

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS FOR ARTS INTEGRATION

Frameworks, models, and planning guides are often the bases for the implementation of arts integration and are profoundly affected by issues such as beliefs about roles for the arts in schools, experience and training in the arts, roles in schools and communities, and available resources. Models for arts integration are often compared to traditional approaches to arts-specific curriculum designs. Four approaches to arts curriculum are examined by Krug and Cohen-Evron (2000):

- 1 using the arts as a resource for other disciplines;
- 2 enlarging organizing centers through the study of the arts;
- 3 using the arts to interpret ideas or themes in other subjects; and
- 4 understanding life-centered issues through a combination of the arts and other subjects.

Boix Mansilla's (1998) discussion of interdisciplinary learning notes that there are three necessary elements: "an emphasis on knowledge use; a careful treatment of each discipline involved; and appropriate interaction between disciplines."

Arnold Aprill (2001) calls for a new model of curricular integrity which needs to move away from "core" subject to education as a "whole" and a model of integrated instruction. Aprill asserts that arts integration must be viewed as a domain of knowledge that can stand side-by-side with other content areas.

Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences theory has provided teachers and teaching artists with a framework for integrating the arts in the regular education classroom (1983, 1993, 1999). Gardner's original list of intelligences, including logical-mathematical, linguistic, musical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal, provides teachers with a straightforward planning tool for the purposes of arts integration. The multiple intelligences approach has been extended well beyond the arts and has been the impetus for designing whole schools around approaches that address students' capacities.

Eisner refers to the concept of **integrated arts** that represent one of four curricular structures (2002):

- 1 focus on a particular historical period or culture;
- 2 focus on the similarities and differences between and among the art forms themselves;
- 3 identification of a major theme or idea that can be explored through the arts and other fields as well; and
- 4 access through the process of solving a problem that has roots in the arts and other content fields.

Sample units, projects, and programs representing these structures can be found in the literature.

Liora Bresler (1995) describes four arts integration "styles": subservient, co-equal, affective integration, and social integration. The "subservient" style has been the target of often intense criticism from arts communities and there is evidence that such practices exist (Mishook & Kornhaber, 2006). Bresler describes this model as one in which the arts serve the basic academic curriculum in terms of content, pedagogy, and structures. The

"co-equal" style addresses the content, goals, skills, and structure of the arts and non-arts disciplines equally. The affective integration style, Bresler notes, emphasizes the potential of the arts to evoke feelings, and gives students an opportunity to express themselves and be creative across disciplines. The social integration style suggests a more political goal for principals, who employ arts integration as a way to connect with communities through partnerships and projects.

Wiggins (2001) presents three main questions: What is interdisciplinary, who benefits, and does it work better than traditional methods? Drawing on the research of Bresler, Beane, and Gardner, Wiggins focuses on three main areas regarding integrated instruction: 1) theoretical, 2) curricular, and 3) instructional. Wiggins finds Bresler's notion of "subservient" integration to be very common in schools (e.g., singing the ABC's and calling it arts integration). Wiggins cautions arts specialists to be aware and knowledgeable of the types of integration and their outcomes and to be strong educators in their own field.

Wiggins and Wiggins (1997) claim that it is possible for music teachers to develop interdisciplinary curricula if they focus on integrating conceptual connections that are curricularly appropriate to music and to other targeted content areas. The authors also suggest that arts teachers, in this case, music teachers, take the lead in planning such curriculum in order to ensure that no one discipline is considered the "core" (p. 40). They suggest models that integrate **learning processes, affective responses, and themes-based or cognitive responses** (that affirm the value of arts and non-arts concepts).

Bamberger (2000) outlines a research procedure for investigating common learning processes in projects that "juxtapose activities that embody underlying conceptual structures and problem-solving strategies" (p. 32). For example, Bamberger describes music, mathematics, and sciences as disciplines that share **structures and strategies**. Shared structures include hierarchies,

periodicity, units, ratio-proportion, symmetry, pattern, and constants-variables. These subject areas also share strategies such as counting and measuring, parts/wholes, similar/different, parsing/chunking, classifying, and naming (p. 32). Common structures and strategies can become the organizing principles for planning and implementing integration.

Brown (2007) suggests a set of questions to consider before initiating arts integration. What is the content? What is appropriate instruction? Who provides the instruction? What strategies are implemented? How will assessment occur? She notes,

Arts integration is like a weaving wherein the design may repeat a pattern or be variable. Just as the warp and weft strings are integral parts of a woven whole, the arts are an integral part of the curriculum and are valuable in all aspects of teaching and learning. (p. 72)

The weaving metaphor is common in arts integration discussions (Blecher & Jaffee, 1998; Chen, 2005; Hansen, Bernstorf, & Stuber, 2004; Mantione & Smead, 2003).

Cognitive psychologist Arthur Efland (2002) offers the view of a work of art, not simply as an outlet for personal expression, but also as a reflection of a larger world or cultural environment. An art work can therefore become the locus for the integration of knowledge of what is within and what is part of the outside world. Efland notes:

Works of art might serve as cognitive landmarks to orient learners as they

weave their maps of knowledge and understanding. Such works can serve as places in the web of knowledge where paths of inquiry may cross, and where connecting links between domains become established. The maps of knowledge that individual learners develop for themselves should resemble the hypothetical map of the curriculum. (p. 164)

Arts integration thus can be described as a system for mapping knowledge. Efland sees an art work as a point where paths of inquiry can converge, further underscoring the relationship between a conceptual framework for arts integration and for inquiry or problem-based learning. Cognitive learning theory underscores learners' needs to map knowledge, sometimes separating in order to understand, and then finding connections and relationships between ideas, vocabulary, and concepts.

Marshall (2006) draws on cognitive theory to establish an argument for what she terms **substantive arts integration**. She discusses state standards, especially in California, reminding the reader that:

Art education principles represented in standards and frameworks necessitate lessons that go deep: mining the concepts behind images, ideas and processes—and broad: making a web of connections between art content,

artmaking and other domains and ideas. Therefore, they do not isolate art as a hermetic field but call for an integrated arts education that connects to all areas of inquiry. (p. 19)

Inquiry has become a springboard for teachers and artists who are engaged in arts integration. David Amdur (1993) describes a process of “contextual inquiry” which stems from Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE). He states that such inquiry is consistent with arts integration because it encourages students to question concepts across the disciplines. The Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE) has made teacher and artist inquiry questions the focus of professional development, documentation approaches, and assessment for action research teams in and across schools (Burnaford, 2007). Arts integration and action research are increasingly linked as processes for designing, examining, and assessing both teacher and student learning (Burnaford, 2007; CAPE UK 2005; Mason & Steedly, 2006; Rich, Lane, Polin, & Marcus, 2003). Chancer and Rester-Zodrow (1997) describe a model where **inquiry** serves as the impetus for “Moon Journals,” in which elementary students observe, write, and draw as they learn about the phases of the moon, time, changes of seasons, and other natural phenomena. The lessons, guided by writing and visual art goals, address the content of the science curriculum through the process of students’ questions.

Documentation in and through arts integration can be seen in the Reggio Emilia schools (Gandini, Hill, Cadwell, & Schwall, 2005), in which young children investigate and document their world explorations, thus “making learning visible” (Project Zero and Reggio Children, 2001). The Reggio Emilia perspective on the **atelier** or studio as a metaphor as well as a literal laboratory in schools and schooling has informed many of the practitioners and theorists in the arts integration

movement in the United States. The **atelier**, conceived as a place for observing, documenting, researching, and theorizing about students’ learning, has become part of the framework for designing arts integration in some contexts. “The role of the atelier, integrated and combined within the general framework of learning and teaching strategies, was conceptualized as a retort to the marginal and subsidiary role commonly assigned to expressive education” (Gandini, Hill, Cadwell, & Schwall, 2005). For some, the Reggio perspective gave voice to a broader goal—to reform teaching by adopting the pedagogies of “expressive education” in learning areas beyond as well as in the arts.

The Arts Integration Mentorship Model (AIM) from the Center for Community Arts Partnerships at Columbia College builds upon a literacy curriculum, primarily writing, as a springboard for arts integration. Cynthia Weiss, Director of AIM, describes the model as a learning spiral (Weiss, in Weiss & Lichtenstein, in press). The learning spiral engages teachers, artists, and students in asking inquiry questions that, together with the overarching **big ideas** are driving forces in arts integration. Content goals, including arts goals, demand the learning of shared language and language specific to individual content domains. In the arts integration learning spiral, reminiscent of Bruner’s spiral curriculum (1960), learning occurs through immersion in doing, making, and sharing that in turn engenders new intentions for teaching and learning on the part of all engaged in the process.

A common set of models for integrating the arts has emerged from the field of language arts/literacy. Literacy specialists have long been aware of the power of integrating teaching and learning regarding visual imagery and written words, especially as they are interconnected in picture books (Alejandro, 2005; Chu, 2005; Greenberg, 2005; Kiefer, 2005; Yolen, 2005). While much of this work is not titled explicitly as “arts integration,” authors suggest ways for classroom teachers to help students notice the pictures, draw meaning, and at the same time learn about the visual representation,

artist and illustrator choices, and media. The correlation between subjects is apparent in the instructional materials themselves (e.g., picture books).

Claudia Cornett (2003), a literacy specialist, offers a comprehensive guide for teachers who want to integrate the arts and their literacy curriculum. She describes the process as teaching **with, about, in, and through** the arts, and offers teachers detailed lesson plans and principles to integrate drama, visual art, dance, and music. While the reading and writing guidelines are central to this approach, Cornett is also careful to incorporate the requisite fine arts standards in her text. Kelner and Flynn (2006) also propose to develop reading comprehension through drama, and suggest this **merging of purposes** because the two fields have some “natural links” (p. 2). There appears to be some research to support or endorse the use of drama in conjunction with the teaching of reading (Podlozny, 2000; Wagner, 1998, 2002), with proposed connections Cynthia Weiss calls **parallel processes** that can be identified and assessed in multiple disciplines.

Rosenbloom (2004) proposes three philosophies of interdisciplinary curriculum as arguments for and against the practice in schools, particularly in the field of music. The **purist** philosophy represents the view that music study should never be diluted or devalued by attempting to integrate it with other subjects (Freyberger, 1995; Gee, 2003). There are those in the arts community who feel strongly that integration is unacceptable under any circumstances. Bennett Reimer explains: “We do not teach music as a way to teach other subjects, just as other subjects are not taught as ways to teach music” (1997, p. 9); and, “While music can enhance a variety of other values, musical values are what we music educators should principally serve. We are the profession that provides those values, which matters so much to human beings” (2004, p. 10).

The **utilitarian** philosophy conversely notes that music is only valuable as it illuminates other subjects, a perspective not evident in arts integration literature. The **organic** philosophy suggests that it is possible to

implement an interdisciplinary curriculum with each subject retaining its particular and individual integrity (Hope, 2003). The organic theory of curriculum is easily identified in many arts integration programs and projects.

Aprill (2001) objects to the treatment of discipline-specific arts instruction and arts-integrated teaching as dichotomous practices with different sets of rules rather than a continuum in which varied but connected practices inform and illumine each other (p. 25). Scripp and Subotnik (2003) call for a framework for innovation “based on comprehensive, interdisciplinary programs that are intended to benefit all children in public schools” (p. 8). This approach does not exclude arts-specific teaching and learning and is in fact dependent upon it as part of a continuum of arts learning. They further suggest a framework as a path of innovation “from performance-based, non-compulsory curricula for the benefit of the talented few toward comprehensive, interdisciplinary programs designed for the benefit of every child in the school community” (p. 9).

Brown and Nolan (1989) describe an evolution of integration that often occurs as teachers and students become more familiar with and expert in integrating knowledge and skills (see Table 6 on p. 26). Although not specifically termed arts integration, the Brown and Nolan framework is applicable and could serve as one such continuum for arts learning.

Ingram and Seashore (2003) in their Summative Evaluation of the Arts for Academic Achievement (AAA) four-year initiative in Minneapolis described five models for implementing arts integration that they observed in the 31 participating schools: “1) Residency Model; 2) Elaborated Residency Model; 3) Capacity Building Model; 4) Co-Teaching Model; and 5) Concepts Across the Curriculum Model” (p. 3). These five models, though not characterized as a strict continuum, could represent a progression of implementation approaches with increasing engagement and participation from within the school and across the content disciplines as participants become more comfortable and familiar with integration.

Snyder (2001) describes the processes of connection, correlation, and integration as current trends in education. She cautions against connection as the most popular, most used, and least meaningful way of linking disciplines (p. 34). From Snyder's perspective, **connection** is when one discipline is used in the service of another. Snyder notes that connections, for example, rarely develop musical concepts and skills but they are the most popular approach to helping students realize relationships between prior knowledge and newer experiences. **Correlation** in Snyder's conceptual framework occurs when two disciplines share common materials or activities. She notes that with correlation no plan is made to develop important ideas across disciplines to form generalizations (p. 35). When correlation becomes consistent in a school, Snyder comments that many schools begin to seek funding for professional development, teaching artists, and/or arts materials. She notes that in the current climate of testing accountability, correlational curriculum often stops as teachers and students prepare for standardized high stakes tests, usually in mathematics and reading.

Correlational curriculum, in short, is not a systematic, regular part of the curriculum. For Snyder, **integration** occurs when a broad theme is selected that cuts across content areas so that disciplines can interpret and explore the theme in unique, yet related ways. She notes that when schools truly move toward arts integration, scheduling and school goals also start to change. This view represents a continuum toward integration that is measured, not just through student learning but also through school schedules and explicit goals.

The Music-in-Education National Consortium (MIENC), a national network of universities, arts organizations, school reform foundations, and partnering schools, has responded further to this theory of integration as part of a continuum (Scripp & Subotnik, 2003). For MIENC, the framework of integration is situated in a tension between processes of differentiation and synthesis, maintaining the integrity of the art form as a separate discipline while also affirming the value of teaching for transfer with respect to shared concepts and processes. Each differentiated

» Evolution of Curriculum Integration Approaches (Brown & Nolan, 1989)

Integration through correlation between subjects



Integration through common themes and ideas



Integration through the practical resolution of issues and problems



Integration through student centered inquiry

TABLE » 6



art form and subject area needs to be learned for its own sake, its particular literature, and its medium of expression before the process of its explicit synthesis with other subjects becomes meaningful. Thus, learning in the context of its integration with other subject areas becomes an optimal condition for assuring that fundamental concepts and processes shared between an art form and other domains become more deeply and broadly understood (Myers & Scripp, 2007).

This stance, describing the coexistence of arts integration (**synthesis**) with the need for explicit, defined learning within an arts discipline as taught by qualified and trained arts professionals (**differentiation**), may be the future of arts **integration** within a larger vision for arts **education** in public schools. ■