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Contemporary Issues in Art Education  
Article Response - In the Arts Spotlight by Rebecca Hotvedt  
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This article reflects upon integrating the arts into all academic subjects. Incorporating the arts can be done through collaboration with other visual/performing arts teachers, or the regular classroom teacher taking the initiative to get creative when teaching new material to students. The reason for choosing this article was to begin looking at how “integrating the arts into daily instruction for at-risk students can unlock the doors to learning in a variety of academic subjects (70).” The article tells the story of a new general education teacher that wanted to find a way to reach more of her students. Figuring out the students background, their learning style, and a way to reach all students became a main focus for her teaching style. Students who are often disruptive in class “had created defense mechanisms to survive in what were often chaotic home situations (70).” Looking at students disruptive behaviors often means that the “children who lack stimulation from touch and physical movement seek other ways to satisfy their brain, usually through aggression and violence (71).”

“Students need to have a talent or skill that takes them to a new environment and a mentor who takes an interest in them and provides emotional support while they are still learning (71).” As teachers, our role is to make a connection to our students and to give them various ways to learn the material presented. In an art classroom, the goal of creating artwork can be reached by taking many different routes. A teacher is like a facilitator who can help students reach their goals by teaching different ways to approach the problem or assignment. It is also very important to have a supportive learning environment so that all learners feel safe and welcomed. Teaching in a fun and inviting learning environment and involving the students through performance, writing, collaboration, and art making are all ways to also help reinforce the desired material/methods to be learned. “The arts are strongly linked to emotions, enhancing the likelihood that students will remember something (72).”

Art is something that should be accessible to everyone. Students all learn in different styles. “By integrating the arts into the curriculum, I have seen students master concepts that I thought were beyond their abilities (72).” Art is a way to reach all students. “A strong arts

foundation builds creativity concentration, problem solving, self-efficacy, coordination, attention, and self-discipline (73).”

The school I currently teach at is primarily an emotional support school. The students in this article represent many of my students that come in and out of my classroom daily. Just being a first year teacher, I feel that I have a very good understanding of my students and their needs, but feel that I still want to keep learning as much as I can to help them with their academic achievements. This article is a great foundation for art teachers as well as any other teacher working with children and the importance of art education in schools today. It explains the background for students with emotional outbursts and what can trigger them. It also went on to explain the ways that the teacher was trying to teach one subject through various methods to reach all students. In the article, Rebecca Hotvedt completed various studies with her students and applied multiple art making skills, dance, and music into her everyday lessons. She also collaborated with the special area teachers and found her students were more engaged, retained new information presented, as well as finding new interest within their school.

My goal is to create a curriculum for my students that can be very hands on with movement, involvement and more collaboration. Reaching all of my students through the arts has always been a goal of mine. I find that in the art room each child has a chance to express themselves through their work. It’s a time where they can have a sense of play, while at the same time a sense of discovery as they create. My goal is to make my classroom a place where they feel success and have a chance to shine. This article provided some additional support in how to integrate various styles of learning into any classroom. From an art teachers point of view looking at a general education teacher’s point of view, it is easy to see how collaboration is very important. Cross-curricular integration benefits all students and produces positive outcomes for all involved, including the teachers. Ultimately all students can benefit from a curriculum that offers the elements of movement and emotions to be expressed through various methods of learning.

Hotvedt, R. (2001). In the Arts Spotlight. *Educational Leadership*, 59(2), 70-73.