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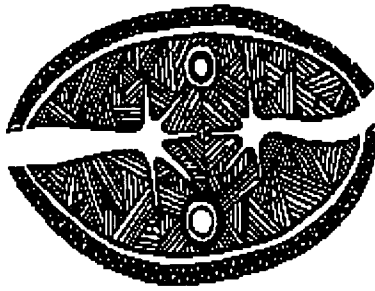
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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a narrative of a case study conducted in an Ohio middle school as part of a 5-year nationally funded reform program, Transforming Education through Art Challenge (TETAC), which features the arts as central in integrated/interdisciplinary curriculum planning. In the school the paper reports on, there are approximately 64 teachers involved in the study from various disciplines, as well as two university researchers. The paper states that as a group the educators are constructing a concept of school reform as a continuing process. It explains that they are looking at the operational and managerial aspects of schooling to enable the arts to play a pivotal role in the development of integrated curriculum. The paper identifies and illustrates the myths and realities of school reform programs with partial tales of experiences from this case. It states that a developmental explanation of integrated curriculum will be introduced and applied in this case. (BT)



“Cultural Change Through a School Reform Project: A Case Study”

by

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Columbus, Ohio

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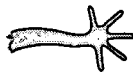
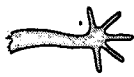
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Cultural Change Through A School Reform Project: A Case Study

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Abstract

In our paper we present a narrative of a case study conducted in a middle school as part of a five-year nationally funded school reform program, Transforming Education Through Art Challenge (TETAC). In the school we report on, there are approximately sixty-four teachers involved in the study from various disciplines, and two university researchers. As a group we are constructing a concept of school reform as a continuing process. We are looking at the operational and management aspects of schooling to enable the arts to play a pivotal role in the development of integrated curriculum.

The myths and realities of school reform programs are illuminated and illustrated with partial tales of experiences from this case. A developmental explanation of integrated curriculum will be introduced and applied to our case.

Introduction

We have resonated with USSEA and INSEA's names, which incorporated the concept of education through art. We have seriously contemplated what it is we teach *through* art and have come to the conclusion that it is about life and death; human existence; and how to accomplish and learn about this complicated, ambiguous, multidimensional, and ever-changing phenomena. Through art we can come to understand cognitively, emotionally, physically through our senses, socially, and sometimes spiritually, the phenomena of life and death. Art is a social and cultural expression of life and death, and therefore, intimately connected with it. This, we believe, has implications for the teaching of art. If art has intimate connections with life, than it is intimately connected with ALL other subject areas in schooling.

We believe it is the mission of all education, in all subject areas, to teach about the experience of life and death through the content in our subject areas in the most meaningful ways we can and to provide opportunities for multiple possibilities for thinking about and enacting this shared human experience. We further believe this should be done in a way that provides equity in opportunities for all students and is concerned with negotiated and distributive power relationships.

These beliefs and values have been the major influences in the teaching and research work with which we have been involved, primarily multicultural and interdisciplinary and integrated curricula, in which the arts have a significant and substantial role. We do not believe that as art teachers we should teach art solely as a subject, but rather that we should teach it in a context, providing for a more informed understanding of the issues and concerns about life that are relevant to our students' lives. Further, we suggest that the educational reform movement associated with integrated curriculum is important to consider towards this end.

TETAC

This case study is a narrative discussion of aspects of Malabar Middle School's third year, of a five year program, in which they were involved in a collaborative school reform effort titled Transforming Education Through the Arts Challenge (TETAC). TETAC is a national educational reform program that features the arts as central in integrated/ interdisciplinary curriculum planning. It is funded primarily by the Annenberg Foundation and the Getty Institute for the Arts, however at our site The Ohio Arts Council and The Ohio State University Art Education Department have also made substantial contributions to the program.

We (Christine and Pat) are part of a Faculty Committee for Collaborative Reform with six other faculty from our department who are collaborating with teachers and administrators in five Ohio public schools or offering their expertise to the schools. We are connected with five similar university sites and

their corresponding collaborative schools located throughout the nation, which are referred to as Regional Institute Groups (RIGs). The first year of the program for our RIG was primarily administrative and involved the selection of the schools, and the organization of and discussion of the possible roles of the mentors/researchers and other faculty interested in program at the university level. After the schools were selected in the first year, they were requested to form Leadership Teams at their schools to assist in administering and providing direction at their site.

We have based our telling of this tale on our individual field notes, informal interviews with school personnel, and observations. We invited the teachers and others associated with Malabar's Program to provide feedback to our narrative and where appropriate have included their suggestions. However, the narrative is primarily our own and we have determined what was included in the telling of the stories, their form, and ways they were analyzed, interpreted, and reported.

Definition of Terms

Because the TETAC Program involves school reform through interdisciplinary/integrated curriculum development and implementation, we felt it was first necessary for us to introduce the concepts of school reform and interdisciplinary/integrated curriculum. We then describe the site, personnel involved in the program, and aspects of the curriculum development efforts and implementation at Malabar Middle School.

School Reform

In our view school reform is not a project, it is an attitude and a process, which is always dynamic, negotiated, fluid, changeable, reflective, and dictated by time and place. For these reasons we feel that it is understandable that being involved in school reform it is not generally a comfortable experience; nor should it be. Since time and place are continually changing in terms of social, political, technological, and economical climate, so too the process of school reform efforts must continually be in a state of evolution.

However, school culture dictates that schools have end products such as: completed curricula, test scores, finished projects, and graduations. These end products are not generally compatible with the process of school reform that we present. Therefore, we feel that through the process of school reform the culture of schooling should continuously be challenged in these areas.

In a thought provoking article on school reform by Pogrow (1996) titled, *Reforming the Wannabe Reformers*, eight myths of school reform and their realities are presented. If we had read this article before beginning the project we might not have agreed to participate in it. However, since it's too late to rethink that decision, we felt his admonishments and advice were worth considering as we contemplate the project to date and make suggestions as to how to carry on.

"Myth 1. You can change instruction via advocacy, in-service, and training" (p. 658).

"Reality 1. Large-scale reform requires highly specific, systematic, and structured methodologies with supporting materials of tremendously high quality. (Such methodologies are hereafter referred to as 'technologies')" (p. 658).

"Myth 2. Theory is a useful guide for the design of programs and reforms" (p. 658).

"Reality 2. Metaphor is much more important to the design of sophisticated programs than research and theory" (p. 658).

"Myth 3. You can reform education by disseminating knowledge and leaving it up to practitioners to apply that knowledge" (p. 658).

"Reality 3. Reform requires technology, methodology, structure, dosages, and materials" (p. 658).

"Myth 4. The most important change involves radical reformulation of existing practice, i.e., new paradigms" (p. 659).

"Reality 4. The most important changes are incremental ones" (p. 659).

"Myth 5. The best way to achieve reform is through school wide change/restructuring" (p. 659).

"Reality 5. School wide change, while a nice idea, has never worked on a large scale and is probably not necessary" (p.659).

"Myth 6. You can develop learning through reforms designed to enhance correlates of learning, such as self-concept or empowerment" (p. 659).

"Reality 6. The best way to enhance learning is to develop more powerful programs to enhance learning" (p. 659).

"Myth 7. You can understand large-scale change by understanding what happens on a very small scale. This is the biggest myth of all" (p. 659).

"Reality 7. It's the scale, stupid! Large-scale change reflects properties that are often diametrically opposed to those in effect in small-scale research" (p. 659).

"Myth 8. Directive programs cannot be effective on a large scale, and attempts to implement such programs rob teachers of their individuality" (p. 659).

"Reality 8. It is possible to develop a new generation of far more powerful programs that can be effective on a large scale" (pp. 659-660).

Pogrow proceeds to enumerate the consequences of believing and acting upon the myths: 1.) "Repeated failure of reform initiatives" (p. 660). 2.) "Massive waste of resources on staff development and dissemination" (p. 660). 3.) "No professional validation standards for considering and implementing reform. Repeated cycling of inadequate progressive and traditional reforms" (p. 660). 4.) "Repeated cycling of inadequate progressive and traditional reforms" (p.660). 5. "Misleading conclusions and misleading uses of research" (p. 661). 6.) "Substitution of process for philosophy of outcomes, of good intentions for science, and of global good efforts for precision interventions" (p. 661). His solution is to reform the reformers and the way research is done. He sees a collaborative progress between the university researchers and the practitioners as the answer. Through these joint development ventures he envisions the creation of reforms that are "specific, systematic, interventions" (p. 661).

TETAC School Reform and Project Goals

TETAC's Vision of School Reform

TETAC's national administrative component has defined the elements of school reform to be: high expectations of students, demanding curriculum, authentic assessment, different roles, connections with communities, collaborations. They envision high expectations as consisting of "higher order thinking" vs. basic skills, understanding interpreting vs. memorizing isolated facts, metacognition: self-awareness as learners, and (self assessment; portfolios; reflective journals). More demanding curriculum includes writing across the curriculum, integrated curriculum, planning by groups, use of technology, collaborative learning, related to assessment, and to think globally and locally. Their understanding of different roles consists of teachers working in teams, teachers having group planning time, shared leadership roles, and time for professional development with teachers as leaders. Connections with communities is seen as the use of parents, local people, and artists in the schools; partnering with local agencies (business, arts agencies); service learning; and the study of local community, people, and culture. Site-based management, individually of schools; school to school linkages, networking groups of schools; and school-university linkages (especially preparing new teachers are seen as effective collaborations.)

TETAC's Goals for School Reform

TETAC has three primary goals supported by Getty for their program agenda: "1. Demonstrate that discipline-based arts education [DBAE] promotes improved student achievement in the arts. 2. Establish discipline based arts demonstration schools that are substantially different from the status quo. 3. Establish, develop and nurture a national consortium of demonstration schools committed to bold discipline based education reform." They also list additional goals for Annenberg Schools: 4. Demonstrate that DBAE arts education reform can serve as a viable focal point for whole school reform. 5. Demonstrate the ways in which DBAE arts education reform and school reform strategies can transform strategies can transform schools and the lives of students and teachers. 6. Establish, develop and nurture a national consortium of demonstration schools committed to bold (DBAE) arts education reform and whole school reform to improve student achievement. They also produced a list of conditions needed to accomplish these goals.

When the project was first conceived by the National Steering Committee they envisioned each RIG having three Getty schools and three Annenberg schools. In our RIG the separation between Getty and Annenberg schools has not been retained and we simply consider them all simply TETAC schools. Since the goals of Getty and Annenberg are not philosophically compatible, this may be the reason that the schools and researchers are finding implementation often confusing and difficult.

School Reform Conflict

TETAC's five year program does not support the broader idea that school reform should not be tied to a particular program and project, which is associated with a specific beginning and ending time frame. It is assumed that the school initiatives that are begun in this project will continue past the five years, however this is not a stated goal of either of the primary TETAC funders.

The issues of model schools and a national curriculum are also conflicted areas. TETAC has

described model schools and a national curriculum as end products of the five year program. This is in conflict with the ideology of school reform that supports the idea of schools and curricula as site specific and continually evolving. This conflict can be summed up in the difference between program and model as an end product at the end of five years vs. attitude and process as a continuous search for possibilities that meet the needs of the time and place when and where curricula and models are developed.

Interdisciplinary/Integrated Curriculum

Interdisciplinary and Integrated Curriculum are defined and discussed in numerous ways. Generally, integrated curriculum development and planning is easier for elementary school teachers because they are not trained as subject specialists. Middle and high school teachers are trained as subject specialists so integrated curriculum planning is more problematic because they are conditioned to be more territorial by colleges and universities and isolated by the structure of the secondary schools.

A source that deals with the integrated curriculum development and implementation in a comprehensive way is Rebecca Crawford Burns (1995) *Dissolving the Boundaries: Planning for Curriculum Integration in Middle and Secondary Schools*. She states that the goals of integrated school reform are to improve: professional development, curriculum and instruction, community support, and the opportunity for access to quality education by all children. These goals, especially the last one, are in sync with the multicultural school reform movement.

The concept of integrated curriculum has been around in the United States for along time. Some say since the 1900's. The writing of Dewey were largely responsible for creating this educational approach (Burns, 1995).

Integrated curriculum is a holistic approach to learning that stress connections and relationships rather than delineations within and across the academic disciplines and between academic and vocational programs. It is a tool for building bridges instead of boundaries between specific bodies of knowledge. Contrary to traditional discipline-based curriculum that focuses on content objectives, integrated curriculum is concept driven and focuses on performance expectations that students are expected to attain. At the heart of integrated curriculum are students' needs and interests. (p. 10.)

Integrated curriculum may be organized around themes or topics; essential) questions; metacognitive, emotional, physical, and spiritual concepts/skills, or real-life issues. "Regardless of its structural model, integrated curriculum should include appropriate disciplinary knowledge, address the needs of learns and reflect the real world" (Burns, 1995, p. 10).

The need to integrate is simply based on the fact that life is not divided into subjects. The reality of a person's individual and social life is not segmented in this way and therefore it seems inappropriate to divide the curriculum in this fashion. Subject areas fit neither the way individuals build their personal knowledge structures nor the way social problems arise to which knowledge may be applied (Burns, 1995).

When teachers refocus instruction from a discipline-based orientation to a more relevant perspective based on "real life" issues, problems, and skills, students are more active participants in their own learning. When educators integrate their subject content, they reduce knowledge fragmentation and avoid replicating skills and content. This reinforces the possibility of students making connections and foster in-depth understanding, which promotes mastery of knowledge and inquiry skills that prepare students for life their current and future life experiences.

The arts have a great deal to offer integrated curricula as a school reform movement when they are used to investigate and explore the overarching and meaningful themes, concepts, issues or problems relevant to the students' cultural lives because the arts have been constructed to accommodate thinking that is complex and interpretive. The arts also have components that enable experiences to be processed as long-term memory. It is reported that memory is only processed into long-term memory if has an emotional and/or a sensory component that is intensely meaningful to an individual (Pinker, 1997). Although sciences and some other subjects other than the arts generally can provide understandings about themes, concepts, issues and problems; they often do not include the emotional and sensory component that would facilitate processing the information into long-term memory where it can continue to be called upon to inform the individuals future understandings and life experiences.

Developmental Stages of Integrated Curriculum

Burns (1995) described a series of stages that integrated curriculum moves through as it is

developed to its fullest potential. She bases her stages on observations in the field. For each stage she provides a definition and a key word concept, discusses the stage as related to curriculum, instruction, assessment, and classroom culture. She then provides the pros and cons of each stage. In our presentation of Burns stages we went into an in-depth presentation of each stage, but due to space limitations for the article we will provide a short description of each stage and the key word.

"Stage 1: Parallel disciplines. Teachers partner in related disciplines and sequence content to coincide. (Most teachers start at this level)

Key word: Sequencing" (Burns, 1995, p. 18)

"Stage 2: Multidisciplinary. Teachers weave a theme or topic through several content areas.

Keyword: Coordinating" (Burns, 1995, p. 18)

"Stage 3: Interdisciplinary. Instructional teams create curriculum around overlapping skills, concepts, and attitudes.

Keyword: Focusing" (Burns, 1995, p. 20)

"Stage 4: Integrated. With student input, instructional teams design curriculum around real-life issues, questions, and concerns.

Keyword: Blending" (Burns, 1995, p. 22)

"Stage 5: Transdisciplinarity. Students and teachers jointly develop curriculum that prepares students for the unknown future.

Key word: Transcending" (Burns, 1995, p. 24)

We believe that Malabar's planning teams and the various teachers that make them up are at various points in the stages Burns presents. Most of the teachers are between stages 1 and 3. Although at times some of their activities, especially in the service learning area, have moved into the final stages.

It is interesting to note that the teachers can function well as a team and still be at diverse levels of Burn's stages. Teachers may also move back and forth across these stages depending upon the units they are involved in.

Malabar Middle School

In attempting to reform ourselves and our practice as mentors and part of this school reform project, something that Pogrow (1996) stated needs to happen, the OSU TETAC mentors collaboratively developed goals, benchmarks, rubrics, and guidelines for developing integrated curriculum. The goals, benchmarks, and rubrics for assessing curriculum were developed in the spring/summer of 1998 in four areas. The first area was Integrated Curriculum, the second Art Infusion, the third Technology, and the fourth Community. The guidelines for developing integrated curriculum were developed because the National TETAC Task Force for Curriculum had developed guidelines for developing curriculum around the arts. The OSU TETAC mentors found these guidelines inappropriate for our work with our site schools because our vision was more in-line with the Annenberg focus of integrated curriculum development where art is not taught as an isolated subject in the schools. We did however, for the most part, use the National TETAC Task Force's structure in constructing our guidelines Winter/Spring Quarters 1999 (January-May). These goals and benchmarks were used by us (Pat and Christine) to assist in reforming our ideas in working with the Malabar teachers and understanding and influencing their practices as related to TETAC. This year at Malabar we (Christine and Pat) dealt with the Pogrow's (1996) realities of the myths in relation to these goals and benchmarks.

Analysis of Project and Recommendations

Not enough planning time for the program's curriculum is still an issue. We recommended last year to devote one meeting per week to the TETAC Program for documenting progress, planning, exploring process and questions, and sharing assessment ideas. We recommend that the teams continue to do this until it becomes a habit. Little to no communication between teams has created ill feelings and unprofessional behavior that has hindered the goal of school reform through integrated curriculum. We strongly recommend that a system be developed to solve this crucial communication component.

Another key component to this reformation is to enable the Explo teachers to meet with the regular Planning Teams. The Explo teachers are meeting as a team once a week. This is beneficial to TETAC goals. As communication is minimal in the school, the Explo teachers need to have an opportunity to meet with the Core teams. Their voice and input need to be part of the planning and not a tag on. Scheduling is an issue that also effects the classrooms. At this time, Explo teachers receive different teams at the same time. This effects the integration element.

Many Malabar faculty members are understanding the multiple layers of collaboration. Others are still holding on to the isolation component that is so much a part of traditional teacher culture. They demonstrate a fear and resistance through which they manifest multiple reasons for not participating in this project or school reform. At a meeting with the superintendent, principal, and Christine, these problems were discussed. The superintendent requested that Christine proceed with a survey that would give teachers a voice and also help them to explore their role and responsibility as individuals, team members, and as a school. Spring Quarter Pat conducted the survey; however, the data has not yet been analyzed.

At the end of this (1998-1999) school year, the principal was transferred. Changing a principal in midstream creates many issues. Strategies will have to be developed to ensure continuity. We (Pat and Christine) recommend that in the course taught during the Autumn 1999 quarter such strategies be emphasized. We also realize that we will need to meet extensively with the new principal regarding this project and the issues.

In 1998 we noted that Malabar teachers demonstrated a weakness in developing integrated/interdisciplinary curriculum. Christine worked with them during a graduate course at Malabar. The course focused on developing, implementing, assessing, and utilizing comprehensive arts centered interdisciplinary/integrated curriculum and embedded assessment.

We also recommended that the Leadership Team should act as coordinators and trouble shooters by establishing deadlines for the teams such as: units, webs, lessons, supply requests, computer schedules, etc. Notices regarding the deadlines need to be sent out one week prior to them and the administration should follow up and hold the teams accountable. Although this was beginning to develop, it needs to be consistent and in a written format.

The teachers really wanted to write their units; however, they found that one hour a day was not sufficient to brainstorm and collaboratively write them. Christine recommended to the Leadership Team that money for professional development be used to pay for substitutes for the two teams writing units. The outcomes were wonderful. Not only did they write a unit, but also their outlook on the project, their team, and their profession positively reformed.

We stated in 1998 that there were problems with several teams or team members not wanting to participate in the TETAC program. This continued to be an issue. The superintendent's solution was to simply demand that all teams be a part of this project. At the Spring workshop, several teachers from those teams were invited and they were surprised at how much they had misunderstood about the project and pleased to discover how many ways their classroom and teaching could benefit. Several of those teachers did an end of school year workshop to encourage teachers to think about how they work with a theme and with each other.

Conclusions

The focus needs to be the process and that becomes the product. There is no one answer but multiple ways and those ways are always changing to meet the needs of the students and society. We continue to stress that the development of comprehensive arts centered curricula with embedded assessment that utilizes technology is the product; curricula are secondary. Viewing this in any other way continues a traditional Modernist philosophy and is antithetical to school reform. Many issues have surfaced this year. The way those issues have been addressed or avoided have revealed a lot about the process of school reform and teacher cultures. We look forward to continuing to observe/mentor and meet the challenges and further developments in the program during the 1999-2000 school year.

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