

## Volume 19, Issue 1

The 2023 issue of *Journal of Learning through the Arts* presents the work of scholars who capture, in a broad perspective, keen observations of healing that learning through the arts provides to students and educators. The studies frequently occur on a smaller scale and relate close reflections, sometimes drawing on impacts of the pandemic. In the Performing Arts section, authors Salazar, Bustos-Flores, and Huang relate findings about the affordances of virtual music instruction despite its disruption for Covid classrooms. Posted in the Medical Humanities section, authors Wilkins, Hohn, and Zigelsky discover the impacts of an instructional university/museum collaborative on medical students' personal and professional lives through a mixed-methods study, focusing especially on therapeutic strategies. There are three articles in the Teaching and Learning through the Arts section. Foust and O'Neal articulate some key emotional outcomes of different arts integration lessons for special needs students, language learners, and mainstreamed students in a Tennessee elementary school. Author Briggs shares a case study of four New South Wales art students' portfolios and the instructor's assessments to discuss how the students evolved in their choices and critical thinking processes. The third article in this section by authors Kohler and Vu also highlights student choices regarding guidance and freedom in their lessons, reminding educators of significant factors in designing lessons. In the Opinion section, authors Zhu and Hartline recommend several approaches to incorporating sustainability into arts integration that carry over from Covid instruction into possibilities for student experiences today. Each of these articles provides educators and researchers with concepts to unpack further for how arts and learning can be infused with ongoing attention to healing-themes in efforts to enhance student experiences.

### **Performing Arts**

*The Intersectionality of Arts-Integration and Social-Emotional Learning during COVID-19: Musical Bridges Around the World: The Musical Sprouts Program by Kimberly Alexis Salazar, Belinda Bustos-Flores, Awilda Ramos, Becky Huang*

Studying the third-year data of a three-year longitudinal study of the Musical Sprouts Program offered by Musical Bridges Around the World (MBAW), the authors present a look at impact on STEAM education and social-emotional learning for 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> graders in four Texas schools, noting that the Musical Sprouts Program builds on the National Endowment of the Arts 2012 findings. Cultural content and musical performances related to sister cities, to Japan and Ukraine, and to African American styles and were included in the Covid classroom coverage through videos provided to teachers for instruction. Finding positive impact on content knowledge and social-emotional learning about connection to community, the authors see that, even with Covid and storm complications that disrupted the learning experiences, the program is valuable for future research possibilities.

### **Medical Humanities**

*Improving Interpersonal Communication Skills for Future Healthcare Professionals Through Undergraduate Experiential Education in the Arts by Catherine Wilkins, Jontae Hohn, Rachel Zigelsky*

The authors present a small case study about undergraduate medical students who trained over time through a *Connections* course, a community-based collaboration of a Florida university and a

museum launched in 2016 open to all students, to facilitate their learning about healing therapies for art-museum attendees/patients diagnosed with particular mental conditions (e.g. Alzheimer's/PTSD), HIV/AIDS, or substance-abuse conditions. With several activities, seminars, discussions, tours with curators, and reflection, students learn several strategies which they can apply to their repertoire of therapies for their future patients, demonstrating their training by providing tours to patient-participants at the end of the course. In mixed-methods surveys of the students, the authors discover long-lasting impacts on the students' personal and professional lives, with communication and relationships indicated most frequently as the stand-out takeaways.

### **Teaching and Learning through the Arts**

*The Urgency of the Arts in Addressing Student Isolation, Belonging, and Joyful Learning by Bradley Foust and Ivonne Chand O'Neal*

Authors Foust and O'Neal present a qualitative study for a Title 1 elementary school in Tennessee, surveying and interviewing selected instructors as they focus on student engagement and student social emotional needs. The authors bring in the contexts of the impact of school shootings and the achievement gaps as some of the reasons that arts integration is especially effective as an approach to meaningful and joyful learning. Educators who work with special needs and language learner populations as well as mainstreamed populations mention various lessons that have positive outcomes. The authors tie the creative problem solving of artists to the needs for resiliency among students.

*Art Education and Visual Literacy: Putting Theory into Practice by Judith Ann Briggs*

Author Briggs highlights the learning gains when Year 12 arts students in New South Wales, Australia explore visual literacy in creating portfolios and journaling. Having conceptual frames in place for their thinking and reflecting, the students capture their understanding in various forms to articulate their artworks' messages and processes in response to prompts. The creative and critical experiences of four students are shared along with depictions of their pieces along with the instructor's and author's assessments to show how the students demonstrated visual literacy, evolution in their thinking, and meaning-making.

*Effects of Choice-Based Art Education in the K-12 Art Classroom by Kylie Kohler and Phu Vu*

The authors share a personal K-12 educator's action research inquiry with ranges of students across grade levels in a small rural school district in Nebraska. Offering art option interventions for student learning, the educator interprets various survey results of the students "likes" regarding guidance and freedom with projects and visual art media, noting that student age is a factor. The instructor's reflection on the implementation of choices in arts lessons for K-12 students points toward careful consideration of lesson design and materials to better engage all students.

### **Opinion**

*Sustainable arts integration in teacher preparation: A reflection on community collaboration practices by Mollie Zhu and Amy Hartline*

The authors visit the idea that teachers integrating arts into instruction may not be doing so out of motivation or engagement themselves, connecting this condition to lack of teacher preparation and professional development. Examining a collaboration between a teacher in a Georgia teacher education program and a community educator, the authors present a theme of “art” in “earth” to look at how sustainable arts integration may provide instructors with potentially impactful ways for teachers to connect their students to their communities. Repurposing found household materials and waste materials becomes a resourceful way for educators to meet budget challenges and creative opportunities. The authors share activity design emerging from lessons created during Covid to develop resilience in students.