

Intro from Editors

- **Merryl Goldberg, Professor of Music, School of Arts, California State University San Marcos**
- **Virginia Smith, Ph.D., Professor, Lincoln University**
- **Elaine Walker, Professor, Department of Education, Leadership Management and Policy & Sametric Research, Seton Hall University**

We are pleased to be guest editors on this special issue featuring articles that are derived from research projects funded by the Office of Innovation and Improvement (OII) within the U.S. Department of Education. This collection of articles is from the Arts in Education Model Development and Dissemination (AEMDD) and Professional Development for Arts Educators (PDAE) programs and is the first to be published as a group. They highlight significant research in the areas of arts education and arts integration, which we hope will provide insight to educators, administrators, artists, and researchers on the roles the arts play in sustainable educational reform. Those insights include building capacity, implementing rigorous interdisciplinary curriculum, comparing multiple approaches, and professional development for both arts specialists and classroom teachers.

The arts are an integral part of a well-rounded education. Providing students with learning opportunities in the arts can help them to gain the skills and habits of mind that are essential to thriving in school and in life. These skills include curiosity, creativity, critical thinking, observation, communication, and problem solving skills. Since 2001, The Office of Innovation and Improvement has invested more than \$225 million in new awards and administers three arts in education grant programs that aim to integrate the arts effectively into the curriculum – either as a means of strengthening core academic subjects, or as an academic discipline in its own right. These three programs are Arts in Education Model Development and Dissemination (AEMDD), Professional Development for Arts Educators (PDAE), and Arts in Education National Program (AENP).

All of these projects work toward achieving three goals:

- Supporting education improvement by strengthening arts education as an integral part of the elementary and secondary school curricula
- Helping to ensure that all students meet challenging state academic standards
- Enabling all students to demonstrate competence in creating, performing, and responding to the arts.

Many of the studies in this special issue focus on the role of arts in literacy or mathematics. This emphasis is driven in part by the reporting requirements of the grants that included attention to test scores. However, this did not limit the projects or the research. The arts as a vehicle for uncovering and supporting student success are at the core of each project, whether the researchers looked closely at arts disciplines in and of themselves, arts integration with literacy or math, or the impact of professional development and teacher learning within the context of engaging student learners.

This collection represents a range of studies including broad scale partnerships between arts partners and multiple school districts, as well as smaller studies within a single district. This collection also represents a broad geographical reach spanning the U.S. from Maine to San Diego and many stops in-between, including New York, Chicago, and Washington D.C. All articles address students in schools with extensive needs and/or high poverty, and several of the projects touch on the contributions arts make to supporting English language learners.

In addition to featuring the research documenting and analyzing the benefits and challenges of the model programs, we believe the research methods, in and of themselves, will contribute to the conversation of educational research as well as rigorous research in the realm of arts education and arts integration.

As a whole, this issue represents hopefulness in uncovering opportunities for students to enact their potential. Students are wonderfully capable when given the opportunity. The articles in this special issue highlight the impact arts can have in uncovering their capabilities. For teachers and administrators, this collection identifies multiple successful practices for in-class instruction in addition to numerous models of professional development for classroom and arts teachers. The professional development derives from studies focusing on institutes, to workshops and ongoing in-class coaching. For researchers, there is a collection of methodologies and tools to draw upon for future work. And, of course, this conversation is merely a small opening in what needs to be done, or is possible. We look forward to the contribution this special issue will make to education, especially in light of the educational reforms and changes that provide a significant opening for the arts, such as Common Core, Next Generation Science Standards, and the dedicated push in Title I towards using funds for arts integration.

Thanks to the Arts in Education Team in the Office of Innovation and Improvement at the Department of Education for their relentless and enthusiastic support. Visit the Office of Innovation and Improvement's webpage [imbed] for more information about federal education programs that support the arts.

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oii/ip/programs.html>

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