

# **UC Irvine**

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### **Title**

Teaching and Learning through the Arts Introduction

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This section is designed to embrace a wide range of articles and projects that focus on teaching and learning through the arts, whether it be with children or with teachers. Gail Burnaford's study describes a government-funded professional development initiative that explored the impact of network-based intensive professional development for arts teachers in four specific areas: 1) their role in building community in their schools; their role as community builders in their schools; 2) their role in building curriculum with non-arts teachers in their schools; and 3) their role in building their own leadership capacities. Clearly, the study points to the need for strong partnerships in support of the work of arts teacher specialists.

On the elementary level, it is critical to support pre-service teachers as they begin to find ways to integrate curriculum in service of creating powerful learning experiences. McVarish offers a provocative article involving pre-service teachers who create original mathematics literature books. The article posits that creating such books offers ways for pre-service teachers to gain new mathematical understandings, connect the math they will be teaching to other life situations, identify pedagogical practices that support student thinking, integrate artistry into the teaching of content, and understand more deeply the multidisciplinary nature of mathematics.

Another look at teaching focuses on the challenges posed for those teaching English as a Second Language. Joseph Dicks and Barbara Le Blanc

describe a second language research project done in grades 9 and 10 classrooms based on the principles of drama for learning, including play and make believe, learning in context, and ownership of learning. Research in drama in ESL classes has shown that drama offers a great deal in terms of engagement and motivation. What this article does is offer a unique blending of process drama and simulation (as often seen in social studies instruction) and provides direction and concrete resource materials for those who would like to experiment with this blending in order to enhance motivation and engagement for students in second language classrooms.

Finally, Warash returns us to the world of children through her description of an intriguing project where four-year-olds study and discuss the paintings of Andy Warhol. During the project the children practiced language and improved communication skills, while at the same time playing with various art materials and media. Warash's study demonstrated that children's skills in painting improved as overall manual dexterity was enhanced.

In all, these articles point to the variety of projects that complement and extend arts education for teachers and students. It is our hope that they will provoke and provide inspiration for further studies and projects that continue to explore what the arts offer learning and teaching.

