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This volume reflects a range of articles showing the breadth of research in arts education and integration with other disciplines. The issue starts with a section which provides various perspectives—an educator’s reflections on her own teaching strategies, ideas about the healing potential of contemporary art, and emerging definitions of “learning” and “making” from librarians. The articles then explore specific examples of teaching and learning through the arts that highlight the use of art criticism used with 4th graders, a writer’s discovery of voice through creative fiction, poetry generated from idea bundles, drama adapted for pre-schoolers, developing leadership skills in a summer performing arts program, how opera assists preclinical medical students, and a successful arts implementation for struggling freshmen. The section on Teacher Preparation and Professional Development presents articles focused on an elementary school with full arts integration and an examination of an access gap in national teaching journals regarding arts education for teachers. We continue to see the value of integrating arts into education as well as continued need for ongoing research.

Teaching and Learning through the Arts

“Drama-Based Instruction in the Visual Arts: A Teacher’s Action Research Journey” by Kathryn Dawson, Stephanie Cawthon, and Shasta Ihorn

This case study presents an arts teacher’s investigation of how professional development in drama helped shape her teaching in visual arts. The contexts of Drama for Schools, Drama-based Pedagogy, and an ART Fellow initiative provided backdrops for the instructor’s and researchers’ collaborative participatory action research approach allowing the instructor to implement chosen strategies in the middle school classroom. The instructor reflects on projects with students that include masks, flipbooks, sculpture, and a mock art auction.

“Egosystem: A Visualization of Wholeness Amidst Environmental Uncertainty and Fragmentation” by Christopher Nokes

The researcher explores the potential for self-healing, self-repair, and self-renewal that students experience when engaging with contemporary art, which has the qualities of fragmentation to help students find wholeness. Nokes considers the psychology, philosophy, environment, design, and creativity in art that assist students in shaping and re-shaping their struggles, realities, and awareness. The term *egosystem* receives extensive examination throughout the article.

“Public Libraries as Sites of Collision for Arts Education, the Maker Movement, and Neoliberal Agendas in Education” by Alexandra Lakind

In this multi-year empirical study of an arts-based maker program in a public library system (“Bubbler” in the Madison Public Libraries), the researcher investigates the participants’ definitions of “making” and “learning” in an effort to highlight the differences between entrepreneurial/production-oriented goals for creating and that which is playful and imaginative in construction. An examination of the tensions of social structures implied by the Maker Movement, neoliberalism, and arts education leads to a commentary on culture.

“Voices from Diverse Freshman Students: How Arts Integration Impacted their Learning” by A. Helene Robinson

With multiple measures in a mixed-method study, the researcher looks at the impact on learning of arts integration on a diverse and largely disadvantaged freshmen population, who also experienced a strong disruption of the semester resulting from both a snowstorm and a hurricane. Teachers in a treatment group received a limited amount of professional development in arts integration by using small group project based implementation along with the already-in-place project based format in the course level. Qualitative and quantitative data from the students identify several gains; results also point to gains for teachers’ classroom instructional processes in challenging circumstances.

Language Arts

“Using Art Criticism to Engage Students in Writing” by Allen Trent and Pete Moran

The researchers worked with fourth graders to integrate art criticism and writing, seeing the possibilities this approach has to address the components of Common Core standards. They share details of lessons, student responses, colleague responses, and resources to examine how art criticism enriches teaching and supports students.

Narrative and Storytelling

“Seeing the World through Words: A Student Writer’s Journey toward Developing her Own Voice” by Vicki Chen

The author studies her own progress in creative writing since her youth through various excerpts from a collection that includes journals, fiction, poetry, and school assignments to examine her development of voice and change in beliefs about writing. The study refers to Vygotsky’s “Four Phases of Sign Acquisition” to evaluate her journey. She delves into the details that contribute to personal understanding of one’s motivation for learning and writing.

Poetry

“Writing Poems from Idea Bundles” by S. Rebecca Leigh

Working with pre- and in-service teachers, the researcher uses a technique of “idea bundles,” which includes various visual and print media to enhance their literary experience with writing poems. The qualitative study presents how students were supported by the various media to explore language and the construction of meaning.

Performing Arts

“Investigating the Influence of Dramatic Arts on Young Children’s Social and Academic Development in the World of ‘Jack and the Beanstalk’” by Kathryn F. Whitmore

In a qualitative study at a Headstart preschool where an interactive drama residency was in place, the researchers observe the 3-5 year old children and their teachers to examine the students’ engagement, self-efficacy, and risk-taking as well as early literacy development. Classroom

teachers and teacher artists from Blue Apple Players (an educational theater program) use an adapted version of the folktale “Jack and the Beanstalk” to work with children for 10 weeks, implementing song, drawing, role-play, movement, and problem-solving. The article presents several artifacts and reflections that show the impacts of drama on early childhood learning and teacher practice.

“Leadership Development for High School Students in a Summer Performing Arts Program” by Steven D. LeMire, Lindsay Achtenberg, and Dean Opp

Looking at high school learners in a concentrated timeframe during a summer performing arts program, the researchers use pre- and post-evaluations to examine the self-reported growth of students who produce a theatrical performance. With guidelines from a leadership handbook, students developed specific skills to work with and reflect on. The authors discuss the potential impacts on student success that come from improvements in leadership skills.

Medical Humanities

“Diseases, Doctors, and Divas: Cultivating Reflective Capacity in Preclinical Medical Students through a Critical Examination of Opera” by Scot R. Levin, Fei Cai, Nicole Noronha, Hedy S. Wald, and Michelle M. Daniel

The researchers focus on an elective in opera for preclinical students to study the students’ development of a professional identity. The course brought together various medical practitioners, faculty from several subject areas, and the students for viewings of operas as well as a field trip to the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City. These opportunities allowed for a range of focused discussions including such concerns as the representations and stereotypes of illnesses in opera and public perception, bioethics, and the need for physician emotional awareness.

Teacher Preparation and Professional Development

“Arts Integration: A Study of Teachers’ Perceptions” by Deborah LaChapelle Hayes and Pat Clark

The authors focus on interviews of teachers and the principal at a Title I elementary school where full arts integration had been established for several years. The concise article highlights comments from the participants that reflect the positive impact of arts on participation, multiple learning modalities, and teaching strategies when supported at many school system levels.

“A Content Analysis of the Intersections between Art Education and Teacher Education” by Maureen R. Lorimer

The author investigates five national and international journals to demonstrate how publications need to increase the publication of arts education content to help pre-service teachers develop as faculty, particularly for multiple subject, non-art single subject, special education, and California teacher candidates. The journals in focus are not art education journals, but broader journals in general teacher education, to highlight the publication trends and arts policy initiatives that were included, yet reflect a gap to be filled.