

IMPACT OF FINE ARTS INTEGRATION ON THIRD, FOURTH,  
AND FIFTH GRADERS' READING ACHIEVEMENT  
IN AN URBAN MAGNET SCHOOL

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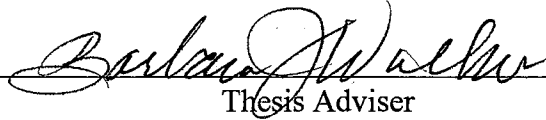
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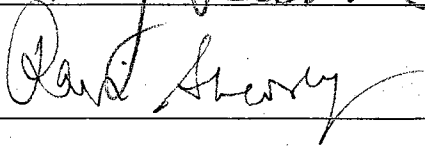
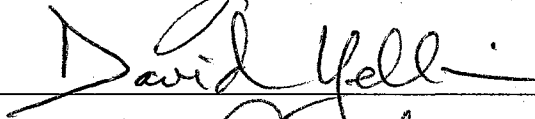
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Urban elementary schools in American have been facing a steady decline in academic scores for minority populations (Allington & Walmsley, 1995). Educators are concerned with the lack of academic progress made by minority students after entering public school. Often, poor or minority children are separated into special tracks if their educational background is not as strong as their classmates. Less rigorous curriculum is offered to students who are placed into these special tracks of learning. Teachers often expect less from inner-city children. In many instances, urban schools are asking these students to complete fewer assignments and on easier levels of academic instruction

The failure of most public schools to teach poor children is a national problem. According to a national report sponsored by the Heritage Foundation (2000), fifty-eight percent of low-income fourth graders cannot read, and 61 percent of low-income eighth graders cannot do basic math. Of the approximate 20 million low-income children in kindergarten through twelfth grade schools, twelve million aren't even learning the most basic skills. No single curriculum or teaching methodology has been identified as being successful in schools with high concentrations of low-income children (Carter, 2000).

As urban schools search for the identification of successful educational practices and school cultures appropriate for urban students, this information may lead to models



that could be used at other schools to improve students' learning (Sleeter, 1991). The traditional educational practices being used are unsuccessful for one third of our students, primarily African American, Native American, and Hispanic students whose drop-out rate is much higher than mainstream American students (McLaren, 1994).

The cycle of low performance in families must be addressed by society to meet the needs of individuals lacking literacy development (Come, 1995). Gemmer and Harris (1987) observed that children who are physically or verbally aggressive in the classroom have a negative impact on the education of all their classmates because the teacher must stop to attend to those needs. Some children come to school without experiences that would help increase their foundation for learning. Each school is isolated and serves a low-income community for students who have low academic achievement (Come, 1995).

This tendency toward higher acts of violence with individuals who have dropped out of school has been linked with low literacy development. Statistics given by Lewis (1996) indicated if prison rates continue to increase, there soon will be more people in prison than in four-year colleges. It is unthinkable to be part of a society that fills its prisons with uneducated men and women, and fails to see the connection between good education and good lives. This cycle must be broken to help urban students be successful in schools (Lewis, 1996). Schools have to find new ways to meet the challenge to help urban students achieve academic success especially in literacy (Come, 1995).

Children raised in low-income families score lower than children from more affluent families on assessments of cognitive development, school achievement, and emotional well being. Children living in persistent poverty appear to be at greater risk for serious academic failure. Children living in poverty may have their potential contribution

to society limited because of low literacy skills. A variety of factors identified as being consistently related to the school achievement children. According to Payne (1988), the parents' education, the family's income, the number of parents in the child's family, the parents' expectations, and characteristics of the child's school are indicators of future success. The classroom teachers are among the vital elements in helping children receive a quality education with adequate literacy skills.

According to Knapp and Shields (1990), the cycle of failure can be broken if educators take steps to minimize the incongruities between school and students' homes. Such steps include developing instructional programs that incorporate the life experiences and skills that students bring to the classroom and at the same time providing students with the skills and strategies they will need to succeed in the larger society. Helping students achieve academic success should be the goal of all teachers from the first day of school.

One response to this dilemma of breaking the cycle of failure or in finding ways to help students achieve, is embodied in the perspectives of Rosenblatt (1978) and Eisner (1999). They believe that aesthetic learning helps students to transform learning into an art form. Particularly important to the present study is reader-response theory. In reader-response theory, a reader brings certain assumptions to a text based on the interpretive strategies he/she has learned in a particular interpretive community. Rosenblatt (1995) (originally published 1938) identifies two methods by which students read. One is the reading for information or efferent reading. The other is the aesthetic reading, which focuses on feelings while reading. Aesthetic reading may help readers make connections between facts more easily when they are engaged in the story. Aesthetic reading evokes

an emotional response from the reader. The purpose of using literature as part of the instructional strategy serves as a vehicle for getting readers to view more than one side of an issue and to develop critical thinking skills (Monhardt & Monhardt, 2000).

Readers shift between different stances in reading: aesthetic and efferent. The importance of their social interaction and broad approaches to response is the basis for what Rosenblatt stated in her framework of the reader's transaction between the reader and the text within a particular context. The reader maintains an active role responding and adopting different stances, either primarily aesthetic, or efferent, depending on the kind of meaning he/she intends to construct. In the aesthetic stance, the cognitive, and affective elements of consciousness – sensations, images, ideas become personally lived through experience as the learner reads (Becker, 1999).

Rosenblatt (1978) explains the difference between the two stances in the following manner:

In the efferent situation, a paraphrase or summary or restatement may be as useful as the original text...But no one can read a poem for you. Accepting an account of someone's reading is analogous to seeking nourishment through having someone else eat your dinner for you and recite the menu . . . The paraphrase does not equal the poem (p. 86).

Becker (1999) explains that the meaning for a text comes from the transaction between the reader and the text within a specific text. It is the reader who maintains an active role in deriving meaning and selects different stances, either primarily aesthetic or efferent, depending on the type of meaning he/she intends to derive. In the aesthetic stance, the reader connects together the “cognitive and affective elements of

consciousness-- sensations, images, feelings, ideas-- into a personally involved poem or story.” In contrast, when adopting an efferent stance the reader focuses on the information he/she wants to carry away from the material. In presenting the differing stances, Rosenblatt does not portray these in conflict. The reader’s responses represent points along a continuum (Becker, 1999). Rosenblatt (1978) presents the role of the reader as having to “learn to handle” stances to written materials as he/she shifts from aesthetic to efferent reading.

Rosenblatt (1978) described how a reader’s response is both individually and socially constructed. This view accounts for multiple and diverse responses within and between readers. A group of students reading a common text will respond differently because of individual feelings, experiences, and knowledge. Historical, social, and cultural aspects of a readers’ identity also influence the meaning of texts so that readers’ responses also vary by group. Many professional resources stress the use of reader response journals. One strong advocate of the reader response journals includes the work of Nancie Atwell (1987). Others, inspired by theories of multiple intelligences and multicultural education, encourage alternative forms of representing readers’ responses such as drama and art (Asselin, 2000).

This aesthetic focus in reading from reader response theory can be enhanced through the arts as a way to help students develop in the area of literacy (Rosenblatt, 1978). Using the aesthetic focus for reading may help urban children to develop an emotion from the aesthetic or engaged experience. One such way to ensure this is through the integration of the arts within a reading curriculum. Through the integration of the arts curriculum, students are instructed in creative, and engaging ways so they can succeed in

the school curriculum. Teaching reading includes using the arts as a way to respond to literature using the senses, the mind, and the emotions creating aesthetic response (York, 1998). Using arts has proven consistently successful with at-risk or Title 1 students who have not learned to read in the classroom through traditional methods (Collett, 1992).

Art education corresponds to the theory that children learn best when they use their minds to solve problems. Eisner's research (1999) on the learning styles of children found that kids learn best when they are active and have choices, and when learning is relevant to their personal lives. Art educators say that those are the things that occur in good arts related classes every day. The arts are no longer confined to a room separated from other classrooms. Instead, it is front and center in every subject taught in the classroom. As teachers and administrations are discovering, integrating the arts into a school's entire curriculum is a smart way to help all students learn and receive a quality education (Black, 1996).

McNeil (1985) maintains the goal of all education in the arts should be the enhancement of basic literacy through integration of the curriculum with the arts such as through dance, music, drama, and the visual arts. Ideas applied to success in school may find the avenue of curriculum integration a foundation for further growth.

#### Statement of the Problem

A steady decline in below-standard scores in reading, math and other basic skills are fueling a movement to return to basics. The traditional educational practices being used are unsuccessful for one third of our students, primarily African Americans, Native

Americans, and Hispanic students whose drop-out rates are much higher than mainstream American students (McLaren, 1994). Urban schools are searching for ways to identify successful educational practices to establish models that could be used at other schools to improve students' reading ability, such as through arts integration (Sleeter, 1991). There is little research on successful models of effective Fine Arts integrated programs in magnet urban schools.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of a fine arts curriculum – consisting of dance, music, drama, and visual arts—on the reading performance of third, fourth, and fifth grade students in one elementary magnet school in Oklahoma. Research has established fairly consistently that the integration of the fine arts across the school curriculum leads to an enhancement of academic performance among middle class students (Beane, 1997; Black, 1996; Sleeter, 1991; McNeil, 1985; Goodlad & Su, 1992). The intent of this research was to ascertain the extent to which such a curriculum would impact reading performance in a predominantly African-American, economically disadvantaged student population. As schools search for the identification of successful educational practices, this information may prove to be a model that could be applied to other schools to help improve students' reading ability.

## Research Hypotheses

1. There are no significant differences in reading performance (measured by Iowa Test of Basic Skills) between third grade students exposed to an integrated Fine Arts curriculum and those exposed to a traditional curriculum.
2. There are no significant differences in reading performance (measured by Iowa Test of Basic Skills) between fourth grade students exposed to an integrated Fine Arts curriculum and those exposed to a traditional curriculum.
3. There are no significant differences in reading performance (measured by Iowa Test of Basic Skills) between fifth grade students exposed to an integrated Fine Arts curriculum and those exposed to a traditional curriculum.
4. There are no significant differences in reading performance (measured by the Criterion Reference Test) between fifth grade students exposed to an integrated Fine Arts curriculum and those exposed to a traditional curriculum.

## Definition of Terms

Aesthetic Reading - in transactional theory, a type of reading in which attention is focused on “what is being lived through, the idea and feelings being evoked during the transaction” (Rosenblatt, 1978) (Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 5).

Fine Arts Curriculum – The curriculum relating to dance, drama, music, and visual arts programs.

Fine Arts Integrated Curriculum – See section in Chapter 3, Weekly Plan for Integrated Curriculum for a descriptive example.

Magnet School – A thematic centered school that has unique means of implementing specialized curriculum in a field of interest.

Traditional Curriculum – The basic core courses of reading, writing, social studies, science, and arithmetic required in school. Skills are usually taught in isolation.

Traditional School – Regular curriculum is offered without special emphasis toward the Fine Arts.

### Significance of the Study

The results of this study may help teacher educators understand how using an integrated fine arts curricula will benefit the learning of children in the area of reading instruction. The ability to read will have a significant effect on a student's life long learning capabilities. Findings from this study will be presented to the district school board for their use in preparing for possible curriculum changes for the future.

This study will provide data for elementary schools across the nation that are searching for an innovative approach to help at-risk urban students achieve success in the area of reading.

### Assumptions

This study is based on the following assumptions:

1. Teachers are not integrating fine arts curriculum into traditional curriculum because of time restraints
2. The community and parents do not support the arts in the basic curriculum of the school, but endorse the back to basics movement. Parents see



academic achievement as the first priority and the arts as “extras.” Only one of the two schools in the study have an integrated Fine Arts curriculum.

### Limitations

This study is subject to the following limitations:

1. Study was limited to two schools; therefore, generalizability of results is limited.
2. The study was limited to those classrooms in which the teachers were willing to participate in the study.
3. Training in the arts through the private sector through individual lessons in music, dance, drama, or music might have been a limitation. See Chapter 4 Table.
4. The bias of the researcher may have been a limitation. The researcher was the administrator of one of the study schools.

### Organization of the Study

This study is presented in five chapters. Chapter I provides an overview of the study including background information, a statement of the problem, definition of terms used in this study, and the assumptions and limitations of the study.

Chapter II reviews the literature in the areas of fine arts curriculum being integrated into the traditional reading curriculum. Chapter III describes the methodology

used in the study including selection of participants, the instruments used, and the research design, and procedures.

Chapter IV presents the results of the study and Chapter V discusses the findings along with some conclusions and implications for teaching and learning.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter discusses previous studies that have been conducted which are related to the integration of fine arts curriculum into a traditional reading curriculum. The first section was an investigation of literature involving curriculum integration as well as fine arts integration. Other sections include review of literature for the high risk factors which may impact academic achievement of urban students.

#### Integrated Curriculum

In the 1800s the idea of integration in the schools was focused on the promotion of social unity. German educator Johann Herbart and his followers developed ideas about the correlation of curriculum through subjects that many times referred to as “integration of studies.” By the mid-1920s the term integration had changed in meaning to assume a new meaning as part of an organization. Unity among individuals’ behaviors brought Gestalt psychologists into a movement known as integrated personality. This integrated personality sought unity between self and the environment. In response to questions concerning the process of integration, a child-centered curriculum would be developed. The activities developed would be from the child’s interests, experiences, and overall development. Another response focused on the idea that students were more likely to

learn subject matter if it were developed into generalized concepts that crossed over to separate curriculum themes (Beane, 1997).

The 1990s have been identified by a renewed interest in curriculum integration for several reasons. First is the perception that curriculum for students should move away from the memorization stage to applied knowledge skills such as problem solving and more challenging curriculum (Beane, 1997).

Second, the world is in constant review about knowledge that is presently known and which will be discovered today. With this flow of information constantly being challenged it is difficult to approach curriculum claiming to have all the answers. Third, the problem of solving questions through only one discipline can give a very narrow focus. An understanding of the problem must be given a broader knowledge bank for the development of ideas or answers (Beane, 1997).

Fourth, in the movement for curriculum integration, the educators were advocates of “whole-teaching” curriculum such as whole language, unit teaching, thematic structure, and problem centered methods with projects. Teachers were identified as the key to helping students learn through difference focuses. Teachers who choose to use curriculum integration have already made a commitment to move from the traditional stance to a more student-centered stance. The students are able to engage in deeper more meaningful dialogue with the teachers in this type arrangement (Beane, 1997).

Walmsely and Walp (1990) discussed research illustrating integrated language arts with studies in the area of curriculum integration that provided information for integration and findings into challenges and potential benefits for educators and students.

These studies show possible positive effects of an integrated approach to learning. Third and fourth-grade teachers identified themes for unit development, made selections for literacy and required skills to be taught. Data from this study in relation to vocabulary and sub tests on comprehension assessment on a reading achievement test did recognize students performed at or above grade level.

Morrow (1992) built on the previous study and focused on the effects of using a basal reading program with literature but also with supplementing materials. These two second-grade classrooms identified in the study had many of the same features:

- Emphasizing written and oral language processes in response to literature.
- Embedding skill-oriented literacy learning within literature reading.
- Identifying key outcomes including comprehension, ability to create both oral and written stories, development of language complexity, vocabulary, and positive dispositions toward literacy. (Morrow, 1992, p. 8)

This study by Morrow (1992) did provide adequate descriptions of both the intervention and students' work to interpret findings. The study gave a persuasive argument for the value of supplementing traditional curriculum with literature.

Goodlad and Su (1992) felt that integrated curriculum could be more easily established in an elementary school because it lacked constraints from separate curriculum specialists. Another study of curriculum integration by Sylvester (1994) provided teacher research conducted with third graders while in the study of classroom economy. The results of this study showed growth in self-esteem. The study suggests

that students were engaged in meaningful exercises that included work on math problems as well as focusing on meaning in literacy.

Gavalek, Raphael, Biondo, & Wang (1999) maintain that while the philosophy and worth of integration may be stated in resource materials, the discussion of how to effectively promote and design integrated units do not live up to derived standards. Integration instruction is not easy and involves crossing areas of curriculum and much planning. Integration is multi-faceted. The authors maintain schools should be asking whether to integrate and then focusing on what to integrate with what, why, when, how and for whom.

#### Integration of the Arts in the Curriculum

Parallels may be identified in the language arts and particularly in the art of creative reading with the aesthetic stance used in teaching through the arts. As in a musical experience, a creative reader will comprehend the content of the literature and add personal feelings with the events of the reading experience. Musical experiences are functional in nurturing such abilities as listening skills, sequential thinking, recognizing spatial and perceptual relations, and linear thinking. The relationship between music and reading can be analyzed in a parallel manner. Music has timbre and tonal nuances, while literature when read aloud has intonation, juncture and pitch. In music there is rhythm, and in literature there is style, including flow, pace and transitions. Both the listener and the reader bring past experiences to the music and reading event. Furthermore, both listening and reading entails a pleasurable mood and involve the intellectual activity of

following the unfolding musical structure, literary plot, themes, and characters (Elliot, 1999).

A study conducted by the Ohio State University in the spring of 1970, entitled Interdisciplinary Model Programs in the Arts for Children and Teachers, (IMPACT), was one of the first models for integrating the arts into educational curriculum. were invited by the Office of Education to develop a plan for demonstration programs in the arts. A middle school in Philadelphia; two elementary schools in Columbus, Ohio; a three-district consortium in southeastern Alabama; six elementary schools in Glendale, California; and one elementary school in Eugene, Oregon were selected for the plan.

It was apparent from the beginning that the project sites came to the decision to be involved in Project IMPACT for widely differing reasons and with various levels of commitment. The sites were geographically diverse and different in their educational structure and climate. Diversity in this regard did not tend to complicate any consistency in evaluation; it worked to the overall advantage of the project by showing the feasibility of establishing an arts-oriented curriculum in a variety of different school settings. Each of the sites was selected near an institution of higher education, and each project was encouraged to develop lines of communication with these institutions to provide resource and consultative assistance.

IMPACT began in Columbus City Schools during 1970-71 in two elementary schools, Cranbrook and Eastgate. Eastgate was considered the most "inner city" of all the schools involved in the project. Its income bracket was from low to middle income. The students of this school were primarily African-American.

An aesthetic team, which provided the model for the other teams, included a teacher in the following arts: visual, music, drama, and dance. Also, an instrumental teacher was added to this team on a part time basis. By working as a team they were able to develop many art activities which involved more than one art form.

In evaluating the role of the arts in the classroom, all teachers indicated that the role of arts in their classrooms had increased as a result of their IMPACT experience. All teachers indicated that IMPACT activities had improved the balance between affective and cognitive learning, and all but one teacher indicated that the belief that the arts had achieved a more equitable role with other instructional areas.

There were dramatic shifts in the extent to which teachers indicated that they incorporated the arts into the teaching of other instructional areas. They expressed a more child-oriented type of procedure with more flexibility. There was an increased willingness to try new ideas by the staff as was reported in surveys collected during the study.

In evaluating the change in students, data regarding students were examined in relation to changes in the cognitive and affective domains. Changes in the cognitive domain were primarily in terms of traditional academic achievement, with increased academic growth on standardized tests. Changes in the affective domain were examined in terms of students' interests and attitudes.

The main question concerning the evaluation team was whether children's academic performance would be hindered by the new concentration of the arts. Teacher responses indicated that no adverse effects were viewed by teaching the arts. Seventy-



five percent of them indicated the belief that IMPACT had positively affected their students' overall school achievement. The other teachers felt that IMPACT had little or no effect on overall achievement. The data from standardized achievement tests reflected no more than the normal variation from year to year.

Perhaps the following statement by Harlan Hoffa, President of the National Art Education Association, best characterizes the reactions of many observers of IMPACT:

It (IMPACT) has proved to be an exceptional educational activity; innovative, exciting, involving, totally, entire schools and school districts and, most importantly, it offers a beacon for educational change with which few other projects, in arts education or elsewhere, can compare wholeheartedly urge its continuance by whatever means may be available.

(1973, p.306)

Another study involved the Durham Magnet Center that had an arts integrated curriculum. Students were encouraged to act, sing, dance, or play an instrument with special help from the teachers while completing their regular academic assignments. Duke University established a formal relationship with the Durham School. A modified block schedule pairs language arts and social studies for curriculum integration while science and math were taught separately. The students at Durham School were demonstrating academic growth as measured by state-administered end of grade tests. (Jirtle, 2000).

The Partnership Assessment Project (PAP) compared student achievement under two conditions: prepared curricular incorporation of community arts experiences and the

same arts experience without prepared curricular incorporation over a four year period. The project design included training for teachers in the use of the arts in the classroom, advice for integrating curriculum, teaching for transfer, and assessment through the use of portfolios and performance-assessment techniques (Tunks, 1997).

Classroom teachers attended training sessions where they explored and discovered basic arts knowledge and skills that prepared them for incorporating community programming into their curriculum. In the third year, the teachers had added many arts and cultural experiences to their repertoire. Drawing on these experiences, the teachers embarked on new approaches to integrated curricula. Core subjects were vertically aligned through thematic units. Evidence of higher academic achievement in the students participating in the Partnership Assessment Project, as compared with other students in the same grade level in the same school, indicates the potential effects of arts and culture programming in enhancing student learning. When arts and culture experiences are demonstrated to enhance academic achievements, those who value only academic achievement may become more convinced of the value of the arts in school. It is important to realize that arts instruction can aid in overall learning for the student. However, active teaching for transfer is important because students do not necessarily recognize the connection between concepts presented in arts and the same concepts in other settings. The arts teachers must find these connections and include them in regular instruction (Tunks, 1997).

Luftig (2000) discussed the effects of one arts program called SPECTRA Plus. This study involved children in three grades at two schools in two different school

districts. Two different control groups were utilized in the study. A hypothesis was developed that stated the SPECTRA Plus program would enhance the academic achievement, creativity, self concept, good classroom control, and appreciation of the arts in a diverse group of elementary school children. SPECTRA Plus was a school wide, multi-disciplinary, integrated arts-in education program that evolved from a community-wide Cultural Action Plan in 1990. Through a collaborative planning effort between the Fitton Center for Creative Arts in Hamilton, Ohio, two local school systems, and Miami University. The program had five main components. The first was arts instruction. The program site had to offer classes in each art form (art, music, dance, drama/theater) for one hour each week. The other curricular areas (e.g. reading, mathematics, science) had to be taught through the arts and the arts taught through other subjects. The program also contained artist-in-residence individuals to work with teachers and students from two weeks to nine months. The professional development opportunities in a variety of educational arts strategies were provided for teachers and artists as part of the partnership. Teachers had built in schedules with planning times so that they could plan arts integration activities across the curriculum. The SPECTRA Plus philosophy was not that the arts should have a significant position in the curriculum just because they were “good” or beneficial to students, but rather that involvement in the program would result in better performance in all aspects of the student’s schooling, including academic achievement. Of the 615 participants in three grades (grades 2, 4, and 5) School District A contained approximately eleven percent African-American students and School System B contained approximately five percent African-American students.

The students' academic achievement was measured by two different standardized instruments: The Iowa Tests of Basic Skills and the Stanford Achievement Tests. The reading scores from both tests were used for data analysis in the study. These scores were total reading, reading vocabulary, and reading comprehension. Percentile scores were used to report difference scores between pre-and post testing. In the area of reading achievement scores, the study did not reveal any difference between the two groups. This may have been due to the use of different standardized academic tests (Luftig, 2000).

### Literacy and Arts Integration

To assist in the area of literacy, the integration of arts has taken a step into the curriculum field. Elliot Eisner (1998) urges schools to develop multiple forces of literacy so children can, "read the language of art, or music, or mathematics, or written prose" (p. 34). The arts are the key to opening curriculum so children can use their imagination, solve problems in many different ways, and increase their learning (Eisner, 1998).

Gardner (1984) found that the cognitive components of artistic expression and response does assist students in learning to read. It is believed that art promotes creative and critical thinking as well as divergent behaviors. Gardner provided research about students who were involved in an enriched sequential, skill-building program in two Rhode Island elementary schools. Those students who had started out behind caught up to statistical equity with the control group in reading and out-performed the control group in mathematics when arts integration was included.

Gilles (1998) conducted a study at Lee Elementary School used literature and the arts to work on retelling literature. The first grade teachers wanted to use art, music and movement to help meet a language arts goal in curriculum. Students were evaluated on their ability to retell a story from beginning to end. A control group and an experimental group were used in the study. It was discovered during this study how important it is for children to use expressive arts to learn and express their learning. After reading the story, one class (control) stayed behind in the regular classroom while the other class (experimental) engaged in activities using the arts. Books read did lend themselves to exploration of music, drama, and art. When exploring the connection between literature and art, children can learn more about the life of an artist, learn more about the history of art in a specific country or use books as resources for their own artistic and dramatic projects. Students in the experimental group could remember details and story lines in much more detail than the control group in relation to number of words used for the description (Gilles, 1998).

Results indicate that students outperformed their peers when they were able to integrate art activities before the retelling assignment. Their stories were more descriptive in nature. It was discovered during this study how important it is for children to use expressive arts to learn and express their learning (Gilles, 1998).

Norris, Richard, and Mokhtari (1997) conducted a study in which they made a comparison of a written exercise before and after a drawing was made by the children. The 60 third grade children, who drew before they completed their writing assignment, scored significantly higher on measures of writing quality than students who were only

involved in prewriting discussions. It was noted that they produced more words, more sentences, and more idea units. The findings of this study indicate that the marked difference in writing performance was related to the integration of drawing and writing.

For readers, visual art and graphic images have been used to illustrate written text. 'The multi-sensory contacts with ideas and concepts have increased students' reading abilities (Jansson & Schillereff, 1980).

Another study involved the comprehensive approach to arts education moving from the academic fringes into the core curriculum. Shady Brook Elementary began with fall visits to two local art museums by the staff and some parents. The faculty was able to purchase art prints with a \$1,500 grant from the district. These art prints were used in science class to demonstrate scientific principles. This approach is producing excellent results at Shady Brook Elementary School. Students are seeing and understanding art in more intricate ways, and they're thinking smarter and performing better. Reading scores, measured by the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) are up 12.3 percent in the last five years and writing scores are up 14 percent. Comprehensive arts-education is enhancing students and giving them the ability to understand concepts and use expression more completely. Students were able to apply logical thinking to all academic areas. There is no doubt that the enthusiastic and full immersion in comprehensive arts education was a major factor for this sharp turn around. The impact on teaching and learning emphasized the bringing into view the entire curriculum as a whole rather than as isolated subjects. Art proved to be the bridge for bringing seemingly different subjects together (Chapman, 1998).

Sky View Elementary School, located in Cobb County, Georgia implemented the Stimulating Maturity Through Accelerated Readiness Training (SMART) program. The participants in this study entered the school without the physical, visual or auditory readiness skills which are needed to be successful in school tasks. The SMART program was designed to “boost” success in kindergarten and first-grade students through movement and dance activities (Scott, 1999).

The program consisted of classroom, playground, and floor activities, and movement through dance that stimulate parts of the brain leading to heightened attention, eye-hand coordination, listening and visual coordination. These areas are necessary for success in reading readiness. It shifts the instructional focus from listening to interacting (Scott, 1999).

During the first year of implementation (1997-98), Sky View learned how effectively the program worked. Students in kindergarten and first grade had made significant gains in both reading and writing. Students taking part in the stimulation activities were better in listening, early reading, early arithmetic, and early writing. The closure of readiness gaps were accelerated through the implementation of this program (Scott, 1999).

An interesting study was conducted through a Chapter I school in Beaverton, Oregon. The focus of the study was not directly to measure reading and writing but these avenues made it possible for them to learn what they wanted to know and express what they wanted to say (Hoyt, 1992).

The use of drama evoked higher order thinking, problem solving, and language for ways to express knowledge orally. The children invented dialogue for plays and scripts. In whole class dramatics, students all portrayed body motions and appropriate sound effects as the teacher read books to them. After dramatic presentations, students were encouraged to recreate a story with pictures or writing. The retellings reflected greater understanding of the story with more specific details being given (Hoyt, 1992).

Hoyt (1992) gives evidence of using Readers' Theater to interpret a story using the written text in a particular classroom. The readers were encouraged to stress reading rate, intonation, and emphasize the meaning of language to make the print come alive.

Children also used visual arts such as drawing, painting, and collage as alternative ways to express their understanding of literacy. To draw a picture about a story, the children must draw upon both the affective and the cognitive domains. Drawings provides an opportunity to clarify, reflect, and consider relationships before information is shared verbally about the learning acquired (Hoyt, 1992).

Elliot (1999) conducted a study that indicated that the use of creative drama enhanced the reading scores of a population of remedial or low-ability fifth graders. The aim of the program was to increase reading performance, not to teach creative drama. It was also noted that it was a special population of fifth graders in need of reading skills, not a population of average students. Given the aims of the study and the population studied, the results are limited to like populations. Reports of the effects of arts education on academic achievement appear to be most notable in programs that are specifically designed to help students with reading problems learn to read through the arts. Students



did show a gain in creativity but academic growth was not reported. According to National Visual Arts Standards (2000), developed by the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations, the arts are worth studying simply because of what they are. Historically, the arts have served to connect our imaginations with the deepest questions : “Who am I?” “ What must I do?” and “Where am I going?” The arts are used to achieve many purposes, such as to present issues and ideas, to teach or persuade, and to entertain. Becoming literate in the arts helps students understand and do things better in the world. The arts help students develop the attitudes, characteristics, and intellectual skills required to participate effectively in today’s society and economy.

Alperstein and Weyl (1993), maintain the arts are basic to education in a very complete form. The arts enhance student creativity and increase creative thinking and problem-solving abilities. The arts use of both hemisphere of the brain, development of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills and learning styles is a strong argument for arts education. The arts increase communication skills needed in today’s complex society. Mostly importantly, the arts enhance basic literacy skills including cultural literacy and non-verbal stimuli.

The ability for students to acquire aesthetic judgment, a skill that enhances daily life and affects individual choices can be strengthened through the arts. Another important reason for arts education is in the area of self- concept. The arts develop self esteem and help students gain a more positive self- concept (Alperstein & Weyl, 1993).

The Arts Education Partnership Working Group, under the sponsorship of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and the J. Paul Getty Trust, issued a

report in January 1993 called The Power of the Arts to Transform Education: An Agenda for Action. The report cites multiple benefits for schools with strong arts programs.

Some of these benefits include intensified student motivation to learn, better attendance among students and teachers, increased graduation rates, improved multicultural understanding. Renewed and invigorated faculty, more highly engaged students, development of a higher order of thinking skills, creativity, and problem-solving ability, and lastly greater community participation and support.

In addition to the intrinsic value of art itself, arts education has the potential to transform education in ways that no other discipline can, lending value to four different learning domains which includes cognitive skills. Studies have shown that the arts develop the critical thinking skills of problem solving, analysis, evaluation, and decision making. Arts education develops the ability to interpret and understanding complex symbols in the same manner as language and mathematics (Getty, 1994).

In the national report, *The Arts: Dynamic Partners in Building Strong Schools* (Getty, 1994) implies creative skills in arts education are playing a central role in fostering creativity, developing imagination, enabling students to envision alternative possibilities. The arts create the capacity for experiencing the shaking up consciousness and inspiring innovation. Arts education develops a diverse range of cognitive abilities. These pedagogical benefits help teachers promote achievement across disciplines, fostering the development of spatial, mathematical, logical, and physical ability.

### Other Impacting Factors

Equally important is the impact of urban and magnet schools on the curriculum for this study. Four out of every ten fourth graders are prevented from reaching high academic standards because they cannot read proficiently. The demands for literacy in our world have been increased by society and continue to influence future success in an individual's life. The nation has been challenged to ensure that all children will be independent readers by the end of third grade (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1999).

It has been stated that having a low social economic status is a group risk factor for children in urban surroundings to become less qualified readers in comparison with children from more affluent communities. Academic achievement is chronically low in the urban schools identified as at risk for reading difficulties because they are affected by various conditions associated with urban schools (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1999).

One condition associated with urban schools isolates the factor that children of low social economic status are forced to attend schools with chronically low academic achievement. Characteristics of low achieving schools include: lower rates of time-on-task time, less teacher preparation of needed materials, and lack of high expectations communicated to students. The climate of low achieving schools does not always foster ultimate learning success and motivation (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1999).

According to Carter (2000) the best lesson that schools can promote or teach is that all children can succeed in school. Each school must change from within to have the high expectations required of all children by the teachers.

To help students achieve success in schools change must come from within. Often urban settings have low expectations, dilapidated buildings, and deflated children. Children cannot be led to believe all failure in school is due to lack of natural ability. They must learn that hard work creates ability. Inner-city schools must accept the challenge to help all children learn to read (Carter, 2000).

Teachers of students in the inner-city settings have often been reported to underestimate students' capabilities as well as postpone more challenging and interesting work for too long. They fail to provide a context for learning or for meaningfully using the skills that are taught. Teachers are even reinforcing academic failure over the long term. It has been noted that disadvantaged students are better able to meet the academic challenges of school when teachers respect the students' cultural/linguistic backgrounds and communicate this appreciation to them in an individual way. Good academic programs encourage students to draw and build on the experience they have, at the same time exposing them to unfamiliar experiences and ways of thinking (Knapp, Turnbull, & Shields, 1990).

To meet this challenge, classrooms that have departed from the skills-oriented approaches to literacy instruction have found that increasing the amount of time children spend actually reading text helped in all areas of instruction and thinking. Meaning-oriented reading classrooms tried to link the teaching of skills to the actual reading of text, while making room in the curriculum for a wide range of other activities that engaged learners in the task of making sense of text. Teachers were building a bridge between children's experimental knowledge base and their academic learning experience.

By connecting instruction more closely to children's experiences, teachers achieved higher levels of engagement in reading. New methods of instruction must be developed to assist students in the urban school setting to be successful (Knapp, Shields, & Turnbull, 1995).

One such way to help students in the urban setting be more successful is through the introduction of magnet schools. The magnet schools, sometimes referred to as "alternative schools" or "schools of choice," are public schools that provide incentives to parents and students through specialized curricular themes or instructional methods. School reform has long been under the national spotlight with a growing recognition that the existing system of school support, training, and level of education in the classrooms are not meeting the needs of students, especially in urban settings. Magnet schools are being established in more and more school systems in an attempt to reform urban schools. Magnet schools are based on the premise that all students do not learn in the same ways. Since a magnet school voluntarily attracts students and teachers, it will succeed because, more than for any other reason, those in attendance want to be there (Goldring & Smrekar, 2000).

Magnet schools have become a primary reform vehicle for addressing desegregation and school choice concerns in urban districts. The magnet school is designed to attract students away from their neighborhood schools, generally into minority neighborhoods. As originally conceived, magnet schools were designed to increase students' academic performance, and to enhance racial and social diversity. In

the early 1970s there was a small number of these programs (Yon, Nesbit, & Algozzine, 1998).

Research on magnet schools suggests that many of the schools provide an innovative, distinctive approach to education. An early review of magnet school research and evaluation studies from 12 large urban districts showed that students' superior performance in magnet schools was evident in reading, math, science, and writing. The pattern of declining scores, common in urban schools, disappeared over a 10-year period. The difficulty of controlling statistically for all the differences between magnet and non-magnet schools make the interpretation of performance of students in the magnet programs harder to evaluate (Yon, Nesbit, & Algozzine, 1998).

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of a fine arts curriculum—consisting of dance, music, drama, and visual arts—on the reading performance of third, fourth, and fifth grade students in one elementary magnet school in Oklahoma. Research has established fairly consistently that the integration of the fine arts across the school curriculum lead to an enhancement of academic performance among middle class students (Beane, 1997 and Black, 1996). The intent of this research was to ascertain the extent to which such a curriculum would impact reading performance in a predominantly African-American, economically disadvantaged student population. As schools search for the identification of successful educational practices, this information may prove to be a model that could be applied to other schools to help improve students' reading ability.

### Research Hypothesis

1. There are no significant differences in reading performance (measured by Iowa Test of Basic Skills) between third grade students exposed to an integrated Fine Arts curriculum and those exposed to a traditional curriculum.
2. There are no significant differences in reading performance (measured by Iowa Test of Basic Skills) between fourth grade students exposed to an integrated Fine Arts curriculum and those exposed to a traditional curriculum.
3. There are no significant differences in reading performance (measured by Iowa Test of Basic Skills) between fifth grade students exposed to an integrated Fine Arts curriculum and those exposed to a traditional curriculum.
4. There are no significant differences in reading performance (measured by the Criterion Reference Test) between fifth grade students exposed to an integrated Fine Arts curriculum and those exposed to a traditional curriculum.

Teacher questionnaires provided information about awareness of techniques to integrate the arts into the basic curriculum as well as training received in the area of arts integration. This measurable score in academic performance was the basis for comparison between a magnet school using a fine arts integrated curriculum and a school using traditional curriculum in the area of reading for students in the third, fourth, and fifth grades.

All testing completed was the requirement of the District, with out additional

testing requested by the researcher to complete this study. Only composite scores for each of the sub tests for the Iowa Test of Basic Skills used in the area of reading performance.



## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research methodology used in the present study. Following a brief statement of the purpose of the study along with a listing of the main research hypotheses, I provide some details about the participants, the instructional setting, the instruments used for collecting relevant data, and the procedures followed to obtain and analyze such data.

#### Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of a fine arts curriculum—consisting of dance, music, drama, and visual arts—on the reading performance of third, fourth, and fifth grade students in one elementary magnet school in Oklahoma.

#### Research Hypotheses

As stated in the review of the literature, the integration of curriculum and instruction within traditional school curricula has been shown to positively impact student achievement in several ways (see for example Guthrie, 1996; Lieberman and Hoody, 1998; Gavaleck et al., 1998). This study is intended to contribute to the growing body of knowledge regarding the effects of different approaches to instruction by studying the

impact of integrating a traditional core curriculum with a fine arts component—consisting of dance, music, drama, and visual arts—on the reading performance of third, fourth, and fifth grade students in one elementary magnet school in central Oklahoma. The following set of hypotheses was used as benchmarks for measuring such an impact.

1. There are no significant differences in reading performance (as measured by the Iowa Test of Basic Skills) between third grade students exposed to an integrated Fine Arts curriculum and those exposed to a traditional curriculum.
2. There are no significant differences in reading performance (measured by Iowa Test of Basic Skills) between fourth grade students exposed to an integrated Fine Arts curriculum and those exposed to a traditional curriculum.
3. There are no significant differences in reading performance (measured by Iowa Test of Basic Skills) between fifth grade students exposed to an integrated Fine Arts curriculum and those exposed to a traditional curriculum.
4. There are no significant differences in reading performance (measured by the Criterion Reference Test) between fifth grade students exposed to an integrated Fine arts curriculum and those exposed to a traditional curriculum.

### Participants

The participants involved in the present study consisted of third, fourth, and fifth grade students enrolled in intact classrooms from two inner city schools: A traditional curriculum school and a Magnet Fine Arts School. Of a total of 252 students included in the study, 110 students were enrolled in the Magnet Fine Arts School while 142 students were enrolled in the traditional school. The students in both participating schools ranged

in age from seven to twelve years of age. Over 85 percent of the students in both schools were of African-American ethnicity. There were 119 males and 133 females. Table 1 provides a more detailed description of the participants.

The participants from both the Magnet Fine Arts School and the traditional school were selected from intact classrooms that were pre-assigned to a grade level teacher. These classrooms were regular education classrooms and thus represented students of all academic ability levels.

The classroom teachers, who participated in the study, were third, fourth, or fifth grade teachers selected from the same two urban elementary schools as the participants. Eight of the teachers were from the traditional curriculum school, and 12 teachers were from the school with the integrated Fine Arts curriculum. The range of teaching experience in number of years taught was 11 years for the integrated fine arts school, and 12 years for traditional school. Forty percent of the teachers at the Magnet Fine Arts School had received a Master's Degree or higher, while 36 percent at the traditional school acquired the same degrees.

TABLE 1  
DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS

	3rd GRADE	4 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE	5 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE	TOTAL
<b>Magnet Fine Arts School</b>				
Number of Students	34	39	37	110
Mean Age	9.6	10.5	11.6	
<b>Gender</b>				
Female	16	25	20	61
Male	18	14	17	49
<b>Ethnicity</b>				
African American				
Female	14	20	16	50
Male	17	14	14	45
American Indian				
Female	1	0	0	1
Male	0	0	1	1
Hispanic				
Female	0	1	0	1
Male	0	0	0	0
White				
Female	1	4	4	9
Male	1	0	2	3
<b>Traditional School</b>				
Number of Students	49	51	42	142
Mean Age	9.4	10.6	11.5	
<b>Gender</b>				
Female	20	31	21	72
Male	29	20	21	70
<b>Ethnicity</b>				
African American				
Female	20	29	20	69
Male	29	20	21	70
American Indian				
Female	0	0	0	0
Male	0	0	0	0
Hispanic				
Female	0	0	0	0
Male	0	0	0	0
White				
Female	0	2	1	3
Male	0	0	0	0

### Instructional Setting

Participants were selected from two urban elementary schools in Central Oklahoma. The socio-economic status of the community was low to poverty level. According to information reported in the district's statistical profile for each of the two schools (District Statistical Profile for 1999-2000), the Magnet Fine Arts School had a percentage of 87 of its students on free and reduced lunch. The traditional school had 84 percent of its students on the free and reduced lunch program. Student enrollments for both schools are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2  
SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographic Information	Magnet Fine Arts School	Traditional School
Classrooms in the Study	6	8
Teachers in Study	12	8
Mean Teaching Experience	11 years	12 years
Degree of Teachers with Masters or Higher	36 %	40 %
Free/Reduced Lunch for Students	87 %	84 %

The two participating schools were affiliated with a large urban school district in Central Oklahoma. The first school (hereafter referred to as the traditional school) followed a core traditional curriculum as required by the state. This curriculum consisted of instruction in the subjects of reading/language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, health and physical education. With the exception of a music curriculum of approximately 30 minutes per week, this school did not have any specialized fine arts curriculum and did not have any teachers trained in the fine arts.

The traditional school, built in 1997, is housed in a one-story facility (approximately 40,476 square feet) located in an economically disadvantaged area of town with a high concentration of ethnically diverse students. With a total school enrollment of 337 for the present school year, approximately 2.2 percent of the students were Caucasian, 1.4% American Indian, and a majority, African-American (96%). There were no Asian or Hispanic students represented.

The mobility rate for the traditional school was 18.6 percent with an attendance rate of 95.8 percent. Free/reduced lunch was 84 percent for this school year. There were twenty-five certified teachers on staff. Forty-seven percent of these teachers were African-American. The average years for teaching experience was 12 years, with 40 percent having at least a Master's Degree. The third grade classrooms had a total enrollment of 49 students who were not on an Individual Educational Plan. The fourth grade classrooms had an enrollment of 51 students with three classroom teachers. The 42 fifth grade students were divided between two teachers. Of the 8 teachers in the study from the traditional school, two of the teachers were males and six were females.

The Magnet Integrated Fine Arts School (hereafter referred to as the Magnet Fine Arts School) was a much older school. It was built in 1928, as a two-story facility. With the assistance of a large U.S. Department of Education grant, the school was selected as a magnet school with an intended strong fine arts emphasis. The Fine Arts, which consisted of dance, music, drama, and visual arts, were integrated within the school's existing core curriculum. This Magnet Fine Arts School was identified as a magnet fine arts school for the first years of operation during this study. The initial year was a planning year with 1999-2000 being the first year for implementation of the magnet theme. This Magnet Fine Arts School was one of seven identified schools to receive the federal funding. These magnet schools gave parents an opportunity to choose their child's school. The magnet plan permitted voluntary desegregation of the school. The programs of excellence and concentrated academic focus contribute to school reform and improved racial balance. Students who chose to apply, based on their special interests and talents, attended magnet schools voluntarily. An individual magnet school focused on a course of instruction based upon a specific theme or concept to which students were attracted.

Like the traditional school, the Magnet Fine Arts School was located in the same general area and had a large minority student population. The total enrollment of this school was 365, with 95 percent being African-American, 3.6% Caucasian, and the remaining students being of American Indian, Asian, and Hispanic origin. There were 30 certified teachers on staff assigned in the Magnet Fine Arts School, with 16.6 percent being minority. The average teaching experience was 11 years. Thirty-six percent of the staff had at least a Master's Degree. Four teachers taught third grade with a total of 34 students. The fourth grade classrooms had an enrollment of 39 students with four

teachers. There were four classroom teachers in the fifth grade with a total enrollment of 39 students. Of the total number of teachers, two were males and ten were females.

Unlike the traditional school, the Magnet Fine Arts School had a unique teaching arrangement with two partner teachers assigned to each room. Due to the lack of adequate space to accommodate large number of students, two teachers worked together with a class designed for a maximum of 34 students. One of the partner teachers had a strong background in teaching math and other teacher had a strong reading background. The teachers were encouraged to take turns being the lead teacher, while the other was the supporting teacher. This arrangement gave the teacher who was leading the instruction another pair of eyes to watch for individual student needs. In some of the classes, one teacher formed a small group to help students in an identified area of need while the lead teacher was meeting the academic needs of other students.

### Instruments

In an attempt to ascertain the degree to which the integrated fine arts instruction model had an impact on students' reading achievement, data were collected from several sources including existing reading scores from the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), the Oklahoma Criterion Referenced Test (CRTs), researcher-designed teacher and student surveys, classroom observations, and anecdotal data obtained from teachers, parents, and students. The following outline provides more detailed information about each of these data sets.

1. Reading Achievement Data: These data consisted of the following:



a. Pre- and posttest reading scores from the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

These data were obtained from the schools' database for third, fourth, and fifth grade students based on the spring administration of the test.

The ITBS is a nationally recognized test with documented content validity, and reliability for assessing reading achievement (fall -  $r = .926$  and spring -  $r = .931$ ) as listed in the Iowa Test of Basic Skills Administration Manual. The ITBS posttest was administered to third, fourth, and fifth students in the spring term as required by the State of Oklahoma. Specially trained teachers administered the Iowa Test of Basic Skills in individual classrooms by grade levels in both schools. Since the main interest in the study was to gauge students' overall reading performance, only the Iowa Test of Basic Skills pre- and post composite test scores were used for all analyses. These scores were used to determine whether any gains in reading performance could be found among the students in each of the grade level.

b. Posttest-Only Reading Scores from the Oklahoma Criterion Reference

Test. The Criterion Reference Tests are administered once a year in fifth, eighth, and eleventh grades in Oklahoma. They are intended to measure the extent to which students have mastered the skills delineated by the Oklahoma Priority Academic Skills program. The reading scores on this test consist of percentage passage.

c. Surveys. Two surveys were designed by the researcher with the goal of

finding out the level of exposure to the Fine Arts both in and out of

school by students and teachers. The surveys (see Appendix A ), which consist of forced-choice as well open-ended statements, were intended to describe teacher perception in regard to integrating the arts into the traditional curriculum, and to control for the participants' prior knowledge and exposure to the Fine Arts. The first survey was mailed to 20 teachers in the target schools. The second survey was completed by the students and sought to determine whether they had any exposure to fine arts instruction outside of the school setting through private lessons, and other means.

2. Classroom Observations: Occasional observations were made by the researcher (approximately 2 per month) to gather information about any aspects of the study including teacher and student reactions to the integration of the Fine Arts in the curriculum, changes in classroom teaching strategies, and other related matters.
3. Anecdotal Records. These data consisted of occasional notes taken by the researcher when interacting with teachers, students, and parents outside of the classroom setting. Such qualitative data were used, along with the classroom observations, to validate, confirm, and complete the information gained from quantitative measures used in the study.

### Research Design

A modified quasi-experimental design was used in the present study.

However, some of the quantitative data used (e.g., ITBS test scores) are available

through pre and posttest, other data could only be obtained through posttests (e.g., CRT tests). As a result, the traditional school was used as a posttest-only control group while the Magnet Fine Arts school was used as a quasi-experimental group. The control group followed a traditional core curriculum and the Magnet Fine Arts School used an integrated Fine Arts curriculum.

### Treatment

In addition, while the traditional school had a basic administrative structure, the Magnet Fine Arts School had four magnet Fine Arts' specialists or teachers working at the school on a daily basis to teach and help the students. Part of their assignment was to assist grade level classroom teachers to incorporate the Fine Arts curriculum into the traditional curriculum using different modalities. The four magnet fine arts specialists were teachers who have had specialized training in one of the following areas: vocal and instrumental music, visual art, drama, and dance. These teachers were specifically placed in these positions because of their individual training and expertise in the identified area of study. When interviewed they were in agreement that integrating the arts would be a positive step forward for the school and its students. The Fine Arts specialists in music, drama, dance, and visual art, also agreed that team teaching would be a beneficial to the students and teachers at the Magnet Fine Arts School.

## Weekly Integrated Curriculum Plan

Monday Morning – Reading Time -Class reads chapter of a trade book, Sarah, Plain and Tall.

Monday Afternoon – Art Class – Students will talk about setting of Sarah, Plain and Tall and begin drawing large mural depicting life on the prairie.

Tuesday Morning – Students will continue reading next section of Sarah, Plain and Tall. Additional details may be added to mural began on Monday during Art class.

Tuesday Afternoon – Vocal Music – Students will learn about instruments such as the banjo and harmonica. . They will listen to music containing these instruments. These instruments were commonly used to provide music for community dances.

Wednesday Morning – During reading time, students will discuss chapters read in the book, Sarah, Plain and Tall and write in journals about the main characters.

Wednesday – Dance – Students will learn the steps to several dances like Cotton-Eye Joe and square dancing. These dances were taken from the books with settings like Sarah, Plain and Tall.

Thursday – As part of reading instruction from the book, Sarah, Plain and Tall, students will discuss feelings of Sarah as she remembers the ocean and her family.

Thursday – Drama – Students will act out scenes from the book, Sarah, Plain and

Tall being read in class. Students will identify characteristics for each main character as they act out scenes from the story.

Friday Morning – After reading further in the book, Sarah, Plain and Tall, students will make a scroll depicting the sequence of the book.

Friday Afternoon – Students will be engaged in activities not completed during the week.

The magnet arts specialist or resource teachers worked closely with the classroom teachers in developing a system to integrate the arts on a daily basis. Each week, Monday through Thursday, the classroom teacher and his/her class attended a specialized class in each of the four arts teachers' rooms for forty minutes daily. The class and teacher participate in a planned activity for forty minutes to reinforce instruction in the regular classroom. For example, the third grade class may be studying various animal habitats. After planning between the classroom teacher and the specialist the curriculum would be outlined for the next week. The arts' specialists would have students draw pictures in art class to reinforce the classroom instruction. The class may be reading the book, Island of the Blue Dolphins by Scott O'Dell (1960) and would draw mountains and seas in the art class to establish the setting of the story. The dance class might have movement to island music and learn hula movements. The drama class might act scenes from the story to help with student comprehension skills.

On Fridays, students selected a "club" or special interest from one of the four Fine Arts curriculum involving music dance, visual art, and drama. These students met with the arts integration teachers to extend the learning from the regular classroom. Students may be making a volcano or complete some weaving activity with the idea of making

baskets. The clubs for all the special classes (art, music, drama, and dance) were held during the regular school hours so all children could attend activities. With students being bussed from all over the district, the Magnet Fine Arts School did not want transportation issues to interfere with students participating in all special activities.

Team planning, between the resource art specialist and the classroom teachers by grade level, was held once per week for forty minutes. This meeting was between all the teachers of a particular grade level and the four full-time arts' specialists. The communication at the planning meeting centered directly toward skills to be taught or materials to be covered for the next week. Themes were identified per grade level and resource teachers located and identified ways to help students learn the curriculum through an integrated Fine Arts approach.

#### Procedures

The data gathering for the present study took approximately one year to complete and consisted of several key steps or phases, including:

- (a) Phase One: Gaining permission to conduct the study. This step involved developing a proposal that described the purpose of the study, the steps to be taken to ensure protection of human subjects as required by Oklahoma State University's Institutional Review Board, soliciting support and willingness to participate from the school district administration, the students, and their parents, and preparation of the necessary materials to conduct the study.
- (b) Phase Two: Distribution of surveys to the teachers and students. This phase consisted of identifying a group of the target teachers and students involved in

the study, mailing of the surveys to teachers, and soliciting their assistance for having their students complete the surveys to students in their classrooms.

Permissions to complete the study were obtained for all students.

- (c) Phase Three: This phase of the study was devoted to the collection of the quantitative data (i.e., Administering and or acquiring Iowa Test of Basic Skills and Criterion Reference Test for reading performance data), and qualitative data (i.e., Observation and anecdotal records).

### Analysis of Data

As indicated earlier, the data obtained for this study consisted of both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data sets consisted of basic descriptions of the subjects, teachers, and schools. These data were analyzed using basic descriptive statistics captured in frequency tables. The data obtained from the teacher and student surveys were analyzed using frequencies and descriptions. These data provided valuable information which was used to control for initial differences in perceptions of and exposure to Fine Arts instruction. To find out whether there were any significant differences between the Magnet Fine Arts School and the traditional school relative to reading performance were evident (measured by Iowa Test of Basic Skills and Criterion Reference Test for pre and post data) and analyzed using t-tests. The remaining data were essentially qualitative in nature (e.g., classroom observation records) were analyzed using comparative methods aimed at finding support in the qualitative data for the differences in reading performance among students in the two schools.

Chapter IV presents the results obtained in the study. The aim is to find out if there were any differences in the reading performance of third, fourth, and fifth grade students as a result of exposure to an integrated Fine Arts curriculum. The data obtained will be presented and discussed (in Chapter V) in light of what is known about integrated curriculum and instruction and their impact on student performance.



## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

In this study, I sought to investigate the impact of an integrated fine arts curriculum on the reading performance of third, fourth, and fifth grade students. The proposed instructional model was implemented in an entire school—a magnet school in an urban school district with a predominantly African-American student population. Considering what is known in the literature about the usefulness of integrated instruction approaches on student achievement, it was predicted that the fine arts program would lead to significant improvements in the overall academic performance of the target students population in general, and in particular their reading performance. The following section presents the results obtained regarding the impact of the proposed program.

#### Analysis of Survey Data

To establish similarity of background knowledge and prior exposure to the fine arts (e.g., dance, drama, music, and visual arts), among the teachers and students in both schools, an informal, researcher-designed survey was completed by both teachers and students. The results of this survey (see Table 3) indicates that the two schools were quite similar in terms of prior knowledge and exposure to the fine arts. As Table 3 shows, a majority of the students in both schools had little or no exposure to the fine arts.

TABLE 3  
STUDENT EXPOSURE TO THE FINE ARTS IN A MAGNET FINE ARTS SCHOOL  
AND A TRADITIONAL SCHOOL

	Magnet Fine Arts School (n=110)		Traditional School (n=142)	
	Yes Percentages	No Percentages	Yes Percentages	No Percentages
Exposure to dance	6.36	93.64	6.36	95.77
Exposure to drama	.09	99.10	1.59	98.41
Exposure to visual arts	3.64	96.36	2.11	97.49
Exposure to music	7.27	92.73	8.45	91.55

Of the twenty teacher surveys completed from the Magnet Fine Arts School, only two teachers reported any outside experience with the arts. The vocal music teacher and a fourth grade teacher had specialized training in music. The Magnet Fine Arts School had a requirement of forty hours training during this first year of operation, which was one of the requirements of the Magnet Grant.

These findings were confirmed by consulting available school records at each school building. An examination of these records indicated that with the exception of a 30-minute music session per week at each school, none of the schools had ever had a focused or comprehensive Fine Arts program.

However, in the present study, one of the schools was designed to include a major emphasis on the fine arts, which is integrated into the regular curriculum. Specifically,

the students enrolled in the Magnet Fine Arts School attended special classes during the regular school day. For example, a third grade class might have dance on Monday, music on Tuesday, visual art on Wednesday, and drama on Thursday. Certified teachers with special training in the particular art forms of art, dance, music, and drama were the instructors. Planning with the classroom teacher by the four certified specialists provided an avenue to incorporate the arts into the regular curriculum and thereby enhancing it. Planning was for one 45-minute period each week among the specialty teachers and grade level teachers. The meetings were held for the purpose of exchange of ideas. The arts teachers had questions as to curriculum requirements of each grade and subject matter the classroom teacher would be covering for the next week. The classroom teachers wanted ideas and examples as to how to incorporate the arts into the daily areas of dance, music, art, and drama weekly in each area for a total of 45 minutes curriculum of the children. The teachers and arts specialist used an arts integration record form during their planning meetings.

The teachers at the Magnet Fine Arts School provided strong support for the arts program established. Teachers written comments on the survey indicated the perception that the integration of the arts across the curriculum helped students in processing information and helped increase higher order thinking skills as evidenced by questions and comments given in class. General comments made by the Magnet Fine Arts teachers are summarized as follows:

1. Students seemed to remember lesson information at a higher rate when they have prepared an arts related activity.

2. The arts show the students there is more to school than the normal classes of rote memorization. Students were able to express themselves in ways they couldn't before.
3. Students need movement. Students retain more by singing and acting out what they are learning. Integration of the arts can provide a basic understanding of the Arts and add to student understanding of the creative thinking and problem-solving processes by integrating the arts, students get real "hands on" understanding of concepts such as geometry, symmetry, main idea, and character descriptions.
4. Experiences with the arts help students retain information from a story involving characters, setting, and motives from the written word of a book to seeing the characters come to life through drama.
5. There is a strong relationship between music and reading. If a student has positive experiences in one of the arts, it can carry over into directly effecting the academic scores of students.
6. Students get a connection through the arts of how subjects are related in the curriculum.

#### The Impact of Fine Arts Integration on Students Reading Achievement

Four main research hypotheses guided the search for answers regarding whether the proposed integrated fine arts program did or did not have an impact on student reading achievement. The results will be presented following each of the hypotheses.

### Research Hypothesis # 1

There are no statistically significant differences in reading performance (measured by the Iowa Test of Basic Skills) between third grade students exposed to an integrated Fine Arts curriculum and those exposed to a traditional curriculum.

The results, shown in Table 4, indicate that there were no statistically significant differences in reading performance ( $t(81) = .480$ ;  $p = .632$ ), as measured by the composite scores of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, between third grade students exposed to an integrated Fine Arts curriculum and those exposed to a traditional curriculum. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. An examination of the composite scores suggests that while third graders in the Magnet Fine Arts School achieved slightly higher mean scores ( $M = 55.62$ ;  $SD = 13.80$ ) than their counterparts in the traditional school ( $M = 53.82$ ;  $SD = 18.59$ ), these differences were not large enough to reach statistical significance.

TABLE 4

DIFFERENCES IN READING PERFORMANCE AS MEASURED BY SPRING SCORE FROM THE IOWA TEST OF BASIC SKILLS BETWEEN THIRD GRADERS IN THE MAGNET FINE ARTS AND TRADITIONAL SCHOOLS

School	Number of Students	Mean (SD)	t (81)	P > t
Integrated Fine Arts	34	55.62 (13.80)		
Traditional	49	53.82 (18.59)		
			.480	.632

## Research Hypothesis # 2

There are no statistically significant differences in reading performance (measured by the Iowa Test of Basic Skills) between fourth grade students exposed to an integrated Fine Arts curriculum and those exposed to a traditional curriculum.

The results, shown in Table 5, indicate that the differences in reading performance between the fourth graders in the Magnet Fine Arts School and the traditional school were statistically significant ( $t(88) = 2.916$ ;  $p = .004$ ). The null hypothesis was, therefore, rejected. However, this difference, while statistically significant, is not in favor of the Magnet Fine Arts School. An examination of the mean of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills composite scores obtained shows that the fourth graders in the traditional school achieved higher mean scores ( $M = 52.25$ ;  $SD = 18.03$ ) than did students in the Magnet Fine Arts School ( $M = 41.95$ ;  $SD = 14.55$ ).

TABLE 5

DIFFERENCES IN READING PERFORMANCE AS MEASURED BY SPRING SCORE FROM THE IOWA TEST OF BASIC SKILLS BETWEEN FOURTH GRADERS IN THE MAGNET FINE ARTS AND TRADITIONAL SCHOOLS

School	Number of Students	Mean (SD)	t(88)	P > t
Magnet Fine Arts	39	41.95 (14.55)		
Traditional	51	52.25 (18.03)	2.916	.004

### Research Hypothesis # 3

There are no statistically significant differences in reading performance (measured by the Iowa Test of Basic Skills) between fifth grade students exposed to an integrated Fine Arts curriculum and those exposed to a traditional curriculum.

For the third research hypothesis, the null hypothesis was rejected. The results, displayed in Table 6, show that the differences in reading performance between the fifth graders in the Magnet Fine Arts School and the traditional school were statistically significant ( $t(79) = 6.57, p = .05$ ). Indeed, an examination of the mean composite scores obtained shows that the fifth graders in the Magnet Fine Arts School achieved higher mean scores ( $M = 45.2; SD = 14.50$ ) than did students in the traditional school ( $M=39; SD = 18.51$ ).

TABLE 6

DIFFERENCES IN READING PERFORMANCE AS MEASURED BY SPRING SCORE FROM THE IOWA TEST OF BASIC SKILLS BETWEEN FIFTH GRADERS IN THE MAGNET FINE ARTS AND TRADITIONAL SCHOOLS

School	Number of Students	Mean (SD)	t (77)	P > t
Integrated Fine Arts	37	45.2 (14.50)		
Traditional	42	39.0 (18.51)	6.57	.05

#### Research Hypothesis # 4

There are no significant differences in reading performance (measured by the Criterion Reference Test) between fifth grade students exposed to an integrated Fine Arts curriculum and those exposed to a traditional curriculum.

The results, shown in Table 7, indicate that there were differences in reading performance, as measured by scores on the Oklahoma Criterion Reference Test, between fifth grade students exposed to an integrated Fine Arts curriculum and those exposed to a traditional curriculum. An examination of the percentages obtained suggests that, as a group, more students in the magnet fine arts program (58%) passed the reading portion of the test than did students in the traditional school (53%). In fact, a significantly higher number of students in the fine arts school passed the reading test when compared to the average passing rate of all fifth grade students statewide.

TABLE 7

DIFFERENCES IN READING PERFORMANCE AS MEASURED BY SPRING  
CRITERION REFERENCE TEST BETWEEN FIFTH GRADERS IN THE MAGNET  
FINE ARTS AND TRADITIONAL SCHOOLS

Criterion Reference Test	Number of Students	Percent of Students Passing Reading Subtest
Magnet Fine Arts	37	58
Traditional School	42	53
State Average Passing Rate		50



In addition to the above research questions, there was interest in finding out whether there were any gains in reading among all students (i.e., third, fourth, and fifth graders) in the Magnet Fine Arts School. These results are presented in Table 8.

Further analysis was completed. The researcher wanted to know if the students in the Magnet Fine Arts School made yearly gains. These results are reported in Table 8.

TABLE 8

GRADE LEVEL RESULTS FOR THE MAGNET FINE ARTS SCHOOL AS  
MEASURED BY SCORES ON THE IOWA TEST OF BASIC SKILLS FROM FALL  
TO SPRING

	FALL		SPRING		Dependent t-test	P <.05
	Number of Students	Mean	Number of Students	Mean		
Third Grade	34	43.58	34	58.68	7.90	.05
Fourth Grade	39	35.08	39	42.88	4.58	.05
Fifth Grade	37	39.00	37	43.84	2.54	.05
Total	110		110			

The results shown by Table 8 indicate fall to spring test scores as measured by the Iowa Test of Basic Skills for students in each of the three grade levels: third, fourth, and fifth. All the individual grade level scores reflect a statistically significant gain in reading achievement for the students from their fall to spring scores.

In summary, the results of this study have shown that in the scores from the fifth grade students as measured by the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, the implementation of the proposed magnet fine arts program had a positive impact on reading performance. Chapter V will discuss these results and their implications for faculty, research, and curriculum for providing an integrated Fine Arts curriculum.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of a fine arts curriculum consisting of dance, drama, and visual arts on the reading performance of third, fourth, and fifth grade students. My focus with this research project was to ascertain the extent to which such a curriculum would impact reading performance in a predominantly African-American, economically disadvantaged student population.

The subjects were third, fourth and fifth grade students from two elementary schools in central Oklahoma. One of the schools was a Magnet Fine Arts school while the other was a traditional school. The schools were comparable in socio economic status, mobility, and curriculum, except for one factor. The one factor of difference involved the magnet school having a fully implemented fine arts integrated curriculum. The traditional school received only thirty minutes per week of a Fine Arts emphasis through a vocal music class offered by the district. The Magnet Fine Arts School had a unique program funded through a federal grant to help students increase their academic achievement through the integration of the fine arts within the curriculum.

The reading section of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (IOWA) was used as a measure of reading performance for third, fourth, and fifth grades. In addition, for fifth graders, an additional measure of reading performance, The Criterion-Referenced Test

(CRT), was used. This test is administered to all fifth grade students in the state and it is intended to assess mastery of reading competencies and standards. The IOWA test was administered in the fall and spring of the 1999-2000 school year, while the CRT test was administered during the spring of 2000.

The data obtained revealed some interesting findings. First, it was found that third grade students in the Magnet Fine Arts School did not perform as expected. A comparison of the reading performance on this test showed that the mean scores of third grader's in the Magnet Fine Arts School turned out to be higher than did third graders enrolled in the traditional school however, this was not statistically significant. Second, results for fourth graders showed that students in the traditional school achieved higher reading mean scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills than did those in the Magnet Fine Arts School using the integrated curriculum. Finally, statistically significant differences were found in favor of fifth graders in the integrated Fine Arts School. The results showed that fifth grade students in the Magnet Fine Arts School had higher mean scores than did their counterparts in the traditional school as measured by the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. These results were confirmed by the reading pass rates of these when measured by their performance on the Oklahoma Criterion-Referenced Test, which is based upon the state's standards for reading performance.

These findings are somewhat unexpected, especially for third and fourth graders. However, when taking into consideration the entire context in which the study was conducted, there could be two possible explanations for these results. On the one hand the data did show that third and fourth graders in the Magnet Fine Arts School out performed students in the traditional school when using the IOWA Test of Basic Skills as a measure

of reading performance. This finding suggests that the Integrated Fine Arts Curriculum used did have a have a positive impact on fifth graders' reading performance but for third and fourth graders'. In addition, upon a close examination of these data, it would be difficult to conclude that with a high degree of certainty that the Fine Arts curriculum did or did not have an impact on the students' reading performance. Since there are potentially numerous variables that can be addressed, it is unclear if the students' reading performance can be attributed solely to integrated Fine Arts Curriculum.

On the other hand, a slightly different picture emerges when taking into account the qualitative data collected during the course of the study, including class observations, field notes, and informal discussions with some of the teachers, students, and parents. In my observations of the classrooms in action, and in my discussion with teachers in the build, it's been clear to me that teachers felt that their students were "better off" because of this program. They reported to me that a majority of the students were spending more time reading, discussing their reading with peers, writing about their readings, and generally feeling more engaged in their learning. When I had a chance to visit with some of the students in the Magnet Fine Arts School, I noticed that many of them showed signs of more involvement in their learning. For example, they frequently reported to me that they looked forward to going to art classes. Some of them indicated that they liked not having to do so many worksheets, and that they preferred to read real books. They also appreciated the fact that their grades were based on a variety of performances, not just test scores. Finally, several parents reported that their children enjoyed reading more than they did before. Many felt they had experienced success in the fine arts schools, and they seem to attribute this to the Fine Arts curriculum.

Despite these positive observations and comments, one still has to be cautious when drawing definitive conclusions about the impact of the Fine Arts integration on student reading performance. There are potentially several variables that could have been responsible for the differences in reading performance among students in both schools. These variables include the teachers' educational preparation and teaching experiences, the methods used to teach reading, the curriculum materials used, and the students' motivation to learn. These variables, which have not been systematically controlled for in this study, should be subjected to further research.

Other factors to consider include the time it takes for programs such as the one used in this study to show some long-term results. Since this is the first year of implementation of the integrated fine arts curriculum, it would be interesting to track students' reading performance through the second, and third years of implementation. It would be necessary to give allow more time for the program to work as it is intended. As teachers become more comfortable with the integration of the arts across the curriculum, the reading academic achievement is likely to improve. One year of implementation may not be long enough to reach its intended goal of improving reading performance of all students involved. Many times the first year is a planning year, which is used for future growth. Allowing more time for students and teachers to grow and succeed would be advised.

It is important to keep in mind, too, that the schools involved in this study are situated in an urban setting with a student population that is economically and academically disadvantaged. Students in most urban settings have specific challenges and problems that can prevent them from succeeding in school. Common problems such as

poor attendance, low expectations for academic performance, and parental involvement can present major obstacles for these students. For many, a lack of good role models for school attendance, and a reliable home support system may not be detrimental to school success and persistence. New programs such as the one used in this study may need a little extra time to work in such settings than it might in economically well-off settings.

The findings of this study have some important implications for teaching and for curriculum development. Teaching children from low socio-economic family structures requires a more thorough examination of the structures of curriculum development and its presentation. As noted by Knapp, Shields, & Turbull (1995), the conventional instructional framework for learning of skills in comprehension, reasoning, and composition is being shortchanged for economically disadvantaged students.

Implications for teachers include the flexibility in their approach to teaching. Many of the teachers are not used to the type of teaching strategies needed for the fine arts program to work as it is designed. For example, teachers must be willing to change the way they have always taught and be willing to try new teaching strategies, be willing to collaborate with fellow teachers, and to look for new and innovative ways to meet the needs of their students. To help teachers in developing these new strategies for instruction, professional training must be made available to them. They must be presented with credible, research-based information that this type of instruction is effective and can help them to facilitate learning for all their students.

Research on the effectiveness of integrated instruction on student learning has shown that this type of instruction helps students in becoming more engaged in their learning, and more willing to learn. Integrated instruction strategies involving the use of

literature as a way to enhance content learning has been shown to be quite helpful not only in learning the content but also in promoting the will to learn. Rosenblatt (1978) maintained that when given choices, readers learn to respond to literature in unique ways. Such responses promote social collaboration, sharing of ideas, and independent learning. The integration of instruction also allows students to use a variety of learning styles and strategies, which in turn promotes effective learning (York, 1998).

The findings of this study have implications for curriculum development and planning. Curriculum experts agree that effective curricula should not be developed in isolation. Rather, they should be integrated. For example, the skills of reading are best taught in the context of reading literature, and also in the context of teaching content subjects such as science, social studies, and mathematics. The curriculum literature available suggests a move away from traditional curriculum and toward curriculum integration developed collaboratively by experts in various subject areas. Such approaches promote collaboration and team teaching.

As noted earlier, teachers must be willing to learn how to use curriculum integration to address the educational needs. Researchers such as Beane (1997), Fogarty (1991), Gavalek, Raphael, Biondeo, & Wange (1999) have explored the value of curriculum integration. Teachers who embraced the fine arts integrated curriculum in this study found students who were able to remember details of an assignment through the help of integration of the fine arts. Teachers help students to develop their aesthetic reading stance by the type of questions they ask. These questions involving higher order thinking skills and hands-on activities involving real life experiences give the students a



foundation on which to draw for further academic skills. These experiences are likely to be remembered by the student to a great degree than a simple pencil and paper task.

In summary, in this study, the data collected for this study showed mixed results. The integration of the Fine Arts curriculum was found to have a positive impact on the reading performance of fifth graders but not third and fourth grade students. However, as argued above, these findings could be due to a number of variables that may not have been taken into consideration in this study. For example, it remains unclear if the reading performance of all students in the study could be attributed only to the fine arts program implemented. In addition, successful implementation of this program may need more time to implement than one academic year. Finally, standardized test scores such as the ones used here can measure program success; but other informal measures such as observations, anecdotal records, etc., should also be taken into consideration. Both types of data should be used when assessing the impact of such a program on student learning.

For those schools interested in integrating fine arts into their traditional curriculum, it is recommended that they consider the following: First, they should allow for sufficient time and effort when planning for the integration of the fine arts across their school curricula. Planning will allow school personnel to carefully organize for the design, implementation, and evaluation of integrated instruction. Planning should also be guided by a common vision and a set of common goals for improving learning through integration of the arts across the curriculum.

Second, schools should consider providing timely staff development for teachers and other school personnel who will be involved in the design, implementation, and evaluation of integrated fine arts curricula. School personnel need to be committed to the

program, and be willing to spend the time and effort in learning the best ways to infuse the fine arts across their curricula. This means, they should be prepared to change some of the ways they have been teaching, and learn new ways of promoting learning for all students. Professional development is important in helping teachers learn how to organize the curriculum through integration.

Third, schools should ensure that adequate resources are available for the successful implementation of the integrated fine arts curricula. In the case of this study, a multi-year grant was obtained which allowed for the implementation of the program. Grants such as the one supporting this study's program are available from federal, state, and private foundations. The financial resources are necessary for hiring new teachers, for training existing teachers in the integration of instruction, and other related needs. Without such resources, it would be difficult to successfully implement and maintain such programs.

Finally, and perhaps more importantly, it is recommended that schools allow sufficient implementation time for the program to reach its desired results. The improvement of students' reading performance can take requires hard work and can take a significant amount of time to show results, especially in urban, economically and academically disadvantaged school settings such as the one used in this study. In addition, schools interested in studying the impact of integrated instruction programs on student learning should take into account multiple data sources, including quantitative data such as standardized test scores, and qualitative data such as teacher perceptions, students

performances, parental involvement, and other related information. A combination of all of these types of data will provide a more efficient way of assessing the impact of integrated instruction programs on student learning and achievement.

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## APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A  
SURVEY INFORMATION



Dear Selected Teachers:

I am a graduate student at Oklahoma State University who is interested in learning about the relationship between fine arts integrated curriculum and reading achievement. This survey is part of my dissertation study.

As a participant in this study, I would ask you to complete a teacher questionnaire form concerning your thoughts on using a fine arts integrated program. These forms would be kept confidential with only a code identifying the school, but not any individual teacher. Upon completion, the form would be sent to me in the envelop provided. Not participating in the project will not jeopardize any future relationship with Oklahoma State University or your standing with your school.

There is no risk to you or your school, as all information will remain confidential and known only to the researcher. This will be the only form you will be asked to complete. The purpose of this study is to compare and contrast the integration of a fine arts curriculum and a traditional curriculum. This study is designed to determine what way the fine arts curriculum impacts reading achievement of students in the third, fourth, and fifth grades.

For more information on this request, please feel free to contact me or Dr. Kouider Mokhtari, (405 – 744-8004) my committee chair or Dr. Barbara Walker, (405- 744-8004) my thesis advisor.

Sincerely,

Janice Matthews  
(405-728-8122)

## CONSENT FORM

I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Subject

I certify that I have personally explained all elements of this form to the subject or his/her representative before requesting the subject or his/her representative to sign it.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Project Director or his/her authorized representative

## Letter of Consent

Dear Parent:

In cooperation with Oklahoma State University, I will be conducting a research study dealing with the impact of fine arts instruction on third, fourth, and fifth graders' reading achievement. Your son/daughter's participation will enable the researcher to assess the level of fine arts training received separate from the school setting. The results will make a significant contribution to understanding the impact of a fine arts program on reading instruction for children. No risks or expenses are evident for your son/daughter.

This study will involve a brief, survey of approximately five minutes during class time during the school day. The student will answer four questions regarding private fine arts training in the areas of music, dance, drama, and art.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Your son/daughter may withdraw from the study at any time. No names will be associated with the individual surveys. Only the class totals will be used in the researcher's study. The composite data for your child's class will be given a fictitious name (pseudonym.) The only person who will have access to the data will be the researcher and my advisor, Dr. Kouider Mokhtari. All information will be held in the strictest confidence.

If you have any questions, you may contact Janice Matthews at (405) 728-8122. You may also contact Dr. Kouider Mokhtari at (405) 744-8004 or University Research Services, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma 74074; (405) 744-5700.

I have read the above information and understand the purpose and procedure of the study. My signature indicates that my son/daughter may participate in this study.

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Signature of Parent or Guardian

---

Date

## SCRIPT FOR STUDENT SURVEYS

The classroom teacher will read:

In cooperation with Oklahoma State University, you are being asked to complete the following survey. This research study deals with the impact of fine arts instruction on reading achievement. Your participation is strictly voluntarily. There are no expenses involved for you. This survey will take approximately five minutes to complete. Only class totals will be used in the data collection. No names will be associated with your survey. All information will be held in strictest confidence.

The teacher will read procedure:

Please answer yes or no to the following four questions:

1. I have taken private lessons in the area of dance?
2. I have taken private lessons in drama?
3. I have taken private lessons in visual arts?
4. I have taken private lessons in music?

When finished, pass in the completed survey form.

STUDENT SURVEY  
GRADE \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete the following survey and return it to your teacher.

1. I have taken private lessons in the area of dance?      \_\_\_\_\_yes      \_\_\_\_\_no
2. I have taken private lessons in drama?      \_\_\_\_\_yes      \_\_\_\_\_no
3. I have taken private lesson in visual arts?      \_\_\_\_\_yes      \_\_\_\_\_no
4. I have taken private lessons in music?      \_\_\_\_\_yes      \_\_\_\_\_no

## Survey of Students

In response to the surveys regarding exposure to the arts outside of the school setting, the students responded as follows:

Table I

	Dance	Drama	Visual Arts	Music
School A				
Third Grade	1	1	1	0
Fourth Grade	2	1	0	3
Fifth Grade	4	2	0	5
School B				
Third Grade	0	0	1	3
Fourth Grade	4	2	3	5
Fifth Grade	2	1	0	4

## SCRIPT FOR TEACHERS

Principal will read:

You have been asked to participate in a study regarding your training in fine arts. Please take a few minutes and answer the following questions by checking the appropriate blank, filling in the blank, or writing any response you feel appropriate. This survey will take approximately ten minutes. The information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be identified. There is no expense involved with your participation in the study. Also, there is no penalty for not participating in this research study conducted through the Oklahoma State University. If you have any questions, you may contact Janice Matthews at (405) 728-8122.

A self-addressed, stamped envelope is attached to the survey for return in the United States mail.

Your help is appreciated.

## TEACHER CONSENT FORM

Study: Impact of fine arts instruction on third, fourth, and fifth graders' reading achievement.

Investigator: Janice Matthews

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby authorize and direct Janice Matthews to

Perform the procedures listed here:

1. Purpose: This study is designed to understand the impact fine arts instruction has on third, fourth, and fifth graders' reading achievement.
2. Procedures: Your participation in this study will involve filling out one questionnaire, which will ask about your experience with training regarding fine arts integration. Also, you will be asked to collect one study survey sheet from each child in your class.
3. Duration of Participation: It is estimated that your participation in this study will require less than 30 minutes.
4. Confidentiality: Your questionnaire responses will be kept confidential (not shared with others), except for my advisor, Dr. Kouider Mokhtari. Data collected will be reported as a composite score with no individual names given. A fictitious name or pseudonym will be assigned to your class's responses.
5. Risks: This study does not involve any risks or expenses on the part of the participants.
6. Benefits: As a research participant, you will benefit from the study because the information you provide will be utilized to help evaluate the value of an arts integration program.



7. Questionnaire: The questionnaire completed in this study will ask you about  
your exposure and training in regard to a fine arts integration program.

I have been fully informed about the procedures listed here. I am aware of what will be asked to do and of all the risks and benefits of the study. I, also, understand the following statements:

I certify that I am 18 years of age, or older.

My participation today is part of an investigation entitled, Impact of Fine Arts Instruction on Third, Fourth, and Fifth Graders' Reading Achievement.

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of fine arts instruction on Third, fourth, and fifth graders' reading achievement. I understand that Participation is voluntary, that there is no penalty for refusal to participate, and That I am free to withdraw my consent and participation in this project at any Time, without penalty.

I may contact Janice Matthews at (405) 524-9803 should I wish further Information about the study. I may, also, contact University Research Service, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma 74074, phone (405) 744-5700.

I have read and fully understand the agreement form. I sign it freely and Voluntarily. A copy has been given to me. I hereby give permission for my Participation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I certify that I have personally completed all the blanks in this form and have explained them to the subject before requesting that the subject sign the form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Project Researcher

## TEACHER SURVEY

The purpose of this survey is to gather information about your experience or training in regards to fine arts instruction. Please take a few minutes and answer the following questions by checking the appropriate blank, filling in a blank, or writing any responses you feel appropriate. Also, please feel free to make any notes or additional comments at the bottom of this page in the space provided or on the back. The information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. Please do not identify yourself or your school by name.

## Part One: Demographic Information

1. Gender: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_      2. Age: \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade Level Teacher      4. Years teaching \_\_\_\_\_  
 5. Total number of students in your class: \_\_\_\_\_

## PART TWO: Integration of Fine Arts Instruction

6. Has your district provided any workshops or seminars in arts integration?  
 \_\_\_\_\_ No      \_\_\_\_\_ Yes
7. If your district does provide workshops or seminars in arts integration, how many have you attended?  
 \_\_\_\_\_ None      \_\_\_\_\_ 1 or 2      \_\_\_\_\_ 3 - 4      \_\_\_\_\_ 5 or more
8. Do you feel there is value in arts integration instruction for students?  
 \_\_\_\_\_ No      \_\_\_\_\_ Yes
9. If given the opportunity to add instruction in the arts, would you be willing to participate?  
 \_\_\_\_\_ No      \_\_\_\_\_ Yes
10. What, if any, obstacles do you foresee in having arts integration in your classroom?

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**APPENDIX B**  
**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD**

Oklahoma State University  
Institutional Review Board

Protocol Expires:

Date: Tuesday, May 02, 2000

IRB Application No: ED00256

Proposal Title: IMPACT OF FINE ARTS INTEGRATION ON THIRD, FOURTH, AND FIFTH GRADERS'  
READING ACHIEVEMENT

Principal  
Investigator(s):

Janice Matthews  
6709 NW 115  
Oklahoma City, OK 73162

Dr. Kouider Mokhtari  
248 Willard  
Stillwater, OK 74078

Reviewed and  
Processed as: Expedited (Spec Pop)

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

---

Signature:



Carol Olson, Director of University Research Compliance

Date

Approvals are valid for one calendar year, after which time a request for continuation must be submitted. Any modifications to the research project approved by the IRB must be submitted for approval with the advisor's signature. The IRB office MUST be notified in writing when a project is complete. Approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. Expedited and exempt projects may be reviewed by the full Institutional Review Board.

2

VITA

Janice L. Matthews

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

**Thesis: IMPACT OF FINE ARTS INTEGRATION ON THIRD, FOURTH, AND FIFTH GRADERS' READING ACHIEVEMENT IN AN URBAN MAGNET SCHOOL**

**Major Field: Curriculum and Instruction**

**Biographical:**

**Personal Data:** Born in Wetumpka, Alabama on November 24, 1951.

**Education:** Graduated from Central High School, Tulsa, Oklahoma in May 1970; received Bachelor of Science degree with a major in Elementary Education from Southern Nazarene University, Bethany, Oklahoma in May 1974; received Master of Science degree with a major in Education from University of Texas at Tyler, Tyler, Texas in August 1980; received certification in Mid-Management from University of Texas at Tyler, May 1986. Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree with a major in Curriculum and Instruction at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in May 2001.

**Professional Experience:** Elementary classroom teacher, Oklahoma City Public Schools, 1974-1975; Tyler Public Schools, Tyler, Texas, 1976-1990; Middle School Curriculum Director/Assistant Principal, Tyler Public Schools and Chapel Hill Independent School District, 1990-1994; Middle School Teacher, Florence Public Schools, Florence, Alabama, 1994-1995; Administrator, Oklahoma City Public Schools, 1995-present.