



The Beat of a Different Drum:

Arts Integration In Enid Public Schools

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Marcia Daft, Artist Educator

In the classroom I'm sitting in there are tables and chairs. There are pens and pencils. There are students and teachers. No one is sitting at the tables. The pens and pencils are put away. No paper is being used this afternoon. Instead the students are studying math. Without paper. They are drumming to a rhythm provided by Marcia Daft, today's instructor. The students keep up with her repeating pattern. Drum. Clap. Drum. Clap. Drum. Clap. They recognize the sequence of six and discuss what makes up the pattern unit; a drum and a clap. Then they count the pattern units and come to the conclusion that you can count this sequence in two ways. One by one, or by twos. Suddenly the room is

skip counting and the math lesson is underway.

Rhythmic movements from drumming on your lap to shaking your maracas along to music or a dramatization of a story are what you might think of when I say arts integration in the classroom. You might also envision students singing along to the beat of sticks, but this is so much more. The students in Mrs. Jana Randolph's first grade class at Eisenhower Elementary are learning to skip count through rhythms. Counting by two's is now a matter of skipping the drum and emphasizing the claps. They work with the instructor, their partners, and always with their minds to comprehend repeating patterns

and skip counting. They combine number sequences with vocal patterns while moving their bodies and in the end, they can skip count.

Daft was flown into Enid as an instructor for the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., and teaches this lesson provided by Enid's Partners In Education program. Daft, a professional musician and nationally known arts educator is a regular visitor to Enid through the Partners in Education Program.

"She is a professional in her art form, professional in teaching her art form and a professional in teaching teachers how to teach through art," said Christy Northcutt, Partners in Education

co-organizer.

Daft's goal with the students today is not for them to memorize the concepts of skip counting. "The minute they memorize it they lose what it means," said Daft. "They need to understand the concepts."

Following a similar lesson in the 4th grade class at Hayes Elementary students reflected on the experience. "It is important to have a fun time in learning," said Malliyah Baker. "It is important because most kids think that just sitting in a chair with paper and pencil is boring. If a teacher has rhythm and moving it may be easier to learn."

"I think arts integration is important because it helps you learn different subjects in a fun way," said Audry Jacks. "I really do feel like I learned something."

This lesson is arts integration in the classroom where teachers take their students away from pen and paper and into a circle where lessons are taught through all available senses. Arts integration has come to Enid Public Schools thanks to Lew Ward and a team of professionals who believe that these children are going to need more than reading, writing and arithmetic to keep on top of their futures.

The Partners in Education Program is a partnership of the Enid Public Schools, the Enid Arts Council and the Kennedy Center. The partnership brings these experts to Enid to hold workshops for teachers on how to integrate arts into the classroom, which are free for the educators and funded locally. Partners in Education combine a performing arts center or arts organization with a school system throughout the nation to expand their education programs with a primary focus on the education of teachers.

Lew Ward, a Presidential appointee to the President's Advisory Council on the Arts at the Kennedy Center, approached Christy Northcutt in 2005 with the Partners in Education program and after explaining its intent asked her if she, as the Enid Arts Council President, would embrace the opportunity to bring this program to Enid. Not only did Northcutt think it was a good idea, she has been running the program ever since with the help of her Enid Public Schools partner Jena Kodesh. The two applied to bring the program to Enid and have successfully put on numerous workshops, for hundreds of teachers in Enid's Public School System.

"When Enid attended the Annual Meeting at the Kennedy Center to report on our partnership season (academic year 2005-2006), we astonished the other



Above two photos: 4th graders participate in "Moving Through Math" at Hayes Elementary School.



The educators draw a straight line using dance bands



Making right angles with dance bands



Area educators participate in Marcia Dafts "Moving through Math" seminar



Enid Early Childhood Director, Chris Smith and Reba Gregory of Hayes Elementary



Jan Robinson at the Kennedy Center Principal's Reception

national partnerships with our overwhelming success," said Northcutt. "Where they struggled to complete 1 or 2 workshops, we held 4 workshops that reached 140 teachers and over 2,800 students."

When asked about why she enjoys the program Northcutt said, "This is the best. It is enriching the lives of our children, while increasing test scores and the enjoyment of teaching."

Kodesh is an arts teacher in the Enid Public School system as well as the visual arts consultant for EPS. Her view on the benefits of "Arts Integration" is based on her classroom experience. "The Arts, aide achievement by actively engaging all types of learners with information which teachers want students to identify. Forms of art become teaching methods and strategies instead of exercises, which are hitched onto the end of a lesson. Students are actually learning through the integrated art form."

She goes on to explain that research has proven that adding art form to a lesson takes approximately seven minutes longer, but it encompasses all learning styles including visual, auditory and kinesthetic learning all while still covering national, state and local standards for subject areas.

The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. is world renowned for its educational workshops in the arts. Enid has been a participant in the nationwide program for

more than four years. Enid's focus previously was on grades 4 through 8. The group is now offering these arts integration opportunities to all grades. The workshops train teachers in how to successfully integrate the arts into their classrooms. Kennedy Center presenters, like Daft, teach a lesson in the classroom, while Enid teachers observe and learn their techniques. Students experience learning through a variety of art mediums: dance, drama, fine arts, puppetry, storytelling, visual arts, and music. The hope is to create more well rounded students that obtain higher test scores and develop an appreciation for the arts.

According to research, art integration raises test scores, builds self-esteem, and increases retention of knowledge. Examples of the success of art integration and the Kennedy Center Educational Workshops can be taken from the Wilson School in Oklahoma City. They began participating in the Partners in Education program in 1998 when, according to state mandated tests, their scores were the lowest in Oklahoma City Public Schools. Their proudest accomplishments from the program are increasing their test scores by 29 percent, they are now in the top 10 schools in Oklahoma City, their students excel in all areas of academics and the arts, and they are overwhelmed by the number of transfer requests they receive each year and cannot accept all requests.

"When you add the arts to a history

lesson such as the Civil War – you act out the events, you understand the characters and their feelings, you sing the songs of the Underground Railroad, you participate in the traditional dances of the time and you wear historical costumes,” said Northcutt. “You’ve experienced the academic lesson, drama, music and dance all in one – plus you’ve truly felt the lesson and taken it to a newer height of learning.”

Many students don’t actively take part in classroom discussions. They are shy-natured or worry that their answers aren’t correct. The arts offer another avenue for learning that allows students to participate through movement, facial expression, body language, vocal ranges, rhythms, and more. A student struggling with academics may have a natural talent in music. When you integrate music into the learning process, they’ll naturally enjoy the lesson more, may become a leader for the classroom in the art form, and thus make an easier connection with the academic work. Arts can bring out the best in students and help them feel successful.

Administrators in Enid are seeing the effects of arts integration in their classrooms. Jane Johnson, Hayes Elementary principal, mentions the significant difference between classrooms with and without arts integration. Johnson notices the students understanding and feeling the concepts of the lessons when arts integration is used. While Johnson did not do any research prior to beginning the Kennedy Center workshops, she does see a qualitative difference in her teachers and the students.

“The teachers who use arts integration have a more captive audience in the classroom because the children are just spellbound,” said Dr. Ruth Ann Erdner, assistant superintendent of Enid Public Schools. “They are really participating in the project rather than just listening. It makes a world of difference. Statistically I don’t have any scores but emphatically I’d say it is making a difference in instruction.”

This year the Partners in Education Program is focusing on two schools: Hayes and Eisenhower Elementary Schools. Those two schools had the most teachers participate in the workshops over the past four years. The partnership will hold workshops for all of the schools’ teachers over the coming months. Next year they hope to concentrate on new schools in the Enid Public School system. The future of this program is far-reaching and bright as the Arts combine with curriculum to take our students into the future. **E**



Myra and Lew Ward



Ron Few, Principal of Longfellow Middle School, with Bill Word, Enid High School Assistant Principal



Patty Bradley, Jena Kodesh, Teresa Willems, Deana Cunningham, Christy Northcutt, Dr. Cheryl Evans, Mike Klemme and Jessica Edwards of the Enid Arts Council