

# Program 8

## Building on New Ideas

### Description

In this program, you will see how the Learner Teams implemented new ideas and expanded arts instruction into the general curriculum at their schools. In conversations with workshop leader Susanne Burgess, Learner Team members reflect on instructional changes and consider where they'll go next with the arts.

Emphasizing the arts in the general classroom was a new idea at Ridgeway Elementary School in White Plains, New York. Learner Team members chose to replicate some of the activities they had experienced in the summer workshop as a first step toward broadening the role of the arts in their curriculum. Over the course of the school year, they led their students through a process of investigation and creation leading up to a multi-arts performance.

At Kingsbury Elementary School in Memphis, Tennessee, Learner Team members used several approaches to engage students, including an introduction to costume design, visits from a local dance artist, and analysis of a passage of music. These approaches all related to the multi-arts aspects of a ballet that the children planned to attend.

Having already identified the arts as a priority, Learner Team members at Drew Model School in Arlington, Virginia, sought to create connections between the arts and other subjects. Teachers collaborated to integrate visual art with science for third-graders, with community studies for kindergartners, and with music for fifth-graders.

In this session, you will take on roles from the school community to debate the importance of the arts to education. You also will work in pairs to create a work of art that communicates your vision of arts in your classroom.

### Learning Objectives

- Understand the effects of an increased arts presence on faculty and on students.
- Consider ways to build on new experiences with the arts.

### Guiding Questions

The following are questions for your group to consider as you work through the session.

- How do the arts impact the way students learn?
- What roles do the arts play in your school's curriculum?

### Key Concepts/Vocabulary

- *Constructivism*: the belief that learners create their own knowledge structures rather than merely receiving them from others, that knowledge is not simply transmitted from teacher to student but instead is constructed in the mind of the learner
- *Differentiated instruction*: teaching that is adapted to the needs of individual children

# Workshop Session (On-Site)

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## Materials and Resources

- Videotape or broadcast of Program 8—Building on New Ideas
- Several sets of four index cards labeled “teacher,” “principal,” “parent,” and “student”
- Paper and art supplies
- Reading: Factors for Arts Education Success
- Reading: Research on Arts Education

Readings are available in the Appendix of this guide or on the workshop Web site.

## Getting Ready (10 minutes)

In the previous program, you saw Learner Team members reflecting on the impact of lessons and teaching strategies that they tried with their students. This program documents some of their collaborative work with colleagues, their observations about how their teaching practice changed, and their thinking about what their next steps might be.

**Facilitator:** Engage participants in thinking about the role the arts can play in the classroom by discussing the following questions.

- How can arts education increase student learning and understanding?
- How can the arts enable students to create knowledge for themselves?
- How can teachers help students make learning their own process rather than the process of the teacher?
- How does focusing attention on the artistic process (creating, performing, and responding) affect students’ understanding of the arts?

## Watch the Program (60 minutes)

View Program 8—Building on New Ideas.

As you watch the program, consider the following focus questions.

- How did the three Learner Teams connect the arts with other parts of the curriculum?
- How are they planning to build on and expand their work?

# Workshop Session (On-Site), cont'd.

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## Suggested Activities and Discussion (50 minutes)

### Making a Case for the Arts (20 minutes)

Learner Team members used a variety of techniques to bring the arts into their classrooms, but all of them started by recognizing the value of the arts for elementary schoolchildren. Realizing the power and promise of arts education is a first step toward changing instructional practice and finding a new role for the arts in your school.

**Facilitator:** Lead a debate about the importance of the arts.

Divide into two groups for a mock debate. Distribute index cards with roles to be assumed during the debate. In each group, there should be at least one person playing the role of teacher, one person representing a principal, one acting as a parent, and one playing the role of a student.

In the debate, one group will make the case for an arts-rich curriculum in every classroom. The other group will counter with arguments against arts education. The debate may begin with stereotypical claims and put-downs, but it should work toward deeper discussion of real issues. Begin the debate with the following questions.

- Do you consider the arts to be extraneous to traditional curriculum—at best merely an enrichment?
- Should the arts be an essential part of the core academic curriculum?
- What makes a subject “academic”?

When everyone has spoken, end the debate. Come out of character and talk about any points that did not have a counterargument. Is the case stronger for or against the arts?

### Preparing To Build on New Ideas (25 minutes)

Divide into pairs, each pair collaboratively creating a work of art—such as a drawing, sculpture, poem, song, dance, and/or scene—that communicates your vision of the arts in your classroom. Combine two or more art forms if possible.

Reassemble as one group and share your works of art, pointing out and discussing similarities and differences.

Begin laying the foundation for your shared vision of the arts in every classroom by discussing the following questions.

- What changes in curriculum content and instructional practice will need to be made?
- What assistance will you need from administrators, fellow teachers, and others outside the school?
- What expertise do various teachers have, and how can you employ this expertise in team-teaching situations?
- What additional knowledge and skills do you and other teachers need to make arts instruction meaningful and effective?

**Facilitator:** Lead a discussion envisioning the expanded role the arts can play in your school. Consider several comparisons, such as:

- How is a classroom like a blank canvas or an empty stage?
- How are the arts like a magnifying glass, bringing out details and deepening understanding in all subject areas?
- How can the arts be used as a glue to hold together many parts of the curriculum?

### Reflection (5 minutes)

Artists look at things in different ways, experimenting with various approaches and changing patterns. Professional educators engage in a similar process, continually assessing and improving their curriculum and instructional practice. What are you going to do next as you work to bring an arts-rich curriculum into your classroom?

**Facilitator:** Use the following observations and question to focus a closing discussion.

# Next Steps (On Your Own)

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## Homework Assignment

When you began your journey exploring the role of the arts in every classroom, you were asked to complete a survey and save a copy of your responses. Return to the Survey (Start Your Journey Here) and answer the questions again. Compare your initial responses to your current understandings about the arts.

## Optional Activities

Other enrichment activities can boost your learning. Consider the recommended activities below and choose those that best meet your needs. Time permitting, you might share what you find out with other participants.

Work with your colleagues to develop and implement strategies for achieving your shared vision of the arts in every classroom.

Teach the *Quidam* multi-arts unit of study that was the focus of Programs 1–4. You can download the complete lesson plans from *The Arts in Every Classroom* workshop Web site at [www.learner.org/channel/workshops/-artsineveryclassroom](http://www.learner.org/channel/workshops/-artsineveryclassroom).

Develop your own multi-arts unit of study. Use the following criteria to assist you in your planning.

## Criteria for Planning Multi-Arts Instruction

Does the instruction you have planned around a particular subject include:

- enduring ideas/understandings?
- measurable learning objectives?
- correlation with national, state, and local standards?
- clearly defined formative and summative assessment strategies?
- appropriate use and introduction of arts vocabulary?
- developmentally and sequentially appropriate knowledge, skills, and materials?

Seek out and attend professional development workshops and conferences in arts education theory and practice.

The following organizations are national voices for arts education in the United States. They have been involved with the development of the *National Standards for Arts Education* and the *Model Standards for Licensing Classroom Teachers and Specialists in the Arts* developed by the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium, a program of the Council of Chief State School Officers. To learn more, visit the Web sites of these organizations:

- American Alliance for Theatre & Education ([www.aate.com](http://www.aate.com))
- National Art Education Association ([www.naea-reston.org](http://www.naea-reston.org))
- National Association for Music Education ([www.menc.org](http://www.menc.org))
- National Dance Association ([www.aahperd.org/nda/template.cfm](http://www.aahperd.org/nda/template.cfm))

For more ideas and information, see the Resources section in About This Workshop on *The Arts in Every Classroom* workshop Web site.

Read the introduction to the *National Standards for Arts Education* ([http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/professional\\_resources/standards/natstandards](http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/professional_resources/standards/natstandards)) to learn more about the benefits an arts education can provide.

# Next Steps (On Your Own), cont'd.

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Learn about how arts education has improved student learning and changed the culture of many schools. Look at these readings on *The Arts in Every Classroom* Web site and in the Appendix to this guide.

- Factors for Arts Education Success
- Research on Arts Education

The following articles can add to your understanding of this material:

- “Helping Students Ask the Right Questions” ([www.ascd.org/frameedlead.html](http://www.ascd.org/frameedlead.html)) by Cynthia Richetti and James Sheerin, *Educational Leadership*, Volume 57, November 1999. Four strategies help students grapple with complex situations, make decisions, solve problems, and implement solutions. By learning question-based, problem-solving strategies, students become more effective thinkers and learners.
- “Reconcilable Differences? Standards-Based Teaching and Differentiation” ([www.ascd.org/frameedlead.html](http://www.ascd.org/frameedlead.html)) by Carol Ann Tomlinson, *Educational Leadership*, Volume 58, September 2000. Can addressing students’ individual needs help prepare them to meet high standards? Standards-based instruction and differentiated learning can be compatible approaches in today’s classrooms.

## Suggested Additional Readings

- “Guiding the Innate Constructivist” ([www.ascd.org/frameedlead.html](http://www.ascd.org/frameedlead.html)) by Geoffrey Caine, Renate Nummela Caine, and Carol McClintic, *Educational Leadership*, Volume 60, September 2002. Teachers can create short, carefully designed events that fully engage students and prepare the way for active learning.
- “The Many Faces of Constructivism” ([www.ascd.org/frameedlead.html](http://www.ascd.org/frameedlead.html)) by David Perkins, *Educational Leadership*, Volume 57, November 1999. Although most constructivist classrooms feature active, social, and creative learning, different kinds of knowledge invite different responses, not one standard approach. The author of *Smart Schools* describes pragmatic constructivism, a toolbox for the problems of learning.

# Notes

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