

Arts Integration in Teaching and Learning: Implications for Preparing California's Teachers

A policy brief prepared for the Commission on Teacher Credentialing by the California Alliance
for Arts Education

Goal: Strengthen the role of **arts integration** and creativity in the Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs) of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC).

Overview

Arts have a far broader role in teaching and learning than as single subjects of study (art, music, dance, theater) unto themselves. Integrating the arts throughout the curriculum has the power to motivate students and unleash critical and creative thinking skills, setting the foundation for teaching for understanding. Several statewide and national initiatives including CREATE CA (Core Reforms Engaging Arts to Educate), policy shifts within Title I, the dissemination of nearly 15 years of rigorous arts integration research sponsored by the Department of Education, and alignment of National Standards connecting Core Arts Standards directly to Common Core assert the value, potential, and critical role arts play in student academic achievement, engaging and supporting students in learning, planning instruction, and creating effective environments for learning.

Strengthening the role of art integration in teacher credentialing TPEs is especially critical at this juncture. Though the arts are mandated in K-12 education by federal law, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), and required per the California Education Code, access to **Arts Education** over the last 15 to 20 years has eroded significantly. Credential candidates entering the field of teaching are now far less prepared in the arts in general due to little exposure in their own K-12 education. While it is impossible to make up quickly for the lack of arts education in their K-12 experiences, it is critical that our future teachers, so capable and full of potential, have access to understanding the role of arts in teaching and learning, and especially the role of **Arts Integration** as pedagogy. Thus, this policy brief proposes specific edits aligned to three major areas of the TPEs: Engaging and Supporting Students in Learning, Planning Instruction and Designing Learning Experiences for Students, and Assessing Student Learning.

Arts integration is a pedagogy whereby students engage in learning subject matter through the arts. The Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., a nationally recognized hub for professional artists and arts education defines arts integration as, “an approach to teaching in which students construct and demonstrate understanding through an art form. Students

engage in a creative process which connects an art form and another subject area and meets the evolving objectives in both.”ⁱ A teacher who is trained in arts integration pedagogy may design lessons through which her students act out the life-cycle of a butterfly, dance DNA, illustrate main ideas in storybooks, or rap mathematical formulas and concepts.ⁱⁱ

“I was introverted as a child. But when we were in dance class, where you had to project and express yourself, it was a release. Somewhere along the way, I realized I loved being able to step out of my shell.” Jacqueline Green, Alvin Ailey Dance Theater Artist

For students like Jacqueline Green, the arts can be a path toward being fully human. The role of arts in teaching and learning goes well beyond teaching *about* the arts. The arts are integral in opening avenues of expression, communication, reflection, risk taking, imagination, and determination. Students engaged in the arts often show grit, confidence, resiliency, passion.

Research has shown that arts integration can be extremely successful in bolstering achievement in language arts and mathematics as well as science and social studies. Arts integration sets the stage for enhanced student engagement, increased learning with understanding, greater facility in creative and critical thinking, and more equitable access for diverse learners including English language learners. In addition, research underscores the role of arts activities in promoting the kind of classroom community that encourages students to value caring, kindness, and fairness, and where they learn to work collaboratively to solve problems. Arts integration as a strategy for learning does not take time away from important educational objectives. Arts Integration embodies and supports educational objectives.ⁱⁱⁱ

Since 2001, the Office of Innovation and Improvement at the Department of Education has invested more than \$225 million in Arts in Education grant programs that aim to integrate the arts effectively into the curriculum – either as a means of strengthening core academic subjects, or as an academic discipline in its own right. These three programs are Arts in Education Model Development and Dissemination (AEMDD), Professional Development for Arts Educators (PDAE), and Arts in Education National Program (AENP). The body of research from these programs and others documents and underscores the role of arts integration in providing a platform for assessing student learning in addition to promoting student learning. Research has also shown that teachers engaged in professional development in arts integration are more likely to be enthusiastic about teaching, invested in students' learning, and have greater facility with regard to promoting a classroom community that encourages students to collaboratively solve problems.

Gaining the skills to integrate the arts into their classroom prepares future teachers with the skills and habits of mind that are essential to thriving in school and in life. Learning through the arts has become a critical bridge in:

- Supporting education improvement by strengthening the learning opportunities as an integral part of the elementary and secondary school curricula;
- Helping to ensure that all students meet challenging state academic standards;
- Assessing student learning in subject areas;
- Supporting the needs of English Language Learners;
- Establishing community and enhancing school climate;
- Closing the “equity gap” by providing opportunity to children especially in high poverty settings; and,
- Addressing the needs of the workforce, one in which creative and critical thinking skills is increasingly valued and essential, according to business leaders^{iv}

Recommendations

Based on the overview and discussion above, the following recommendations are suggested revisions to three categories of TPEs: Assessing Student Learning, Engaging and Supporting Students in Learning, and Planning Instruction and Designing Learning Experiences for Students.

Assessing Student Learning

Arts integration can be a critical tool in uncovering capability in students. Some students, identified as “low,” might actually be above and beyond in their capacity to learn, yet hampered by situations such as access to technology, limited English proficiency, and opportunities to show what they know via traditional methods.^v According to Arne Duncan in remarks concerning the release of the National 10 year study *Arts Education in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools*, “most troubling is an ‘equity gap’ between the availability of arts instruction as well as the richness of course offerings for students in low-poverty schools compared to those in high-poverty schools, leading students who are economically disadvantaged to not get the enrichment experiences of affluent students.” This is especially poignant for California where an average of 60% of children attend Title I schools.^{vi}

Art broadens opportunities for teachers to assess student learning. When a student presents a mathematical formula in music and describes how the musical metaphor matches the conceptual understanding, the teacher has a concrete opportunity to assess the student’s knowledge. This (alternative) assessment can be more insightful than a paper and pencil test that might only measure rote learning. The arts can be especially helpful in opening avenues for English language learners. For example, a student struggling to find words to describe a scientific understanding of a cell may very well be able to draw a picture of the cell with all the details. Student artwork can provide a tangible representation of students’ understanding of content knowledge, and thus act as an artifact for assessing their knowledge.

TPE 3: Interpretation and Use of Assessments: The suggested edit adds “representations of student understanding through the visual and performing arts (song, dance, acting, drawing, multi-media, etc.),” to the current language on the use of “work samples” and “performance-based real-world applications” to assess student learning.

Candidates know about and can appropriately use informal classroom assessments and analyze student work, including the types of quality of student work samples such as representations of student understanding through the visual and performing arts (song, dance, acting, drawing, multi-media, etc.) as well as performance-based real-world applications of learning.

Engaging and Supporting Students in Learning

Art engages children. It can serve to motivate and excite students, as well as provide a platform for them to shine. The use of arts integration opens venues for students and teachers alike, providing them with tangible opportunities to create, respond, connect, and participate (or, perform).^{vii} Arts integration as engaging pedagogy connects seamlessly with Common Core. According to David Coleman, an architect of the Common Core State Standards, “arts have a central and essential role in achieving the finest aspects of the Common Core.” He continues, “A key idea of the standards is to base analysis of works of art and of writing in evidence. The standards require that analysis includes the ability to cite that evidence as the basis of understanding.” In 2012 and then in 2014, the College Board prepared two research briefs outlining the role and alignment of arts to and with the Common Core.^{viii}

TPE 4: Making Content Accessible: This TPE already refers to the visual and performing arts as well as addressing creativity and imagination as strategies to make content accessible. The suggested edit adds “the Arts” to include as a viable mode of communication and expression.

Candidates understand how to deliver a comprehensive program of rigorous instruction that includes Reading, Writing, the Arts, Speaking and Listening, and Language within discipline specific standards.

TPE 5: Student Engagement: Arts can motivate and inspire students as well as tap into students’ experiences. The suggested edit adds the phrase “arts integration,” to the sentence concerning instructional relevance.

They use community resources, student experiences, and applied learning activities, including arts integration, to make instruction relevant.

TPE 6A: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Grades K-3: This TPE already refers to “movement.” Though the authors of the original TPE might not have meant “movement” in the sense of dance per se, the opportunity to move is apropos and the suggested edit adds “arts” into the mix as well. This is also appropriate at the upper grade levels as well:

...candidates for a Multiple Subject Teaching Credential understand how to create a structured day with opportunities for movement as well as other arts.

TPE 6B: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Grades 4-8: This TPE refers to students' thinking. The suggested edit to this TPE adds the word "creativity" to activities that foster students' thinking:

Candidates design learning activities to extend students' concrete thinking and foster abstract reasoning, problem solving skills, and creativity.

TPE 7: Teaching English Learners: This TPE already refers to the visual and performing arts, and can be strengthened by adding "arts integration" to modes of communication:

They implement an instructional program that facilitates English language development, including reading, writing, arts integration, listening and speaking skills, that logically progresses to the grade level reading/language arts program for English speakers.

Planning Instruction and Designing Learning Experiences for Students

Dr. Monique Chism, Director, Student Achievement and School Accountability Programs, United States Department of Education, clearly articulates the necessity for educational leadership to recognize the power of arts integration. She is a powerful advocate for the use of arts to meet the goals of Title I (academic achievement, student engagement, school climate and parental involvement). At the time of this writing, Cindy Marten, Superintendent, San Diego Unified School District has implemented a three million dollar arts integration initiative, Ruth Perez, Deputy Superintendent, Los Angeles Unified School Districts has issued a letter to all principals: "SUPPORTING TITLE I SCHOOLWIDE PROGRAM (SWP) GOALS THROUGH ARTS INTEGRATION." Other districts including Sacramento City and Chula Vista schools are focusing efforts on arts strategies that support Title I goals.^{ix}

TPE 9: Instructional Planning: The arts can be a foundational tool for instructional planning. The suggested edit for this TPE adds "arts" to the tools of instructional strategies:

In planning lessons, they select or adapt instructional strategies, instructional materials, media, arts, and technology to meet student learning goals.

TPE 11: Social Environment: Arts can provide a significant platform for a healthy school climate, one that sets the stage for respect, caring, and kindness. Suggested edit adds a reference to the arts in creating a sense of community:

Candidates establish a sense of community through various means including incorporation of the arts and promote student effort and engagement by creating structures that emphasize collaborative activities, joint problem solving, and an atmosphere of respect, kindness, and caring.

Implementation Feasibility

Several credential programs throughout the state are already implementing arts integration pedagogy either as standalone classes or integrated into subject-matter methods courses.^x Indeed there are numerous public schools where the power of the arts has already been recognized and put into practice. Turnaround Arts, a project led by the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, is currently in ten California communities. This is the same committee that issued “Reinvesting in Arts Education: Winning America’s Future through Creative Schools.”^{xi} However, these instances of arts integration are still the exception rather than the rule. To make arts-integrated instruction available to all students, experienced teachers would need support for learning and understanding new teaching practices that incorporate the arts, and some parents might need help in understanding that high academic standards are being enhanced, not jeopardized. These challenges could be greatly ameliorated in fairly short order if all new teachers came out of their pre-service credential programs with a good foundational understanding of the arts and of the ways they might be integrated into the teaching of other subjects. That would enable them to begin their teaching careers with arts-integrated practices and, before long, to provide leadership among their more senior peers with regard to arts integration.

Like their K-12 counterparts, college and university faculty involved in teacher preparation would need support for learning and understanding new practices and implementing the changes into their credential programs. However, there is ample existing expertise in this arena within the state as well as numerous models of instructional classes and successful partnerships between colleges of education and arts departments (and/or arts partners). The need for change is evident and the challenge to implement realistic. Si se puede.

This paper was prepared in collaboration with several professors throughout the state. Lead author is Merryl Goldberg, California State University San Marcos with input from Paul Ammon, University of California Berkeley. In its earlier stages, Maureen Lorimar, California Lutheran University, Eric Engdahl, CSU East Bay, and Jim Cantor, CSU Dominguez Hills were instrumental in framing this conversation and bringing the issues of arts education and arts integration to the forefront, most notably in organizing the Fall 2014 California Council of Teacher Educators conference on Arts Integration.

ⁱ The Kennedy Center has numerous publications and information concerning arts integration as well as impactful research concerning student engagement and creativity. A good starting place is: <http://www.kennedy-center.org/education/ceta/>

ⁱⁱ Arts integration pedagogy is also used in university settings. Some medical schools, including Brown University Albert Medical School offer future doctors classes engaging them in the arts to learn such things as bedside manner. Scientists are following suit. Alan Alda is a visiting professor at Stony Brook University in a program where he teaches scientists improvisation aimed at helping them explain their ideas more clearly (NY Times 3/3/15).

ⁱⁱⁱ There is a considerable body of research concerning the benefits and challenges of arts integration. Though too numerous to cite here, the following references provide access to a significant amount of literature.

- Gail Burnaford (2007), lead author, published a comprehensive literature review of: Arts Integration Frameworks, Research and Practice which can be accessed: http://209.59.135.52/files/publications/arts_integration_book_final.pdf
- Arts Education Partnership has vetted via peer review, summarized and synthesized over 200 Arts Education and Art Integration research studies and it can be accessed at this site: <http://www.aep-arts.org/>
- Launched 2/15, the website <http://www.title1arts.org> provides principals and administrators (as well as others) with arts integration research tied directly to Title I goals. It also includes a video of Monique Chism advocating for the use of arts integration in meeting the goals of Title I.
- A peer-reviewed collection of AEMDD and PDAE articles was recently published in "Learning through the Arts" an online journal at the University of California Irvine: https://escholarship.org/uc/class_lta

^{iv} "The Rise of the Creative Class" by Richard Florida is often cited when discussing workplace requirements for the 21st century, as is the work of Daniel Pink. The Journal of Business Strategy has published numerous articles concerning the role of arts or artistic thinking to entrepreneurship and innovation. One such article by Kevin Daum, "relates the influence and connection to arts based training and practical experience to entrepreneurial endeavors". <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/full/10.1108/02756660510700546> Additionally, Colleges of Business such as Bentley College outside of Boston are requiring students to take theater classes and/or classes focused on creativity to better prepare them for careers.

^v Significant resources concerning arts and assessing student learning can be found at the California County State Superintendents Educational Services Association (arts initiative) Website: <http://www.ccsesaarts.org/content/toolbox.asp> Additionally, Merry Goldberg, author this paper and of the book: *Arts Integration: Teaching Subject Matter through Arts in Multicultural Settings* (2012 4th edition, Pearson), delves deeply into assessing students' understandings through arts in several chapters.

^{vi} The 10-year report on arts education can be found here: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2012014rev>

^{vii} These qualities are the cornerstone of the National Arts Standards: <http://nationalartsstandards.org/>

^{viii} The 2014 report prepared by the College Board on Arts and Common Core can be accessed here: <https://nccas.wikispaces.com/file/view/Common+Core+phase+2+final+report+7+25+14.pdf>

^{ix} California Alliance for Arts Education has a step-by-step document addressing how to achieve Title I goals through the arts. It can be accessed here: http://www.artsed411.org/files/Embracing_Arts_Ed_to_Achieve_Title1_Goals.pdf

^x The California Council of Teacher Educators' Fall conference 2014 focused on Arts Integration setting the foundation for ongoing discussion across the state with regard to arts integration and its role in teacher preparation. A retrospective of the conference is included in the Winter (2015) publication of the CCTE: <http://ccte.org/wp-content/pdfs-newsletters/ccte-news-2014-winter.pdf>

^{xi} For more information on Turnaround Arts as well as the report on "Reinvesting in Arts Education," see the following: <http://turnaroundarts.pcah.gov/>

http://www.pcah.gov/sites/default/files/photos/PCAH_Reinvesting_4web.pdf