

HISTORICAL CONTEXT FOR ARTS INTEGRATION

Arts Education

There have long been advocates for arts education in the public schools. Utah founded the first state arts agency in 1899 and by the middle of the twentieth century, civic organizations such as museums and symphonies regularly began to schedule educational activities as part of their missions (Remer, 2003). The New Deal provided public support of the arts, which resulted in artists working with schools, but the primary opinion, despite Dewey and the Progressives, was that the arts were enrichment or primarily for the wealthy or talented.

Public support engendered through the Kennedy administration's appointment of a special consultant for the arts was extended during the era of Johnson's Great Society. In 1965, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund produced a set of recommendations calling for the nurturing of children's appreciation for great art. The formation of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) spearheaded support for artists in schools initiatives in the 1960s, which contributed to a burgeoning interest in arts integration.

The economic downturn of the mid to late 1970s, followed shortly by the publication of *A Nation at Risk*,

worked to undo many of the Johnson administration's efforts to advance the arts. The NEA shifted its focus and began emphasizing professional development of teachers and artists working in schools.

Arts Integration

The idea of arts integration is related to structural, conceptual, and philosophical notions that are connected to curricular movements in schools. In the early twentieth century, the organization of the secondary school curriculum as a series of distinct subject areas, while persistent, was also consistently challenged (Cruikshank, 2000). In 1918, the Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education report recommended the organization of the curriculum around major themes, including health, fundamental processes, and civic education. Integrated curriculum, as well as "correlated curriculum," "fused curriculum," and "project curriculum" all were touted as improved means to prepare young adults for adult life (Cruikshank, p. 179).

William Heard Kilpatrick, a collaborator and colleague of John Dewey, outlined the "project method," which was a precursor to later integration approaches.

Kilpatrick's article "The Project Method" (1918) described this approach, proposing that the interests of children be the units or themes of study, thus making learning more relevant and meaningful. Dewey responded in 1931 during a speech at Harvard University. He stated that neither of the two ways of organizing the curriculum—by subject and by project—would clarify the curricular "confusion" that was apparent. Dewey proposed that subjects be reorganized so that "the interdependence of knowledge and the relationship between knowledge and human purpose would be made clear" (Kliebard, 2004, p. 149). There needed to be a study of "the interrelation of subjects with one another" in order to determine how they might work together to "increase both intellectual curiosity and understanding, while disclosing the world about us as a perennial source of esthetic delight" (p. 150).

Parallel with Dewey's thinking, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) issued a landmark report in 1936 titled *A Correlated Curriculum* (Weeks, 1936). This convincing treatise described a democratic education that combined subject-specific learning with interdisciplinary and integrated options for learning at the secondary level. *A Correlated Curriculum* provided examples of "correlations" between English and other subject areas from classrooms representing the work of 43 researchers. While the report had only minimal impact at the time, its presence served as a foundation for the theories offered by James Beane and others later in the century. Cruikshank explains: "What is remarkable about *A Correlated Curriculum*... is the emphasis that it places upon the integrity of the intellectual pursuits embodied in particular disciplines at the same time that it recommends a disregarding of discipline lines" (p. 191). That orientation is consistent with many current practices in arts integration. In the mid-twentieth century, **problem-based learning** and **inquiry learning** built on this notion, suggesting that the questions students ask to work through an investigation or problem create an approach to learning that is multidisciplinary and relevant to the real world. These elements persist in contemporary arts integration.

The general term **curriculum integration** has been applied since the 1960s, particularly in middle schools (Beane, 1997). Arts integration proponents have drawn upon the work of Beane, as well as Heidi Hayes Jacobs (1989, 1997, 1998) and Robin Fogarty (1991). Beane has advocated moving the subject-centered school curriculum structure toward a full integration model. He explains,

Imagine for the moment that we are confronted with some problem or puzzling situation in our lives. How do we approach the situation? Do we stop and ask ourselves which part of the situation is language arts, or music, or mathematics, or history, or art? I don't think so. Instead, we take on the problem or situation using whatever knowledge is appropriate or pertinent without regard for subject area lines. (Beane, 1997, p. 7)

Teaching Artists and Arts Partnerships

The availability of teaching artists to schools and classrooms—most obviously in urban areas—has also contributed to arts integration. Teaching artists, who are typically not certified teachers but who do practice an art form as a profession, are considered integral to success in some models for arts integration. The term "teaching artist" has its roots in the early 1970s and was coined by June Dunbar of the Lincoln Center Institute to avoid the use of the clinical term "resource professional," according to Eric Booth (2003). Although teaching artists also work in schools in non-integration



models, including performance, artists-in-residencies, and guest instructors in an art form, they are familiar partners in regular education classrooms where they plan with classroom teachers to integrate at least one art form and one non-arts content area.

Arts integration, as a curricular area, provided rich opportunities for teaching artists to define and refine their work with children and teachers in schools. The arts integration movement afforded content specialists in areas such as reading, math, science, and social studies, to discuss, experience, plan, and teach with arts specialists in schools. Arts integration encouraged classroom teachers to explore whether, how, and to what degree the arts could play a role in their classrooms.

Teaching artists find themselves in a field without formally recognized certification, working with in-school arts teachers or classroom teachers, teaching in their own art domain, but perhaps also entering the world of science standards or literacy benchmarks. Meanwhile, boards of education, principals, and state legislatures are pressing for reading, mathematics, science, and social studies achievement, often placing the arts in schools at risk.

Arts integration gained attention in the 1960s and 1970s when arts partnerships became common structures for engaging community organizations and public schools, particularly in large urban areas (Remer, 1996). In 1999, the Arts Education Partnership (AEP) published *Learning Partnerships: Improving Learning in Schools with Arts Partners in the Community* (Dreeszen, Aprill, & Deasy) at the request of the U.S. Department of Education and the National Endowment for the Arts. This was followed by a 2002 publication, *Teaching Partnerships: A Report of a National Forum on Partnerships Improving Teaching of the Arts* (Arts Education Partnership, 2002). These two publications reflected a growing trend for describing the nature of partnerships involving public schools, arts organizations, and universities. While not all partnerships reflected in these documents focused on arts integration, the proliferation of sustained partnerships contributed to the discussion of arts education that involves classroom teachers as well as arts specialists and teaching artists. ■