The Question:

“As a leader in education, how can I support my staff in helping students building an understanding of themselves through the arts?”

The Answer:

Five important things to consider:

1. Use the arts to reduce gaps and increase graduation rates and improve public confidence

2. Promote identity construction through the arts by developing habits of reflective thinking, self-expression and making choices.

3. Improve student achievement through two processes at the heart of artistic activity.

4. Support a culture of peace by exposing students to diversity through the arts.

5. Use a variety of human, written and electronic resources to support arts experiences.

1. USE THE ARTS TO REDUCE GAPS, INCREASE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATES AND IMPROVE PUBLIC CONFIDENCE

“The Arts play a vital role in ensuring that students remain engaged by encouraging them to learn in physical and embodied ways, by inviting them to collaborate with peers, by requiring them to respond emotionally and by calling upon their cognitive capacities as they learn in, through, and about the arts”

Engaging Students Through the Arts

The Arts can be used in your school to:

* Enhance the learning experience of students through offering highly engaging and creative programs
* Develop creative and collaborative thinking skills
* Foster a healthy and supportive appreciation for the feelings of others.
* Encourage an engaging collaboration between the Arts and other disciplines in the curriculum
* Enlist arts instruction to support literacy and numeracy, as well as financial and critical literacy
* Demonstrate to community how the Arts support learning in your school

*“The Arts . . . help students strengthen their sense of identity and develop a positive self-image*.”

Grades 9-10: The Arts

2. PROMOTE IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION THROUGH THE ARTS BY DEVELOPING HABITS OF REFLECTIVE THINKING, SELF-EXPRESSION AND MAKING CHOICES

“... a young person’s sense of self can be a valuable platform for making youth development experiences relevant and engaging to them”

Stepping Stones: A Resource for Youth Development

The Arts are the mirror of society, but at the elementary and secondary levels, the Arts are above all the vehicle for the student’s personal expression. Throughout their work, students express themselves by using both the language of emotions and elemental language of the arts in order to find their own voice.

In your school, the Arts should:

* engage students in determining their own learning goals
* Provide opportunities for student choice
* Encourage and value student voice
* Be offered in all four strands throughout the school year
* Have a place in the elementary timetable sufficient to achieve the overall and specific learning expectations in the Arts
* Be allocated resources for the materials, equipment and facilities that foster and promotes artistic identity
* Whenever possible, be taught by a teacher with some elemental knowledge of the Arts

“When students see themselves in the learning, they are more engaged and have a stronger sense of self, they have greater understanding of their strengths and needs, they have a greater sense of belonging, and they develop a sense of respect and self-worth in their abilities (Fielding and Rudduck, 2003)”

GAINS Adolescent Literacy Guide

3. IMPROVE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH TWO PROCESSES AT THE HEART OF ARTISTIC ACTIVITY

The foundation of the Ontario Arts curriculum is built on the Creative and Critical processes. This emphasis shifts assessment of student achievement from product to process. In the classroom, these vital practices encourage creativity, reflection, and collaboration, and develop habits of mind that are increasingly valued in our world.

“A focus on creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration is essential to prepare students for the future.”

 The Partnership for 21st Century Skills



In your school, the Arts will:

* Use the Creative and Critical processes as the foundation for teaching and learning in the Arts
* Support risk-taking and diversity of thought
* Ensure that process is central to assessment and evaluation in the arts
* Frequently engage students in conversations about stages of the creative process
* Provide sufficient time for exploration and experimentation
* showcase various stages of the Creative or Critical process
* Encourage students to pursue their passions or interests in the arts
* Develop learning and innovation skills valued in the 21st century

4. support a culture of peace by exposing students to diversity through the arts

“Canada is a young and diverse nation and Canadian culture celebrates diversity. Canadian artists have gained centre stage in the hearts and minds of Canadians, and have become key figures on the international cultural scene.”

Government of Canada Integration Gateway: Arts and Culture,

By collaborating and working on a team in an Arts setting, students will draw inspiration from their own background, and from heritage of others. Becoming familiar with our various cultures and drawing inspiration from them will help students strengthen their own identity while appreciating the perspectives of others.

In your school, use the Arts to:

* Create a positive, safe school environment that fosters and promotes equity, inclusive education and diversity
* Explore avenues to collaborate with diverse cultural groups to expand students’ awareness and experience
* Weave FNMI cultures, arts and traditions into classroom experiences

 “The Ministry of Education will: integrate content that reflects First Nation, Métis, and Inuit histories, cultures, and perspectives throughout the Ontario curriculum and related resources”

Ontario First Nation, Metis, and

Inuit Education Policy Framework.

5. USE A VARIETY OF HUMAN, WRITTEN AND ELECTRONIC RESOURCES TO SUPPORT ARTS EXPERIENCES

“Community partners can be an important resource for a school’s arts program. They can provide models of how the arts relate to life beyond school. These models include partnerships of school boards and individual schools with arts agencies and institutions, social services, community organizations, corporations, and local businesses.”

Grades 1-8: The Arts

Inviting artists into the classroom, virtually or in person, is a powerful way of providing authentic Arts experiences for children while including job-embedded PD for teachers. Professional artist may serve as role models for both staff and students. The Ontario Arts Council offers a number of programs, which include Artists in Education, Aboriginal Artists in Schools, and Arts Education Projects. Other programs that support the Arts in schools include Learning through the ArtsTM, Artsmarts, MASC, Prologue to the Performing Arts, and ARTSALIVE (National Arts Centre). Used effectively, these organizations may enhance arts experiences within your schools and develop teacher capacity and comfort in teaching in, through and about the Arts.

In your school, encourage:

* Hosting artists from the community and beyond
* Visiting artists’ use of the Critical and Creative processes
* Use of available human, technological and physical resources to improve teacher capacity in the Arts
* Professional development in the Arts
* Consideration of Arts teaching when making staffing and time-tabling decisions

RESOURCES

ARTSECO Arts Time Allocation Document

[www.artseco.ca](http://www.artseco.ca)(link)

Curriculum Services Canada: Arts Best Practice Videos

<http://www.curriculum.org/arts/>

CODE – Council of Ontario Drama & Dance Educators units

 <http://code.on.ca/resource>

EDUGAINS – Search ARTS – DI lessons, Financial Literacy in the Arts, Literacy Connections and lesson plans

[www.edugains.ca](http://www.edugains.ca)

OAEA – Ontario Art Education Association resource units

<http://ontarioarteducationassociation.org/>

OMEA – Ontario Music Educators’ Association resource units

<http://www.omea.on.ca/resources.php>

Ontario Arts Council - Artists in Education, Aboriginal Artists in Schools

www.arts.on.ca

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Upitis, R. (2011). Engaging Students Through the Arts, Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat

http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/WW\_Engaging\_Arts.pdf

Stepping Stones: A resource on Youth Development

<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/topics/youthopportunities/steppingstones/youth_policy.aspx>

Equity and Diversity framework

http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/inclusiveguide.pdf