

CONCLUSION

NEXT STEPS FOR RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

Elliot Eisner (2002) notes that what the field of arts education needs with respect to research is an agenda. The same could be said of this emergent field of arts integration. In 2004, the Arts Education Partnership (AEP) outlined new opportunities for research in arts education. Many of the topic areas listed in this document begin with “The Arts and…” or “Arts Learning and…”, suggesting the need for and interest in how the arts intersect with areas such as literacy and language, self-identity, social skills, persistence, resilience, group learning, and participation in a democratic society, to name a few. Further investigation of **transfer**, the “impact of arts on cognitive development” and the “interaction of cognitive and affective processes in the arts” is warranted. More study is also needed concerning “which content skills, concepts,

structures, strategies are most effectively integrated and at which developmental level(s).”

Evaluation and research is clearly needed in the area of **teacher development** with respect to arts integration. Teacher education programs do not always prepare teachers for collaborative planning, working with arts specialists in schools or teaching artists in communities. The “emerging roles for teaching artists” in schools, as well as the optimal preparation and development of teaching artists are important areas for investigation as well. **School change studies** are needed to document what happens when teaching artists, museum docents, university interns, cultural organization education directors are all in integrative partnerships with schools and teachers. Whole school studies, including investigation of **leadership patterns** that examine what happens when arts integration practices are introduced, expanded, and institutionalized are also important contributions to the field.

Arts integration researchers need to continue to test and critique methods for assessing the quality of teaching and impact on learning in arts integration curriculum with methodology designs shared for different scopes

and scales of implementation. Certainly, the dialogue regarding causation, correlation, and connection must continue without allowing that conversation to dominate either research or practice. These research programs, if implemented and disseminated, become tools for engaging policy makers and researchers beyond the arts community.

Maxine Greene notes, “Mastery of a range of languages is necessary if communication is to take place beyond small enclosures within the culture; without multiple languages, it is extremely difficult to chart the lived landscape” (1995, p. 57). After examining the perspectives concerning arts integration in and across professional associations, arts organizations, and in higher education, it appears that continuing communication is essential if quality arts education that incorporates integration is to continue. Dissemination of effective integration practices within the arts and non-arts fields that preserve the integrity of the disciplines is crucial. Compelling theoretical frameworks are needed that illustrate arts specific and arts integrative learning as a continuum. More contributors to this dialogue serve to break down false dichotomies in order to further genuine and authentic research consistent with the arts domains themselves. Dana Balick (1999) reminds us that “understanding is rarely, if ever, a solo enterprise” (p. 153).

The field would benefit from a wide dissemination of project implementation and evaluation reports as well as teacher writings regarding the development of integrative instructional and assessment practices. Often such reports are not published and are not readily available so that others can learn from what has already been done. Scripp and Subotnik (2003) call for the publication of integrated learning curricular units with explicit objectives that draw upon collaborative efforts among higher education faculty, teaching artists and classroom teachers. Such curricula, if distributed across schools and networks, could be field tested and evaluated by practitioners and researchers in arts fields and non-arts fields, as well as assessed in diverse contexts and classrooms by more than one teacher.

ARTS INTEGRATION...TO GET TO THE OTHER SIDE

In March 2005, New York University and the New York based project ArtsConnection hosted a conference titled, “Beyond Arts Integration: Defining Learning in Arts Education Partnerships.” The conference, by its very title, provokes comment and intrigue. Are we indeed “beyond” arts integration in education? Or, are we simply beyond the need to defend the presence of arts integration in schools and classrooms, so that we might now truly examine teaching and learning demonstrated in those classrooms?

Steve Seidel presented the keynote address at that conference (<http://www.artsconnection.org/keynote.html>) and titled his talk, “To get to the other side: Curricular integration, dangerous ignorance, and the drama of learning.” He began, in traditional keynote style, with a joke:

Why did the arts educators and the other teachers in the school integrate their curricula? To get to the other side. Okay, that’s not really a joke. It’s actually serious and it’s the title of this talk.

Of course, Seidel knew he would have to describe what he meant by “the other side”:

Right off, I’d like to try to name what is on the “other side”: I’d say that on the “other side” are the knowledge,

skills, and understanding that we need in order to create a world and live lives that we consider decent and morally acceptable.

Seidel challenged the listeners to think about what was really worth learning about in these times, citing such “big ideas” as **human rights, languages, globalization, monuments, sadness, and density** as topics rich enough to be worth the journey to “the other side.” Seidel proposed that these topics are so fundamentally complex and rich that it’s hard to imagine teaching them without integrating the arts because other disciplines alone could not fully address their richness. The arts bring artistry; the arts bring artistic process, such as **improvisation, composition, interpretation, practice, performance, and critique**, Steve argued.

This literature review would indicate that arts integration is indeed a path for many students, teachers, artists, schools, and communities. It is our hope that sharing research and practice will allow new research agendas, new perspectives, and new conversations across pathways to indeed get to “the other side.” ■

