

An Integrated and Collaborative Approach to Art for Life:

The Impact of Environmental Forces on our Lives

Art, both in and outside of the classroom, is seen as a way to communicate personal meaning, as well as the human experience itself.

Jeffrey L. Broome

*University of North Texas
Denton, Texas*

Monica Broome

*Northwest Independent School District
Fort Worth, Texas*

Authors' Note

The unit described in this article was originally created and implemented in 2007, two years after the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina in the United States. The recent earthquakes in Haiti and Chile have given us cause to revisit the material, and the ideas put forth within the unit may be relevant to students and teachers who share concerns over such catastrophes to human life caused by natural forces.

Abstract

While the *Art for Life* model of authentic visual arts instruction is receiving continued attention from higher educators working in preservice preparation programs, it has yet to be determined how such a program may work in public school classrooms. This article details the collaboration between a fifth grade teacher and a professor of art education as they create and co-teach an *Art for Life* inspired instructional unit with specific emphasis placed on the interdisciplinary possibilities provided by the approach. The resulting thematic unit concentrates on the impact of environmental forces on our lives, and integrates the subject areas of visual art, science, and language arts within its curricular framework. The article concludes with a discussion of the successes and failures of the instructional unit and offers suggestions to those who may be interested in exploring an integrated approach to the *Art for Life* model.

Keywords: arts integration, interdisciplinary instruction, instructional collaboration, Art for Life.

Correspondence regarding this article may be sent to:

Dr. Jeffrey L. Broome
email: jeffrey.broome@unt.edu

Since the publication of Anderson and Milbrandt's book, *Art for Life* (2005), we have taught in and near three large universities in three different states where the text was used by art education professors involved in preservice teacher preparation. Additionally, we discussed the use of the text with numerous other art educators at state and national conferences. As the growing use of *Art for Life* as a higher education text became apparent to us, we also wondered about the model's implementation in K-12 classrooms. The purpose of this article is to describe our efforts in creating and instructing an *Art for Life* inspired unit in a fifth grade classroom in a public elementary school in Georgia. Our particular approach emphasized instructional collaboration and interdisciplinary opportunities provided by the model as we co-taught many aspects of the unit as an elementary education generalist working alongside a professor of art education.

Background

Art for Life (Anderson & Milbrandt, 2005) presented a holistic, authentic approach to teaching art that focuses on thematic instruction with connections made to real life rather than creating art for its own sake. Art, both in and outside of the classroom, is seen as a way to communicate personal meaning, as well as the human experience itself. The model advocates thematic instruction, or the organization of educational units around central issues of human significance, as a method for connecting learning to real world problems. In *Art for Life*, such themes are often introduced through the presentation of visual artwork that addresses these real life concerns.

Anderson and Milbrandt (2005) discussed the curricular structure of *Art for Life* as a comprehensive approach that includes objectives in the traditional disciplines of art production, art history, art criticism, and aesthetics, but also incorporates visual culture studies, modern technology, and creative self-expression. The various components of *Art for Life* are rarely addressed as individual disciplines introduced separately; a cross-disciplinary approach is more appropriate as each discipline is just as likely to offer authentic contributions to the real-life themes explored in instruction.

While *Art for Life* is presented as model of art education, and visual art is at its heart, its interdisciplinary nature allows for the integration of other subject areas in exploring chosen themes of interest. Real life experiences, unlike traditional schooling, are not fragmented into distinct areas of subject area concentration (Dewey,

1916/1997) and the possibilities for integration of various subject areas into the *Art for Life* model was an approach that we were interested in exploring through our collaborative efforts as a fifth grade generalist working in tandem with an art educator.

Integrated Instruction

The connection of subject areas in a seamless interdisciplinary fashion is not new and the origins of the idea can be traced back to the early 19th century (Parsons, 2004). These ideas had blossomed by the early 20th century and the call for an integrated approach to education could be heard clearly in the work of Dewey (1916/1997) and other prominent progressive strands of education (Stankiewicz, 2001). In Efland's discussion of the history of art education (1990), he presents Winslow's book, *The Integrated School Art Program* (1939), as one of the first publications to concentrate primarily on the visual arts as an appropriate subject area to connect with other disciplines. Other notable efforts in integrated arts instruction during this era include the Owatonna Project initiated in 1931 (Efland, 1990) and the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education introduced by Loris Malaguzzi in the aftermath of World War II in Italy (Gardner, 2000; Hinckle, 1991).

While the roots of integrated arts instruction can be traced back to over 100 years ago, there has been no loss of interest in the topic during the 21st century. The National Art Education Association released two books on the subject of interdisciplinary art education during a

two-year time span in 2005 and 2006 (Stokrocki, 2005; Taylor, Carpenter, Ballengee-Morris, & Sessions, 2006) and numerous other publications have appeared on the topic in the recent decade (Burnaford, Aprill, & Weiss, 2001; Daniel, Stuhr, & Ballengee-Morris, 2006; Goldberg, 2006; Parsons, 2004; Smilan & Miraglia, 2009).

Considering the sustained interest in this topic over a significant period of time, it is natural that a number of different versions of integrated arts instruction have developed over the years (Mishook & Kornhaber, 2006; Parsons, 2004). Eisner (2002) categorized these various integrated arts approaches into four distinct categories. The first of these approaches involves the use of visual art to help students understand a particular historical time period, such as using examples of photographs, music, clothing, and architecture to enhance student understanding of a specific era. The goal of a second approach is to assist students in making comparisons and contrasts between different types of visual and performing arts, such as recognizing how rhythm and repetition are both similar and different when used in music versus a painting. A third version of integrated arts involves creative problem solving where students are given an open-ended task, such as designing a playground, that naturally requires the use of multiple disciplines in order to solve the problem at hand.

A final approach utilizes a universal theme or big idea (Walker, 2001) of relevance to students' lives as the central focus for instruction, with the

incorporation of a variety of academic areas, both in the arts and other subjects, to enhance the unit through authentic and meaningful connections (Eisner, 2002). It is this last approach that seemed to have the best fit with the goals of *Art for Life* and best suited our goals in implementing an integrated co-taught *Art for Life* inspired lesson at the elementary level. As an art education professor and a supporter of arts instruction, it was also important to us that our integrated approach placed the visual arts in a co-equal role (Bresler, 1995) to the other subject areas involved in the thematic instruction, rather than a subservient role.

The Instructional Unit

One of us (Monica) was working as a fifth grade teacher at a public elementary school in Georgia and the other (Jeff) was working as a visiting professor of art education at a nearby large state university when we began to plan the unit. We have been married for over 10 years and had worked together previously at another elementary school where Jeff was the art specialist. We found that the congruency in our educational philosophies, as well as our knowledge of each other's strengths and weaknesses in subject area familiarity, and ability to cooperate, collaborate, and compromise with each other offered us advantages in planning an instructional unit together. As a married couple, we also had the luxury of doing a great deal of instructional planning at our own home at our own leisure. Burnaford, Aprill, and Weiss (2001) offered a number of suggestions in

finding collaborative co-teaching partners interested in arts integration, and we will revisit some of these strategies in the conclusion of this article as we acknowledge that our own educational partnership is unique in nature.

Since the integrated *Art for Life* unit would take place in Monica's classroom, it is relevant to note that she had worked with the same basic core of students the year before, as she had volunteered to *loop* (Ball, Grant, & Johnson, 2006), or stay with her students, for a prescribed period of years in order to establish a continuity of caring (Noddings, 1996). The relationships between students and their teacher had been built upon from the previous year, and classroom routines and expectations had been established and practiced over consecutive years. Most of the students had met Jeff previously during his informal visits to the class for school functions, and nearly all were aware that he was an art education professor at the nearby university.

While the school was situated approximately six miles from the large university, its location was in a smaller rural incorporated municipality with a population of around 1,100. In terms of school demographics, approximately half of the students were African American, slightly less than 30% were Hispanic, approximately 18% were White, and the remaining smaller percentages were comprised of multiracial groups, Asian Americans, and Native Americans (greatschools, 2007). During the year that we implemented our integrated unit, the school received Title

One status from the federal government for its high percentage of economically disadvantaged students. The fifth grade class that we worked with had 28 students.

We brainstormed the broader framework for most of the instructional unit during the public school preplanning period in the summer of 2007. Believing in the *Art for Life* position that learning can be more meaningful when it is connected to real life themes of concern for students, our planning logically began with the selection of an appropriate instructional theme. We briefly considered the option of directly involving students in the selection of their own topic of thematic instruction when they returned to school in the fall, a strategy that we consider viable and is supported by others (Kasten & Lolli, 1998; Ostrow, 1995). However, we put this idea aside when we considered this approach would not allow for collaborative planning to begin until the fall semester was already underway when our professional schedules would be filled with other instructional and service responsibilities.

Instead we decided to trust our judgment as experienced educators, Monica's knowledge of her students' interests from the previous year, and suggestions in literature regarding the creation of teacher-directed instructional themes as an equally suitable option (Anderson & Milbrandt, 2005; Coyne, 2000; Baskwill, 1988), and selected a relevant unit of instruction when the convenience of our summer schedule allowed more opportunities for focused planning. In this

process, we considered local concerns, prominent national events in recent years, the role art could play in authentically exploring such themes, and how such issues might relate to the framework established by state educational standards (Anderson & Milbrandt, 2005; Burnaford et al., 2001). In the end, we selected a theme entitled, *The Impact of Environmental Forces on our Lives*. We made our selection based on the concern over the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina just two years earlier, the drought and water restrictions facing the state of Georgia, and the connection to Georgia Performance Standards for earth science in fifth grade that related to the destructive forces of nature (Georgia Department of Education, 2008).

Among the key concepts of our unit was that natural disasters are real events that impact real lives in very real ways (not as glamorized in action-adventure disaster movies) and, as such, the resulting devastation to humankind should be a concern to all, even if the event is not directly local. Art and other subject areas can be used to explore how others have faced and depicted natural disasters, to personally reflect on such experiences, and to uncover understandings of the inner workings of environmental forces. Although we planned the unit as a team, we relied on each other's specific subject area knowledge, and on resources that we created and used in the past (Lancaster et al., 2001). By the end of the brainstorming sessions, we had a suitable framework for integrating the subject areas of visual art, science, and language arts into a nine-



The Natural Disasters Classroom Wall Map

agreed that Jeff would visit the fifth grade classroom as a guest co-instructor once a week to help facilitate art instruction.

While it was our intention to avoid obvious subject area delineation when introducing the instructional unit, such distinctions were useful in organizing the report of our experiences and have been used as part of the framework below. The details of the activities included within the unit are presented with interwoven entries from our own reflective journals that we both kept throughout the experience.

Introducing the Unit

The first day of the instructional unit started with a discussion of current events that involved natural disasters and included the projection of real life images from both a recent earthquake in Indonesia and a flood in central Sudan. Monica facilitated a whole group conversation where students shared personal experiences related to natural disasters or their own remembrances of such disasters in the news. Not surprisingly, Hurricane Katrina was a

frequent topic of discussion while other students' comments had to be redirected toward disasters caused by environmental forces, rather than by humans or malfunctioning machines. The discussion led the class to develop a working definition for natural disasters and students agreed that they would keep journals of such catastrophic events detailed in the news and that they would chart new disasters on the classroom world map.

Integrating Science

For the first of several ongoing assignments involved in our instructional unit, Monica divided the class up into cooperative groups each consisting of four students. She randomly assigned each group a natural disaster (tornado, earthquake, hurricane, tsunami, flood, wild fire, or blizzard) to research with the ultimate goal of uncovering five designated key points about the disaster to share through an open-ended project presented to their classmates.

As a major component of the project, students detailed one significant historical occurrence of their designated disaster and reflected on the impact that it had for the people and communities of that time period. The manner in which students could share information about their disaster was open-ended, but several suggested methods included a variety of visual and performing art forms such as (a) informational skits, (b) poster presentations, (c) performed television commercials, (d) performed radio shows, or (e) group created newspapers, magazines, books, or comic books.

Broome & Broome/ *An Integrated Approach to Art for Life*

Along with the presentation, each team also created and performed a visual simulation of the destructive forces of their designated natural disaster at work. As a collaborative group, each team drew a blueprint of how their simulation might be performed and were required to pretest their simulation in advance of the presentation date. If the pretest was unsuccessful, groups revised their blueprints and tried again until the results were satisfactory.

Integrating Language Arts

Students could choose between two different designated texts, or focus novels, to serve as the centerpiece for their language arts instruction. The use of two texts allowed Monica to differentiate her instruction (Tomlinson, 2001) by student readiness levels in reading, and also offered students an alternative book to explore based on their interests or as an extension activity if they completed all work related to their first choice. Many of the students chose *Earthquake at Dawn* (Gregory, 1992), a work of historical fiction based on the San Francisco earthquake of 1906. Notably to art educators, the book contains historic photographs of the quake taken by an emerging photographer of the era, Edith Irvine, and offers a partially fictionalized account of her firsthand experiences on that fateful day. Many other students chose a work of non-fiction, *Earthquake*, by Christopher Lampton (1991) as their focus novel instead.

Regardless of their book selection, students kept a literature log to reflect on their daily reading and also to respond to



Students worked collaboratively at a computer laptop station as they researched their assigned natural disaster in preparation for an informative group project to be presented to their classmates.

predetermined comprehension questions. Students also met periodically in small cooperative groups to discuss their readings and were given individualized tasks to perform prior to these meetings so that each student would have something unique to bring to the conversation. In brief, these tasks asked students to either (a) make connections between the text and outside events, (b) offer a summary of a recent reading, (c) illustrate a passage from the story and use the image as a catalyst for discussion, (d) identify new, unusual, or exciting words introduced in the text and discuss their meaning, or (e) select a dynamic passage from the book to use as a read-aloud opportunity and to spark further discussion about effective writing.

Integrating Visual Art

The unit was underway by the time Jeff made his first visit to the classroom as a visiting co-instructor and art specialist. The activities began with the projection of



Students identified the natural disasters portrayed in a series of artwork projected on the class whiteboard.

a series of visual artwork onto the classroom whiteboard, with each image containing an artist's depiction of a particular type of natural disaster. Image by image, students identified the natural disasters in the art historical examples and we wrote their responses on posted chart paper as the activity progressed.

While many other images could have been displayed, we made our selections based on the portrayal of a variety of natural disasters and also as an attempt to select a variety of artists that were diverse in their gender and ethnicity. Our selections included the following: John Steuart Curry's *Tornado Over Kansas*, Katsushika Hokusai's *The Great Wave of Kanagawa*, Edith Irvine's *Brewery?* (earthquake), Charles Deas' *Prairie Fire*, Winslow Homer's *The Gulf Stream* (water spout), and selections from Kara Walker's post-Hurricane Katrina installation, *After the Deluge*. After the students identified these disasters, we asked them to name other types not represented in the art historical images and we wrote these examples on the chart paper as well.

Having completed this extensive list, we asked the students to review the artwork again and search for other imagery, aside from the disasters, that was included in every single art historical example. After some investigation, several students commented that every image depicted at least one person within its composition. In response, we projected the images yet again and, for each image, asked the students to consider the emotions that the people in the artwork might be experiencing. On a separate sheet of posted chart paper, we recorded the emotions described by the students: fear, sadness, bravery, despair, thoughtfulness, and relief.

For each emotion listed, we countered with an adapted line of questioning recommended by Barrett (1997) and asked students to describe the visual evidence in the artwork that allowed them to interpret the feelings of the figures in each image. We paraphrased and charted the students' answers to this line of inquiry as well and generated a list of responses that noted

Broome & Broome/ *An Integrated Approach to Art for Life*

the artists' depiction of facial expression, pose of figures, emotional use of color, and other setting-specific context clues to portray the intended feeling.

Near the conclusion of this session, we discussed how students could use the information gleaned from our analysis of the art historical images to create their own visual depictions of natural disasters. We provided students with a planning sheet that included a series of questions to help them focus on the parameters of an upcoming two-dimensional art project. These parameters included the following requirements: (a) each student's artwork will depict a natural disaster, (b) the artwork will include at least one human, (c) the student will consciously select the emotion(s) he or she wishes to portray in his or her figure(s), and (d) the student will consciously select and use the artistic technique(s) or method(s) that he or she feels is most appropriate to portray such emotion(s). The planning sheet also included several small boxes for students to use in creating thumbnail sketches in preparation for their larger final image. We also informed students that they would be given a small sample of two-dimensional media (pencils, markers, crayons, and watercolor paint) to choose from for their final project, and we asked them to consider which choice(s) might be best used to accomplish the goals stated above.

The passage below is excerpted from Jeff's reflective journal and illustrates his thoughts on the introductory art session with the fifth grade class.

Overall, I thought the introduction went extraordinarily well! The students were really enthusiastic and our discussion was quite lively. Unlike many other classes I've seen in different contexts, we certainly didn't have to pull any teeth to get students to talk about the unit. I could be wrong, but I think all the foundation that Monica put into introducing this theme and the research that the kids are doing played a big part in their involvement today. They were already knowledgeable and enthusiastic about natural disasters prior to my arrival, and I think this made them more invested in the project and more secure in answering questions.

Of course, I shouldn't overlook the greater possibility that the students' interest and enthusiasm is inherent in the theme itself. No matter how much you prepare students for a topic, it doesn't mean that they are going to care about it. I think the focus on themes that are relevant to students' lives and interests might be one of the most compelling aspects of the "Art for Life" model. Education, like art, should be about things that count in life.

The project. Throughout the instructional unit, students continued to work on their science simulations, explored their focus novels, and worked on their art projects, with special time reserved specifically for the latter activity during, but not limited to, Jeff's weekly visits

to the class. Students presented their planning sheets to us and discussed their intended choice of two-dimensional media before beginning work on larger sheets of paper for their final projects. Several students asked about the possibility of including more than one disaster in their image and justified their plan through information gathered during their ongoing research projects. It is not unusual for one disaster to lead to others, such as an earthquake that leads to tidal waves and



After preliminary planning, students worked on their natural disaster images in their fifth grade classroom and were given several choices of two-dimensional media to best portray intended emotions in their figures and the disaster itself.

fires, or a hurricane that produces tornados in its destructive path.

Monica reflected on our subsequent decision to allow students to include more than one disaster in their artwork in her reflective journal.

It seemed like a good idea at the time, because it came about from some students' investigations and discoveries in other areas of our instructional unit. But our good intentions also sort of opened up Pandora's Box as there

were then several other students who combined natural disasters in a sort of absurd fashion straight from your typical Hollywood disaster movie. This was the exact sort of unrealistic portrayal of these situations . . . divorced from the reality and tragedy of such events for real people . . . that we were hoping to avoid. Fortunately, it was only a handful of students who took such liberties with the parameters of the project. In hindsight, I think it was the right decision to allow the combination of disasters in certain instances, but we should have required students to justify the reasons for the combination and only allowed it on a case-by-case basis.

The students worked diligently on their artwork for several weeks and the results displayed a wide variety of natural disasters and ways to portray human emotions in the face of such disasters (see Figures 5 and 6). As the projects neared completion, Jeff took time in his journal to reflect on the students' art.

Overall the students worked really hard on their artwork and I'm very pleased with the results. In terms of the parameters and objectives that we set at the outset of the project, I think every student has met or will meet our goals. I think an overlooked and important aspect to instruction based on real life themes is that you don't have to be the "most talented" or technically precise artist in the class to have created a successful and meaningful

Broome & Broome/ An Integrated Approach to Art for Life

project. Take Cindy [a pseudonym], for instance . . . In terms of technical skill, she is not nearly as advanced as many of her peers. In the beginning of the project she was afraid to take the risk of moving beyond stick figures in order to show emotion in her people. She worked so hard in drawing a person as best as she could. But in the end, an open-ended thematic approach allowed her to address the assignment at her own readiness level and she was still able to meet all of the parameters of the project . . . she had a disaster, and a human figure that was clearly showing emotion through pose and facial expression . . . and Cindy managed to create a work of art that portrayed the reality of the situation more accurately than some of her peers that went off on fantastical tangents.

It's those tangents that always seem to create minor sticking points in thematically orientated art projects. There is always that sort of song-and-dance that we do with some students in almost negotiating (Hafeli, 2000) what imagery students prefer to draw and what imagery we as teachers see as appropriate for a designated theme [citation not included in original journal entry]. Some of the boys were absolutely focused on making low-rider trucks and cars as points of visual emphasis as families sped away from erupting volcanoes or as cars were tossed about in a tornado . . . and there was no convincing Willy [a pseudonym] not to include those cool

surfer dudes in his tsunami image. Those instances were in the minority, but as a teacher I always dwell on future improvements.

Writing about art. Once we identified a few students who were nearly finished with their project, we introduced the next stage of our unit that required students to craft a written story about their completed work of art. Monica introduced the activity and discussed how each work of art only represented a snapshot of a much larger story that was most likely missing a beginning and an ending. She provided a graphic organizer sheet to help students brainstorm the missing pieces to their stories in terms of the problems, actions, and results surrounding the imagery in their artwork. Students completed both the graphic organizer sheet and a rough draft of their narrative, while constantly referring to the details in their own art, before completing their final story. An excerpt from one of the completed stories is presented below.

It came out of nowhere. Boom!!! People ran screaming and people tried to get to safety. But the Brown family had no idea until Susan, their 4-year old daughter, told them that she heard some screaming. They looked out the door when Jacob, their younger son, said, "Run! Tornado!" "Where is a safe place?" asked Kim, the mother. "I know," said Jim, the father. "The basement!"

They ran to safety, so they

Journal of Art for Life 1(1)

thought. Susan felt the storm getting stronger! The family was scared! They could still hear the loud shriek of the townspeople.

Thankfully the storm went away after awhile. The Brown family ran out of the house and thought they were going to get in their truck, but the tornado took it, so they just walked to town. Half of the town was gone, and even the mayor was killed by the dreadful tornado. The townspeople were glad the storm was over, but the Browns were very sad because they loved the mayor like a brother...

Many of the students' stories, like the one above, presented another opportunity to consider whether or not our instructional unit was effective in portraying natural disasters as real events that impact the lives of real people, and that these occurrences deserve our attention, compassion, and action even when they take place in far away locations. For Monica, one of these culminating stories, in particular, gave her a moment to reflect on the overall effectiveness of our integrated approach to Art for Life. In her journal she wrote:

Our integrated arts approach to this unit seemed to help in a lot of unexpected ways. Carl [a pseudonym], for instance, has been a reluctant writer since I had him in class last year. I tried to get him to write about anything that he might be interested in, and nothing would work. When he started his natural disaster drawing, he really took his time with it and added



Fifth grade student's depiction of a tornado disaster

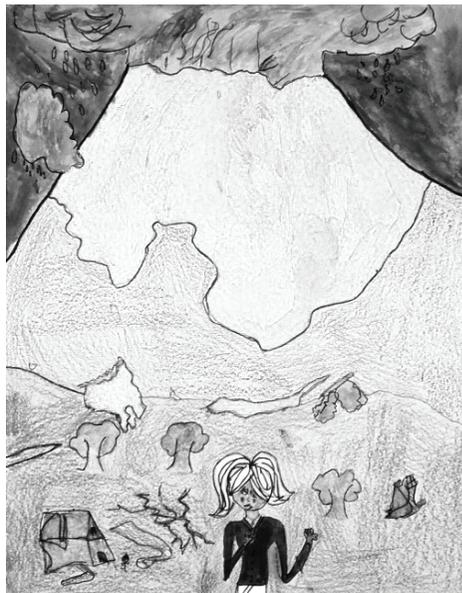
lots of details. The drawing became like an ongoing story to him. When he finished his art project, he was excited to write down the story that he had been creating in his head and on paper all along. He felt really proud of both his artwork and his story! As a result of that, he entered his story in a district writing contest and won with his entry from our unit. What a way to break the old "writers block" that all of us have experienced! He gained his self-esteem and motivation as a writer and has continued on that path ever since our unit concluded.

Conclusions

Our goal for this project was to corroboratively create and instruct an integrated Art for Life inspired unit suitable for an elementary classroom, and also to document our efforts, successes, and failures along the way. For the most part, we feel as if the unit was successful in depicting Art for Life as an educational model that can be easily adapted and expanded to sustain

an integrated approach to thematic instruction. The emphasis on real life issues at the heart of *Art for Life* readily opens the model up for cross-curricular connections to other subject areas that have relevance to carefully selected themes. In the case of our unit and its focus on the impact of environmental forces on our lives, the theme lent itself to natural and unforced connections to the subject areas of science, language arts, and the visual arts. We felt as if the chosen theme was relevant and timely to our students' lives and, for the most part, sustained their interest and provided meaningful educational opportunities throughout the lesson. We hope the unit's activities allowed students to understand and feel compassion for those who have had their lives altered by natural disasters and also to gain some respect for the reality of such forces of nature.

While our efforts may have been successful in showing the interdisciplinary possibilities offered by *Art for Life*, our own execution of our approach still shows room for some improvement. There were moments in the unit where students slipped into creating fantastical depictions of natural disasters, falling short of our intentions for students to grasp the reality of such environmentally caused catastrophes. While few challenging lessons are rarely ever always successful, and students often tend to negotiate what they prefer to depict with the expectations of teachers' assignments (Hafeli, 2000), we still see where this shortcoming in our achieving our overall objectives could have been



Fifth grade student's depiction of a volcano disaster

avoided with both minor and major adjustments on our part.

On the smaller scale, we opened the door for the creation of some of these unrealistic portrayals of natural disasters by universally allowing all students to combine multiple environmental forces in their art, instead of only on a case-by-case basis. On the larger scale, and in retrospect, we both feel as if we missed a major opportunity to crystallize the big ideas behind our instructional unit by not including a community service component that allowed for meaningful outreach to survivors and victims of actual natural disasters.

In consideration of this oversight, and for those who might be interested in designing an integrated *Art for Life* unit, we highly suggest the allowance of significant

and ample time to plan such units in advance. We worked on creating our instructional unit throughout the summer months, yet there are still significant aspects that we would change to our overall unit design.

For those who wish to try our collaborative approach to co-teaching an integrated *Art for Life* unit, we suggest taking time to find interested colleagues with whom you share similar educational philosophies and with whom you work well. We acknowledge that, as a married couple who has worked together at the same school site in the past, we find instructional collaboration to be enjoyable and found it relatively easy to make instructional plans during our own personal time and within the comfort of our own home. If you are seeking an interdisciplinary instructional partner for the first time, Burnaford et al. (2001) provide examples of successful arts integration partnerships and offer suggestions for those interested in identifying colleagues and building teams for the purpose of creating such interdisciplinary units of inquiry. Among many recommendations, it is suggested that potential partners spend significant time planning together and exploring compatibility in curricular goals, teaching styles, personalities, schedule, and overall flexible nature. Once suitable co-teaching partnerships have been identified and formed, sample planning forms are provided to assist in the development of thematic approaches to instruction. Most importantly, the authors suggest that “all you need is one other person who shares your vision” (p. 159) in order to establish a foundation that could lead to meaningful arts integration.

For elementary art educators who are interested in using such an integrated approach on their own without a collaborator, we urge you to integrate other subjects on a much smaller scale than was described in this article. Time constraints for most elementary art educators do not realistically allow for the full range of subject area integration depicted here without sacrificing valuable time devoted to their own curriculum. Finally, we remind classroom generalists who wish to try this integrated approach on their own, that the visual arts lie at the center of *Art for Life* and that the model would be incomplete without the incorporation of authentic visual arts education at the core of instruction.

References

- Anderson, T., & Milbrandt, M. K. (2005). *Art for life: Authentic instruction in art*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Ball, T., Grant, J., & Johnson, B. (2006). Looping. In N. C. Lester & L. Constable (Eds.), *Multiage in a nutshell: Your guide to a multiage classroom* (pp. 14-17). Eagleby, Australia: Multiage Association of Queensland.
- Barrett, T. (1997). *Talking about student art*. Worcester, MA: Davis.
- Baskwill, J. (1988, August/September). Themestorming. *Teaching K-8*, 19, 80-82.
- Bresler, L. (1995). The subservient, co-equal, affective, and social integration styles and their implications for the arts. *Arts Education Policy Review*, 96(5), 31-37.
- Burnaford, G., April, A., & Weiss, C. (Eds.). (2001). *Renaissance in the classroom: Arts integration and meaningful learning*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Broome & Broome/ An Integrated Approach to Art for Life

- Coyne, A. L. (2000). *Creating a year-long theme: A teacher's journey for multi-age and single-age classrooms*. Columbus, OH: Englefield and Arnold.
- Daniel, V. A., Stuhr, P. L., & Ballengee-Morris, C. (2006). Suggestions for integrating the arts into curriculum. *Art Education*, 59(1), 6-11.
- Dewey, J. (1916/1997). *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education*. New York, NY: The Free Press.
- Efland, A. D. (1990). *A history of art education*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Eisner, E. W. (2002). *The arts and the creation of mind*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Gardner, H. (2000). *The disciplined mind: Beyond facts and standardized tests, the K-12 education that every child deserves*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Georgia Department of Education. (2008). Georgia standards: Science k-5 [Web page]. Retrieved from <https://www.georgiastandards.org/Frameworks/Pages/BrowseFrameworks/ScienceK-5.aspx>
- Goldberg, M. (2006). *Integrating the arts: An approach to teaching and learning in multicultural and multilingual settings* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson, Allyn and Bacon.
- greatschools. (2007). Involved parents, successful kids [Web page]. Retrieved from <http://www.greatschools.org>
- Gregory, K. (1992). *Earthquake at dawn*. San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Hafeli, M. (2000). Negotiating "fit" in student artwork: Classroom conversations. *Studies in Art Education*, 41(2), 130-145.
- Hinckle, P. (1991, December 2). The Best Schools in the World: Early Childhood – 'A School Must Rest on the Ideal That All Children are Different'. *Newsweek*, 118, 53-54.
- Kasten, W. C., & Lolli, E. M. (1998). *Implementing multiage education: A practical guide*. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon.
- Lampton, C. (1991). *Earthquake*. Brookfield, CT: The Millbrook Press.
- Lancaster, L., Mankowski, C., Newburg, V., Russell, D., Broome, J., Kleinschmidt, E., . . . Stamets, R. (2001). *Shake, rattle, and roll: An intermediate unit*. (David C. Anchin Center, University of South Florida, 4202 East Fowler Avenue, EDU 208 B), Tampa, FL.
- Mishook, J. J., & Kornhaber, M. L. (2006). Arts integration in an era of accountability. *Arts Education Policy Review*, 107(4), 3-11.
- Noddings, N. (1996). The caring professional. In S. Gordon, P. Benner, N. Noddings (Eds.), *Readings in knowledge, practice, ethics, and politics* (pp. 160-172). Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania.
- Ostrow, J. (1995). *A room with a different view: First through third graders build community and create curriculum*. York, ME: Stenhouse.
- Parsons, M. (2004). Art and integrated curriculum. In E. W. Eisner & M. D. Day (Eds.), *Handbook of research and policy in art education* (pp. 775-794). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Smilan, C., & Miraglia, K. M. (2009). Art teachers as leaders of authentic art integration. *Art Education*, 62(6), 39-45.
- Stankiewicz, M. A. (2001). *Roots of art education practice*. Worcester, MA: Davis.
- Stokrocki, M. (Ed.) (2005). *Interdisciplinary art education: Building bridges to connect disciplines and cultures*. Reston, VA: National Art Education Association.
- Taylor, P. G., Carpenter, B. S., Ballengee-Morris, C., & Sessions, B. (2006). *Interdisciplinary approaches to teaching art in high school*. Reston, VA: National Art Education Association.
- Tomlinson, C. A. (2001). *How to differentiate instruction in mixed-ability classrooms* (2nd ed). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Walker, S. (2001). *Teaching meaning in art making*. Worcester, MA: Davis.
- Winslow, L. L. (1939). *The integrated school art program*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.