

Running Head: TEACHING FROM THE HEART THROUGH THE ARTS

**Teaching From the Heart Through the Arts:
The Personal and Professional Impact of Arts Integration on Educators**

By

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Abstract

This thesis explores the personal and professional impacts of arts integration on educators. The study used qualitative research to survey a selective sampling of educators and alums in the arts integration-centered *ArtsCore* Colony. The findings offer insight into how arts integration positively affects teachers, especially in the areas of engagement, collaboration, and creativity.

Key Terms: *arts integration, education, music education, curriculum, teacher morale, retention*

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Chapter I: Introduction

Arts integration invigorates me as a teacher. When I first discovered arts integration as an undergraduate student at Lawrence University, everything clicked. It aligns perfectly with my own teaching philosophy and interests. Students (and teachers) learn more when they are enjoying themselves and arts integration definitely makes learning fun! Arts integration gives me the opportunity to use my own creativity to enhance student learning experiences. At the same time, they are also getting the chance to think creatively and explore the world in new, engaging ways.

After teaching for a few years, I learned about the *ArtsCore* program through the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh. I was incredibly excited to hear about another arts integration program and immediately signed up. The program taught me valuable arts integration skills and gave me even more ideas for how to implement it in my general music classroom. In my first few years using arts integration, I helped kindergarten students learn writing skills through the creation of radio shows, including their own radio advertisement jingles. I taught fourth graders about diverse music and cultures around the world through exploration of puppetry. Fifth graders learned about city landmarks and historical facts by examining artists who create skylines and then making their own artistic interpretations of cities to accompany original musical blues verses. Sixth graders discovered the role of music in silent films and then used their writing skills to develop scripts for silent films of their own. There were so many moments in these lessons where I witnessed things “click” for students. They were finally gaining deeper understanding of the topics we studied and having a wonderful time along the way. I found myself having just as much fun as the students. Arts integration makes teaching and learning immensely satisfying and fulfilling. That is what education should be.

Purpose Statement

In setting out to do this study, I wanted to see if arts integration has the same powerful effect on other teachers that it had on me. In doing preliminary research, I discovered that many studies have been done concerning how arts integration impacts students, but very little research exists about how it affects educators. This study includes an overview of arts integration and discussion of previous research in the areas of arts integration and teaching. It also seeks to answer the research question: How does arts integration impact educators personally and professionally?

Importance of the Study

The information in this thesis will be of value to educators and specifically music educators; students; pre-service educators and their professors; administration; and the field of education as a whole. As previously mentioned, very few studies exist on how arts integration affects teachers. This study seeks to discover the impacts it may have and consequently may change educational practices and lead to more frequent integration of the arts in classrooms. If arts integration becomes more prevalent in K–12 classrooms, it may also become an important part of collegiate pre-service education programs and district professional development so that educators feel better prepared to create and implement arts-integrated lessons.

Definition of Terms

Arts integration: a method of teaching in which students learn and demonstrate knowledge creatively by connecting the arts with another school subject area and meeting standards in both disciplines (The Kennedy Center, n.d.).

Arts enhancement: when the arts are used to help support other subject areas but no objectives or standards for the arts are taught as part of the process. For example, students sing a song about the water cycle to help meet science learning objectives, but the lesson doesn't

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include any musical objectives for the song like learning about melodies, rhythms, or song structure.

ArtsCore Colony: a year-long professional development program through the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh that teaches educators what arts integration is and provides hands-on opportunities to learn arts integration skills, share resources, and gather lesson ideas for use in the classroom.

Personal impact: how something affects educators outside of their role as a teacher. For example, how they are influenced physically, mentally, or emotionally.

Professional impact: how something affects educators in their role as a teacher. For example, how it influences their teaching practice or methods.

In conclusion, Chapter One explained the purpose of this study, presented the research question and the study's importance, and included a definition of key terms. Chapter Two will present a review of relevant literature for this study.

Chapter II: Review of Related Literature

Many studies have considered the impact of arts integration on students, but little research has been done regarding its effect on the educators involved. This chapter will provide a review of the literature related to this study concerning arts integration's professional and personal impact on educators who implement it in their classrooms. Existing research relevant to this study includes research in the areas of: Creativity in Education and Curriculum Development, Collaboration in Teaching, and Morale and Retention. The first section will evaluate research from scholars who have studied the role of creativity in education and its pivotal part in curriculum development. From here, the second section will examine the work of researchers who have studied how collaboration can affect the practice of teaching. This chapter will conclude with a third section which will discuss research on the related issues of teacher morale and retention.

Creativity in Education and Curriculum Development

Scholars have examined the role of creativity in education (Ayers, 2016; Lewis and Mardirosian, 2016; Rinne, Gregory, Yarmolinskaya, & Hardiman, 2011; Lucas, 2001; Collard & Looney, 2014). Additionally, others have explored curriculum development in terms of arts integration (Burnaford, Aprill, & Weiss, 2001; Chemi, 2014; Lajevic, 2013; McDonald, 2010; Pool, Dittrich, & Pool (2011); Van Eman, Thorman, Montgomery, & Otto, 2008). Literature in this section comprises research about how arts integration creatively stimulates students when included as part of classroom curriculum.

In the Foreword in *Arts Integration in Education: Teachers and Teaching Artists as Agents of Change: Theory, Impact, Practice* edited by Lewis and Mardirosian, Ayers, D. (2016), discusses the important goal of making:

a place in each child's education where they study not only math and reading and the arts, but a place where they discover the interconnectedness of knowledge- academic, cultural, and artistic; where they experience the extraordinary breadth of the world as expressed through the arts; and where they observe and appreciate the importance of the arts and culture in creating a civilized society (p. xiv).

In addition, Lewis and Mardirosian state that arts integration allows students to develop creativity and connections, creating a deeper level of understanding both in and across school subject areas. This different approach to teaching and learning also leads to greater student engagement and motivation. By creatively stimulating students in all these different ways, arts integration encourages deeper levels of thinking, creates stronger mental connections, and improves student memory and retention.

Lucas (2001) and Collard and Looney (2014) examine the importance of student-teacher relationships and a supportive school environment to encourage creativity. Lucas describes how building relationships between teachers and students can foster individual "learner-centered creativity." He explains:

Creativity is a state of mind in which all of our intelligences are working together. It involves seeing, thinking and innovating. Although it is often found in the creative arts, creativity can be demonstrated in any subject at school or in any aspect of life (38).

Similarly, Collard and Looney describe the role school environments may play in allowing teachers to feel free to explore creatively and then in turn, allowing students to do the same. They state that "teachers are also more likely to focus on learner creativity and teaching creatively in school and policy environments that value and support them and encourage innovation and associated risks, and that allow them to develop their own creative dispositions" (3). In finding time and resources to nurture their own personal creativity, teachers will be better able to help nurture creativity in their students.

In terms of curriculum, Burnaford, Aprill, and Weiss (2001) discuss how arts integration can provide “a way to teach beyond the standards” (p. xxxiii). They discuss how arts integration allows for collaborative curriculum development between arts specialists and classroom teachers. Furthermore, they describe how arts integration is “a powerful vehicle to cross the boundaries of core subjects and arts concepts, affective and cognitive modes of expression, form and content, process and products, the self and the world” (p. xxxiii). Additionally, Lajevic (2013) states that “Arts Integration when done successfully promotes an exploration of curriculum as a body of knowledge, experiences, and participants, constantly changing in shape and form while continually engaged in a process of becoming” (p. 4). She also discusses the importance of experiential learning and how it can improve student engagement and comprehension. Lajevic argues that too often the arts are used for decoration and that teachers need to maintain the integrity of the arts throughout the arts integration process.

When purposeful planning in arts integration occurs, it can impact both student and teacher learning. Pool, Dittrich, and Pool (2011) demonstrate the connections between arts integration, Howard Gardner’s multiple intelligence theory, and the *Artful Learning™* model. This model of teaching was “inspired by the vision of Leonard Bernstein, who observed that the artistic process for both creating and experiencing art is a fundamental way of learning in any discipline” (p. 2). They suggest that learning occurs through a four-phase learning sequence in which students “experience, inquire, create, and reflect” (p. 2). After having teachers use an arts integration model in their curriculum, they found that it expanded educators’ ways of thinking and consequently, broadened their creativity and variety in lesson planning. McDonald (2010) also describes how in the development of an arts integrated curriculum, “opportunities are designed by the teacher for young students to do, make, create, perform, display, analyze, review, and reflect upon their arts-infused lessons and learning across the curriculum” (p. 4). These processes allow the students and teachers to think about their learning and make cross-curricular connections.

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Van Eman, Thorman, Montgomery, and Otto (2008) describe some of the challenges of arts integration in a high-stakes, assessment-driven society. They illustrate three distinct types of teachers¹:

The teacher who Cracks the whip on her own performance does not choose arts integration as a primary focus of her instruction, but only as an occasional additional teaching strategy because of time constraints imposed by high-stakes testing. The teacher who Walks the tightrope, teeters between arts integration and district mandates in her desire to integrate the arts. This teacher is comfortable using arts integration as one of many teaching strategies; realizing themes, ideas, and concepts should be taught holistically. The teacher who Flies the trapeze seeks creative solutions to meet school district expectations and teaches in a manner that her experience and thoughtfulness has proven to be best practice in which arts integration transforms student learning. She risks the consequences that control the other teachers and keeps the arts as a primary focus in her curricular planning (p. 24).

Testing is a prevalent focus in education today. It takes a special type of teacher to find the time and energy to meet testing standards while also best meeting the needs of students. Arts integration may provide teachers with the skills and means to accomplish this. Chemi (2014) also discusses the skills needed to be a successful arts integration teacher and the differences between being a teacher, an artist, and an artful teacher. She claims it is important to take ample time to focus on the art involved in lessons so that students do not feel rushed and have more time to process the presented material. In addition, she emphasizes the importance of cultivating “students’ self-expression through specific means and procedures of works of art” (p. 381). Taking this extra time and energy to develop truly integrated lessons has many positive impacts on students and their teachers. Rinne, Gregory, Yarmolinskaya, and Hardiman (2011)

¹ Capitalization is from the original

discuss as well how the arts can lead to positive effects on long-term memory in the areas of “rehearsal, elaboration, generation, enactment, oral production, effort after meaning, emotional arousal, and pictorial representation” (89-90). By creatively stimulating students in all the different aforementioned ways, arts integrated curriculum encourages deeper levels of thinking, creates stronger mental connections, and improves student memory and retention.

Collaboration in Teaching

While creativity in the classroom and in curriculum development are essential, scholars have discovered that collaboration also plays a key role in providing the best possible arts integration experiences for staff and students (Duma and Silverstein, 2014; May, 2013; Saraniero, Goldberg, & Hall, 2014; Snyder, Klos, & Grey-Hawkins, 2014; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Fantilli & McDougall, 2009). The literature in this section explores the importance of collaboration as part of the arts integration process.

Snyder, Klos, and Grey-Hawkins (2014) look closely at improved school performance as a result of arts integration and more opportunities for collaboration between staff. They explain how “collaboration with Instructional Arts teachers (is) essential in planning true arts integrated lessons that address arts standards and content standards simultaneously” (p. 10). This collaboration combined with staff analyses of student needs also allowed teachers to better work together to determine which areas of the curriculum needed additional support and planning. May (2013) explains the importance of collaboration in arts integration specifically focusing on music, but also the challenges that go along with that. She states that “integrating music with other subjects should not be the burden of the music educator, but should be a ‘two-way street’ where the responsibility for planning goals and objectives for students is shared by music educators and classroom teachers” (p. 6). However, May goes on to discuss that it is sometimes difficult to find school colleagues willing to collaborate in the development of arts integrated

lessons or units. Even if those connections between staff are successfully made, it can be challenging to find common time for planning and collaboration. It is important for schools to prioritize collaboration time to allow for creation of the best possible arts integration experiences for both staff and students.

Johnson and Birkeland (2003) also examine the role of collaboration in professional learning communities. They explain that in strong professional learning communities “teachers recognize their interdependence, have high standards for their work, readily share what they know, and promote continuous learning by all,” whereas in weak learning communities “teachers are left to fend for themselves and find themselves competing rather than collaborating with colleagues” (p. 585). In addition, Saraniero, Goldberg, and Hall (2014) discuss the impact of collaboration with an arts integration coach on teachers working to integrate their classroom curriculum. Their studies show that teachers who worked with a coach “reported greater confidence integrating the arts, produced higher-quality work samples, taught more reading concepts with arts integration, implemented more arts standards, and used arts integration more frequently” than teachers not given the opportunity for collaboration (p. 9). Thus, research shows that allowing more time for professional collaboration between arts integration educators leads to better outcomes in the classroom and school communities.

Fantilli and McDougall (2009) discuss the importance of “a collaborative school culture in which teacher colleagues were comfortable sharing ideas, resources, and planning strategies” (p. 821). This school culture allows teachers, especially those early in their careers, to feel better supported and prepared in their curriculum development and delivery. Duma and Silverstein (2014) also elaborate on the value of quality professional development. They show that group collaboration elements in arts integration programs strongly influence teachers’ abilities to successfully integrate the arts into their classrooms. They found that “collaboration often results in teachers who are more willing to take risks, are innovative in their teaching, persist in

integrating the arts despite obstacles, and use a child-centered rather than adult-centered approach to teaching” (p. 7). All the research clearly demonstrates the importance of collaboration time in the growth and development of integrated, engaging classroom curriculums and confident, prepared educators.

Teacher Morale and Retention

As discussed previously, opportunities for creativity and collaboration are particularly important in helping educators feel supported and inspired. Scholars have examined additional factors that may also impact teacher morale and retention (Whitaker, Lumpa, & Whitaker, 2013; Protheroe, 2006; Fontaine, Kane, Duquette, & Savoie-Zajc, 2012; Schaefer, Long, & Clandinin, 2012; Fantilli & McDougall, 2009; Pietarinen, Pyhältö, Soini, & Salmela-Aro, 2013; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). The literature in this section examines the issues surrounding teacher morale and retention and potential solutions to better meet educators’ needs.

Whitaker, Lumpa, and Whitaker (2013) examine the importance of educators’ basic needs being met according to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs. They concluded that the social needs of teachers are especially important. It is important for teachers to have time together to collaborate and improve their sense of belonging. They also found that “teachers who feel good about themselves will become inspired to teach and deliver instruction at an exceptionally high level” (p. 181). Protheroe (2006) also discusses the importance of school environments in helping teachers feel valued and satisfied. Staff members want to feel “recognized for a job well done, that their administration was supportive and caring, that teachers in their schools participate in making important school decisions, that principals frequently discuss instructional practices with teachers, and that there is a great deal of cooperative effort among the staff” (p. 47). Protheroe additionally explains that because of teachers’ desires to help improve student understanding, “strengthening school efforts to ensure student success-

although often stressful- can be structured in ways that strengthen teachers' bond with teaching and their schools" (p. 48). If teachers feel appreciated and impactful in their classrooms and schools, they are more likely to stay.

Fontaine, Kane, Duquette, and Savoie-Zajc (2012) address the teaching shortage and that a sizable portion of early-career teachers resign within their first years of entering the profession. Drawing on previous research, they summarize that some external factors that influence teacher retention include work environment, professional and personal development opportunities, support from mentors and administrators, school scheduling, and available curriculum resources (p. 383). If teacher needs are not being met in these different areas, they are likely to leave the school or even teaching all together. Schaefer, Long, and Clandinin (2012) also describe how "the discourse around teacher attrition and retention has kept the focus on seeing the problem as one of only retaining teachers, rather than sustaining beginning teachers in a profession where they will feel fulfilled and see themselves as making a strong contribution" (p. 117). Teachers need to feel valued and given the necessary resources to feel fulfilled throughout their careers. One of the best ways to evaluate these needs is working alongside teachers and making them part of the dialogue in creating supportive, successful schools.

Fantilli and McDougall (2009) explain that "collaboration with experienced colleagues via grade and divisional teams, team teaching and informal mentorship relations" is especially important for teacher development and retention (p. 823). They additionally found that having a principal who promotes and supports a collaborative school culture is also beneficial. Pietarinen, Pyhältö, Soini, and Salmela-Aro (2013) found similar results. They discuss how symptoms of teacher burnout often include exhaustion, cynicism, and professional inadequacy. Lack of social relationships and communal support may cause teachers to leave the profession as well. They conclude that "adopting proactive strategies that allow teachers to simultaneously regulate their own behaviour and their working environment are effective in reducing burnout" (p. 69).

Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011) also examined reasons teachers might leave the profession due to lack of job satisfaction. They explain that “in order to increase the feeling of belonging and job satisfaction and decrease emotional exhaustion, it seems important to create a supportive school environment, to clarify and develop mutual goals and values, to reduce time pressure on teachers, and to establish school-based directions for student behavior” (p. 1037). To retain educators, they need to feel connected to their colleagues and school community and satisfied in the work they are doing.

Creativity in education and curriculum development, collaboration in teaching, and teacher morale and retention all play central roles in the lives of teachers. To better understand the impact of arts integration on educators it is important to keep these factors in mind. As shown in this chapter, significant research exists about each of these topics, yet there is extraordinarily little literature about the direct impact arts integration may have on teachers. The included literature forms a foundation for further in-depth examination of how arts integration impacts educators both personally and professionally. The next chapter will examine the methodology used in this study, as well as the study design and analysis procedures.

Chapter III: Design and Methodology

The last chapter reviewed the preexisting literature about creativity in education and curriculum development, collaboration in teaching, and teacher morale and retention. Chapter Three will look at the design for this research project and the methods of analysis used. It is divided into the following subsections: Process, Participants, Research Method, Data Collection, and Analysis. As noted in Chapter One, the research question driving this study is: How does arts integration impact educators personally and professionally?

Process

The process for conducting this research began with trying to determine where gaps were in previous studies about arts integration and its impact. There is substantial research about arts integration within school curricula and the impacts it has on students, but there was little about how it may affect educators. Thus, the research for this study began with trying to understand arts integration's impact on educators both personally and professionally. The *ArtsCore* program through the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh provides teachers with training and professional development in arts integration, so it seemed like the ideal organization to partner with for this study. The *ArtsCore* experience begins with a 3-day seminar, known as *ArtsCore* Colony, where participants learn about arts integration and gain ideas for how to implement it in their classrooms. All the educators there were invited to take the initial survey for this study after giving consent through the *ArtsCore* program. Part of the Colony also involved alums of the *ArtsCore* program. Since this study aims to explore the impact of arts integration on educators of varying levels of experience, the alums were surveyed as well. *ArtsCore* educators were given the same survey at the beginning of the school year (in August) and again at the end of the year (in March) to see if their thoughts on arts integration changed after gaining more experience with it. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the second survey was given virtually through *Google Forms* whereas the first one was offered in person (See Appendix A). There

were twenty (20) new *ArtsCore* teachers and eighteen (18) *ArtsCore* alums who completed the first survey. Two (2) new *ArtsCore* teachers and eleven (11) *ArtsCore* alums completed the second one. The completed surveys were *in vivo* coded to analyze for possible trends and to best trace the impact that arts integration had on the *ArtsCore* educators.

Participants

The participants for this study were identified using selective (or purposeful) sampling. With this kind of sampling, participants are chosen based on certain criteria to fit the study's parameters. Including a broad range of teaching experience amongst the study participants was important to best understand the impact that arts integration may have on educators. Palinkas, et al. (2015) explained that "purposeful sampling is a technique widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources" (p. 534). Exploring the impact of arts integration on educators could potentially include a pool of teachers from anywhere in the world. Trying to find ways to connect with such a vast number of teachers was outside the constraints of time and resources for this study. Instead, using the participants in the *ArtsCore* Colony allowed for strategic sampling that would include a wide variety of teachers representing varying years of experience, grade levels, and subjects taught.

After deciding to use the *ArtsCore* Colony educators as participants for this study, these teachers were asked to complete a consent and release form through the *ArtsCore* program and the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh. There were two different groups of participants for the study- current *ArtsCore* Colony educators and *ArtsCore* alums. These teachers are referred to by pseudonyms in this publication, however their grade level, subject area, and *ArtsCore* status have been retained. The breakdown of participants by grade level and subject area is included below:

Table 1***Grade Levels/Subject Areas Taught by ArtsCore Colony Members and Alums***

GRADE LEVEL/SUBJECT AREA:	COLONY:	ALUMS:
Kindergarten	2	0
1 st Grade	1	1
2 nd Grade	1	0
4 th Grade	3	2
5 th Grade	1	1
6 th Grade	2	2
Elementary School Art	2	0
Elementary School Music	2	3
Elementary English Language Learners	0	1
Middle School Science	2	0
Middle School Art	0	1.75
Middle School Language Arts	0	1
Middle School Social Studies	0	1
Middle School Spanish	0	0.5
High School Business	1	0
High School Art	0	1.75
High School English, Speech, and Drama	0	1
Special Education	2.5	0
Arts Integration Specialist	0.5	1

Note. The decimals indicate that teachers served in multiple teaching positions.

Research Method

This study utilizes qualitative research. Bucura (2013) describes how “each person’s understandings are unique, and therefore qualitative research is inherently situational, as the participants are studied within the context of the natural world around them” (p. 138). This type of research fit perfectly with this study because it allowed for exploration of how arts integration

affects teachers within the environment of their own classrooms and schools. The qualitative research also allowed for examination of how arts integration plays a role in the participants' lives both personally and professionally.

Phenomenology was used to gather information in the qualitative research for this study. Groenewald (2004) explains that with phenomenology, "the aim of the researcher is to describe as accurately as possible the phenomenon, refraining from any pre-given framework, but remaining true to the facts" (p. 44). In doing this research, the objective was to look at the data collected about the educators' arts integration experiences without bringing any preconceived ideas or bias about what results might be discovered.

The qualitative nature of this study provided the opportunity to focus closely on the effects arts integration had on the *ArtsCore* teachers. It took their individual experiences, thoughts, and ideas into account when examining the impact arts integration had on them and their teaching. Through surveys, teachers were able to share the impact arts integration had on them, providing valuable data for this study.

Data Collection

The qualitative research process for this study necessitated the selection of a pool of participants representing varying degrees of teaching experiences and subject areas. The participants comprised of *ArtsCore* participants who began the Colony program at the same time as the start of this study. In addition, a second group of participants was chosen consisting of *ArtsCore* program alums. Having a mix of teachers just beginning to learn about arts integration and some farther along on their journey was important for gathering information about diverse individual experiences.

After determining a research question, it was clear that working with the *ArtsCore* organization would be the best option for completing this study. Contact was established with

the organization and they agreed to have this research occur as part of their program. A group of teachers new to arts integration and a group of alums were selected. The new Colony participants completed paper surveys during one of their first few days of *ArtsCore* whereas the alums completed their surveys during an *ArtsCore* alums event. Throughout the school year, *ArtsCore* Colony participants and alums received opportunities to enhance their knowledge of arts integration through assorted professional development experiences. At the end of the school year, *ArtsCore* participants and alums were surveyed again. The second survey was slightly different from the first one in order to provide a deeper look at the teachers' experiences and feelings about arts integration. It took into account responses from the initial survey and asked additional questions to expand upon the original information gathered, specifically in the areas of teacher strengths, weaknesses, morale, and creativity. This time, the survey was implemented through the completion of Google Forms because of restrictions from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Analysis

After collecting the survey data, the data analysis plan for this study focused on coding for themes. Saldaña (2016) explains that coding provides “slices of social life recorded in the data – participant activities, perceptions, and the tangible documents and artifacts produced by them” (p. 15). He also describes how “just as a title represents and captures a book or film or poem’s primary content and essence, so does a code represent and capture a datum’s primary content and essence” (p. 3). Upon receiving the surveys, an initial read-through was conducted to review and summarize participants’ responses. The surveys were also sorted into two groups, current *ArtsCore* Colony educators and *ArtsCore* alums, so they could be coded separately.

This study employed three rounds of coding. After reading through the surveys, primary themes were identified during the first round of coding. This initial round resulted in ten (10) different themes derived from the pre-surveys and post-surveys. The focus was narrowed in the second round of coding, resulting in five (5) themes for the surveys. The final round of coding

distilled the results further into three (3) key themes, which combined results from the pre- and post-surveys. These specific themes will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four.

Chapter Three explored this research project's design. It examined each step of the process and the method of analysis used. Chapter Four will take a closer look at the findings from this research.

Chapter IV: Findings

The previous three chapters introduced this study about the professional and personal impacts of arts integration on educators, shared a review of literature related to the study, and gave a description of the methodology and my approach to analysis. Chapter Four will include a report of the findings from the data. As described in Chapter Three, there were twenty (20) new *ArtsCore* teachers and eighteen (18) *ArtsCore* alums who completed the first survey at the beginning of the school year. Two (2) new *ArtsCore* teachers and eleven (11) *ArtsCore* alums returned the second survey sent at the end of the year. There were three (3) rounds of coding in which initial themes, subthemes, and final themes were identified. The results of this data collection are as follows.

Initial Themes

The first round of coding identified ten (10) different initial themes. They were excitement/fulfillment/inspiration/fun, uncertainty/nervousness, engagement/meaningfulness/ impact, enhancement vs. integration, creativity/creating, collaboration, classroom management/behavior, curriculum, planning time, and retention of learning. The tables below show how many times each theme was mentioned by *ArtsCore* participants in the two different surveys. Additionally, the tables show the percentage of survey participants that mentioned each theme.

Table 2

Pre-Survey Themes Used by ArtsCore Colony Members and Alums

<u>Theme:</u>	<u>Colony:</u>	<u>Colony %:</u>	<u>Alums:</u>	<u>Alums %:</u>
Excitement/Fulfillment/ Inspiration/Fun	10	50%	9	50%
Uncertainty/Nervousness	2	10%	0	0%
Engagement/Meaningfulness/Impact	11	55%	12	66.7%

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Enhancement vs. Integration	13	65%	1	5.6%
Creativity/Creating	15	75%	8	44.4%
Collaboration	7	35%	15	83.3%
Classroom Management/Behavior	2	10%	0	0%
Curriculum	3	15%	0	0%
Planning Time	3	15%	0	0%
Retention of Learning	2	10%	0	0%

Table 3

Post-Survey Themes Used by ArtsCore Colony Members and Alums

<u>Theme:</u>	<u>Colony:</u>	<u>Colony %:</u>	<u>Alums:</u>	<u>Alums %:</u>
Excitement/Fulfillment/ Inspiration/Fun	2	100%	10	90.9%
Uncertainty/Nervousness	0	0%	0	0%
Engagement/Meaningfulness/Impact	1	50%	7	63.6%
Enhancement vs. Integration	0	0%	1	9.1%
Creativity/Creating	1	50%	11	100%
Collaboration	1	50%	8	72.7%
Classroom Management/Behavior	0	0%	0	0%
Curriculum	0	0%	7	63.6%
Planning Time	2	100%	8	72.7%
Retention of Learning	0	0%	1	9.1%

Some of the themes were mentioned multiple times in individual participant’s surveys. Tables 2 and 3 show the number of the participants that mentioned the themes, whereas Table 4 shows the total number of times each theme was mentioned in the pre and post surveys.

Table 4

Survey Theme Total Times Mentioned

<u>Theme:</u>	<u>Pre-Survey Total:</u>	<u>Post-Survey Total</u>
Excitement/Fulfillment/ Inspiration/Fun	24	12
Uncertainty/Nervousness	2	0

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Engagement/Meaningfulness/Impact	27	18
Enhancement vs. Integration	15	1
Creativity/Creating	27	33
Collaboration	24	18
Classroom Management/Behavior	2	0
Curriculum	5	8
Planning Time	3	15
Retention of Learning	2	2

Note. There were 38 total participants for the pre-survey and 13 for the post-survey.

These graphs show the comparison between percentages of current Colony members and Alums that mentioned the various themes in both the pre- and post- surveys.

Figure 1

Pre-Survey Theme Comparison Between ArtsCore Colony Members and Alums

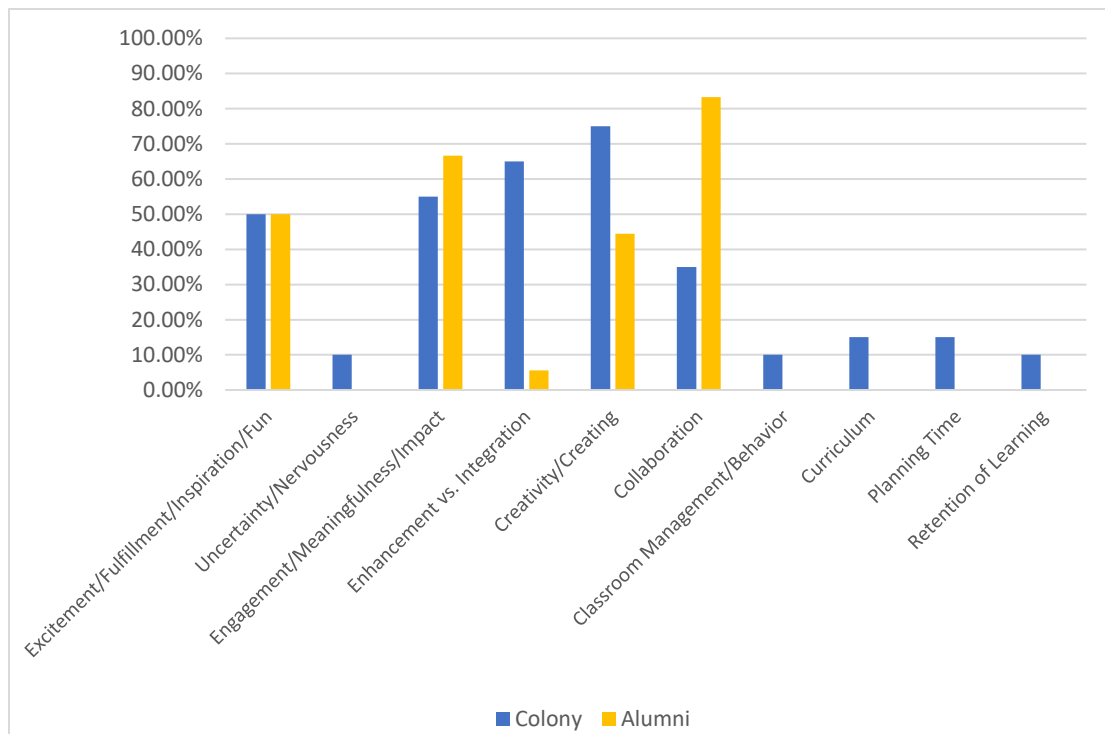
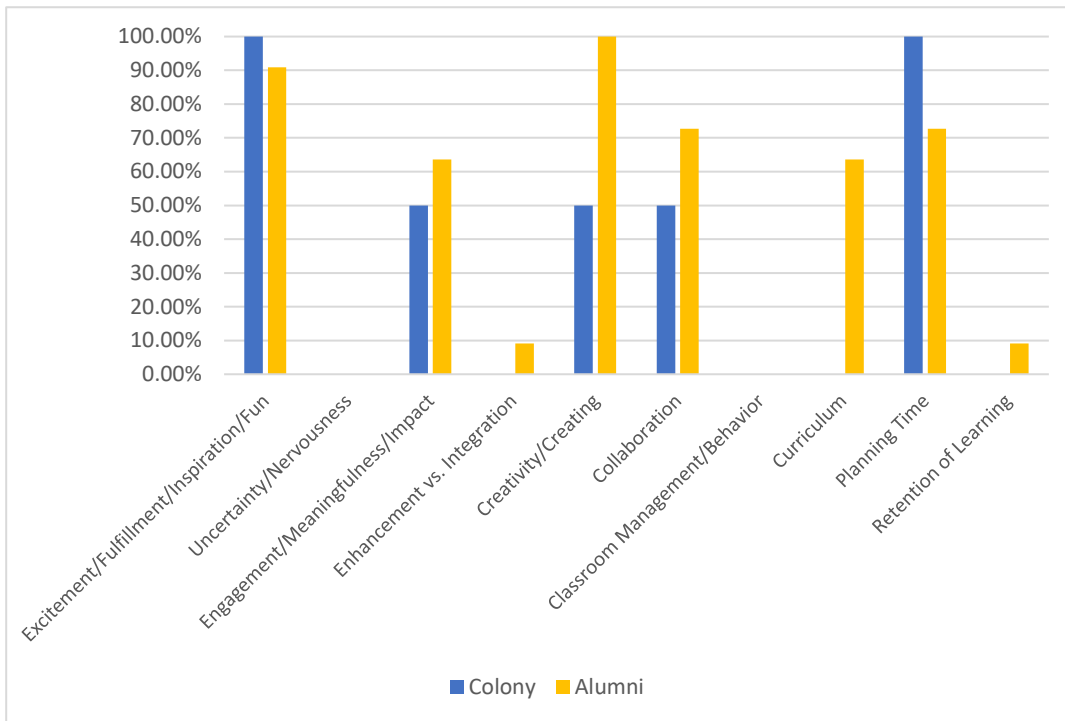


Figure 2|

Post-Survey Theme Comparison Between ArtsCore Colony Members and Alums



As shown in the tables and figures, the most commonly mentioned initial themes in the surveys were excitement/fulfillment/inspiration/fun, engagement/meaningfulness/impact, creativity/creating, and collaboration. Planning time was also a common theme in the post-surveys even though it was not mentioned as frequently in the pre-surveys.

Subthemes

Challenges

After going through the data, the initial themes were reduced to five (5) subthemes: challenges, engagement, collaboration, curriculum, and creativity. Many of the participants discussed challenges related to using arts integration in their classrooms. Some of these challenges included finding enough planning time; assessing; building confidence in teaching other new, unfamiliar subject areas; and ensuring that the new lessons or curriculum created utilize true arts integration, instead of merely arts enhancement. Seventh and eighth grade

language arts teacher/*ArtsCore* alum Erica commented about the challenge of “being bold and straying away from expected curriculum to do projects.” Science teacher/*ArtsCore* Colony member Leslie said she needs to “[spend] more time on the art content. I teach enough but would like to do more.” Eighth grade literacy teacher/*ArtsCore* site coordinator and alum Anna described how she needs to “build my capacity and help other teachers with assessing the art standard in an arts integration lesson” and art and Spanish teacher/*ArtsCore* alum Amelia stated, “I need time more than anything to plan lessons that incorporate more integration.” Of all these difficulties, ample planning time and ensuring the arts were presented in a truly integrated way were the challenges most frequently mentioned in the pre- and post- surveys.

Engagement

The second subtheme found in the surveys was engagement. Participants referenced engagement of students, but also of themselves. They discussed how arts integration improved student focus and retention, while also creating meaningful learning experiences. Music teacher/*ArtsCore* alum Fiona described how arts integration “creates better student achievement, participation, engagement, and it is more fun for students.” Second grade teacher/*ArtsCore* Colony member Bridget added, “The kids are more engaged when we integrate the arts and have a deeper understanding that sticks with them.” Participants also mentioned their own increased engagement, describing the positive impact of arts integration using words like “exciting,” “fulfilling,” “inspirational,” “meaningful,” and “fun.” General music teacher/*ArtsCore* alum Michael commented, “It has made me a more refreshed, engaged, creative leader and educator, and my students have benefited.” Erica agreed as she stated, “It fulfills my personal need and challenges students to be creative and try new things.” Many educators mentioned an increase in engagement in their students and themselves because of arts integration.

Collaboration

Collaboration emerged as the third subtheme in the surveys. Many of the surveyed educators mentioned how collaboration is often a large part of their arts integration process and success. A sizable portion of that collaboration occurred between classroom teachers and specialists (music, art, library, and physical education teachers). Bridget explained how arts integration makes her “feel more part of the community at school through art/music/gym collaboration.” Music teacher/*ArtsCore* alum Pamela agreed, claiming, “I like collaborating with other teachers and committing to an arts-integrated practice gives impetus to and framework for collaboration.” Sixth and ninth-twelfth grade visual arts teacher/*ArtsCore* alum Adrienne added, “It’s so impactful to know that teachers help reestablish what I’m teaching and vice versa.” This collaboration is an important part of arts integration and helps educators feel more connected, supported, and successful.

Curriculum

The next subtheme in the surveys was curriculum. Several surveyed educators mentioned adjustments made to how they think about curriculum and lesson development. K–5 general music teacher/*ArtsCore* alum Justin explained, “[Arts integration] challenges me to step away from the basic curriculum and create something new.” Kindergarten-first grade teacher/*ArtsCore* Colony member Alicia shared a similar sentiment in saying, “It changes the way you look at the state standards and the way you can assess them.” Fiona described how this change in curriculum also impacts her classroom environment: “I have more fun with the students! I also am continuously learning and creating better lesson plans.” Amelia discussed how arts-integrated lesson creation is more enjoyable as it brings together two of her interests: “It makes teaching Spanish more fun! Art has been my number one passion and it’s great to not feel that I have to abandon that despite teaching something else.” Fifth grade teacher/*ArtsCore*

Colony member Heather summed up the curricular impact by saying, “[Arts integration] provides a different lens to what we already do on a daily basis. It’s ‘good teaching’ and a way of doing [that] challenges me to improve lessons to increase students’ engagement.” Many of the educators found arts integration made them reconsider their curriculum and modify it to be more exciting and engaging for themselves and their students.

Creativity

The final subtheme from the surveys was creativity. A substantial portion of participants mentioned how integrating the arts into their teaching helped foster innovative ideas. Adrienne explained that arts integration “keeps my creativity moving— constantly coming up with new ideas to interest the kids and hit both content areas.” Fourth grade teacher/*ArtsCore* Colony member Lisa concurred: “It makes teaching more fun and allows me to be creative.” Leslie expanded how arts integration changes the way educators approach teaching. She stated that “arts integration has provided me [with] an opportunity to try new things. I am starting to look at my content differently.” This new, creative way of thinking and teaching also improved teacher morale. According to Pamela, “I think it is invigorating to think of teaching from different perspectives, so arts integration has had a rejuvenating effect on my morale.” English and drama/college level communication teacher/*ArtsCore* alum Jessie added that creativity can extend to students as well: “I’m much happier when it’s time to assess student learning because the products are much more diverse, individual, and interesting.” Creativity is prevalent throughout both arts-integrated curricular development and the final learning outcomes in classrooms.

Themes

In evaluating the surveys for commonality, the five (5) subthemes were subsumed into three (3) overarching themes: engagement, collaboration, and creativity. These themes were

prominent in the surveys, with engagement mentioned in 60.5% of the pre-surveys and 61.5% of the post-surveys. Collaboration appeared in 57.9% of the pre-surveys and 69.2% of the post-surveys, while the educators discussed creativity in 60.5% of the pre-surveys and an impressive 92.3% of the post-surveys. Educators explained both the personal and professional impacts of these areas on their arts-integrated teaching.

Engagement

The surveys showed that teachers often saw an improvement in student engagement as a result of arts integration. Arts integration also led to an increase in student retention as students participated in more meaningful learning experiences. Justin explained that arts integration “helps create a fun, engaging, and positive learning environment. Children are excited to learn and return.” K–6 general music teacher/*ArtsCore* alum Stephanie agreed: “I see that students are more engaged and self-regulated during [arts-integrated] lessons and I also find that their learning is deeper because of their ability to transfer and retain information. It's really exciting.” *ArtsCore* coordinator/former art teacher/*ArtsCore* alum Rachel also added, “[Arts integration] enhances learning, deepen[ing] understanding, student buy-in, and engagement.” Kindergarten—second grade special education teacher/*ArtsCore* Colony member Natalie talked about the impact that arts integration can have on classroom management: “Kids are more engaged and it has brought out the positive leader[ship] skills in certain students that really struggle with behavior.”

The positive impacts and engagement extend to educators, as well. Rachel stated, “I found it highly engaging for me as an art teacher. It was interesting to me to learn about the content behind and around each art technique and I loved sharing that with my students.” Sixth grade teacher/*ArtsCore* Colony member Tessa discussed how it motivated her as a teacher: “It has inspired me, given me hope that learning can be creative, refreshing, and something to remember for a very long time!” Stephanie shared a similar sentiment: “I feel enlivened

whenever I have the opportunity to bring an integrated learning lesson/project/unit to my staff and students.” Anna described how improved student engagement impacts her own drive as a teacher: “My experience with Arts Integration has resulted in several student success memories. Recalling those ‘light bulb moments’ and authentic wins for students who historically struggled in a literacy classroom have helped me to persevere through stressful days.” This engagement through arts integration keeps teachers and their students excited about learning and eager to continue sharing meaningful learning experiences together.

Collaboration

Collaboration was another prevalent theme in the surveys. Educators mentioned the importance of being able to work together to create curriculum and new arts integrated ideas. Pamela stated, “Using arts integration in my teaching affects my level of creativity and satisfaction. I love collaborating with others.” She elaborated, “I use arts integration in my music classroom when I collaborate with regular [education] teachers to build lessons that allow students to discover, explore, understand, create, and demonstrate their understanding of an idea through an art form.” Rachel also commented on the benefits of collaboration: “I love helping teachers...by developing their passions and weaving them into their curriculum with the arts.” The fostering of this connection to other educators and the opportunity to incorporate teachers’ interests or passions keeps them motivated and excited to continue utilizing arts integration in their lessons.

The sharing of knowledge between specialists and classroom teachers also allows everyone involved to learn more about subject areas they might not normally feel familiar with or comfortable teaching. Rachel stated, “[Arts integration] encourages me to learn new things and find deeper ways to teach and for my students to learn.” Art teacher/*ArtsCore* alum Jill agreed:

As an art teacher, I appreciate the impact arts integration has on the art field, meaning it is something that does not have to be ‘only for talented’ people / students, but art is seen more as a means of appreciation and a craft that is something to be enjoyed and implemented more often.

In addition, collaboration may help reduce educator burnout. Stephanie explained:

Working closely with targeted grade-level teams this year has been awesome because the art teacher and I aren't stretched so thin trying to support each grade level. The grade-level teachers are responsible for more of the planning and implementation and we serve more as coaches. It's been really fun to work with them and see them grow in their capacity because that's what needs to happen for integrated learning to be truly sustainable school-wide.

During a time when teacher burnout levels are high, arts integration provides ways for teachers to feel supported and re-invigorated in their teaching while building positive relationships with their colleagues.

Creativity

The third major theme in the surveys was arts integration’s impact on creativity. A big area affected by creativity was curriculum creation. Rachel explained, “It has helped me to learn to be creative in subjects [in which] I might not have thought I could be creative; creativity is everywhere.” First grade teacher/*ArtsCore* Colony member Tracy added that arts integration caused her to shift “my thinking beyond just the curriculum and ‘normal’ way of teaching to help reach all students.” Pamela also described the impact of arts integration on creativity in her curriculum: “Learning how to create integrated lessons has helped me channel and order my creativity in order to better serve the end result.” Adding more creativity into the curriculum also leads to a positive impact on students. Jill elaborated, “I've always enjoyed creating art—it

makes the classroom a happy place when kids get to be creative.” Leslie agreed: “Arts integration gets me excited about seeing how students can express themselves.” Tessa added that arts integration gives “students opportunities to experience a variety of art forms they would otherwise not be able to experience. Simply put: the love of learning is evident!” Arts integration can reinvigorate classroom curriculum and consequently students’ educational experience.

In addition to creativity occurring in arts-integrated curricula, it also affected the educators themselves. Jessie described this impact:

[Arts integration] makes teaching more of a facilitation as the teacher backs away while students create. [It’s] way more fun! . . . I’m rejuvenated with never really knowing what products students will produce . . . I love that it intentionally makes time in my day for art.

Fiona agreed: “It has made me more creative and has inspired me to keep getting better.” Justin talked about this as well, saying that “[Arts integration] helps me grow and think creatively at all times.” Anna also discussed how creating an arts-integrated curriculum may expand educators’ artistic knowledge:

Arts integration has also deepened my appreciation of art and exposed me to new art forms. [It] has helped me feel empowered in a profession where it's easy to feel bogged down or tied to curriculum requirements. . . Arts Integration has pushed me outside of my creative comfort zone. I've pursued opportunities to learn about new art forms for my personal growth.

This creative spark helps many educators rekindle their joy in teaching and find new possibilities for what learning can be.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the survey findings including initial themes, subthemes, and themes. The next chapter will discuss and analyze these findings and talk about implications for educators, future educators, administration, students, higher education faculty who work with pre-service teachers, and the field of music education as a whole.

Chapter V: Discussion, Implications, and Conclusion

Chapter One gave an overview of this study and presented the research question: *How does arts integration impact educators personally and professionally?* Chapter Two presented pre-existing research that was relevant to this study in the areas of creativity in education and curriculum development, collaboration in teaching, and teacher morale and retention. Chapter Three explained the design and methodology for this study, including who the participants of the study were, how they were selected, and how research data was gathered and analyzed. In Chapter Four, the findings of this study were discussed. The survey data was coded for themes including ten different initial themes, five subthemes, and finally the three main overarching themes of engagement, collaboration, and creativity. Chapter Five will discuss the significance of the study's findings and their implications, as well as presenting the next steps for this research.

Discussion

Engagement

Engagement was a topic that frequently appeared in the surveys, and it plays an important role in motivating both educators and students involved in arts integration. As mentioned in Chapter Two, Lajevic (2013) described how “Arts Integration when done successfully promotes an exploration of curriculum as a body of knowledge, experiences, and participants, constantly changing in shape and form while continually engaged in a process of becoming” (p. 4). Arts integration encourages students to be more deeply involved in the educational process, which in turn leads to better retention of the learning material. K–5 art teacher/*ArtsCore* alum Thea explained how “finding organic connections between arts concepts and core standards strengthens the importance of art and provides rich learning experiences.” These rich educational experiences make students more excited to learn. Anna elaborated: “Arts Integration makes learning and teaching meaningful and memorable for staff and students.” In addition to helping students academically, arts integration may also help improve their focus

and reduce classroom management issues. If students are actively engaged in learning, they are less likely to exhibit challenging behaviors in the classroom. This in turn gives teachers more opportunities to work with students academically instead of having to focus on addressing the behaviors. The improved student engagement and retention and consequent reduced behavioral challenges are major benefits of arts integration.

Arts integration may also keep students better engaged by appealing to a wide variety of learning styles. Chapter Two explained how Pool, Dittrich, and Pool (2011) found that learning occurs through a four-phase learning sequence in which students “experience, inquire, create, and reflect” (p. 2). Incorporating art, music, dance, or drama into a regular academic lesson helps students experience the subject material in a new and unique way that enhances this four-phase learning process. This in turn may help improve student understanding. Seventh and eighth grade art teacher/*ArtsCore* alum Megan described how arts integration “energizes and inspires. . .makes my teaching more effective. . .and learning more meaningful.” Dance or dramatic movement activities may appeal to kinesthetic learners, music or other listening exercises may help aural learners, and art related experiences may better reach visual learners. These unique ways of learning through arts integration may better reach a wide range of students and lead to greater student academic success.

Besides helping students be more engaged and successful, arts integration may also create similar experiences for educators. High school film photography and introduction to art teacher/*ArtsCore* alum Emma explained that arts integration “challenges me and helps me push myself to be a better teacher.” Adrienne agreed: “It makes [my teaching] richer and deeper.” In addition, arts integration may provide teachers with valuable skills that help them feel more proficient in the classroom and therefore better able to be fully engaged in the learning experience. Michael commented, “It has given me tools to be more competent, confident, and resilient.” Amelia concurred, “I’m a more passionate Spanish teacher and think I am more aware

of what kids need.” Seeing student success may also reinvigorate educators. Bridget described how “it’s exciting to be doing something that I know students will enjoy and remember.” Stephanie added, “Seeing how much students learn and retain through integrated learning practices helps stave off teacher burnout, which just personally, seems looming ever closer lately.” Fostering this love of learning in students through arts integration may also rekindle the joy of teaching in educators, making teaching more satisfying, and consequently, making teachers more likely to remain in the profession.

Collaboration

As found in both the pre-existing research and in the survey results from this study, collaboration is also an essential part in the success of arts integration. In a time when teacher burnout is high and morale is low, it is essential to create solid support networks for educators. As stated in Chapter Two, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011) found that “in order to increase the feeling of belonging and job satisfaction and decrease emotional exhaustion, it seems important to create a supportive school environment” (p. 1037). Arts integration allows that to happen. In collaborating with co-workers and administration to create arts-integrated experiences for students, educators are also building new connections and support for themselves. This added support gives educators some place and/or someone to turn to on difficult days. In a good support network, there are resources readily available to meet whatever needs teachers may have, whether they are curricular or emotional. A collaborative arts integration network provides these necessary resources for educators and makes it less likely that they will leave the profession from feeling isolated or experiencing burnout.

Collaboration may occur in many ways and one of the most common forms of arts integration collaboration takes place between classroom teachers and specialists working together in the same school. Specialists are often the only people in their building teaching their content area, which can sometimes feel a bit isolating. Collaborating with coworkers to create

arts-integrated lessons may help them to feel better connected to their school community. It also allows the specialists to share their unique knowledge and skillset, which can help their colleagues gain better understanding of the arts. Almost all the specialists associated with *ArtsCore* mentioned the importance of this collaboration in their surveys. Thea explained, “Arts integration empowers me as an educator, creates community, and fosters collaboration.” Stephanie agreed: “Being able to collaborate closely with other teachers is really exciting and life-giving for me.” Jill also added, “[Arts integration] helps me be more connected to my peers as well as I have a better understanding of the subject matter taught in their classrooms.” A large number of *ArtsCore* classroom teachers discussed the impact of this collaboration as well. Sixth grade ELA and geography teacher/*ArtsCore* alum Jackie stated, “[Arts integration] keeps me open to new ideas and different lessons. I collaborate more with other teachers and specialists.” Bridget also commented how arts integration “will allow me to reach more kids in more ways and find new exciting ways to collaborate.” These connections between teachers are especially important for helping teachers feel supported and for collaboratively creating high-quality arts-integrated lessons.

In addition to collaboration occurring within a school, it may also happen with teachers in other schools or districts and with members of the community. The *ArtsCore* program has done an excellent job of facilitating this kind of collaboration. They have created a strong network of alums and provided many opportunities to share ideas through workshops, symposiums, alums gatherings, and an online lesson-sharing database. It is beneficial for educators to hear how arts integration is implemented in other places and get new ideas that they can take back to their own schools. The *ArtsCore* lesson database also provides a great resource for teachers to search for lessons fitting certain topics or subject areas. They can use these lessons as written or they may spark ideas for other new arts-integrated activities. Community collaboration is another exciting opportunity for arts integration. Teachers may

bring in local community experts on topics to serve as guest artists, presenters, or even co-teachers. Bringing guests into the classroom builds stronger community connections and gives students (and staff) the opportunity to hear a unique new perspective on a topic or learn from an expert in their field. This can create immensely powerful learning experiences. It also gives community members better insight into what is happening in classrooms. During a time when education is frequently criticized, allowing the community to see what students are learning and the meaningful educational experiences they are having may help them to view education a bit more favorably. Building these connections between educators and their communities may lead to better education and awareness for everyone involved. The data in this study shows that when teachers feel valued by their coworkers and community, they are much more likely to see themselves remaining in the field of education.

Creativity

The other major element of arts integration that emerged in the surveys was creativity. Currently, school curriculum frequently primarily focuses on preparing students for standardized testing. Students study learning material with the expectation that it will appear on a formal test or evaluation. This type of learning and “teaching to the test” can be extremely stressful for both students and staff. Additionally, it leaves little time for cultivating student creativity. Arts integration brings that creative spark back into learning. Instead of standardized testing, arts integration assessment may happen in a variety of other creative ways. Students might prove their understanding of a concept through creating a dramatic tableau, an interpretive dance, or even a painting. This assessment may also occur in groups of students instead of individually. Knowledge doesn’t need to be demonstrated through answering multiple choice or fill-in-the-blank questions on a computer or test packet. It can be shown in ways that allow the students to prove their understanding through assessments that better meet their individual interests and learning styles. As described in Chapter Two, Van Eman, Thorman,

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Montgomery, and Otto (2008) explored the impact of high-stakes testing on different types of teachers. They found:

The teacher who Flies the trapeze seeks creative solutions to meet school district expectations and teaches in a manner that her experience and thoughtfulness has proven to be best practice in which arts integration transforms student learning. She risks the consequences that control the other teachers and keeps the arts as a primary focus in her curricular planning (p. 24).

Teachers must find ways to rise above the focus on standardized testing and think creatively about how to meet standards while still keeping students excited and engaged. Arts integration provides the perfect platform to do this.

Arts integration also challenges students and teachers to think creatively and “outside of the box.” As mentioned in Chapter Two, Ayers, D. (2016), discusses the important goal of making

a place in each child’s education where they study not only math and reading and the arts, but a place where they discover the interconnectedness of knowledge- academic, cultural, and artistic; where they experience the extraordinary breadth of the world as expressed through the arts; and where they observe and appreciate the importance of the arts and culture in creating a civilized society (p. xiv).

Arts integration provides this place for students in their education and allows them to experience learning in a refreshing new way. It also encourages teachers to think more creatively about how to inspire students and help them develop these diverse types of educational connections. Anna elaborated:

Arts Integration has developed my confidence to try new things in order to connect with my students. My training has helped me to understand that the creative process is more

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valuable than the end product. I am also more resilient and embrace failures as opportunities to grow. I am more willing to demonstrate vulnerability for my students.

Fifth grade special education teacher and arts integration specialist/*ArtsCore* Colony member Theresa agreed: “Arts integration gives me a purpose- a reason for sharing/building creative capacity in students.” Building creative connections can also help develop stronger relationships between teachers and their students. It allows educators to see new sides of their students, and possibly previously undiscovered interests or talents, that they might not otherwise get to experience. These positive new connections can make time in the classroom more meaningful for everyone involved. Arts integration allows students and teachers to experience school differently as they examine academic subjects from exciting new angles, build stronger personal connections, and delve deeper into their creative educational exploration.

In addition to encouraging students to learn in new ways, arts integration also helps teachers cultivate a different part of themselves in developing their own personal creativity. As explained in Chapter Two, Lucas (2001) found:

Creativity is a state of mind in which all of our intelligences are working together. It involves seeing, thinking and innovating. Although it is often found in the creative arts, creativity can be demonstrated in any subject at school or in any aspect of life (38).

Regardless of which subject(s) educators teach, arts integration provides opportunities for them to unlock their own creative potential. Sixth grade literature and social studies teacher/*ArtsCore* alum Taylen explained: “It gives me a new outlet to make lessons meaningful and memorable. It brings me joy and helps me stay grounded in being ‘new’ at something.” Erica agreed:

[Arts integration] validates my own personal philosophy of learning- how everything is interconnected and that art makes things beautiful and rich and real. It [also] validates

what I know to be true about myself. This is how I learn best. It is the best thing and it always reaffirms my desire to teach, especially after stressful days.

During a time when many teachers are feeling burnt out, finding new creative purpose and passion in their arts-integrated teaching reinvigorates educators and may improve their drive and desire to remain in education.

Implications

Educators and Music Educators

Hopefully after reading the results of this study, more educators will explore arts integration and either begin or continue developing arts-integrated curricula in their classrooms and schools. While developing arts-integrated lessons may require more time and energy initially, the benefits make it worth the effort. Implementing arts integration can help teachers find new joy and excitement in teaching, which may have been lost in the age of standardized testing. It can also encourage their own creativity both in and outside of the classroom. For music educators specifically, arts integration may create new opportunities for collaboration with regular education teachers and/or other school specialists. It allows music teachers to share their unique knowledge and skillset with their peers and may make them feel more valued, which is increasingly important during this stressful time for educators. Using arts integration may reframe teachers' views of what education can be and make them more excited to continue exploring new educational possibilities in the future.

Students

Arts integration has a significant impact on students as well. Introducing arts integration to more educators also means that it will affect a larger number of students. Learning through an arts-integrated framework may help students find greater joy in education and allow them to form a stronger understanding of academic concepts. It may also appeal better to their preferred

learning style(s) and give them a chance to demonstrate their knowledge in a way that best fits their needs. Teaching students to look for broader connections between subjects and ideas encourages their creativity and fosters in them valuable skills that will serve them throughout their academic tenure and the rest of their lives.

Future Educators and Their Professors

To help educators feel more prepared and comfortable with arts integration, their study of it as a teaching practice would ideally begin at the collegiate level. Incorporating study of arts integration into college pre-service teaching programs will allow future teachers to gain understanding of this valuable teaching practice before even beginning their careers in the classroom. College pre-service education curricula should introduce pre-service teachers to what arts integration is and give them opportunities to create sample lesson plans that could be used in the classroom after graduation. Introducing college education students to arts integration would also help provide them with a network of collaborative colleagues. As they begin their teaching career, they could reach out to their university peers with any questions or concerns they might have. This level of support early on in the teaching process would be invaluable. Including arts integration in pre-service education curricula will provide educators with the tools and resources needed to feel better prepared and more confident to implement arts-integrated teaching in their classrooms.

Administration

Supportive administration plays a key role in the success of arts integration. Hopefully, this study will help administrators realize the benefits of using arts-integrated curricula in their schools. Appreciation of the value of this practice should lead to higher prioritization of the resources needed to make this type of teaching possible. These resources may include physical supplies or materials, but also the collaboration time and support needed for teachers to

successfully implement these lessons in their classrooms. Having administrative support will increase the likelihood for success of arts-integrated programs in schools.

The Field of Education as a Whole

There are clear benefits for the implementation of arts integration in curricula. This study showed the positive impacts it can have on students and staff. As educators and administration realize the merits of using it, arts integration will ideally become common practice in classrooms everywhere, beginning with education of pre-service educators at the collegiate level. Normalizing an arts-integrated way of teaching will create classroom environments where all students and educators feel valued and excited to learn together. This is the kind of positive educational environment schools should strive for and hopefully it will soon become commonplace.

Next Steps

Upon completion of this study, the next steps are to continue to spread awareness of the benefits of arts integration. This may include the creation of more professional development programs for current and pre-service educators. Developing easily accessible curricula and professional development materials may increase the likelihood of schools' implementing arts integration. An example of this is the 'ABCs of Arts Integration' that I created with the help of Tina Christenson. It describes different skills needed for successful arts integration and is included in Appendix C. Another next step will be to continue providing opportunities for teachers to network and share arts integration ideas with each other. This could happen virtually or in person. Building a strong network for idea sharing will help educators feel better supported and set them up for success. As arts integration becomes more commonly used in classrooms, it will lead to a larger network of collaborators and an increased number of lessons and resources that educators can share and access. This study proved that arts integration can reinvigorate

educational experiences for educators and their students. Hopefully, this awareness and then consequent implementation of arts integration will change and improve education in the future.

Conclusion

In this study, Chapter One presented the research question exploring how arts integration impacts educators personally and professionally and gave an overview of the project. Chapter Two provided a literature review on research related to the study including creativity in education and curriculum development, collaboration in teaching, and teacher morale and retention. Next, Chapter Three examined the design and methodology of the research for this study. It described the selective sampling of *ArtsCore* Colony members and alums. Chapter Three also explained how the qualitative nature of this study allowed the research to focus closely on the effects arts integration had on the *ArtsCore* teachers. Chapter Four presented the study's findings, including the initial themes, subthemes, and main overarching themes. It looked closer at the data and organized it in different tables presenting the occurrences of the themes in the participant's surveys. It also shared relevant quotes from the participants about their arts integration experiences. Chapter Five took the discussion of the main themes—engagement, collaboration, and creativity—even further. It explained the relevance of these topics for educators and the field of education as a whole. It also included more quotes from the participants about their arts integration experiences. Finally, Chapter Five described the implications of this research for educators and, more specifically, music educators, students, future educators and their professors, administration, and the field of education as a whole. In addition to the implications, the chapter also explained the next steps for this research and the impact it may have on arts integration and education in the future.

This study proved that arts integration can have a strong personal and professional impact on educators and their students. Although the arts integration process may sometimes

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be challenging, the benefits make the effort worthwhile. Arts integration makes the classroom a joyful place where students and teachers can express their creativity as they explore and discover together. As Jessie described so beautifully, “It reminds me [of] the importance of being a creator and that we are all artists. Not every piece of art is a masterpiece, but it is the piece that was meant to come out at that time.” Imperfections happen, but it is the experience of creating together that matters and which can lead to truly incredible learning experiences, so teach from the heart through the arts!

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Appendix A

Consent Letter and Informed Consent Form²



Li-Hsuan Hsu, Department of Art, (UW Oshkosh), is conducting research to gather data regarding the effectiveness of programming related to arts integration as an approach to teaching. This programming takes several forms through ArtsCore, a grant project supported by Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies. Dr. Hsu would appreciate your participation in this project as it will assist in understanding what activities strengthen and support UW Oshkosh preservice undergraduate students and practicing teachers relative to arts education, instructional planning, and arts integration.

As part of this study, you might be asked to complete surveys and/or interview(s) that should take 10-20 minutes. Surveys can be completed anonymously. The interview, with one of the researchers, would be conducted in a quiet, convenient, private location. Your involvement in the research is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate or stop participating at any time. You can refuse to answer any of the questions at any time. If you choose not to participate, or change your mind later, your decision will not affect your relationships with the researcher or your right to other services that you may be eligible for. If you want to withdraw from participating in completing the survey or interview, you may do so without penalty. The information collected from you prior to withdrawal would be destroyed if you desire.

The study is not anticipated to present any social or medical risk other than the minimal risk associated with everyday activities. Your decision to participate in this study may not benefit you directly but will increase the knowledge base related to support arts education and arts integration.

Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality of participants. This will include the surveys, documents, coding of all transcribed interviews and observation notes. The information will be stored in a password protected computer. The information will be used for instructional planning and future research studies and you will not be identified individually. If researchers want to show photos or video clips of research subjects during conference presentations or use them in a classroom, the subjects will be asked for permission to use their images in those ways

Once the data collection is completed, we would be happy to share results. If you have any questions about the study, please contact:

Dr. Li-Hsuan Hsu
Assistant Professor
Department of Art
University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh
800 Algoma Blvd
Oshkosh, WI 54901
hsul@uwosh.edu
920-424-7055

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this survey, please contact the chair of the Institutional Review Board:

Chair, Institutional Review Board
Office of Grants and Faculty Development
University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh
Oshkosh, WI 54901
920-424-3215

Although the chairperson may ask your name, all correspondence is kept in confidence.

By signing this agreement, you are agreeing to the explanation provided and agree to participate in the survey completion. I understand my participation in the survey is strictly voluntary.

PRINTED NAME SIGNATURE DATE

This research project has been approved by the UWO IRB for Protection of Human Participants for a one-year period.

² The research for this project was done in conjunction with research done through *ArtsCore* at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh so the same waiver was used for both studies

Appendix B

Pre-Survey and Post-Survey Questions

Name: _____

Impact of Arts Integration Survey (August 2019)

1. How do you define arts integration?

2. How do you currently use arts integration in your classroom?

3. How does arts integration impact your teaching?

4. How does arts integration affect you as a teacher?

5. What are some of your favorite arts integrated lessons?

6. What are some of the best arts integration resources you have found?

7. What do you currently teach (grade/subject area)?

8. Would you like to be part of a case study exploring the impact of arts integration on teachers?
_____ Yes _____ Maybe _____ No

Impact of Arts Integration Survey (March 2020)

I am finishing up the research for my thesis and would love to hear an update from you. If you could please fill out this form for me, I would really appreciate it. Thank you so much for your help with this! –Schuyler Pietz

Email:

Name:

I am currently...

- An ArtsCore Colony Member
- An ArtsCore Alumni
- Other

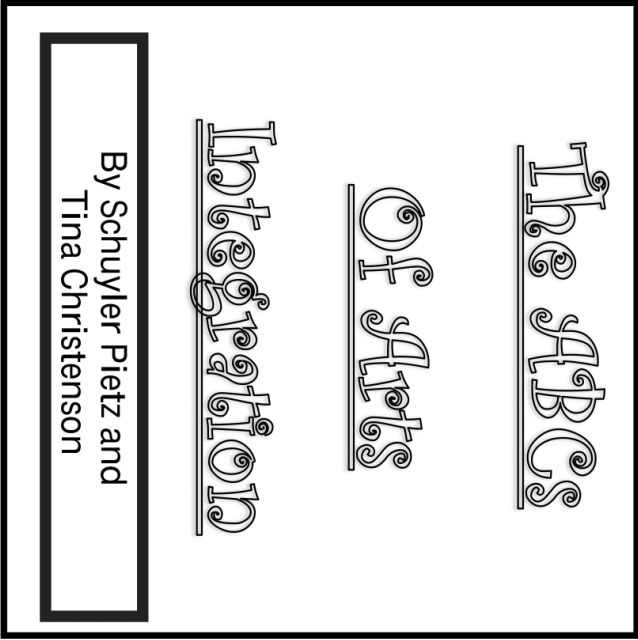
I teach:

How long have you been teaching?

1. How do you define arts integration?
2. How do you currently use arts integration in your classroom?
3. How does arts integration impact your teaching practice?
4. How does arts integration affect you personally as a teacher?
5. What are some of your favorite arts integrated lessons?
6. What are some of the best arts integration resources you have found?
7. What are your current strengths with arts integration?
8. What are your current weaknesses/areas you could improve with arts integration?
9. What resources would be helpful to strengthen your current areas of weakness/uncertainty in arts integration?
10. How has arts integration affected your morale as a teacher?
11. How has arts integration impacted your own creativity?
12. Do you have any other questions, thoughts, or comments you would like to add?

Appendix C

The ABCs of Arts Integration (in Ready-to-Print Then Fold Format)



Some Suggested Resources:

-The Kennedy Center ArtsEdge

<https://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/>

-ArtsCore (UW-Oshkosh)

<https://www.uwosh.edu/artscore/>

-Edutopia

<http://www.edutopia.org/blogs/tag/arts-integration>

-Scholastic

<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/collection/strategies-arts-integration>

-Wisconsin Art Education Association

<http://www.wiaarted.org/>

-National Association for Music Education

<http://www.nafme.org/>

-Educational Theatre Association

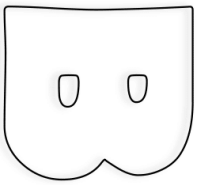
<https://www.schooltheatre.org/home>

-National Dance Education Organization

<http://www.ndeo.org/>

*Come and
integrate
with me!*

A
**rts can enhance
learning when
integrated**



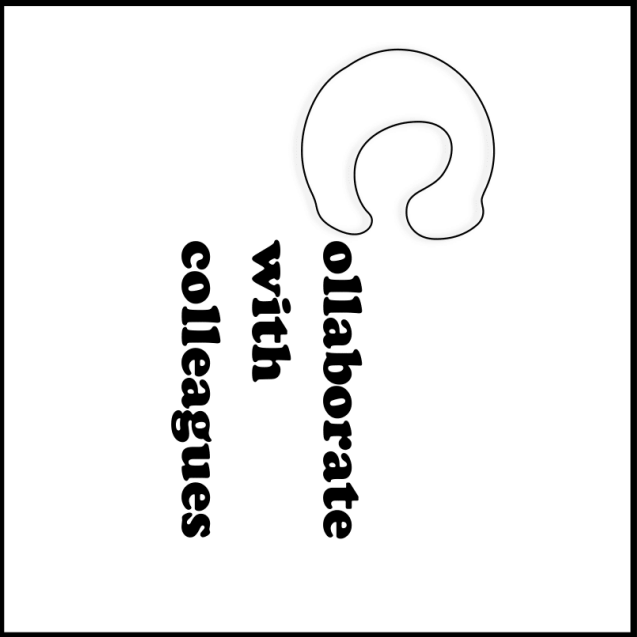
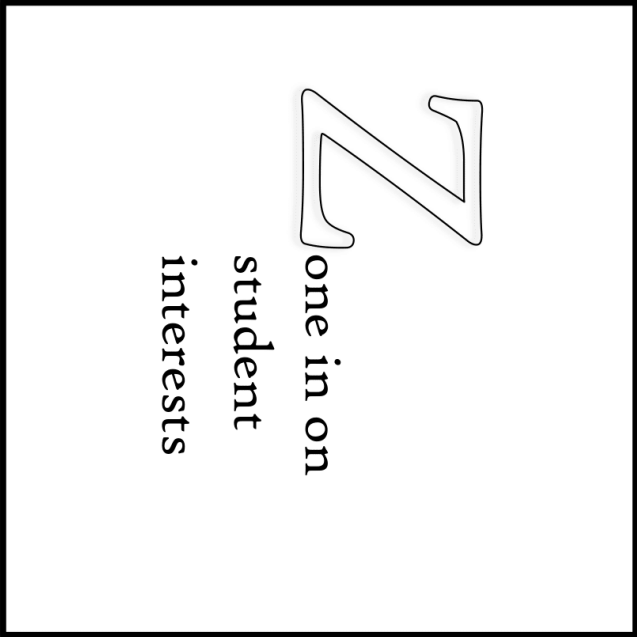
**e open to
trying new
things**

Now you know

your Arts

Integration

ABCs...



Discover new connections between the arts and other curricular subjects


You can do it!

eX
pet
challenges,
but also
embrace
them

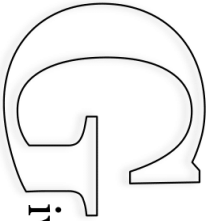
eE
ngage students
by presenting
information in
new and
meaningful
ways

F
ind new
resources in
your school
and in your
community

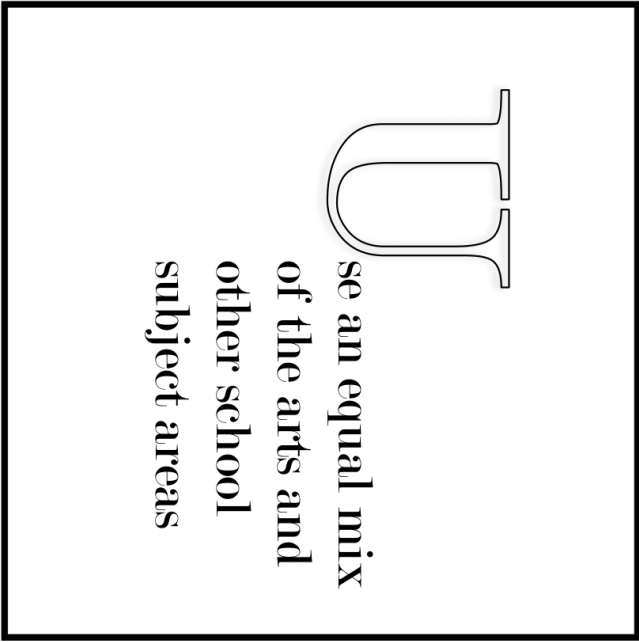
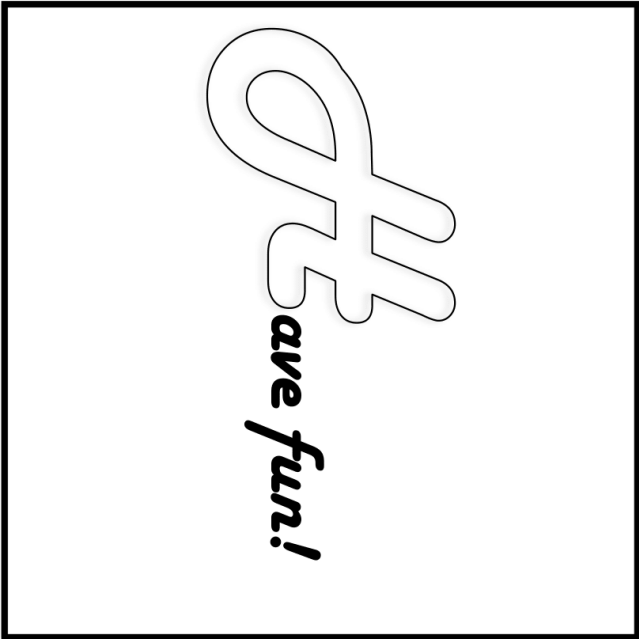
W
elcome life-changing
experiences for
you and your
students

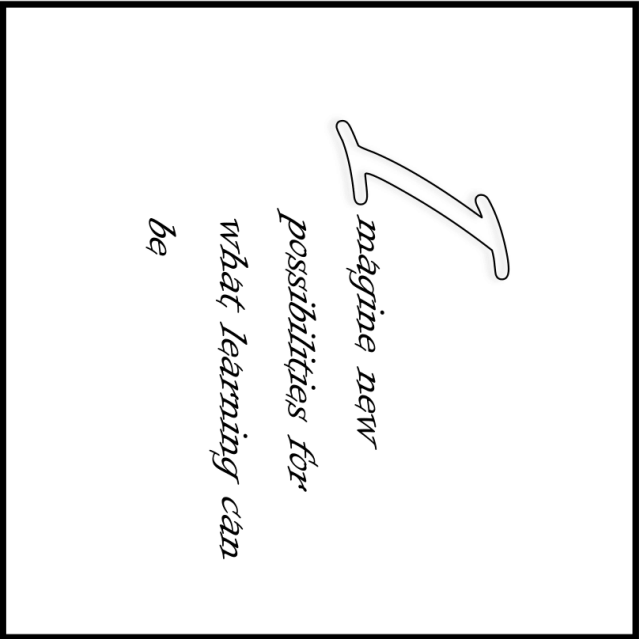
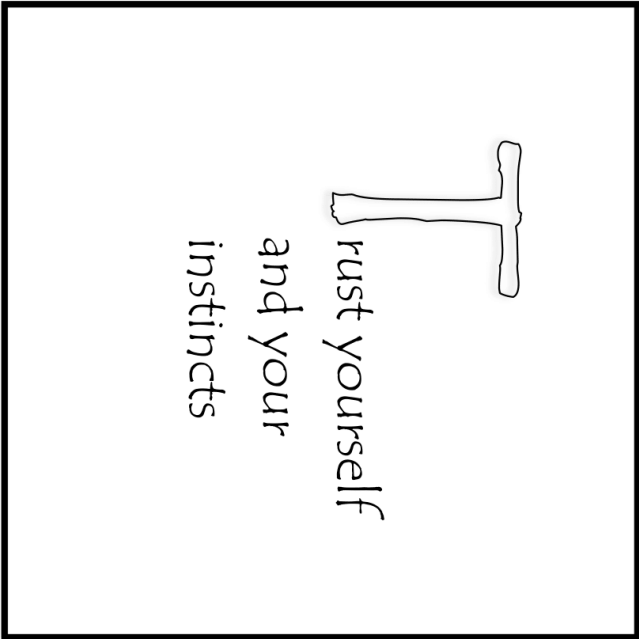


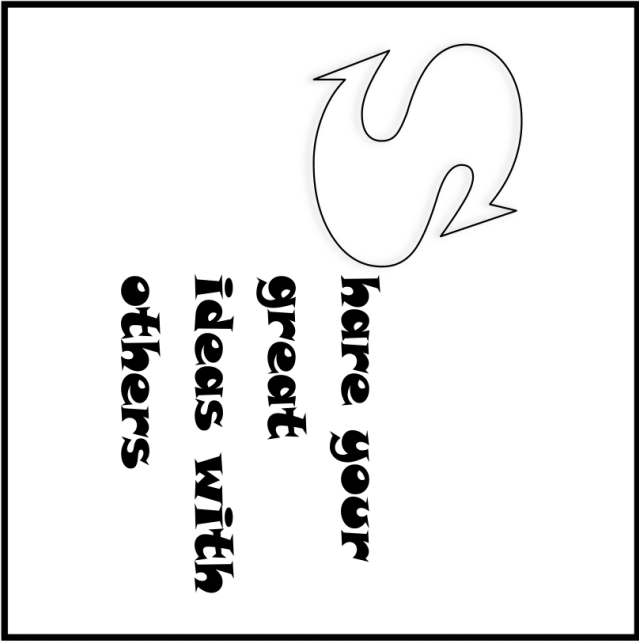
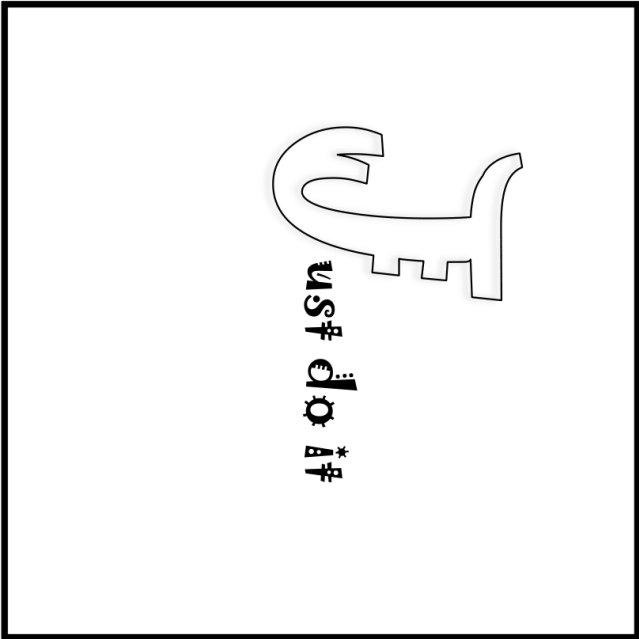
*ary the arts that you
use (include drama,
dance, music, art, and
more!)*

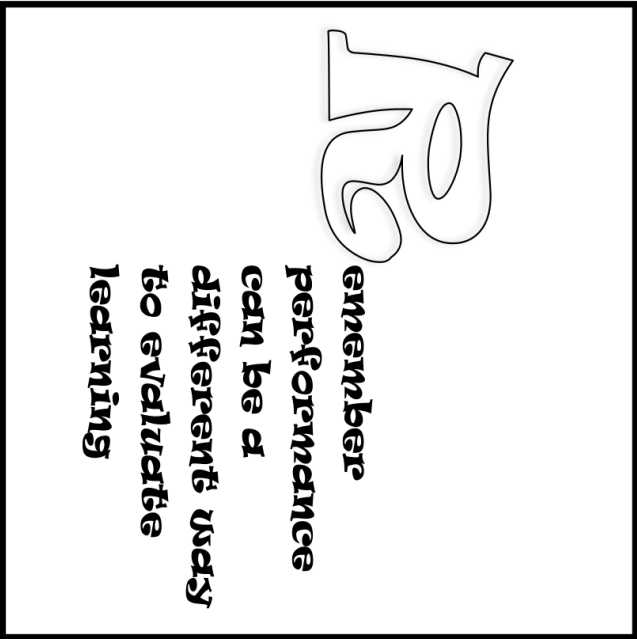


**ive students more
responsibility for
their learning**

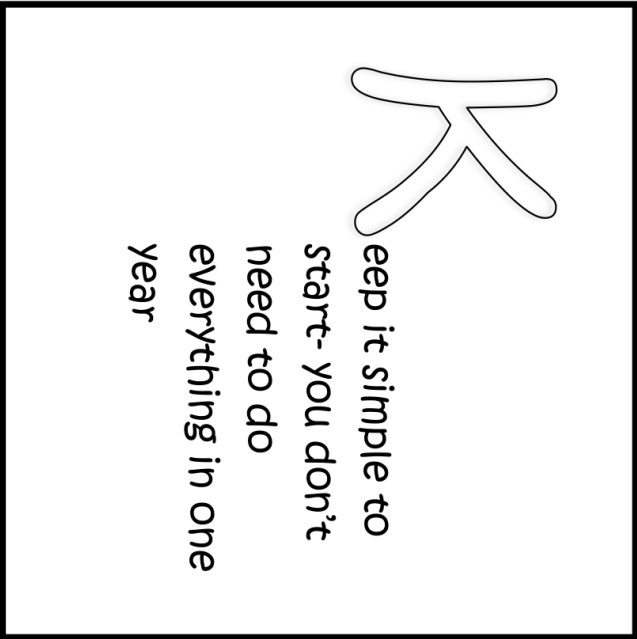








R
remember
performance
can be a
different way
to evaluate
learning



K
keep it simple to
start- you don't
need to do
everything in one
year

Let go of your
inhibitions and
take a chance in
trying
something new

Quit thinking
there is only
one way to
teach

P
ersonalize
student
learning

M
ake learning
meaningful

Networks are available for ideas and support

Openly communicate with co-workers when developing lessons together