

Educator Effectiveness Webinar Series
Enhancing the Instructional Program with Creative Arts
Q&A with Susan Riley, M.Ed.
September 22, 2016

Questions

1. Are we currently still in a serious creativity crisis in the US schools?

We are making small progress but still need to embrace the role of creativity in schools. There is a common misconception that arts integration (AI) is as simple as adding “arts and crafts” to lessons, and this lack of understanding can prevent educators from reaping the full benefits of AI in the classroom. It is important for educators to understand how AI is naturally aligned with core content standards, and how it can enrich students’ learning experience and performance in any content area.

2. How would a math adult education class (GED and ESL) integrate the art?

In many ways, using arts integration with adults is very similar to how you would use it in a traditional classroom. You’re teaching the content in and through the arts. Adults enjoy being able to creatively express and explore ideas. Ms. Riley recommends using CBAM, which is the Concerns-Based Adoption Model to identify what the adults in your classroom already know, how they are most comfortable learning (and through which arts area) and then providing opportunities for adults to explore, solve, and present problems in and through the arts.

3. How would you bring theater arts into the Pre-K classroom?

One way that performing arts can be integrated into a Pre-K classroom is to start with making connections between the curriculum’s vocabulary and instructional terms, and performing arts. This is described in further detail on educationcloset.com, in Susan Riley’s *Early Childhood Connections through the Performing Arts Map*.

4. How can I integrate arts in my math class?

By creating a curriculum map, teachers can identify natural connections between math standards and arts standards, and create a “lesson seed,” which is a short paragraph describing the lesson idea that connects those two standards. For example, to encompass the math standard “add and subtract within 20,” and the art standard “use observation and investigation to make a work of art,” teachers might have students create buildings that have the same number of total rooms, each with different configurations.

5. How can state leaders ensure the arts are integrated into STEM and that all of these subjects are given adequate time at the school level in terms of both classroom instruction and professional development?

In order for AI to be beneficial to all classrooms, educators need to be equipped with the knowledge, resources, and time needed to understand and implement AI effectively. State

leaders can support AI by making information and resources about the benefits of AI readily available to educators and administrators, as well as providing resources to guide educators through the steps of implementing AI in their own classrooms.

6. With tight budgets and time, does STEM/STEAM threaten arts-for-arts sake classes?

Not so long as we're implementing STEAM with integrity. STEAM is predicated upon the idea that students have already learned the explicit skills and processes in the art form and content area being integrated before the integration lesson begins. This means that students must have access to arts classes which provide them with time to deeply learn and explore an arts area just for the sake of the art form itself. Once students have this understanding, knowledge and experience, they are then equipped to apply and create new meaning, products and processes in a STEAM integrated lesson.

7. Are resources by theme or intent?

When developing integrated lessons or units, we're doing so through intentional alignment to standards. This goes a bit further than thematic units and is more authentic to the content areas being addressed.

8. Where do you go with testing in the arts? Is there a movement to hold schools accountable?

After successfully integrating arts into the general classroom, it's important to assess student learning in both core content and the arts. To accomplish this, schools could use a joint rubric, formative assessments, portfolios, or a standardized assessment benchmark. There are also several digital assessment tools available that can support assessment of an AI lesson to ensure that knowledge and skills from both content areas are assessed.

9. How will this presentation connect with different student learning styles?

AI allows teachers to differentiate instruction to meet students' needs, including those of special education students and English language learners. For example, for special education students, visual art can be supplemented with textures and background music to enhance creation time. For ELLs, AI can be especially helpful because the emphasis is not on language. Instead, ELLs could engage through shadow puppets, dance, and drawing.

10. Could you discuss the adult learning and workforce development context?

Creativity has been identified as a critical component for success in the 21st century workforce. When preparing students for jobs that do not even exist yet, it's imperative that we provide them with the skills and processes that foster creative and critical thinking, application of knowledge and the ability to develop new solutions. This can all be accomplished through an integrated approach using the arts as a pathway to learning.

11. What are quick arts hooks to integrate into the general classroom for non-arts teachers?

The *60-Day Jumpstart Plan* is an excellent resource to use when integrating the arts into the general classroom. The plan outlines how administrators can create a “features/benefits list,” create a diverse team, share the process in action with their community, start small and simply, and celebrate and share their AI accomplishments.

12. How can a Science Teacher implement creative art while instructing Chemistry?

I would recommend taking a look at your standards first and identifying where there are already some natural connections. For instance, investigate chemical properties of paint or other artistic mediums, or explore the chemical reactions needed to create fireworks as well as the artistry behind creating and producing a fireworks show in real-time. How does the chemistry influence the art and vice versa? Lots of times looking at the broader processes, rather than the minute details, provides you with a wide range of options for arts integration.

13. Do you have Faith Based ideas for creative arts as well?

For faith based ideas, try looking at the cultural context of the faith lesson first and pairing that with the cultural standards found in all of the arts content standards. This can help students explore both the history and the context surrounding the lesson being addressed.

14. How do you manage costs associated with an enriched arts curriculum?

AI can be implemented in a variety of cost-effective ways. By creating a curriculum map, educators can plan how to integrate creative activities into their main content instruction in a way that does not require many, if any, additional resources. There are also several digital tools and online resources that are low- or no-cost that educators can utilize in their AI lessons.

15. Will this webinar be relevant for all content areas?

Yes. AI can enhance all classrooms, regardless of the content area. AI emphasizes both the process and the products of learning, giving students different opportunities and pathways to learn, and demonstrate what they’ve learned. There are natural connections between content standards and AI that educators can identify and work from to create an AI lesson. Regardless of the content area, grade level, or unique student needs, AI can enhance what is being taught by prompting students to think creatively: to describe, analyze, interpret, create, present, evaluate, and reflect on the content they are being taught. The result is a more advanced understanding of the content and a richer learning experience for the students.

16. How can museums support this work?

A trip to a museum (in person or virtual) can be a great way to integrate the arts into a lesson. Students can discuss and write about the exhibits and works of art they see and make connections to the content they learn in the classroom. In addition, museums can serve as a great opportunity for professional development. Teachers could attend educational workshops at a local arts museum, for example.

17. Is Early Childhood addressed?

Briefly, however this webinar looked at the broader ideas of clarifying best practices in using arts integration and/or STEAM at any grade level. We do have several resources available for arts integration and Early Childhood on educationcloset.com, including an archived hour-long workshop on the topic. You can view that here: <http://educationcloset.com/2015/02/18/early-childhood-through-arts-integration-workshop-archive/>

18. What are some strategies to integrate the arts and the middle school level during regular education classes?

To integrate the arts effectively at any grade level, it is important to understand that AI is a process. The Ladder of Integration provides achievable steps for AI: 1) “show and tell” teachers how AI can enhance their classrooms, 2) provide core-based strategies, 3) identify connections between content and arts standards, 4) create a lesson plan, and 5) document evidence of successes and challenges.

19. Why aren’t more people using creative arts in their instruction?

Educators may not have had access to the information and resources needed to support them as they integrate the arts into their classrooms. It is important that educators and administrators understand the benefits of AI and have an understanding of the steps needed to implement it effectively. AI approaches are grounded in over 25 years of research and can deeply enrich students’ learning experience if integrated using a strategic and gradual approach.

20. Do you have any suggestions of how to use the arts effectively in French classes?

Communicating through the arts can be very beneficial in language classes, as it gives students another way to communicate through the language being studied other than reading and writing. For example, the learning experience can be enhanced through music, dance, or using shadow puppets.

21. How do I encourage educators to explore digital tools as a means of creativity?

When used efficiently, digital tools can be a great low- or no-cost way to provide students with opportunities to think creatively and develop digital literacy, while simultaneously acquiring core content knowledge and skills. By providing students with opportunities to use digital tools such as PowerPoint, Prezi, or social media to complete assignments, educators can integrate arts and creative thinking in a way that fits their classroom’s needs.