

Expanding the Role of the Arts Specialist

Length: 30 minutes

Featured Schools

School:	Lusher Alternative Elementary School
Location:	New Orleans, Louisiana
In this program:	Kathy DeJean, dance specialist Megan Neelis, second-grade teacher Amanda Newberry, theatre specialist Eve Gitlin, third-grade teacher Paul Reynaud, first-grade teacher
School:	Harmony Leland Elementary School
Location:	Mableton, Georgia
In this program:	Mary Perkerson, visual art specialist Denise Walker, first-grade teacher Gillian Conner, fourth-grade teacher

About This Program

Arts specialist teachers are finding new opportunities to interact with students and other teachers. This program highlights three arts specialists as they teach classes in their own art forms and share their skills and ideas with teachers of other subjects.

Kathy DeJean, a dance teacher at arts-based **Lusher Alternative Elementary School** in New Orleans, Louisiana, coordinates her lesson plans with classroom teachers, using dance to give a new twist to students' experiences in school.

"Dance words are all through the curriculum. Whether you are jumping or running or hopping or rolling or swimming, those are action words, and they are parts of speech. If a classroom teacher really wanted to see that the education of the whole child includes the arts, she could possibly acquire some dance vocabulary that's common to any dance form and turn it over to the kids," says DeJean.

Mary Perkerson, a visual art specialist at **Harmony Leland Elementary School** in Mableton, Georgia, conducts workshops in visual art techniques for new teachers there. For an honors art class, she introduces a group of kindergarten through second-grade students to techniques of cel animation.

Perkerson demonstrates some of the ways she integrates visual art topics into Harmony Leland's school-improvement goal of literacy:

- reading books on arts topics during the school's daily DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) time and at the end of the school day;
- writing book reports, doing research, and writing poetry and stories about visual art and artists;
- writing a story about Martin Luther King, Jr., and then making a drawing to go with it;
- designing a literacy mural for teachers to paint in the school hall; and
- working with classroom teachers on visual art projects to integrate with other subjects for the school's weekly Art Hour.

Amanda Newberry, a theatre teacher at Lusher, works with a first-grade class to explore storytelling by using improvisation to "write a story in your heads."

"I will ask teachers what they would like: 'What curriculum are you getting stuck on? How can we make it more experiential, more real?'" says Newberry. "Once students forget that they are in the classroom, they can see it, they can actually believe it's happening. So, you have to be very guided."

She continues, "I've had teachers who say, 'I would love to have drama, but don't make *me* do it, don't put me up there.' Because I do [have the teachers participate]. I think it's great for the students to see the teachers in a different role, see another side of them. Students think, 'If the teacher is willing to do it, then, gosh, so am I.'"

About This Program, cont'd.

Arts Education Standards Addressed in This Program

Dance (Lusher Alternative Elementary School)

- **Content Standard 1**—Identifying and demonstrating movement elements and skills in performing dance
Achievement Standards for Grades K–4:
 - Demonstrate kinesthetic awareness, concentration, and focus in performing movement skills
 - Demonstrate the ability to define and maintain personal space
- **Content Standard 2**—Understanding choreographic principles, processes, and structures
Achievement Standards for Grades K–4:
 - Create a sequence with a beginning, middle, and end, both with and without a rhythmic accompaniment

Theatre (Lusher Alternative Elementary School)

- **Content Standard 2**—Acting by assuming roles and interacting in improvisations
Achievement Standards for Grades K–4:
 - Assume roles that exhibit concentration and contribute to the action of classroom dramatizations based on personal experience and heritage, imagination, literature, and history
- **Content Standard 3**—Designing by visualizing and arranging environments for classroom dramatizations
Achievement Standards for Grades K–4:
 - Collaborate to establish playing spaces for classroom dramatizations and to select and safely organize available materials that suggest scenery, properties, lighting, sound, costumes, and makeup

Visual Art (Harmony Leland Elementary School)

- **Content Standard 1**—Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes
Achievement Standards for Grades K–4:
 - Use different media, techniques, and processes to communicate ideas, experiences, and stories

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Viewing Suggestions

Who Should Watch This Program

“Expanding the Role of the Arts Specialist” demonstrates opportunities for integrating the arts throughout the school day and curriculum. The program can be an effective introduction to a professional development workshop on this topic for arts specialist teachers, new and experienced classroom teachers, curriculum planners, and administrators.

Other audiences for this program might include:

- advocates, critics, policymakers, and prospective funders for arts-based programs, to demonstrate that the arts promote academic achievement and meet standards in all areas of academic learning, and
- specialists in other subjects such as reading, to show how teachers in all subject areas can integrate the arts with other areas of learning.

Before Watching

This program models interactions among arts specialist teachers, classroom teachers, and students in several instructional environments.

As you watch, look for ways that the arts specialists seek input and feedback from classroom teachers:

- How do they incorporate this information into their instruction?
- Should arts specialists take the lead in offering to help classroom teachers learn arts-based skills? How can they do this in a collegial way that will gain teachers’ support?
- Do arts specialists gain insights about students that would be helpful to classroom teachers? How should specialists share this?
- How can arts specialists become part of the classroom teachers’ teams, regularly sharing information and ideas?
- Is the “expert” role of the arts specialist diminished or enhanced by interacting with other teachers?

Watching the Program

Watch “Expanding the Role of the Arts Specialist” (30 minutes).

Viewing Suggestions, cont'd.

Suggested Activities and Discussion

Consider the following questions for reflection:

- If you are a classroom teacher, how can an arts specialist help you enrich instruction in your classroom?
- What arts-based skills would help you teach more effectively?
- How could you initiate collaborations among arts specialists and classroom teachers at your school?
- If you are an arts specialist, identify one or two specific ways you could expand your role at your own school. What are some steps you can take right now to make this happen?

Below are some additional ways you can build on the ideas in this program in a variety of school and community settings.

Professional Development Sessions for Teachers

- Work with your arts specialists to present a workshop or series of workshops for classroom teachers to learn arts-based skills they can use in their classrooms, for example, drawing and painting techniques, theatre exercises, or skills in listening to and interpreting music.
- See what resources for acquiring arts-based teaching skills are offered by museums, theatre and dance groups, and orchestras in your area. If no such training exists, ask a local group to help you develop one.
- As a mixed group of specialists and classroom teachers, visit a museum, concert, or play. Afterward, discuss the experience from your various perspectives.

Curriculum-Planning Sessions

- With your arts specialists, brainstorm ways the arts can make teaching more effective at your school, for example, by overcoming language and other barriers to learning or by reaching students with various learning styles or special needs.
- Identify opportunities for bringing arts specialists into classrooms regularly. Invite specialists to help you plan specific ways they could integrate with your curriculum and set goals for making this happen. Include periodic skills-sharing sessions with arts specialists and classroom teachers in your school schedule.

Community Outreach

- Find opportunities for arts specialists to address parents' groups, school board meetings, or other gatherings about the arts' benefits for learning.
- Invite parents, policymakers, and other community leaders to a student performance or exhibition of student work at your school. Share students' reflections on the experience and what they have learned from it.
- Hold a recital or exhibition by arts specialists from your school.

Additional Resources

Related Video Library Programs

Watch these programs for more information on ideas explored in “Expanding the Role of the Arts Specialist”:

- Teaching Dance
- Teaching Music
- Teaching Theatre
- Teaching Visual Art
- Students Create a Multi-Arts Performance

Web Resources

The Arts in Every Classroom video library Web site: www.learner.org/channel/libraries/artsineveryclassroom

The Arts in Every Classroom workshop Web site: www.learner.org/channel/workshops/artsineveryclassroom

Standards for the Arts

National Standards for Arts Education: <http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org>

State Standards for the Arts: www.ncsl.org/programs/arts/artsed/artedhom.htm

Related Organizations and Resources

National Dance Association: www.aahperd.org/nda/template.cfm

American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance: www.aahperd.org

American Alliance for Theatre & Education: www.aate.com/welcome.htm

The National Association for Music Education: www.menc.org

American Music Conference: www.amc-music.com

National Art Education Association: www.naea-reston.org

Educational Resources Information Center: www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed329490.html

Arts Education Partnership: <http://aep-arts.org>

Resources for Teaching Drama in the Classroom: www.angelfire.com/ego/edp303