



DELLTA Developing English Language Literacy through the Arts

Our Goal: To support the social and academic development of Multilingual Learners by capitalizing on the learning opportunities inherent in art-making spaces.

Our Strategy: Address essential aspects of classroom eco-system that affect academic outcomes.

1. Rigorous curricula. Students learn to work and think like artists:

- use the tools and language of an art form to take imaginative risks and make artistic choices
- collaborate to explore and communicate a concept or feeling
- give voice to ideas, envision alternative possibilities and persevere
- engage in a creative process which integrates higher order thinking skills—analysis, synthesis and evaluation—with social-emotional learning

2. Teacher knowledge and practice.

Teams of ENL/ELA teachers engage in an inquiry process along with dance and theater artists that promotes co-construction of rigorous interdisciplinary instruction with clear learning targets in both the arts and language acquisition.

3. Technical resources and knowledge used as a tool for learning.

Middle-school students document and assess their learning through collaborative digital portfolios, and share what they have learned with the school community through oral presentations supported with digital data.

Our Impact

According to an overall analysis of observational data by the independent evaluator (Horowitz, 2010), student achievement in DELLTA was strongest in these areas:

1. Motivation
2. Perseverance/Task Persistence
3. Focus
4. Ownership of Learning
5. Spatial Awareness
6. Self-Confidence
7. Collaboration

Our program curricula and these findings are consistent with current definitions of social emotion learning necessary for postsecondary and workforce readiness: collaboration; critical thinking; communication; creativity; and, persistence.

Recent test results (2014-2017) showed DELLTA students' scores increased on the New York State English as a Second Language Test (NYSESLAT) by 57% while the matched comparison group scores increased by 38%. These results are consistent with analyses of English language acquisition among previous participants (2011-2014).

"When examined in combination with survey and comprehensive observation data, analysis indicates that dance and theater education within DELLTA programs supports English language acquisition. This is likely due to the use of language in an authentic context that students value, in an environment that rewards self-expression, and in a program model with comprehensive professional development, partnership and organizational support." (Horowitz, AERA, 2018)

For more information: www.artsconnection.org/literacy-language-learning