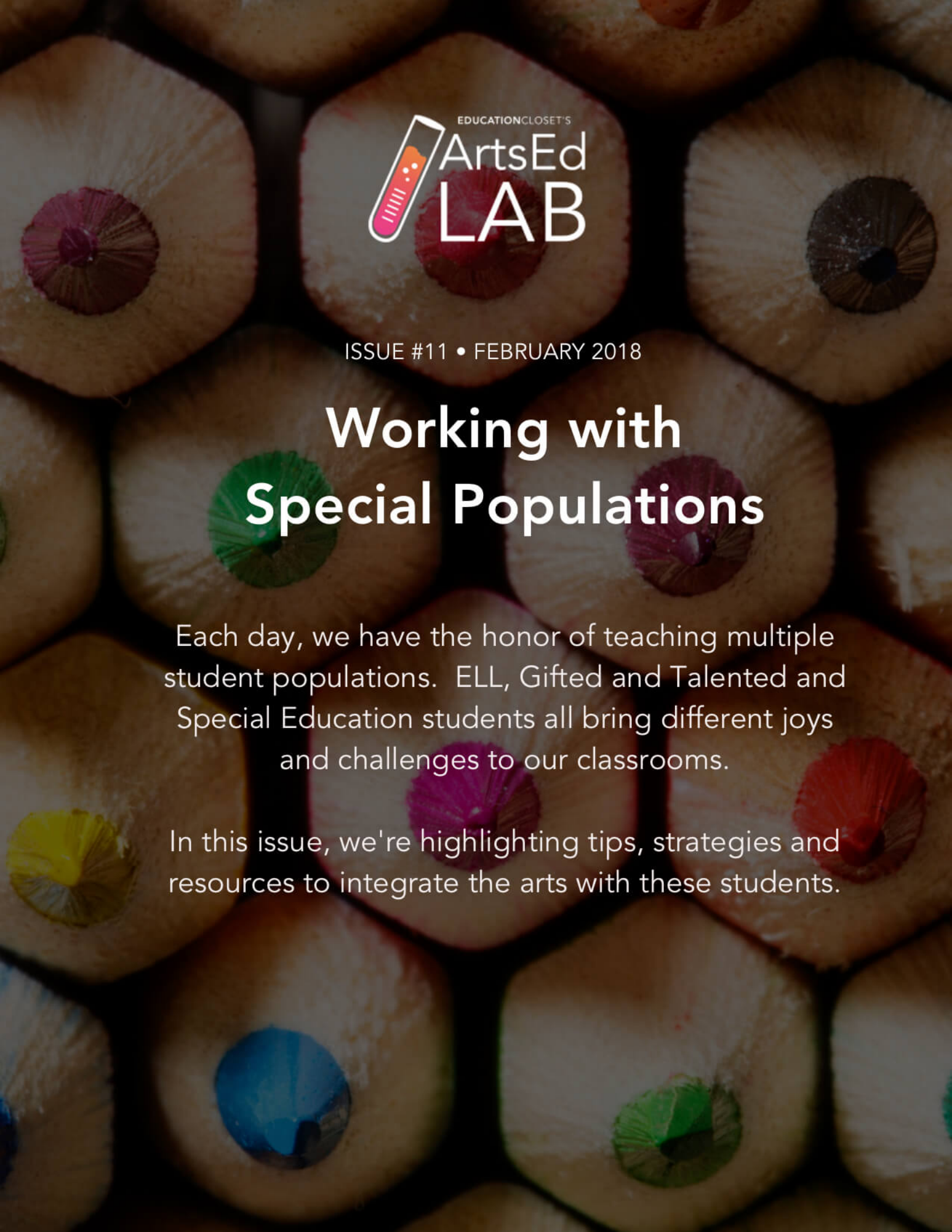


EDUCATIONCLOSET'S ArtsEd LAB

ISSUE #11 • FEBRUARY 2018

Working with Special Populations

Each day, we have the honor of teaching multiple student populations. ELL, Gifted and Talented and Special Education students all bring different joys and challenges to our classrooms.

In this issue, we're highlighting tips, strategies and resources to integrate the arts with these students.

Celebrate Black History Month with an Arts Integrated Unit on Romare Bearden

By Dyan Branstetter | February 2018

Are you looking to integrate the arts into your literacy block? Or to incorporate African American artists and history into your lessons? Or simply test out some project-based learning for 2018? Here's a unit for you to use that does it all. While it is designed for enrichment 3rd graders, it could be used with fourth and fifth graders with little to no modifications.

Overview:

This unit is a study of artist Romare Bearden in combination with the book Me & Uncle Romie: A Story Inspired by the Life and Art of Romare Bearden, by Claire Hartfield. This unit emphasizes process over product. After a lot of guided exploration, students create a collage in the style of Romare Bearden's "The Block" that depicts a block in their neighborhood. Students also write a narrative piece using their created collage as the setting.

To begin:

Before even mentioning the project, students read the story Me and Uncle Romie in partner groups. As they read, students watch for how main character James' feelings change throughout the story. Then have them identify what it is that makes his feelings change. This points us towards a discussion on the theme of the story. After reading, we identify James' problem and the solution to the problem, which also points us towards the theme. Finally, we talk about the setting and Uncle Romie's (and James') art and how it is such an integral part of the story itself.

After reading, I present the details of the entire project upfront to get students excited. I share the product that students will be required to create. Typically after learning the guidelines, they're motivated to gain information in order to complete the project. They actively seek out the content necessary to help them create it. I love seeing this happen because it is such a natural way to learn. Find a student handout with the overview here.

Class structure:

While much of this project takes place during the workshop part of our class time together, the beginning of each session focuses on reading or art skills and

strategies that are necessary for fully comprehending both the fiction and nonfiction readings. All of the instruction that I mention below occurs during the mini-lesson which is always followed by workshop time. Reading the story simultaneously with the nonfiction research, collage creation, and narrative writing makes for insightful and unique student work. Once the students are immersed in their work, I can confer with students about their process or utilize the time to conference with individuals and meet with small groups.

Uncovering Background Information:

To complete this project, third graders must first learn what a collage is. Then they explore Romare Bearden's art to learn about his style and inspirations. (At this point, students usually haven't figured out that Uncle Romie is Romare Bearden.) Throughout the project, I use the Metropolitan Museum of Art's interactive online tool "Let's Walk the Block".

During our next whole group mini-lesson, I project the online tool. I explain that this will be guiding our exploration of Romare Bearden, specifically, his collage called The Block. We then watch the short video clip about this work. This is a bit detailed to introduce at this point because students are still making connections between the narrative, setting, and nonfiction information. However, I've found it is the best way to share the mentor art for this project. Once students dive into the rest of the website's features, in combination with more class discussion, they begin to put together the pieces to understand the big picture.

Guiding the Learning:

The MET's interactive website is not an easy read for third graders. So I created a WebQuest that guides students to clarify words, phrases, music, and people listed as Bearden's inspirations. This essentially completes a close read of the

nonfiction text AND the art on this interactive tool. They compare this to information that our anthology provides on collages. This prevents students from quickly clicking around the website without actually doing anything. Download the WebQuest to print for your students here.

One of the strategies I've included in the WebQuest to help students interact with the text is called "Evidence For, Evidence Against". The directions for this section are included, but if you need a more detailed explanation you can find it here.

Clarifying Vocabulary and Going Deeper:

Our next mini-lesson centers on taking the time to clarify words that we don't know. There are so many tier 2 and 3 vocabulary words and unfamiliar names in the Let's Walk the Block online tool, and many students just read right past them. Understanding who the famous people are, as well as the meanings of these words, provides a much better experience for students as they work to make connections.

We divide and conquer the amount by assigning every student a different word and person to clarify. Students scatter to look up their word and do a thumbnail research sketch of their famous person. Then we all reconvene to compile our information as a class. Many of the people who inspired Bearden are famous African American artists, poets, and musicians. As the students uncover these connections it paints a great picture of the Harlem Rennaisance for them to discover. In addition, students hear snippets of jazz, read poetry, and see works of art from this movement since part of their thumbnail sketch requires them to post a famous work by their famous person.

Read more about this activity here, or download the teacher directions with words/people to clarify and students guide sheet here.

Beginning the Collage:

After students have explored the WebQuest enough to recognize Romare Bearden's collage work, I share our collage requirements. (To help scaffold time management for students, I require that they are finished with step 6 of the WebQuest before they begin their artwork.)

1. Students will design a collage to represent the block where they live. (We talk about "poetic license here since not all of us live on an actual block.)
2. Students will create the collage in the style of Romare Bearden.

As a class, we look at the "Be an Artist" portion of the Met's online tool which guides students through the steps of creating a collage. I provide each student with a 24" x 8 sheet of paper and any media we have.

Designing the Assessment Tool:

After the students start planning their collage, we stop and develop criteria for assessment. I base this on the project guidelines and on student input regarding elements of collage. (I count each students' collage as a supplemental reading score; the students need to comprehend the information about Romare Bearden's style and demonstrate that they read to comprehend the elements of collage. I consider it a performance-based reading assessment.) I find that by waiting until students start the project to develop the assessment criteria, this equips the students to better choose what they should assess. (Plus, it is a great review of the requirements.) Students not only have the end of their project in sight, they begin to realize the challenges.

I help to guide them, but the students usually set the bar high. Then, I format the criteria as a checklist or rubric, and students assess their work before turning it in. Student involvement in the development of assessment criteria causes students to self-monitor their way to success, resulting in higher quality student work and accountability. Here's an example.

Pulling it all together:

With our mini-lesson/workshop approach to this unit, students are working simultaneously on their WebQuest and collage art. Depending on the group, I like to extend and culminate the project in writing class. Some groups have had difficulty mastering our skill of identifying and changing "point of view". To help learn this, we work on writing a narrative using our collage as the setting. Students can write in first person or third person to create a story that occurs in the collage that they created.

Other years, students have really struggled with informational writing. To help with this (and to help with assessment), I've had students write artist statements to accompany their collage art. Either writing option is fantastic for early finishers or as a separate portion of the project. I've found that requiring students to complete all of the writing in addition to the artwork and WebQuest has been too overwhelming for some.

Whether you pick and choose components of the unit or use it in its entirety, I hope that your students are able to gain a better perspective on the rich influence of African American art in our country's history!

Find this unit in outline form here.

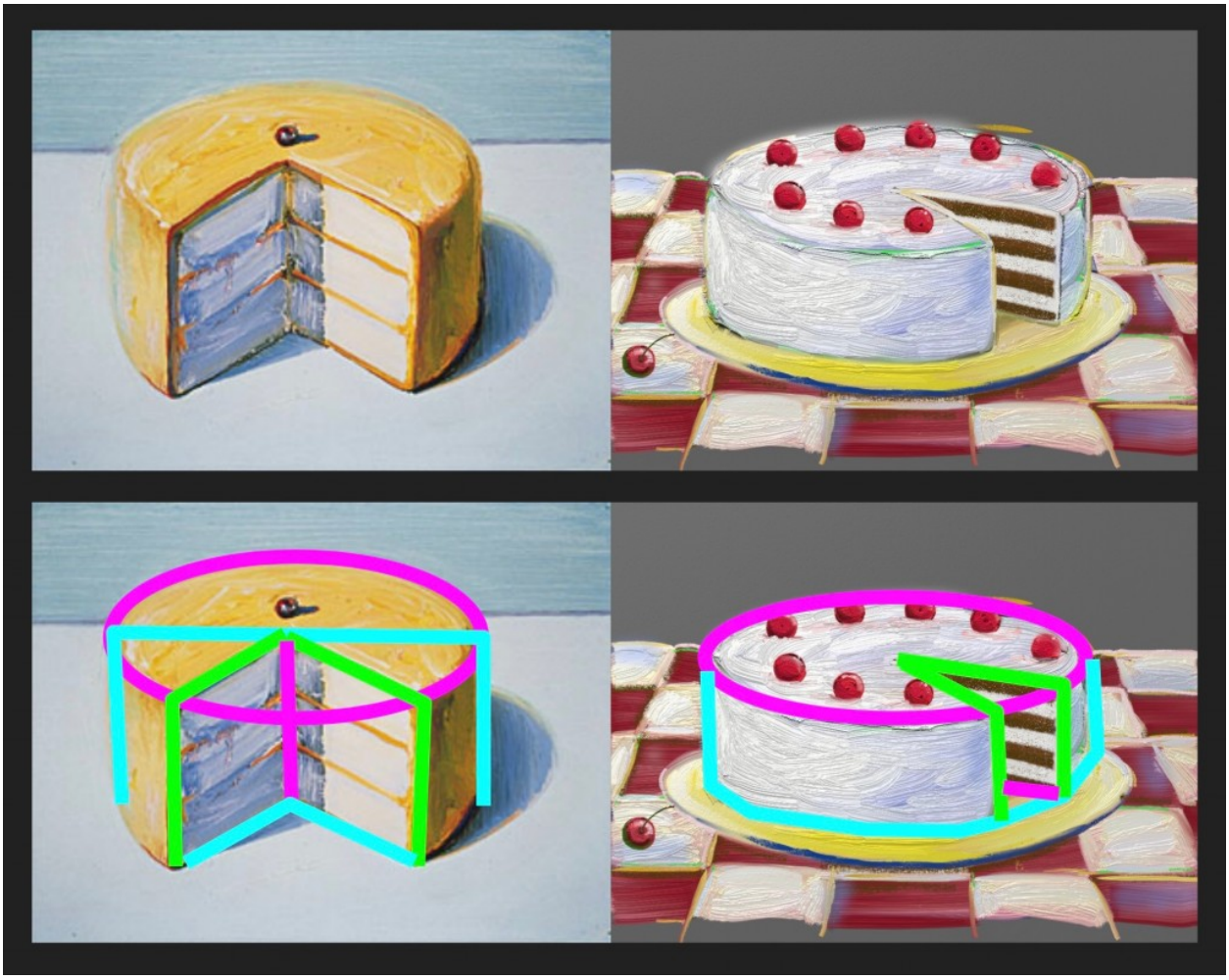
Wayne Thiebaud: Cakes! Math and Visual Arts Integration

By Lauren Hodson | February 2018

Wayne Thiebaud is an artist made famous by his paintings of desserts. His artwork looks good enough to eat. The thick application of oil paint has the texture of real frosting, meringue, and fillings with delightful values and colors.

Though Thiebaud's paintings look complex, artists of all ages can create cakes of their own. Once we break it down, step back, and realize that all artwork is composed of basic shapes and lines, we begin to see the geometry at play.

When we specifically dissect the form of a cake, we are talking about cylinders. We need to use angles to create missing slices. Along with 3 Dimensional shapes and angles, we must also use perpendicular and parallel lines in order for our drawing to be in perspective. Wayne Thiebaud inspired cake drawings are a perfect pathway for Arts Integration by using Math and Visual Arts concepts.



Math Concepts:

- Angles (45° and 90°)
- 3 Dimensional Shapes/Forms
- Perpendicular Lines
- Parallel Lines
- Measuring
- Using Mathematical Tools

Art Concepts:

- Color Families/Theory
- Texture

- Observing Artistic Works
- Form
- Shape
- Line
- Value
- Space/Perspective

Materials:

- Drawing paper for Sketching
- Pencils/Erasers
- Rulers/Protractors
- Oil Pastels
- Paper Towels for Blending
- Cotton Swabs for Blending

Process:

Begin with a See, Think, Wonder Arts Integration Strategy. This is my favorite strategy to use because it is quick, opens up many opportunities for thoughtful discussion, and is a brilliant way to introduce a lesson. Learn more about this strategy HERE.

Artwork Recommendations:

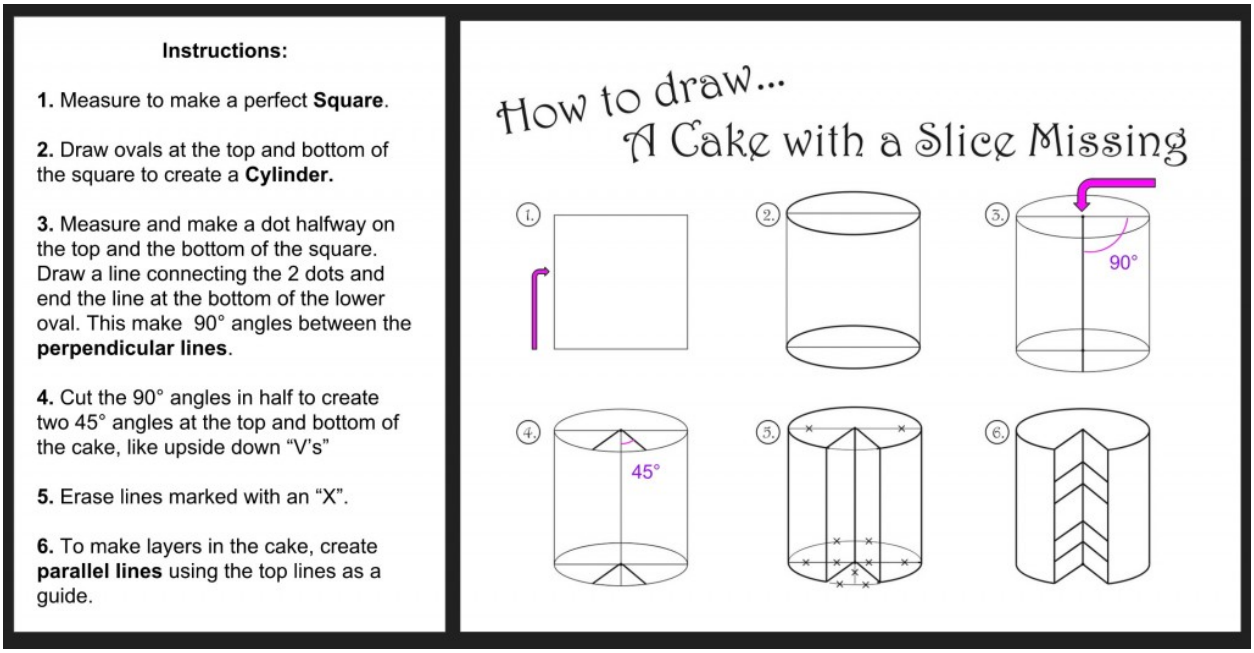
- Lemon Cake 1983
- Cakes 1963
- Neapolitan Meringue 1986
- Chocolate Cake 1971

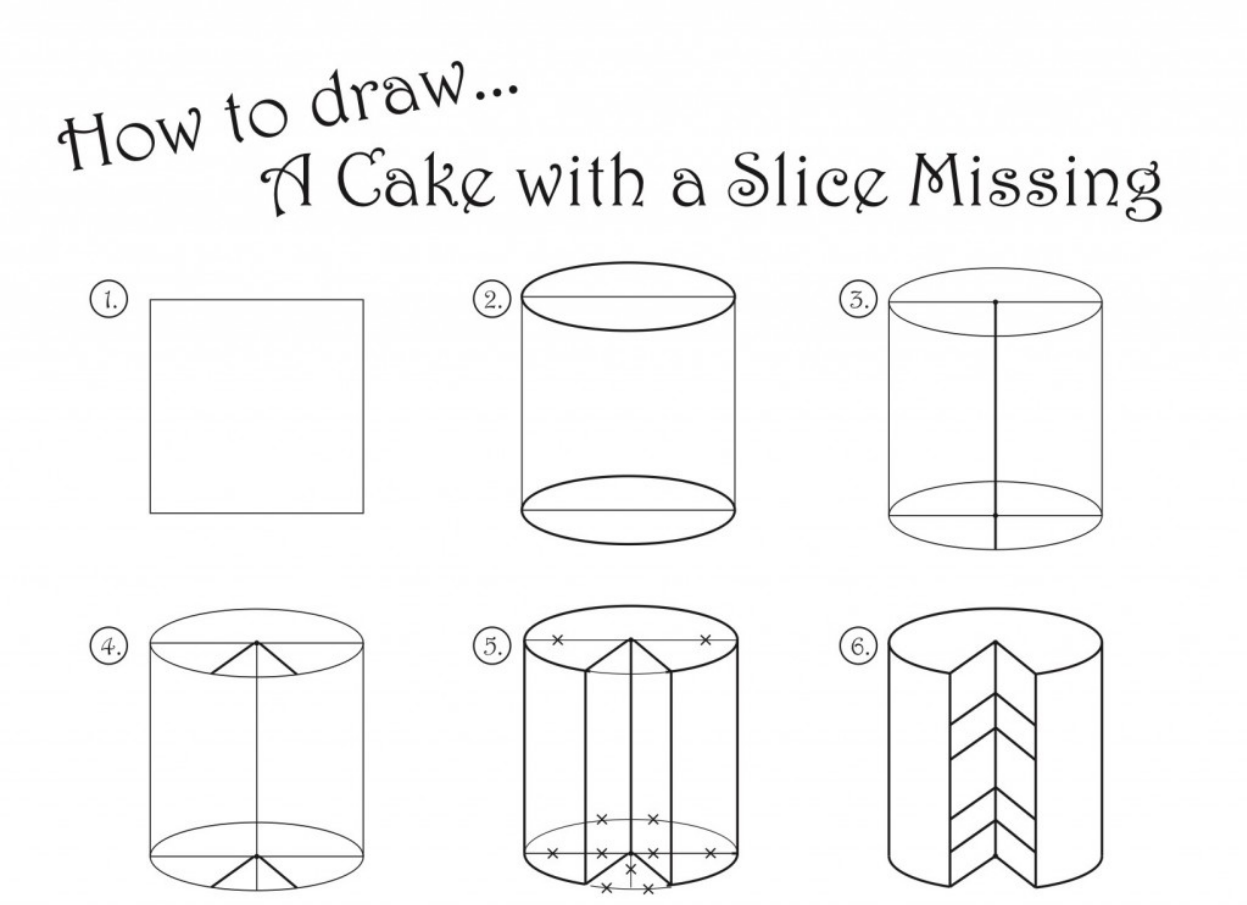
Artistic Observation Discussion Topics:

- Shape and Form: What shapes, forms, and angles do you see?
- Colors: Are there any color families represented? Cool colors? Warm colors? Complementary Colors? How are colors used to create a feeling?
- Space and Perspective: Where Are the cakes? How do we know that? What is in front or behind the cake?
- Value: Where do you see shading? Where are there tints and shades? Why would artist shade their work?

Get to Work:

- Sketch
- Practice drawing cakes. You can do this step-by step together with a small group or you can provide students with a sheet such as the one below.
- When talking about the drawing process, do not forget to use mathematical terms like perpendicular and parallel lines, and 45° and 90°.
- Do not forget to add a platter, or cake stand under your dessert. You may also want to add a table line about halfway up the cake cylinder.

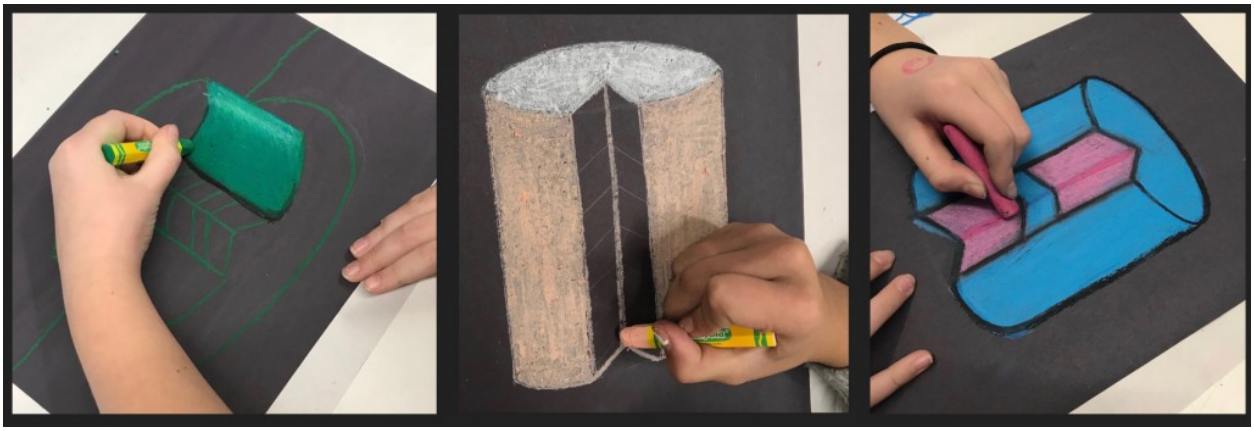




Draw and Color:

- Draw a final draft on a piece of paper. I like using black paper or colored construction paper, but white drawing paper works well too.
- Using oil pastels, color in your cake using tints. These are colors with white added to them, or light colors.
- Add value to your cake with shades, or dark colors with black in them. Shading in portions of your cake after deciding where the imaginary light source is, will add dimension to your drawing and use the concept of space to set the scene for the viewer.
- Outline: To make these cakes stand out, think about outlining them with black oil pastels. This can really make them pop off the page.

TIP: Plan your colors ahead of time. Good planning will prevent two similar colors competing for attention on the page. Think about using a color scheme.



Bring Wayne Thiebaud Math Cakes into your classroom today! Artists of all ages will enjoy this project!

STEAM in the Classroom Look-For List

By Susan Riley | February 2018

When it comes to using STEAM in the classroom, how do you know what you should look for in outcomes for students, teachers and lessons? It's one thing to design a lesson, but it's totally different to see STEAM in practice.

But the practice is one of the most exciting things about using the approach. During these lessons, students engage on a totally different level and often produce work that is much more vigorous. But in any active classroom, it's easy to confuse activity with deep learning.

STEAM OUTCOMES

The best way to ensure that your lessons are authentic to the STEAM process is with a simple look-for list. We have one developed for arts integration look-fors, but STEAM is a bit different. It has a different focus and intention that arts integration. So it also requires a slightly different list of outcomes. Take a look at this list and let's dive into each segment.

STEAM LOOK-FOR LIST

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- [ ] **There is an intentional connection between the STEM and arts Contents being taught.**

Both the STEM and arts content are being equitably discussed, explored and applied to develop solutions to a key question or problem.

- [ ] **The standards for both content areas in the lesson are naturally aligned and make sense to teach together.**

The verbs in both standards are asking for the same thing. For example, the Science standard asks the students to "demonstrate" and the Arts standard asks the students to "apply". Or, the overarching topic for both content areas is the same. ie: Composition.

- [ ] **The lesson is inquiry-based and the two connected areas are both exploring the essential question through problem-solving and process-based learning.**

There is an essential question that explores a topic from multiple perspectives. Students are engaged in asking questions, research, creating new solutions, and/or collaborating with others in applying and merging current skills in both aligned content areas. The design process may be used throughout the lesson.

- [ ] **The arts are being taught with integrity and not in service of the other content area.**

The arts content has been selected purposefully and in collaboration with an arts specialist who has previously taught the skill addressed. Students are applying their skills in the arts as a way to enhance meaning and deeply explore the topic.

- [ ] **There is evidence of at least one of these 21st century skills: Collaboration, Creativity, Critical Thinking and/or Communication.**

Students are working with others, considering one question multiple ways for both content areas, sharing with their peers in small or whole groups and creating original solutions and compositions.

- [ ] **There is application of skills and processes learned from previous direct instruction of both standards being addressed.**

Students are using their current knowledge to create new solutions to existing problems or challenges. Both of the selected standards have been taught previously by the individual content expert.

- [ ] **Both the STEM and the arts standards are assessed equitably.**

A variety of assessment solutions are presented for both the STEM and the arts area. These could be diagnostic, formative or summative. Both content areas' assessments are equitable to each other and directly assess the standards chosen.

BONUS **Exploring potential career pathways and/or real-world applications of the STEAM areas addressed in the lesson.**

[DOWNLOAD THIS STEAM LOOK FOR LIST]

INTENTIONAL CONNECTIONS

Similar to arts integration, the best quality STEAM lessons intentionally connect 2 aligned standards. The first two components of this list break this down a bit. We want to make sure we purposefully select standards, content areas and topics that make sense together. The easiest way to do this is through seeking similar verbs across standards.

For example, if the science standard asks students to "demonstrate" something and the art standard asks students to "apply" their skills, this can be an indicator of a possible alignment. It's not a hard and fast rule, but it definitely helps to eliminate standards that won't work together and leave us with the best options available.

INQUIRY BASED

Any good STEAM lesson is grounded in inquiry, problem-solving and process-based learning. In fact, this is one of the distinguishing characteristics between Arts Integration and STEAM. So when viewing STEAM in the classroom, you want to pay close attention to the essential question and the process surrounding its exploration.

What problems are being investigated and solved? How are both contents being used to explore the problems? Why is the process important to the question posed? These are all important components to a STEAM classroom or lesson.

INTEGRITY

Whenever a STEAM lesson is being used, it's imperative that the arts content has been selected purposefully and that it's being taught with integrity and not in service of the other content. This is a non-negotiable.

Many times, we'll see lessons where students are creating a craft at the end of the lesson and educators call it "STEAM". Things like creating a shadow-box about the planets for a science lesson or painting a derby car that was built in an engineering unit.

Simply adding paint, tape and glue doesn't make it a STEAM lesson. That diminishes the deep process-based learning that is inherent to the arts. Instead, the lesson should be actively teaching the arts standard through application of skills students have learned during dedicated arts times.

21st CENTURY SKILLS

The 4Cs of 21st century skills - Collaboration, Creativity, Critical Thinking and Communication - aren't going anywhere. They are a critical component to student success in a rapidly changing workforce and society. Luckily, these are easily woven into any quality STEAM lesson. This is where the active engagement really starts to shine with student groups, creating original solutions and compositions and exploring questions from multiple perspectives.

EQUITABLE ASSESSMENT

Finally, a true STEAM lesson requires assessing both the content and arts standards that were selected and taught. As all good teachers know, if you teach it - you assess it. But remember that assessment is not the same as

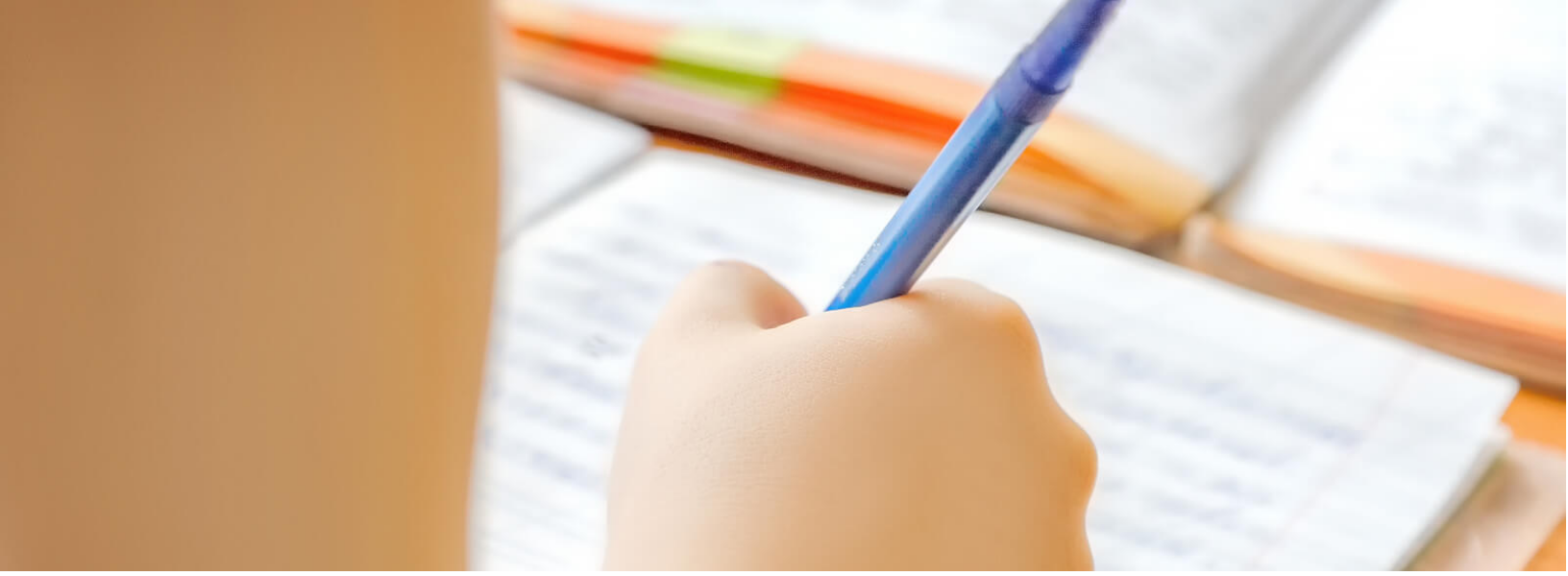
evaluation. Assessment is a measurement of growth, not a judgment of mastery. So in a STEAM lesson, you're looking for student growth in both content areas from the lesson. If you need support in how to do this, or examples of maker-based assessments, definitely check out our Assessment for Makers online course.

BONUS: MAKING MEANING

Making meaningful connections isn't really a bonus. It's wrapped around the whole lesson like a warm coat. Making connections to career pathways and real-world applications is a way for students to understand that what they're doing in the STEAM classroom matters. It's not just "playing" - what they're learning, creating and applying has real possibilities and opportunities.

USING THIS LIST

The great thing about a list of look-fors like this is the ability to use it for many different reasons. If you're a teacher, use this list as a way to tighten up your STEAM lesson development and implementation. If you're an administrator, use this as a checklist during a STEAM lesson observation. Or use it as a way to make sure your teachers and school is on the right track towards becoming a "STEAM School". No matter what, these 7 basic outcomes will help take your students to the next level.



Arts-Based Strategies for Struggling Writers

By Brianne Gidcumb | February 2018

Pen to a blank sheet of paper… it can be daunting for even the most experienced of writers. For our students who struggle with writing, it can be the source of limiting beliefs, negative self-talk, and doubts about abilities and intelligence. What if there was a way to alleviate some of the stress of writing, allowing students to tap into their other strengths as a catalyst for writing experiences? This is a great place for the arts. Here are a few arts-based writing strategies to use in the classroom that will hopefully engage and motivate your struggling writers.

Visual Art

Art Stories: Students summarize key points of a story or a book by creating a piece of visual art. Students will then write an artist's statement about their piece and how it reflects the key points of the story, describing their artistic choices.

**Storytelling:* Cut up several old picture books, and have students mix up the art to make up a new narrative. Students can then use these pictures as a prompt to write their new book.

Drama

Stepping Into the Painting: Using a piece of art or an image, students become a character or an object they see. After students choose their character or object, they must begin to verbally tell a story. They give background into what they are seeing, thinking, and feeling. Once the exercise has been completed, have students write their story. See more about the Stepping into the Painting strategy HERE.

Character Letters: Have students write a letter to someone of their choosing: a character from a story, a composer of a piece of music, an artist, etc. Have the student introduce themselves, ask questions, and express opinions. Extension: have students switch letters and write a reply.

Music

Guided Active Listening: Have students listen to a piece of music, preferably one that features a particular instrument. Have students write a monologue from the point of view of that instrument. You can also have students listen to a piece and write a creative story about an imagined event within the piece. See more HERE.

Song Stories: Have students select a piece of music of their choosing and brainstorm who wrote the song and why. Students will then write a story about how the song came to be.

Dance

**Key Topic Dance*: Have students brainstorm important words or topics in a story or book. Next, list movements, shapes, levels, and energy that could be used to

convey the topic. Have small groups plan a dance or movement around a chosen topic word. After the performance, have students write a response about what they did and how they felt, making reference to the key topic they conveyed as well as elements of dance.

** These strategies, and many more, can be found in Creating Meaning Through Literature and the Arts by Claudia E. Cornett.*

Arts & STEAM in the Gifted & Talented Classroom

By Dolph Petris | February 2018

Arts and STEAM integration in the Gifted and Talented classroom is, curiously interesting… in a good way. The teacher can expect a broad spectrum of student output that ranges from bizarrely abstract to acutely sterile. Both of which can be equally interesting, and here's why…

Gifted and Talented students usually approach an assignment from a methodical perspective. This student population is used to a level of Depth and Complexity, Novelty, and Acceleration. Generally, this is not typical among the general education classroom. These students want to think at a higher level, they want to reach a new height that perhaps they have never reached.

Go Beyond

This population of students will typically experience some level of self-imposed academic discipline each and every day while in the core curriculum classroom. As their teacher, we must remember that art and STEAM integration is no different. Approaching a typical art project should also go beyond the realm of our expected possible outcome as these students will likely find, or create, a caveat that extends or tweaks the original project scope.

When this happens, and it will, the art teacher need not become derailed that their original art project is modified by someone other than themselves. Instead, we should embrace the sometimes nutty and obscure level of creativity that these students bring to the table.

Gifted and Talented students prefer a formulaic process. They prefer explicit instructions followed to a tea. However, there are a handful of students that no matter what you 'prescribe' will want to take a unique direction that you possibly did not anticipate. For this reason, you may want to search for projects that utilize and incorporate their inherent strengths into something that is pleasing and memorable for all.

An Education Closet online workshop titled 6 Strategies to STEAM Up the Classroom was the springboard for an amazing lesson that creates a color-coded structure using the numerals of Pi. By following the structured 'pattern', the resulting image titled 3628 Digits of Pi, by Martin Krzywinski resembles the look of a Piet Mondrian painting.

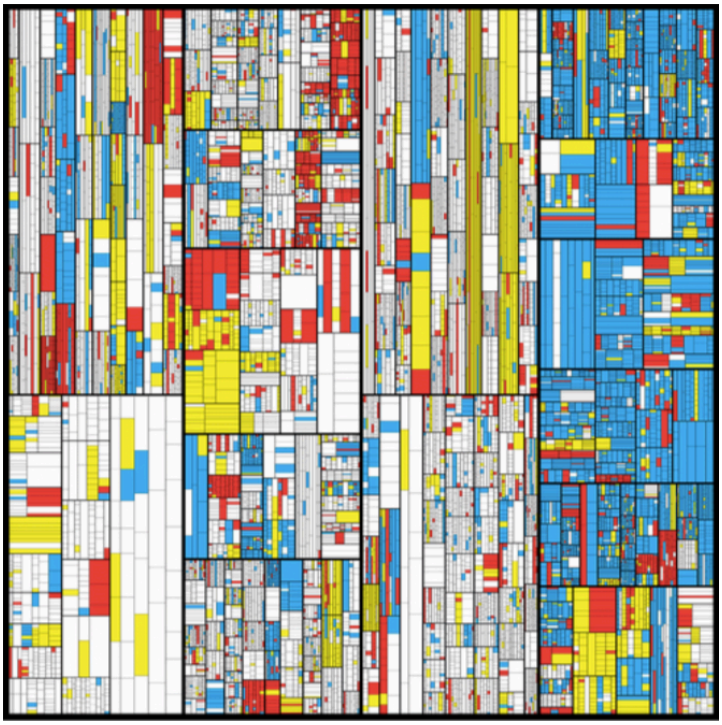


Photo courtesy of http://mkweb.bcgsc.ca/pi/.

The resulting imagery looks stunning, and the math behind the art was something my GATE students love. They became hungry for more complex visual intricacy. Students who never saw themselves as very creative, became creative. This type of project was a chance to learn about data visualization, widely used in the field of Science.

New Meaning

A typical art project will quickly become atypical and will take on new meaning. Student-created tangents will surface as a meaningful tangential and show connected relevance to the original concept.

One of the tools I like to have available for my students is an abundance of miscellaneous stuff. As teachers, we know how easily our collection of 'junk' can increase. But I have found that my students love this kind of stuff! Kids aren't allowed to have junk. So junk in the classroom becomes a novelty. I keep a bin or two of 'parts' and have students organize it all, which they enjoy doing anyway. When it comes time for any art project, my students will often request to dig into the bins to see if there is anything they could use and incorporate.

Working with the Gifted and Talented student population has been a fresh experience in teaching the arts. Curiosity exists even within the general education student population. Inherent curiosity is intrinsic. It is something we are born with, our driving force behind aesthetic beauty of what could be. It is that something that marks pivotal moments in time for science, art, and history of all mankind.

How Arts Integration Impacts Hollywood

By Deirdre Moore | February 2018

You might not think it, but arts integration has a far bigger impact in your world than you think. It's everywhere, and Hollywood is evidence of that. So this winter when you're drinking cocoa to warm your body, watch Disney/Pixar's *Coco* to warm your heart and soul. If you have not seen *Coco*, you should - even if you are not into animated movies! When the trailer first came out, I wanted to see this movie but unfortunately, I never made it. Lucky for me, it was nominated for many awards. It won the Golden Globe for Best Animated Motion Picture. It was also nominated for Best Original Song Motion Picture and 13 Annie Awards (awards specifically for animated films). So thankfully, one of my local theaters brought it back and gave me a second chance.

Arts Integration at its Finest

This movie is arts integration at its finest. It is also a great argument for the need for arts education. Without it, a film like this could never have been made. It takes a cultural tradition (Dia de los Muertos) and mixes it with music, visual art, and great storytelling. This creates a media arts feast for the eyes, ears and heart. It also manages to remind viewers of the importance of family, of honoring our elders and our heritage. Lastly, it educates the public about this Mexican holiday.

To start, the animation was amazing. The quality of animation in Pixar films constantly blows me away. Watching the fingers of the characters playing guitar shows the attention to detail that makes this one of the good ones. Because most of the characters are skeletons, they provided a challenge to animators to have them move differently than humans who have muscle and can move smoothly. After viewing the film, I was combing the internet for more behind the scenes information and discovered a website that points out lots of fun hidden Pixar references and points out some foreshadowing provided by the animators.

Beauty Abounds

It's not only the animation that is mind-blowing but also the sheer beauty. The images of the Land of the Dead were dripping with color and images of Mexican and Aztec architecture. It looks positively magical and gives some great laughs as well featuring systems from the Land of the Living as well as old technology like some classic desktop computers. The town in Mexico which is home to the movie's living focus family was preparing to celebrate Dia De Los Muertos. It is rich with iconography of the holiday. The skulls, the marigolds, the ofrendas, the papel picado (tissue paper cut into traditional designs) abound. They give your eyes so much to drink in. Not to mention all the festively attired dead who have crossed over for the holiday to visit their relatives in the Land of the Living.

What adds to the visual beauty of the film is the beauty, fun and significance of the music. The protagonist is Miguel, a young boy who wants to be a musician but something from the family's past has caused the family to ban music and devote their artistry to shoemaking. As the film progresses we are treated to mariachi music, solo vocals, duets and beautiful guitar playing. "Remember Me" appears multiple times in the movie and takes on greater significance as the story unfolds. There are Miguel's hero's version , the singer/songwriter Hector's version, and Miguel's duet with his grandmother.

There is more than one instance where music brings loved ones together but the most moving is that final rendition of "Remember Me" which shows the phenomenon that music can help reach those with dementia in a touching scene with Miguel and his failing grandmother. This interaction helps to bring an end to the family's ban on music. I recommend tissues for that scene (and many others, come to think of it).

The Art of Storytelling

Finally, there is simply great storytelling. There is the universal story of wanting to belong, of love and conflict in family, of the importance of family, the importance of knowing and appreciating your ancestors and then there is an education in Mexican culture. The Latino actors who portrayed these characters emphasized how respectful the film's creators were to the Mexican culture. In a press conference with some of the cast and creators, Edward James Olmos who voiced a character with a small but significant role talks about what he feels is the importance of this movie for Mexicans, especially at this time in this country. It is definitely worth taking a listen.

So, if you get the chance, check out *Coco* and revel in how many different aspects of arts integration you can find. Sit down with a box of tissues, some loved ones and let *Coco* entertain, elevate and educate you.

Painting in the Rain

By Mary Dagani | February 2018

When I became a traveling STEAM teacher for my district, I was told there would be a change as a result of my new job requirements. And just between the two of us, I was petrified about the change. You see, I was told that I now had to include the Special Day Class (SDC) classes in my teaching rotation. (SDC is a term that is used to describe a self-contained special education class. This class provides services to students with intensive needs that cannot be met by the general education program.)

Talk about sweating bullets! I had experience working with special needs population in a limited capacity, but classrooms containing multiple students with special needs? I did not have the credential or the training for that! Regardless, I dutifully took my rotations and swore I would make the best of it.

That was when something totally unexpected happened. I noticed the more I integrated music, visual art, and dance with my classes, the better the students responded to the lesson. (Hmmmmmm, could we be on to something here?) I decided to make it a challenge to modify my lessons to the level where more time was spent teaching through the Arts. And as I did, I noticed the students responding with more enthusiasm, interest, and success. I even received more requests to repeat these activities. Yes, I was on to something!

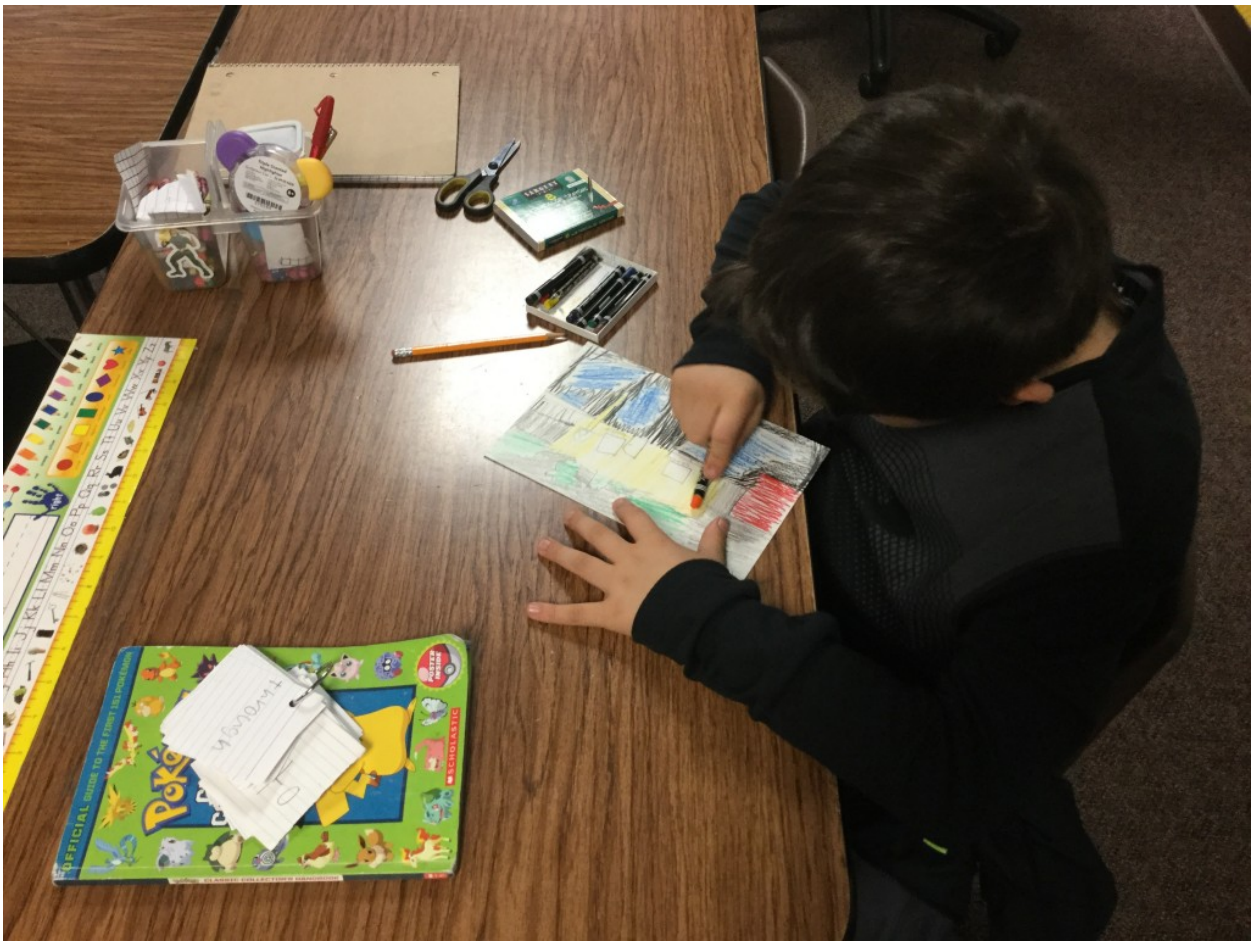
Rain, Rain, Go Away

Let me preface this section by saying that I am heartbroken and saddened by the recent death and destruction here in California as a result of our recent rain storms. Mother nature can be cruel and unpredictable. But, when our routinely beautiful, blue skies become gray, and the kids can't go outside to play, ANY classroom can become a bundle of pent up energy for a traveling teacher. And so it was last week as I headed to my favorite primary SDC class. My only thought was how I could make the best of a bad situation and use it to my advantage.

As I headed to the classroom in the pouring rain; watercolor crayons, paper, instrument bag, all in tow, I could see the blinds swaying and their little faces lined up against the window peering out at their wet world. The excitement of the rain and their confinement to the warm, dry room made their energy level quite noticeable from afar.

When life gives you rain, make rain art!

We started our session by using line/shape to create a pencil sketch of their view from the aforementioned window. Next, came the filling in of the spaces with various values of water color crayons. And finally, the main event was placing their artwork out in the rain and giving Mother Nature her chance to contribute to the process. The result was a surprisingly, unique, and colorful way to produce a painting. The students aptly named their creations: Rain Art!



While our artwork dried, we used body percussion (snapping, clapping, patting, stomping) to create an indoor rain storm. Each student had the opportunity to conduct the sound storm by motioning a crescendo/decrescendo sign with their hands. (Imagine moving your hands in the shape of a very large greater than/ less than sign like this: <>). The adults in the room were amazed at the level of participation and concentration from the students. They loved the activity so much, that we added small hand percussion instruments and repeated the process. It was a rainy day success!

As I trudged through the pouring rain back to my car, my mind travelled back to a time when I started this position. I thought about how I decided to make the best of teaching my required allotment of special needs classes. But, somewhere along the way these kids won me over and I am now teaching 4 sessions. The connections the students have made *with* the Arts, and the ones I built with these students *through* the Arts, have made a significant impact on my life.

But don't just take my word for it, check out these two great articles here and here to give you even more inspiration.

Increase Student Learning with Social Media

By Amy Traggianese | February 2018

You're probably reading this and thinking, "Wait a minute… social media can INCREASE student learning? No way!" I think it can! One of my SLOs this year ties *visual art, ELA and social media* together to increase student learning.

SLO rationale:

- Students will demonstrate proficiency and fluency in their ability to meet the literacy demands of an interconnected world.
- Students will share what they create in the art studio.
- Students will have a global audience to share with on Instagram.
- Students will practice digital citizenship.

Social Media in the Classroom?

Children in my classroom will create art, write about it, share it while practicing digital citizenship, which is one of the ISTE Standards for students. Students don't have to create work just for the teacher anymore, they can go beyond the walls of their classrooms. After all, digital tools help students engage with a broader, global audience.

Will this global audience increase proficiency and fluency in student communication about their art creations? I think so. Through this SLO, I hope to show student growth in art making, art vocabulary *and* speaking, listening and writing.

All students need practice in communication and self-reflection of their learning process in all subject areas. In my art room, I have students write artist statements about their work and then discuss their art process with peers. Critique during a gallery walk has always been a place for students to learn from each other, but something was missing.

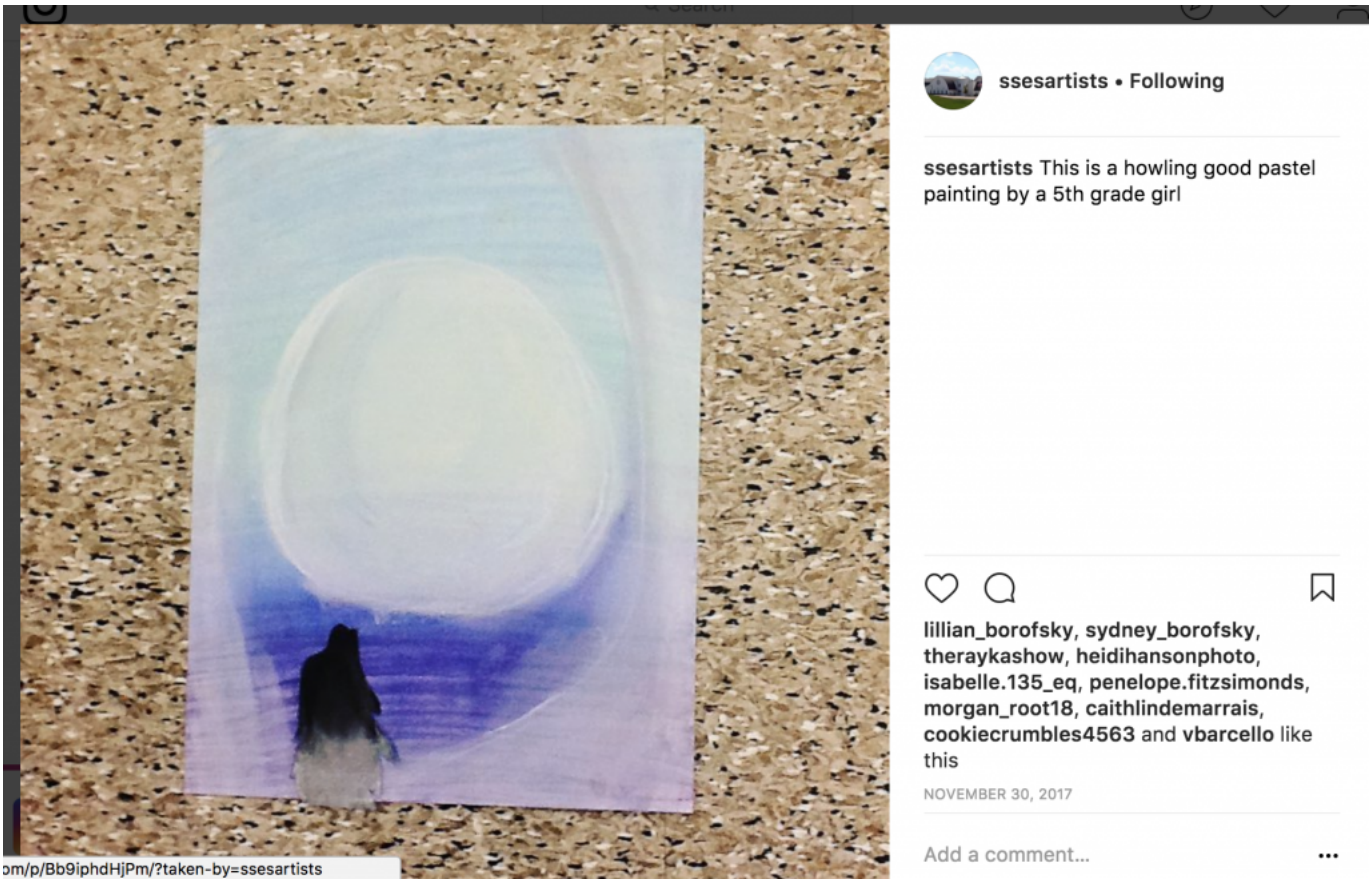
Taking the next step

So I decided to go to the next logical step: connect my students to a global audience to share their work and practice and learn how to be good digital citizens. So I started an Instagram account for our school's art, music and PE departments a few years ago.

Instagram "papers" for student practice

We get a lot of "likes" and a sprinkling of appropriate comments here and there, but that is it. I decided it was time for students to post, which led me to find other classrooms to follow. Now students can see images and appropriate news from other classrooms all around the world in our Instagram feed.

At first, I modeled how to post to Instagram for each class, using my iPad projected through my teaching computer. I display the image up on the board with Reflector. This was important for all of my students to see, because only a few of them have their own Instagram account. I had all students write out what they'd like to post with their artwork. I reviewed and okayed it before they posted.



An instagram post by a student. Click **here** to see more!

So far this year, some students in each class have posted to Instagram. I have noticed that students are putting more time and effort into their creations and they want to share online and interact with the world. They are also taking their time to think through what they want to write.

Good Digital Citizenship

Ultimately, teachers always help students make wise choices and be kind, in person. We need to expand this and help students be good citizens online. In the last few months, my students have been very excited to share with the world. Here's a great post by Dyan explaining student voice and the power of an audience.

How do you help students make wise choices and be kind, in person and online? Do your students have opportunities to practice sharing their work with a global audience?

Layering Changes Earth Science and Art Lesson

By Susan Riley | February 2018

Today's free lesson sample is for grades 7-8 and connects earth science and visual art. Students will be exploring earth's layers with printmaking. By connecting these areas, students begin to explore the ideas of changes over time and how different layers and textures contribute to a whole composition.

LAYERING CHANGES LESSON

TEACHER(S):		MAIN CONTENT:	SCIENCE & ART
DURATION:	40-60 MINUTES	GRADE LEVEL:	7-8

INTEGRATION OF

- ☐ E/LA
- ☐ Math
- ☒ Science
- ☐ Social Studies
- ☐ Health
- ☒ Visual Art
- ☐ Music
- ☐ Theater
- ☐ Dance
- ☐ Media

21ST CENTURY SKILLS

- ☒ Critical Thinking
- ☒ Creative Thinking
- ☒ Collaborating
- ☐ Communicating
- ☐ Media Literacy
- ☐ Informational Literacy
- ☐ Tech Literacy
- ☐ Flexibility
- ☐ Initiative
- ☐ Social Skills
- ☐ Productivity
- ☐ Leadership

STANDARDS

MS-ESS2-3. Analyze and interpret data on the distribution of fossils and rocks, continental shapes, and seafloor structures to provide evidence of the past plate motions.

VA:Cr2.3.7a Apply visual organizational strategies to design and produce a work of art, design, or media that clearly communicates information or ideas.

KEY VOCABULARY

Plate
Layers
Texture
Geologist
Printmaker
Mining
Engineer

ARTS CONCEPTS

- ☒ Create
- ☐ Respond
- ☐ Perform/Produce/Present
- ☐ Connect

MATERIALS

- 25-30 cardboard squares
- Variety of texture materials (yarn, noodles, bubble wrap, rubber bands, foam pieces, ribbon, etc)
- Glue or double sided tape
- Brayer rollers
- Colored ink
- White printmaking paper

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

How can we determine changes that happen over time?

LESSON SEQUENCE (Overview of activities, concepts, etc.)

1. **Direct instruction** of Earth's Layers - explore the 4 main layers and their individual characteristics.
2. **Artful Thinking Activity:** Claim/Identify/Question using a piece of printmaking.
3. Explore the process of printmaking and examples of different textured prints.
4. **Direct instruction** of texture
5. **Connection Strategy:** Select textures that would best describe/indicate each layer of the earth.
6. **Printmaking Activity**: In small groups, create texture plates for each of the earth's layers and a whole-group print that includes layers from each of the texture plates. Create plates using texture materials and cardboard squares.
7. Trade the final print with another group. **Analyze** the other group's print to identify each layer presented.

ASSESSMENTS

ARTIST REFLECTION WRITTEN STATEMENT

Respond to the following questions in paragraph form:

1. Why was printmaking a good method of demonstrating geological layers?
2. What do rock layers and printmaking have in common?

[DOWNLOAD THIS STEAM LESSON]

Looking for done-for-you lessons with powerpoints, student materials and assessments? Be sure to check out the IntegratED Curriculum. It's a digital curriculum supplement that gives you everything you need for arts integration and STEAM without all the planning.

EARTH SCIENCE LESSON IMPLEMENTATION

If you'd like to do this lesson, I highly recommend downloading this powerpoint on Layers of the Earth because it's a great fundamental component for exploring this science concept. It also comes with a student foldable for each of the earth's layers. You can then use this foldable to explore various textures.

Be sure to take some time view examples of printmaking and understand the various textures available. These textures include things like

- smooth
- rough
- hard
- soft
- woven
- bumpy
- jagged and
- ridged

Then, have students identify the textures they would use for each of the earth's layers. Finally, give each student a piece of cardboard and several different textures to choose from. In groups, students create a collaborative printmaking piece using their textured cardboard pieces. Ultimately, the collaborative composition should reflect each of the earth's layers that they identified earlier.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

The essential question for this lesson is "how can we determine changes that happen over time?", but there are a many others you could explore. Things like:

- How does Earth change?
- How are Earth's systems connected?
- Why should we recognize patterns that exist in our world?
- How do the processes that shape Earth affect our lives?
- How do artists work?
- What do we know about how Earth's features are formed?
- How do artists formulate and interpret investigations with their work?
- How does artwork evolve?

Enjoy this free lesson sample for your classroom!

Design Across the Arts

By Laura Wixon | February 2018

With the recent tidal wave of schools turning from STEM to STEAM, the Design Process is playing a vital role in lesson plans. Design thinking provides a standardized resource for teachers to weave through all of their project based lessons as a common thread and a tool for students to use when approaching problems solving. In its purest form, the Engineering or Design Process consists of defining, designing, building, revising, and improving the initial idea. It breaks a large project or problem down into defined and manageable chunks and provides a structure for critical thinking.

The official steps of the design process involve:

1. Defining the problem
2. Collecting information
3. Brainstorm and Analyze Ideas
4. Develop Solutions
5. Gather Feedback
6. Improve the Design

However, as more schools are turning to STEAM, there seems to be an overwhelming belief that when it comes to integrating the arts, Visual Arts seem have an exclusive hold on the Design Process. It may originate from visual art

being a "more approachable" subject, or from the pedagogical influence of graphic design. But regardless, it undervalues other art forms to not include them in the design thinking process. Media arts is occasionally integrated into the design process through digital design elements. Despite this, however, it is rare to see lessons incorporating the design process partnering with music, dance, or theater. This might seem surprising to performance arts teachers, who naturally use the design process in their classes on a regular basis.

Take, for example, the process of developing dance choreography. First, dancers think about the context of the song or music (define the problem). Then they gather inspiration from dance movements or styles (collect information). Next, they experiment with various dance phrases (analyze ideas). After that, they weave phrases together (develop solutions). Lastly, they perform and respond to feedback from an audience. Rehearsal is perhaps the performing arts vocabulary for the final step of the design process: improving the design. We traditionally think of design as the process of producing an object. However, if we think of it as producing a performance or a non-tangible it readily lends itself to the performing arts. If a music, dance, or theater standard aligns well with the math, science, engineering, or technology standard being taught, don't be afraid to think outside the box and integrate design with a performing art.

The Design Process Across The Arts

Music: Link the science of sound and the sound of music (no, not the musical) in a lesson that demonstrates what different pitch sound vibrations look like. Experiment with placing a speaker in the bottom of a bowl. Then cover the top of the bowl with part of a stretched balloon. Finally, place a thin layer of sand on top of the stretched surface. What do different pitch and volume vibrations look like?

Theater: Process Drama is theater and design thinking working as one! Allow students to become scientists, mathematicians, and engineers working to creatively solve problems as a first-hand experience.

Dance: Link geometry and dance as students explore patterning, repeated shapes and kinesthetic movement. Or link science and dance and ask students to explore biomes through their five senses interpreted through a dance. Assign students problem solving tasks and ask them to use their bodies to solve the issues at hand.

Media Arts: Graphic design is the artform that pioneered design thinking. Graphic design stems from the idea that there is a visual problem to be solved and that students must use creative thinking skills and visual information to develop a solution. Ask students to develop a logo for a company using color psychology, and information about the cooperation.

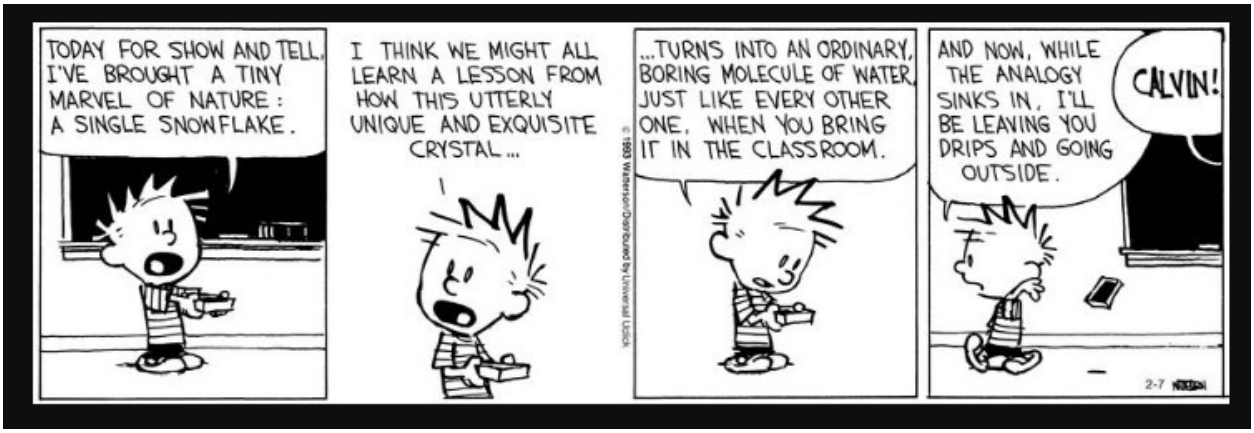
Visual Arts: Consider printing out a large-scale map of your city and laying it out across the classroom floor. Identify food deserts that exist within your area and ask students to work in small groups to identify places where a farmers market could be established to help solve this problem. Have students use simple recycled materials to physically construct their models and place them on the floor map.

For additional information regarding the Design Process check out this article on gaming in the classroom.

Four Surefire Ways to Reach Unmotivated Gifted Students

By Dyan Branstetter | February 2018

Have you ever had a student in your class whom you know is brilliant, yet they are producing nothing? Or have you written a comment such as, "Kevin is not working to his potential,"? When working with advanced and gifted learners, this is all too common. Some teachers find students such as these annoying because the student behavior can seem disrespectful, oppositional, and arrogant. As such, they are not as quick to reach out to that student. Before we look at strategies that can help students find their full potential, we have to understand the reasons for *why* students are lacking motivation.



SOURCE: Watterson, Bill. "Calvin and Hobbes." The Complete Calvin and Hobbes. N.p.: Andrews McMeel, 2012. Print.

Is it the instructional design?

Before we start to analyze the behavior of our unmotivated students, we have to determine if the cause of the underachievement is due to instructional design. Students who feel that they don't have a voice in what they are learning tend to eventually tune out. Some feel it is a lack of respect for their passions.

In addition, if tasks are monotonous or not authentic/vigorous enough, students may not see the value in them. This could lead to a lack of motivation. The lack of intellectually stimulating opportunities will have students dreading school and wishing for more free time to learn. (Remember, if a student can prove mastery of a skill after a few problems, they shouldn't have to do a whole page of similar problems.) If you find that your lessons need some help in this area, check out EducationCloset's many lessons and units. Integrating the arts, and project-based, interdisciplinary units are rigorous motivators for all students, especially advanced learners.

Is it student behavior?

Other motivation problems relate to specific student behaviors. Some advanced students are "selective producers", viewing school as a buffet where they choose what they want to put effort into. Other students will work for one teacher but not for another. Perfectionism is also a quiet block for some students. Their fear of failure prevents them from putting forth their full effort.

Some students don't have the skills to manage their workload. It overwhelms them and thus, they shut down because they don't know where to start, or because they can't do it all. So instead, they do nothing. Finally, some gifted students simply haven't developed the grit required to learn something new because concepts have come so easily for them in their early childhood years.

Let's take a look at each of these behaviors and some possible interventions to help students work to their potential.

Step 1: Identify the root of the behavior.

- **Conference with the student to gain some insight.**
    - Sometimes, they will come right out and tell you. Be careful to listen objectively if the student shares concerns/dislikes. It is easy to get defensive- we know we put a great deal of time and effort into planning, and criticism, especially from a student, can be hard to hear. Listen for the student's rationale and try to determine if you should modify your instruction or if it is more of a behavioral concern.
    - Other students won't share so willingly. Maybe they have already shut down, maybe they're afraid you will push them, or maybe they can't pinpoint why they aren't motivated. Ask students probing questions like what their favorite school subject is and why. Or perhaps, what their least favorite subject is and why. Ask what makes something easy and what makes something difficult. And most definitely, use this opportunity to find out what this student wants to learn about and see if he or she knows how he learns best. If you can begin to determine the underlying problem through this conversation, you are one step closer to helping.
    - Make sure that the student is accountable. The way this is presented can either help or hurt the situation, so pay attention to the sensitivity of the student as you go forward. The student needs to be aware that his or her underachievement is not his teacher's fault and it's not his parent's fault, but instead, he needs to own it and work past it. Ensure that student that you will do everything in your power to help him succeed, but without teamwork from all counterparts, the problem won't be solved. End the conference by sharing the goal that you have made to help the situation and a goal that the student will work on to help the situation.

- **Communicate with the student's family**
    - Have a conversation with the student's family. While it is very true that students perform differently at school and home, parents have great insight into their child's learning behavior. Ask what causes frustration at home and how parents' see their child's ability to complete homework tasks. Explain what you see at school, and ask what motivates that student at home. (Note: Be careful not to vent to parents- you are presenting an objective view of what you see and asking for tips. Many times you'll find that parents are also frustrated with the same things that you are. It will be most helpful if you present this as a team approach. Let the parents know that you will seek expert advice to help if your own ideas aren't enough, and make sure to follow through.)
    - You can identify similarities and differences in the student from home to school behavior, and you can also gain insights into the parental response to the student's lack of motivation. (Could the child be used to unclear boundaries, so they consider school work optional? Could the parent frequently jump in and help when things get challenging, preventing the student from developing grit?) Setting some clear initial goals that parents can support at home can be very beneficial. Sometimes, just knowing that parent and teacher are on the same page can be enough accountability to jumpstart some motivation.

Step 2: Try Some Interventions

There is no "quick fix" for many of these underlying reasons for underperformance. But, here you'll find a few ideas to help get started.

- **For the student who lacks "buy-in":**
    - Increase that student's perception of school. Connect his or her interests to the content that you're delivering. Work to create a relevancy for all students, but especially the student who is a hard sell. Chances are if you can reach that student, the other students will be on board as well! In addition, make sure to give pretests to

make sure you're not directly instructing that student on skills they have already mastered. Take interest inventories. These help you know how much you need to “sell” the curriculum and how you can make those connections to that student's interests.
    - Make sure not to "stand and deliver", but instead design instruction to help students learn on their own. Some students would prefer to learn at their own pace from a YouTube video rather than slowly move step-by-step while following a teacher's directions.

- **For the Perfectionist:**
    - These are our students who don't like to take risks, who try something and tearfully tear it up, resolving to never do it again, and who have high anxiety about getting answers correct. Sometimes this is loud and clear, and sometimes it is quietly masked by what looks like apathy, opposition, or incomplete work. Sometimes this can be further compounded with a label of giftedness- teachers think because a child is "gifted" means that they should perform better than others. Comments like this can push a child further down a path of self-doubt. To help with early perfectionism, books like "Beautiful Oops" by Barney Saltzberg is a great read aloud which you can frequently refer to. Carefully presented feedback can help students work through their perfectionism, as well as parent education on helpful feedback. Praise affects both motivation and resilience, and should always focus on the process rather than the child's intelligence.
        - Example: Focus on the process: "I love how you persevered by trying multiple strategies to solve that problem!" versus a focus on intelligence: "You're so great at multiplication!"
    - Learning about growth mindset vs. fixed mindset can help students conquer perfectionism as well.

- **For the Fixed Mindset Learner:**
    - This student doesn't think he can learn so he has negative feelings about it. Because he has negative feelings, he doesn't put in effort, hence, he doesn't have success. To help with this, share scientific

knowledge of Carol Dweck's Growth Mindset. (Here's a great video series from ClassDojo on this topic.) Make sure to build in opportunities for this student to be successful. Quietly celebrate these successes. If the student gives permission, use their work (with or without a name, depending on permission) as an example during instruction. Pointing out these little successes helps build confidence and is a great stepping stone for reversing a fixed mindset.

- **For the Unorganized Learner:**
    - Some students just need some assistance with time management. They have trouble breaking tasks down into manageable steps. Meet often with these students. This is helpful for all students at first. But for those who continue to struggle, meet often in small groups or one on one to set up and manage a calendar. Teach them how to prioritize and make to-do lists and set daily goals. Make sure to continually check on these students to hold them accountable until these organizational skills become habits. It takes some time up front but sets students up for great success in the future.

Don't let these learners slip away

These ideas are specifically geared towards our advanced learners. But many of them are simply best practice and will work for *all* learners. Sometimes, we need to focus extra attention on those who have given up on school... even if their scores are "proficient". They deserve as much of our effort as those who are struggling to meet mastery. For these are the students who will be the next Steve Jobs, Oprah Winfrey, Lin Manuel Miranda, J.K. Rowling or Misty Copeland. Unless we let them slip through the cracks.

Source:
The ideas presented are a combination of my own experiences combined with ideas from the webinar "**Motivating the Gifted but Reluctant Learner**" by Diane Heacox, Ed.D.

See Think Wonder: Winter Photography Round-up

By Lauren Hodson | February 2018

See Think Wonder is one of my favorite Arts Integration Strategies. [Learn more about this strategy](#).

What is See Think Wonder?

*You begin by looking at an image or a problem and asking the students "What do you **see**?" and writing everything they say down in the column. Then, you ask "What do you **think**?" about anything that they noticed. This probes them to look a little deeper at what they noticed on the surface to see if there is any significance to it. Finally, you ask students "What do you **wonder**?", which allows them to take what they thought about the image or problem and let their imaginations run wild… what is the setting, what happened to cause this problem, why did the author/painter/creator set it up this way, what are we supposed to take away from this? These are all high-level inquiries that propel our students into discovering the "answers" for themselves.*

Susan Riley EducationCloset

Why I Use This Strategy: Flexibility

You can really tailor this strategy to your specific needs. You can use See, Think, Wonder to introduce a lesson or unit and as a warm-up when students come into the classroom.

I love how creative and brain exercising it can be. Additionally, it keeps me on my toes and keeps me searching for interesting paintings, photographs, mathematical inventions, scientific discoveries, and historical moments.

There are many changes and extensions you can make to this strategy as well. For instance, students can write out their responses or they can share them as a class. Individuals can keep a journal of responses or a chart can be made during discussion. It can also be a short activity or a long, more in-depth conversation. It is completely flexible and perfect for people just trying out Arts Integration.

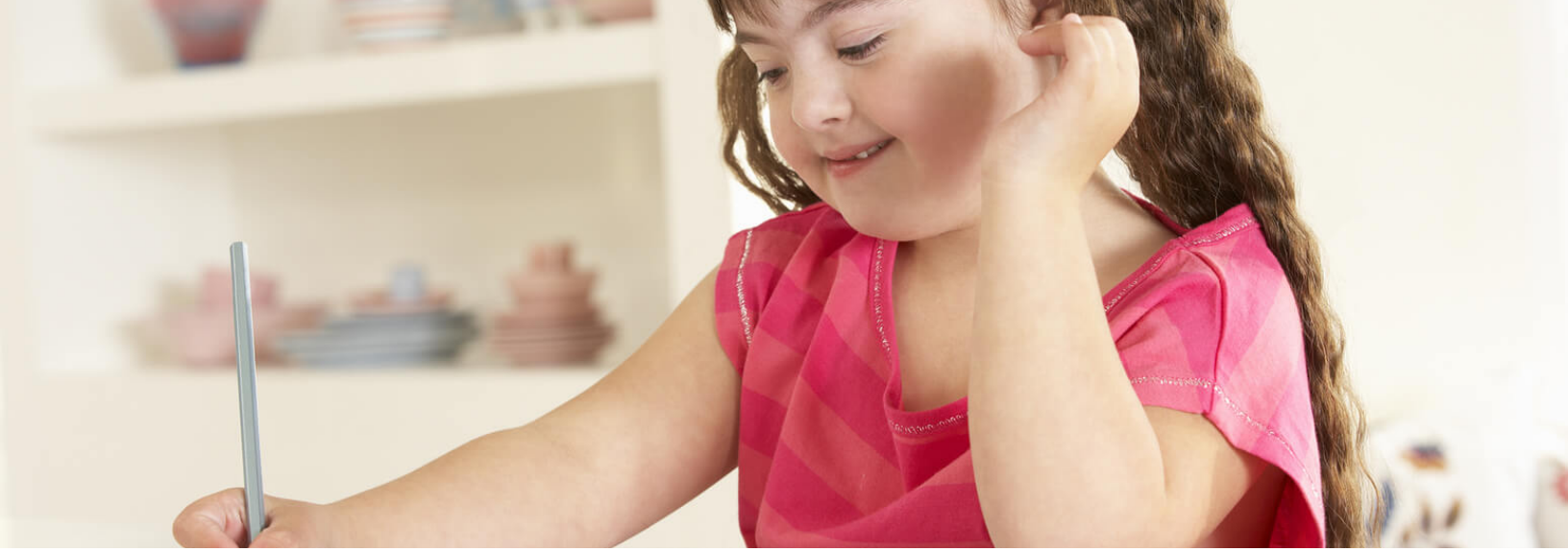
To get you started with using this amazing "See, Think, Wonder" strategy, I have collected some interesting, winter-themed, discussion fueling images that you can introduce to your classroom today!

Winter Photography Links for See, Think, Wonder Strategy

- Hot Tea Thrown in the -40° Celsius air: By **Michael Davies**
- Fascinating and Action-packed Squirrels in the snow: By **Vadim Trunov**
- Frozen Sand Towers Carved by Strong Winds on The Shores of Lake Michigan: By **Joshua Nowicki**
- Stunning Ice Formations on The Mount Javornik In Slovenia: By **Marko Korošec**
- Japanese Snow Monkey with an iPhone: By photographer **Marsel van Oosten**

- Enchanting Drone Aerials Look Like Scenes Inside Snow Globes: Collected by Wired Photographer **Karolis Janulis Loves**
- Frozen Soap Bubbles: By Photographer **Angela Kelly**

These photographs can easily allow you to include the See Think Wonder Arts Integration strategy in your classroom today!



Arts Create Opportunities to Access for All

By Deirdre Moore | February 2018

Our theme for the magazine here at EducationCloset this month is special populations. That can range from English Language Learners to students with special needs. While brainstorming for this article, I searched through the 5 year's worth of articles I have previously written for EducationCloset. I found some articles I had not even remembered writing until I started to read them.

From my quick perusal, I found four articles that deal with the idea of special populations and the arts. The gist of them are that teaching with an arts integrated approach is just best practice. That all populations benefit, but the ones who seem to reap the most benefit are those who have trouble learning in traditional ways.

Arts Integration with English Learners

This article - Arts Integration with English Learners - was a reflection on my studying for the CTEL in California and reading about teaching strategies suggested for this population that frequently brought in the arts. In addition, I added the evidence mounting from the implementation of an AI approach to teaching science. The San Diego Unified School District developed this with the University of California, Irvine. Although all populations benefited from the

approach it was ELLs that showed the most improvement. Dancing, chanting, acting and drawing the content helped the students have new ways to experience and understand the science content in a language foreign to them.

Arts Integration: A Way to Reach All Learners

Arts Integration: A Way to Reach All Learners was my experience using an AI approach with my students with special needs. This was when I began leveraging the arts to reach learners who had trouble finding access to content in their "mainstream" classes. Acting, movement, poetry writing and comic strip making with my students with special needs brought them joy. Joy in learning when school was historically frustrating, discouraging or even intimidating for them.

The Brilliance of Integration: Making Music for the Deaf

In this article, I talk about a hearing woman who had friends with hearing impairment. She learned to sign ASL to communicate with them. One day at a party, she started to interpret the music that was playing. She did this by signing the words. But she also added body movement and facial expression to capture the mood and essence of the music. That led to her starting a business of interpreters, expert in bringing music alive for those who cannot hear.

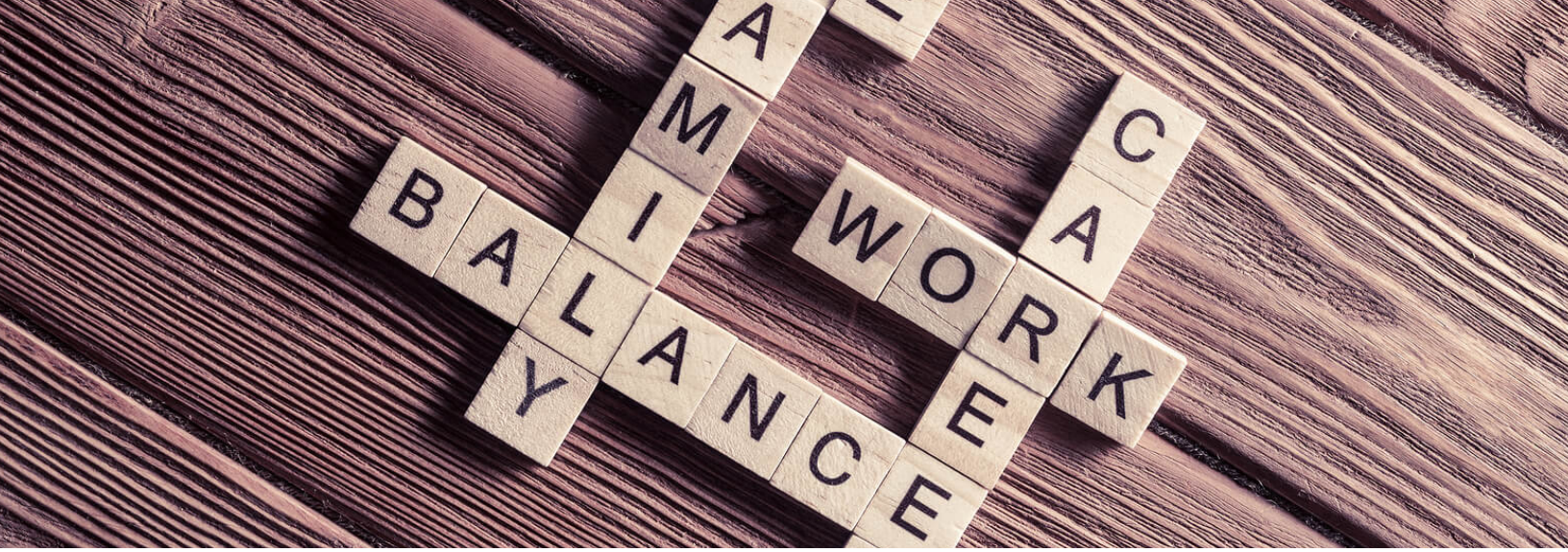
Music, Movies, Autism, the Brain and the Human Experience

But one subject that I found both inspiring and sobering was using the arts with people with autism which I covered in an article called Music, Movies, Autism, the Brain and the Human Experience. After re-reading that article, I did some further research on the topic. I am not an expert by any means but from what I can conclude, we don't know much about autism. We don't know what causes it or how to help those afflicted. I found one perspective I came across particularly interesting. Some who think that those who try to make someone "less autistic"

are making a mistake. That they should instead use what makes them unique to help connect with them. Some also caution that while the arts may be a way to foster better communication, there is no fail-safe way to "reach" someone with autism.

It is a mysterious condition but the arts certainly provide new opportunities for all of us to make connections when traditional face-to-face conversation is not an option. The Big Anxiety sponsored an event they called Neurodiverse-City where artists with autism showcased their art to help others understand the world as they do. As The Conversation.com knows, art allows us all another way to communicate and better understand one another.

While there is no one way to best educate everyone, the arts certainly do provide new and alternative ways to learn, to practice learning, to communicate and to express learning. As educators charged with teaching everyone, we need to use all available tools. Especially those tools which have proven to be most effective with populations who are most marginalized by traditional teaching methods. As I argued in one of my articles, Why Arts Integration? It's Just Best Practice!



Self-Care for Teachers

By Brianne Gidcumb | February 2018

How many of us made New Year's Resolutions on January 1st with the best of intentions? I did. And as the routine of daily life has exhausted us and stolen focus, how many of us have let those resolutions slide onto the back burner? I have.

Our days are scheduled to the minute, to the point of overcommitment, packed with responsibilities, chores, and to-do's. And we let our own physical, mental, and emotional health fall down our list of priorities. I submit that our own well-being should be priority number one. You can't fill from an empty cup. Let's explore a few ways you can integrate a little self-care into your busy days. Schedule some self-care practices into your day. Commit to them as you would any other event on your calendar. Maintain the greatest asset to your students (YOU!).

Restore

Care for yourself physically, mentally, and emotionally. Give yourself permission to take a break and relax. So many of us struggle with giving ourselves the space to slow down, but know that maintaining the asset that is *you* is essential to keeping up the pace it takes to be an educator. You can only give of yourself to

your students if you have a reserve of energy, time, and passion to give. Take a nap. Get away for a weekend. Disconnect from technology for a few hours. Take a bubble bath. Get a massage. Do something to release tension so that you can move forward with intention.

Center

It's one thing to restore: it's to find and maintain balance in the midst of our busy days. Too often, we wait until we reach that burn-out status before we give ourselves permission to care for ourselves. Integrate some practices to help you maintain a sense of centeredness. Close your classroom door and meditate for 10 minutes at lunchtime. Move daily to refresh your body and release stress. Start your day by journaling for just five minutes. Create rituals that give you a sense of peace every single day.

Grow

Engaging in daily personal development can not only help you to maintain a sense of centeredness and focus, but also energize and impassion your busy days. Start your day with 10 minutes of reading. Take a class (for fun, not only for professional development). Pursue that hobby that's always interested you. Find a creative outlet. Engage in something (outside of teaching) that inspires you. Feed your soul.

Always remember that YOU are the greatest asset to your classroom and to your students. You are responsible for facilitating your students' growth and learning: it is an awesome privilege and responsibility. And if you don't protect the asset (YOU), your students will be impacted as well. It is not only okay to take care of yourself - it is necessary!

What Does an Arts Integration Specialist Do?

By Susan Riley | February 2018

Have you ever thought about being an arts integration specialist? If so, you might be wondering a couple of things:

1. Are there really jobs out there for this?
2. What does an arts integration specialist do?
3. How do you become an arts integration specialist?

All are great questions! Let's take a look at each of these in more detail and explore some new possibilities.

THE JOB MARKET

Before making any kind of career decision, it's always wise to consider if there are really jobs out there in the field. As schools evolve and change, more and more are finding a need for educators trained in using integrated approaches like Arts Integration, STEAM and Project-Based Learning. While many would love to hire a dedicated teacher-leader for these roles, the pool of candidates is limited. This means schools may have to turn to repurposing teacher positions in a building or adding more responsibilities to current teacher roles.

This is definitely not ideal, and if a candidate is available who has been trained in the approach, they are much more likely to get some dedicated time towards becoming a mentor or facilitator in this role.

Additionally, as the new ESEA law has started to come into effect, more schools than ever are applying for (and receiving) funding for arts integration and STEAM initiatives. Part of the funding equation is providing for a specialist to work with teachers, plan lessons, demonstrate strategies and help review data.

Finally, don't forget to think outside of the school walls! Central offices are hiring arts integration specialists at district levels to both begin and continue integration efforts. And of course, many curriculum companies, museums and private education firms are always looking to hire educators who have received training in arts integration.

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES

If you're interested in an arts integration specialist position, you'll want to be prepared for everything the job entails. One of the great things about being an arts integration specialist is the sheer variety of what you get to do. The creative possibilities are exciting and the leadership experience is so valuable. Of course, it can also be overwhelming if you aren't aware of everything that goes into this role. Here's just a few activities arts integration specialists are responsible for:

- Planning and preparing arts integration lessons, assignments, assessments and materials
- Developing an arts integration budget
- Creating and delivering professional development and online resources
- Recruiting and supporting arts integration efforts in the school or district
- Curriculum mapping standards across multiple content areas and the arts
- Planning and administering arts integration assessments

- Modeling various arts strategies to be used in the classrooms
- Demonstrating and co-teaching arts integrated lessons
- Maintaining and analyzing arts integration-related data
- Counseling teachers when academic and adjustment problems arise related to teaching through the arts

As you can see, arts integration specialists can do a lot for a school or district! Want to see what an actual arts integration specialist job description looks like? Download our job resource to review expectations and qualifications for this kind of position.

Arts Integration Specialist Job Description

Provides for Arts Integration instruction of students by working with teachers to develop, select, and modify instructional plans and material; and presenting them using arts integrated instructional techniques which meet the needs of all students.

Assists schools to provide an atmosphere and environment conducive to the intellectual, physical, social and emotional development of students. designs co-curricular programs in a variety of school-related settings and activities. Monitors and evaluates student performance.

Develops and implements plans to improve student performance through arts integration, especially in the areas of the core academic subjects. Works with schools to model how to plan and implement high-level arts integrated lessons, assessments, and curriculum mapping across the disciplines.

Conducts professional development in Integrated Arts Teaching and Learning with faculties district-wide throughout the academic year. Monitors and assists in the management of the elements of Arts Integration at elementary and secondary schools.

Job Duties and Responsibilities

These examples are illustrative and not all inclusive:

1. Works with school administrators and teachers to plan and prepare arts integrated lessons, assignments, assessments, and instructional materials.
2. Assists in developing and implementing a county-wide arts integration budget.
3. Assists in aligning district wide staff development opportunities and online resources in Arts Integration within the assigned schools.
4. Assists in recruiting teachers and supporting the Arts Integration efforts in the school/ district.
5. Maintains and updates the Arts Integration sharing tools, such as websites, social media, etc.
6. Assists schools to establish learning objectives consistent with appraisal of student needs, curriculum framework, curriculum mapping, and knowledge of human growth and development.

DOWNLOAD THE JOB DESCRIPTION

HOW DO YOU BECOME AN ARTS INTEGRATION SPECIALIST?

Ok... so now that you know there's a job market out there for this and you are excited by the job description, what are your next steps? There's several possibilities you can pursue. First, you could get a master's in Integrated Arts or STEAM through a program like Lesley University or University of San Diego. You could also pursue a STEAM endorsement from Clemson University if you'd like to add something new beyond a Master's Degree.

If you don't need a master's degree but are looking to get certified as an Arts Integration Specialist, I'd invite you to check out our certification program. It's a 1-year, online program that is unlike anything else out in the market. Participants are grouped into cohorts with others in their region and assigned a dedicated mentor from our team. Everyone also has direct access to me. I also personally engage with everyone in the program to ensure they reach their goals.

Now that it's February, our online Arts Integration Specialist Certification Program is gearing up for enrollment. We open enrollment once per year and only for about 3 weeks. During this time, we receive hundreds of applications from educators all over the world who want to become leaders in this field.

Right now, several of our current students have already received and accepted job offers as arts integration specialists just by being in this program. And we're all so excited to cheer them on.

We only accept 100 applicants each year to provide as much personalized interaction as possible. If this is something you're interested in, be sure to get on our waitlist and apply! This may be just the change you were looking for. If so, it would be our honor to help you reach your goals.

Using Illustration to Teach Academic Vocabulary

By Amanda Koonlaba | February 2018

They Need More, and We Know It

I've been working with seven students who are learning English as a second language. Every afternoon, I use a district-adopted program called Language Power with them. This program is quasi-scripted, but does include some great non-fiction books. The goal for working with these students is to build their academic vocabulary.

Students who are learning English as a second language tend to pick up conversational English naturally through interaction. It is not as easy to acquire academic vocabulary. Therefore, we must explicitly teach it.

As I've been working with these students, I've noticed that just plowing through the texts and worksheets hasn't been enough. Luckily, following the script hasn't been required. The students have a real thirst for a creative connection. So, I've been able to integrate some art into this program.

Don't Have to Just Take My Word For It

Recently, I had a conversation with my principal about using the arts in the regular classroom. Sharing about when she was a teacher integrating the arts, she told me how engaged her students would be when they were able to create something before writing about it. She explained, "If I just gave them a writing assignment, it would take them forever to get five sentences on the paper. There'd be no voice in their writing. When I had them engaged in a creative process connected to an art form before they had to write, their writing would be incredible. They'd write something you'd actually want to read."

I write all of this to solidify the concept that our students need more than worksheets. Worksheets have a place, and I often use them in connection with artwork. By themselves, though, worksheets aren't enough. Students need more, and we know it. We know they need to engage in creative, problem-solving processes. All students need this. However, as we strive to explicitly teach academic vocabulary to our English Language Learners, we have to be intentional about making sure they get it.

Draw What They Know

Teachers can't just say their students will draw a picture and call that arts integration. There needs to be a problem-solving element to it. Here are some tips on having students draw when learning academic vocabulary that will make it challenging and meaningful in an arts-integrated way:

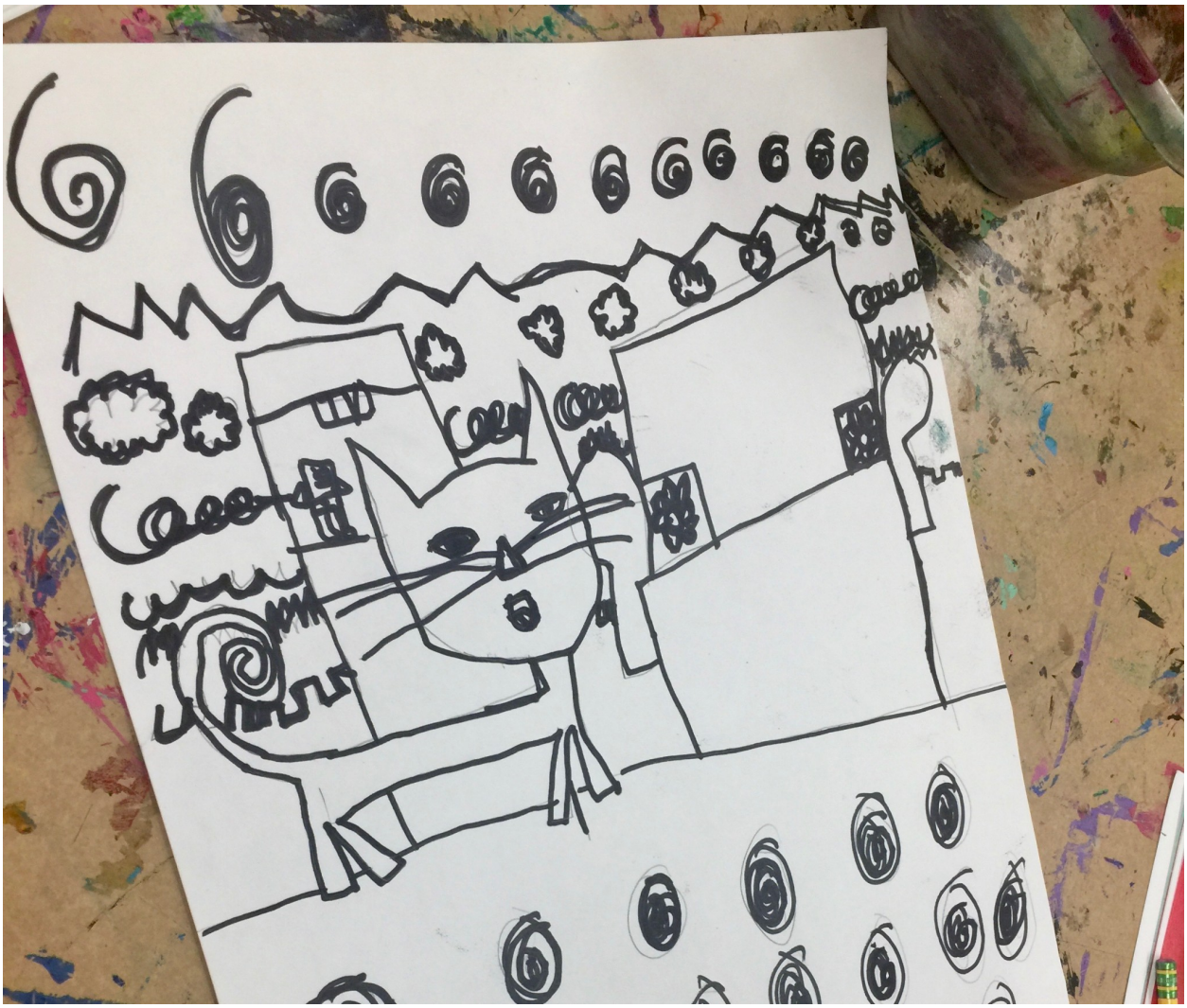
- Landscapes or Scenes- If the student is to illustrate a word or concept that requires them to draw an entire scene, have them focus on space as an element of art. Things that are close to the viewer will be larger. Things that are far away from the viewer will be smaller. They will probably need to include a horizon line. For instance, if the student is trying to show the concept of a grassland as a biome, they would need a horizon line and

plants that would be close to the viewer. There might be mountains (very small) in the background.

- Nouns- Students will often need to illustrate nouns. Have them focus on proportion. For instance, if the student needs to illustrate the concept of a graph as a text feature, they'll need to make sure the data on the graph is shown in a proportional way. If it is a bar graph, the bar representing ten cannot be the same size as the bar representing three, and so on. Other nouns, like those of an organ system require proportion as well. If the student is trying to show the relationship between the brain and spinal cord, they need to consider the size relationship as they draw.

- Verbs- If the concept a student needs to visually represent is a verb, have them think about emphasis or repetition as they draw. Let's say a student is illustrating the term "analyze." They might draw a person with a magnifying glass. They might draw a dark, heavy line around the circle of the magnifying glass to emphasize it. This would help one understand the magnifying glass is important to the message of the image.

- Abstract Concepts- Abstract concepts can be illustrated abstractly. The student might choose to illustrate the concept of democracy with a large circle containing many smaller circles. It might not be immediately obvious how that relates to democracy. However, if the student can tell you that the large circle represents the government and the smaller circles represent the people, they've done a great job with this illustration. So, have them use abstract drawing to illustrate abstract concepts.



This illustration shows a kitchen. This was drawn by a first grader who was learning vocabulary related to familiar places. Notice the horizon line. The cat is closer to the viewer and is larger. The kitchen equipment is bit smaller because it is farther away. The wall behind the kitchen equipment has a pattern on it and appears even farther away.

The Benefits

These strategies really benefit all students, but work particularly well with students learning English as a second language. A simple internet search of how to teach academic vocabulary would turn up a plethora of information about the benefits of using images. By adding the arts pieces described above, you can get the students more engaged. This will make it more meaningful and

memorable. Plus, it will give them an outlet for creativity. That's just good teaching.

Remember

Remember that it is powerful for students to display their learning in the hallways. You can easily display these illustrations with photos of the students working and explanations of the process. The hallway displays can be used as a teaching tool as well. Check out this article that I wrote for how to accomplish this for the benefit of your students.

Finally, here's an article called *Hear It, Speak It, Notate It, Spell It* that uses music to work on some language skills. This would combine well with the strategies written here.

Ekphrasis: STEAM Inspired by Art

By Tom Collins, Guest Author | February 2018

Ekphrastic work is art that is inspired by another piece of art. I was first introduced to this concept when discussing project based learning in second language acquisition with a colleague. They told me of their work with Spanish poetry, for which they found inspiration in Goya's *Third of May*. They had used the poem to assess their student's understanding of descriptive Spanish language. In the task set the students examined the vocabulary used. Then, as an assessment of their language understanding, they drew the image that the writing conjured up in their minds. The original piece was then revealed and the similarities between the student's interpretations and Goya's work were striking.

Art Inspired by Art

This conversation brought to mind a time when I first taught through an ekphrastic model during my first year teaching elementary science in Chicago. Our wonderful art teacher, Justine Domine, presented a project to me and my colleagues. We were to diverge from the standard curriculum for a few days. During this time, a single piece of art would be used as a stimulus for all our work.

Art classes that had taken place that half of the semester had been based on The Herring Net (by Winslow Homer). We teachers had the opportunity to explore the piece with the pupils in our classes for two days.

The Herring Net, 1885 by Winslow Homer. Courtesy of **www.winslowhomer.org**

My 4th graders were learning about states of matter at the time and we had just talked about the properties of gas: no fixed shape, energetically spreads out to completely fill a space, and can be compressed. We used the herring trapped in the net in Winslow's work as a stimulus. Our conversation went from the adaptations for life in the water to how fish were able to maintain their buoyancy. It brought to mind the Cartesian Diver model and how this shows buoyancy through gas compression. This is when you trap a bubble of air in a piece of straw and place it in a bottle of water. Then, through squeezing the sealed bottle to exert pressure on the gas in the straw, the 'diver' will ascend and descend in the water column as the gas' density changes.

Integration Inspired by Art

This project enabled the pupils to demonstrate their knowledge of the properties of the gaseous state **(science)**. They were able to construct a model to demonstrate their understanding, selecting their materials and components carefully **(Design and Technology)**. And all the while, they were learning about great artists, architects, and designers in history **(Art)**. The art integration in this case was a school-wide approach, interpreting the work of Winslow Homer.

Taking one painting inspired literacy, math, dance, music, science, foreign language, drama, humanities, and social studies, and the school was abuzz for two days with children across different grades talking about the way they were approaching the piece of art. All it took was a bit of creativity in how a piece can link to learning goals. That, and the courage to let the children take the helm! Suffice it to say, Mrs. Domine has made this project an annual one. As a result, the children eagerly look forward to learning about a new work of art each year.

So I challenge you, take a walk to your local gallery. Choose a piece from the permanent collection so the children can visit the piece. Bring a print back to school and use it for a couple of hours/days/weeks of ekphrasis.

Editor's Note: This article was written by guest writer, Tom Collins. Tom has been a science teacher at the British International School of Chicago, Lincoln Park since 2014. A former kindergarten class teacher in the UK, outdoor and environmental educator, and high school English teacher in Japan, Tom now leads a young STEAM department committed to providing students with the opportunity to take ownership of their learning through the integration of Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math.

Teaching with Creativity: Take Two!

By Laura Wixon | February 2018

Season Two of Teaching with Creativity

Your favorite arts integration vodcast returns for another information packed season! Education Closet has brought *Teaching with Creativity* (TwC) back for a second season of nine episodes that will air on Wednesdays from February 7th through May 16th at educationcloset.com. You can also opt to have episodes sent right to your inbox by subscribing on iTunes or YouTube.

What is TwC about?

Teaching with Creativity is the EducationCloset vodcast! We offer educators free tips and techniques for utilizing arts integration and STEAM methods in the classroom in an audio-visual media. We strive to interview teaching artists and prominent figures in the arts world who can offer unique strategies and perspective into the world of Arts Integration as well as demonstrating hands-on lesson plans that teachers can use in their classroom. Teachers can choose to listen to the audio, or watch the video, as we offer the content in dual format. Each episode comes with a full transcript available for download.

Who is in the cast of TwC?

In addition to myself, *Teaching with Creativity* features two very talented and experienced educators who serve as hosts to guide us through Season 2. Amanda Koonlaba has dedicated over twelve years to teaching both visual and general education. She was named Elementary Art Teacher of the Year for the state of Mississippi in 2016. She also received the Arts Integration Service Award from the Mississippi Whole Schools Initiative in 2015.

Mary Dagani is a STEAM TOSA, Project Lead the Way Launch Lead Teacher, and an Orff Schulwerk music specialist. Mary has spent her unique arts integration background to her 28 years of teaching in the classrooms of sunny California. You may recognize us from our over 40 Facebook live videos produced by EducationCloset, offering free ideas and inspiration to teachers! We are so excited to be utilizing the vodcast music.

Thoughts and ideas regarding what you would enjoy seeing featured on upcoming episodes of *Teaching with Creativity*? **Let us know**, we value your input!