

Making Connections

Length:	30 minutes
School:	Hand Middle School
Location:	Columbia, S.C.
Grade:	7
Teachers:	Mary Lou Schweickert, Band Mary Ann Odom, 7th-Grade Social Studies Sharlyn Turlington, Visual Art June Kirkland, Chorus Karen Shull, 7th-Grade Language Arts Jennifer Larson, Theatre
Description:	Teachers make creative connections between arts and non-arts subjects.

About This Program

In this program, we meet four of the arts teachers at Hand Middle School, and see the different ways they are connecting with what seventh-graders are learning in language arts and social studies.

First we visit band, taught by Mary Lou Schweickert. Students are learning about World War II in social studies, and she has chosen the “Armed Forces Medley” as a way of relating to their studies. Her students research the different branches of the armed forces, and hear from the school’s assistant principal, who demonstrates military bearing while dressed in her Air National Guard uniform. Mary Lou helps students learn to count in 6/8 time by demonstrating how the rhythmic pattern provides a march-tempo beat.

In social studies, Mary Ann Odom introduces letters from a local woman to her sweetheart in the armed forces during World War II. The students analyze the letters as a historian might. Mary Ann appreciates the arts teachers’ efforts to connect with her curriculum. As an example, we see seventh-graders in Sharlyn Turlington’s visual art class using scratchboard techniques to depict their investigations of countries around the world.

In chorus, June Kirkland introduces a song based on a poem by Walt Whitman, while in language arts class, Karen Shull and her students look at the metaphors in Whitman’s “O Captain! My Captain!” They are also studying Anne Frank’s *The Diary of a Young Girl*, and they discuss the differences in treatment of the Jews in Germany during World War II and in Russia under the czars.

The historical theme is picked up in theatre class by Jennifer Larson, whose students have staged *Fiddler on the Roof*. The students’ experience extends far beyond the stage, as they study aspects of Jewish history and culture in relation to the musical.

Arts and Non-Arts Standards Addressed in This Program

Standards listed refer to the McREL Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks, a synthesis of national standards in each of the disciplines, found at www.mcrel.org.

Music

Standard 7: Understands the relationship between music and history and culture

Theatre

Standard 6: Understands the context in which theatre, film, television, and electronic media are performed today as well as in the past

Visual Arts

Standard 3: Knows a range of subject matter, symbols, and potential ideas in the visual arts

Language Arts

Standard 5: Uses the general skills and strategies of the reading process

World History

Standard 41: Understands the causes and global consequences of World War II

Viewing Suggestions

Who Should Watch This Program

Teachers—“Making Connections” will be interesting to middle school teachers of all disciplines who wish to collaborate on units of study that are theme-based and interdisciplinary.

Administrators and professional development providers—This program can be useful in illustrating how teachers can design interdisciplinary units around broad themes.

Before You Watch

Respond to the following questions.

- What themes speak to middle school students? Why?
- How does a theme provide opportunities for connections with other teachers?
- Why does studying a single subject from multiple angles help students grasp it better—for example, learning about the Civil War through the visual art and music of the time?

Watch the Program

As you watch, note the topics that teachers use to help students make connections across their different classes. How does the instruction connect social studies and band; chorus and language arts; and language arts and theatre?

Reflect on the Program

- Which teachers in this program do you feel made the strongest impact with students? How and why?
- Do you feel that the topics teachers used helped to reinforce learning across disciplines? Why or why not?
- What are some ways these teachers assessed student understanding?

Additional Resources

Consult some of these resources for more information.

Books

Chertok, Bobbi, Hirshfield, Goody, & Rosh, Marilyn. *Teaching the Middle Ages With Magnificent Art Masterpieces (Grades 4-8)*. New York: Scholastic Professional Books, 2000. ISBN: 0590644351

Chertok, Bobbi, Hirshfield, Goody, & Rosh, Marilyn. *Teaching American History With Art Masterpieces (Grades 4-8)*. New York: Scholastic Professional Books, 1999. ISBN: 059096402X

Gutloff, Karen. *Integrated Thematic Teaching (Teacher-to-Teacher Series)*. Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1996. ISBN: 0810629097

Parker, Steve, & Hayes, Malcolm. *20th Century Music*. Milwaukee, Wisc.: Gareth Stevens, 2002. ISBN: 083683030X

Post, Thomas, Ellis, Arthur, Humphreys, Alan, & Buggery, JoAnne. *Interdisciplinary Approaches to Curriculum: Themes for Teaching*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1996. ISBN: 0132277786

Oliver, Clare, & Gaff, Jackie. *20th Century Art* (illustrated edition). Milwaukee, Wisc.: Gareth Stevens, 2001. ISBN: 083682847X

Reynolds, Nancy, & McCormick, Malcolm. *No Fixed Points: Dance in the Twentieth Century*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2003. ISBN: 0300093667

Sternlicht, Sanford V. *A Reader's Guide to Modern American Drama*. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2002. ISBN: 0815629397

Web Sites

American Experience: PBS's long-running history series that brings to life the incredible characters and epic stories that helped form this nation
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/index.html>

The Library of Congress: A rich online collection of resources, documents, and digital artifacts
www.loc.gov/

Music Theatre International: Information about licensing musicals, including the Fiddler on the Roof "Broadway Junior" package.
www.mtishows.com

PBS Teacher Source: Standards-based curriculum materials that weave together PBS video and online resources
<http://www.pbs.org/teachersource/>

The South Carolina Band Link: Local information about South Carolina band activities
www.bandlink.org/