

# *What Are the Arts, Their Standards, and Their Impact on Student Learning?*

In my classroom, the arts bring voice and life to students' thoughts, emotions, and connections to their learning. This learning engages them in a multi-sensory way. It is a safe haven for expression.

—Carlie Ward, grade 5 teacher



## FOCUS ACTIVITY

Directions: Please fill out before and after reading this chapter.

Before Reading Chapter A = agree D = disagree	Statements	After Reading Chapter A = agree D = disagree
	The arts (Music, Visual Art, Theatre, and Dance) are core content areas.	
	The arts should be taught by arts specialists (music, dance, theatre, visual art) only.	
	There are arts specialists at (my or local) K–8 school site(s).	
	Classroom teachers should use arts activity within other content area instruction.	
	Students can increase understanding through arts activity connected to other content area instructional goals.	
	I am comfortable with the idea of using the arts in connection with other learning across my classroom curriculum.	

Welcome. By answering the Focus Activity questions, you have already begun an interesting and constructive inquiry. One goal of this book is to guide you through an individual process to purposefully plan, teach (at school sites or lab groups within methods classes), and evaluate customized standards-based arts activity within K–8 content area instruction.

This first chapter offers information about the arts, their content standards, and the impact of arts activity on student learning and achievement. After this discussion, you will read two stories of real K–8 classroom teachers engaged in purposeful planning, teaching, and evaluative processes. These two vignettes describe how and why arts activities (music, visual art, theatre, and dance) were utilized to increase student interest, participation, and memory of specific learning tied to other content area instructional goals.

## *What Are the Arts?*

### **Arts as Core Content**

The arts are, by law, core content containing *four* distinct disciplines (music, visual arts, theatre, and dance) and are therefore worthy of study unto themselves.

National education goals were announced in 1990 and “with the passage of the *Goals 2000: Educate America Act*, the national goals are written into law naming the arts as a *core academic subject*—as important to education as English, mathematics, history, civics and government, geography, science and foreign language” (Consortium of National Arts Education Associations, 1994, p. 131). As such, *all* students by law deserve and should have access to specialized instruction (an education in the arts) taught by specialists in all four arts disciplines.

## *Who Will Teach the Arts?*

As you know, the Arts (composite word for all four arts disciplines) may not be afforded the same consideration for instruction (teacher preparation courses, district funding, school scheduling, specialized arts teachers, facilities, materials, curriculum development, professional growth, etc.) as the other core content areas of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. (Physical education may also be marginalized.)

Core curriculum in all four arts is frequently not available or is delivered in a marginalized, nonsupported manner to school children (Leonhard, 1991; Stake, Bresler & Mabry, 1991; McDonald & Fisher, 2002, 2006). *Specialized* instruction for *all* students in each of the four arts (taught by teachers with specialized degrees and credentials in those specific arts) may not be available at most K–8 school sites. In other words, although the four arts are core academic content, the delivery of a specialized education in all four arts for every child is at best, challenged, and many times, totally unavailable.

The reality at many schools is that specialized education in the arts is limited to music or music and visual art. Furthermore, *many K–8 schools do not have arts specialists*, and the responsibility to include core content in the arts may rest with classroom teachers, falling under the nonspecialist instructional umbrella of arts within general education. With these situations in mind, how can the arts be made available to as many students as possible within general education contexts (nonspecialized arts instruction) taught by classroom teachers?

### **Classroom Teachers: General Education With and Through the Arts**

In order to deliver arts instruction to as many students as possible, the inclusion of arts activities within general curriculum instruction is becoming an important focus for future and practicing classroom teachers. Classroom teachers can and do successfully infuse customized arts activities within and tied to other content

area standards-based instructional goals (e.g., purposeful musical activity within a standards-based, thematic social studies/history lesson; art illustration tied to specific language arts (literacy) lesson goals; theatre (reader's theatre) activity designed around factual "big ideas" in a lesson about the night sky; etc.) (McDonald & Fisher, 2006).

Furthermore, many educators also believe that young students need *both* specialized arts education and frequent learning opportunities that regularly *infuse* arts activity into everyday general classroom instruction as a powerful way of teaching, learning, doing, knowing, and connecting learning across the curriculum (Barrett, 2001; Barrett, McCoy & Veblen 1997; Barry, 1998; Cornett, 2006; Gelineau, 2003; Hancock, 2007; McDonald, 2008; McDonald & Fisher, 2002, 2006; Snyder, 2001). In the best of these learning contexts, standards-based arts activity is successfully paired with other content and student learning needs across the curriculum thereby increasing student understanding of the learning at hand. This takes careful, *purposeful planning*.

## *What Is Purposeful Planning With and Through the Arts?*

Purposeful planning with and through the arts is a reoccurring theme and an ongoing, individualized self-study process you will follow throughout this book. This process includes your review of what young students already know and need to know within grade-level, standards-based, content area instruction. Purposeful planning requires the teacher to define and focus on the "big ideas" that need to be taught, learned, and remembered by students.

Appropriate standards-based arts activities are then developed and infused into other content instruction with the purpose of increased student participation, learning, understanding, and memory of the learning at hand. Importantly, this learning includes increasing student and classroom teacher's knowledge of the arts themselves.

Appropriate, useable, and doable arts-infusion materials and resources must be located, created, or developed. Opportunities are designed by the teacher for young students to do, make, create, perform, display, analyze, review, and reflect upon their arts-infused lessons and learning across the curriculum. Throughout these processes, teachers and students are encouraged to reflect upon their experiences and tie them to content learning at hand.

Arts-infused lessons are easily assessed and evaluated by the teacher and young students to determine if content learning goals were accomplished (achieve-

ment) and how and why (and to what extent) the arts experiences impacted that teaching and learning. Finally, in purposeful planning, classroom teachers develop ways of constructing, using, evaluating, and sharing with peers a customized file of arts-infused lessons across their curriculum.

In order to successfully infuse and connect arts activities within other content area instruction, future and practicing classroom teachers must first become familiar with the arts content standards as they begin their purposeful planning processes. It's time to review those standards now.

## *Standards in the Arts*

The national standards in the Arts (on which all state and district arts standards are based) were written for arts specialists and intended for use within specialized arts instruction. Yet, it is helpful to read and review these standards (see Table 1.1, "Arts Content Standards," p. 6) as you begin to make translations and applications toward your own future or current classroom teaching. Information offered in the Focus Activity may also help you begin to consider what elements, concepts, and activities within each of the four arts content standards are most *appropriate* for your own use, understanding, abilities, background, and current comfort level in the arts.

### **Suggestions for Standards-Based Arts Activities**

As you make your way through this book's many K–8 classroom vignettes and your own upcoming planning processes, the information in Table 1.2, "Activities Students Can Do in the Four Arts," (p. 7) may be of help to you. This list was created by classroom teachers and offers some initial suggestions for standards-based, hands-on concepts and activities in each of the four arts. In it you may find ideas and activities that may be appropriate for your future or current teaching in the K–8 general classroom.

#### Understanding the Art Standards

### 1.1

As you read the following preliminary information based on the national standards in all four arts, note that a more comprehensive look at specific, discipline-based, arts content standards is offered in Chapter 7 of this book. As you read this book chapter by chapter, you will naturally become more familiar with arts standards and real-life classroom applications through teacher vignettes and accompanying "Lesson Tracker" analyses offered throughout. You will also use your own state's arts content standards as you complete the sequenced planning phases within self-study activities at the end of several chapters of this book.

#### Research your own state and district arts content standards.

### 1.2

Go online to your state's Department of Education and/or your local school district(s) and look for content or instructional standards in the Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA). There you may find standards listed by individual arts discipline (music, visual art, theatre, and dance) and grouped by sequenced grade-level expectations. Locate the grade level you teach or wish to teach. Keep these standards handy as you read this book and complete the sequenced self-study exercises at the end of several chapters.

**Table 1.1** Arts Content Standards**National Music Content Standards include:**

1. Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music
2. Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music
3. Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments
4. Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines
5. Reading and notating music
6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music
7. Evaluating music and music performances
8. Understanding relationships among music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts
9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture

**National Visual Arts Content Standards include:**

1. Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes
2. Using knowledge of structures and functions
3. Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas
4. Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures
5. Reflecting on and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others
6. Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines

**National Theatre Content Standards include:**

1. Script writing by planning and recording improvisations based on personal experience and heritage, imagination, literature, and history
2. Acting by assuming roles and interacting in improvisations
3. Designing by visualizing and arranging environments for classroom dramatizations
4. Directing by planning classroom dramatizations
5. Researching by finding information to support classroom dramatizations
6. Comparing and connecting art forms by describing theatre, dramatic media (such as film, television, and electronic media), and other forms
7. Analyzing and explaining personal preferences and constructing meanings from classroom dramatizations and from theatre, film, television, and electronic media productions
8. Understanding context by recognizing the role of theatre, film, television, and electronic media in daily life

**National Dance Content Standards include:**

1. Identifying and demonstrating movement elements and skills in performing dance
2. Understanding choreographic principles, processes, and structures
3. Understanding dance as a way to create and communicate meaning
4. Applying and demonstrating critical and creative thinking skills in dance
5. Demonstrating and understanding dance in various cultures and historical periods
6. Making connections between dance and healthful living
7. Making connections between dance and other disciplines

Source: MENC, 1994, pp. 23–72.

**Table 1.2** Activities Students Can Do in the Four Arts

Theatre	Art	Music	Dance
reader's theatre	found art	songs	movement response
role playing	painting	instruments	pantomime
pantomime	sketching	chants/raps	movement to poetry
puppets	crayons	listening to music	movement to ideas
masks and characters	papier mâché	poetry and music	keeping a beat
script writing	clay/sculpture	rhythmic response	movement to words
finger plays	scratch art	found instruments	games
action to words	photography	composing	moving with props
scenery design	textiles	history of music	nonverbal communication
lighting design	artist study	compose song lyrics	body percussion
sets and costumes	torn paper art	music of the world	dances of the world
tableaux of scenes	mosaics	symbols of music	dances of different eras
creative drama games	pastels/chalk	reading music	popular dances
	charcoal	study composers	created dances
	water color	styles of music	gestures—no words
	pottery	science of sound	movement tableaux
	crafts	environmental sounds	
	jewelry	sound effects	
	tie-dye	music and mood	
	print making	musical theatre	
	stamp art	performing music	
	vegetable stamps	write about music	
	murals	write about musicians	
	stencil art		
	fashion		
	history of art		
	art of many cultures		
	computer art		
	write about art		
	study artist styles, lives		
	science of color		
	dioramas		

Note: This list was created by a group of 35 K–8 classroom teachers.

Source: From *Teaching Literacy Through the Arts* (p. 3), by N. L. McDonald and D. Fisher, 2006, New York: Guilford. Reprinted with permission.

It might be pertinent now to consider some more information concerning *why* teachers should teach with the arts within the general curriculum and the effect of those learning experiences on student achievement.

### 1.3 How the Arts Impact Student Learning

Recent academic research about the effect of the arts on learning has been compiled into a pivotal study, *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development* (Arts Education Partnership, 2002). (Note: For a complete listing of specific research studies, refer to the complete version of “Critical Links” available online at [www.aeparts.org/cllinkspage.htm](http://www.aeparts.org/cllinkspage.htm). Reference the specific art to locate supporting studies connected to learning in other content areas.)

## *Research on the Impact of Arts Activity on Student Learning*

### **Why Use the Arts Within Content Area Instruction?**

The arts are important, but why should you take the time to develop yet another instructional consideration to incorporate across your future or present classroom curriculum? The answers are many. The arts make all kinds of learning exciting. The more involved students are, the more they learn and remember. The “making and doing” in arts activities can also

uniquely stimulate the senses and provide direct, active pathways to perceptions about the world around us. The arts provide a wealth of experience related to forms of human expression found in language as well as various forms of nonverbal and sensory communications such as gesture, emotions, feelings, sound, symbols, movement, shapes, colors, patterns, and designs (Gardner, 1984, 1993a, 1993b). Dance, theatre, music, and the visual arts often communicate within nonverbal avenues of expression and use symbols that are simply not translatable to human language. By doing so, they provide important ways of knowing as essential forms of human discourse and inquiry (Eisner, 1980). Human language alone may not provide the sufficient means to communicate many life experiences, emotions and meanings (California Department of Education, 1996). (within McDonald & Fisher, 2002, p. 4)

### **How Does Participation in Arts Activities Impact Student Achievement and Learning?**

Figure 1.1, “How Students Benefit From Activity in the Arts” provides some further, in-depth reasons to include the arts within and across the K–8 general curriculum.

### **Learning Through the Arts: Student Academic and Social Development**

According to a summary essay by James S. Catterall, “The Arts and the Transfer of Learning” (located within the larger comprehensive compilation of recent research studies, *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development*, by Arts Education Partnership, 2002), student learning is positively impacted by arts activities in the following areas:



**FIGURE 1.1** How Students Benefit From Activity in the Arts

- **Students learn through activities in the arts** by utilizing systems that include students' "integrated sensory, attentional, cognitive, emotional, and motor capacities and are, in fact, the driving forces behind all other learning" (Jensen, 2005, p. 2).
- **Students can benefit from activity in the arts**, "including students who are marginalized or underserved, at-risk, and those children with special needs. Students who receive learning opportunities with the arts benefit from better communication skills, friendships with others, and fewer instances of violence, racism, and other troubling and nonproductive behaviors (Fiske, 1999)."
- **Engagement in arts activities can increase important literacy skills** because students read, write, speak, and listen as they participate in the arts, and the arts themselves encourage new types of literacy to emerge (Armstrong, 2003).
- **K–8 students learn through doing, creating, making art, and participating in arts-related activities, performances, and displays.** Engagement and attention are key to learning (Marzano, 2004). "Hands-on and minds-on activities with and through the arts allow students explore content in new ways" (McDonald & Fisher, 2006, p. 6).
- **Students need to connect and exercise what they have learned throughout their school day.** Students learn within and across many contexts. Rather than thinking of math, science, social studies, or literacy/language arts as "something we've got to do every morning or afternoon," we want students to use what they have learned *throughout* the school day. The arts can help provide those contexts for connections. For instance, if you begin to use arts activity to increase student's literacy skills, you can also naturally design opportunities for students to connect this learning to social studies, math, and science (Jacobs, 1989, 1997).
- **When students participate in arts activities, their learning can provide them with needed cultural relevance** "through connections to various cultures, times, and their unique contribution of visual art, music, theatre, and dance" (McDonald & Fisher, 2006, p. 6).
- **Through the arts, students can enhance their creativity and increase satisfaction and involvement with the learning at hand.** "Classroom teachers consistently report that they and their students are happiest and most productive when engaged in creative ways of learning the arts naturally provide. Many teachers also report that these are the most meaningful and memorable learning experiences for their students" (McDonald & Fisher, 2006, p. 6).

*Learning through Musical Activity:* cognitive development, spatial reasoning, quality and prolixity of writing, mathematics proficiency, self-efficacy and concept, reading and SAT verbal scores, English skills of ESL learners

*Learning through Visual Art Activity:* content and organization of writing, reading skills and interpretation of text, reasoning about scientific images, reading readiness

*Learning through Theatre/Drama:* story comprehension (oral and written), character identification and motivation, amount of peer interaction, writing

proficiency and prolixity, conflict resolution skills, focused thinking, understanding of social relationships and emotions, engagement and involvement, skills applied to new texts, problem-solving, self-concept

*Learning through Dance/Movement:* self-confidence, persistence, reading skills, nonverbal reasoning, expressive skills, creativity in poetry, social tolerance, group and individual social development

*Learning through Integrated Arts Activities within Content Area Instruction* positively impacts student learning and instructional environments in the following areas: leadership, reading, verbal, and mathematics skills; creative thinking; achievement; motivation; cognitive engagement; instructional practice in the school; professional culture of the school; school climate; and community engagement and identity

*Learning through Arts-Rich School Environments* is linked to the following: creativity, engagement/attendance, range of personal and social developments, and higher order thinking skills

## *Arts Infusion in Action: Classroom Vignettes*

You may now wish to consider direct applications to the realities of K–8 classroom instruction. As you read the following classroom teacher vignette, keep in mind two important questions:

1. How do these two classroom teachers teach with the arts in a nonspecialized manner (arts within the general curriculum)?
2. Specifically, how do these teachers understand, address, communicate, and assess the arts and other content area standards; effectively plan for what students need to know; seek and find materials; use best practices in teaching; and evaluate their lessons connected to specific standards-based learning goals across content areas?

### • IN THE CLASSROOM

#### **Integrating Language Arts/Literacy with the Arts: “Orchid Paragraphs”** Content Areas: Literacy/Language Arts, Arts (Visual Art, Music)

My students are all second language learners and have trouble speaking and writing in English. I decided to give them a language experience lesson so they would all have something to write about, little did I know to what level the students would take this.

—Adrienne Laws, second-grade teacher

**Observation:** Mrs. Laws guides me over to the class bulletin board display area. There, I see her inner-city second-grade students' beautiful still-life illustrations (crayon, pastel, and charcoal renditions) of a flower (orchid) paired with samples of their descriptive paragraphs. I asked Mrs. Laws about the lesson.

During this "Orchid Paragraphs" set of lessons, Mrs. Laws invited an artist relative to teach her children how to view a flower still life, create original art, and write about what they saw and illustrated. Later the same week, Mrs. Laws helped students to read books about painters and their craft and guided them to websites and library books about painting and painters as well as other activities based on this active arts experience and connected to goals within her writing instruction.

Mrs. Laws exclaimed, "Can you believe the writing that came out of this experience?" A student added, "Look over there, that one's mine!"

## 1.4 Content Standards Reminder

Remember that the language of the all content area instructional standards varies greatly from state to state, district to district. In order to meet this challenge, every effort has been made to use generalized terms to describe various content area standards within the lessons in this book. Although the standards used here are based on the California Content Standards used by our teacher contributors, it is hoped that translations and applications to your own state content standards can be easily made.



Mrs. Laws's "Orchid Paragraphs" lesson: Sample of student artwork and writing by second-grade student Dinh Chau.

Photo by Adrienne Laws.

"Mr. Marcell taught us how to make art with a real model. He showed us orchid flowers and how to draw them. First, we drew a box, then one long stem. Next, we drew some leaves and dirt in the box. Last, we drew the flower. Mr. Marcell also taught us about blending colors, 3-dimensional objects, even shading also he taught us about pollen. We learned about an artist's signature and about an artist's perspective. He told us that the stem holds the flower and can also provide depth in our live model. Mr. Marcell is Mrs. Laws' father."  
By Dinh Chau

One student sample read:

Mr. Marcell taught us how to make art with a real live model. He showed us orchid flowers and how to draw them. First we drew a box, and then one long stem. Next we drew some leaves and dirt in the box. Last we drew the flower. Mr. Marcell also taught us about blending colors, three-dimensional objects, even shading, also he taught us about pollen. We learned about an artist's signature and an artist perspective. He told us that the stem holds the flower and can provide depth in our live model. Mr. Marcell is Mrs. Laws's father. By Dinh Chau

## • l e s s o n t r a c k e r

### Mrs. Laws's "Orchid Paragraphs"

- **Big Ideas:** Students need to develop and use new vocabulary in writing (brief narratives) and speaking based on direct experience in visual arts. Visual arts activity can generate new vocabulary and interest in writing and speaking about that hands-on activity.

- **Content Standards Addressed**

**Grade 2: Language Arts (Writing)**—Write brief narratives based on experience, report on a topic with supportive facts and details, listen and speak (oral communication), recount experiences in a logical sequence.

**Grade 2: Visual Arts**—Develop perceptual skills and Visual Arts vocabulary (balance, mood, warm and cool colors); analyze art elements and principles of design (line, color, shape/form, texture, and space); create original work of art (drawing, pastels); use this vocabulary in writing and speaking about an artist's demonstration and one's own individual work of art.

### Teacher Debriefing: Mrs. Laws's Grade 2 Art and Literacy Lesson

#### Big ideas tied to content standards

**Q:** How and why did you (Mrs. Laws) choose your integrated instructional theme?

**Mrs. Laws:** My students are all second language learners and have trouble speaking and writing in English. I decided to give them a language experience lesson so they would all have something to write about. Little did I know to what level the students would take this. They wanted to check out art books and books about artists from the library. They wanted to use every new vocabulary word they learned in their writing.

**Q:** Why did you choose to integrate visual art activity into your classroom literacy instruction?

**Mrs. Laws:** I have found that art and music are a universal language for children and can lead to richer learning experiences. Many of my students are tactile and visual learners so I anticipated this was something they would enjoy.

**Q:** What were your standards-based, “big ideas” literacy goals for this lesson unit?

**Mrs. Laws:** I wanted my second graders to write brief narratives based on *direct* experiences. First of all, they needed a *real* reason to write, based on what they learned and enjoyed. They needed to think about what they did in the art activity and organize ideas for their descriptive paragraphs. I wanted my students to improve their ability to sequence their descriptions and incorporate detail and new vocabulary into their writing. I wanted to connect to visual art to have hands-on experiences with concepts and new vocabulary of space, shading, warm and cool colors, lines, artist perspective, etc., and ask students to use that new vocabulary about visual art in their writing. They also needed to discuss and edit their writing with others and make revisions for their final paragraphs.

## • l e s s o n t r a c k e r

### Mrs. Laws’s “Orchid Paragraphs”

#### Considerations/Steps in Planning

- English language learners are tactile learners and need a reason to write based on real experiences.
- ELLs (English language learners from several language bases in this classroom) need a visual arts experience (e.g., a visiting artist and hands-on project) to develop perception and active use of art vocabulary in speaking and writing. *Visual Art teaching/learning accommodations were made (observation/direct drawing) to help overcome language barriers (student comprehension/fluency) during verbal instruction and demonstrations.*
- Students need to think about what they did in the art experience and sequence descriptions and new vocabulary into writing.
- Students need to discuss, edit, and revise their own writing with others.

#### Teaching strategies/sequences

**Q:** What happened during the lesson?

**Mrs. Laws:** The students were heterogeneously grouped with five students in a group, and they were rotated into my father’s group every 35 minutes. He did a quick sketch to demonstrate technique introducing new vocabulary as he drew. The students were so excited and were impressed by his talents that you could only hear “ooh’s” and “aah’s” as he demonstrated. Then he distributed materials and took students step by step, sketching out their still life using pencils and using the new art terms. [Mrs. Laws and her guest used accommodations in visual art teaching techniques to help her English language and special learners in oral comprehension and vocabulary during initial modeling and instruction. These students were from several native language bases

other than English. According to Mrs. Laws, “only one student knew what an orchid was.” She determined her students needed to follow the artist in a nonverbal way and then apply English language terminology during and after their hands-on experiences (observation/drawing practice). They then went on to create their own unique interpretations of an orchid still life.]

Then he showed them how to add color, shading, and draw a table line so their artwork wasn’t floating in the air. Then they verbally recounted their steps and what they learned before the next group rotated in.

The following day we made a web with the new art terms we learned and in pairs orally recounted what we learned. Then each student was to write a paragraph about his/her experience, have two friends edit his/her work before showing it to me. We conferred during writer’s workshop and then the students did a good copy, which was put up under their art work, and a copy of their work was sent to my father, who in return wrote the class about their writing.

## • l e s s o n t r a c k e r

### **Mrs. Laws’s “Orchid Paragraphs”**

#### **Teaching Strategies/Sequences**

- Invite artist to classroom.
- Rotate small groups of students to work hands on with the visiting artist.
- Artist demonstrates drawing technique (first with pencil) of an orchid still life using new visual arts vocabulary throughout. Artist demonstrates how to add color, perspective, shading, balance, etc.
- Students create own drawings based on step-by-step guidance of the artist (ELL and special learner accommodation).
- Students orally recount what they learned (art vocabulary, techniques, and steps).
- The next day, create a web of new art vocabulary. Students orally recount what they learned with a partner.
- Students write their own paragraph then discuss, edit, and revise with partner.
- Students confer with teacher and create final draft.
- Display paragraphs with art work. Pair with music for an Open House classroom presentation.
- Visiting artist responds in writing to student’s work. Teacher reads his letter to the class.

#### **Assessments/evaluations**

**Q:** How did you evaluate/assess student learning?

**Mrs. Laws:** I think our assessments of what the students learned were imbedded and infused within the lesson activities. For instance, after the artist demonstration, my stu-

dents applied that knowledge directly within their individual drawings and paragraphs. Also, they orally recounted their knowledge of new art vocabulary. In other words, they showed what they learned in an active manner through discussion, partner work, drawing, writing, and speaking. Finally, their work was proudly displayed in the classroom, and then we made a PowerPoint slide show of their artwork and their writing. We entitled the slide show “An Art Lesson,” and we set it to music and played it for Open House.

## • l e s s o n t r a c k e r

### Mrs. Laws’s “Orchid Paragraphs”

#### Assessments/Evaluations

- *Students orally recount* steps of drawing techniques using new art terms.
- *Class discussion and partner work* is based on new vocabulary web
- *Authentic assessments*—Students actively apply knowledge of new vocabulary through producing and displaying individual art work paired with narrative paragraphs

**Q:** Did this integrated lesson serve to increase intended student learning? Why or why not? How?

**Mrs. Laws:** This lesson went beyond my expectations. The writing that was produced was incredible even from my special needs students. They all were able to use a great deal of new English language vocabulary (visual art elements and concepts) within their paragraphs. Also, they were willing to write more because of all the discussion and hands-on reference. Because of this, their writing was more interesting. This class had trouble in the past with staying on topic and writing cohesive sentences that flowed from one thought to the next. I anticipated several rough drafts but that wasn’t the case. They all had so much to say, and they were bringing in other staff members to check out their work (PE teacher, librarian, administration, and just about anyone they met).

## • BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

### Locate Resources Beyond Your Classroom

Visit your local museums, arts venues and arts educational programs, historical societies, community landmarks, and cultural centers to see what resources are available to students, families, and teachers to extend learning through the arts. Ask about information of interest to K–8 students and their families as well as artist-in-residence programs, field trips, and visitors to school sites. One example of an arts education provider is “Young Audiences.” See [www.youngaudiences.com](http://www.youngaudiences.com) for a directory of information near you.

**Reflections on Mrs. Laws’s lesson.** In this vignette, Mrs. Laws chose to utilize an important “outside the classroom” resource: someone she knew (her father) acting as a guest teacher to demonstrate visual art techniques. However, the planning and sequencing of this lesson was completely *her own* vision. She learned that her idea was a good one and that her plan for hands-on arts-activity infusion served to increase writing and oral language skills in her classroom. She could see the results, as could students, parents, administrators, and others. This was a memorable learning experience for all.

Mrs. Law’s classroom example may also provoke other questions, perhaps related to darker truths we may not want to verbalize. For example, some of you may be wondering how, in light of the considerable and sometimes overwhelming

### 1.5 Resource Suggestion

For age-appropriate, classroom-teacher-friendly, standards-based, integrated arts activities (including all four arts) tied to music and language/literacy development and across the grades 1–6 curriculum, see teacher text and CD series (with extra materials and visual arts transparencies for classroom use) in *Making Music with the Arts and Across the Curriculum (Grades 1–6)* by Pearson Education, Silver Burdett Music (2008).

demands of standardized testing, Mrs. Laws actually had the time (and permission) to plan and implement an integrated arts activity into her regular classroom literacy instruction? Others may be wondering if what Mrs. Laws accomplished must require the unique talents of a visiting artist guest or particularly high-achieving students. Others of you may feel her integrated lesson was interesting but had nothing to do with your curriculum challenges or future challenges in X content area(s) of grade X. Some of these concerns can be answered now, and others will be addressed throughout this book.

Mrs. Laws is one of many real-life, practicing inner-city K–8 classroom teachers you will meet and get to know throughout this book. Their schools are

Title I schools with 100 percent of the students qualifying for free lunch programs. (Well over 90 percent of these children are English language learners.) The overwhelming majority of the ideas you will read do *not* require an arts specialist or specialized arts background to teach, and all were created and taught by the teachers themselves.

**Considerations in Mrs. Laws’s planning and teaching.** Mrs. Laws took the time to think of, plan, teach, display, extend student learning, and reflect upon and evaluate her customized, integrated lesson. She did so because she and others like her have determined (through direct experience) that the arts *enliven* and *enhance* student learning within content area instruction. Research clearly indicates arts activities can and do provide increased avenues for student participation, active involvement, meaning making, and memory of the learning at hand (Cornett, 2006;



Fiske, 1999, Hancock, 2007; Jensen, 2005; McDonald & Fisher, 2002, 2006; Smith, 2001).

Mrs. Laws's lesson did require some *focused thinking, reflection, and comprehensive curriculum planning toward student understanding* (Posner, 1995; Wiggins & McTighe, 2006). All good teaching requires the same. She had to:

- First *identify* her literacy instruction needs or “big picture” teaching goals linked to content standards.
- *Know what her students needed to know* and then be willing to seek “doable” arts activity to successfully pair with those carefully identified needs.
- *Imagine* what she wanted to happen during the lesson (toward her standards-based content goals). In her particular case, Mrs. Laws looked outside her classroom walls for resources, that is, asked what a guest artist could add to her lesson.
- *Be willing to experiment* (and even fail), to learn along with her students during an integrated arts activity. Accommodations for student needs were made during visual art instruction.
- *Utilize that increased learning* to encourage students to *learn more* and *do more* descriptive paragraph writing.
- *Create a formal or informal display piece or opportunity*, a form of performance art (authentic assessment) through a PowerPoint slide show paired with recorded music for audience viewing at a school Open House. Others were able to see what the students did and learned.
- *Acknowledge what she (the teacher) learned* through watching and reflecting on what happened with her students.
- *Use what she learned to improve her future teaching*. Mrs. Laws's literacy content instruction was consequently enhanced and augmented by this reflective practice experience. Pride in the successful results served as a motivation to incorporate more of these kinds of arts-infused activities into her classroom curriculum.

Many of you would like to involve more of your future or current students in arts activities to establish and increase important learning connections throughout their school-day curriculum and experiences. You may feel you also need some time and guidance to think, plan, and teach (or learn to teach) in more creative, engaging, and productive ways.

Through reading Mrs. Laws's classroom example, debriefing, and discussion, you have begun to explore the potential benefits of designing your own arts-infused lesson ideas across the curriculum. That process includes customized standards-

based curriculum planning; experimental teaching through arts infusion, evaluation, and assessment; and self-reflection.

With these important goals in mind, let's consider another arts-infused lesson example from a middle school social studies/U.S. history classroom.

### • IN THE CLASSROOM

**Integrating Social Studies/U.S. History with the Arts: “Let’s Find Out: George Washington and the American Revolutionary War”** Content Areas: Middle School History/Social Science, English Language Arts, Arts (Theatre, Music, Visual Art)

**Big ideas tied to content standards.** Mr. Gonzalez wanted his middle school history/social studies students (grade 8) to know and remember more standards-based facts about George Washington and the American Revolutionary War. First, he asked his class what they already knew about George Washington. He listed their ideas (“He’s important!” “His picture is on the one-dollar bill,” “Washington, D.C., was named after him.”). The students were then asked what they knew about American Revolutionary War (“The British soldiers wore red,” “The Americans won!”).

### • l e s s o n t r a c k e r

#### Mr. Gonzalez’s “Let’s Find Out: George Washington and the American Revolutionary War”

##### Big Ideas

Who was George Washington, and what was the American Revolutionary war? Find out what the students already know and what they want to know about the topic. Formulate questions and research activities based on student input.

##### Content Standards Addressed

- **Grade 8: U.S. History and Geography**—Understand major events preceding the founding of the nation; understand the role of leaders such as George Washington.
- **Grade 8: English Language Arts**—Read and respond to historically or culturally significant works of literature that reflect and enhance their studies of history and social science; deliver oral responses to literature
- **Grade 8: Theatre**—Use theatrical skills to present content or concepts in other subject areas; write and create short dramatizations; perform character-based improvisations, pantomimes, or monologues.
- **Grade 8: Music**—Understand the historical contributions and cultural dimensions of music; identify and explain the influences of various cultures on music in early U.S. history; perform music from diverse genres, cultures, and time periods.

Students were then asked what *they* wanted to learn about each of the categories (Washington and the American Revolutionary War), and their ideas were listed on the board in the form of questions (e.g., Who was in the American Army? Were young people involved? What weapons did they use? etc.) *Mr. Gonzalez used these student questions to formulate what the students needed to know.*

## • l e s s o n t r a c k e r

### Mr. Gonzalez’s “Let’s Find Out: George Washington and the American Revolutionary War” (cont.)

#### Considerations/Steps in Planning

- By asking his students what they already knew about the topic, Mr. Gonzalez found out his students’ knowledge was very limited.
- Mr. Gonzalez designed his integrated lesson based on what the students wanted to learn about the topic. He solicited questions from his students and used those questions as points of inquiry to shape their small-group research project.
- In order to further involve the students in the topic, Mr. Gonzalez found and used biographical texts, reader’s theatre, dramatized scenes from historical and informational texts, visual art, and music (based on the historical period).
- Mr. Gonzalez wanted the students to create and present their small-group research using multiple forms of media.

**Teaching strategies/sequences.** Mr. Gonzalez found a short biography of George Washington and prepared a simple scripted reader’s theatre based on selected parts of the book’s text. On another day, Mr. Gonzalez helped students dramatize short scenes about General George Washington described in the book text and in their history textbook.

The students learned to sing “Yankee Doodle” with a CD recording of the song using song sheets (see Figure 1.2, “Music and Words to ‘Yankee Doodle’” on p. 20). Students learned the meaning of the original song text through participation in a reader’s theatre (see Figure 1.3, “Yankee Doodle Reader’s Theatre” on p. 21). The school music teacher lent Mr. Gonzalez a state-adopted K–8 music textbook series (Pearson Education/Silver Burdett’s “Making Music, K–8,” 2005) that provides a CD recording of the song paired with a historical painting of two young men playing the fife (small wooden flute) and drum as they march with the American soldiers.

### 1.6 More about American Patriotic Songs

For more information, background, and history of famous U.S. patriotic songs, see the following sources:

Cohn, A. (Ed.). (1993). *From sea to shining sea: A treasury of American folklore and folk songs*. New York: Scholastic

Collins, A. (2003). *Songs sung red, white, and blue: The stories behind America’s best-loved patriotic songs*. New York: HarperCollins.

**FIGURE 1.2** Music and words to “Yankee Doodle” from Grade 2, Pupil’s Edition (p. 405) of *Making Music K–8* by Pearson Education/Silver Burdett Music. © 2005. Used by permission.

★ ★ Yankee Doodle ★ ★

Words by Dr. Richard Shuckburgh Traditional

VERSE

1. Faith'r and I went down to camp,  
A - long with Cap - tain Good - in'  
And there we saw the men and boys  
As thick as hast - y pud - din'.

REFRAIN

Yan - kee Doo - dle, keep it up, Yan - kee Doo - dle dan - dy,  
Mind the mu - sic and the step And with the girls be hand - y.

2. And there was Captain Washington  
Upon a slappin' stallion,  
A-giving orders to his men;  
I guess there was a million. *Refrain*

The middle school students were very curious about both General Washington, his soldiers, and the young musicians.

## • BEYOND THE CLASSROOM .....

### Adopted Text Series in K–8 Music

To locate your district’s state/national adopted text series (books and CDs) in music, ask your university music or arts methods instructors or the librarian, principal, and/or vice principal at your school site. Practicing teachers can also visit your district resource center or talk to any music teachers and/or district visual and performing arts coordinators.

.....

The next day, Mr. Gonzalez assigned “Let’s Find Out” groups: small groups of students, each selecting one of the questions posed by the entire class at the beginning of the unit. (Remember that these questions were based on what students wanted to know about the topic.) The student groups were encouraged to use their history texts, websites, school

**Reader #1:** Songs have a history and their words tell an ever-changing story. Today, Americans are known as “Yankees” all over the world and our song “Yankee Doodle Dandy” is sung, played, and enjoyed by people everywhere.

**Reader #2:** The song “Yankee Doodle” has a long and very funny history. It has been popular in America and around the world for more than 200 years. The original tune was heard in England in the 1600s and was originally known as “Nancy Dawson.” Then the song took on new forms and became known as “Nankey Doodle.”

**Reader #3:** A “Nankey” was a Puritan, a member of a group of people who questioned and rejected traditional British government and religious establishments. The song makes fun of these people as slow and simple-minded. Puritans, as we know, eventually settled in America at Plymouth Rock and beyond, so the tradition of making fun of them continued during colonial times. Little did anyone know what would happen to this song and a nation about to be born.

**Reader #4:** There is a popular legend that when the Native Americans first met the Puritan settlers they had trouble pronouncing the word “English.” Instead, the natives used the slang word “Nankey” in referring to the Puritan settlers but actually pronounced the word as “Yankee.” So, eventually the British began to sing the words “Yankee Doodle” instead. The story goes on . . .

**Reader #5:** The man who wrote the words we know today was Dr. Richard Shuckburgh, a surgeon in the British Army stationed in the American colonies during the Revolutionary War. He wrote the words to “Yankee Doodle” to make fun of the poor American troops, their ragged clothes, carefree attitudes, disorganization, and lack of traditional British military discipline and training.

**Reader #6:** The words “thick as hasty pudding” actually meant the American soldiers were very disorganized and slow. A “dandy” was a person who acted more important than he really was, and the American soldiers were said to be more interested in dancing, music, and fun than the British soldiers of the time.

**Reader #7:** Captain Washington (George Washington) seemed to be giving a few too many orders to his men. . . . “I guess there was a million.” We all know that in another popular version of the song, someone seemed have had a pony named “Macaroni,” which seems to be pretty close to our slang for “noodle brained”! A “macaroni” was actually a knot located around a hat brim where people placed a feather.

**Reader #8:** The Americans surprised the British and adopted the song “Yankee Doodle” as their very own. The song became a source of great Colonial pride. They loved the humor and the tune so much, they ended up singing, marching, whistling, and playing the fife and drum to “Yankee Doodle” wherever they went.

**Reader #9:** In fact, when the British troops surrendered, the British general, Lord Cornwallis, paraded his well-dressed troops to meet the American general, George Washington. Thousands of Americans looked on. When Lord Cornwallis handed over his sword (a signal of official surrender), George Washington gave a signal. The American band began playing “Yankee Doodle” as loudly as they could.

**Reader #10:** We wonder if it was the Americans’ way of making fun of the British right back by actually enjoying and adopting a song meant to make fun of them. Maybe that’s the best thing to do when people make fun of us!

### FIGURE 1.3 Yankee Doodle Reader’s Theatre

Source: From *Teaching Literacy through the Arts*, (p. 94), by N. L. McDonald and D. Fisher, 2006, New York: Guilford. Reprinted with permission.

library books, interviews with teachers and parents or grandparents, videos and DVDs, and any other sources they could find to collect historical/factual information answering the research question they selected.

Two days later, Mr. Gonzalez invited small groups to share what they found out. Finally, based on what the small groups discovered, the class created an illustrated, fact-based class bulletin board, “All About George Washington and the American Revolutionary War.”

## • l e s s o n t r a c k e r

### Mr. Gonzalez’s “Let’s Find Out: George Washington and the American Revolutionary War”

#### Teaching Strategies/Sequences

- Ask what students already know about the topic, and record what they want to know in the form of questions.
- Use informational text (biography) to create a scripted reader’s theatre. Use history textbook information to help students write and create their own dramatized historical scenes, dialogues, and movement tableaux based on the topic and perform them for class, then analyze how historical facts were portrayed.
- Show historical paintings and song text from this period and analyze with entire class. Decode historical song text meaning and analyze historical settings of paintings. Perform music of the period.
- Use original student questions. Assign research project to small groups based on answering one question offered earlier in the unit.
- Have small groups share what they found out. Class creates a fact-based bulletin board display using input from all the groups’ research.

**Assessments/evaluations.** As you just read, Mr. Gonzalez constructed his integrated unit around what his students *needed to know* in order to master content outlined in History/Social Science standards. He then searched resources at the school site library (and with the music teacher) to provide catalysts for creative arts-related activities linked to the facts his students needed to know.

Through experimentation within active student learning contexts (*doing* a reader’s theatre, *creating* historic fact-based reenactments, *singing* song texts and *viewing and discussing* art), Mr. Gonzalez was able to *authentically assess* increased student interest, involvement, and memory of the learning at hand (Eisner, 1980; Frey & Fisher, 2007; Frey,

Fisher, & Moore 2005; Gardner, 1984, 1993a, 1993b; Jacobs, 1989, 1997; Jensen, 2005; McDonald & Fisher, 2002, 2006; Rosenblatt, 1995).

## • l e s s o n t r a c k e r

### Mr. Gonzalez’s “Let’s Find Out: George Washington and the American Revolutionary War”

#### Assessments/Evaluation

- Mr. Gonzalez assessed what his students already knew and wanted to know about the topic through class discussion. This informal assessment shaped the content of the unit.
- Student script writing and dramatic presentations of historical scenes were measured/graded for accuracy of content, use of historical facts, and vocabulary.
- Authentic assessments/rubrics—Students’ dramatic scenes, oral presentations of “Let’s Find Out” facts, were graded on a scale of 1 to 5 using a rubric. The rubric included the following categories: preparation, organization, clarity of speech/presentation style, met the goal of answering the research question, historical accuracy, creativity.

**Reflections on Mr. Gonzalez’s lesson.** Mr. Gonzalez offered the following:

This kind of integrated teaching is new to me, but well worth the effort it took. I experimented with asking students what *they already knew and what they wanted to know*. By them telling me (and me listening to their responses), I was able to create some simple ways to incorporate arts activity (theatre, music, and visual art) into their inquiry. I’m not talented, believe me, but I tried it anyway! They wanted to *do* the activities because it was a way for them to answer their own questions, be creative, and see and enjoy the end results of their study. They felt they were a part of the history they were studying. Their memory of the historical facts and events of this time period increased achievement on both class assessments, and standardized tests far exceeding the achievement of previous years. Now my only problem is that my students are always asking me when we are going to “do” things again with whatever we are learning.

Importantly, throughout this unit, Mr. Gonzalez deliberately and creatively addressed multiple learning styles and made important connections across content areas through student participation in active arts activities (Gardner, 1993a, 1993b; Harmin, 1994; Jacobs, 1989). What Mr. Gonzalez’s middle school students describe as “fun because we got to do things” is actually evidence of increased participation, learning, and memory of their learning about George Washington and the American Revolutionary War.

## Conclusion

The arts are, by law, core content, worthy of study unto themselves. Yet, with the challenges of delivering standards-based, specialized instruction in all four arts to *all* students, something else is needed. Future and practicing classroom teachers may desire to and do successfully use the arts within content instruction across the curriculum as a way to teach more students with and through the expressive and memorable learning avenues the arts provide.

Within this chapter's real-life classroom examples, both Mrs. Laws and Mr. Gonzalez offered powerful insights into how they planned, taught, and evaluated their customized arts-infused lessons. Finally, through your reading, you have begun to think about your own arts-infused teaching and the planning processes involved.

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