



# BARBARA IMPERIALE SANDERS

Arts Integration  
Specialist  
Certification  
June 2020

## Arts Specialist Teaching Reflection

### Looking Back In Order To Move Forward

I grew up in a family of educators, and this gave me was a unique view of education and what it can offer a person. Being dyslexic learning was natural, not easy; it wasn't impossible, but it was very different from how others learned. I love knowledge and how it feels to acquire new information; however, I needed to find my path toward learning. I turned to the arts to help me better understand what I couldn't understand in written language. I academically lead on the arts as a way to understand a topic deeper or to exhibit a new concept I learned. I was able to express myself and newly learned knowledge exceptionally easily using visual art, especially in content areas I struggled in.

I have become a lifelong learner, and this is what continuously inspires me to teach. I know intimately what it feels like to struggle through the education process. I frequently reflect when in the classroom as an educator about how it felt to be able to absorb the knowable when it was auditable delivered, however struggling when left to research and writing on my own cognitive. I remember spending days on papers that would only take fellow students hours to write, only to receive a below-expected grade.

I can vividly remember asking to do an extra credit project for a class I was struggling in. It is embedded in my memory how it felt met with the following response from the teacher "make what you think is related to this subject, and I will decide after you hand it in whether or not you receive the extra credit." I remember leaving that teacher's presence and thinking now what? I know the project needed to be good and intense, with a thoughtful connection to the content. I created a replica Queen Elizabeth wedding dress and a full metal armor out of roofing metal accurately and precisely. Then delivered a written explanation of both and their relevance to the class. I got the extra credit, and I will never forget that teachers face. This is how my passion for arts integration first began on the teaching level.

As an arts integration specialist, I bring a unique view to my instructional practices. I believe that connecting multiple subjects into one delivery or a single project will level the educational planning field while elevating academic expectations. I hope my students can gain an understanding of the interplay between the arts and other academic subjects. This interplay through arts integration can empower their learning and allow them to flourish intellectually. Arts integrations, when implemented with structure and design, will not only allow growth but for the advancement of learners to push the limits of the classroom while allowing them to see how other students with different learning styles can excel. Therefore creating authentic experiences with different learning approaches. If the classroom structure is loosely based on teaching for artistic behavior and links the ailment of the standers through arts integration, it creates the opportunity for students to acquire a deeper understanding of how subjects can be interwoven. Creating a web of recallable information that can be later applied to real-world experience.

My goals as an arts integration specialist are to reinvigorate student interest in learning while infusing the classroom with excitement and the internal push for lifelong learners. I hope to set this goal into course by inspiring fellow colleges to use arts integration as a tool to layer instruction with multiple fascinated content connections that are relatable able to young minds and to ignite the curiosity of new concepts.

In my classroom, the most valuable teaching I can deliver is to teach my student how to think and not what to think. It is about my students realizing how they learn and ways to harness this knowledge to improve their overall educational performance and experience. Many of my students struggle in their classes due to the miss management of time, or because they are on a personal quest to be perfect, it is where as an art educator, I can help them. Supplying tools and strategies in the art class that they can later apply to other subject areas. Consequently, helping them format a learning system that works solely for them, that in turn can be applied to any subject area, and will create a higher level of overall academic achievement.

Students who struggle when learning in typical platforms excel in a more problem-based learning environment. In arts integration, the arts are taught simultaneously as the core subject, and problem-solving task naturally appear. This brings depth to the learning and creates a retrievable pathway for the knowledge that is unique to each learner. Arts Integration allows for teacher specialization; however, foresters collaboration among colleges and creates an interlocking of different subject area curriculum, therefore, creating a learning web of knowledge. This arts integration curriculum web creates fewer holes for the students to slip through in compassion to traditional instruction methods. When using this arts integration web a common benefit emerges, for both teachers and students, an enriched and exciting educational journey.

When an arts integration program is set into motion, it will appear as a seemliness transition of knowledge between teachers and students. Arts integration lessons will have blurred lines between different subjects area because in an art integration lesson, the subjects are simultaneously taught and assessed based on the aligned standards for both a core area and the arts. The subjects become equally valued in the classroom. If this does not happen adequately, then the arts are only working in service of the core subject, this is the arts enrichment lesson but not an authentic arts integration lesson.

Core curricular areas such literacy, language development, and math are typically viewed as a top priority in a school atmosphere, the arts often get overlooked, and many don't truly see the tremendous impact the arts have on children's education. Too often, arts education is mistakenly viewed as having little academic merit. According to the U.S. Department of Education's statement on the Importance of Arts Education, many schools wrongly choose to cut arts programs, citing standardized testing as a higher priority. These decisions are often based on the misconception that the arts are entirely separate from general education and view that the arts as having little impact on the child's development. I believe that an arts integration program can prove just the opposite. While creating an arts integration program at my current district, collected data proved a 14% increase in math standardized testing and a 56% increase in science standardized test scores within the few years of the program.

According to the National Art Education Association, art can help children to build critical thinking skills, agility, and imagination abilities; all are assets crucial for well-rounded growth. These translate into real-world skills such as problem-solving and strategic planning. Teaching art can foster positive emotional development by encouraging students to identify and analyze their feelings, consequently developing a deeper understanding of themselves and their learning.

The U.S. Department of Education in "The Importance of Art Education" article states that art is a "challenging" and "rigorous" academic subject. Additionally, it is stated that art can be effectively used to enrich classroom learning of core subjects. I believe that through arts integration, we can take this step of enrichment deeper to create seamless alignments that allow students' real-world experience even at a young age.

Teachers can convey mathematic concepts such as geometry while aligning to art study of symmetry or scale. Art critique experiences can enhance language acquisition and literacy skills through the development of unrestrained thought patterns.

I have high expectations for my classroom and school's continued work with our arts integration program. My current district has began an arts integration program three years ago and I look forward to acquiring data that relates to our program while evaluating the progress we have made both with student achievement and their engagement in their studies. I look forward to increasing the students' overall excitement for learning through creating art integration lessons that bring learning to a deeper and more fulfilling level through curriculum development. I aspire to have fellow arts integration teachers begin to take the reins of the program and drive the excitement for a new style of learning to other colleagues while pushing deeper into other core subject areas, making even more content connections. My school has done the legwork building the foundation of a strong arts integration program by creating time and organization the delivery of the program, now beings the heavy lifting to build upwards. I am hopeful with many hands; it will make for easy lifting.