

## **Review: *Arts Integration in Education: Teachers and Teaching Artists as Agents of Change - Theory Impact Practice***

R. Darden Bradshaw, PhD  
University of Dayton

Acknowledging the current educational climate, the editors and authors in this volume display the varying means through which art integration can serve as a tangible, focused means of art education that both supports creative and committed learning within schools while fostering a space for learners to apprehend and celebrate their knowledge acquisition. Arts integration, the authors in this compendium note, is not only a means of transforming schools, but more necessarily, a joyful engagement with the power of the arts. This approach, not new by any stretch of the imagination, is, they argue, all the more relevant today, given our political, cultural, economic, and social challenges faced in the high stakes testing environment that is schooling. Citing various methods and practices, *Arts Integration in Education: Teachers and Teaching Artists as Agents of Change* is a welcome addition to the current research on art integration.

The editors, in the first section of the book, firmly situate arts integration within various theoretical frameworks including cognitive and affective theory and Gardner's multiple intelligences, as well as discuss the relationship of brain-based learning and arts integration and the intersection of creativity and collaboration as manifest in an integrated learning classroom. The second section of the volume elucidates and demonstrates the ways in which teachers have been trained in arts education. Calling for increased investment in arts integration pedagogy and practice in pre-service teacher programs, each chapter offers valuable tools, strategies, and methods for transforming teacher training that embraces arts integration and acknowledges the myriad types of learners encountered in a classroom. Finally, Section III provides examples of arts integration practice within classrooms, schools, and community-based arts settings that highlight and suggest alternative solutions, through arts integration, to many of the current challenges faced within arts education.

A strength of this volume is the broad cross section of contributors and their experiences. These range from artists, teaching artists, educators working in K-12 education, researchers and those in higher education working with pre-service teachers. Each provides their unique perspective and offers insight into the potential power of arts

integration. Another strength is the manner in which the authors in this volume celebrate the diversity of arts integration—the plurality of it as both a pedagogical practice and a philosophical foundation for rich educational reform.

Yet for all that, visual arts educators may find themselves left wanting. While impossible to meet every need in an edited volume that currently creeps close to 500 pages, the absence of discussion, research, and strategies that integrate the visual arts into the classroom is decidedly lacking. The bulk of the text leans more toward integration of theater, music, literature and dance. The editors acknowledge the scarcity of visual arts integration included in the volume.

This serves as a further call to visual arts educators working with integration to disseminate and share our research and practices in art integration. Currently, there are numerous educators within the field of art education working with art integration, yet fewer still writing and publishing. The most notable of these is *Art-Centered Learning Across the Curriculum* by Julia Marshall and David M. Donahue (2015).

The primary intended audience for this text are teachers and those training to become teachers. This volume, in its approachability and solid modeling of pedagogy, would be a great addition to methods courses for pre-service teachers studying for licensure in any art certification and for those in general education. Arts integration is a proven method for fostering deeper, more meaningful engagement of students in their learning, and this book will enlarge the conversation about arts integration and potentially provoke new research that will support innovation in teaching.

## References

- Mardirosian, G. H., & Lewis, Y. P. (Eds.). (2016). *Arts Integration in Education: Teachers and Teaching Artists as Agents of Change - Theory Impact Practice*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago.
- Marshall, J., & Donahue, D. M. (2015). *Art-Centered Learning Across the Curriculum: Integrating Contemporary Art in the Secondary School Classroom*. New York, NY: Teachers College.