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## Discovering alternative visual art programs for California schools

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**DISCOVERING ALTERNATIVE VISUAL ART PROGRAMS FOR CALIFORNIA  
SCHOOLS**

**By**

**Angela Marie Schiaffo**

**California State University, Monterey Bay**

**May 2005**

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SCHOOLS

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ANGELA MARIE SCHIAFFO

APPROVED BY THE DEAN OF THE COLLEGE OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

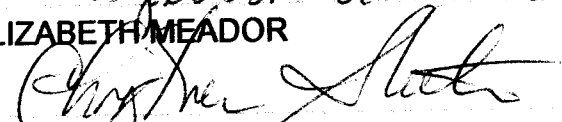
  
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## **ABSTRACT**

### **Discovering Alternative Visual Art Programs for California Schools**

**By**

**Angela Marie Schiaffo**

The economic state of the California public school system has significantly declined throughout the past decade. Specifically, government funds for art education in schools have been cut. Therefore, this action thesis will support the argument for art education in public schools by discussing the history of arts in California and the correlation between visual arts and student achievement. Evidence to support this argument will include how critical the aesthetic and cultural development skills imbedded in art are for our future society to study and appreciate. This thesis will present methodology for alternative actions to improvement and change the art education in California Public Schools.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to express gratitude to my parents, Frank and Patrice Schiaffo. To my father, Frank, who continuously motivates me to strive toward aspirations in life, and to my mother, Patrice, whose artistic appreciation and abilities have inspired me to pursue the study of the arts. This research is dedicated to you both.

For my husband, Jason, I thank you for your support and love throughout this roller coaster ride. The patience and kindness you've shown will not be forgotten, and I hope to reciprocate during your studies.

Thank you to my professors, Patty Wang, Elizabeth Meador, and Christine Sleeter. It has been inspiring to work with professors who are so passionate about transformation and diversity in our changing world.

To my family, friends, and colleagues, thank you all for your enduring support throughout this time in my life. I look forward to reconnecting with you all.

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## **Chapter One**

### **Statement of Purpose**

#### ***Purpose Statement***

Art education, in the present state of the California school system, is quickly vanishing. The purpose of this paper is to push awareness of the lack of art education in schools and work toward change. In the first portion of this paper I will describe the history of implementing art education in public schools, as well as the recent decline of art curriculum. Throughout research, there is one major reason for this recent decline, and that is simply lack of funds. The state of California has cut back almost all funding for arts in the classroom. However, not all schools are affected by this budget cut. I will explain why this social injustice is appearing in the California schools, and give information to support why all school age children need art curriculum. Through experiencing art education, students gain a rich background, fostering critical abilities that only the introduction of art can instill. The research and evidence that supports art in the classroom is that teaching art instills aesthetic appreciation, teaches industrially relevant skills, and is needed to develop certain cognitive capacities. I will also report recent information that states when students are not taught artistic skills, appreciation of the arts diminishes.

As a new teacher to California, I was shocked at the limited arts offered to students of public schools. A native Pennsylvanian, I was accustomed to art education from kindergarten to college. Moving to an urban public school in California without a physical education, music, art, or library program, was a shock to say the least. My first question to my fellow educators was “Why are there no specialty classes for our

students?” Everyone unanimously replied, “Money”. So, I began this research believing there was no way, based on funds, that our urban California students would receive any specialty programs. I was mistaken. As you will see, through research and networking I have found a wealth of organizations and educators, whose main objective is to provide art education to the students who have none. These incredible resources are located right in the community.

### ***Action to Accomplish***

During my study in the Masters of Arts in Education program, I’ve become greatly interested in art education. For my action thesis project, I specifically focused on visual arts and how to integrate this enormously essential program of study into the curriculum of a local school. In general, I’ve found from talking with educators, working in the local district, and following the media, that there is a great necessity for visual arts in California elementary schools. The largest barrier that public schools face for including art education is funds. While researching organizations such as the California Arts Council, and the California Department of Education, I discovered the government gives very little funds for the implementation of art education programs in schools. Presently, art programs are forced to look elsewhere for funds.

To take action, I collaborated with community organizations and wrote a grant to a foundation willing to give resources to fund an innovative art education partnership between the Cultural Council for Monterey County (CCMC) and Martin Luther King School (MLK), where I am teaching. I proposed employment of the community artists, through the CCMC, for their services in instructing the students of this local elementary school in studies of aesthetic, historical and technical aspects of a visual arts



program through integrating it into their language arts curriculum. I feel confident in the implementation of this program because of the various theories of scholarly work I will be using to advocate the urgency of an arts curriculum in the developing child, the partnership already in progress and also by having the support of the school administrator, teachers and director of CCMC. While developing this grant-issued program, I created a model for teachers who have similar views on integrating musical, performing, or visual arts and would like to implement a similar program in the future.

### ***The Dilemma***

There is an obvious lack of art education in California schools. The question I've researched is why there is such an absence of visual arts in many of our schools. This has happened because of a variety of factors, which include the decline of arts requirements for educators, the rise in high stakes testing and standards, and the misplacement of government funds in state schools.

Approximately 30 years ago, California Universities eliminated many of the art requirements for educators to complete before and during their credentialing program. As a result, many credentialed teachers do not have the necessary skills needed to teach visual arts. Since the recent arts advocacy, the University of California, as well as some other Universities, has added arts as a requirement for admission to college. Although many students may not receive a visual arts background because the 'arts' in this requirement many times is a blanket term including musical and performing arts, as well as foreign language and psychology.

High-stakes testing and standards have frightened educators, schools, and government officials to push math and literacy, therefore eliminating many other

programs. Although there is a visual arts framework that California students are required to learn, there is no form of assessment for these standards, therefore they are not being taught as extensively as math and literacy. Standards have become a law more than a guide in recent years, which has forced schools to overlook the visual arts, which ironically has been shown to improve learning in core subjects such as math and literacy as I will show you in the next chapter.

Art education has been cut from almost all aspects of the California public schools system, and government funds for art have been lowered over 500% in the past two years. The Secretary of Education, Rod Paige (Appendix B), sent a letter to all superintendents and administrators in the country, stating that arts education must be taught, and Title I and II funds are given to do so. However, many schools use this money for implementing intervention and enrichment programs for math and literacy because of the high-stakes testing.

There is quite a paradox in the information causing the dilemma, where there is no one group in which to place blame for a lack of visual art. I aspire to make a difference in the community where I teach by educating teachers about this dilemma, and what options are available to integrate visual arts into a public school. Finally, I plan to actually initiate a visual arts program in the school where I am currently teaching.

### ***Social Injustices***

I believe in promoting equality and impartiality by teaching art in all educational settings, not just the affluent ones. Arts seem to thrive in middle and upper class schools where parent involvements and financial resources are plentiful. Donations, fundraisers, and volunteer work are helpful to produce money and time for an art curriculum to be

present. Many local schools in this socio-economic setting have art programs in place despite a lack of funds from the government. These programs are a result of local public funds from parents and community (PTA).

In low socio-economic schools, arts are not always a priority because parents who reside in poverty are less likely to have time to advocate for an arts curriculum in the schools, and because financial resources limit the ability to do so. This inequality is very apparent in local public schools. If this social injustice persists, there will be an entire generation who grow up without interest, skill, and aesthetic value in the arts. In Gardner's research it shows visual art aids in giving voice to those students who don't excel in the other areas of the eight intelligences (Gardner,1993). I strongly believe everyone in this world is entitled a heard voice and to silence a group because of money, education, or ethnicity is a huge injustice that I adamantly disagree with. However, the teaching profession is a strong tool for implementing change and justice in society and I believe educators can help reintroduce arts in schools through structuring a strong model to receive the appropriate materials to put into practice a visual arts program.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Review of Related Literature**

#### ***Introduction***

The implementation of visual arts education has been dramatically reduced in the California public schools. This study will support the need for change in the California public schools art programs. The scholarly research on the correlations of visual arts with learning that I have reviewed illustrates much evidence that supports the rationale for change in the present education situation.

To advocate visual arts in education, we must examine the historical background of art education in public schools, as well as the correlation between art and learning. There have been various recent studies of collaborative programs, similar to that of the partnership between Martin Luther King School and the Cultural Council of Monterey County that are focused on integrating art into the curriculum and focus on student achievement. The following review of literature links the arts and learning by and shows how the arts assist in student achievement.

#### ***Historical Background***

Art education took its original shape in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century when society needed not only the university-bound individuals, but also reliable and skillful workers for offices and factories. During this time the American society acknowledged that teaching art created a talented and skillful workforce. Ideas formed around a diverse group of theories and practices comprised of beliefs that opposed traditional scholarly and rote schooling. The school of thought during this period is known as progressive education,

and was headed by leaders such as Rousseau, Froebel, Montessori, and Pestalozzi who believed children should learn by creating and experiencing (Jessup-Woodlin, 1996). Progressive education fostered programs of self-expression, which in turn taught children about individual differences and awareness of one's creative abilities. Ford quotes Froebel describing this learning through creating process:

What he tries to represent or do he begins to understand...the drawing properly stands between the word and the child, shares certain qualities with each of them, and is therefore, so valuable in the development of the child. (Ford, 2003, p.266)

Progressive education fostered programs of self-expression, which in turn taught children about individual differences and awareness of one's creative abilities. When this school of thought intersected with education, it brought out the ideas that art benefits cognitive abilities and student achievement (Wolf, 1992). What emerged from this was an emotional and romantic view of the arts. This slowly changed, and what followed was a school of thought that based on a behaviorist approach rather than the emotional-centered art instruction that was prevalent in the progressive movement.

After World War I, the depression affected this positive, progressive outlook, and art was regarded as a luxury of the upper class. Art was still taught in schools, but was not as appreciated by the general public. The general public did not have the luxury of buying art supplies and art was regarded as frivolous (Freedman and Hernandez, 1998).

There was a short reprieve for the arts after World War II when the United States was luxuriating in its position as a world power. Money was available for schools, thus schools had music and art teachers as a matter of course. This rosy period didn't last for too long however. In America's desire to be first in everything was of course the

determination to be the first in academics. As we discovered that we didn't compare favorably to other countries some proponents advocated just teaching fundamentals of reading, writing and math. If we were going to put a man on the moon, we had to do it by being scientific and mathematical, not by expressing ourselves through art (Wolf, 1992). The American public was again looking at art as somewhat frivolous. Still, it was educational research that really led to art education's downfall.

Researchers in the 1960's and 1970's found regularities in children's thought processes. Psychologist Jean Piaget described children as active and constructivist problem solvers (Rothenberg, 1990). This systematic and behavioral school of thought shifted art education from an aesthetic pursuit to a more academic focus, losing the emphasis on expression and creativity. Essentially, educators were taught that children learn in specific developmental stages.

In the 1970's many controversies appeared about the nature of art in American schools, specifically in California. There were debates such as where did thoughtfulness and expression fit in the art curriculum, and was there a necessity for funded programs in American schools. This leads the discussion to the art trends in California and the legislation behind them (a complete history of legislation affecting art in California can be found in Appendix A). The behavioral school of thought may have brought about the Ryan Act of California in 1970 (Appendix A), which eliminated art training for teachers. What followed was a twenty-year period where teachers were not trained or educated in the arts, which could be a result of the current lack of arts in schools today.

The Arts Education report and legislation that followed (Appendix A) from 1989 until 2002 shows the awareness of the importance of art education. California State assembly

speaker Willie Brown set up an arts education task force that researched the lack of art education to training teachers. This report stressed the importance of arts education, urging the California Arts Council and the Department of Education to bring artists into the schools to help train teachers as well as work with students. (California Alliance for Art Education, 2003)

The California Visual and Performing Arts Framework (Visual and Performing Arts Curriculum Framework and Criteria Committee) was written as a result of the Arts Education Report of 1989. This framework established the standards for the major components of art education in the multi-subject curriculum. The framework prescribes four major components including; visual and tactile aesthetic perception, artistic knowledge and skills of creative expression, historical and cultural visual arts heritage and analysis interpretation, and judgment of aesthetic valuing. These components are organized with objectives, necessary content skills and individual levels for each component. Although these are California state standards, they are looked upon as a suggested framework and do not seem to have the rigidity that the math, science, social studies and language arts framework sets.

After the release of the report, the California Arts Education Partnership Program put into practice the recommendations of the speaker's task force, specifically obtaining funding through the California Arts license plates made available through donations in 1992. In 1995, Legislators, colleges, and the Board of Education all adopted changes to bring arts back into education.

The recent 2003-2004 cutbacks were detrimental to various programs and guidelines that were implemented throughout the past twenty years. Art organizations were forced

to close, or become non-profit. This affected many schools that benefited from art programs previously supported by the government-funded grants. As a result, federal grants have become extremely competitive, and private foundation funds are not enough to assist the tremendous need for art in California. I believe all California schools need art education programs, in spite of the recent cutbacks.

In the following sections, I will describe the major ideas that appeared in my research to suggest that reintroducing art education in schools is worth doing. In researching art education in schools, I've found that visual art education encourages aesthetic appreciation, conveys cultural and developmental expression, and correlates with student achievement. The following section makes a case for the inclusion of visual arts in California, based on the literature of researchers.

### ***Aesthetic Appreciation***

A recurring theme that comes up in research is that if students do not learn art, they cannot appreciate it (Brown & Korzenik 1993, CAAE 2003, Jessup-Woodlin 1996, Wolf 1992). In their research, Brown and Korzenik (1993), advocate the importance of creating art appreciators in order to understand the infinite dimensions of artwork. These dimensions can include historical, mathematical, and expressive ideas that may only be seen through the arts (Jessup-Woodlin 1996).

Although the skill of recognition and appreciation of art is embedded in many educational theories, as well as the California state standards, it is not widely taught in the multi-subject classroom. It is important to put theory into practice when teaching this skill. Ways of doing this involve field trips to museums, critiquing professional artwork and studying the history of art (CAAE 2003). Some educators think of this skill as



frivolous, and thus think there is no meaning for it in the classroom. Patricia Jessup-Woodlin (1996) argues that, “Aesthetic education has not yet secured its place in school curriculum, and that is probably a result of the excessive emphasis we place on the mastery of facts and concepts. But the complete and fully human development of children requires more than cognitive mastery” (p.18). This refers to the dilemma of the increase in academic content standards, without interest in the arts. All children need a curriculum rich in all values and aspects of life. Children need to know what they and others feel, create, believe and feel is important and should be looked upon with respect and wonder.

Aesthetic appreciation encompasses more than just the appreciation of the beauty of art it also includes visual stimulation. If a student can relate to the aesthetics of art, then he or she is receiving visual stimulation, which Eisner (1985) argues is extremely valuable for young learners. Eisner’s research looks at aesthetic appreciation as a tool for human development and describes the innate reasons behind aesthetics in art. Human beings are stimulus-seeking organisms that need aesthetics to make order in the world. If humans are only offered one type of experience, they will tend to seek others. Children need to make sense of their world, and through the arts they have more of a variety to do this.

### ***Cultural and Developmental Expression***

When speaking of the integration of visual arts and literacy, there is much to be said about the powerfulness of self-expression. This theory relates back to the thoughts of progressive education era, and is apparent in much scholarly research today. Goldberg, a researcher and art education advocate states “Art is as expressive as a language for

students who cannot express themselves linguistically” (2000, p.8). With increasing percentages of language learners in California, this is a strong argument for additional art integration in public schools. Expressing oneself through multiple channels of learning disciplines has proven to aid in cultural development as well. Research shows that art helps to improve the cultural development and identity of students (Freedman & Hernandez 1998, Gardner 1980,). In Gardner’s research of children and their drawings, he describes the importance of a child developing self-knowledge, or identity of self through drawing and visual arts. When children come to know the world, their perspective of tangible objects helps make them who they are. He explains that the transition from a world of tangible objects, to a world of symbols is very important for development. This study implies that without the vehicle of visual art children could not properly express themselves therefore properly develop.

Authors such as London (1994) describe the multi-sensory environment art can give, and the benefits of exploring ones culture and community through art. Many art movements throughout history started as a base for cultural individualism. Art enriches culture and diversity because of its multifaceted dimensions. Results from studies done by DeJarneete (1997) and Freedman and Hernandez (1998) show that many students who are diverse in culture and language translate information in more of a concrete manner through the arts. This is another reason why it is crucial to integrate such curricula into the diverse and multicultural schools of California.

Gardner’s research also shows that the developmentally appropriate expression of art education should be multifaceted and expressive using developmentally appropriate media. Having the opportunity to learn literacy through art, could prove very useful for

those students who are not at the developmental stage to learn literacy through pencil and paper type exercises. Visual representation of literature helps young readers identify with aspects of text. When discussing art and literacy, Gardner (1980) advocates using art because “Young children are able to make fine discrimination and to recognize individuals, cars, or animals on the basis of details” (p.11). In order to achieve higher level thinking (i.e. synthesis, evaluation) students need to know how to visually perceive and conceptualize art as well as literacy.

Gardner and Armstrong’s research shows that we all have diverse inherent skills for solving different problems (Gardner 1993, Armstrong 1993). This multiple intelligence theory encompasses diverse cognitive intelligences. Freedman (2003) describes the correlation between cognition and visual arts. The basis of this correlation is that all people are possible of learning, but that learning can take place many different ways. Visual arts can be a vehicle to heighten expression of oneself in culturally and developmentally appropriate ways. This is why the importance of incorporating the arts into our vastly diverse public school curricula is crucial.

### ***Visual Arts and Student Achievement***

Arts in many public California schools have been removed and distant from other core subjects. Art education advocate Merryl Goldberg (2000) describes historic pedagogy of teaching arts.

The most common form of arts education involves a specialist who teaches about the arts, this model does not take into account the full potential of arts in relation to knowledge and intellectual development” (pg. 4)

Goldberg's literature supports the theory of arts integrated curriculum and discusses the powerfulness of students who can find meaningful relationships between subjects and arts. Goldberg addresses the integration of core subjects with the arts where integration provides an opportunity which students are actively challenged with the complexities and new humanistic expansions of art along with the academic subjects.

The correlation between art and literacy is very apparent in recent research. Even government officials relay back the studies. Arnold Schwarzenegger declared in a 2004 proclamation of California Arts Day that "Exposure to the arts improves academic skills essential for reading and language development and helps all California children lead richer, fuller lives" (Appendix C).

The integration of art and literacy is very important when focusing on student achievement. Teaching art alone does not necessarily aid in student achievement. Burger and Winner (2000) examined journals, art education research, and individual studies that examined elementary age students, to uncover the answer to the question, "Is teaching reading through art more effective than teaching reading alone?" (p. 3) Their research concluded that the only relationship between teaching visual art and achievement is reading readiness. However, the study of integrated visual art and literacy "revealed a positive, moderately sized relationship between reading improvement and an integrated arts-reading form of instruction" (p. 4).

A similar study, the Minneapolis based Arts for Academic Achievement (AAA) program shows a correlation between integrated programs and student achievement. The AAA's main purpose was to form partnerships between schools, art organizations, and artist residence programs. This study found a correlation between arts integrated

instruction and improved student learning in literacy. The study found that arts integration assisted all students learning, especially for disadvantaged learners (Ingram-Riedel, 2003). The data from of 27 elementary schools' state achievement scores revealed "students whose teachers integrated the arts into English/reading lessons or math lessons had a higher gain scores in those disciplines" (p. 24). This research proves the academic enrichment that art integrated programs have the ability to foster.

### ***Discussion***

The research and evidence that supports art in the classroom shows that teaching art instills aesthetic appreciation, teaches cultural awareness through expression, and develops certain cognitive capacities when integrated in curriculum. However, from reading the historical background of legislation, it becomes quite evident that in California one could travel from kindergarten through college without ever participating in an art curriculum. This contradiction brings up a question for the educator: How can we take it upon ourselves to include art education into curriculum without the funds to do so?

One apparent solution that I have come up with is to apply for resources through government or privately funded grants. Educators need to rely on alternative revenue streams if resources are not made available in the public school system. Although this is an obvious resource, there is very little research about teachers applying for and writing grants. I believe teachers need to take a stand, and help to get the art programs that California public schools so desperately need. In the following chapter is an example of a basic teacher written grant, along with the methods and resources that are needed to apply for alternative resources.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

In the following chapter, I will describe the steps I took to successfully submit a grant proposal asking for funds to promote visual art education. There are several procedures one needs to complete in order to turn a vision into a correctly written grant proposal. The major pieces that needed to be accomplished in order to write this specific grant proposal were looking at the community, research, networking and forming partnerships. The following methodology is described as a linear procedure. However looking back, this action research was not at all linear, but more circular until I found the desired result.

#### ***Community***

The school which this grant was written for MLK, is a Title I school. Title I is a government funding term, indicating high poverty and low achievement in the school. Of its 900 students, over 80% are Hispanic, the African American, Filipino, Vietnamese, and Caucasian population make up the other 20%. The community in which MLK is located is devoid of a downtown, or community center. The jobs in this community are almost all hospitality based, which means most of the money goes to other affluent nearby communities.

Compared to traditional schools, MLK could be defined as to what it doesn't have. Programs of study such as music, physical education, visual and performing arts, and library have been cut. Teachers, who implement these programs themselves, need to pay for supplies out of pocket, and find time for lessons in a school that's in danger of failing the state academic achievement standards-based tests. The programs which have been

cut from this school are important for a school with over 80% English language learners, where non-language expression is crucial.

### ***Research***

To begin I read a variety of literature that dealt with trends of the inadequacies in the education system today. I felt most passionate about the lack of arts, so I decided on creating a vision of implementing visual art education in my school. It was apparent that funds played a major role in the scarcity of art programs, so I decided to write a grant proposal with the knowledge gained to acquire art for the Martin Luther King School. Once I found my action to accomplish, there were important aspects to research. The school where this vision was to be implemented had to be researched as well as information on how to effectively write a grant proposal and the arts resources available in the community, were all key factors in following through with this action.

The grant required a variety of school research for completion. The school's secretaries and administrators were incredibly helpful with this. I spent a good deal of time asking for ethnicity printouts of our school, fiscal tax identification numbers, and general student population facts. It was very important to keep all this information organized for when it came time to write and submit the grant.

As a novice at grant writing, I had many questions about how to effectively write grants, where to find them, and what was involved in the process. This was one of the most difficult tasks. I found that the more I discussed my project with people, the more resources became available. There were only a few people that I found who helped me immensely. A professor at school gave guidance on what foundations are looking for, a retired administrator who is experienced in grant writing lent me an actual grant that she

wrote, and a working Community Program for Youth (CPY) grant writer gave me the addresses of various foundations he knew that assisted with similar causes. The information I gained from the previous professionals was effective, current, and reliable. This is another reason why I value the practice of networking with the community in which your research is located.

The artist's resources were greatly magnified after I sought them. It is interesting that I hadn't heard of any local resources for art in schools prior to this research. On the other hand, when I went out and looked for resources, I found an abundance. By asking local art advocates and ex-art teachers, colleges and art studios, I found an abundance of professional artists that were happy to help in this action. Following I will describe the steps I took while networking with the community art resources.

### ***Network***

Networking was the most valuable tool in order to complete the action I wanted to accomplish. I would never have been able to find the abundance of resources I did find without the conversations that took place between various community resources. I began at the Visual and Public Arts Department (VPA) located at CSUMB. There, visual arts professors directed me to various community programs and gave me the important contact information needed for each. Examples of these are the Cultural Council of Monterey County (CCMC), The Boys and Girls Club of Monterey, Community Program for Youth (CPY), Oldemeyer Center, Community Arts Partnership in Education, the Museum Project, Arts Habitat Project, the Lyceum, and many retired and working work art advocates.



It was extremely beneficial to go to the process of networking with the variety of community resources, listed previously. Visiting with the directors and personnel of the ten resources listed in the previous paragraph brought over fifty possible leads. Talking with just a few people in the community generated more available resources than I could possibly work with.

After receiving the variety of leads, I began calling, meeting and emailing each one. After a few weeks I was able to assess the probable cohesiveness between the organizations and the MLK School. Through evaluating the school's needs by holding a staff meeting at MLK, I decided on working with just one of the resources. However, I found all of the organizations and professionals to be very valuable by furthering my knowledge of the subject and the abundance of resources in the community, and would recommend this type of networking to anyone looking for alternative programs in their schools.

### ***Partnerships***

After the school research had been gathered and the networking complete, I was able to organize and find the resource that best fit the Martin Luther King School. The Cultural Council of Monterey (CCMC) was the best fit partnership for what our school needed. The director had already had a grant in mind for our fourth grade classroom and needed my help implementing this. I needed help from her to implement my school-wide artist program; this formed a perfect partnership where we could both assist in each others goals for the MLK School. The director was extremely helpful and resourceful when assisting me with how our organizations could become educational partners. She and I worked together quite a bit, finding ways to present visual art education in the MLK

School. The director is a seasoned grant writer, and she suggested that we integrate a curriculum into a visual arts program. In order to receive grant funds, almost all organizations need to see proof of collaboration and integration. This is exactly what we planned for.

The program would introduce community artists into our school to integrate literacy and art. This is a community artist program that the director was familiar with. The director had written a curriculum and had taught a workshop on how to include art in schools by putting community artists with teachers in a workshop setting and then discussing the ways to integrate art into the language arts curriculum. I read the syllabus, and modified it to fit exactly what I learned the teachers and students at the MLK School needed.

The CCMC supplies the community artists, who have already been trained in the artists in residence program. The collaboration would focus on what stories are already in the language arts program, and what theatre the artists could incorporate in with the literature. The program we designed first included 2 workshops for the necessary collaboration of artists and teachers to find the students needs. Then, each teacher would be allotted eight weeks with an artist in his or her room to tie in reader's theatre with their language arts program. Artists would help the teacher and students create an art intertwined literature unit, based on reader's theatre. In addition to meeting the listening and speaking standards, students would also be able to practice visual and performing arts standards by making props and acting out characters. The program would incorporate visual art, story telling, and theatre with the appropriate aligned standards. The only piece missing were the finances needed to supply the artists of the CCMC.

The director of CCMC assisted in providing me many leads for finding grant sources to fund a program such as this. After researching a large number of websites, foundations, and professional organizations, I found the source that most suited our need. The National Education Association provides funding for innovative learning that is proven to significantly improve achievement for underserved students (NEA Foundation, 2005). The NEA Innovation Grant was exactly what the partnership between the CCMC and the MLK School was all about. I proceeded to write and submit the grant application to the NEA. I included all researched information about our school, provided a budget and timeline of project, and stated the importance of visual arts for our student population. If approved, the school will receive up to \$5,000.00 to follow through with the visual arts and literacy partnership. Following is a duplicate of the NEA Innovation grant, submitted in January, 2005.

**Chapter 4**  
**NEA Innovation Grant**

The NEA Foundation  
Attn: Innovation Grants

1201 Sixteenth Street NW, Suite 416  
Washington, DC 20036-3207

Please accept the attached Innovation Grant Application to the NEA from Martin Luther King Jr. School. We are requesting a grant of \$5,000 to be used for the implementation of a Visual Arts and Literacy program in partnership with the Cultural Council of Monterey County (CCMC) for the 2005-2006 school year.

As designed, this program will primarily be a collaborative effort between the teachers at MLK School and the artists in residence of the CCMC. Together, the partnership will bring comprehensive support to students in the area of literacy via art education. An in-depth program description is included in the attached proposal.

If you have any questions regarding the attached application, please do not hesitate to contact me at 831-\*\*\*-\*\*\*\*.

Sincerely,

Angela Schiaffo

## NEA Innovation Grant

### ***Students Served***

The students who will be served by this innovative arts and literacy enrichment program will be second through fifth graders, totaling ten classes at elementary level, of Martin Luther King School, in Seaside California. Of the MLK student body, 58% of students are considered proficient in English (SARC, 2003) yet only 22% of the students tested proficient on the California Standards Test in April of 2003. There are various factors that affect this gap in student achievement scores, one of the main being the language factor. Below is an ethnicity and language table with basic statistics describing the MLK School student population.

<b><i>*English Learner's Home Language</i></b>	<b><i>Ethnicity of School Population</i></b>
Spanish 81%	African American 26%
Vietnamese 9%	Asian American 18%
Filipino/ Tagalog 6%	Latino 48%
Other 4%	White/ European 9%

(CBEDS Census, 2002)

**\*Please note that the preceding table shows the 42% who were classified as English learners.**

According to the School Accountability Report Card in 2003, English learners at MLK School scored lower on the CST than students whose native language is English. There is much research to support the correlation between a visually stimulating environment and language acquisition, therefore a visual arts and literacy program may prove to be beneficial to our student's population.

### ***Goals for Student Achievement***

With the collaboration of visual artists, storytellers, and teachers, this project will strengthen literacy achievement by increasing the modalities in which students attain literacy. Learning to read is critically important for all children and MLK School's state achievement scores demonstrates that improvement in literacy is needed in our school. This is why I am proposing the implementation of a literacy and visual arts program. This program links visual and performing arts with literacy, therefore allowing students to learn literacy through different modalities, providing a successful learning experience, improving in literacy skills and giving students ownership of their own learning. The goal of this project is to find ways to link the cognitive skills developed in Visual arts and Readers Theatre to literacy achievement for our students.

### ***Timeline of Activities to Engage Student Learning***

The program, which has already been written by the CCMC arts coordinator, and discussed with the staff, will begin in August of 2005. At this time the second through fifth grade elementary teachers will have a collaboration meeting with the arts education coordinator Linda Risso, the artists (one visual artist and one storyteller) and myself. The meeting's two main objectives will be to produce a year-long schedule for the visual artist and storyteller in the ten different second through fifth grade classes. Additionally, the meeting will provide the visual artist and storyteller the opportunity to explore MLK School's curriculum.

Throughout the 2005-2006 school year, each teacher will have twelve one hour classes where the artists will visit the classroom and implement the Visual Arts and Literacy program. Teachers and artists will use inquiry-based methods to introduce projects to students that align with the school adopted literacy program. The artists will visit each second through fifth grade classroom and integrate specific art techniques such as drawing and painting skills, storytelling techniques of character development, and development and writing dialogue skills into their literacy program. For example, students will be asked to observe a painting and consider how they would bring the characters or characteristics to life and students will work in groups on dialogue, puppets, masks, hats, scenery, music or other aspects of production. In each phase of preparation, teachers and artists look for opportunities to integrate arts-based inquiry with literacy:

- When writing a dialogue, students role-play conversations with each other, assuming roles of various characters and brainstorming what they might say, aligning writing rubrics with writing and oral English language conventions.
- Students listen and read musical lyrics based on the same theme as the artworks while thinking about the characters and vocabulary to describe them, identifying the musical elements of literary language.
- Students research how animals or other characters act or move by writing summaries that contain the main idea of the literacy selection, then design puppets with those features, developing a list of action words to describe the movements.

### ***Professional Development***

At the beginning of the partnership between the CCMC artists, and the MLK teachers, projected August 2005, there will be a meeting between teachers

and artists to familiarize artists with the school adopted literacy texts, curriculum and students needs. Following this meeting, the artists (one story teller and one visual artist) will be given a specific time to separately visit each classroom a total of twelve hours throughout the year.

Following the artist's first three lessons with each class, there will be a two hour workshop, written in the program, taken place during the collaboration time set aside for the school on Fridays. This workshop will be a forum where all teachers and teaching artists collaborate to develop an Arts-Based Unit. Elements of visual arts, music and storytelling will be combined as teachers create an original, standards based, multi-arts unit with a literacy theme, as described above in the student-goal section.

After the completion of the workshop the artists will finish the nine class lessons with each teacher to help implement their unit in the classroom. At the end of the year, the teachers will have gained valuable collaboration time with artists. In addition teachers will have created a multi-arts unit based upon literature, and standard aligned curriculum for their appropriate grade level to implement in future teaching experiences.

### ***Evaluation***

The students will be assessed on speaking and listening standards throughout the school year according to the speaking and listening portions of the California State English Language Arts standards. Students will also be given a base-line writing sample at the beginning and completion of the program to demonstrate growth. The school adopted 'Results' reading assessment will be held at the completion of Reader's theatre, and the students will be asked to perform and critique a Readers theatre on their own.



In order to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the visual arts and literacy program, the teachers will compare California Standards Test scores from the 2004-2005 school year (pre-implementation) to those of 2005-2006 (post-implementation).

**Budget**

<b>Artists in Residence</b> (\$50/hour 120 hours)	<b>6000.00</b>
<b>Art Supplies</b>	<b>1250.00</b>
<b>Children's Literature</b>	<b>600.00</b>
<b>Monterey Peninsula Unified School District Overhead</b>	<b><u>750.00</u></b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$8600.00</b>
<b>Matching Support from CCMC</b>	<b>\$3000.00</b>
<b>Request from NEA Innovation Grant</b>	<b>\$5000.00</b>

Thank you for considering this request. The MLK School is appreciative of any assistance the NEA Foundation can give. If I can answer any questions please contact me at Martin Luther King School, (831) 799-8000.

Respectfully,

Angela Schiaffo  
Fifth Grade Teacher  
MLK Junior School

## **Chapter 5**

### **Discussion**

The steps taken in this action thesis project taught valuable lessons that I learned during the groundwork for this project. The outcomes have greatly benefited my school, teachers, and I've gained a great deal of knowledge and experience. Although a decision on my grant application has not been made yet, many positive actions have come about for the entire community at MLK School such as leads for artists in residence programs and a new awareness of the benefits of collaboration between teachers and artists. In this concluding chapter, I will explain the benefits of the community research I practiced during this grant proposal, and offer Tips for Teacher Grant-Writing.

### ***Actions***

During the research phase of my project, I called, visited, emailed and interviewed numerous community members about how to include visual arts in our community. Shortly after I submitted the grant proposal, teachers, administrators, community organizations, etc., continued giving me information about anything related to grant funds or arts. I actually became overwhelmed with the amount of faxes, calls, and visitors I received. A couple of local artists called our school looking for the possibility of a working partnership, an administrator set our school up with an artist, and the CCMC wrote us into a science integrated visual arts grant. Currently, the most successful action taken was the artists in residence that I was able to integrate into our language arts curriculum. Following is a brief description of the two week partnership we shared.

The artist, Matt Learn (pseudonym), is a professional storyteller, writer, and educator. This artist has been teaching in workshops and residencies for over twenty years, and was eager to work with our school. Mr. Learn uses stories, exercises and humor to convey that every child has a story to tell by using the students' personal and physical environments as a source for material. He uses Site Specific Education ([marcleviit.org](http://marcleviit.org), 2005), which is an educational philosophy that focuses on utilizing students environment to create writing and stories. This artists was an excellent match with our students, many of whom have not had experiences outside of their neighborhoods.

A meeting was called by an administrator who worked with Mr. Learn before, between Matt, the administrator and me. I was able to use some of the research and skills learned through this visual arts grant proposal to organize a brief artist in residency program between our school and the artist. As I remembered from previous experience with the grant proposal, the teachers' input is critical. So, before the meeting I went to each teacher to see what aspects of writing they would like reinforced in their classrooms with our visiting artists. Then, in our meeting we discussed what the format would look like- a large school-wide assembly with individual classroom workshops after the assembly. I asked if Mr. Learn would be able to teach the numerous writing skills that our teachers requested, and he agreed.

During the next two weeks, Mr. Learn visited all classrooms and taught creative, artistic lessons on voice, details, organization, and oral speaking strategies. Students were excited and the lessons were successful, as discussed below. I believe this to be

partly from the artist, who placed an artistic adaptation on regular writing instruction, to make it more engaging for the students.

### *Awareness*

The teachers in the MLK School were thrilled that their students portrayed such enthusiasm in the writing lessons. We learned a great deal from Mr. Learn's lessons, including how to implement creative storytelling into our writing lessons. A main theme that majority of the teachers learned, was that children need to tell their story before writing it down. It made me realize that we are all social beings and having the ability to speak about experiences first (via role playing, script reading, etc.), brings the writing about much easier. In future writing lessons, many teachers said that they would use aspects of Mr. Learn's lessons again. This type of staff development where educators are given artistic yet practical models to help their students is very powerful.

This education model is one of the most powerful things about artists in residency programs. If a school only has the opportunity for one year, then its teachers gain new, artistic lessons to tie into their curriculum over the years. If our school receives the funds for artists integrated language arts program next year it will give over twenty professionals a visual arts integrated unit to use and derive ideas from for many students for years to come.

### *Closing*

The most valuable skill I've learned from this project is the power of networking. We live in a vastly diverse community in California, and it brings such satisfaction to both parties when partnerships can be formed by helping children learn. The amount of

contacts, friendships, and general awareness of my community has grown enormously. I would highly recommend this type of research to anyone searching to implement a vision, start with the people who work and live in that desired setting.

At the time of this thesis publication, I have not received any confirmation of funds allotted to the MLK School for a visual art and literacy program. However, I now have seen a glimpse of the vast community resources just outside our school's doors waiting to help in teaching diverse and creative lessons to the children. I look forward to using these resources as an educator to assist in giving students an education filled with diverse multicultural arts and humanities that they deserve.

## **Tips for Teacher**

### **Grant Writing**

#### **Research**

- Find out what vision you are interested in implementing at your school.
- Why is it important to students, teachers, and society to apply this vision in your school?
- Know your schools:
  - ✓ Population
  - ✓ Ethnicity
  - ✓ Free and Reduced lunch percentage
  - ✓ Financial Office (Fiscal Agent and Tax ID numbers)
  - ✓ Phone, Fax, Email, Address
  - ✓ Administrators, Grant Writers, Secretaries

#### **Network**

- Put your ideas out into the community by contacting **every** community resource you can find that shares interest with in your vision. Examples in the community are:
  - ✓ College and University Departments
  - ✓ Non-Profit organizations
  - ✓ Specialty stores and shops
  - ✓ Local High Schools
  - ✓ Educators in your field of interest
- Arrange for meetings with community resources; take notes, phone numbers, free brochures and flyers, etc.

#### **Organize**

- Place all information gathered in a file. Some info may seem trivial, but it may prove to be an important step in your grant writing.

#### **Resources**

- The following are examples to help get you started in finding the grant that fits your vision.
- Grants are **very** specific. Don't get frustrated, you'll find one that's right for you!

<http://www.nfie.org/programs/grantguides.htm>

[www.artsed411.org](http://www.artsed411.org)

[http://www.educationworld.com/a\\_admin/grants/additional\\_grants.shtml](http://www.educationworld.com/a_admin/grants/additional_grants.shtml)

<http://www.captainplanetfdn.org/grants.html>

<http://www.staplesfoundation.org/foundapplication.html>

Written by Angela Schiaffo, 2005

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## *Appendix A*

### Legislation effecting Art Education in California

- 1970: Ryan Act.** Eliminates arts-course training requirements for elementary school teachers.
- 1978: Proposition 13.** Property-tax cap results in school funding being shifted from local communities to the state. Districts are forced to cut staff and programs.
- 1983: High school reform.** Law requires high school students to take either one-year foreign language or visual or performing arts.
- 1989-90: Arts education report.** Arts Education Task Force issues a report stressing the importance of arts education, urging the California Arts Council and the Department of Education to bring artists into the schools to help train teachers as well as work with students.
- 1992: Arts partnership.** The local Arts Education Partnership Program puts into practice the recommendations of the speaker's task force from the Arts education report of 1990.
- 1995: Education Code Number 5121.** Amended elementary grades course of study to include visual and performing arts, including instruction in the subjects of dance, music, theater, and visual arts, aimed at the development of aesthetic appreciation and the skills of creative expression.
- 1999: University requirements.** Both UC and CSU systems change admission requirements to include one year of visual or performing arts, beginning in 2003.
- 2000: Arts budget increases.** Gov. Gray Davis increases the California Arts Council's annual budget to earmark \$10 million for education programs.
- 2001: Teacher requirements change.** The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing alters its requirements for accreditation to include some training in the teaching of visual and performing arts. Requirement taken place in 2004.
- 2001: The state Board of Education adopts content standards for the arts.**
- 2003: California arts council budget cut by over 90%.** Grant making activities suspended, including arts in education grant programs.
- 2004: CDE Arts Work Grants: \$6 million eliminated in Gov. Schwarzenegger's budget** on August 12, 2004, SB1108.

Retrieved from [www.ede.ca.gov](http://www.ede.ca.gov), [www.aep.org](http://www.aep.org),

## ***Appendix B***

Dear Superintendent and Administrators:

As I am sure you know, the arts are a core academic subject under the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB). I believe the arts have a significant role in education both for their intrinsic value and for the ways in which they can enhance general academic achievement and improve students' social and emotional development.

As I travel the country, I often hear that arts education programs are endangered because of *No Child Left Behind*. This message was echoed in a recent series of teacher roundtables sponsored by the Department of Education. It is both disturbing and just plain wrong.

It's disturbing not just because arts programs are being diminished or eliminated, but because NCLB is being interpreted so narrowly as to be considered the reason for these actions. The truth is that NCLB included the arts as a core academic subject because of their importance to a child's education. *No Child Left Behind* expects teachers of the arts to be highly qualified, just as it does teachers of English, math, science, and history. The arts, perhaps more than any other subject, help students to understand themselves and others, whether they lived in the past or are living in the present. President Bush recognizes this important contribution of the arts to every child's education. He has said, "From music and dance to painting and sculpting, the arts allow us to explore new worlds and to view life from another perspective." In addition, they "encourage individuals to sharpen their skills and abilities and to nurture their imagination and intellect."

A comprehensive arts education may encompass such areas as the history of the arts, the honing of critical analysis skills, the re-creation of classic as well as contemporary works of art, and the expression of students' ideas and feelings through the creation of their own works of art. In other words, students should have the opportunity to respond to, perform, and create in the arts.

### ***Setting the Record Straight***

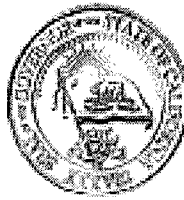
There is much flexibility for states and local school districts under the *No Child Left Behind Act* with respect to support for the core subjects. In Arizona, for example, as part of Superintendent Tom Horne's current "content-rich curriculum" initiative, \$4 million in Comprehensive School Reform (Title I, Part F) funds are supporting arts education at 43 current Comprehensive School Reform schools throughout Arizona. Additional Arizona Arts Education Initiative school sites are being supported with Title V (Innovative Programs) funding under NCLB.

Under NCLB, Title I, Part A funds also can be used by local education agencies to improve the educational achievement of disadvantaged students through the arts. In the same way, Title II Teacher Quality Enhancement Grants can address the professional development needs of teachers of the arts, and portions of Title II funds can support partnerships that include nonprofit, cultural-arts organizations.

The arts also can be an important part of learning and enrichment in programs supported by 21st Century Community Learning Centers program funds. Before- and after-school, weekend, and summer programs are excellent opportunities to stimulate students' artistic interests and foster their growth or to integrate arts learning with other subjects, including reading and math. Cultural partners in the community -- arts centers, symphonies, theatres, and the like -- can offer engaging venues as well as skilled instructors and mentors for students.

Based on a review of data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS: 88), University of California-Los Angeles researchers determined that students who were highly involved in arts instruction earned better grades and performed better on standardized tests. They also performed more community service, watched fewer hours of television, reported less boredom in school, and were less likely to drop out of school. These findings were also true for students from the lowest socioeconomic status quartile of the 25,000 students surveyed, belying the assumption that socioeconomic status, rather than arts engagement, contributes to such gains in academic achievement and social involvement. For both the important knowledge and skills they impart and the ways in which they help students to succeed in school and in life, the arts are an important part of a complete education. As we work together to implement NCLB, let's ensure that all children have the opportunity to learn and to grow in and through the arts.

Sincerely,  
Rod Paige



GOVERNOR ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER

PROCLAMATION

Arts and culture enhance every aspect of life in California, improving our economy, enriching our civic life and exerting a profound influence on the education of our children.

The arts also strengthen California's economy by generating \$5.4 billion in economic activity annually, supporting more than 160,000 full-time jobs and generating nearly \$300 million in local and state revenue. Exhibition and performance of the arts provide a catalyst for economic growth, cultural tourism and community development.

Among our children, the arts promote positive social development and encourage exploration and creativity. Exposure to the arts improves academic skills essential for reading and language development and helps all California children lead richer, fuller lives.

On California Arts Day, we celebrate our state's artistic heritage and the role of the arts in facilitating communication across our diverse cultures. Together with others throughout the country, we recognize October as Arts and Humanities Month and continue our efforts to promote arts education and appreciation.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, Governor of the State of California, do hereby proclaim October 1, 2004, as "California Arts Day" and October 2004, as "Arts and Humanities Month."

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have here unto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of California to be affixed this 14<sup>th</sup> day of September 2004.

A handwritten signature of Arnold Schwarzenegger in black ink.

Arnold Schwarzenegger  
GOVERNOR OF CALIFORNIA

Attest:

A handwritten signature of Kevin Shelley in black ink.  
Kevin Shelley  
SECRETARY OF STATE