

# **ART, MUSIC, and STORY AT WOODS CHARTER SCHOOL**

## **An Exploration of A/r/tography Methods**

by

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Over the course of the 2009-2010 school year, I worked with my 8<sup>th</sup> grade art students to implement a series of projects using an interdisciplinary approach within the art classroom. The main thrust of the project was the creation of a children's book with a focus on art history using an interdisciplinary approach. Students initially explored different artists and art movements to narrow the subject for a story. Through that process, students created large scale works based on those artists' styles, illustrated possible characters for a children's story book, and brainstormed different story themes and ideas. These projects were conducted in a series of individual projects and group work. Once the theme and plot had been selected for the story, students began illustrating and refining the story. Music and a performance were created to accompany the book. This project culminated with a final performance of the book for the entire middle school. Once the entire project was complete, questionnaires and focus groups assessed the impact of these projects. The students benefitted from the various projects because they were able to employ individual talents and interests to different parts of the

projects. The students' reflections and feedback indicated that they valued the creative aspects of the project and the ability to collaborate with each other. The students worked well together, focusing on the strengths of each group member. They also appreciated being able to take turns working within the group, sharing the creative input, and taking responsibility for quality control of each artwork during the project. This project demonstrated that interdisciplinary instruction utilizing story, art, music and performance can be powerful tools to promote group learning in education. By promoting these types of interdisciplinary approaches, an educator can increase participation, engagement, and enthusiasm in students.



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An Exploration of A/r/tography Methods

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MAEd

by

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## **Chapter 1: The Aim of the Research and Introduction to the Problem**

The aim of the research was to attempt to combine a variety of disciplines (interdisciplinary projects) in the art class room to enhance the overall learning experience and also to assess the impact of implementing such a project. The different disciplines included: art history, writing a children's story, illustrating that story, creating a piece of music inspired by the story, and develop a stage performance of this story. The project included large scale and small scale artworks, group and individual activities, story development, educational content about the history of the Louvre and several of the artworks displayed there, song writing, dramatic interpretation, and visual arts. This project was developed to demonstrate that interdisciplinary instruction utilizing story, art, music and performance can be powerful tools to promote group learning in arts education, in both art history content and artistic creation. The research was to promote and evaluate creativity and collaboration within the art classroom under these conditions.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

Writing and illustrating a children's book as part of a curriculum has been used to educate, inspire, and motivate students. Teachers in a variety of subject areas have attempted these kinds of projects using an interdisciplinary approach in an effort to make the curriculum more exciting and engaging. Incorporating picture books in the math classroom has great potential for students to make powerful connections (Shatzer, 2008). Shatzer found that when she introduced picture books in math class there was an overwhelmingly positive response. The students could instantly relate to the books and wanted to use their own books to make connections to math. The use of picture books can provide "meaningful context for children to communicate mathematically, support learners in reasoning mathematically, and explore a variety of mathematical topics" (Whitin & Wilde, 1992, p. 4).

Standifer (2006) developed a picture book to inspire young women to pursue math and science. Another excellent example of this can be seen in Hellman's (2003) research in the use of picture books as a means of deeper learning and understanding. Hellman demonstrated that picture books were an excellent way to teach creative expression and aspects of two dimensional representations. Art educators have also learned that children's books can be used to teach about art history and artists' lives (Mitchell, 1995; Mitchell & Nelms, 1992).

There is also a connection between picture books and music education. Jacobi-Karna compiled a list of children's books that had a connection to music (Jacobi-Karna, 1995). These type of books aid in illustrating concepts such as rhythm, refrain, sound

effects, and timbre. Jacobi-Karna goes farther to state these stories can even be dramatized by the students, providing an enhanced learning experience.

These types of picture books have been developed with an interdisciplinary approach. Interdisciplinary education can be defined as, ‘involving two or more academic, scientific, or artistic disciplines’ (Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, 1988, p. 630). In 1998, Ulbricht carried out research which considered interdisciplinary methods in education to be extremely valuable. Her position is that with the increased interdependence of global economies, technologies, and populations, new problems will arise which call for interdisciplinary solutions (Ulbricht, 1998). There are research applications of incorporating an interdisciplinary approach to art education as well. Suraco (2006) identifies various teaching strategies including psychological approaches, use of question inquiry, and teacher collaboration to implement interdisciplinary lessons in art education.

In addition, writing and art have been linked in several studies. Carroll (2003) found that drawing (e.g., symbols), which children innately have a desire to do, enables pre-writing, brainstorming, fosters further writing, as well as the ability to develop connections between the images and words. As a result, Carroll suggests implementing these techniques for middle- and high-school students. Caldwell and Moore (1991) compared two forms of planning activities, drawing versus discussion as a preliminary activity for narrative writing and found that drawing can be effective and potentially more successful than traditional planning activities like discussion.

Trent and Riley did research which involved using art in a variety of ways across the curriculum (Trent & Riley, 2009). The idea was to not have a specific time set aside

for art but rather to incorporate the arts in other subject areas. This research shows the value of an interdisciplinary approach. The authors found that this type of learning led to positive results which included: higher levels of engagement and enjoyment, creating stronger personal connection, and increased collaboration among teachers and students. One challenge the authors noted is that all teachers would have to receive proper arts training.

An example of this type of training was conducted by researchers who documented a curriculum integration training program which highlighted the idea of incorporating an interdisciplinary approach (Zehava, Maiselman, & Inbar, 2007). Teachers were trained to integrate art, literature, and technology. Their position is that the arts should not be taught as an isolated subject but as part of the entire curriculum.

Lorimore discussed the issue of using an interdisciplinary approach in arts education (Lorimore, 2009). Her research points to enhanced learning in meaningful ways by combining different elements of visual arts, music, dance, and drama. Others have made similar conclusions about interdisciplinary education and have concluded that the “development of critical thinking, analytical thinking, and problem-solving skills are integral components of interdisciplinary arts experiences” (Longley, 1999; Stevenson & Deasy, 2005, p.10).

In addition, interdisciplinary approaches, particularly writing and images, can be used in Arts Based Educational Research (ABER) in the classroom. In ABER, the arts are primarily used as a means of questioning (Eisner & Barone, 1997). According to Barone (2008), Eisner’s arts-based research style now has its legacy in alternative methods and approaches such as aesthetically-based research, a/r/tography, arts-inspired

research, and arts practice as research. ABER is an extremely versatile research method that can adapt to almost any qualitative method (Smithbell 2010).

The forms ABER can take are diverse: performance, film, painting, poetry, or sculpture. Virtually any creative approach can conform to this type of research. Barone's position is that ABER is not a substitute for quantitative or qualitative methodology but rather an alternative approach for researchers to extend their perception and perspective (2006). A good example of ABER, in the form of narrative inquiry, can be seen in the research of Quinn and Calkin (2008). The two educators "discuss how our understanding and use of Research-Based Arts (RBA) compares and contrasts with Barone and Eisner's seven features of ABER" (p.2) through a dialogue in words and images. Sullivan (2005) also explored the area of visual arts and artistic inquiry as a form of research.

A/r/tography, a collective book of twelve research contributions, is another research method available to teachers doing educational research. A/r/tography suggests that images and art can be powerful means of inquiry (Irwin & Cosson, 2004).

A/r/tography refers to inquiry through any type of art making process combined with writing that can be used to enhance connections which offers more meaning.

Meyer describes A/r/tography as a living inquiry (2010). The focus of a/r/t/ography is on the immediate participation in daily life, reflecting on these daily events, and trying to make sense of it through art. As part of the curriculum, A/r/tography can be viewed as "shared investigations of narratives, histories, and realities. In essence, this approach allows for the students to really delve deeper into "place, language, time, and self/other" (p.86). In a course such as this, students should constantly be taking field notes and these field notes will become the content of the class.

These field notes can take many forms: poems, drawings, performances, and original musical compositions.

An example of this type of a/r/tographical approach can be seen in the research of Lincoln (2003). Lincoln created a performance script surrounding the events and impact of 9/11. This script was created with the intention of facilitating a structured conversation about living in a post 9/11 world. Music is another area where an a/r/tographic form of an interdisciplinary approach can be used. Gouzouasis (2007) suggests that this approach can offer both the flexibility of improvising challenging chord progressions and exploring classical music forms that provide research discoveries.

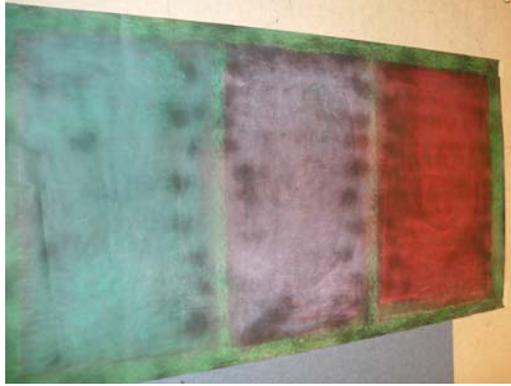
As described, ABER and a/r/tographic approaches have been well-studied. Based on these approaches, the purpose of this research project was to understand whether an art curriculum incorporating interdisciplinary instruction of story, music, illustration, and performance elements can be utilized effectively to promote a meaningful learning experience for students in the art classroom.

### Chapter 3: Methods

During the 2009-2010 school years, two separate classes of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students were selected to participate in this project. These students were selected due to previous learning while in 7<sup>th</sup> grade of a mixed media illustrative style, which could aid them in this project. These 8<sup>th</sup> grade students were instructed to work on a project that combined story, art, music, and performance. Approval from the University of East Carolina University and Medical Center Institutional Review Board Office was received for this project (Appendices A and B).

I thought this would be the right group to work with due to previous experience with these students in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. During their 7<sup>th</sup> grade year, I had instructed them on a particular mixed media illustrative style. The style followed a step-by-step process of layering watercolors and colored pencil. The themes surrounding the construction aspects of the project (apply watercolor to the largest areas in a light wash, followed by light shading with a darker colored pencil in the same area, etc.) centered on mainly two artists Matisse and Rouault. We discussed the flattened and distorted sense of space in Matisse's *The Red Studio*. We also discussed the heavily outlined portraits of Rouault. This project at the end of 7<sup>th</sup> grade set the stage for the beginning of their 8<sup>th</sup> grade year and work on this thesis project.

I wanted to tie in my current 8<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum as the educational theme of the story. The work of the Abstract Expressionists really seems to grab their attention especially when we attempt to recreate the works of Jackson Pollock, Lee Krasner, and Marc Rothko.



Figures 1 and 2. Student recreations using 2 (left) and 3 colors (right) based on Rothko's style



Figures 3 and 4: Student recreations of Krasner's torn paper paintings (left) and detail (right)

The first step was to come up with a story idea. I had them form small groups of three or four and brainstorm original story ideas for a children's book. We talked about their favorite books when they were younger. What were the ideas common among them? They began to focus on *'Alice in Wonderland'* type themes, a story where the main character(s) somehow interacts with the famous artworks or artists; or they went in the direction of *'Night at the Museum'*, in a story where the artworks come to life. I tried to steer the groups away from such obvious themes, but I held back. At the end of this brainstorming session I opened the floor for the discussion of each group's best idea.

They all liked the two previously mentioned themes, which I thought were not original ideas.

Next I switched directions and have each student brainstorm on just creating an individual character. Who is he or she? What does (s)he like to do?, Details like age and hair color that would describe the person. I apparently did not make that clear because I received a vending machine as a main character. The next step was to recreate this written description into an illustrated interpretation. Each student was given a sheet of watercolor paper, watercolor set, and an assortment of colored pencils. After the students completed the character artwork, following the illustrative style/approach, each student traded art with another student. I had the students create their own drawing/watercolor based on another students' character. We repeated this process two more times. When finished, each student had their original artwork and three other artworks based on other student's artworks.



Figures 5, 6, and 7 (left to right). Student depictions of main character of story

Both classes were interested in the large, ominous, all-encompassing works of Rothko. I went with the enthusiasm and began to create large scale Rothko-esque pieces

which were to be used in the performance. In each class, I divided them up into three groups of 5 and one group of 6. The idea was to create four large scale artworks inspired by Rothko's approach. I rolled long black and brown paper about 10 feet long and 4 feet wide. Instead of using paint I decided to use chalk pastels instead. The idea was to give them the experience of subtly layering the edges of floating rectangles. I gave each class 45 minutes to create a Rothko. They had to choose three colors for the rectangles and an additional color for the surround. In most groups, each person took an individual color and began creating the rectangle in their chosen color. Other groups covered the entire surface with the surround color before creating the colored rectangles on top. At the end of class we took the pieces outside and sprayed them with fixative.

I also attempted an additional project with one of the groups. I had previously discussed the works and process of artist, Lee Krasner. Krasner was known for her unusual method of recombining paintings. She would cut up old unwanted painting and recombine them on a new canvas in a new way. I laid out a ten foot long sheet of white paper and had the students use chalk pastels to draw whatever they wanted on this paper. The table I was using was long and students were able to access both sides of the table at the same time. All students were able to participate at once. Frantic sketching and feverish smudging went on for about fifteen minutes. We took this long paper outside and sprayed with fixative. We brought the paper back into the classroom and proceeded to shred it. The students tore large chunks of the drawing off and tore those into smaller pieces. When the destruction was over, I brought out a smaller piece of brown paper. I was about 6 feet in length. The class then proceeded to recombine the old shredded

artwork on the new surface. This piece of art was also created with the intent of using in the final performance.

It was at this point that I realized that we had all of these great props for a performance that had no story. I discussed this fact with the class. We talked about the characters and the large scale artwork and how they could relate to a children's story. Finally I had to step in with a simple, coherent story idea to start as a jumping off point. Basically I began telling them about an experience I had the previous summer on a trip to the U.K.

My wife was traveling for business to London for week. We decided that I would fly over at the end of that week and stay for an additional week. During that week in London we had made plans to travel to Paris for a day trip. During that daytrip one of our stops was the Louvre, of course. The only problem was that we couldn't spend much time at any particular place if we wanted to see all of Paris in a day, which is where the story idea begins.



Figures 8 and 9. Student groups working on sketches that would become watercolor illustrations

The new educational content of the book would be the history of the Louvre and facts about three famous artworks contained within. My class liked the overall idea for a story theme. We decided to revisit the characters we had created earlier in the year. I laid all of them out on the table, placing all similar characters together. There were several characters in each class that were drawn by others more frequently and those were chosen. Eventually we ended up deciding on one particular main character for the story.

This story would be a children's book where the theme, plot, characters, and setting would be created together as a class. In addition, students were instructed to support the story by creating illustrations as well as developing a stage performance accompanied by music, all performed by the students. Each class was split into five smaller self-selected working groups. The goal of each group was to work together to design, draw, and watercolor a page of the story.



Figure 10. Students working in groups to create watercolor illustrations of the story

The music was created and rehearsed by students simultaneously. Once they had completed the illustrations and the music was ready to be performed, rehearsals were conducted. Following the storybook creation and performance, the students were required to reflect on their learnings in a reflection paper. In addition, students participated in two focus groups to discuss two questions that were assigned to them the day before. This discussion guide is presented in Appendix C. The focus groups were recorded for ease in summarizing the findings and a DVD was created.

## Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

### *Development of the Story & Illustrations*

Originally, small groups of students brainstormed story ideas for the children's book; however, none of these could easily be developed into a story. As a result, the students were guided on the story setting and were asked to consider the Louvre Museum in Paris, France. The students embraced this setting and proceeded to incorporate the history and architecture of the Louvre and its famous artworks (A Guide to the Louvre, 2005).



Figure 11. Student illustration of front cover of book



Figure 12. Students working with reference picture (Figure 13, below) to create watercolor illustration for book

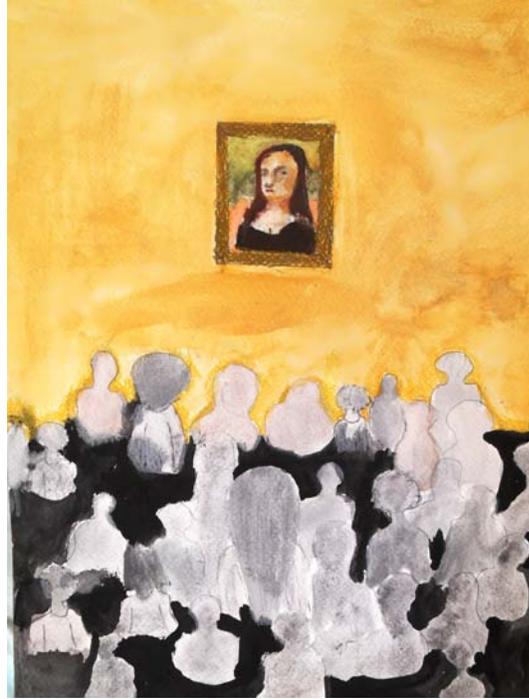


Figures 13 and 14 (left to right). Reference picture of Louvre entrance and student illustration

The students began developing the main characters for the story through drawing various characters and choosing one that the class agreed upon. The plot of the story is based on a girl visiting the Louvre with her father and depicts their tour of the famous artworks, presented in Appendix D. There were two main characters, the Girl and her Father, with several supporting characters including the crowd at the Museum, the students in the classroom, as well as three artworks - *Mona Lisa*, *Nike of Samothrace*, and the *Venus De Milo*.



Figure 15. Students working with reference picture, *Mona Lisa* (Figure 16, below) to create watercolor illustration for book



Figures 16 and 17 (left to right). Reference picture of *Mona Lisa* and student illustration



Figure 18. Students working with reference picture, *Nike of Samothrace* (Figure 19, below) to create watercolor illustration for book



Figures 19 and 20 (left to right). Reference picture of *Nike of Samothrace* and student illustration



Figure 21. Students working with reference picture, *Venus De Milo* (Figure 22, below) to create watercolor illustration for book



Figures 22 and 23 (left to right). Reference picture of *Venus De Milo* and student illustration

Each five-student group was responsible for at least one illustration/page of the children's book. The class together began to flesh out ideas for each illustration. The students had access to several pictures of the Louvre and related artworks from which to base their illustrations. Each group was able to choose the illustration and corresponding text that they would develop. The illustrations were developed in a consistent, guided manner by first creating a light sketch of the overall composition; followed by a light wash of watercolor in the largest areas, then medium-sized areas, and finally smallest areas with drying time incorporated. Finally, all areas were filled in with corresponding colored pencil. The final story called '*Five Minutes in the Louvre*' consisted of 10 pages of text and illustrations found in Appendix E.



Figure 24. Students working on prop, frame for *Mona Lisa*, for performance

### ***The Performance***

The performance was created to be a direct reflection of the story. The students reviewed the book and identified characters and dialogue, scenes and settings, as well as stage direction to develop the performance. The performance, comprised of five scenes, is a dramatic interpretation of the events depicted in the children’s story. There are three speaking parts, the Girl, the Father, and the Narrator. Minimal props were utilized for the performance. One group designed and painted a frame to be used by the student portraying the *Mona Lisa*. Each 8<sup>th</sup> grade class met one day per week to rehearse. Appendices F and G provide the lines as well as the scenes and stage direction,

respectively. The performance can be viewed at <http://vimeo.com/24489496> (password: durham\_thesis).

### *The Music*

The musical score was intended to accompany the stage performance and to reflect the mood of the book. Four students were interested in participating in playing the instruments and the musical ensemble was composed of lead guitar, rhythm guitar, bass and percussion.



Figure 25. Students practicing song for performance

I also participated in the ensemble as a second rhythm guitar and conductor. The students were instructed to use a basic chord structure (mainly C major and G major with a bridge in E minor). The song consisted of three main parts: verse, chorus, and bridge, which cycle throughout the song. In addition to the four players, the entire class also got involved by snapping their fingers along with the music.

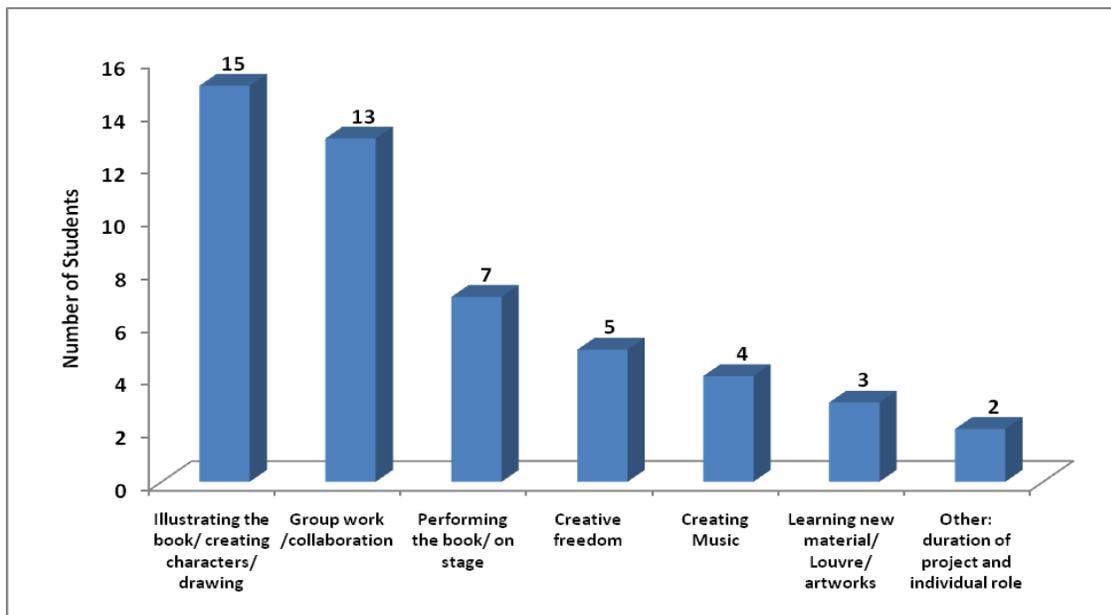
### ***Focus Groups***

Following the completion of the story and performance, 42 students provided feedback on the project through focus groups. Students were asked to state their favorite part of the project, presented in Table 1. For the largest percentage of students (15 out of 42), illustrating the story and the creation and visual design of the character were the most engaging and fulfilling. The second largest percentage of students (13 out of 42) enjoyed the collaboration with others. They enjoyed the process of initially self-selecting their small working groups then coming together as an entire class to create and participate in a live performance of the book with accompanying music. Many of the projects the class undertook regarding this research were done in small groups: brainstorming sessions, illustration, music, and story development.

The third largest percentage of students (7 out of 42) said that participating in the production and performance of the book in front of other students was their favorite part. These students were most engaged when acting or performing. They said that they had never performed on stage as an entire class before. These students also enjoyed that the performance was entertaining as well as informative to an audience. The fourth largest group of students (5 out of 42) said their favorite part was the creative freedom. These students felt that the ability to adapt the project as needed was rewarding and interesting. They specifically cited our early attempts to link the initial art history curriculum to the children's story we were writing, which did not work so we were able to change course. However, art history remained a theme through the famous art pieces which were focused upon in their final story.

The fifth largest group of students (4 out of 42) enjoyed creation of the music, particularly for those students who performed the music. The sixth largest group of students (3 out of 42) enjoyed studying about the Louvre and the relating artworks. Several of these students were also taking French at the time and this directly related to their French class curriculum. The remaining students' favorite aspects of the project included: the long duration of the projects and individual roles assigned for the performance (characters with speaking roles, narrator, and stage director).

*Table 1. Focus Group Results: Student Rankings of Meaningful Elements*

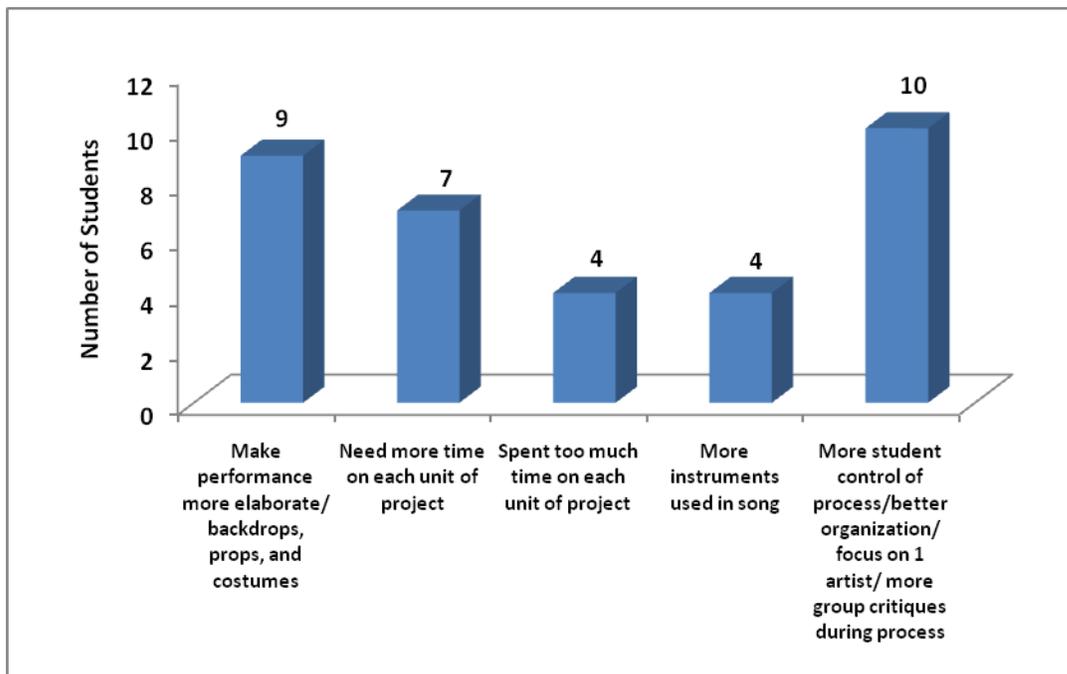


Note: Overlapping response categories

When asked to state the areas for improvement, the majority of students (9 out of 42) remarked that they wanted to make the performance more elaborate in various ways including, enhanced backdrops for setting, costumes for the actors, and props to make the artworks more realistic. The second largest group (7 out of 42) commented that they

wanted more time to develop their ideas, particularly in developing the story, illustrations, and rehearsal for the performance. The third largest group (4 out of 42) thought that the whole project took too long and the scope was too broad. They would have preferred the project to be completed within nine weeks or a semester. For the students participating in the musical performance (4 out of 42), they commented that other different types of instruments should be incorporated. Other suggestions by several students (10 out of 42) were that other types of art be included (e.g., sculpture, large scale artwork), that students should have more control of the process, and better organization.

*Table 2. Focus Group Results: Student Rankings for Areas of Improvement*



Note: Some missing/incomplete responses.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion, Implications, and New Directions**

This project demonstrated that interdisciplinary instruction utilizing story, art, art history, music and performance can be powerful tools to promote group learning in education. Woods Charter School's middle school curriculum is based on Hirsch's (1988) ideas of cultural literacy which provided the framework and freedom to explore non-traditional approaches as demonstrated by this project. The students' reflections and feedback indicated that they valued the creative aspects of the project and the ability to collaborate with each other. The students worked well together, focusing on the strengths of each group member. They also appreciated being able to take turns working within the group, sharing the creative input, and taking responsibility for quality control of each artwork during the project.

Students seemed to enjoy the art aspects of the project the most, which may reflect the nature of the class with the emphasis on art. Perhaps involving educators from other disciplines may emphasize the story writing and dramatic performance aspects of the project. Students worked well together when rehearsing for the performance. They seemed to really enjoy being on the stage together. The collectiveness on stage seemed to relieve the pressure for those students who had lines to speak.

The series of student illustrations also inspired my own art. I worked on two paintings that expressed my interest in artwork I saw while at the Louvre. The first piece is of the *Nike of Samothrace*. In my painting I wanted to focus on the throngs of people surrounding the great statue. I was impressed not only by the statue but also its placement in the Louvre. As you descend a great staircase you approach another which

opens into a large expansive room where the Nike is housed. From the descending staircase you can see the Nike from a distance.



Figure 26. My depiction of Nike of Samothrace and surrounding crowd

The Nike rises well above the stairs and the huge crowd of people viewing the statue are going up and down the stairs. I paused while descending to look upon the scene. The people almost lost their shape and became more of an ocean of faceless shapes floating and bobbing around the statue. I tried to represent this in my painting. I painted the statue and the room where she stands in somewhat realistic colors and shape. The people I represented in a geometric and simplified manner. Most of the colors are dark and muted. The shapes rise and fall in waves advancing and receding from the Nike. The figures almost begin to become a solid mass in places. I purposefully did not paint in any faces or distinguishing details in the figures save a few. I thought of the crowds as an ocean moving as a unit lapping against the *Nike of Samothrace*.

The second piece I created was from a photo I took of the *Venus de Milo*. This larger than life representation of a female also rose above the crowds of people. The difference is it was closer to the ground therefore making it a little more intimate than the Nike. I wanted to represent the Venus in a sketchy painterly style where brush strokes were visible. The Venus in my painting is much less solid than the wall that surrounds her. The reason I did this was to show the movement and the almost transient quality of the statue. The Venus seems like she could almost continue her stride and leave the permanence of the room where she stands. I exaggerated the colors of the marble walls so that the Venus would stand in stark contrast. I allowed the canvas to show through within the shape of the Venus. This quality also adds the almost supernatural quality the statue exudes. I was inspired to create both the Nike and Venus based on the enthusiasm and creativity of the students.



Figure 27. My depiction of Venus De Milo

Although the students came away with the perspective of teamwork, collaboration, and creativity, there are several areas that could be improved to make this project more effective for students. A primary limitation was the amount of time dedicated to this project. Each 8<sup>th</sup> grade class meets twice a week for fifty minutes. Due to the evolving nature of this project, more time may be needed to cultivate some of the creative aspects and may benefit from an iterative process. For example, rehearsing the lines and deciding on stage direction required much more time than was allotted. The students who were performing roles required more time to prepare themselves. The scale of the project as a whole was too large in the limited time available in the school year. The scope and scale of this project really required longer spans of time to complete it most efficiently and effectively.

In addition, another consideration is to find the appropriate balance in content for the project, particularly when introducing new areas of knowledge. It may have worked more efficiently to either assign a story to the students or have the students generate ideas for homework rather than developing ideas together during class time. Based on the learnings from this project, a simple, straightforward story idea was best implemented by the students. Choosing a simple story idea may not reflect all aspects of complex academic curriculum, but it may allow students to focus on the process for implementing the story (i.e. collaboration, communication, and teamwork).

Another important consideration is the difficulty in applying the varying aspects of creativity and emphasis in the form of story writing, illustrating artwork, developing a stage performance, and accompanying music within this project. To ensure that varying creative aspects of the project are given equal weight, there is benefit in collaborating

with teachers from other departments and potentially even alignment of curricula to accommodate this kind of cross-departmental learning.

Overall, utilizing an interdisciplinary approach within this project was effective in enhancing creativity, and fostering specific behavioral attributes in students such as collaboration, teamwork, and communication. These are the types of skills required in college, graduate education, and careers. These skills need to be more consistently promoted within the school curricula and perhaps projects such as these are one approach to accomplishing this goal.

Based on the research conducted, interdisciplinary collaboration should promote student learning and development. For example, the English teacher could aid in story development, history teacher in content development, drama teacher in stage performance, and music teacher in musical accompaniment. Alternatively, if there are not adequate amounts of resources, then potentially high school age students may also play a role in helping to execute a project like this in combination with, or under the direction of, teachers. With the help of teachers and older students, this project could have incorporated more of the school community.

During the current school year, I have implemented a version of this children's book project with my current 8<sup>th</sup> grade class that reflects the successful elements of the 2009-2010 project. These elements were writing and illustration of the children's book with a focus on group work. As a result, the current project involves creating a children's story with illustrations in small groups. Each individual group wanted to create their own story, and between the two 8<sup>th</sup> grade classes I had ten groups which yielded ten books. There was a simplified performance element which involved the groups reading aloud the

story to the rest of the class. In contrast to the previous year, there was no shortage of creative book ideas.

Future design of these types of school-based projects may need to consider middle-school aged groups, sequencing of the aspects of the project (e.g., create performance before illustrations or vice versa), simple stories with ease of implementation, adequate time to execute the project, and collaboration among relevant departments within the school. By promoting these types of interdisciplinary approaches, an educator can increase participation, engagement, and enthusiasm in students.

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**APPENDICES A - G**

## Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter



### EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board Office  
1L-09 Brody Medical Sciences Building • 600 Moye Boulevard • Greenville, NC 27834  
Office 252-744-2914 • Fax 252-744-2284 • [www.ecu.edu/irb](http://www.ecu.edu/irb)

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**Date:** September 13, 2010

**Principal Investigator:** Derrick Brett Durham, MAEd. Student  
**Dept./Ctr./Institute:** Art Education  
**Mailstop or Address:** School of Art & Design, ECU

**RE:** Exempt Certification *KK*  
**UMCIRB#** 10-0469  
**Funding Source:** Unfunded

**Title:** "Art, Story, Music at Woods Charter School"

Dear Derrick Brett Durham:

On 9.9.10, the University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board (UMCIRB) determined that your research meets ECU requirements and federal exemption criterion #1 which includes research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.

It is your responsibility to ensure that this research is conducted in the manner reported in your Internal Processing Form and Protocol, as well as being consistent with the ethical principles of the Belmont Report and your profession.

This research study does not require any additional interaction with the UMCIRB unless there are proposed changes to this study. Any change, prior to implementing that change, must be submitted to the UMCIRB for review and approval. The UMCIRB will determine if the change impacts the eligibility of the research for exempt status. If more substantive review is required, you will be notified within five business days.

The UMCIRB Office will hold your exemption application for a period of five years from the date of this letter. If you wish to continue this protocol beyond this period, you will need to submit an Exemption Certification Request at least 30 days before the end of the five year period.

Sincerely,

Chairperson, University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board

Attachments:

- Parental Permission Form (received dated 9.9.10)

Cc: Robert Quinn, PhD

## Appendix B: Informed Consent/Permission Letter

### Parental Consent for Using Research Data

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I'm presently working on my Master of Arts in Art Education at East Carolina University. As part of my degree requirements, I am planning an educational research project to take place during the 2010-2011 school year that will help me to learn more about educating students in visual arts. This project will involve 8<sup>th</sup> grade students collaborating on writing and illustrating a children's book and performing this story for other middle school students. The fundamental goal of this research study is to enrich the art curriculum through story, art, music, and performance and to ultimately determine the impact of implementing this project in the arts program.

As part of this research project, your child will participate in a series of projects and activities over the school year that will allow me to study the impact of an interdisciplinary approach in the art classroom. As this study is for educational research purposes only, the results of each activity **will not** affect your child's grade.

I am requesting permission from you to use your child's data (i.e. **artwork, responses to survey**) in my research study. Please understand that your permission is entirely voluntary.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at school at 919-969-8353 or by emailing me at bdurham@woodscharter.org. If you have any questions about the rights of your child as a research participant, you may contact *The University and Medical Center Institutional Review Board* at 252-744-2914.

Please detach and return the form below by 10/08/2010. Thank you for your interest in my educational research study.

**Derrick Brett Durham**  
Researcher/Investigator

As the parent or guardian of \_\_\_\_\_,  
(write your child's name)

- I grant my permission for Mr. Durham to use my child's data in his educational research project regarding art, story, and music. I voluntarily consent to Mr. Durham using any of the data gathered about my student in his study. I fully understand that the data will not affect my child's grade, will be kept completely confidential, and will be used only for the purposes of his research study.
- I do NOT grant my permission for Mr. Durham to use my child's data in his educational research project regarding art, story, and music.

Signature of \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian:

UMCIRB  
APPROVED  
FROM 9.9.10  
TO no expiration

## **Appendix C: Student Reflection of Children's Book Project**

Throughout this school year 2009-2010 we have worked on a class project which included: **story, illustration, music and performance**. Now that this project is coming to a close, I would like you to reflect on the experience as a whole.

Your assignment is to write a **reflection paper** based on your experience in creating this project. Discuss briefly your overall impression of this experience. Remember we started this project early in the year, so think about all the aspects we covered during this project. We created illustrations for the main characters, developed a story, illustrated the story, composed a piece of music, and acted/directed/participated in a performance based on the story. Answer the following questions completely. Be sure to give examples to support your answers. Please write a **one paged reflection** based on the questions below.

- 1. What was your favorite part of this project? Why?**
- 2. If we could do this project over again, what do you think we could do better? How?**

**Note: DVD of two focus groups attached**

## **Appendix D: *'Five Minutes in the Louvre'* Plot**

1. The story begins with the main character discussing his/her favorite museum in the world The Louvre. ( Illustration: person imagining different aspects of the museum)
2. Brief history of the Louvre. List a few basic facts. (Illustration: scene of the Louvre)
3. The main character fleshes out the story: She is accompanying her Father on a business trip with father to Europe/London. They plan to visit Paris for the day. (Illustrations: snapshot montage of trip/ a. Plane flight b. London/ character is bored c. Train to Paris d. Eiffel tower e. Notre Dame)
4. Finally they arrive at the Louvre (illustration: at the entrance to the Louvre in a rush)
5. The next few scenes show 3 different art works.
6. (illustration: viewing the Mona Lisa)
7. (Illustration: The Venus Di Milo)
8. (Illustration: The Nike of Samothrace)
9. Museum closes (illustration: leaving the Louvre )
10. Returning home on plane (illustration: character on plane looking at all the pictures she took at the Louvre)
11. Back at home/ in school telling the class about the adventure. (illustration: up in front of class)

**Appendix E: *'Five Minutes in the Louvre'* Children's Book**

**Note: Powerpoint attached**

## Appendix F: *'Five Minutes in the Louvre'* Lines for Performance

1. "I love Art! I'm constantly inspired by the artwork of the great Masters. The only place you can see these artworks in person is at a museum. I have visited many museums but the ONE museum I really want to see is the Louvre.
2. "The Louvre is located in Paris, France. The place where the Louvre was built is thought to have been the site of a wolf kennel. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century the Louvre's construction was underway. It was originally a fortress to protect Paris from enemy invasion. Later it was used as a palace. The Louvre was officially opened as a public museum on August 10<sup>th</sup> 1793."
3. One day I finally got my wish. My father was going on a business trip to London and asked if I would like to come along. Of course I said yes, but begged him to take a day trip to Paris." In London we saw Big Ben, the Houses of Parliament, the London Eye, the Tower of London, the National Portrait gallery, and Trafalgar Square. London was a lot of fun. But I still wanted to see Paris and more specifically the Louvre.
4. On our last day in London my Father asked, " So you still want to go to Paris?" The plan was to take a quick tour of the city ending at the Louvre. We saw the Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame, The Arch de Triumph, had a great meal, and we were headed to the Louvre. When we finally arrived at the Louvre, I couldn't believe it. The greatest museum in the world was right in front of me. The only problem was that my Father and I had spent so much time sightseeing in Paris, we had lost track of time. The Louvre was closing in 5 minutes!!!!"
5. I had to think fast. What were the three art works I had to see? I've got it! I want to see the Venus de Milo, the Mona Lisa, and the Nike of Samothrace. We raced through the entrance, bought our tickets, and frantically located the first artwork. The Venus De Milo is a larger than life statue. Her pose is relaxed and life-like. She towered above the crowds of people viewing her.
6. Next we hurried through the throngs of people to the Nike of Samothrace. Although the head and arms are missing, the statue has a powerful presents. The statue is so balanced, it appears to be descending and landing lightly upon the pedestal.
7. The final artwork I wanted to see was Leonardo da Vinci's, Mona Lisa. I was shocked by the size. One of the most famous paintings in history and it was so small. You couldn't get very close to it either because it was protected by a sheet of bullet proof glass.
8. That was it. The Louvre was closing and we had to leave. What a great experience this has been!
9. I spent the entire flight home looking at all the picture I had taken and reliving the trip in my mind. What great memories I'll have.
10. When I returned to school my art teacher wanted me to show the class all of my pictures and relay all of my wonderful experiences with the class. Everyone was so jealous.

## **Appendix G: 'Five Minutes in the Louvre' Stage Direction**

### **Scene 1**

Song starts

Girl imagining all the museums she has been to. Large thought bubble shows what is in her head. Girl begins her lines from (p.1). One other student will hold up the thought bubble. As thought bubble rises, girl begins to kneel.

She explains the history of the Louvre.(p.2) Project pics of Louvre on screen, while she speaks.

### **Scene 2**

She discusses the circumstances of her trip. The father comes in and speaks. Show pics of London and Paris. (p.3-4)

### **Scene 3**

Arrival at Louvre. Students who portray artwork step up. Girl explains the situation. Other student will be the crowds at Louvre. (p.5) Travel through the different rooms looking at the 3 pieces. (p.6-7) project actual images of art.

### **Scene 4**

Leaving the Louvre. Girl explains. (p.8) Back on plane thinking about the trip/looking at pics. (p.9)

### **Scene 5**

Class presentation. Girl in front of class discussing her trip. (p.10) Student will act as class. Asking questions, etc...

Song ends.

**Note: DVD of performance created**