

Art

AS A TOOL FOR TEACHERS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS



Anandy, 15 yrs old, "Culture," Tempera Paint on Paper, 18x24 inches, New York City, NY

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Art as a Tool for Teachers of English Language Learners

“Having an art class was something very special. It changed my thoughts about art. I now see that art is a language that expresses ideas and feelings visually.”

-Adalisha, age 17, Visual Arts & ESL student, NYC

Introduction

The arts have a profound ability to enrich the lives they touch and can be an invaluable tool for teachers at all levels to enhance instruction for English Language Learners. English Language Learners (ELLs) in New York State enter our public schools facing the multiple challenges of learning English, mastering academic content, bridging distances between the home country and their new home, and negotiating new cultural and social contexts. By integrating the arts and art-making into English language teaching and learning, students will develop and deepen their understanding of their own and others' human experience. In combination with reading, writing, speaking and listening, the arts can open doors for high levels of analysis and also challenge students to explore themselves and their surroundings, and thus find avenues for sophisticated comprehension and communication. The arts convey what it means to be human, challenge the intellect and provide rich experiences in analysis, exploration, reflection, observation, imagination, experimentation, and communication.

In New York State, learners of English as a second language are students classified as “limited English proficient” (LEP) because they come from a home where a language other than English is spoken and score at below “Proficiency” on the LAB-R or score at the Beginning, Intermediate, or Advanced level of English as measured by the NYSESLAT. Diverse student profiles exist within the overall classification of LEP. There are LEP/ELLs who may be gifted and there are many with a high level of proficiency in their native language. Others may not be able to read or write in their native language because they have had a limited or interrupted formal education in their own country. Finally, there is a population of LEP students who have been identified as having special needs and have been referred for special education services. All of these LEP students must receive instruction in ESL.

For ELL/LEP students, it is imperative to make teaching and learning culturally relevant and to enable access to prior knowledge upon which new skills and concepts can be built. It is critical for educators to understand the ways in which students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds profoundly influence their experiences in the classroom. The visual arts enhance language development by offering non-verbal methods for communication and understanding and by providing a platform for students to create mental images. Integrating the arts into language arts and the content areas for ELLs can give students the opportunity to engage in new and varied approaches while gaining positive emotional responses to learning, understanding others and communicating their own ideas.

The arts as a core content area are integral to a well-rounded education. Additionally, a movement to integrate the arts across the curriculum will showcase their contribution to critical areas of learning and their relevance in our schools; it is hopeful that all teachers of ELLs will find continued value participating in professional development aimed at incorporating the arts in classrooms as effective tools for reaching students. Opportunities to practice the arts benefit students' cognitive development and enhance literacy and language development. Students from highly diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds with varying academic needs thrive in programs that incorporate the universal language of art elements and images; access multiple intelligences; and encourage critical and conceptual thinking along with technical and creative problem-solving skills. Students engaged in quality arts curricula develop confidence and find outlets for individuality and self-inquiry. While engaging in a variety of learning styles, their imaginations and visual awareness are stimulated and they learn to understand the work of others and express their own point of view. Through the arts, young people have opportunities to develop their voices; enhance multicultural awareness; take pride in heritage; and recognize their role in, respond to, and participate in the world at large.

By placing art within the context of the lives of ELLs and enabling them to express their ideas visually as well as by speaking and writing, teachers can:

- Build on prior knowledge.
- Scaffold instruction.
- Create a bridge between written and spoken language.
- Make learning relevant and meaningful.
- Help students develop self-esteem.
- Foster creativity.
- Develop an appreciation of the past.
- Highlight similarities and differences.
- Foster higher order thinking skills.
- Promote high levels of analysis, reasoning, and questioning.
- Support creative thinking.
- Model problem solving.
- Emphasize interpreting and communication of ideas.
- Enhance students' ways of observing, responding to, and representing the world.



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Dear Colleagues,

Art is an invaluable tool for teachers to support English Language Arts (ELA), English as a Second Language (ESL), and Native Language Arts (NLA) as well as all content areas for English Language Learners. This guide strives to illuminate the importance of providing students with outlets for creative expression, and exemplify how the visual arts can be successfully integrated with reading, writing and oral communication to increase literacy development and foster higher order thinking skills for English Language Learners. Outlined in this guideline are various approaches that schools, administrators and teachers may follow in order to create programs that connect the New York State Learning Standards for The Arts and English as a Second Language (ESL). Provided are examples of how teachers can collaborate to create interdisciplinary programs geared towards motivating and educating the whole child through the visual arts while enhancing the language acquisition of their students.

This guide focuses on how ELLs can be taught through the integration of visual arts and ESL standards. Various art and ESL integration program models are provided as well as examples of curricular outlines, project ideas and student work. We would like to thank the Director and staff of the Spanish Bilingual Education and Technical Assistance Center (SBETAC) for their efforts in completing this guide.

Best Regards

Pedro J. Ruiz, Ph. D.

Art Education Enhances Literacy

“Through the arts I’ve learned about expressing and listening to others ideas.”

-Yesbel, 16, Visual Arts & ESL student

In his review of a Guggenheim assessment of an art education program implemented in New York City schools, Randy Kennedy raises the question that many readers may be asking: “In an era of widespread cuts in public-school art programs, the question has become increasingly relevant: does learning about paintings and sculpture help children become better students in other areas?”¹ The Guggenheim’s program, *Learning Through Art*, sends trained teaching artists into the public schools to work directly with students and teachers.² The study indicates that the Learning Through Art program improved a range of literacy skills among the students who participated in the program. The students “performed better in six categories of literacy and critical thinking skills — including thorough description, hypothesizing and reasoning — than did students who were not in the program.” The study found the same results two years in a row, confirming the original findings that learning about art has positive impacts on the development of reading and oral communication skills. The No Child Left Behind education law has led schools to increase the amount of time spent on reading and math instruction, resulting in a decrease in the amount of time spent on other subject areas, including the arts. This study validates what many educators have long known – the arts increase a child’s capacity to learn in other academic areas, particularly in reading, writing and verbal communication. The Guggenheim hopes the results of this study will help support educators seeking more money and time for arts education in schools.

Brain research also supports the value of integrating the arts in English and native language arts as well as in other subject areas. Stanford University conducted a study to measure the relationship between reading and the arts and found “likely connections among brain regions involved in the development of reading skills...[and] how exposure to the visual arts might relate to phonological awareness (the ability to manipulate speech sounds), which is correlated with reading ability.” The study involved children who were enrolled in an examination of reading skills and associated brain structures, and sought to see how the arts affected children’s reading fluency, by comparing students with arts training to students without an arts education over a three-year period. The study also involved interviewing the children’s parents, testing reading scores and improvements over the test period and studying the brains of the children through scientific imaging. By measuring the parts of the brain that connect the two hemispheres – “communication cables,” differences between strong and weak readers in connection to experiences in the arts were observed.³

Teachers are beginning more and more to integrate the arts into their curricula in order to better help students’ master the required skills and content area knowledge. Alain Jehlen interviewed educators who are using arts in their classrooms for the National Education Association (NEA)

¹ Randy Kennedy, Guggenheim Study Suggests Arts Education Benefits Literacy Skills, New York Times, July, 2006

² For more information on the Guggenheim program: <http://www.guggenheim.org/new-york/education/school-educator-programs/learning-through-art> and on the program’s website at: http://www.learningthroughart.org/research_findings.php

³ Brian Wandell, et al, Stanford University, *Training in the Arts, Reading, and Brain Imaging*, The Dana Foundation)

and found that many teachers feel that through integration of the arts into their academic lessons students are able to learn more deeply because they use varied ways of thinking and problem solving. Jehlen points out that the schools with the most arts programming cuts are also the low-income schools “where winning students over to the learning enterprise is often the most difficult.” A biology teacher at a school that serves a large population of English Language Learners found that though students may not be able to articulate science concepts they are learning, they are often able to demonstrate their understanding through drawings. Teachers observe that drawing often engages students who might otherwise be disinterested in science and can help students move beyond simple recall when they are asked to make connections and come up with a unique interpretation through an artwork or drawing. Students use observation skills when they are drawing, and this can help to motivate students who might otherwise remain quiet or need more time to process information. Jehlen also recounts the story of an East Oakland teacher who in his first year was inspired by an arts-integration coach to use visual art to connect to students in his content area. In order to get his students to understand big numbers and powers of ten, he had them create posters comparing numbers they found in researching real-world examples. The teacher found that after direct instruction most information was forgotten by his students but what his students learned with art they remembered. Jehlen ends with the question “so is this the future of art education—as a tool for teaching the ‘core subjects’?” Public opinion polls of Americans show that imagination and creativity are revered, and an NEA poll revealed most voters believe arts education is essential and should be considered as part of a basic education.⁴

⁴ (Alain Jehlen, *The Dance Trapezoid: Educators use the power of the arts to teach math and science*, NEA)

Learning Standards

“When I made my ‘Culture’ piece it made me really think about my culture and where I really came from and what I really thought about my culture and what it really means to me.” -Tasia, 16, Visual Arts & ESL student, NYC

Art, like text, can be used as a source to practice critical-thinking skills. Integration art and content is similar to the integration of high quality literature into the curriculum: through activities prior to viewing, during viewing, and post-viewing, and using open-ended questions and connections to students’ own experience, students become critical viewers and thinkers. Teachers create opportunities for students to explore prior knowledge, practice their language, and produce texts and other products for performance-based assessment. Unlike a text, a work of art is a “visual document” that a whole classroom of students can interact with easily at the same time. It provides a common point of reference, without the need for the teacher to stop and check for comprehension.

The State of New York has developed Learning Standards for The Arts as well as for ESL, NLA and ELA. These standards are meant to serve as the foundation for curriculum, instruction and assessments in these subject areas. The Arts and ESL Integration curricular models provided in this guideline offer different approaches on how schools and teachers can use art as a tool to teach ESL, and all examples can and should be standards-based. By planning units of study and lessons that integrate the Arts with appropriate English Language Arts and ESL Learning Standards, the subjects can be merged and instructed in an interdisciplinary fashion.

New York State Learning Standards for ELA

- As speakers and writers, students will use oral and written language for self-expression and literary response.
- Students will listen, speak, read and write in English for classroom and social interaction.
- Students will listen, speak, read and write in English for critical analysis and evaluation.
- Students will speak and write using the conventions and features of American English to influence an audience.

Goals for Students

- To develop understanding of what constitutes artistic expression
- To explore academic language, use of visual images and other conventions
- To become empowered to compare and contrast various works of art
- To use higher order thinking skills to connect art viewing to their own experiences

New York State Learning Standards for ESL

Expectations for Achievement

The ESL standards articulate the abilities and competencies that LEP/ELLs must demonstrate to successfully integrate into the English academic mainstream. The ESL standards combine the principles of second language learning with the language development necessary for success in the academic content areas. Proficiency in the English language, which is essential to meet the standards in other academic content areas, is made explicit as a developmental goal. The ESL standards view second language education as consisting of learning English for authentic purposes in both social and academic settings. Through meaningful and purposeful interactions, LEP/ELLs explore ideas and concepts at a pace that reflects their level of English proficiency and academic preparedness. LEP/ELLs at all levels of English proficiency engage in standards-based tasks that build on their academic, language, and cultural experiences. Unique to the NYS ESL standards is Standard 5: cross-cultural knowledge and understanding. LEP/ELLs bring a rich background of cultural experiences to their classrooms. Standard 5 capitalizes on this background to develop LEP/ELLs' familiarity with their new social and academic environment in the United States, as well as to foster cross-cultural awareness in the multicultural American society.

Learning Standards for ESL at Four Levels – Early Childhood, Elementary, Intermediate, Commencement

Standard 1: *Students will listen, speak, read, and write in English for information and understanding.*

Standard 2: *Students will listen, speak, read and write in English for literary response, enjoyment, and expression.*

Standard 3: *Students will listen, speak, read and write in English for critical analysis and evaluation.*

Standard 4: *Students will listen, speak, read, and write in English for classroom and social interaction.*

Standard 5: *Students will demonstrate cross-cultural knowledge and understanding.*

New York State Learning Standards for the Arts

Expectations for Achievement

All students should participate at an appropriate level and should demonstrate competent, proficient, or distinguished levels of achievement in the following areas by the completion of their secondary schooling: Elementary level achievement in the content standards for each of the four disciplines of dance, music, theatre, and visual arts; Intermediate level achievement in the content standards for two of the four disciplines of dance, music, theatre, and visual arts; Commencement level achievement in the content standards for one of the four disciplines of dance, music, theatre, and visual arts.

Learning Standards for The Arts (Dance, Music, Theatre and Visual Arts) at Three Levels – Elementary, Intermediate, Commencement

Standard 1: Creating, Performing and Participating in the Arts - Students will actively engage in the processes that constitute creation and performance in the arts and participate in various roles in the arts.

Standard 2: Knowing and Using Arts Materials and Resources - Students will be knowledgeable about and make use of the materials and resources available for participation in the arts in various roles.

Standard 3: Responding to and Analyzing Works of Art - Students will respond critically to a variety of works in the arts, connecting the individual work to other works and to other aspects of human endeavor and thought.

Standard 4: Understanding the Cultural Dimensions and Contributions of the Arts - Students will develop an understanding of the personal and cultural forces that shape artistic communication and how the arts in turn shape the diverse cultures of past and present society.

Visual Arts

Standard 1: Students will make works of art that explore different kinds of subject matter, topics, themes, and metaphors. Students will understand and use sensory elements, organizational principles, and expressive images to communicate their own ideas in works of art. Students will use a variety of art materials, processes, mediums, and techniques, and use appropriate technologies for creating and exhibiting visual art works.

Standard 2: Students will know and use a variety of visual arts materials, techniques, and processes. Students will know about resources and opportunities for participation in visual arts in the community (exhibitions, libraries, museums, galleries) and use appropriate materials (art reproductions, slides, print materials, electronic media). Students will be aware of vocational options available in the visual arts.

Standard 3: *Students will reflect on, interpret, and evaluate works of art, using the language of art criticism. Students will analyze the visual characteristics of the natural and built environment and explain the social, cultural, psychological, and environmental dimensions of the visual arts. Students will compare the ways in which a variety of ideas, themes, and concepts are expressed through the visual arts with the ways they are expressed in other disciplines.*

Standard 4: *Students will explore art and artifacts from various historical periods and world cultures to discover the roles that art plays in the lives of people of a given time and place and to understand how the time and place influence the visual characteristics of the artwork. Students will explore art to understand the social, cultural, and environmental dimensions of human society.*

Approaches to Integrating Arts into Instruction

“Because of the art program, my mind grew as a person and as an intellectual one. Art has changed school for me because it has given me a chance to let all of my feelings and ideas out.”

Payne, 16, Visual Arts & ESL student, NYC

“The Board of Regents recognizes the diversity of students in New York State, including students with disabilities, students with limited English proficiency, gifted students, and educationally disadvantaged students, and has made a strong commitment to integrating the education of all students into the total school program. The standards apply to all students regardless of their experiential background, capabilities, developmental and learning differences, interests, or ambitions. A classroom typically includes students with a wide range of abilities who may pursue multiple pathways to learn effectively, participate meaningfully, and work towards attaining the curricular standards. Students with diverse learning needs may need accommodations or adaptations of instructional strategies and materials to enhance their learning and/or adjust for their learning capabilities.” (New York State Education Department, www.emsc.nysed.gov)

“The arts are an integral part of authentic learning; the heart and soul that complement mind and body, a powerful integrative force that teaches the whole child—social, creative, emotional, intellectual, and physical” (LeFrancois, Psychology for Teaching, pg. 499). In order to provide a springboard for the development of an integrated visual arts and ESL curriculum in a school, examples of various approaches are provided to serve as ideas of ways for educators to work together to make connections between the two subject areas and use art as a tool to teach English as a second language. These designs can serve as an inspiration for possible framework teachers and schools can use to develop their own programs. Explained are structures that can be put in place in elementary and secondary schools, and the concepts range in complexity in order to reflect the varied needs, resources and formats of schools.

One Teacher

A basic approach to integrating visual arts and ESL instruction is for the generalist or content area teacher to independently implement art experiences in conjunction with their own curriculum. It is possible and beneficial for ESL, language arts and content area teachers to offer students outlets for creative exploration, hands-on learning experiences, and synthesis of new knowledge via art-making. Teachers can provide opportunities for students to use a range of simple art materials in their classes by designing lessons where students can create drawings, illustrations, posters, and so on, in relationship to what is being studied. This type of art performance task in non-arts classrooms, however, does not take the place of standards-based instruction. Students do need to be served by an arts specialist in order to receive a formal education in the art disciplines and meet the arts standards, however, in conjunction with or in lieu of a visual arts class (in cases where there are no other resources for art education in a school), this practice is meaningful to students, motivates and supports language acquisition.

An enhancement upon the incorporation of art in the classroom is to include the visual arts specialist in integrating reading, writing and speaking into his or her arts curriculum in tandem. ESL teachers offer outlets for artistic explorations in their own classrooms while visual arts teachers incorporate literacy-based practices in the art studio. Students greatly benefit from cross-curricular, interdisciplinary experiences; a further improvement to this model is for ESL and visual arts teachers to work together in the planning of lessons in order to fully complement one another's curriculum and ensure appropriate standards are met.

Visiting Artists

Another method for integrating the arts and ESL curricula is to employ visiting teaching-artists to work collaboratively with arts, ESL and content area teachers. Through this approach, students benefit from receiving direct instruction in the arts from a specialist whom makes connections to the content area curriculum. The teaching-artist plans and provides art instruction while the classroom teacher provides lessons that incorporate reading and writing. Teaching-artists and teachers can also work together to co-teach interdisciplinary lessons. Another goal for this model may be for teachers to observe the visiting artist's lessons in effort to gain professional development in integrative arts education and enhance their abilities to instruct standards-based art lessons independently.

Coaches

In schools served by literacy coaches, an appropriate method of using art as a tool to teach English as a second language is for coaches working with visual arts teachers to support the incorporation of literacy-based instruction and ESL standards within the context of the art studio. Additionally, arts educators can serve schools as arts integration coaches, supporting generalist and content area teachers in delivering standards-based visual arts lessons in conjunction with literacy-based curriculum. Ideally, literacy and arts integration coaches can work together to develop standards-based, interdisciplinary curricula, and support other teachers in implementing integrative art and ESL lessons in their classrooms.

Cross-Curricular Work

Visual arts and ESL teachers can best serve schools and students by collaboratively planning cross-curricular units of study. Students in this type of program experience complementary teaching and learning in different classrooms simultaneously. Teachers can also co-teach to further blend the subject areas and standards in one lesson, and work together to help facilitate student learning in their respective area of expertise. An art and ESL class can be designed and instructed by educators who teach together in one classroom or who take turns working with the same class to implement the different aspects of the interdisciplinary curriculum. Team-planning is extremely beneficial to schools, teachers and students alike, and is an important component to the development of an outstanding, sequential, standards-based, integrated program. If co-teaching and/or mixing is possible within a school structure, it is an ideal approach to offer the students in one class the opportunity to receive instruction from two collaborating teachers and learn through a balanced educational program.

Integrated Program

The most ideal approach to creating interdisciplinary curriculum within a school is to develop an integrated program, that is coordinated collaboratively by arts, ESL, ELA and content area coaches. In a small school, the program coordinators can work together to design and implement integrated units of study in classrooms separately and/or as co-teachers. In a larger school, the program coordinators can work with their respective departments to oversee appropriate lesson implementation by all teachers. This model can be expanded to include all content areas; coaches can work with teachers of other subjects to create integrated curricula in other academic areas, including math, science and social studies. The program coordinators can work together to facilitate the integration of reading, writing and the arts in all subject areas school-wide. This is a progressive and expansive model which may however seem challenging (or impossible) to implement in schools with fixed schedules, programs, limited funding, resources and planning time for teachers. However, if there is vision, flexibility, dedication, ambition and organization, administrators and coordinators can work together to restructure planning and teaching schedules and use existing or grant funding to create, support and supply a program where reading, writing and the arts are intertwined in all content areas in a school. Through emphasis on professional development, teachers can learn new strategies to incorporate reading, writing and the arts in other subject areas via workshops, seminars and in-classroom training provided by coaches.

Strategies for Integrating Arts into Instruction

Questioning and Discussion Strategies which can be Adapted for ELA and ESL Instruction

When discussing a work of art with students, the Community Programs Educators at the Museum of Modern Art⁵ employ some or all of the following questioning and discussion techniques:

1. **Use Open-Ended Questions to Draw Students' Attention to the Artwork**
 - a. "What do we see here?" or "What is going on here?"
 - b. "What do we see at the top, bottom, etc. of the artwork?"
 - c. "What small details, shapes, colors, etc. can we find in the artwork?"
2. **Connect Students' Personal Experiences and Prior Knowledge to the Artwork**
 - a. "Does anybody know what musical instrument this is?"
 - b. "Has anybody ever been to a place that looks like this? When?"
 - c. "Does this remind you of anything you've seen around your house or your school?"
3. **Create a Narrative or Thematic Understanding of the Artwork**
 - a. "What is the person in this painting doing? What are they going to do next?"
 - b. "What do we notice about the expressions on these people's faces? What emotions might they be feeling?"
 - c. "Does this remind us of any stories from our childhood? Which ones?"
4. **Allow for Students to Express Personal Reactions to the Artwork**
 - a. "Anthony has said that this piece makes him think of music and dancing. Does anybody else get a similar feeling?"
 - b. "It seems like the group enjoyed the last artwork that we discussed much more than this one. Why is that?"
5. **Connect Art-Historical Information and Ideas Regarding Artistic Intent into the Students' Interpretation of the Artwork**
 - a. "This is a *self-portrait*. What is the artist trying to show us about herself? How is she showing it?"
 - b. "This artist is well known for his *abstract* art. Has anybody heard that term before or know what that word means?"
 - c. "Why would an artist use all of these dark colors in a painting? What feelings or emotions might she be trying to express to her viewers?"
6. **Paraphrasing**
 - a. Connect and reinforce pertinent themes.
 - b. Build a conversation around previous comments and questions.
 - c. Rephrase comments and connect similarities between student responses.

⁵ Thank you to NYS SBETAC's partners at the Community Education Program at the Museum of Modern Art MoMA, led by Francesca Rosenberg and taught by museum educator Calder Zwicky.

Developing a Lesson Plan: Integrating art into a thematic lesson

Consider starting with a standard and a big idea, and include inquiry, vocabulary and ESL structures.

Who are my students? What do I want to emphasize or explore? What themes will emerge?

Prior to viewing

- What ways will I explore students prior knowledge?
- What vocabulary and what language structures will students need to explore this theme through art and literature
- How will I introduce the theme and get students to connect to it? Will it be through writing? Reading? Viewing?
- What materials will I need?

During viewing

- What open-ended questions will I ask the students?
- What connections will I make to other classroom activities or works that we have read?
- How will I encourage students to think critically?

After viewing

- How will I extend the learning?
- What will I ask students to create to demonstrate they have mastered the topic?
- How will I assess their performance?

ESL Strategies

The arts naturally lend themselves to multicultural and visual teaching and learning, which enhance LEP/ELLs access to language acquisition and cross-cultural education. The use of specific ESL strategies such as Graphic Organizers and Literature Circles can be used by students to learn vocabulary and understand texts, as well as to discuss artwork, historical periods and ideas for pieces, and share finished work. Literature Circles are fun, classroom-based student reading and discussion groups which combine the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Literature circles work at any level, increase autonomy and provide a context for student-centered discussions. It is highly effective to make cross-curricular connections in learning strategies and to use similar platforms of discovery in the ESL and visual art classroom as well as in other content areas. If students are participating in the integrated program in different classrooms (ESL, art studio, other content area classes), it is important to connect the areas of study in the multiple subjects and spaces simultaneously. The cross-content area curriculum should be complementary and instructed at the same time so that the students' work revolves around the same theme and incorporates and reinforces the same vocabulary. Students can be motivated to use the four language skills in response to learning about, looking at and making art; and students should read, write, speak and listen in order to brainstorm, organize thinking and propel creations. Students can follow their art-making experiences by titling and presenting artwork, and writing artist statements and reflections on process and product.

Teachers and students can discuss the outcomes of projects and what might be done differently in a future assignment, and work together to create rubrics to formally assess the completed work. Students should keep an arts journal to use for vocabulary, sketching, and writing preliminary ideas and reflections, along with a portfolio to document all of their reading, writing and artwork with which to assess their learning process.

Visual Arts Projects and Materials

Depending on the resources and facilities available in a school, visual art project scope, size and media will vary. Materials used for making art in the non-arts classroom can be kept to a minimum while still allowing students to have meaningful, creative and hands-on learning experiences in conjunction with literacy development. There are plenty of art supplies available that are manageable and practical to use in classrooms such as markers, pencils, pens, oil pastels, crayons, watercolor paints and air-dry clay. In the studio environment, and under the direction of an art specialist, media-intensive and long-term art projects can be undertaken. In order to illustrate the variety of possibilities, examples of short and long-term projects made with simple and complex materials in both the regular classroom and art studio are provided in the following pages.

Performance Tasks

There are endless possibilities of performance tasks that address both arts and ESL learning standards. Students reading poetry or novels can synthesize meaning by creating drawings in response to their personal interpretations. Before or after going on a class field trip, students can read, write and make drawings about the subject of the excursion. While teaching about a land, culture or historical period, students can research, write and discuss the art of the place, people and time. When students are learning about aspects of nature such as plants, animals, seasons, weather, ocean and landforms, teachers and students can view and discuss artwork made by artists in relation to these topics and allow students to create their own observation drawings and paintings in response. Students can research a topic of personal interest or one which is being studied in class through reading, conducting interviews and with a digital camera. Students can make a series of images illustrating new vocabulary learned using computer drawing tools and create multi-media presentations to share with the class. Students can interview and then create portraits of family members. Culture can be explored by collecting found images, creating a collage and then presenting to the class. Students can draw or paint in response to music from a specific culture, region or historical period and then write a journal response about how the music represents the people, place and time being studied. Words from students' native language and their English translations can be used as the impetus for a design. Scientific concepts such as color theory and the chemical properties of materials can be explored in art media and explained in writing. Students can experiment with mixing colors and values and then write a procedural explanation of the steps and outcomes for another student to follow. Both before and after students write their own poetry, stories, personal narratives, or essays, teachers can encourage students to create an artwork to stimulate or reflect on the ideas in their writing. The possibilities for integrated performance tasks are limitless; this brief list of ideas is presented with the intention of exemplifying interdisciplinary lessons and to provide a spark for teachers' imagination and creativity in planning units of study that make connections between ESL, other content areas and the visual arts.

Assessment

Assessment methods will reflect ESL and arts standards and other relevant subject area standards, and should reflect a variety of learning styles as well as assessment types. Beyond testing, project-based and self assessments should be emphasized, as well as rubrics, portfolios, presentations, and demonstrations. Pre-course and post-course surveys should be given to classes to evaluate literacy levels as well as changes in student feelings towards the arts, reading, writing, listening and speaking throughout the academic year.

Showcases

Schools can showcase their integrated visual arts and ESL program and student accomplishments by holding exhibits of student art and reading, writing and presenting. This type of event will fortify the importance the school places on and show the relationship between literacy and the arts. There are many exciting and creative ways schools can plan events which meet their own needs and provide students with a chance to display their art and literacy skills.

“Instruction based on the NYS ESL learning standards is essentially characterized by using language to learn language, and by using all four language skills—reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Second language acquisition research highlights the crucial role of reading and the importance of using language in meaningful and authentic exchanges, for language growth to occur. Through authentic discourse and negotiation, at levels where language is comprehensible yet challenging, LEP/ELLs acquire not only effective language structures and pragmatics, but also the language needed for academic success. Students create meaning as they engage in language rich practices both in personal interactions and through text. In this standards-based model of instruction, language teaching continues to be made explicit in ESL classrooms, but does not form the core of the ESL curriculum. Rather, explicit language teaching, often through “mini-lessons,” supports the standards and serves authentic and academic tasks. In creative and meaningful language practice that typifies standards-based ESL instruction, fluency, accuracy, and applications are equal partners.” (New York State Education Department, www.emsc.nysed.gov)

The teaching of visual arts English as a second language is naturally symbiotic. Art experiences can provide avenues for students to use “creative and meaningful language” in “authentic exchanges,” and the language skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking greatly motivate and enhance students’ artistic development. Visual arts educators can incorporate the reading of literature, news articles and textbooks; writing assignments such as journal entries, artist statements and research papers on art topics, artists and art periods; discussions revolving around aesthetics, art history and critiques; and oral presentations on artists and students’ own work. Generalists and ESL teachers can make connections to the arts and allow opportunities for students to look at, discuss and create artwork in conjunction with language teaching and units of study. Visual arts specialists can participate in ESL professional development programs and team with a literacy coach to support their use of language development strategies in the art studio environment.

Through professional development arts workshops, and partnering with an arts teacher, visiting teaching-artist and/or arts integration coach, generalists and ESL teachers can gain a deeper awareness of the arts standards, how to lead discussions about art, use various materials, and guide students in the art-making process. Schools that coordinate art and ESL programs that incorporate team-planning, co-teaching and mixing will have the advantage of both content area experts working together to develop interdisciplinary units and integrated teaching and learning strategies will be implemented in both the ESL classroom and the art studio. In cases where there is no provision for an arts teacher, coach or visiting artist to plan collaboratively with the generalist or ESL teacher and work directly with the students to provide art instruction, numerous art textbooks geared for the non-arts teacher are currently available, and can be used as a reference for ideas and steps to take in creating visual art lessons and using art media in the classroom.

Working with Parents and Families of ELLs – Example

The Literacy, Art and Families project is a unique collaboration between the Literacy Assistance Center and the vibrant cultural institutions of New York City. Through this project teachers build partnerships between literacy programs and cultural institutions to provide culturally and linguistically rich learning opportunities for children and adults. The project enjoys the support of the Altman Foundation and the Museum of Modern Art.

The goals of this project are to:

- Draw connections between art and language development
- Encourage families to seek out learning opportunities in the community
- Encourage life-long and self-directed learning for parents and children
- Introduce parents to different ways of learning and teaching
- Develop the skills parents need to navigate cultural institutions
- Nurture creative expression within families
- Provide supplementary learning experiences for children who attend schools with limited resources

For a curriculum framework and toolkit to help you get started integrating the arts into your family literacy program, download [Experience and Engagement with Arts and Museums \(EEAM\): A project of the Literacy Assistance Center and the Museum of Modern Art](http://lacnyc.org/resources/familylit/Artsbook.pdf) at <http://lacnyc.org/resources/familylit/Artsbook.pdf>

Arts Integration Project Models

“What affected me most are the many different types of art that I learned. I never knew of many of these art forms before this visual arts program. I learned how to make a piece personal, how to convey ideas in art, and how to use art elements. I know I’ve been changed by art. I developed into more of a human being. I learned how to better communicate ideas into words and images.”

-Evans, 16, Visual Arts & ESL student, NYC

Detailed program models and project samples are provided as illustrations of how the NYS ESL and Arts Learning Standards can be met and the procedures used in doing so; three further projects samples are outlined briefly in order to demonstrate the adaptability of projects and the variety of student outcomes and approaches that may be taken to meet the same standards. The examples vary in scope and scale and are intended as models that support the performance standards in an interdisciplinary approach; they can and should be individualized by teachers to be kept relevant to their specific content and students’ levels. All of the project ideas are adaptable for various grade, art and ESL levels. As teachers become more familiar with integrating the standards and students become more proficient in meeting them, the levels will continue to rise.

NYS SBETAC Arts and Literacy Development Program

Over the course of the 2008-09 academic year, ESL, bilingual and NLA teachers met for day-long sessions in the professional development series “Connecting Language Arts and Art in ESL and Bilingual Classrooms” conducted jointly by MoMA’s museum educator Calder Zwicky and NYS SBETAC’s Marguerite Lukes. Participants explored the connection between poetry and visual arts and between language for visual and written expression. Sharing their own classroom practices, teachers discussed strategies they find effective in the classroom for pre-reading, reading, and post-reading with students. An hour-long gallery visit (a luxury, as it was a day when the museum is closed to visitors) was followed by the creation of theme-based “tours” in the galleries. A working lunch gave participants time to debrief, and then practice peer questioning techniques to hone in on skills to talk about art with students. Teams of teachers developed theme-based classroom lesson plans to link literacy and language arts with art. Participants then met for a follow-up session to share their lesson plans and feedback from the classroom.



Louise Edman, an elementary school art teacher from Long Island, was one of the teachers inspired by the workshop. She writes:

The Art and Literacy workshop inspired me to introduce the artwork of Marc Chagall to 5th grade students. Using Visual Thinking Strategies, students were asked to spend time looking at "I and The Village", and to write five 'dreamlike' elements that they saw in the painting. Students shared their responses, while I repeated back what each had said. This open forum helped them feel confident sharing their observations, and gave them a feeling of ownership that a teacher-led discussion of the work might have missed. Next, students completed a handout that asked them to recall their youngest memories - a favorite toy, their house, a favorite snack, etc. Using these written responses, students created paintings using oil pastel and watercolor in the style of Chagall. The Art and Literacy workshop helped me to formulate ideas for combining writing and art making. The combination allowed for a greater depth of understanding of Chagall's work, and greater engagement of students in their art making.

A high school ESL teacher who participated reported:

We arranged for Calder [Zwicky] to visit our classroom and help us understand how to look at and talk about works of art. Two days later we visited MoMA and he led us on a tour of the same works (plus others) we looked at in class. The theme was identity/self-identity. In preparation for the classroom visit, my beginning ESL students had to describe what happened "before" the painting and then describe what is going on in the painting ('during'). Post-visit they then did the "after" portion of the activity and successfully revised their thinking with regards to the first two parts, to include incorporating language learned during Calder's visit into their writing.

Writing was initially limited to listing thoughts and ideas with words and phrases only in a 3-column chart labeled 'before-during-after.' Students were grouped in teams of six and they shared copies of Frida Kahlo's 'Self Portrait with Cropped Hair' and their ideas as they created their small-group lists. Later, we had a whole class share-out of ideas and individuals took notes. Students completed the last portion of the 3-column chart ('after') largely on their own, individually, though they were still sharing the copies of the artwork and sitting in their respective small groups.





<http://www.diacenter.org/kos/>
<http://www.diaart.org/kos/biobib.html>

Project Examples

Rollins creates trademark collaborative, large-scale artwork with his students. His work brilliantly intertwines reading, listening, discussion and art-making, and can serve as the impetus for which many integrated visual art and ESL programs and curricula can be born.

- Students can create drawings and paintings on copies of pages taken from texts, magazines, newspapers, personal journals, novels, maps, and dictionaries.
- Students can draw while the teacher reads aloud to the class from a piece of literature or new story.
- Students can work together on a painting that is done on a large piece of paper or canvas as a collaborative response to a reading or concept being studied. Students can work independently to write their own text based on a short story, memory, journal entry or poem on a drawing paper and then draw or paint with watercolors on top.
- Students could make copies of their successful class and homework assignments and paste the pages together on a large sheet of paper and then draw or paint on top. LEP/ELLs could together fill a large sheet of drawing paper with words from their native and English language and then draw or paint on top.

A large piece of mural paper could be taped to a classroom wall and students could write new vocabulary words on the paper as they were acquired – using different sizes, fonts, colors and art media until the entire space is filled with words and/or images or designs. A variation would be for classes to respond to readings of literature or a textbook with words and/or images over time until the paper is full. A large-scale group collage could be created based on a subject theme or personal topic such as family or culture by gluing together various collections of found and made imagery. These are just some of many possible ideas that can be spawned by Rollins' inspiring art and reading program.

Program Model

An integrated English language, humanities and visual arts curriculum was created and implemented in a Los Angeles secondary school via cross-curricular team-planning and co-teaching. Interdisciplinary teaching and learning strategies were developed, and all units of study were project based and designed around framework of connections made between the content areas. In the visual arts courses, projects were DBAE and standards-based, and students in grades 6-12 pursued art history, aesthetics, criticism and creation in direct and simultaneous correlation to their work in other content areas. One unit in particular incorporated the art and ideas of Tim Rollins and KOS. Students studied the US Constitution in their humanities and English classes through reading, writing, and discussions. In the visual arts classes they viewed artwork, read and watched videos about Rollins and his students, continued researching, wrote statements of intent and worked to create an individual piece that combined imagery and text on top of a page from the Constitution based on their personal responses to an Amendment. 50 individual pieces were created individually and then hung together to create a large-scale, mixed-media, collaborative installation. The inclusion of this project in conjunction with Rollins' work serves to illustrate how educators can work together to team-plan and co-teach as well as create curricula inspired by another program model, while creating a unique and individualized curriculum to fit the content area being studied, the needs of students and the scope of their own integrated program.

Sample Project Outline – Collaborative Installation: The Constitution

Interdisciplinary Unit of Study – Visual Arts & ESL & Social Studies

ESL/Social Studies

- Students read, study and discuss the Constitution – in order to understand its smaller parts
- Students select an Amendment of their choice that they have a strong opinion about
- Students participate in literacy circles and various exercises to learn more about chosen Amendment
- Students complete a written summary of that Amendment and then an analysis by a peer
- Students research current events that are affected by their chosen Amendment
- Students participate in fishbowls to discuss, debate and make connections with Amendments
- Students write statements expressing personal interests, viewpoints and opinions in response to the selected Amendment and current events

Visual Arts

- Students work together to create a large-scale, collaborative mixed-media installation expressing personal views on the US Constitution
- Students create a small-scale individual piece that will become a part of the large-scale collaborative piece
- Students are shown and discuss various artworks that relate to the topic
- Students sketch ideas for their visual statement based on their writings



ESL Arts Integrated Program Model

In a public high school in New York City that served primarily LEP/ELLs, an interdisciplinary arts program was established to provide students with a rigorous standards-based arts education that integrated the arts and ESL standards and aimed to raise literacy levels. Students in grades 9-12 (who formerly had no exposure to the arts) were immersed in the study of art history, aesthetics, criticism and production based upon reading, writing, listening and speaking. Work in the visual arts classes was linked to students' own lives, other art disciplines, current events, literature, news articles, and all core content areas. The students in the program developed at an enormously fast pace; skill levels of visual art and English language literacy progressed from low to high. Students who were never previously exposed to the arts and had very little prior English language skills began to meet and eventually exceed ESL and arts standards; demonstrating their learning through written, oral and visual art performance tasks. Participants of the program developed originality, creativity, visual awareness, and comprehension and communication skills. Students learned to interpret the artwork and words of others and to voice their own ideas through discussions, reading, writing and art appreciation and creation. Students worked to meet developmentally appropriate standards and then progressed to higher levels. As students advanced, the reading, writing, discussions and art-making processes became more in-depth and complex. In addition, students' motivation and attitudes toward their learning and class work changed dramatically. Their abilities were heightened and performances progressed to represent deep and thoughtful reflection of themselves and their surroundings. Through their participation in the integrated visual arts and ESL curriculum, students achieved higher levels of success in other content areas as well, and the school at large was revitalized and enhanced by the program, as it nurtured students, provided outlets for critical and creative thinking, deepened the understanding of the self and others, accessed multiple intelligences and cross-cultural learning experiences, created community, raised learning standards and expectations, fostered individuality and achievement, and propelled higher interest in teaching and learning.

Program Objectives

In every unit of study students:

- Question and respond to their own lives, experiences, and environment through looking, talking, listening, reading, writing, and creating visual art
- Are exposed to why and how others have used the visual language to express ideas, communicate and create art

- Connect the art they are studying and creating to history, culture, other academic disciplines, and personal lives
- Connect English language literacy and visual art through reading, writing, listening and speaking in preparation for and in reflection of studies in art history, aesthetics, criticism and creation
- Write journal entries in response to themes or questions in order to fully consider and develop their ideas and create multiple sketches and plans for their artwork before beginning work in order to develop ideas and participate in learning processes and dialogue
- Research and present on themes of study in a variety of ways including reading and writing formal papers, reading novels and poetry, and giving oral presentations
- Participate in small group, individual and class discussions and critiques of the work they are pursuing and/or have completed
- Respond to and discuss the work of various relevant artists and artworks
- Develop an awareness of the language of visual art and express concepts creatively by using the elements of art and specific media, processes and techniques
- Evaluate their own work, process, progress, and goals through written reflections and assessments

Sample Project Outline – History or Social Cause Mural

Interdisciplinary Unit of Study – Visual Arts & ESL & Social Studies

ESL/Social Studies

- Students Study and Discuss a selected historical period or social cause
- Students Chunk the relevant text on topic in order to study and understand its smaller parts
- Students make lists of what they already know about the time period or social cause
- Students participate in literacy circles, play games and do various exercises to learn more about the selected historical period or social cause
- Small groups of students research in textbook, library books and on the internet to find information and imagery in connection to the particular event or cause
- Student groups will create a mini-book filled with information and images collected about their time period or cause
- Students will write personal statements expressing what they find most interesting about the chosen time period or cause and how the topic may or may not connect to students own lives

Visual Arts

- Small-Group and Class Discussion about murals: What is a mural? Where have you seen murals? Who creates murals? Why are murals created? How are murals made? How much time would it take to create a mural? Why do artists make public art? How does a group of artists work together to create a mural? How can you create a mural in your school? What should be reflected in the mural? How can the entire class work on the mural together?
- Art History/Aesthetic Inquiry: Murals

- Show images of public murals based on historical events/social causes, discuss murals using differentiated strategies – if possible, take students on a field trip to see public murals
- Student groups share their mini-books with the class and students pair share their personal reflections and responses
- Class discussion regarding the creation of a large-scale mural by the students in their own school and explain project details
- Mini-Lesson on Space and Emphasis
- Students will work together in their groups to look through collected imagery and make decisions about which images to use in mural
- Give students drawing paper in three sizes to create drawings based on selected imagery using elements of line, shape and space and principle of emphasis
- Students continue creating drawings based on imagery and focusing on the principle of emphasis – Students work with teacher and team members to seek and incorporate feedback and make revisions to work
- Mini-Lesson on Principles of Rhythm/Movement and Contrast – students cut out all finalized drawings and then work in groups to create a collage using the principles of rhythm/movement and contrast to arrange composition on large sized paper (pre-cut to ratio to mural panel) – students work with teacher and team members to seek and incorporate feedback and make revisions to work
- Final compositions are presented by the groups in a literacy circle and one is selected by the class
- Final plan is scanned into a computer – composition is printed onto transparency film (this can also be done on a Xerox machine)
- Mini-Lesson on Color and Value – students create color wheel, value scale and list color harmonies
- Mini-Lesson on Unity and Contrast –teams work together to decide on possible color schemes based on color wheel and harmonies and create 4 different color plans that use unity and contrast and balance – this can be done by hand using on 4 different copies of the plan or on the computer using a photo editing program if resources are available to create a digital image
- Groups share color plans with the entire class and the teacher in an oral presentation to receive feedback to decide final plan
- Students paint the background color on the wall or panels and are given instructions/demo for painting and using the projectors to enlarge and copy image onto wall/panels
- Students project compositions onto the wall or panels and take turns tracing the lines with black paint
- Students work together in teams to paint the mural following the color plans
- Students write artist statement to be displayed with artwork – each team responsible for writing a brief paragraph and then each group must work together to cut and paste paragraphs together and compose the collaborative artists' statement
- Students self-assess using a rubric based on assignment criteria
- Students act as docents by bringing parents and/or groups of students from other classes/grades to look at the work – teams will be responsible for presenting about the meaning and context of their work along with the art elements, principles and materials and processes used in the creation of the piece



Project Examples

In order to offer examples of the myriad of ways in which teachers can approach, adapt and individualize any curricular theme, content area and project to meet the needs and levels of students, as well as fit within program resources, facilities and scope, three abbreviated project samples are provided along with a variety of performance outcomes. It is important to note that while the artwork samples all reflect the same project; they vary in media, standards, intensity, complexity and length. For each of the three projects, examples are shown of artwork created by both elementary and secondary students, and in art studios as well as in non-arts classrooms with a visiting arts specialist/coach.

Culture & Heritage

Speaking, Listening and Looking: Students bring in and share objects that represent their own cultures, look at and discuss artwork from many cultures. Reading: Read literature and textbooks on theme of culture. Writing: Interview family members about cultural heritage, journal entries reflecting culture, self-assessments, artist statement. Visual communication: Students express personal story or views about heritage or represent cultural tradition. Studio: collage/mosaic/painting



Family

Speaking, Listening and Looking: Students tell family stories, share artwork and look at and discuss narrative art that reflects theme of family. Reading: Narrative, family-themed short stories and/or novels (ex. Esmeralda Santiago's *When I was Puerto Rican*, Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club*). Writing: Personal narrative story about family, self-assessments, artist statement. Visual communication: Students create narrative artwork to visually tell a family story. Studio: drawing/painting/collage/quilt/mixed-media



Self-Portraits

Speaking, Listening and Looking: Students look at and discuss self-portraits from various cultures and regions throughout history. Reading: Literature on theme of personal identity (ex. Sandra Cisneros' *The House on Mango Street*, Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl*). Writing: Journal entries reflecting on themes of self and personal identity, self-assessment, artist statement. Visual communication: Students create observational, expressive, or symbolic self-portraits. Studio: drawing/painting/printmaking.



Student Voices

My experience in visual arts classes has made me think twice about art. Before I thought that art was just about drawing and painting, but our teacher made us look beyond that—she made us explore the world of art. That had a big influence in all of our work. Participating in the art program has been a great experience for me.”

-Stephanie, 16, Visual Arts & ESL student, NYC

“Through outreach we provide exposure and awareness. At a publicized event the students and their work are... recognized, and everyone is pleased. However, such an exhibit can result in viewers thinking “what talented children” rather than “what a talented *teacher* to get that out of kids.” To reach towards advocacy requires that we also teach the public what students have learned in the process of creating the works. In the exhibit itself, wall text should state the goals of the lesson, informing and reminding others that the works provide evidence of understanding. Viewers should realize the works did not just happen because supplies were handed out.” (Irvine, National Art Education Association)

Perhaps the most effective way to communicate the impact that quality, standards-based arts education has on motivating and enhancing literacy in ELL and LEP students is to see them at work and read the words used to describe their experience participating in an integrated Visual Arts and ESL program. Research and test scores are integral to creating awareness and change in education, but ultimately, educators and students themselves are the best testimony, and by listening to children’s voices – written, verbal and visual, perhaps teachers and administrators will best witness the impact an integrated visual arts and ESL program can have on the education of young people. Students are directly influenced by their participation in arts education, and through continued research, outreach, advocacy, and examples of successful programs, curricula and outcomes, we may be able to generate the resources for and propel new programs in schools that utilize the powers of the arts as a tool for teaching our students English as a second language.

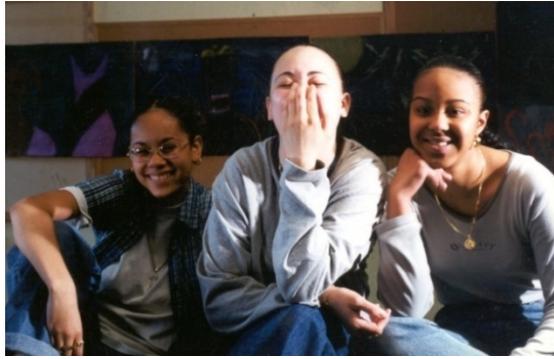
How has participating in the visual arts program affected you?

*Taught and allowed me to express myself in new ways
Provided a new sense and way of communication
Gave me a new sense of direction for my future
Enlightened me and made me braver
Changed the way I look at things
Improved my English and helped me learn to communicate better*



How did the addition of the visual arts program change the school?

*Brightened it up/made school more beautiful, exciting, and interesting
Provided a new outlet for kids/gave us something to really get involved in
Students became serious in art and it became the new theme of the school
Gave opportunities for kids to express themselves and use talents
Provided a new and different way to learn in school
It united students and created community
Gave new drive for the future*



How has the study of visual arts changed your learning?

*Made learning and education fun
I've learned to be creative and express myself
Learned history and inspired a desire to learn more
It broadened my overall knowledge and educational experience
Opened my eyes to looking at things in a whole new way/opened my mind
Gave me focus/expanded my horizons
I learned about my community and it made me want to help
My overall attitude changed after I could express myself in art*



Do you think that it is important for all schools to have arts programs and why?

*It allows students to learn in new ways
Kids need to express themselves and have outlet
It teaches children to be independent and become leaders
It is fundamental like science, math and English
Allows students to display talent and ideas
It can unify students/gets students involved
It provides a new form of communication and expression of self
Students can discover new things about themselves through art
Makes school a lot nicer and more interesting*



What has been your most significant change due to your participation in the arts program?

*My grades got much better
Now I want to go to college*

*I have become much more open-minded/more accepting of different people
I was exposed to the arts for the first time and have now become dedicated*

*Gained confidence and strength
I work better with others/appreciate community*





How has your school changed due to the addition of the visual arts program?

Made me want to work harder
It changed for the good and made progress in building community
It has a much nicer environment to be in
We get to show our work in the halls, feel proud, and have others appreciate us
Our minds have been changed for the better
By learning art I also gained more knowledge in other subjects—I didn't understand something
in science class, but then through art it made sense
More organized and unified
We got to go to museums and have accomplishments like exhibits
Teachers got better and more involved
Immature to mature
There used to be a lack of spirit, now there is spirit
Enlightened us/helped us understand the world



Additional Resources

Guggenheim Learning Through Art

<http://artscurriculum.guggenheim.org/lessons/start.php>

For a curriculum framework and toolkit to help you get started integrating the arts into your family literacy program click here: [Experience and Engagement with Arts and Museums \(EEAM\): A project of the Literacy Assistance Center and the Museum of Modern Art](#)

<http://lacnyc.org/resources/familylit/Artsbook.pdf>

The Poet Speaks of Art

Poetry and accompanying works of visual art

<http://www.english.emory.edu/classes/paintings&poems/titlepage.html>

NOTES