

INTRODUCTION

In this literature review, we attempt to describe what has been written between 1995 and 2007 regarding arts integration. We have unavoidably encountered specific issues and trends that continue to shape the field. We have examined the range of practices labeled as arts integration as described in published and available materials. Terms such as “interdisciplinary,” “arts-infused,” or “cross-disciplinary,” not to mention “thematic” and “arts-based,” kept our conversations challenging. We have included some international resources although our emphasis is on arts integration in the United States.

What This Review Includes

The literature is limited to reports, books, articles, and research summaries that explicitly name arts integration or, in some cases, interdisciplinarity, as the focus. While topics such as the role of teaching artists, arts partnerships, the preparation of arts teachers and classroom teachers, school reform, budgets for the arts, and political considerations relevant to the arts are all highly pertinent, they are not the focus of this review and will only be discussed as they relate explicitly to arts integration. We cannot claim to have uncovered

every source on the topic, but we believe that we have examined most of the relevant work in the field to date. Ideally, this review will contribute to continued dialogue and increasing rigor in research and practice with respect to how, when, and to what degree arts integration becomes an accepted and well-defined element of the curriculum.

The review begins with the **Historical Context** regarding curriculum integration and related educational or curricular approaches to teaching and learning that are relevant to arts integration.

No curricular movement exists in a vacuum; arts integration stems from or is related explicitly to other methods that purport to engage students in learning. We also include an overview of the position statements of **Professional Arts Education Organizations** regarding arts integration and a summary of **State Standards** regarding arts integration and general arts education. Then, we introduce selected **Definitions** and **Theoretical Frameworks** for “arts integration” programs and practices.

We describe the **Research** related to arts integration teaching and learning as it exists in published and available studies and reports. Research includes meta-analyses, compendia, case studies, and dissertations that may incorporate quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Because extensive meta-analyses have been reported and discussed in *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development* and *Reviewing Education and the Arts Project (REAP)*, we have chosen to summarize relevant research from those two compendia and refer the reader directly to them for further investigation. We then present other relevant research and evaluation studies, particularly from 2003 to the present, which are not included in either of the two compendia.

The review also includes annotations of books and articles targeted for classroom teachers, arts specialists, and teaching artists, that represent **Methods and Practices** in arts integration. The **Conclusion** section synthesizes the trends and questions that emerged during this investigation that we offer as possible future areas for research and practice. It is our hope that this review will encourage those committed to arts education to communicate their goals, innovations, evidence of efficacy, and research-based teaching approaches to afford all young people access and experience in and through the arts.

What This Review Does Not Address

For the purposes of this review, discussions of curricular approaches such as thematic units, literature-based

units, or problem-based learning projects are not specifically addressed, because arts processes, vocabulary, and elements are often not an explicit focus for these descriptions. The review does not address initiatives where the arts are a casual or unintended byproduct of learning and teaching rather than an explicit goal. It does not investigate projects described in the literature in which the arts are used only as a culminating project (i.e., a mobile to demonstrate children’s understanding of the planets).

Additionally, while attempts were made to be inclusive, this literature review does not incorporate the vast number of privately and publicly funded project initiatives that have been implemented over the past 20 years for the simple reason that many of the project evaluation reports are not published and articles or books are not available that describe the work for a larger audience. Due to time constraints, we were not able to search in depth the studies and practices internationally, although a few are included in the scope of this review. We know that much of the work on arts integration has been done in these arenas and regret that not more of these stories can be included here.

We also encountered many conference proceedings and presentations related to arts integration and chose not to include most of them in this review. Ideally, this review can serve as a springboard to encourage current and future project directors and researchers to expand the audience of their work. ■