

Fall 2014

Where Art Thou?: Bringing the Arts into Elementary School Classrooms

Sean Hagen
California State University, Monterey Bay

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.csumb.edu/caps_thes

Recommended Citation

Hagen, Sean, "Where Art Thou?: Bringing the Arts into Elementary School Classrooms" (2014). *Capstone Projects and Master's Theses*. 497.

https://digitalcommons.csumb.edu/caps_thes/497

This Capstone Project is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ CSUMB. It has been accepted for inclusion in Capstone Projects and Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ CSUMB. Unless otherwise indicated, this project was conducted as practicum not subject to IRB review but conducted in keeping with applicable regulatory guidance for training purposes. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@csumb.edu.

Where Art Thou?: Bringing the Arts into Elementary School Classrooms

Sean Hagen

California State University Monterey Bay

Abstract

There is not enough art education in local elementary schools, and the curriculum, time constraints and funding make increasing arts education difficult. Interviewing a diversity of local elementary school teachers allowed us to get a broad understanding of the situation of the arts in schools, and to discover attitudes toward the arts which might encourage or discourage increasing arts education in schools. More privileged schools with the means to include art education find that students are excited and engaged in learning. There is, however, a lack of training, funding, and time in the curriculum to allow for greater arts education. A grant was applied for in hopes of bringing a professional in the arts, associated with the Arts Council of Monterey County, to provide a ten hour lesson on the arts to a school with no formal arts education. Teachers want to bring the arts into their classrooms, but faced with current restrictions, they are finding it difficult.

Keywords: art, education, curriculum, funding, teacher training

Where Art Thou?: Bringing the Arts into Elementary School Classrooms

Setting the Stage: Today I would go to school. I went to school every day anyway, but today I would go with purpose, and would be glad to be there. Today we had Art Core, our elementary school's art program organized and led by parent volunteers. It was a time we could express ourselves and be fearless, freed from the concrete rules of other subjects. I loved every moment I had with art, for in my mind, this was the kingdom over which I ruled, even if only by sitting at my desk, silently and passionately absorbed in my work. I didn't know it back then, but the time I had with art would also improve my capacity and depth of understanding in other subjects. It would give complexity and richness to my writing, and give me new ways to think about math and science. More importantly, it made me complete as a person, and it challenged me, again and again, to become better as I learned about the artistic movements, and actively tested the limits of my own creativity in and out of school.

It so happened that my Cub Scout leader was also the chief organizer in our elementary school's art program, where her son was a peer of mine. In my young eyes, she was a sharp woman of fierce countenance packed into a small but sturdy frame, with an unmatched fondness

for arts and crafts. Thus, the school's art program was ideally balanced. There was a strictness which informed us in no unclear terms as to what the time we had was for, but which provided the freedom to set the class brimming with creativity. Our elementary school was, and is, a public school in San Diego, part of the San Diego Unified School District.

Background Research

The topic I am interested in is arts education. In the group I am collaborating with, the arts have always been an important part of our lives. Growing up, we all had strong art programs in our early education and believe that there are many benefits that help students become successful. We want to make sure that students in the future benefit from the arts as much as we did in the past. The Arts Education Partnership, Americans for the Arts, the National Art Education Association, and the California Alliance for Arts Education are organizations that are also interested in integrating the arts into the classroom.

Concerning the history of this issue, art programs are one of the first programs to be removed from a school when money is lacking. From our experiences in classrooms, art is a backburner subject that is not focused on or used very often. It is not a priority for schools, and because of the budget cuts, most schools overlook the importance and benefits that it brings to the students. In the past, many schools had amazing art programs that were in engaging and the students enjoyed. Today, we don't see as many in our public schools. There are two perspectives to the situation: those who believe that art is a strong tool to help kids learn and express themselves, and those who think that the core subjects are more important to focus on.

Individuals and groups including the State Board of Education, the principal, teachers, school site council (SSC), parents, students and community members are all local stakeholders in this issue, and the role that each plays is connected to each other. Each group wants to see success for the students and the school, and these groups must be able to work together to make progress on this issue.

The current situation involving bringing arts education programs into public schools is that in California, No Child Left Behind was phased out, and now we have the Common Core State Standards, which dictates content standards in elementary schools, and is a state-led initiative. According to Smith, decades of decline in the arts is due to “tight budgets, an ever-growing list of state mandates that have crammed the classroom curriculum, and a public sense that the arts are lovely but not essential” (Smith, 2009, “It has become a mantra in education”).

Arts education is currently in a difficult place, and faces restricted school budgets, a tightened curriculum because of federal and state testing as well as government mandates to increase scores in core subjects. According to the California State Board of Education website (2014), there are currently “academic content standards for Visual and Performing Arts in kindergarten through grade twelve”, which contains dance, music, theater and visual arts (www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/, 2014, “Academic content standards for Visual and Performing Arts”). However, with the standards that teachers are required to meet for other subjects in the classroom, they have very little time to bring art into the classroom and offer the many intellectual, emotional and social benefits of the arts. Indeed, this concern is reflected in Virginia Lena Pinasco’s Capstone project at CSUMB, the purpose of which was to show that art

integration boosts children's imagination, and encourages their own learning. Over the course of interviewing teachers in the field, she found that "state standard guidelines limited the amount of time in the classrooms for art" (Pinasco, 2013, p. 7). I have seen these restrictions and obstacles to art education, such as a rigid curriculum and budget cuts reflected across the research in arts education, as well as in my own experience. There is also a belief that art education means more than what takes place in the classroom. Parent encouragement is an important factor which facilitates learning. Bolin feels that "Art education... occurs both inside and beyond the walls of public school. Their parents encourage them to make art, [and] discuss art together outside of school" (Bolin, 1999, p. 4). Many students do not have the benefit of such encouragement at home, so it is left to schools to provide adequate art programs for students.

The literature shows that inclusion of art programs in the school are crucial for child development. Baker discusses the research which tend to support how the arts increases academic as well as social skills. The benefits of art education are worth pursuing and dedicating class time to, even with so many other important subjects to cover. Baker maintains that even though arts education is considered by most researchers in the field to be crucial to early development, data can be difficult to come by. Currently, school districts are not required to report to the federal government the status of their arts education programs. According to Rome, "There's very little national-level research on the status and condition of arts education" (Rome, n.d., "There's very little national-level research", as cited in Baker, 2014). Although it can not be ignored that there are studies that indicate positive results of art education and those that do not, according to Ravitch, "The arts are absolutely crucial because these are the subjects and activities that bring children to school. [The arts] are highly motivating and they expand students'

ability to think and feel and get connected to other students” (Ravich, n.d., “The arts are absolutely crucial because”, as cited in Baker, 2014). While definitive proof of such would be ideal, there is a general consensus among educators on the inherent benefit of the arts.

Hetland agrees with this thinking: “When there's strong emotional content to the learning — when it's fun or engaging or gratifying — it's more likely to take hold” (Hetland, n.d. “

Moreover, children simply enjoy participating in the arts”, as cited in Baker, 2014). Many studies have been conducted which link the arts to increased academic performance, but while there is a tendency toward improved performance, it cannot yet be said that there is a direct link between the two.

Many researchers feel that the greatest benefit of the arts is already proven. Ravich believes that “It's too utilitarian an argument to say that test scores will grow if you do the arts. I don't think it's relevant, and it doesn't matter. They're important for our spirit and soul and humanness” (Ravich, n.d., “It's too utilitarian an argument to say”, as cited in Baker, 2014). These same concepts of the inherent value of arts education are seen throughout the literary research. As Gioia puts it, “Art is an irreplaceable way of understanding and expressing the world... there are some truths about life that can be expressed only as stories, or songs, or images” (Gioia, as cited in Evans, 2008).

Still, arts integration advocates have for years been accumulating evidence that shows the importance of the arts in schools. The literature all points toward the same idea, that the arts help children to make important connections to themselves, their peers, and to the world around them. It engages students and makes them more receptive, and increases curiosity for learning new things. They learn that art is subjective, that there are not always concrete black and white

answers, that there are different ways to think about things. All these are important for building strong, inquisitive minds.

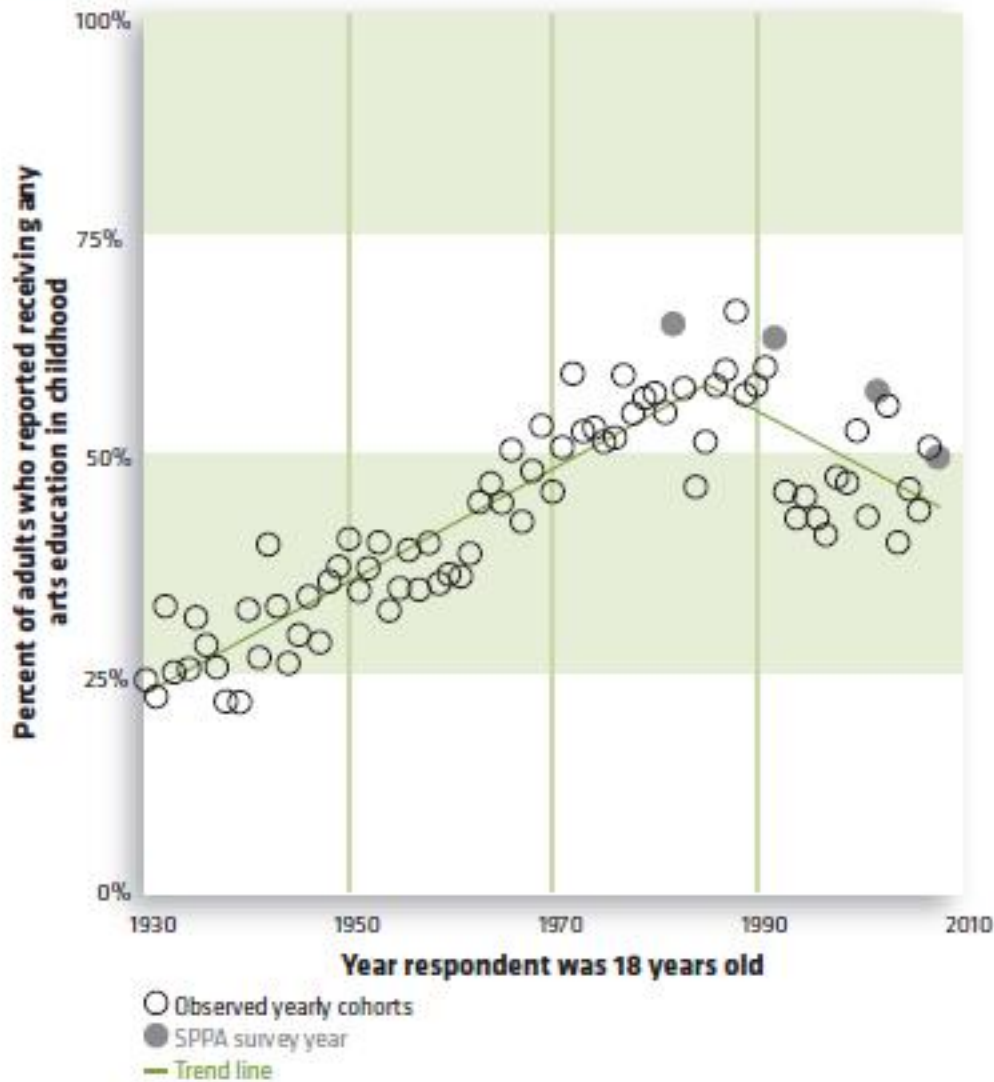
Another researcher in Baker's article (2014), Schellenberg, conducted a scientific study in which he tested 144 six year olds over 36 weeks to see if after-school music instruction in the form of keyboard or vocal, improved their IQ scores. There were two music groups, one drama group, and a control group with no arts instruction. Schellenberg's study showed that the group with music instruction had improved IQs over the control group, regardless of socioeconomic background, and the drama group had improved social skills. (Schellenberg, n.d., as cited in Baker, 2014). This empirical evidence is representative of the positive trends other researchers in the field have found, who have studied the value of the arts in early education.

Wherland builds on Lev Vygotsky's theory of development and his definition of imagination and argues that art in the classroom is important for developing children at this stage of cognitive development. According to Vygotsky, "the entire future of humanity will be attained through the creative imagination; orientation to the future, behavior based on the future and derived from this future, is the most important function of the imagination" (Vygotsky, 2004, p. 88, as cited in Wherland, 2012, p. 19). It can then be assumed that since our role as educators is to prepare students for the future, that integration of the arts is a crucial element to cognitive development in the elementary years.

When thinking about the future of the arts in schools, it is important to have an understanding of the past trends. According to the National Endowment for the Arts (2011) in an SPPA survey, the percentage of adults who received any arts education as children has been declining since 1982, in popular art forms such as music, visual arts, theater and dance, from

around 55% to 45% (Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011, p. 46).

Percent of Americans who received any arts education in childhood over the past 77 years



Source: 1982, 1992, 2002, and 2008 waves of the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts.

Figure 1. This graph visualizes this downward trend in art education since 1982.

Given the current economy and governmental policies, what we now have is a disturbing

picture of the current situation of the arts in elementary schools. The literature and research of people and organizations in the field demonstrate a consensual understanding that there is both a decline in the arts in elementary schools, and that the arts opens countless doors for students to be successful and achieve their full potential. Without the arts in schools to enrich students' growth, we are ultimately depriving our future of the creativity which drives the richness and diversity of the country.

Method

Art education in schools should be taken more seriously and respected. There should be more arts programs, elective opportunities, and less cutbacks to this school subject. Arts education in our schools creates a creative community and highly motivated and achieving students. Art education also provides a safe and inclusive outlet. Involvement in the arts can be associated with gains in reading, math, cognitive ability, critical thinking, and verbal skills (Henry, 2002). This learning can also improve motivation, confidence, concentration, and teamwork. Art connects people to the world on a deeper level and also helps them to view people, situations, and problems from different perspectives and in different ways. It provides a foundation that creates social bonds and community cohesion. Various art forms can provide a diverse learning experience, cultural awareness, and self growth. Through our research, we are hoping to learn why art programs in elementary schools are not being implemented to their full capacity as well as how this can be changed.

Context

Grant Elementary School¹ is located in Ocean City, CA. They are part of the Sunnyside Unified School District and have a mission to improve the world with every student. Grant is a public elementary school that includes grades kindergarten through fifth grade. Grant Elementary contains nearly 500 students with an average class size of about 27. About 82% of the entire school enrollment is hispanic or latino. A total of 53% of the students attending this school are english language learners and 55% receive free or reduced price meals. The AMO's (Annual Measurable Objectives) for English/Language Arts and Mathematics have not been met at Grant. This results in the placement of Grant Elementary in Program Improvement. The 2013/14 year is their fourth year level in program improvement.

The Intercontinental School of Montgomery is a Public Charter elementary school serving grades K-08, and as it is in high demand, is open to all applicants by lottery. It is located in Seabreeze, California. Its faculty have lived and taught in many countries across the globe, bringing a rich and diverse perspective to the classroom. It is the goal of the community, faculty and friends to create a rich and engaging experience for the students, which will benefit them throughout life. This school uses Whole-Child Curriculum, which focuses on the total growth of the developing child, and includes visual and performing arts through all grade levels. The school has a total enrollment of 424. Being a Charter school, the Intercontinental School of Montgomery has the flexibility which allows a comprehensive arts program to benefit early education. As a charter school, it receives funding from the State of California based on Average Daily Attendance. In light of the fact that this funding falls short of the services and programs the school provides, it is made up for by using a non-profit organization which raises funds for the

¹ All names of people and places are pseudonyms.

school through the support of student families. Every family is encouraged to donate \$1,800 per student, or as much as they are able.

Manta Ray Chartwell School is a public K-8 school located in Prince Grove, CA. This school is unique for the area because it uses the Waldorf curriculum as well as the California State standards to give the students learning opportunities to reach their full potential. The teachers at this school use hands-on methods that inspire creativity, motivation, and critical thinking in each student. There is a variety of specialty classes offered to the students such as Handwork, Spanish, Music, Theatre, Choral Singing, P.E., and Strings. Along with the Intercontinental School of Montgomery, this is a charter school and is also funded by the State of California based on the Average Daily Attendance. Each student that has perfect attendance generates about \$6,500 per year to the school and with every day missed this number decreases accordingly. Parents play a huge role in supporting the programs for the students by fundraising and donating money. The students that attend the Manta Ray Chartwell School are benefiting from the unique programs and curriculum that is offered to them.

CJ Cranton Elementary School is a public elementary school located in Martina, CA and is part of the Manta Ray Unified School District. As a school, their mission is to create engaging learning experiences for their students to achieve well-rounded skills that will benefit their futures. CJ Cranton Elementary School provides classes for Kindergarten through 5th grade students, along with programs such as After School Academy, English Language Advisory, GATE, and Intervention. Since this is a public school, they receive their funding through the Average Daily Attendance. Their attendance rate has declined to 95%, meaning they have lost over \$35,000 in funding over the past 5 years. The only art program they are able to provide for

their school is a music class for the 5th graders. A credentialed music teacher meets with the students for 45 minutes once a week. CJ Cranton offering great effort to provide their students with the best they can give.

Participants and Participant Selection

Researchers.

Deanna: My name is Deanna Basso, and I am a senior student at CSUMB. I am studying to attain my bachelor's degree in Liberal Studies, have spent countless hours in elementary school classrooms, and am completely invested in this topic. I used my knowledge of research and source material to find reliable sources and conduct productive interviews. I am biased in that I have been greatly affected by the arts and feel strongly about its presence in grade schools. I made sure to ask fair and unbiased questions throughout my research and interviews.

Caro: I am a senior at CSUMB who has been studying Liberal Studies and Spanish. I have worked alongside teachers in elementary school classrooms around the local community throughout my college years and witnessed how the arts are integrated into these schools. I grew up with a very strong art program in my elementary school and truly believe that art education is beneficial for the students in many ways. This bias could have hindered my researching skills, so I made sure to not let it impact my interviews.

Sean: My name is Sean Hagen, and am studying at CSUMB to be an elementary teacher in California. I personally benefited from art programs in my early education, and want to pass on the tremendous benefits which I received on to future students. As a scholar, future teacher,

and lifelong enthusiast of the arts, I am qualified to research the role of the arts in elementary schools. I maintained awareness, in the process of researching the issue, of my strong bias in favor of arts education. I strove to maintain impartiality throughout my research.

Informants.

The informants for this project consist of elementary school teachers that are working in the local area. Teachers at Grant Elementary School, the Intercontinental School of Montgomery, Manta Ray Chartwell School, and CJ Cranton Elementary School participated in interviews to provide us with information on how they view the art programs in their schools. The teachers voluntarily took the interviews, meaning the grade levels that they teach range from 1st to 6th grade.

Procedure

In the process of collecting our data, each researcher visited a local school and conducted interviews with members of the faculty. Multiple interviews yielded a diversity of perspectives on the subject of art education. Interviews were obtained in the form of face-to-face meetings on school grounds, using written notes and an audio recorder with permission from the interviewee, or in the form of email correspondence.

Data Analysis

The data that is gathered will be analyzed by the three researchers to find the common themes that are revealed when discussing the art programs in the local elementary schools. The

results that are found will be based on the ideas given across the multiple schools and teachers interviewed and will be supported with various evidence. The data will also be examined with the knowledge of our literary evidence.

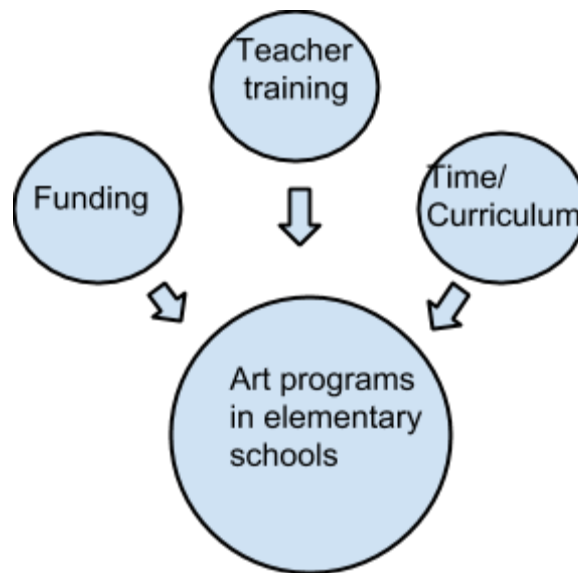


Figure 2. This graph illustrates the relationship of various factors which are important to incorporating art programs into elementary schools.

Results

After our interviews with multiple teachers in various schools in the local area, it was revealed that art education is suffering in the classrooms. Teachers discussed issues with funding, lack of training, and time constraints due to the curriculum.

Funding

Firstly, more funding should be assigned and distributed to art programs and supplies in elementary schools. Ms. Lowe, a 5th grade teacher at Grant Elementary School, believes that schools that are lacking art education should receive more state and federal funding assigned to art programs in public schools. Elementary schools that are in need of more art programs are the schools that are lacking the funds to do so. Along with Ms. Lowe's beliefs, Ms. Paris, a 3rd grade teacher at Manta Ray Chartwell School, discussed how she personally needs to find grants and donations for supplies to support her art lessons in the classroom. This supports our claim because for schools with low funding for the arts, teachers are forced to take it upon themselves to spend money if they choose to incorporate the arts in their classroom. Mr. Ford, a 2nd grade teacher at the Intercontinental School of Montgomery, states, "This school enjoys the benefit of having many parent volunteers and receives financial contributions from families which enables the school to be very competitive in the quality of the programs it offers. Without the active support of the administration and parents, the quality of instruction would suffer as a result." This means that the quality of art education for students relies heavily on outside contributions. Therefore, in light of this evidence, teachers believe that funding is essential to the quality of art education in our elementary schools.

Teacher Training

Along with funding, teachers feel they should be better trained and prepared to teach art education. In our interview with Mr. Ford, he stated, "I don't think I ever received any formal training on how to integrate art." If teachers had better training, they would be more capable in

integrating art programs. He also thinks that with more training, teachers would be more comfortable and willing to use art in the classrooms. Teachers that are less confident with art as a subject are less likely to teach it. Ms. Mac, a 2nd grade teacher at Manta Ray Chartwell School, believes there are some teachers that do not consider art a part of teaching, which limits the creativity they bring into the curriculum. With better training, teachers will understand the value of art education. This evidence supports our claim that teachers who are better trained in art education are better equipped to include art programs in their schools.

Time/ Curriculum

Teachers also believe that more time should be allotted to art education in their school curriculums. Ms. Lowe feels that due to state testing and district benchmarks, teachers think that there is not enough time for art in the curriculum. Teachers are pressured into producing good test results, therefore non-core subjects, such as art, become less important in the classrooms. Ms. McCall, a 3rd grade teacher at CJ Cranton, says, “I definitely do not think that is enough devotion to art, however, like I said, principals/districts/California are now looking for everything to be tied to a standard for it to be “meaningful” for student learning, and sadly art is left out of those standards.” Since students are not being tested on art standards, teachers are not incorporating art into the curriculum. Mr. Appleorchard, a 2nd grade teacher at the Intercontinental School of Montgomery, discusses his belief that [error in grammar, punctuation, mechanics or style - pls correct] there is a lack of time available to teachers as they are bound to a standardized curriculum. The California school curriculum is too rigid to allow freedom and flexibility to include art education. As evident from these teachers’ points, since art is not a core

subject, it does not receive the amount of time that teachers believe necessary.

Conclusion

From the teachers that we have interviewed, there is a consensus concerning what should be done about the lack of art education in elementary schools. More funding should be assigned, more training should be provided to teachers, and more time should be set aside in the curriculum for art education. It was clearly evident that there is a strong belief amongst teachers in various schools that art education is important and beneficial to the students and is not receiving the attention it deserves.

Description and Justification of Action

The lack of art programs in many elementary schools can be traced back to a variety of factors that come directly from the thoughts of the teachers in the schools themselves. Since art in the classrooms relies heavily on teachers and supplies, any probable action will need to provide support for the educators to fulfill beneficial art programs for the students. By increasing the art programs in schools, students can gain a new sense of learning that is different from the standard classroom lessons.

Options

In order to incorporate more art programs into elementary schools, we have come up with three different action options for teachers, administrators, and parents to consider. Based on

our research and interviews at local schools, we have determined that factors such as funding, time restraints, curriculum restrictions, parental involvement, and teacher training all play a role in the lack of current art programs. Our three options that address the issue concerning student involvement with the arts in today's classrooms are creating a workshop to better train teachers, organizing parental volunteers to help involve art programs in schools, and applying for a grant to bring the Professional Artists in the Schools Program through the Arts Council for Monterey County to a local school which could benefit from such a program. By creating a workshop to help train teachers with arts in the classroom, they will be better equipped and more comfortable with involving art in their curriculum. Parental volunteers are important assets in support of these programs because they provide extra encouragement and funding for the students inside and outside of the classroom. Thirdly, by applying for a grant, a local school would be provided the funding to benefit from a professional art program.

Evaluation of Options

To help us decide which option to choose as our action, we created a table to help us evaluate each idea according to certain criteria. We used time, reach, and reasonableness as our three criteria. Time is indicative of how long it would take for each action to be set up and carried out. Reach refers to the number of teachers, administrators, parents, and students, that might be impacted by our actions. Lastly, reasonableness consists of the likelihood of completion for each action. These criteria are important in helping us decide which action we will include in our project. A high rating in the table means either a large amount of time will be needed, a large number of people reached, and a higher degree of practicality. A low rating in the table means

either a shorter amount of time, a limited reach of stakeholders, and a low degree of practicality.

Figure 3	Time	Reach	Reasonableness
ACTION OPTION 1: Workshop for training teachers on how to integrate art education	High	High	Low
ACTION OPTION 2: Organize parent volunteer sign up to help with art programs	Medium	Medium	Medium
ACTION OPTION 3: Apply for a grant to bring the Professional Artists in the School Program to a local school	Medium	Medium	Medium

Figure 3. Evaluation of our action options based on the rubric criteria.

The first option includes setting up a workshop to train teachers on how to better embrace art into their schools. This action would take a large amount of time to complete because we would have to hire a professional to come and run the workshop for the teachers. This requires research in finding a local professional, funding to pay them, and a venue to hold the event. Approval would be needed from the administration of the school and a date would be necessary

to carry out the event. This action would reach a good number of teachers, possibly all, depending on attendance and interest. The reasonableness of this action is low due to the time constraints and the difficulties in acquiring all of these factors.

Organizing parent volunteers would take a medial amount of time. We would need to acquire a list of student guardians and create a volunteer system where they have the opportunity to participate in art activities in the schools. We would also need to give the volunteers a sense of direction to pursue for the following school years. There is also a medial amount of reach for this option because we would only be working with one school and the action would only reach the parents at this particular school. The reasonableness for this option is medial as well. There is no guarantee that the school would continue to use this system in future years. Further, there is no assurance that parents will be interested in participating in this system.

Lastly, applying for a grant to bring the Professional Artists in the Schools Program to a local elementary school will take a medial amount of time, has a medial amount of reach, as well as a medial amount of reasonableness. It will take time to each fill out a grant application, as well as wait for the results and follow up with the necessary proceedings to bring the program into a school. The reach is medium because we will only be able to incorporate the program into one school due to the cost, but it will reach every student that attends this school. There is no guarantee that we will receive this grant, which makes the reasonableness a medium. If we were to be granted the money, the Professional Artists in the School Program would be implemented in a local school. This action is able to be completed in the amount of time we have available.

Evaluation of Evidence

Based on our interview results and researched literature, it is clear that it is important to judge the options not solely on our table criteria, but on the evidence as well. By implementing a teacher workshop for better training on how to integrate art into education, teachers will gain confidence and knowledge on the subject, which results in them carrying out more efficient art education in their schools. Teachers are the primary art instructors for students in elementary schools, but in most cases their art training ranges from non-existent to minimal (Arts Impact, 2005). Multiple teachers that we have interviewed have also agreed that more training in the arts would be beneficial to their classroom. Training teachers would help them to feel more confident and comfortable teaching this subject (Ford, personal communication, October 13, 2014). Some teachers limit the creativity they bring to their curriculum because they do not consider art an important subject; they were never taught the importance of incorporating it to their classroom (Mac, personal communication, October 13, 2014). Teachers and researchers agree that more training in art education would benefit the students in the classroom.

Along with teacher training, parental volunteers can provide support for teachers who are trying to facilitate art programs in their classroom. The new Common Core does not test the students on art standards (California Department of Education, 2014). Teachers spend most of their time focusing on the core subjects and have limited extra time in their schedules to plan art programs in their classrooms. In our interview with Lowe (2014), she explained that state testing and district benchmarks leave little time in the curriculum for art. Parent involvement helps to minimize the stress placed upon teachers to include art in the curriculum. The more parents that participate, the less preparation the teachers will have to do in order to make these programs

possible. Over thirty years of research shows that parent involvement is a significant factor in a child's academic success (Eagle, 1989; Henderson & Berla, 1994; U.S. Department of Education, 1994; Ziegler, 1987). Funkhouser (1997) believes that "If families are to work with schools as partners in the education of their children, schools must provide them with the opportunities and support they need to become involved." By setting up a parent volunteer option, we are providing a local school with the opportunity for parents to become more active in their children's education.

Funding is another critical issue for arts education in schools today. Many teachers have told us that due to the lack of funding, they are unable to provide art programs for their students. In an interview with Paris (2014), she discussed how she personally needs to find grants and donations for supplies to support art programs for her students. Since 1992, government funding for the arts in public schools has decreased by 31 percent, and state and local funding has decreased by over 25 percent (Stubbs 2012, "In addition to"). In an article about budget cuts, Fang (2013) states, "With so little public funding, schools are now relying more on private funds and patrons of the arts to provide creative outlets for students" ("With so little"). The Arts Council of Monterey County improves the quality of life with their program of incorporating professional artists into local schools (Arts Council for Monterey County, 2014). By applying for a grant to provide this program into a local school, we are helping a school that is in need of funds for art programs.

Decision Making

After considering the criteria and evidence for the three different action options, we have

decided to apply for a grant in order to bring in a professional artist to CJ Cranton Elementary School through the Arts Council of Monterey. Creating a teacher workshop would be impractical due to the limited amount of time we have to fulfill this action. There is also no guarantee that the teachers would volunteer their free time to attend the workshop, or use the information provided in their future classrooms. In contrast, this workshop could be valuable to informing teachers of the benefits to teaching the arts to their students. Establishing a parent volunteer system would be a great option if we could have started in the beginning of the Fall, but at this point there is not enough time to situate a school with this type of system. There is also no guarantee that parents would actually sign up and volunteer their time to help with the art programs in the classrooms. Conversely, creating a parent volunteer system has the potential to provide additional support to the teachers to facilitate bringing in art.

At this point, we recommend applying for a grant to pay for the Professional Artists in the Schools Program to come to our school. This would be a 10 hour program of dance, visual arts, music, and drama. Potential negative outcomes could be that we do not receive the grant to provide this program. This would leave us with only information and recommendations to offer to the school with hopes that they will apply this program in the future.

Conclusion and Related Outcomes

Despite the fact that we might not receive a grant, we are still proceeding with this action because we feel it would make the most impact and is the most reasonable out of the three options. With this program, the students will be getting an enriching experience that their school

would not normally provide. The Professional Artists in the Schools Program will help the students explore their imagination and own creativity, while also helping to develop their problem solving skills in the classroom.

Action Documentation and Reflection

Below is an email the principal of the cooperating elementary school sent in response to our request to implement our action at her school.

Thank you for contacting me. I would love to have additional arts programs implemented at [this school]. Good luck on the grant and please let me know if you need any assistance. Have a great Thanksgiving.

CSU Monterey Bay Alumni Association Capstone Grant Application

Application Form for Fall 2014 and Spring 2015

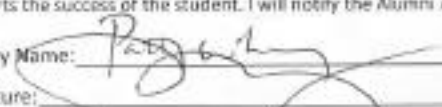
Applicant Information

Complete Name: Carolina Liemola
 Student ID #: 000276145 Major: Liberal Studies Graduation Date: Fall 2014
 Permanent Mailing Address: 1154 Humbug way
 City, State, Zip: Auburn, CA 95603
 Day Telephone Number: (530) 305-0797 Primary Email: cliemola@csumb.edu
 Total Capstone Budget: \$500.00 Amount Requested from Alumni Association: \$500.00
 Capstone Group Members (if applicable): Deanna Basso, Sean Hagen

Faculty Capstone Reference


This section is to be completed by a CSUMB Faculty/Capstone Advisor.

I have approved this Capstone project. The student's Capstone project encompasses their learning while at CSUMB and supports the success of the student. I will notify the Alumni Association of the final grade given for the project.

Faculty Name:  Phone Number: _____
 Signature: _____

Applicant Signature

I certify that all information is current and valid. Any false information will disqualify my application from the review process.

Applicant Signature:  Date: 11/19/14

Fall applications and budget must be turned in by 12PM Thursday, December 4th- NO EXCEPTIONS
 Spring applications and budget must be turned in by 12PM Thursday, April 30th - NO EXCEPTIONS
 to the Alumni and Visitors Center
 CSUMB Alumni Association
 Alumni & Visitor Center
 100 Campus Center
 Seaside, CA 93955-8001
 (831) 582-4723
 alumni@csumb.edu
Continuing the Vision, Giving Back, Staying Connected

Figure 4. The grant which was filled out by Carolina Liemola on behalf of our group. It requests a capstone budget of \$500 in order to fund an art lesson from the Professional Artists in

the School Program to our cooperating local elementary school.

The action that was done for this project included applying for a grant to bring the Professional Artists in the School Program, which is provided through the Art Council of Monterey, to a local school. We filled out a grant application, and when our request is approved, it will provide the funding for a local school to benefit from a professional art program. This would consist of a 10 hour program of dance, visual arts, music, and drama. We corresponded with the principal of the school via email to make sure that this action was wanted, and did not simply assume that the school recognizes the lack of the arts in schools as an important issue which needs to be addressed.

In the course of working on this project, we had to make a few changes and modifications in deciding the most appropriate and effective action to take. This action was not the only idea we had when considering what action to implement. We considered organizing a workshop for training teachers on how to integrate art education, and establishing a parent volunteer sign up to help with art programs, but while each could have been excellent options, they each had drawbacks which led us to the action we chose. For example, if we began a parent volunteer program so late in the school year, there may not have been enough time to get the program established, and there is no guarantee enough parents would be willing to participate. We used three criteria, time, reach and reasonableness to compare the options, and this evaluation of options can be seen in table 1.1 in our Description and Justification of Action section.

So far, we have had a very positive response to our action. Not only does the principal recognize the lack of art in school, but she was very supportive and glad to be offered the

opportunity to implement more arts programs.

In general, I am still surprised that many schools have very poor art programs, or none at all, especially when there is so much evidence of the benefits the arts can have early in a student's education. I was also surprised that several of the teachers we interviewed had very little, if any, training in the arts. This may increase their desire to give their students experiences and knowledge they themselves did not get at that age. Additionally, at the outset of the project, I was concerned that it might be very difficult to arrange interviews with elementary teachers. I found that many teachers are very accommodating. The teachers I interviewed were happy to voice their opinions about the arts in schools. It would have been less stressful if I knew that from the start of the project.

The next important step in the project is to wait for approval on the grant, and to let the principal know when we have the funds, so that we can then continue with the proceedings to arrange for the Professional Artists in the School Program to come to the school.

It is a rewarding opportunity that I have had the pleasure to actively participate in, conducting research toward making progress in increasing arts education in local elementary schools. I have learned that I am dedicated to the arts, and that many of my interests and concerns about art education and the school system as a whole are shared by the teachers I interviewed at their school.

I have learned that teaching is as unique as the teacher, that it takes energy, time and dedication to spice up lessons and integrate elements such as art or music to lessons, which are not required by the curriculum. It is a balance between what the curriculum requires and what you feel, as a teacher, would be beneficial to students.

I have learned that learning is a process, a cycle which does not end. New information requires you to look at your knowledge base and reassess. Working toward change is a similar process of evolution, it involves forming and reforming ideas and strategies as new information is taken in.

As a developing professional in the field of education, the CSUMB Liberal Studies Department has inspired me to provide instruction in preparation for future careers and life-long learning. It encourages me to provide a broad-based curriculum for students, to become an advocate for multiculturalism, and to be mindful of the contexts of histories, families, cultures, and communities which contribute to the diversity of the school environment. Additionally, in the course of thinking, reading, writing and speaking about teaching, I have found it beneficial to use innovative technologies to improve learning and teaching about the value of multiculturalism as I strive to be an ethically and socially responsible educator. The coursework which I have taken in my time at CSUMB has reflected these values and ambitions.

As I progress toward being a practicing educator, it will be necessary to make the jump from Service Learning and learning restricted to the university classroom, which embodies my education thus far, to a more applied setting in an elementary school. This will allow me to begin to put into practice what I have learned. Of course, leaving the university classroom does not indicate the end of learning. To the contrary, it opens up new and endless avenues to learning, particularly as a product of teaching.

Critical Reflection

This critical reflection takes into consideration the lessons I have learned about myself, about teaching and learning, and the nature of working toward change, in the process of working

on this project. I will also discuss how the themes of the Liberal Studies Department Mission Statement as well as the new MLOs have impacted my development as a professional, and how that will influence my professional future.

Lessons Learned

It is a rewarding opportunity that I have had the pleasure to actively participate in, conducting research toward making progress in increasing arts education in local elementary schools. I have learned that I am dedicated to the arts, and that many of my interests and concerns about art education and the school system as a whole are shared by the teachers I interviewed at their school.

I have learned that teaching is as unique as the teacher, that it takes energy, time and dedication to spice up lessons and integrate elements such as art or music to lessons, which are not required by the curriculum. It is a balance between what the curriculum requires and what you feel, as a teacher, would be beneficial to students.

I have learned that learning is a process, a cycle which does not end. New information requires you to look at your knowledge base and reassess. Working toward change is a similar process of evolution, it involves forming and reforming ideas and strategies as new information is taken in.

Synthesis and Integration

As a developing professional in the field of education, the CSUMB Liberal Studies Department has inspired me to provide instruction in preparation for future careers and life-long learning. It encourages me to provide a broad-based curriculum for students, to become an advocate for multiculturalism, and to be mindful of the contexts of histories, families, cultures,

and communities which contribute to the diversity of the school environment. Additionally, in the course of thinking, reading, writing and speaking about teaching, I have found it beneficial to use innovative technologies to improve learning and teaching about the value of multiculturalism as I strive to be an ethically and socially responsible educator. The coursework which I have taken in my time at CSUMB has reflected these values and ambitions.

As I progress toward being a practicing educator, it will be necessary to make the jump from Service Learning and learning restricted to the university classroom, which embodies my education thus far, to a more applied setting in an elementary school. This will allow me to begin to put into practice what I have learned. Of course, leaving the university classroom does not indicate the end of learning. To the contrary, it opens up new and endless avenues to learning, particularly as a product of teaching.

References

- Baker, Beth. "Arts Education." *CQ Researcher by CQ Press*. N.p., n.d. Web. 1 Oct. 2014.
<<http://library.cqpress.com/cqresearcher/document.php?id=cqresrre2012031600&type=hitlist&numhttp://www.msn.com/?pc=AV01>>.
- Bolin, P. (1999, November 1). Elementary School Art Education.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3193788?seq=2&Search=yes&searchText=art&searchText=education&searchText=elementary&list=hide&searchUri=/action/doBasicSearch?Query=elementary+art+education&acc=on&wc=on&fc=off&prevSearch>
- "Content Standards." - *Standards & Frameworks (CA Dept of Education)*. N.p., n.d. Web. 1 Oct. 2014. <<http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/>>.
- Evans, Karin. (2008, December 1). Arts and Smarts.
http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/arts_smarts
- Pinasco, V. (2013). *CAPSTONE FESTIVAL CSU Monterey Bay* [Pamphlet]. N.P., n.p.
- Rabkin & Hedberg. "National Endowment for the Arts." *Arts education in America: What the declines mean for arts participation*. p. 46, 2011. Web. 1 Oct. 2014.
<<http://arts.gov/sites/default/files/2008-SPPA-ArtsLearning.pdf>>.
- Smith, F. (2009, January 26). Why Arts Education Is Crucial, and Who's Doing It Best.
<http://www.edutopia.org/arts-music-curriculum-child-development>
- Wherland, Sharon. "Lev Vygotsky and art education: a theoretical framework for a

cultural-historical model of visual art education for primary school-age children."
Summit. p. 19, 2012 Web. 2 Oct. 2014. <<http://summit.sfu.ca/item/12384>>.

Appendix A

Manta Ray Chartwell School**Rachel Paris- Grade 3.**

C: The first question is, “What is your experience as a teacher with art education in the classroom?”

R: Like my past experience?

C: Ya, just any experience.

R: So, while I was in college I volunteered with an art program and just like once a week went to the local school and helped to do little crafts and things. And then after I graduated I served a term with Americore in Salinas. And we did primarily literacy based projects but we tried to make it even more creative and hands on. Painting, fingerpainting, letters and words, making it more creative and tactile. And then after that I worked with extended learning in MPUSD. So, for students that have social-emotional need, an academic need of some sort and we had the academic component but then another component of the program was art. So, we had service learners from CSUMB come which was awesome and we also worked with ME Earth. We did an eco-literacy program so they helped to bring in some different projects for us, but that was more just facilitating and other people bringing in the actual content. And then here at Manta Ray Chartwell School we do a lot of art in the classroom. The students have specialty classes. One is handwork where they knit and crochet, and they make yarn and dye fabrics and the textiles. But the painting and the mosaics and different cultural arts I facilitate in the classroom.

C: Okay cool! How do you think art education affects the students?

R: I think it inspires them to keep coming to school. And sometimes their learning math or language arts components, but it doesn't feel like work to them because they're making a mosaic with the vocabulary words or it doesn't feel like the schooling, repetitive type of thing, you know? It engages them and makes them be more at school participating.

C: Ok, are you encouraged/discouraged to incorporate art into your lesson plan? If so, by whom?

R: Our curriculum is Waldorf inspired. So, we are encouraged to incorporate a lot of art to the curriculum which is awesome because that's not always the case. Um, and by whom? By the administration, by fellow teachers, by parents. Like today, parents just helped me to put up this sutka, and then next week the children are going to help me decorate it with willow branches and that's kind of another form of art. This is a structure that the ancient Hebrew used and then we get to bring it to life and they put the decorations and everything on it. So, the parents are really helpful because I could not do that on my own. I need their support and their encouragement and their talents to do this sort of thing.

C: Alright, how often do you incorporate art into the classroom? Do you think that it is enough?

R: Daily, sometimes more frequently. We definitely do a watercolor painting once a week. And then it depends on how much time I spend planning and how creative I'm feeling. But, so too could art be musical art? We sing everyday. We sing to transition from one activity to another. We sing to greet each other in the morning. We do a lot of music. They have wooden flutes. They're pentatonic so they play seven notes. We are transitioning to recorders, which can play the whole scale. So, we do a lot of different types of art and daily. I think it's enough, but we could always incorporate more.

C: Alright! Um, not that one. Okay, what do you think are the difficulties with incorporating more art education in the classrooms?

R: You need a lot of outside support because it's really easy to give everyone the same worksheet and say sit silently and do this work whether you want to or not. So, I as a teacher, need to be inspired to collect the supplies, find grants and donations for the supplies, and I need the outside support which thankfully we have here. So, that's a big roadblock. And then also some curriculums in other districts and things, they just give you an outline and you have to be on a certain page at a certain time and they dictate, you know? 90 minutes in English and 90 minutes in Math and this is the curriculum you need to follow and tests you need to turn in at the end and you're limited by time, which is a bummer.

C:Alright, and the last question. Is there anything else you would like to share about the topic? Such as personal experiences or anything else you could think of?

R:I think that art is critical to education because if children don't want to be at school and they're not inspired and engaged it's a losing battle. We just need more art!

Lauren Mac- Grade 2.

1) The Waldorf -Inspired methods that separate our school from others lend ample opportunity for art and music across content areas. Visual arts, music, movement and song support mathematics and language arts in grade 2.

2) Art education makes content accessible and meaningful for the children. As visual beings, the children can process and retain a deeper understanding of lesson material when supported with poetry, dramatic performance, music, games, painting and modeling that reinforce a more emotional, sympathetic connection to material.

3) Our school model encourages art education. Each grade incorporates a weekly watercolour painting class into their schedule, and daily, students of all grades are singing, reciting verse and poetry, drawing and moving in rhythmic, cooperative motion.

4) Each day my second grade students have at least three elements of art in their activities, and usually each class they have has one or two. I think it is adequate, as time, focus and opportunity for independent practice is also a consideration.

The key is to make the artistic activities meaningful as well as create an opportunity for the child to develop the artistic capacity as well as reinforce a learning objective.

6) Having previous experience in the local public city school district schools, I believe the challenges are that teachers are not given any element of freedom or flexibility to veer from the mandated curriculum. Many teachers do not consider art a part of teaching, which is also limiting to the creativity they bring to the students. How can one nurture creativity, appreciation for the quality and care of one's handwriting, calculations or work if it is not both modeled and

expected?

7) I have taught grades 6,7,8,1,and 2. In my experience, the children are far more invested in the educational experience, enjoy and anticipate the school day, and are generally more compassionate, open minded and cooperative when they have a day that is woven with various arts activities. Teachers are treated with great respect and reverence for the beauty of the art they bring, whether it be song, drawings, painting or moving a line of children holding hands through a loop and spiral back again. Each day is experience as a complete and balanced picture, with the focused, independent, thought and willful work being balanced with activities that draw out a different expression of learned content. Particularly in meeting children of different learning needs, diagnosed disabilities or just enriching and challenging those who seem to get everything the first time.

A few years ago, after having graduated my 8th graders, I thought about looking at different jobs teaching where it would be 'easier,' not so creatively demanding etc., but I quickly realized that this work is what I love about my job. Joyful teachers make joyful learning environments. Children can then trust the teacher and build a healthy, respectful and positive relationship with their teacher. This supports classroom management, differentiated education, parent cooperation and involvement; all qualities that cultivate student success.

Chantel Wood - Grade 5.

1) At our school we incorporate different mediums (wet on wet painting, colored pencil, crayon, pastel, oil, black and white, and water color) throughout our day. We teach the children how to use art to illustrate what they are learning,

2) Art gives the students another way to express themselves and allows them to expand their imaginations. It also helps them become more dexterous, which in turns opens up pathways for them to learn other subjects.

3) We are encouraged to incorporate art. We work at a Waldorf inspired school and Waldorf philosophy believes in using art in all grades to learn.

4) Daily. Yes

6) Costs, supplies, and time constraints.

Intercontinental School of Montgomery

Mr. Ford - 1st Grade.

1) What's your experience as a teacher with art education in the classroom?

I don't think I ever received any formal training on how to integrate art, I guess if we include music as an art, then I would say I use it as a way to build community and teach skills. A lot of my pedagogy is story-based, so songs lend themselves to stories, so I'll use a lot of songs that will help me, and help the kids remember content. We have a continent song, an ocean song, days of the week, the seasons, and so those are content based, and then I have others that are more for fun and community building.

2) How do you think art education affects students? Oh, I think it is super important. I think unfortunately a lot of schools don't see the value of using art, and I think they see it as detached from content, and I don't think it is. I think it's more connected than people think. It seems that the trend is to get rid of art classes. One of the things that when I give my kids free time, the thing they always want to do is color or draw or make books. Especially in the first grade students really gravitate to the visual arts. For the music, a lot of the kids, they know songs, they know jingles. Many of the songs we use are part of our routines, and they help us make transitions. I had a girl say hey I wrote a song for this... in the morning we collect money... I use the money system. So she wrote this great song, she wrote it halfway through the year, just the melody, and I wrote the chords, and then she would sing it. So now every day we sing it. So, I think that it's just critical. It helps connect the classroom.

3) Are you encouraged or discouraged to incorporate art into your lesson plans? I'm encouraged, I just think our world is filled with art and music, so I think that if you don't have it, it just doesn't seem right. If we want to be authentic in the real world, I think that even having music playing in the background is helpful. Displaying kids' work, and any time you can integrate art

makes it more... it's like comfort food. It's like we always have it, so to not have it is not right. The kids do have a special art class, so they have visual arts and performing arts. Half the year is visual, and half is performing. When we're in those times, right now we're in visual arts, we have what's called a transdisciplinary approach. What that means is that we have multiple subjects happening at once. We collaborate with the art teacher and try to say here's what unit we're in, and here's our central idea, and we generate, brainstorm ideas together, and she'll say here's what I'm doing, and so she'll bring her content knowledge of art. It's the same way with performing arts. He'll bring his content knowledge and he'll say oh ok you're studying animals so we'll sing songs about animals and we'll do drama skits that incorporate animals. We collaborate as a team. Both first grade teachers and the art teachers will collaborate to determine how we can integrate. We did a unit on signs and symbols before our fall break which just came up, and so that was a great... I said to the art teacher, a lot of those signs just have those stick figures on the bathroom sign, just a man and a woman, and they're just stick figures. I have kids that can't even draw a stick figure, so for this unit can you focus on that so that when they come into my class and we want to show a sign with a guy walking, it really looks like a guy walking.

4) How often do you incorporate art into the classroom? It would be something that they have the opportunity to do when they have completed other required work, so that's like a may-do option. We always have to illustrate what we write, so when first graders are just learning to write, we want them to draw what they've written about, so that there's that connection between... and I call it scientific drawing. Just to make it so it's not just some crazy drawing, you have to represent what you're seeing or what you're writing about. And then the opposite is true. Say with the signs and symbols unit, or when we're studying plants and animals, let's go find a plant and let's like really try to draw it, and then we'll write about it and do some research about it. So it's integrated there. And again with the performing arts, for me, there's reader's theatre, so as kids become better at reading, there are these two or three people skits that they can take turns reading to each other, and they can act it out a little bit. I would say with the music, I have a lot of jingles that I use and one of them is "Big money.. coming to get you, big money.." and so when we're talking about money we always talk about counting the biggest money first.

So, just because I use that kind of stuff, the kids come up with their own. This one boy, one day he said, we have this big kind of cheering finger, the number one finger, and so in the morning we pick the student of the day, and we're starting that one day and he started singing and I said what's that? And so he said that's the big finger song and I said lets hear it, but he said he was too shy, but now he sings it. Since I encourage it and I do it a lot, even when the spanish teacher comes in, I'll say buenos dias in a kind of sing-song voice to her, and I'm always trying to spice it up a little bit. I find kids do that as well and they love it.

5) What are the difficulties in incorporating more art education into classrooms? You're limited by how well you draw and if you're comfortable with singing. That's part of it. Your comfort level as a teacher. I'm probably over the top because I perform, and my mom was an artist. It's part of my being, so its easy for me, but I would say a lot of teachers probably don't feel comfortable being that way. When I first started, I was apprehensive in breaking out a song, because I didn't know if it was going to be crazy town. I found that it really is a bonding agent. For other teachers, I can see them going oh I can't sing, I'm not good at drawing, and I don't want these kids to get out of hand. For me it's the opposite, because now I know it works, and it encourages me to do it more. The biggest problem is people's comfort level.

6) Is there anything else you'd like to share? I encourage everybody to do it, and I think the kids will embrace it. It might be a different thing when you get into the higher grades because you've got more social conventions moving in, and they don't want to embarrass themselves, but I do think there's a place for it, it just has to be proposed in the right way.

Mr. Appleorchard - 2nd Grade.

1) What is your experience as a teacher with art education in the classroom? I teach at a public charter school that is fortunate enough to incorporate the arts on a weekly basis. We actually have a full-time visual arts teacher as well as a full-time performing arts teacher; our students spend the first half of the year (2 days/week) in visual arts, and the second half of the year in performing arts, so our students are quite fortunate. In terms of art education, both of our arts teachers "push in" (or incorporate lessons) to each of our units. For example, our first unit of the year was called How We Express Ourselves, and our students explored how people communicate and express themselves through various forms of art. In this, our students looked at poetry as well as illustrations as a means of self-expression; our visual arts teacher taught lessons that tied in with this focus.

2) How do you think art education affects the students? I think when it is done well, art education has a tremendously positive impact on students. They see that there is true value to having a balanced education; not everything in their school day needs to be math, reading, writing, and science. Plus because our school is an IB (International Baccalaureate) school, the students don't think of their school day as being compartmentalized; all subjects are incorporated throughout the day. This is the way life is: you do not just use math from 12:00-1:00 each day. When they see that they can incorporate art in math, for example, they see that there are connections between everything. I think that is (or at least should be) one of the goals of education: to realize the connections that exist within our world.

3) Are you encouraged/discouraged to incorporate art into your lesson plans? By whom? I am fortunate enough to be encouraged to incorporate art into my units (not necessarily all my lessons, per se, but definitely the overall units). This comes from our administration as well as the overarching IB program through which our school is accredited.

4) How often do you incorporate art into the classroom? Do you think that it is enough? Again, our school has a full-time arts teacher who works with the students twice per week, so it's a bit of a tough question to answer. When I am able to integrate more art throughout my classroom I

try to, but because there is so much other content (i.e., math, language arts, etc), I don't always have a ton of time to incorporate art. In terms of whether or not that is "enough", I am not sure; we are definitely more fortunate at our school to even *have* arts. I have got friends who teacher at other public schools and they don't have *any*, so I think there is a happy medium somewhere out there.

5) If not, what do you think should or could be done about this? Or: What do you think should or could be done to improve art education in schools today? I think our school has a *ton* of things right when it comes to education. The overall idea that our students have a balanced education that incorporates the arts, Spanish, and PE shows that we truly value more than just your typical "book-learning". What can be done to improve art education? I think the bigger issue to to just improve the *education system* in general, part of which would be incorporating arts in *all schools*.

6) What do you think are the difficulties in incorporating more art education in classrooms? I think there is a real lack of time available to most teachers. If you look at a typical public school (not like the charter school I am at) they are bound to a pretty standardized curriculum that is scripted and paced. Their days are essentially set; they use the language arts curriculum (which sometimes incorporates science and social studies) for several hours each day, the math curriculum for a bit, then the school day is over. As a result, the teachers don't have time to do the "fun" stuff like PE and art, which, if you ask almost anyone, is just as valuable as anything else. What makes it so difficult to incorporate more art in most classrooms? I would say overall it is a combo of the amount of time teachers have and the structure dictated by the school districts.

7) Is there anything else you would like to share about this topic? Personal experiences? Our country is going through a pretty huge shift in the world of education right now. Between the Common Core State Standards (which address math and language arts) and the upcoming Next Generation Science Standards, education is in for a very exciting time. I am not sure how these changes will be affecting art education, but if the emerging popularity of charter schools is any indication, most folks seem to be getting fed up with the "typical" school system. Charter

schools have so much more freedom to include these "extra" programs that many folks grew up with. My hope is that more and more people express an interest in art (as well as other programs) and rally the politicians to change the way our school systems are set up.

CJ Cranton Elementary School

Karrie McCall - 3rd grade.

1) What is your experience as a teacher with art education in the classroom?

Last year at my previous school, third grade got to share an art teacher (I'm not sure what program she came from because I wasn't teaching 3rd grade), and I think she came once a week for an hour, rotating between the three 3rd grade classes. Sadly, I personally haven't gotten to experience any formal art education.

2) How do you think art education affects the students?

Based off of talking with other teachers that did get to utilize an art teacher in their classrooms, the students always looked forward to the lessons and really devoted their time to making their projects meaningful. In my opinion, students always light up whenever I do an art project in my own classroom, and it is a fun way to further their understanding of a core subject like math, language arts, social studies, and science.

3) Are you encouraged/discouraged to incorporate art education into your lesson plans? By whom?

As far as having a time block set aside for just art, MPUSD "discourages" that; meaning, there are a certain amount of minutes that are required for each subject (language arts, math, PE, science, social studies, and language intervention), and there are no assigned minutes for art alone. My principal encourages us to tie "art" into those subjects, especially collaboratively because of the new Common Core Standards. For example, one thing I have done this year for a social studies unit on community, I had each student draw their own dream community on watercolor paper in pencil, trace the pencil with black crayon, then paint their communities with

watercolors. Also, every week I introduce new vocabulary words, and every Monday my students have to draw a picture representing that vocabulary word to help them remember it better.

4) How often do you incorporate art into the classroom? Do you think that it is enough?

Unfortunately, I don't get to incorporate art as often as I'd like to, mainly because unless I can tie it to a standard, I can't do it, and since there are no art standards, teachers are forced to be creative in incorporating it in the other core subjects. For little things like drawings for spelling/vocabulary words, I incorporate that at least 3 times a week for language arts center rotations and introducing new words, but for larger projects using other means of art besides a pencil/crayons/markers, I probably only do that once or twice a month, if that. I definitely do not think that is enough devotion to art, however, like I said, principals/districts/California are now looking for everything to be tied to a standard for it to be "meaningful" for student learning, and sadly art is left out of those standards.

5) If not, what do you think should or could be done about this?

Since California is in a transition into these new standards, schools are now in need of new teaching materials. I think if schools looked into adopting materials that contained suggested art projects to tie into the new standards, that would be beneficial to students' interest in the material they are required to learn, while making it easier on teachers who are currently reaching to squeeze art into meeting a standard. Whether such materials are being produced, I have no idea, but if it were up to me, that is something I would look for as a principal/site administrator/district.

6) What do you think are the difficulties in incorporating more art education in classrooms?

The new obsession with tying everything to a standard has made incorporating art nearly impossible without major planning, and that planning takes a lot of time, effort, energy, and drive.

7) Is there anything else you would like to share about this topic? Personal experiences?

The principal you have makes all the difference in the world. Some principals are super cut and dry and by the book, so they don't want to see anything that isn't required, while others are very supportive in incorporating art (if it ties to the standards of course...)

Grant Elementary School

Jen Lowe- 5th Grade.

1 and 4) I've always incorporated art in my curriculum. I think art is absolutely essential to children's education. My art program includes direct teaching of drawing, painting, and collage. We also go to the De Young Museum of Art in San Francisco every year. We also have Evo Bluestein for dance and music instruction.

2) Art is really critical for my students, and I see such a positive impact. Students, more than ever, need fine muscle motor development. They are not exposed to any arts-- they don't color, draw, move, dance, or use their imagination.

3) The only thing that inhibits my teaching of the arts is money for supplies and money to hire the private busses to take us to San Francisco.

5) We REALLY need to fund, at the state and federal levels, art programs and teacher training in the arts.

6) There is not enough time to teach, jump through the hoops of the state testing, the District Benchmarks, and the numerous paperwork and interventions, and new programs, and old programs, and gimmicky programs, plus teach much needed arts curriculum.

7) Children need art now, more than ever. They are experienced with computer games, and iPads, and Chrome, but they don't get their fingers dirty with paint, or their hands smudged with charcoal, or clay under their fingernails. They don't get to act in plays, or sing, or dance. We are raising a nation of children with NO imagination, I have taught for 20 years, and we used to always have time for singing, and art, and drama, and performance. Today, we just focus on the benchmarks and the testing, and we've left the joy of teaching and learning behind.