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A Pastiche of the Arts and Educational Research

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Abstract

This article provides an overview of the articles featured in the Journal.

Biography:

Bobbi McKean specializes in theatre education and outreach as well as improvisation and collaborative play development. She directs the BFA and MA of the Outreach concentration strand within the Theatre Education and Outreach degrees. Bobbi also acts as coordinator for outreach activities for the School of Theatre Arts and directs the ArtsBridge America outreach program in arts education for the College of Fine Arts. Before teaching at the University level, Bobbi was a professional actress and teaching artist. She was Director of Education at the Seattle Children's Theatre for seven years and served as Artistic Director of the Seattle Peace Theatre, where she directed collaborations with young people and artists from Seattle, Moscow, Russia, Tashkent, Uzbekistan and Zurich, Switzerland.

A teacher, director, writer, designer, acting coach, and educational consultant for over twenty years, David Yarnelle has worked with theatre companies, public school corporations, community colleges, universities, and theatre professionals across the country. In addition to ongoing research, writing, and teaching courses in Acting, Dramatic Structure, History of Theatre, and Theatre Appreciation at the University of Arizona, Mr. Yarnelle served as Education Program Evaluator and Consultant for The Arizona Theatre Company.

Keywords: the arts, elementary education, community, higher education

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This issue of our journal embodies the range of arts and learning possible in our schools and communities. The articles reflect the diverse landscape of arts education, including dance, poetry, visual arts, drama, music and media. Each author takes to heart the mission of integrating the arts across subject disciplines, cultures and generations.

Mila Parrish in her article, [SPEAK OUT: Dancing into Problem-Based Learning](#) demonstrates how universities can build partnerships with school communities to tackle real world issues through dance. Through her project, pre-service teachers and high school students work together to explore how dance can become an expression of ideas when embraced by a community of artists and learners.

Likewise, Karen Kauffman illustrates how the ArtsBridge America model for integrating the arts through university and community partnership can be adapted to fit the needs of the particular institution. By combining service learning with a community outreach program in dance, Kauffman provides insights how existing resources and programs of her particular institution can become vehicles for preparing teaching artists.

Building on professional development efforts for teachers, Robin Vande Zande focuses on three design projects created by teachers in a summer course and later taught in their classrooms. The projects reflect an approach that connects elements of design with a study of community. By looking at their own communities through the lens of design, students and teachers embrace an interdisciplinary approach to learning.

While much of arts education focuses on schools, cultivating community partnerships through arts education can provide a framework for community building. Amy R. Shimshon-Santo argues in her article that increasing access to arts education requires attention be paid not only to content issues in arts education, but, also, to holistic approaches that address the contexts of diverse learning communities.

In the elementary classroom, arts integration poses distinct opportunities and challenges. Gwen Autin demonstrates how even a brief three-day residency where a teaching artist and a math teacher come together to teach fractions through kite-making can yield impressive results in learning. Sue Cromiller presents a curriculum for exploring poetry with third, fourth and fifth graders, unlocking the mysteries of language and engaging imaginations. Marcia Gibson surveys the adults, parents, teachers and community members, to assess the values placed on visual arts education in the elementary classroom. The examples of students' work combined with the results of the surveys add to the ever-growing case for arts education in the schools.

The role of the arts in second language learning is the focus of The Role of Drama on Cultural Sensitivity, Motivation and Literacy in a Second Language Context. Coming from Canada, this study focuses on French immersion classrooms but the implications of the work resonate to classrooms in the United States and beyond. Drama proves to add motivation and clarity to the writing tasks and shows promise as a powerful strategy of instruction for second language learning.

Another study from Canada focuses on the role of music education in early childhood education. Maureen Harris explores the effects of a music-enriched curriculum in a Montessori school and finds that a child-centered music environment offers entry into the world of mathematics for young learners. With the renewed emphasis on early childhood education both in the United States and Canada, this article reminds us of the need to focus on integrating the arts beginning with early childhood education.

Finally, Jess Damsen 's article on The Media Mural Project heralds the next issue of the Journal set to focus on the arts and technology. This special issue looks at how experience of the arts is mediated by technology. Check out the call for papers and keep your eye out for this issue. Submission deadline for articles is February 1, 2008.

Pulling together this rich pastiche of articles was accomplished with the tireless efforts of Maureen Burns and our copy-editor Barbara Cohen as well as the many reviewers who took time from their hectic schedules to read and offer substantial comments. Our thanks to all!

As a former teaching artist (Barbara) and elementary classroom teacher (David), we take great comfort in knowing that so many committed and insightful educators are doing what they can to make certain the arts are alive in their communities and classrooms. Our hope is that these articles will serve as inspirations for more projects (and more articles) to come!