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Fine Arts Integration in Early Childhood Education Classrooms

By

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This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Honors in the Discipline of
Education and the Elizabethtown College Honors Program

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Abstract

This study seeks to define the place of fine arts in all early childhood classrooms regardless of subject. This research explored how fine arts can enhance a lesson or a student's learning experience and the perceived effects of art integration on students and teachers. Research methodology included conducting interviews with practicing teachers in both general and special area education to understand their perspectives on fine arts integration.

Keywords: fine arts, art integration, student's learning experience

Fine Arts Integration in Early Childhood Education Classrooms

Introduction

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to define the impact of the fine arts in all classrooms regardless of subject. This research will explore the influence of art integration on students and how fine arts can be effectively integrated to enhance a student's learning experience.

General context for the study

Fine art is defined as “creative art whose products are to be appreciated primarily or solely for their imaginative, aesthetic, or intellectual content” (Oxford Languages). This includes literature, music, painting and drawing, performing and film. The arts are shown to develop neural systems to produce a wide range of benefits. This includes strengthening fine motor skills, focus, memory, and many other skills useful in the classroom. The fine arts also support learners with many non-academic benefits such as promoting self-esteem, motivation, creativity, and aesthetic awareness. The arts offer students cultural exposure, opportunities for emotional expression, and foster social harmony and appreciation of diversity (Jensen, 2001, p.3). Students who have become involved in the arts display greater strengths in those categories and display fewer “non-productive behaviors” (Fisher & McDonald, 2002). The positive affects fine arts have on students create opportunities for teachers to enrich their students' achievement both in their classroom and beyond.

Significance of the study

In current school systems, success is typically believed to be best represented by high standardized test scores in science, math, reading, and writing. With these skills as a priority, arts are often pushed into the background (Deal-Flynn, 2016). This study will help bring awareness

to the ways fine arts affect students. From this research, teachers will be able to grasp a better understanding of ways they can utilize fine arts to enhance their classroom. This study will also serve to advocate for the relevance and importance of fine arts in education and the need for stronger preservice teacher education on arts integration.

Review of Literature

Research Question

How can the fine arts be effectively integrated across subject areas in early childhood education and what are the perceived benefits of this practice from a teacher perspective?

Fine Arts in the Classroom Currently

Many non-arts teachers struggle to find the time or are too uncomfortable and unfamiliar with the arts to include them in their daily practice. There is minimal data that develops this topic, however the research that does exist includes research findings that show that the lack of comfort for generalist teachers when it comes to integrating the arts stems from their lack of preservice preparation. Teacher education fails to provide sufficient background in the fine arts; therefore, many teachers are not experienced in the areas of dance, music, theater, and visual arts (Deal-Flynn, 2016). Teachers that lack exposure to art forms may have limited ideas on what art integration can look like in the classroom, while teachers that are more experienced in the arts can incorporate their own creative side into their lesson planning and brainstorming for activities. This creates a large disparity across classrooms when it comes to the level of art integration.

Integration in the Classroom

All children deserve to be educated in the arts and given opportunities to explore various medias and be creative. “Within purposeful integrated contexts where children’s learning in the arts is vitally connected to other learning at hand...” (McDonald & Fisher, 2002, p. 2) educators

can expand the exposure to arts into everyday lessons for their students. Many resources available pair standards in music and art with different subject standards to help build lesson plans that rely on an integration of arts that enriches both the learning of the original subject and that of the art form. By building the arts into lessons as a learning tool and incorporating them into other core classes, for example, writing and performing a play about key content or learning how to recognize 2-dimensional shapes in artwork, teachers can create a school environment rich in arts and culture (Smith, 2009).

Fine Arts Application

Fine arts integration is defined as “an approach to teaching in which students construct and demonstrate understanding through an art form” and “a creative process which connects an art form and another subject area and meets evolving objectives in both” (The Kennedy Center, n.d., p. 1). The overall goal of art integration within general education is “not to make every student an artist, but to exploit art as a unique vehicle for developing the individual creative potential in every student” (McDonald & Fisher, 2002, p. 6). The opportunities that become available to educators when they explore the potential applications of arts in the classroom are limited only by their imagination, as they are accessing “an open door for learning beyond its core content boundaries” (Wiggins, 2007, p. 63). Involvement in the arts is associated with gains in math, reading, cognitive ability, critical thinking, and verbal skills (Smith, 2009).

The arts can be integrated successfully into each subject. By being intentional, teachers can find creative ways to use the arts to both make their lessons more fun and engaging (Potocnik & Devetak, 2018) and strengthen the learned skills by providing students with insight to potential application beyond the specific subject.

Math

Math classes provide many opportunities for art integration. Teachers can use musical notes to teach fractions (Smith, 2009), songs or poems to remember common math processes, artwork to teach geometry, and many other possibilities. The connection between music and memory provides many opportunities for math teachers to build music components into their lessons to help reinforce the memorization of tricky skills. Introducing art opportunities into the math setting can engage students who may typically struggle to remain motivated. It also can produce openings for natural conversations and collaborative learning (Carpenter & Gandara, 2018).

Science

Within science class “fine art material can be used for stimulating students’ individual interests and self-concepts about science in general” (Potocnik & Devetak, 2018). In early childhood education, the science lessons taught are commonly simplistic introductions to larger ideas and concepts. Using the arts to teach science helps teachers form simple activities that can contribute to the student taking more interest in a new and unfamiliar topic. A more complex concept like composition of materials may be taught in the simplified idea of teaching students paint colors are made up of numerous colors (Potocnik & Devetak, 2018). Teachers may also introduce plant and insect life cycles or the water cycle through plays that students can take part in (Smith, 2009). Lessons about weather can be supported with engaging songs and dances. These approaches help keep student interest without including concepts that are not developmentally appropriate for them to process. Music and movement also will support building memory of the content.

English Language Arts

A large portion of early childhood curriculum is dedicated to English Language Arts. In the early grades building a strong foundation of this subject is extremely important to support the future success of students. A music-integrated literacy environment “nurtures auditory and visual discrimination, eye-motor coordination, visual sequential memory, language reception, vocabulary development, phonological and phonemic awareness, and fluency.” Simultaneously, numerous musical skills are enhanced. “In the early learning setting, music’s engaging nature encourages children to attend during reading activities, invites them to be active listeners, and promotes comprehension and dialogue” (Wiggins, 2007, p. 62). A Texas study also revealed students in the arts performed better on state writing tests (Edutopia, 2020). For students, artwork serves to support their understanding of text. When students are learning to write, pictures come more naturally to convey their ideas. When reading, understanding illustrations supports the story and helps represent unfamiliar vocabulary.

Performing plays also supports students in their comprehension of the written material. Teachers can use readers’ theater to support understanding of plot, characters, dialogue, and emotion through text. Introducing a performance component to students’ comprehension approaches is also engaging for students and supports their abilities to work together.

Social Studies

The value of the arts in culture contributes greatly to why art integrated lessons are beneficial in social studies. The arts “hold an esteemed role in the transmission and perpetuation of culture; therefore, knowledge about art is knowledge about many expressive mediums found within human existence” (McDonald & Fisher, 2002, p.2). The arts are necessary to preserve and understand culture and equally help to educate people about the world (McDonald & Fisher, 2002). Exploring music an art from the past or different cultures is an approachable and engaging

way for students to learn more. Many of the opportunities for integration that promote movement, engagement, and memory are valuable to this subject area as well. Incorporating visuals, especially those with color, can support learners in memory recall and processing (Jensen, 2001).

Beyond the Classroom

Fine arts encourage creativity and exploration in students that stretches beyond the limits of the classroom. Exposure in general education may encourage students to explore further opportunities in other classes or extracurriculars that help further enrich their academic careers. The fine arts support students' self-esteem and motivation, develop their creativity and aesthetic awareness, and cultivate social harmony and appreciation of diversity (Jensen, 2001). Other researchers have also supported that groups of students who participate in the arts are found to have "consistently better communication skills, friendships with others, and fewer instances of violence, racism, and other troubling and non-productive behaviors" (McDonald & Fisher, 2002, p.5). Many students find the arts to be reliable outlets for emotions, and by having an opportunity for creative release they are able to be more successful in other aspects of their life.

Challenges

For educators, the challenge arises of integrating arts when it is relevant and well received by their class. Some students may lack a foundation in art or music that makes incorporating activities related to those subjects challenging or frustrating for them. Challenges may also arise due to lack of preservice educational training that limit teachers' familiarity with art integration and how to maximize particular components in their lessons (Deal-Flynn, 2016). Educators may also struggle to recognize how certain arts may pertain to their subject. In regard to both the preparation for and execution of, arts integration can also be regarded as inefficient.

In an increasingly fast paced school environment priorities may shift to teaching content in the quickest way, which does not align with many integration practices (Jensen, 2001).

Implications for Teachers

The influence of art integration reaches beyond just the students. Teachers are also able to benefit from their efforts to enrich the learning experiences of their students. Arts learning can improve motivation, concentration, confidence, and teamwork (Smith, 2009). A Texas study also revealed students in the arts were better behaved, had more compassion towards others, and were more engaged in school (Edutopia, 2020). These strengths improve the classroom environment and student dynamic which allows the teacher to lead successful group activities and witness their students thrive. Many teachers share favorable opinions on the role of arts in the classroom. In a video on arts education a teacher interviewed shares that “the arts have not only given a spirit and life to our program...it also has allowed us to teach some of the things we’re trying to teach... language arts, math, science, and social studies we find can be taught better when they’re taught through the arts” (Introducing Arts Education, 2003). For her, and many additional teachers, they have found art integration has brought strength to their ability to teach core subjects.

Summary

Understanding the importance of fine arts in education is crucial to ensure future and current educators are maximizing the potential of learning in their classroom. Incorporation of the arts intentionally in school systems enhances learning throughout all academic areas. By enriching the school and classroom environment it fosters a love for learning, encourages greater creativity and self-expression, and can improve participation and motivation (Jensen, 2001). From studies showing the benefits of listening to music as a baby, to research on the relevance in

grade school, there are clear connections to the benefits fine arts provide when incorporated into a classroom setting. Some districts are recognizing the changes necessary and are making great strides to revitalizing art programs (Smith, 2009). These approaches are just the beginning. The arts belong in school and provide great opportunities of value to students.

Methodology

Research Design

The current study included teacher interviews in order to gain insight to how teachers view art integration, how they are using it in their classroom, and what the perceived student benefits include.

Participants

Professional staff members within early childhood education contributed to this research. The participants included 7 general classroom teachers and 2 special area teachers in art and music. Participants varied in their teaching experience and personal education backgrounds. Those participating in the interviews were contacted via email and through teacher connections.

Teacher Interviews

Early childhood teachers in both general and special area classrooms were interviewed to answer questions on art integration. General classroom teachers were asked how and to what extent they have integrated arts into their classroom before. They were asked additional questions on the value they see in arts integration and how they feel it affects the learning experiences in their classroom. Special area teachers, such as art and music teachers, were asked questions on how they feel their content can be used and incorporated in a general classroom. Interviews occurred through video or phone calls and were recorded.

Interview Questions

Questions	General Classroom Teacher Only	Special Area Teacher Only
What is art integration?	How regularly do you use art integration?	How do you feel the arts can be used in a general classroom?
Do you think it is important to incorporate the arts into core subjects? Why?	In what ways have you used art integration?	Do you think heavier exposure to the arts during daily instruction benefits student performance in your class?
What benefits do you feel the fine arts provide students?	Do you feel your preservice education prepared you to successfully integrate the arts into your classroom?	Do you think your class helps provide students with a foundation in the arts that can help them be successful in art integration activities? How so?

Analysis

The results of the interviews were analyzed to see where teachers may be lacking in their practices or understanding of art integration, and where teachers are finding success. The questions also allowed participants to share their ideas regarding perceived benefits. The responses of interview participants were compared for similarities and differences and emerging themes were identified. The results may also help to support the research findings of the literature review.

Results

This section will outline the results and findings from the teacher interviews used in the research study.

Qualitative Data

Qualitative data was obtained from interviews conducted with 9 different teachers including 7 early childhood educators and 2 special area educators in early childhood. The questions varied depending on whether the participant was a general area teacher or a special area teacher. The subsequent five sections reveal the major themes that emerged from participant responses to interview questions.

Theme 1: Technology Presenting Limitations

When participants were asked about how the arts can be incorporated into the classroom, many unexpectedly shared their thoughts on the growing use of technology in education. As technology becomes increasingly accessible, many students use it more frequently both in and out of the classroom. One participant shared that some students entering kindergarten “can’t hold scissors and don’t know how to cut” because they haven’t had an opportunity or need to when they don’t have that practice at home. Another participant shared that students aren’t allowed to explore crafting materials at home without supervision which makes technology a more frequent, and “safer,” tool to explore. When students are less familiar with craft and art supplies it makes it more challenging to incorporate them into the classroom.

As a focus for technology integration emerges, teachers express the challenge of converting art projects or creative opportunities they have used in the past to virtual formats. Most participants failed to include specific examples of how they use technology to integrate the arts in their classroom. One participant shares that arts integration “allows students to be hands on, and it supports skill development of working with supplies.” While there are opportunities for arts integration using technology, those activities will limit some of the benefits to fine motor skill development provided by the “hands on” activities described by many participants.

Theme 2: Lack of Preservice Education

A majority of participants identified that there was a very minimal, if any, college level teacher preparation programs oriented toward preparing teachers to integrate the arts in their classrooms. Many of the participants who shared they experienced no preparation also expressed interest in taking a course if it had been available to them. The 7 non-special area teachers shared in their responses that their respective college-level teacher preparation programs did not prepare them for arts integration and if it was introduced in any of their courses, it was a small detail. This lack of preservice focus directly impacts their choices in the classroom. One of the special area teachers expressed disappointment and stated that “Arts are not a priority to schools.” and “many teaches don’t emphasize the arts or the purpose behind them.” A similar idea was expressed by the other participating special area teacher. In other words, many practicing general education teachers felt underprepared for arts integration and developed many of their practices through incorporating their own interests or experimenting with various teaching approaches in their classroom. Special area teachers in art and music felt that the lack of preservice education and the practices of general area teachers reflects the lack of value towards fine arts in early childhood education.

While most participants stated that their preservice education programs did not prepare them for arts integration, one participant shared that their previous position within a different county had helped prepare them through specific curriculum involving the arts. This participant also pointed to their student teaching experience being a major contributor to their preparedness for art integration, as their placement school’s curriculum successfully incorporated opportunities for art integration. A general education participant also shared that while their teacher preparation program “didn’t include instruction on [how to integrate the arts],” when

they began teaching, their in-service courses taught them more about opportunities such as “readers’ theatre.”

Theme 3: Unintentional Art Integration

The initial responses to how participants used the arts in their classroom varied from how the answer developed and expanded throughout the interview. Many of the participants shared that because of their natural inclination to incorporate arts such as music, visual art, dance, or theatre into their lessons, it was often unintentional to them, and so they failed to recognize it as art integration. One participant shared “I have a song for everything we do in class and if I don’t [have a song] I make one up.” The participant shared that students expect music to be a part of their day because the teacher has worked to incorporate it in all of their routines and activities. The practice has become habitual but still beneficial to the classroom environment and students.

Participants also shared that visual art lends itself very easily to support literacy development and often times creating an illustration will accompany a written assignment without the teacher directly recognizing how that is integrating art. The unintentional application of fine arts in early childhood education speaks to the innate appreciation of and desire for creative expression that teachers experience and should work to support in their students.

Theme 4: Benefits to Students

Across all participants in this study, there was a consensus that the arts benefit student engagement in the classroom. “Engagement is a big part of [why arts integration is important]” one participant shared. The statement that “art especially helps develop fine motor skills in young children” was also stated by one participant but shared by many. That participant specifically states that “when [students are] practicing cutting and holding materials to paint or

draw” they are building their fine motor skills while also being engaged and enjoying themselves.

Many participants expressed the benefits specifically of music and dance. One participant stated that “movement and dance is really helpful to students with attention issues.” Another participant shared that “kids love and expect [music in the classroom] and they really begin to understand the purpose behind it.” The interview responses expressed that when teachers develop an appreciation for the arts in their classroom, students take greater interest and want the integration activities to continue.

Participants also shared that as students build greater interest and have increased opportunities to produce art forms of their own they begin to take pride in their work and gain confidence in their abilities. Most participants responded with statements about students’ excitement to receive praise for their work and share it with their classmates.

One participant expressed that “students are willing to try new things,” and that involving the arts into the classroom provides them those opportunities for exploration that are beneficial to their learning experiences. This lends itself to students learning how to “express themselves in their own way,” another common benefit and opportunity produced by fine arts that many participants mention numerous times in their responses.

Theme 5: Easier Integration with Younger Students

Across many participants in both general and special area education fields, responses appeared to be in agreement that the younger students were more interested in fine arts integration opportunities. One participant expressed, that “[art integration] didn’t lend itself as easily in my experience with older grades as it does to [younger students],” and supported the statement by expressing ways their practice was different across grade levels. Another participant

expressed “for students second grade and younger I definitely use [art integration] daily, but with the older students it is much less frequent.” The participant shared that older students are less receptive to arts integration approaches and respond inconsistently in regard to their engagement and enjoyment.

Two additional participants both expressed that older students feel more embarrassment when being asked to participate in singing, dancing, acting, or sharing their artwork during class time. Even special area educators shared in their responses that older students within early childhood education had diminishing interest in music and art. However, one participant shared that providing students with opportunities to express their talents and share them with the class “builds their confidence and allows them to shine.” Many participants also commented on the confidence building opportunities in fine arts integration, which may help to overcome the embarrassment experienced by older students

Theme 6: Embodiment

Several participants shared how art allows students to be “hands on” in the classroom and have tactile experiences that develop their skills and understanding. Multiple teachers shared how art projects integrated in the classroom provide good opportunities to develop importance of specific skills like holding pencils and cutting with scissors. The physical movement associated with integration activities added to the benefits of the activity itself. Both special area teachers discussed how hands on opportunities are an important component in their classroom when creating music and art. This theme reappeared as teachers discussed the issues with technology limiting the frequency of their more physical activities in the classroom.

Discussion

This section will provide a summary of the current research study. First, a review of the findings as they align with contemporary literature will be discussed. Second, limitations will be highlighted. Third, implications for future research and teacher preparation programs will be suggested. Finally, a brief summary will be provided.

Review of the Findings Based on Contemporary Literature

As a whole, the findings of the current study align with contemporary literature. Participants in the current study had generally positive attitudes toward the integration of fine arts in early childhood education. Many participants shared their knowledge of benefits the arts provide and included examples supported by contemporary literature. Participants expressed their beliefs of the benefits to students' engagement, performance, and the opportunity for students to be creative and explore their interests. Participants also shared that they believe a lack or preservice education regarding art integration contributes to its presence, or lack of presence, in early childhood education classrooms.

Contemporary literature shares numerous relevant application opportunities between the fine arts and subject areas in general education classrooms. Research supports that "worthwhile integration allows for meaningful connections to be made across the curriculum" (Deal-Flynn, 2016). Findings of the research study support the value and relevance of art integration shared in the contemporary literature. The research study data included many examples of relevant ways to integrate the art across subject areas also expressed within the literature. Benefits to student engagement, especially with the use of music (Wiggins, 2007), was a common theme through contemporary literature and the research study. Opportunities for creative expression, emotional expression, and benefits like a strengthening of memory, were also common shared themes.

An interesting occurrence in the research study that was not seen in contemporary research was the relevance of unintentional or unrecognized fine arts integration. Many participants expressed ways that they incorporated the fine arts within their lessons and classroom as common practices without acknowledging the art integration they were promoting. The routine incorporation of fine arts that was only recognized when prompted with questioning expresses the value many teachers place on sharing the arts with their students regardless of preservice education or intentional structured integration.

Finally, it is evident within contemporary research that a lack of education on fine arts integration is provided to teachers during preservice education. This education is integral to effective, confident implementation of integration activities and lessons by general education teachers. The findings of this study suggest that early childhood education teachers are underprepared to effectively integrate the arts in their classroom due to a lack of preservice education on the opportunities arts integration can provide and how the best practices may be used in the classroom. Contemporary research supports these findings that teacher education fails to provide sufficient background in the fine arts which contributes to a lack of confidence when incorporating the arts in the classroom (Deal-Flynn, 2016). The results of this study and contemporary research assert that preservice education on art integration is necessary to provide general education teachers the tools, resources, and experience necessary to effectively apply these practices in their classrooms.

Overall, more research will support determining the most successful actions towards adequately preparing general education teacher candidates in early childhood for art integration. Further research will also support best practices of integration in the classroom and how it can be the most accessible to a variety of teachers, students, and environments. Contemporary literature

and the findings of this study assert that many early childhood education teachers recognize the value of art integration and try to incorporate this practice in their classrooms, but preservice education regarding art integration contributes to the extent of its presence, or lack of presence, in early childhood education classrooms. Current research with practicing educators in early childhood education seem to point to a gap in the curriculum of preservice programs when it comes to arts integration in the general early childhood education classroom. Many educators also attribute a lack of arts integration to a diminishing appreciation and focus of arts in education systems. Contemporary research attributes a diminished focus on arts to a growing focus on standardized assessment.

Limitations

A number of limitations affect the findings of this study. First, the interview participants in the current research study were a convenience sample of general education and special area teachers from the Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Delaware areas which limits the ability to generalize results to all early childhood education teachers and classrooms. It also limits the researcher's ability to make generalized claims specifically about the preservice education of teachers due to a lack of variety in the education programs of the interviewees. Another significant limitation of the current study was the very small sample size (9 interview participants). A larger sample with more participants, perhaps from a variety of schools across the United States, would likely yield more significant results. The sample also included far fewer special area teachers than it did general classroom teachers in early childhood education. Moreover, a larger, more diverse sample might also allow researchers to analyze the data in the context of general demographic information (e.g. content area(s) taught, years of teaching experience, and major/ degree program).

The next possible limitation of the study is that interviewees were not provided questions prior to the interview or given an opportunity to prepare responses. Given the inopportunity for preparation, it is possible that participants may have provided answers on impulse which they may have further developed or answered differently had they been given longer time to review and understand the question. During the study, teachers may have also felt anxiety about being recorded. This may have limited the depth of their responses.

Due to these limitations and other potential limitations not recognized by the researcher, results of this study should not be used to make generalizing claims about all early childhood education teachers and classrooms.

Implications for Further Research and Teacher Preparation Programs

Teacher interviews revealed that teacher preparation programs focused on preparing general classroom teachers to integrate the arts need to be in place to help support educator understanding of the potential values and also the potential applications. An increased advocacy for the importance of arts in early childhood education will also allow arts integration to be more supported throughout educational curriculum.

Special area teachers revealed that students' experiences in their general classrooms don't frequently influence their performance in related special area courses because the art activities are not a large enough focus in the general classroom. Implications for teacher preparation programs include providing education and support for cross-curricular lesson planning opportunities where general area teachers and special area teachers can design and collaborate on lessons that support students' performance in both courses.

Implications for further research include an improved sample of participants for teacher interviews. To obtain more meaningful results, the researcher suggests conducting interviews

with teachers from a variety of schools across the United States. A larger sample will produce data that researchers can analyze in the context of general demographic information. It would also allow researchers to make more generalized claims about the majority of early childhood education teachers.

Conclusion

Many teachers currently practicing in the field of Early Childhood can recognize and identify the benefits produced by arts integration in their classroom. Their experiences support many of the research findings regarding fine arts integration. While the value is recognized, a lack of preservice education and preparation programs focus on art integration leaves many teachers feeling as though there is a limited understanding of the full potential of an art integrated classroom. The results of the study suggest that more research should be conducted on the influence of preservice education on teachers' ability and choice to integrate the fine arts into their classroom.

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Appendix A: Interview Materials

Sample Social Media Solicitation:

Hello, I am looking for teachers of special area courses relating to fine arts or general education teachers in Early Childhood Education. If you are interested and willing to participate in an interview or are willing to share this information with someone who is, please continue reading.

I am Emily Flach, an Early Childhood Education student at Elizabethtown College. As part of my undergraduate research at Elizabethtown College and in conjunction with my Honors in the Discipline of Education Senior Research Project, I am conducting a study titled: Fine Arts Integration in Early Childhood Education Classrooms. The purpose of this study is to define the impact of the fine arts in all classrooms regardless of subject. This research will explore the influence of art integration on students and how fine arts can be effectively integrated to enhance a student's learning experience.

As a portion of my research, I will be conducting interviews with Early childhood teachers in both general and special area classrooms to answer questions on art integration. Interviews will occur through video or phone calls and will be recorded. The privacy of all participants will be respected, and no identifying information will be disclosed. There are no associated risks with participation in this study.

If you are interested, please email me, Emily Flach, at flache@etown.edu. You will be provided with more information upon reaching out and are welcome to ask any questions prior to or following your agreement to participate. Participation is voluntary and if at any moment you are no longer interested in participation, you may remove yourself from the interview at no penalty.

Questions	General Classroom Teacher Only	Special Area Teacher Only
What is art integration?	How regularly do you use art integration?	How do you feel the arts can be used in a general classroom?
Do you think it is important to incorporate the arts into core subjects? Why?	In what ways have you used art integration?	Do you think heavier exposure to the arts during daily instruction benefits student performance in your class?
What benefits do you feel the fine arts provide students?	Do you feel your preservice education prepared you to successfully integrate the arts into your classroom?	Do you think your class helps provide students with a foundation in the arts that can help them be successful in art integration activities? How so?

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent- Participant's

Consent Form

Title of Research: Fine Arts Integration in Early Childhood Education Classrooms

Principal Investigator(s): Emily Flach

Purpose of Research:

The purpose of this study is to define the impact of the fine arts' in all classrooms regardless of subject. This research will explore the influence of art integration on students and how fine arts can be effectively integrated to enhance a student's learning experience.

Procedures:

Early childhood teachers in both general and special area classrooms will be interviewed to answer questions on arts integration. Teachers will be selected from a convenience sample. General classroom teachers will be asked how and to what extent they have integrated arts into their classroom before. They will be asked additional questions on the value they see in arts integration and how they feel it affects the learning experiences in their classroom. Special area teachers, such as art and music teachers, will be asked questions on how they feel their content can be used and incorporated in a general classroom. Interviews will most likely occur through video or phone calls and will be recorded. Information will be analyzed for patterns and connections to current literature and research.

Risks and Discomforts

I understand that no risks or discomforts are anticipated from my participation in this study.

Benefits

I will receive no benefits from being in this study.

Compensation

I understand that I will not receive any compensation for participating in this study.

Confidentiality

The information gathered during this study will remain confidential with all records to be kept private and locked in a file during the study. Only the researchers listed on this form will have access to the study data and information. The results of the research will be published in the form of an undergraduate paper and may be published in a professional journal or presented at professional meetings. In any report or publication, the researcher will not provide any information that would make it possible to identify me.

Withdrawal without Prejudice

My participation in this study is strictly voluntary; refusal to participate will involve no penalty. If I initially decide to participate, I am still free to withdraw at any time.

Contacts and Questions

If I have any questions concerning the research project, I may contact Emily Flach at flache@etown.edu or 410-350-6080 or her Faculty Mentor Dr. Shannon Haley-Mize at mizes@etown.edu. Should I have any questions about my participant rights involved in this research I may contact Dr. Susan Mapp, Elizabethtown College Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness and Innovation, at mapps@etown.edu or 717-361-3776.

Statement of Consent:

- I am 18 years of age or older.
- I have read the above information. I have asked questions and received answers. My organization is willing to participate in this study.
- A copy of this consent form has been provided to me.

Participant Signature _____ Date _____

Investigator Signature _____ Date _____