

Preserving a Place for the Arts

Length:	30 minutes
School:	Clarkton School of Discovery
Location:	Clarkton, N.C.
Grades:	6, 7, 8
Teachers:	Theresa Wuebbels, Visual Art and Science Rebecca Hennis, Dance and Language Arts
Description:	Creative scheduling and integrated classwork infuse arts throughout a school curriculum.

About This Program

In Clarkton, a small town in rural North Carolina, integration is both a choice and a necessity: when a magnet grant ended, so did funding for the arts teachers. The visual art teacher became certified to teach science, and the dance teacher became certified in language arts. Each of them now teaches non-arts classes in the morning, and arts electives in the afternoon.

We hear from the principal, and a parent who is also the school librarian, about the importance of the arts at Clarkton. We meet visual art/science teacher Theresa Wuebbels, and see her using arts techniques in a seventh-grade chemistry class. We also meet Rebecca Hennis, the dance teacher, in her sixth-grade language arts class. Thanks to past collaboration between the two, Theresa has been able to use dance techniques with her science students, who demonstrate their understanding of cell division through movement.

We visit two multi-age elective classes taught by the arts teachers. In "Dance-A-Story," students bring life to a book based on a Native American tale. In "My Life, My Roots, My Dreams," students use skills from visual art, language arts, social studies, and science to create an heirloom book about themselves.

We also visit other arts-based electives taught by teachers determined to keep arts instruction alive at Clarkton: a video class taught by a language arts teacher, and a music keyboarding class taught by a math teacher.

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.

Dance

Standard 1: Identifies and demonstrates movement elements and skills in performing dance

Visual Arts

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

Language Arts

Standard 1: Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process

Science

Standard 8: Understands the structure and properties of matter

Viewing Suggestions

Who Should Watch This Program

Teachers—“Preserving a Place for the Arts” will be of interest to teachers who are trying to figure out how to incorporate arts goals within their own classrooms, often by themselves.

Administrators—This program will be interesting to those who have been faced with cut-backs in arts funding, since it highlights ways to preserve the arts through innovative courses and creative use of staff.

Before You Watch

Respond to the following questions.

- Has your school had to cope with reductions in funding for valued parts of the curriculum, like the arts? What happened? Were there any upsides along with the downsides?
- Many people in their teaching draw on artistic skills or subject-matter expertise that is beyond the scope of what they teach “officially.” If you have done this, how has it worked for you?
- What do you think the advantages and disadvantages might be of teaching integrated units alone (e.g., one person teaching visual art and social studies) as compared to teaching such units in collaboration with another teacher?

Watch the Program

As you watch, pay attention to the different ways the teachers combine arts and non-arts elements in their lessons. Take notes, keeping track of the connections that seem substantial and “two-way” (benefiting both arts knowledge and non-arts knowledge) vs. those that are more “one-way” connections (benefiting one discipline or the other, but not both).

Reflect on the Program

- Several of the featured teachers were trained in two areas, arts and non-arts. In what ways, if any, do you think they were better teachers as a result?
- Which of the arts-infused lessons seemed most successful to you, and why?
- What evidence, if any, of student engagement or learning did you see?

Additional Resources

Consult some of these resources for more information.

Books

Brewer, Chris, & Campbell, Don. *Rhythms of Learning: Creative Tools for Developing Lifelong Skills*. Tucson, Ariz.: Zephyr Press, 1991. ISBN: 0-913705-59-4

Carter, Rebecca, & Genovese, Sandi. *The Ultimate Scrapbooking Book*. Carlsbad, Cal.: Main Line Book Company, 2001. ISBN: 0806958316

Cheney, Gay. *Basic Concepts in Modern Dance: A Creative Approach*, (3rd edition). Chicago, Ill.: Independent Publishers Group, 1989. ISBN: 0916622762

Kassing, Gayle, & May, Danielle. *Dance Teaching Methods and Curriculum Design*. Champaign, Ill.: Human Kinetics Publishing, 2003. ISBN: 0736002405

McGreevy-Nichols, Susan, & Scheff, Helene. *Building Dances: A Guide to Putting Movements Together*. Champaign, Ill.: Human Kinetics Publishing, 1995. ISBN: 0873225732

Prince, Eileen. *Art Matters: Strategies, Ideas, and Activities to Strengthen Learning Across the Curriculum*. Tucson, Ariz.: Zephyr Press, 2002. ISBN: 1569761299

Web Sites

Arts Education Partnership: A partnership of organizations affirming the central role of imagination, creativity, and the arts in culture and society, and the power of the arts to enliven and transform education and schools
<http://www.aep-arts.org/>

The Kennedy Center—ArtsEdge: Empowering educators to teach in, through, and about the arts via interdisciplinary and integrated curricula
<http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/>

Americans for the Arts: A nonprofit organization dedicated to serving local communities and creating opportunities for every American to participate in and appreciate all forms of the arts
<http://www.artsusa.org/>

Ancestry.Com: The largest collection of family history records on the Web
www.ancestry.com/

Poetry.Com: A site where over 5.1 million people with a passion for writing have submitted poetry
www.poetry.com/

Notes
