first time, we improvise our conversation. Life has no script written for us, however, we can use role-play to practice the anticipated situation (1).

In their book, Imagining To Learn, Jeffrey Wilhelm and Brian Edmiston define drama simply as, "wondering, 'What if…?' and then interacting with others in a drama world as if that imagined reality was actual" (3-4). Through looking at these definitions of drama, one can see the impact it could have in the classroom. "Asking 'What if…?'" is not an optional question in the curriculum-imagining possibilities is the core of understanding other people, other times, and other places" (Edmiston 4). "Watching children working in drama provides fascinating insights into the richness of their imaginations, the skill with which they negotiate with one another, their present level of critical thinking, and the sophistication of the language they use" (Verriour 7). Gavin Bolton calls the form of drama used to teach in the classroom, "dramatic playing." "Dramatic playing is characterized by a high degree of spontaneity as teacher and students work to create a fictional world in which they assume roles to explore issues that are of concern to them" (Verriour 9). Most professionals in the area of drama in education would define drama very correspondingly. They would all agree that drama is the act of participants joining in an imagined world and taking roles of others. By doing so, students are able to learn through other perspectives and act as one would in the imagined situation. Drama, although not new to humans has had an integral impact on history and those who lived through it. Drama and theatre arts have been around since ancient times. "Most familiar to us in the Western world is the theatre of ancient Greece, which developed from celebration and dance into a golden age of theatre" (McCaslin 271). This form of art and its artists were highly respected. "Plato, in The Republic, advocated play as a way of learning. Aristotle urged education in the arts, distinguishing between activities that were means and those that were ends" (McCaslin 271). Many cultures have found using drama to teach religion to be very successful. "The medieval church taught through the medium of mystery plays and in doing, helped to restore theatre to its proper place as a great art form" (McCaslin 271). Drama was used to teach, and as a form of entertainment.

The ideas of using drama as a medium for teaching are not new ideas. However, the western world has yet to widely accept the use of drama as a teaching medium for the elementary curriculum. Much of the research on drama in education today can be accredited to scholars in

England, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. Some arts advocates have succeeded in bringing drama and theatre arts into the schools as an entirely separate program. Even this is still lacking in numerous schools. Although drama in education is not a new idea, recent brain and educational research is causing it to grow in popularity. Educators who use drama to teach their students are finding it to be a very successful method and therefore, are spreading the word.

Drama is a Way of Life

Drama is a natural, innate form of learning for children. As young as toddlers, children play house and pretend to be doctors, teachers, or some other career, which fascinates them. These children are using drama to practice for or imitate life. In her book, Dramatic Play in Childhood-Rehearsal For Life, V. Glasgow Koste includes a text taken from a cereal box, in which attempts to explain the importance of dramatic play. "Playing is one of the most powerful ways for a child to learn. He looks at the world around him and plays what he sees-going to the office, driving a bus, make-believe stores or parties and on and on. He tries different ways of acting, assumes various roles and challenges himself with all sorts of problems" (Koste 2). Dramatic play helps children prepare for life and cope with growing up. It allows children to explore and make sense of the complexities of life without experiencing failure. Since dramatic play is so innate in children, it should be carried on into the elementary classroom. It is something that children are very good at and love to do. "Children bring with them to the classroom the universal human ability to play, to behave, "as if"; many children spontaneously engage in such dramatic play from as young an age as ten months" (Wagner 9). It is very natural for a child to use his or her imagination to transform him or herself even as young as infantry. They are experts in the field. Renowned psychologist, Sigmund Freud states, "We ought surely to look in the child for the first traces of imaginative activity. The child's best loved and most absorbing occupation is play. Perhaps we may say that every child at play behaves like an imaginative writer, in that he creates a world of his own or, more truly he rearranges the things of his world and orders it in a new way that pleases him better…." (Koste 1).

When children transform themselves their imagination is set free. They are then able to make connections between their previous experiences and the unknown. It is this connection that helps children and adults learn best.

Drama is a way of life. It is embedded in each and every person's lives from birth to death. We naturally use drama to learn, explore, and solve problems in new and difficult situations. John Dixon states, "The taking on of dramatic roles, the dramatic encounter with new situations and with new possibilities of the self is not something we teach children but something they bring to school for us to help them develop" (Wagner 9). Not only should teachers use drama to teach the elementary curriculum, but also use drama to teach the students. The educator's job in the classroom is to teach students the curriculum and help them become life-long learners. To become a life-long learner or someone who uses their skills to teach himself and solve everyday problems, the person must acquire some basic social and problem solving skills. Drama is a great way to develop these skills.

It is quite difficult to process something that has no personal meaning to us when we are learning something new. Perhaps it is put best by saying, "Facts are empty without being linked to context

and concepts" (Perry 1). When we learn something new, we connect it to something we already know. For example, if someone has never seen or experienced the ocean before, but listens to someone describe the ocean and how it looks, they will process this by connecting it to their prior experiences. Maybe this person has been to a big lake with waves and a beach where people play in the sand and swim. This person already has a similar experience to that of going to the ocean, so their idea of the ocean is better understood. The ideas of connecting new information with something we already know have been affirmed by Robert Vogel, who has studied cognitive science as it applies to education, for fifteen years. "According to research, the human brain, when learning, strives to make connections. 'The brain does not learn in isolation,' says Vogel. Lessons have to be taught in a way so that the new knowledge connects to something the student already know, he says" (2). Drama can do that for the brain since it is a way of life. It is a practice we are born with. We know drama, so we can connect it with new ideas learned in school. Also, drama allows the learner to explore their experiences in using their imaginations.

How to Use Drama in the Classroom

Putting on plays for an audience is not what is meant by using drama in the classroom. The goal is not to teach acting and performance skills. The goal is to teach the core curricular areas using drama. Betty Jane Wagner, an internationally recognized authority on composition instruction and the educational uses of drama, states of the purpose of role play, "The role playing is improvisational, not scripted and memorized to present a performance for an audience. The emphasis is on drama as an intentional teaching strategy to enhance learning in a particular curricular area" (5). There are many ways in which drama can be integrated into the elementary classroom. Drama can be a way to teach all subject areas. Language arts, social studies, and science are subject areas, which are very successful in using drama. "It is particularly effective in making a historical event come alive for students," says Wagner (5).

A real life example seems to be the best way to illustrate how drama can be used in the classroom. When I student taught a second grade class last year, one of the required benchmarks to meet was to teach about Thanksgiving. Instead of telling the students about Thanksgiving, I let them be the teachers. I assigned them each to a group, which would cover a specific topic of Thanksgiving. (Mayflower, Pilgrims, Native Americans, feast) I told the class that their group was to choose some way to teach the class about their topic. Without influencing their decisions, I noticed that every one of the groups chose to use role play to teach their classmates. It was an immediate, unanimous decision made by all groups to use drama to teach the class. This told me that children most definitely love using drama to learn.

On the day they were to teach, it was amazing to see the students in role. They really imagined themselves back in time to the first Thanksgiving. Students came dressed to look their parts. Many of them did extra research on their own to learn what their Pilgrim role would look and act like. While each group went in front of the room to teach, the class was intensely involved in the learning. Since this experience those second graders are experts on Thanksgiving. This class voluntarily went above and beyond their given requirements to learn.

This is just one example of how drama was used as a method of teaching in the elementary classroom. Role-play can be a very powerful teaching tool. This and different aspects of drama

can be used to teach all the curriculum areas. Holly Giffin, Ph.D. writes, "In the field of education there is tension between the growing concern that children meet external, culturally-approved standards, and the growing body of research and theory suggesting that learning is far more complex and individualized than the standard-makers ever thought" (Koste xiii). Educators must take this into consideration when teaching children.

Theoretical Framework

For many years famed psychologists have viewed drama as a way of learning. While studying the growth of humans cognitively, psychologists have found that drama provides a sound foundation for development. "Lev Vygotsky and Jerome Bruner both see cognitive growth as dependent upon interactive play and upon children imagining themselves acting in worlds that are developmentally a bit above their actual physical and intellectual level. Both provide a solid foundation for using drama in the classroom as a way that deepens and enlarges understanding" (Wagner 15). "Dr. Howard Gardner, co-director of Project Zero at Harvard University's Graduate School of Education, has developed a theory of multiple intelligences which suggests that our school systems, which reflect our culture, teach, test, reinforce, and reward primarily two kinds of intelligence-verbal and logical-mathematical" (Dickinson). Dr. Gardner has suggested that students learn in many different ways. We all have different intelligences that reflect how we learn and what interests us. Gardner names at least five separate intelligences that humans may comprise. If educators teach their students knowing that there are other intelligences besides only verbal and logical, then students will have better chances of learning."They [intelligences] include visual/spatial, bodily/kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligences" (Dickinson). Gardner has recognized each of these intelligences as equally important to learning. "These intelligences provide the foundations for the visual arts, music, dance, and drama, and through these art forms most students will not only find the means for communication and self-expression, but the tools to construct meaning and learn almost any subject effectively" (Dickinson).

Through Gardner's theories, it is evident that drama is a highly effective means of reaching students with intelligences that are not reached through traditional teaching methods. The intelligences are inherent in creative drama. The application of multiple intelligences to education is a mass movement among teachers that is only just beginning. Hopefully, using drama as a teaching strategy will be the foundation for future developments of multi-intelligence teaching approaches. "Instruction for cognitive skills and objectives without affective dimensions may be efficient but not effective" (Lawson 2).

Much of my own knowledge and ideas about education and learning are based on the Constructivist Theory. This theory deems that humans do not learn by soaking up external sources, but rather we learn by actively making our own meaning. "One theoretical viewpoint about modern educational Drama emerges from the ideas of educators such as Rousseau, Montessori, Bruner, and Dewey. They say that learning happens through active participation, or as Dewey states "learning by doing (Courtney 1). Drama is a form of "learning by doing." Dewey also stressed the importance of the imagination. He called imagination the "gateway through which meanings are derived from past experiences that are carried into the present" (Iannone 307). Creative drama is engrossed by the participant's use of imagination. The

curriculum should integrate the imagination or aesthetic world with the cognitive world of the student. "John Dewey's, 'learning by doing' theory shaped the progressive era in education" (Wagner 15).

The benefits of drama move far beyond the cognitive aspects. Although it can be a powerful way to teach the elementary curriculum, it can also be a prevailing approach to teaching the students themselves. Students learn valuable social skills, and develop proficiency for continued success in life. Richard Courtney believes that children must act out their thoughts with physical actions. They do not have the ability to act it out in their head, or "mind's eye," as adults do. (Courtney 1). Drama, which involves imaginative transformation and reflection on experiences, helps students expand their ability to act out thoughts in their minds. This skill is necessary for organizing thoughts and problem solving situations in everyday life. "When a significant event is coming up, we frequently rehearse it beforehand in our minds" (Wagner 16). The skill of playing thoughts out in your mind is also essential for reading comprehension. This is what we do when trying to understand a difficult text. The reader "pictures" what is happening in the text to better understand it.

Drama is also beneficial because of how much the participants engage with each other. This helps to develop valuable social skills in young children. In order for children to be able to learn, they have to feel safe and comfortable. The engagement with each other in drama builds trust and strong relationships. These ideas parallel that of the Social Cognitive Theory.

Brain Research

To really understand how drama has a positive impact on learning, one must first be familiar with how humans learn. "The value of using drama in education is supported by research into how people learn. 'Much recent brain research demonstrates how the arts are able to tap into areas of experience and knowledge which are as significant to the development of learning skills as the traditional 'three R's',' says Juliana Saxton, who is the co-chair of drama in education conferences" (Conference 1). Each person learns best a little differently. Some learn best by visualizing, some by audible, and some by kinesthetic. However, not every person falls into one of these categories. In fact, many people would confess that they remember something best by using a combination of all three types of learning. This is why teachers must utilize all methods of teaching in the classroom. Using drama can be of benefit to all types of learning.

Studying the brain would provide insight as to how humans learn and what methods would be successful to apply in the classroom. "We are on the verge of a revolution: the application of important new brain research to teaching and learning. This revolution will change school start times, discipline policies, assessment methods, teaching strategies, budget priorities, classroom environments, use of technology, and even the way we think of the arts and physical education" (Jensen 1). It seems logical that educators would naturally take current brain research into consideration when teaching. However, until only recently there has been technology, which has allowed us to study the brains of living people. Dr. Bruce D. Perry, M.D., Ph. D., is an internationally recognized authority on brain development and children in crisis. He states, "Over the last 40 years we have learned more about the human brain than in the previous 400 years.

Educators and neuroscientists have been trying to put this knowledge to work by transforming the information of basic and clinical neurosciences into practical insights for the classroom" (1).

Brain research has allowed us to explain many aspects of behavior and learning in the classroom. "We now know the biological roots of impulsive and violent classroom behavior. Many of our conventional educational beliefs are being shattered like glass" (Jensen 2). With the explosion of discoveries with new technologies, we are able to adapt our ways of teaching to best suit the way that our students learn. It is clear that emotions are linked to learning. Hands-on learning is a more effective means of learning, being involved in the learning is powerful, and we learn best by connecting new ideas with old. Each of these ideas can be emphatically proven through recent and extensive brain research.

A depiction as to exactly what process the brain goes through when we learn would clarify why drama would help one learn. James R. Lawson, author of the article, "Brain-Based Learning," describes this process. The brain undergoes an electrochemical process in which information is transferred from one neuron to the next. The brain is made up of billions of these nerve cells called neurons (1). "Neuron connections are flexible, webbed, overlapping, and redundant. Internal and external stimuli collaborate in the formation of pathways and patterns of excited neurons. The more frequently pathways or patterns of neurons are used the stronger the pathways and patterns become" (Lawson 1). It is important that these pathways and patterns become stronger because as they do it becomes more probable that they will be created again. "Simultaneous excitation of multiple pathways and patterns create growth of new neuron connections, thus increasing the potential of the brain to learn" (Lawson 1). This is a simplified description of the physiology of the brain and how it learns. It is important when teaching to connect the new material with student's past experiences because it is this "simultaneous excitation" that helps us learn.

Drama is a teaching method, which would allow students to explore the curriculum using several of Gardner's multiple intelligences. Students are fully involved in learning with drama. They are immersed into the subject. Their bodies, minds, and emotions are extremely active when they become engrossed in the drama. A common misconception is that the brain is like a storage unit, which can store and retrieve information at any given time; the brain is an exceptionally complex system of making connections and creating new information. "The human brain is the most complex system on earth, yet it is too often used in schools primarily as a simple device for storage and retrieval of information" (Dickinson 1). Teachers who orally lecture students, loading them with facts and figures, and then test them on what they remember, are not teaching with the brain in mind.

During drama activities, the student's schema or prior knowledge of the subject is activated to really come to a complete understanding. Essentially, when we learn, we are synthesizing. We are merging our prior knowledge with the fresh information and creating something new in our minds. "Each brain is unique. Genetic and environmental factors influence learning and the connections between cells are created by an individual's unique experiences" (Lawson 1). Drama is such a great way of synthesizing because of how involved the participants must be. They must recall their schema prior to the drama and use their new knowledge to create the drama. When the drama is over, there is room for reflection. Reflection is often a step that is

overlooked in traditional teaching methods. "Students do not just act in drama-they also reflect on the meanings of actions as they consider the consequences for different people. Reflection is dialogic when the students evaluate actions from the point of view of a person affected" (Edmiston 60). Eric Jensen asserts, "Today's educators should embrace a more complex, 'whole-systems approach' to understanding the brain" (Jensen 2). Instead of recognizing the brain as two separate and diverse hemispheres, educators should know that both sides of the brain are equally critical to learning. The left and right hemispheres work together. The prior theory that only the left side of the brain controls academic learning, while the right side controls the arts is out dated and has been proven otherwise with new research. "In general, the left hemisphere processes things more in parts and sequentially….Suffice it to say that the old biases about music and arts being 'right-brained frills' are out dated" (Jensen 8). New research divides the brain into four areas. Each area is called a lobe. Figure 2.1 illustrates where the frontal, parietal, temporal, and occipital lobes are located in the brain. From both figures, it is clear that drama would activate a wide area of the brain. (Jensen)

Figure 2.1
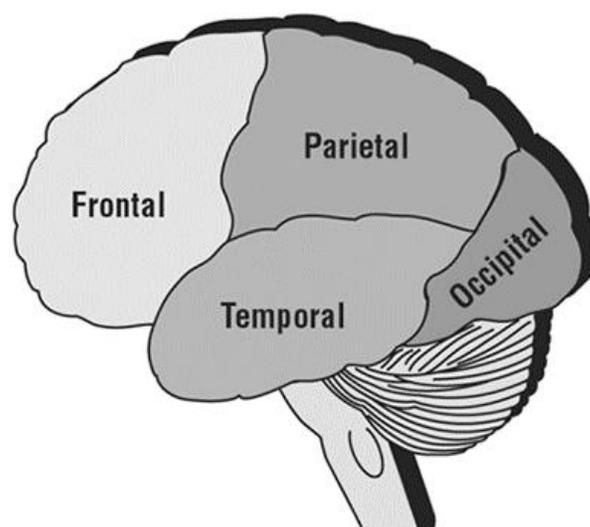
(from Jensen's, Teaching with the Brain in Mind)

The frontal lobe is involved in creativity, judgment, and problem solving. In drama, the student is creating something new. Their imaginations are activated and many times students work together to solve problems in drama. Problem solving in drama comes in two forms. First, it is part of the learning experience. For example, a class is studying the Oregon Trail and pioneer days. The teacher has informed the class that they are all pioneers on the Oregon Trail. She has already read them some books on the Oregon Trail, so the students have some background knowledge that will be accessed. The students must work together to problem solve how they will eat, cross large bodies of water, and overcome other obstacles set up by the teacher that would mimic real problems the pioneers faced. Each student in this class is creatively problem

solving in this drama. They are using their best judgment and retrieving their schema about the Oregon Trail.

The second way problem solving is practiced with drama is socially. Most drama in education is done in groups or with the whole class. Students run into problems where, for example, they do not agree on a solution or action the rest of their group is taking. Wagner states, "Participants in drama must negotiate their roles. Unless they can agree and cooperate, the game is over" (28). Like all group work, students must problem solve how they will handle this conflict of interest. This type of problem solving helps students become lifelong learners. Most definitely as adults we all face problems in our social lives. Whether problems occur at home, school, or in the workplace we all use problem- solving skills to resolve issues. Drama in education calls for more group work, so students obtain the crucial skills needed throughout life. It is quite evident that the frontal cortex part of the brain is very much triggered using drama.

The frontal cortex is not the only area of the brain that is indispensable in use with drama. Other parts of the frontal lobe are needed for speaking, senses, and some motor skills. "The temporal lobes (left and right sides) are above and around the ears. This area is primarily responsible for hearing, memory, meaning, and language. There is some overlap in the function of the lobes" (Jensen 9). The middle area of the brain is responsible for emotions among other tasks. This area known as the limbic system makes up about 20 percent of the brain. (Jensen). This is a vast section of the brain, which is utilized by participants of drama. During drama, students not only engage their senses, but they also maintain an emotional tie to the topic. Students are encouraged to take on a full body role throughout drama activities, which includes feeling their role's emotion.

Emotions and Learning

In the example of the Oregon Trail simulation, students took on their role's emotions as well. For instance, they became excited when they were able to accomplish or solve one of their problems. They showed disappointment and anger when they failed at finding food or other difficult situations. Not only did the students learn about the Oregon Trail, but they also learned how the pioneers lived and felt. "The brain learns best when it processes cognitive, affective, and psychomotor information simultaneously" (Lawson 2). The participants of the drama were processing all this information at once. These experiences completely enriched their understanding.

Students elicit speech, senses, emotions and motor skills when occupied with a drama activity. Therefore, educators who use drama in the classroom are adopting the "whole-brain" approach to learning. Many different parts of the brain are being activated. This generates a much bigger possibility that the students will learn the subject.

The area of the brain that operates emotions makes up 20 percent of the entire brain. Until modern brain research began focusing on emotions, educators did not associate emotions with learning. Now that this connection has been made, it seems obvious that emotions can positively impact the way we learn. "They (the arts) provide rich multisensory experiences that engage the whole mind-body-emotional system" (Dickinson).

Emotions can be in the form of a positive past experience, or what the drama participants feel when they are actively in role of an imagined figure. "Facts and information become relevant when they are relevant to the lives of the people the students imagine" (Edmiston 4).

Hands-on Learning and the Brain

Not only has it been proven that emotions and personal experiences advance learning, but hands-on approaches to teaching progress learning as well. Studies such as those done by Lynn O'Brien of Specific Diagnostic Studies find that only 15 percent of the population learn the strongest through auditory means. Forty percent of the population learns the strongest through visual means and 45 percent of the population learn best by kinesthetic or hands-on types of teaching. The kinesthetic learners need manipulatives and other hands-on activities to conceptualize and grasp concepts. "Understandably, many of them have difficulty learning in conventional classrooms since very little hands-on learning is available in most classes after early primary grades" (Dickinson 1).

Drama in the classroom can really benefit the kinesthetic learners. Students are almost always moving around and actually creating something using their bodies during drama activities. It would be very typical to an observer of a drama-integrated classroom to see students working together out of their seats. Students may be engaged in creating scenes, producing role-plays, and spontaneously using their imaginations to learn. One might hear a whole class discussion or small group discussions reflecting on experiences. The students are involved and actually doing something in addition to just listening. "Students have to do something with information they learn, and then they can process information more deeply. Students need to use what they have learned to reinforce it" (Feden 1). Drama is doing just that. It is taking the information and creating something new with it, which makes it relevant to the student. Although it may seem obvious that this type of learning would benefit young children, many classrooms have yet to adopt the model.

Brain research has now proven that children cannot maintain the extensive attention span that some teachers require of their young students. Dr. Perry makes the analogy of the brain fatiguing as a muscle would. "Learning requires attention. And attention is mediated by specific parts of the brain. Yet, neural systems fatigue quickly, actually within minutes. With three to five minutes of sustained activity, neurons become 'less responsive'; they need a rest (not unlike your muscles when you lift weights)" (Perry 1). This is why children will not learn when lectured to over a significant period of time. Their attention is lost, unless they are somehow involved in the learning process. Dr. Bruce Perry goes on to give an example of what would happen to a child who was given facts over a lengthy amount of time. Perry explains what happens to the child in terms of the research done on the brain and learning by exemplifying what is happening in the child's mind:

So, if this child hears only factual information, she will fatigue within minutes. Only four to eight minutes of pure factual lecture can be tolerated before the brain seeks other stimuli, either internal (e.g., daydreaming) or external (Who is that walking down the hall?). If the teacher is not providing that novelty, the brain will go elsewhere. Continuous presentation of facts or

concepts in isolation or in a nonstop series of anecdotes will all have the same fatiguing effect- and the child will not learn as much, nor will she come to anticipate and enjoy learning (1).

Drama, among other hands-on teaching methods, allows students to learn without losing their attention.

Conclusion

Research indicates that drama is effective in teaching the elementary curriculum. It can easily be adapted and integrated to teach all subject areas. It is proven to be successful through personal experiences, recent brain research, and a study of widely accepted learning theories. "Human beings are storytelling primates. We are curious, and we love to learn. The challenge for each teacher is to find ways to engage the child and take advantage of the novelty-seeking property of the human brain to facilitate learning" (Perry 1). This is the reason and the purpose for the research I have done. Today's education system often put children through unnecessary stress. This stress translates to a negative attitude towards school and learning. It burns out our natural instinct to want to learn. Learning cannot take place unless the child has a motivation and is stimulated through engaging activities.

Drama gives educators the opportunity to teach their students in a way, which would create a love for learning. It provides valuable problem solving, social, and creative skills. Drama embraces the child's imagination and emotions, which in many classrooms are shunned. The values of drama and all of the arts are indicated in the National Standards for Arts Education. "….Students of the arts disciplines gain powerful tools for: understanding human experiences, both past and present; learning to adapt to and respect other's (often very different) ways of thinking, working and expressing themselves; and making decisions where there are no standard answers" (Martin 30).

Perhaps the most important point of all is that participants of drama are being involved in the learning. They are engaging in activities and immersed in the roles, which they assume. We are naturally equipped with the ability to use drama in our lives. It can be said that drama is a way of life. We use drama from birth to death to overcome difficult situations, prepare ourselves, or learn something new. Drama activates the whole brain and also engages many different kinds of intelligences. It reaches students who need a challenge, as well as students who are not reached through traditional teaching methods. "Given the importance of the arts in human knowing, especially in light of Gardner's work on multiple intelligences… it is not surprising that there is a growing body of research and anecdotal evidence that the arts can play important roles in helping all students…." (Darby 308).

If educators want to reach their students and teach them in the most effective possible way, then they will integrate drama and the arts into their classroom. The impact that this kind of authentic learning can make on a child is priceless. The cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dexterity that is gained by using drama create motivated, intelligent, life- long learners. Brian Edmiston sums up the value and power of using drama in the classroom very well. He calls the type of learning in which students are actively engaged in the subject and have some control of their learning, "student inquiry." He writes:

Organizing the curriculum around student inquiry has begun to be recognized as a powerful way to move students beneath the facts and beyond a skill-and kill approach to learning. Inquiry that centers on students' questions and real world issues is intrinsically motivating, engages students in high level critical creative thinking, and connects the classroom to the world-past, present, and future. Teachers are freed from being the authority to being an authority who can guide, assist, and wonder with students-but most of all we are freed to ask questions with students and join together in joint explorations (133).

Perhaps someday in the near future classrooms will be littered with drama-integrated lessons. Educators will take recent research into consideration and build their methods around these new findings. Teachers will embrace the world of drama and give their students the opportunity to learn in a fun and invited environment. When this day comes there will no longer be "three R's," but rather "four R's," where the arts are given equal values as compared to reading, writing, and arithmetic. Not only can the arts be an extra enrichment and area of study, but they also can be used to teach the curriculum and the students.

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