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Research Studies in Music Education 2002; 18; 13

DOI: 10.1177/1321103X020180010301

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Toward integrating Music and other art forms into the language curriculum

Anne Lowe

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the contextual elements that contribute to a successful experience evidenced by both research and practice cultures as a result of the integration of music and other art forms into the language arts curriculum. In order to define the integrated experience as successful, it was also necessary to determine whether the interdisciplinary art/language learning strategies utilized reinforced both language and music learning, and if the integrated experience met the objectives of both research and practice communities. Three second grade classroom teachers from the midwest of the United States and their students chose to participate in this qualitative collaborative research where both the teachers and the researcher were reflective partners in the co-construction of knowledge pertaining to educational practice. Twelve 45 minutes integrated arts/language lessons were devised for each of the three classrooms over a period of one month (three sessions a week) and were taught by the researcher and a graduate student music educator. Data were collected from video tapes of all classroom interventions, informal and semi-structured interviews with the classroom teachers, students, research assistant, school principal and school music specialist, and from written materials and reflective journals. Results indicated that the children learned in both music and language and were able to make connections between all forms of communication, predictions and choices made in both music and language, and between form in music and form in language. Moreover, pedagogical strategies and styles used in the intervention, in addition with supportive, positive, respectful and flexible attitudes from all participants of both research and practice cultures at all levels of the research process, contributed to the success of this integrated study.

Successful learning experiences are the direct results of a planned curriculum which includes pedagogical activities that make sense and are meaningful to the learner (Dwyer, 1995). In an effort to encourage teaching and learning through experiential and meaningful pedagogical strategies, educators have explored an interdisciplinary approach to education (Beane, 1995; Erickson, 1996; Jacobs, 1995; Wood, 1997). They have found that, through interdisciplinary curricular and educational strategies, students seem to develop abilities to analyse, organize, and interpret information received across all the various disciplines (Erickson, 1996). Moreover, they are able to make connections between subject areas and, ultimately, with everyday life experiences outside of the school day (Wood, 1997).

Toward integrating Music and other art forms into the language curriculum

Music educators are also interested in establishing links between school music and everyday experiences lived in school or outside of school. These connections may offer students the educational foundation to become lifetime music lovers, that is, human beings able to enrich their lives with the aesthetic benefits of the musical experience. Some music educators have tried to integrate music to other subject areas and more specifically with language arts (Failoni, 1994; Kite, Smucker, Steiner & Bayne, 1994; Lowe, 1997a, 1997b, 1998a, 2000). Although most of the attempts have shown positive learning outcomes and benefits, there is a lack of research-based studies on the learning/teaching elements that must be in place in order to ensure an overall successful integrated experience.

This research study was developed by a university researcher in response to an elementary school in the midwest of the United States' solicitation to assist teachers in incorporating music and the arts into the curriculum. The school board of this community had opted for a 'schools of choice' orientation where parents have the opportunity to choose the school whose particular theme best meets the needs of their children. The elementary school which had requested assistance had adopted 'Academics through the Arts' as their school theme. The promotional pamphlet of the school indicated that the teaching staff believed that integrated arts education improved learning skills, promoted student achievement, enhanced social skills, built self-esteem, developed confident problem solvers, and stimulated creativity. The curriculum and instructional strategies of this school were designed to develop these abilities while emphasizing the need for students to reach their full potential.

The instructional techniques of the school included a 'balanced calendar' (school breaks distributed throughout the year) which offered a continuous learning cycle, teaching through thematic units to promote connections between school curriculum and life outside of school, and experiential learning and teaching strategies that meet the learning needs of different students (multiple intelligence, learning styles, special needs). This university/public school partnership project in a school which valued the arts and more specifically the integration of the arts into the curriculum was an ideal opportunity to conduct a research study and to work with classroom teachers in an in-service training effort to help them develop and teach integrated lessons. In fact, collaborative university/public school partnerships have already shown positive results in educational improvement and change during the last decade (Altet, 1994; Fullan, 1990; Little, 1990; Pacquet, Altet, Charlier & Perrenoud, 1996; Richardson, 1994). Thus, based on research supporting positive language and music learning outcomes as a result of the integration of music into the language classroom (Failoni, 1994; Kite, Smucker, Steiner & Bayne, 1994; Lowe, 1997a, 1997b, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c, 2000), the purpose of this research was to determine the contextual elements that contribute to a successful experience evidenced by both research and practice cultures as a result of the integration of music and other art forms into the language arts curriculum. In order to define the integrated experience as successful, it was also necessary to determine whether the interdisciplinary music/arts/language learning strategies utilized in this setting reinforced learning in both language and the arts. Moreover, it was deemed important to examine whether the integrated experience met the objectives of both research and practice communities.

Method

Research orientation

To understand the complex issues of this university/public school partnership study, a qualitative collaborative research design was chosen where both the teachers and the researcher were reflective partners in the co-construction of knowledge pertaining to educational practice (Cole, 1989; Cole & Knowles, 1993; Davidson Wasser & Bresler, 1996; Desgagné, 1997; Lytle & Cochran-Smith, 1992; Schön, 1983, 1987, 1994). This type of research values the competency of the actor-practitioner as a key informant of the investigation (Giddens, 1987). Moreover, the researcher must consider the practitioner's point of view not only when collecting and analyzing the data, but in all steps of the research process from its preliminary planning to the publishing of the results (Bednarz, Desgagné, & Lebuis, 1990).

Another reason for choosing a collaborative research design for this study was its dual outcomes. According to Desgagné (1997), collaborative research is beneficial to both the researcher and the practitioner. It unites both research goals (production of knowledge) and educational goals (professional development and reflexive opportunities for the teacher to improve his/her practice). It was thus anticipated that collaborative research methodology

would help to determine contextual elements that contribute to a successful integrated learning/teaching experience as the result of the integration of music and the other arts into the language arts curriculum, and, at the same time, give teachers the professional development needed to successfully incorporate the arts into their language curriculum.

Participants

In order to take under consideration the needs of the research community (university scholars) and the expectations of the public school community (classroom teachers), several mediation challenges were faced by the researcher. These challenges began with the choice of classroom teacher participants. Even though the preliminary research agenda was devised to include one classroom teacher, it became evident at the first meeting held with the classroom teachers, that all three second grade teachers of the school wanted to participate. Thus, since time was not a factor, the researcher adapted to the situation and accepted that the three second grade teachers and their students be involved in the study.

The classroom teachers, as part of their professional development agenda, defined their role as a participative one where they would watch and learn while participating in the activities with the children. They added that they would contribute in defining the language arts learning outcomes and would share materials. However, since the researcher had expertise in music education and in devising integrated music/language lessons, the development and teaching of the lesson plans would be her responsibility. While the researcher had anticipated a more collaborative effort in the development and delivery of the lesson plans, she needed to listen and adapt to the needs of the practitioners.

The teachers chose a fables unit as the language focus of the integrated lessons. They informed the researcher that they were planning to put on a production in which each class would 'act out' an Aesop fable. In addition, they spoke about 'art décor' as another element that would need to be considered for the production. Should the researcher change her initial music/language focus and consider an all art forms/language concentration? In an effort to adapt to the professional needs of the teachers and develop a feasible and rigorous study, the researcher changed the research orientation and included music, drama, and visual arts. Therefore, all art forms were integrated with language as the focus of the integrated learning.

Since the researcher would teach the integrated lessons and that the classroom teachers would be active participants during the lessons, the help of a graduate student research assistant to video-tape the lessons and help in some of the other tasks involved to conduct the research project was required. From the beginning, the assistant graduate student, who had some experience in music education, showed extreme interest to get involved in the integration experience, not only as a technical assistant, but as a teaching partner, thus, a true participant in the development and delivery of the integrated lessons. Her enthusiasm, eagerness, organisation skills, and competency in the field of music education influenced both the classroom teachers' and the researcher's decision to change again the research design. The integrated lessons, consequently, would be team taught by the researcher and Kim, the graduate student music specialist. In addition, Kim would participate as a reflective partner and contribute with the researcher and the classroom teachers to the co-construction of knowledge of the event under investigation.

Data collection and analysis

Because the researcher could not discern at the outset of the study exactly what data may prove useful (Bresler, 1992; Sprindler, 1982), an emergent research design using qualitative methods of data collection and analysis were judged appropriate to address the research concerns of this study (Clandinin & Connelly 2000; Eisenhart & Howe, 1992; Fisner, 1991; Goetz & LeCompte, 1984; Robson, 1993). Data was thus collected through:

1. Video tapes of all classroom interventions;
2. Audio tapes of in-depth semi-structured interviews with the three classroom teachers, research assistant, school music specialist, school principal and a representative sample of students from each of the three classrooms;
3. Informal interviews held with the teachers, school principal, parents and children;
4. Written materials including lesson plans, copies of songs, related school policy materials and a personal journal kept by the researcher and the research assistant.

The collected qualitative data was analysed primarily through processes of constant comparison (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987), construction-enumeration (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and triangulation (Bresler & Stake, 1992; Mathison, 1988). Two and three dimensional charts were developed looking for patterns, themes, and developing categories to account for the data coming from the various sources (Spradley, 1980; Strauss, 1987). Throughout the experiment, understandings were formulated and their usefulness was tested in further discussion with all participants or while observing video tapes of classroom interventions (Bresler & Stake, 1992; Burgess, 1985; Erickson, 1986).

Out of the first phase of the analysis of the data, several categories emerged. These categories were converted into questions addressing pedagogical issues:

- What particular language and music concepts should be emphasized in the integrated lessons?
- What types of pedagogical activities, teaching styles, and strategies can be used to reach integrated learning outcomes?
- Did learning occur in both language, music and the arts?
- Were children able to make connections?
- To what extent can teachers and students with different profiles participate and benefit from an integrated learning experience?

In the second phase of the analysis, these questions were used as a framework where elements common to all sources of data were coded and categorized. The following section lists the emerging pedagogical issues and describes the findings related to each issue.

Pedagogical Issues and Results

What particular language and music concepts should be emphasized in the integrated lessons?

Twelve 45 minutes lessons were devised for each of the three classrooms over a period of one month (three sessions a week) with the prime objective of integrating music and other art forms such as drama, visual art, and dance into a fables language arts unit. Classroom teachers chose the Aesop fable they wanted to work on among the three that were analyzed formally in their language arts curriculum textbook. Janice chose the Lion and the Mouse, Loni, the Tortoise and the Hare, and Peggy, The Ant and the Grasshopper. Specific language arts and music learning outcomes were defined. Language arts objectives consisted of the reinforcement of vocabulary and sentence structure (all three fables), contractions (Lion and Mouse), homophones (Tortoise and Hare), and antonyms (The Ant and the Grasshopper). "We want the children to know that a fable tells a story and teaches us a lesson" said Janice. Specific music concepts included timbre (percussion instruments), dynamics (forte, piano, crescendo, decrescendo, sforsando), style (classical, folk, rock), rhythm (whole note, half note, quarter note, eighth note, rest), melody (ascending, descending, repeated notes) and form (ABA, AA¹, BB¹), concepts also addressed as part of the music curriculum taught by the music specialist in the music classroom. Several common elements in both language and all art forms, such as

communication, predictions, choices, oral composition, and form were also addressed with a strong emphasis on connections between language and the arts.

What types of pedagogical activities, and teaching styles and strategies can be used to reach integrated learning outcomes?

Lesson plans for the three fables included the following activities: acting, pantomime, instrumental and vocal sound effects, instrumental accompaniments, chanting, singing, dancing, listening, drawing, improvising, and composing. For example, children acted out the characters of the fables through pantomime and verbal declarations, and produced instrumental and vocal sound effects to accompany them. Children also composed sentences or poems pertaining to either particular events or the moral of the fable and added music to their verbal composition. Visual art and dance were also incorporated into the integrated lessons. Moreover, sentences and poems that were either part of activities suggested in the language arts textbook or composed or improvised by the children were chanted and accompanied by rhythmic instruments. Listening activities included musical selections such as *The Carnival of the Animals* (Camille St-Saëns) and *The Red Pony* (Aaron Copland), where children were challenged to describe through visual or verbal responses how the composer described the title of his composition through music. When engaged in these listening activities, children discussed the 'power of music' to engage our imagination in many ways.

Kim and my pedagogical styles and strategies used in the classroom seemed to complement one another. Kim was high key, spoke very quickly, was extremely dynamic, and very organized. Reaching every child and controlling the learning environment were very important for her. She asked excellent questions and made sure that the children took ownership for their learning. For example, while teaching instrumental accompaniments, she encouraged children who had learned the music to teach the accompaniment to others in the class. Kim believed strongly in learning by doing and thus constantly looked for ways to physically involve the children during the lesson.

My style was more introverted than Kim's. Even though I engaged the learners in some sort of physical activity, I always made room for reflection and critical thinking. For example, while listening to excerpts of *The Carnival of the Animals* children were asked to identify the animal described by the music and to specify 'what in the music gave you a clue'. Moreover, activities were often followed by situational analysis where students were guided to transfer knowledge to other learning situations and to make connections between music and language. For example, after performing the fable which included dance, acting, singing, playing instruments, visual art, and literature, I guided the children into a reflection on the 'power' of the combination of *all* art forms to tell a story.

After a joint analysis of our team teaching experience and the trials and tribulations involved, Kim and I both concluded that it was a very valuable experience. Since Kim emphasized doing and I added reflecting, the combination of both of these teaching styles and strategies characterizes best the dynamics involved in the teaching of the integrated lessons.

Did learning occur in both music and language?

Classroom teachers, and the school's music specialist, indicated that music behaviors such as singing and playing musical instruments improved as a result of the integrated arts lessons. Furthermore, children developed compositional skills; they could compose melodic/rhythmic patterns to accompany a poem or prose.

When interviewed individually (n=16), children from all the classrooms could explain form in music and gave me examples of problem solving activities we had done in class. A few children from each class were also able to identify different musical styles, such as classical, rock, and folk that we had discussed while making choices during compositional activities. The school

music specialist, said: "Children were quick to tell me, when we covered musical form, that they had learned it with you. We listened to several musical excerpts and they had no trouble identifying the form". Janice added: "Students would talk a lot about what they learned with you when you were not there. They would tell me about style and would spontaneously find the form in poems studied in class or transfer their knowledge of shapes that identify musical form to shapes in math."

Data from the video tapes seemed to reveal that most children could read well and were able to orally compose short poems or prose. Even though pre-experimentation observations and informal interviews with the teachers indicated that children had developed a priori these language abilities, all teachers said that the integrated lessons reinforced both reading and oral composition.

Formal interviews with a sample of children (n=16) from the three classrooms revealed that most children from the classrooms which emphasized either contractions, homophones, or antonyms could tell me what these concepts meant and could give me examples from the lessons developed to illustrate these concepts. One child from Janice's class performed the song that we had composed while studying contractions. One student from Loni's class performed the nonsense song they composed using homophones. On the other hand, a child from Peggy's class gave me examples of antonyms in language and in music: Front, back; open, shut; up, down; high, low; loud, soft.

All teachers told me that the children had met the learning objectives planned for language arts. They all observed that children were learning and didn't realize it.

Were children able to make connections?

Children were encouraged throughout to make connections between all the art forms as ways of communication or venues to tell a story. They were also engaged in activities where they could discover the links between choices, predictions, style, and form that exist in drama, music, visual art, dance, and literature. In fact, as soon as Day 4, most children of all three classrooms were making connections not only between different forms of communication or storytelling, but between predictions and choices that we make in both language and music. For example, when reading the fables, children tried to predict what would happen next and in the same manner, when singing a song, tried to predict how the composer ended his or her composition. In addition, all children formally interviewed at the end of the experience (n=16) were able to tell me how they made connections between art forms and literature and transferred knowledge they learned about form in music and form in visual art, to form in language. For example: "In music, we hear a piece that has a ABA form. If we read the refrain of the poem *Chew and Nibble* which is A, then the first verse which is B, then return to *Chew and Nibble*, A, we could also have as ABA form", replied one child. Problem solving and reflective thinking skills were also observed as soon as Day 6. Children from Loni's class were spontaneously solving form problems and could tell us why they made their decisions. Also, children from all classes were able to place shapes (OAO) to represent the form of *Elephants* from *The Carnival of the Animals* and transfer the shapes to letters (ABA).

Independent learning became more obvious as the children acquired more experience with the integrated lessons. By Day 7, students could, on their own, compose sentences to illustrate homophones, antonyms, or contractions, find the form in selected musical and linguistic examples, choose instruments, or find movements to represent characters from the fables or from excerpts of *The Carnival of the Animals*.

To what extent can teachers and students with different profiles participate and benefit from an integrated teaching/learning experience?

Teachers' Participation: Respect, collaboration, satisfaction, confidence

All teachers participated in the project according to their personality, expertise, and comfort level. Janice told us, during our first meeting, that she would jump in and participate with the children, which is exactly what she did. Loni and Peggy said that they would watch and learn. Peggy, sceptical at the beginning of the study, learned quickly what was expected from her and was genuinely very much part of the whole process. She did watch and learn! Her constant preoccupation of how she could adapt our lesson plans to her own teaching and of ways to integrate the arts/language activities into the production incited her to make comments or ask questions such as: "I think that I would be comfortable to try out this activity on my own. I'm sure the children would get better at it with practice"... or "Can you go over the instrumental accompaniment of this song so that I can practice it with the children and use it in the production?"

Loni, throughout the experience, told us that she liked what we did and basically agreed with the activities suggested in the lesson plans, very much the same behaviors manifested during our first encounters. Although she was somewhat present in the classroom (Day 1 to Day 3; Day 8 to Day 12) to help us either in forming work groups or in writing on the board an oral composition constructed by the students, she was absent from Day 4 to Day 8 due to death in the family and other responsibilities given to her by the school administrators. Even though Kim and I would have wished that Loni would have been more engaged in the teaching/learning experience, we learned that it was important to respect her personal level of involvement with the hope that she would benefit from the experience.

Susan, Loni's student teacher, was always present and participated largely to help us with discipline problems. Loni hoped that Susan would learn from us. In fact, Susan did share that she had learned some class management techniques and ways to incorporate the arts into the language arts classroom as a result of the project.

When it came time for the production, all teachers took on their responsibilities in preparing the performance of their fable for the parents. They got involved in making costumes, composing a script, organizing the décor with visual arts projects prepared during the integrated lessons and in incorporating the arts/language activities into their act. Although all teachers were given the opportunity to ask for my help with the incorporation and performance of the arts/language activities experienced during the lessons, Loni is the only one that benefited from this assistance probably because she wasn't always there to experience and learn the activities with her students. On the other hand, Peggy and Janice chose to work independently. They knew that Kim and I would be at the dress rehearsal to offer additional help if needed.

The school's music specialist was very supportive throughout the experience and provided us with all musical materials needed for the project. She encouraged the children to share with her what they had learned and achieved during the integrated lessons and emphasized some of the concepts, such as form, style, and program music during her music class. Although she had shown interest to come into the classroom to see, experience, and learn more about integrated music/arts/language activities, she did not find the time to do so. Nevertheless, she was always present, maybe not physically but in spirit, and showed continuous support towards myself, Kim, the classroom teachers, and the children by doing everything she could to make the integrated experience a successful one.

Even though the levels of participation experienced by the classroom teachers varied due to personal and professional priorities, each of them showed full support and collaboration throughout the learning experience. Peggy, who was the most sceptical before the experimental period, became very supportive and actively involved very early in the process. On a daily basis, all teachers were willing to help us find resource materials and in giving us ideas on how to deal with particular students or particular events. It is clear that a positive cooperative attitude comes forth throughout the data.

Throughout my personal reflections, I recognized my concern to gain cooperation from all participants in order to ensure that this project was a successful experience for everyone. In doing so, I constantly tried to highlight each teacher's strengths in order to encourage their participation in the classroom. Janice's creative ideas during the compositional activities, Peggy's contribution in the visual arts integration projects, Loni's class management assistance and Kim's ability to engage the children in performance activities were emphasized throughout the project.

The data also reveal a genuine respect for one another. In fact, all participants were willing to learn from each other. Classroom teachers shared at several occasions that they were learning several ways to integrate music and arts into their language curriculum. In addition, Kim's frustrations brought me to constantly question my teaching. I felt that I was learning from my mistakes and from seeing Kim teach.

Teachers also expressed their satisfaction with the inservice training they had received during the integrated experience. "We experienced, with the children, the development of the integrated arts/language fables unit from the beginning to the final production for the parents. You actually came into our classroom and worked with our curriculum. This was very beneficial to me", said Peggy. "It was more than a one shot deal or a one hour workshop that we usually get to fulfill our professional development needs. These workshops are often outside of our reality and do not fit our curriculum needs", she added. "I feel very lucky that you arrived on our doorstep and were willing to jump into our reality. I believe that this is the only way that we can all benefit from the experience, even the children", said Janice.

Teachers also shared the art activities such as songs, sound effects, the creation of new words to a known song, and acting that they would feel comfortable to incorporate into their language arts curriculum as a result of the integrated experience. Each revealed that, as a result of the integrated learning process, they had acquired more confidence in their artistic abilities and would try, on their own, many of the integrated activities. In fact, after the completion of the project, teachers continued to integrate singing, acting, playing of musical instruments, and visual arts into their language curriculum always according to their personal levels of comfort.

We can thus conclude that all teachers who are willing to participate in a collaborative integrated arts/language learning experience will benefit from the experience each at their own level depending on their personal and professional involvement.

Children: Similarities and differences

Children from all three classrooms showed enthusiasm throughout the integrated experience. Kim and I were often greeted with "Hurrah!", "Ah! I love it when you play the guitar", "It's fun, Kim makes us do funny things" or with smiles and eagerness to get involved in the activities. When asked, on Day 12 or during the formal interviews, what they liked best about the experience, many had difficulty determining the best liked activities. "It's hard to say, I liked it all!" On the other hand, 14 out of 16 children liked the activities involving the musical instruments the best, one, the chants and one, the acting. These favourite activities were followed by acting (n=8), singing (n=4), making up songs (n=3) and movement (n=2). When asked why?, they replied: "Because it is more fun than just reading the fable" "It is more interesting because it is more funky." "Because I just love to make up new stuff on my own." "It really helped me to learn the moral of the story and the story itself." Other children said that they liked the fact that they were given an opportunity to make many choices when acting, singing, dancing, composing or producing sound effects on the instruments. "Children spoke with enthusiasm about what they were doing with you... I could tell that they loved every minute of it", said the school music specialist.

Another activity that received high acclaim from the children is musical improvisation and composition. When asked how they felt about their compositions, they replied: "Happy", "Good", "Proud", "Great", "Excited", "My parents won't believe it". The music specialist added: "They wanted to sing their song in music class. They were so excited about it."

Even though children from all three classrooms were highly motivated and learned in both music and language, all sources of data collection showed that children from each classroom manifested different paces of learning. At the beginning, Janice's students were slower in grasping music and language concepts and in going through the problem solving process but were faster learners as they gained more experienced with the integrated lessons. Loni's students were generally fast learners from the onset and remained the same throughout the experience. They were quick at learning songs, chants, grammatical and music concepts and came up immediately with creative ideas when engaged in compositional tasks. Peggy's students, on the other hand, were the slowest learners throughout the integrated experience. They needed more stimulation and more examples illustrating the concepts emphasized in the lesson plans in order to understand and to gain independence when applying knowledge in a new context.

As the children from the three classrooms manifested different paces of learning, they also demonstrated very different classroom behaviors. Janice's students worked very well in groups and were caring and respectful of one another. On the other hand, Peggy's students had difficulty working in groups and sharing with others. Because of Janice and Peggy's emphasis on critical thinking in their own teaching, their groups could analyse the outcomes of an activity and see the connections.

While most students from Janice's and Peggy's classes were good listeners, Loni's group would only listen if given a reason to do so. They were very energetic and easily disruptive if not engaged actively and physically in the learning process.

Even though learning pace and classroom behavior differences were observed among the three classrooms, students from all three classrooms were motivated and happy about the experience and, above all, learned in both language and music. Consequently, the results of this study seem to suggest that the types of activities, teaching styles and strategies used in this study contributed to motivate the children to learn. "They learned without knowing it", said Loni.

Conclusion

In the light of answers given to questions relating to methodological and pedagogical issues developed in the previous sections of this paper, we can now attempt to address the ultimate purpose of this study: What are the contextual elements that contribute to a successful integrated arts/language experience encountered by both research and practice communities? Furthermore, did the integrated arts/language lessons reinforce both music and language learning?

The results indicate that this study was a successful experience for all participants. Children were motivated and engaged in the integrated activities and were genuinely proud of their achievements. Classroom teachers received the in-service training they wished to acquire from the experience and were excited and thankful for having given the opportunity to be involved in the experience. The music specialist was very content mostly because the classroom teachers had received some in-service training and in reason of the positive outcomes of the study. Kim, my teaching assistant, learned a great deal about teaching and learning. In addition, the school principal, a true advocate of 'Academics through the arts', was very satisfied with the outcomes of the study. For her, the fables production presented to parents, friends, teachers and students of the school, was a physical/visual representation of what can be achieved as the result of the integration of the arts into the language arts curriculum. I, on the other hand,

learned much more than anticipated about teaching, team teaching, learning and, at the same time, was able to meet the research objectives of the study. Even though the novelty of the teaching/learning environment may have had an effect on the results of this study, we can nevertheless acknowledge that this collaborative interdisciplinary research project was not only beneficial to the practitioners and the researcher, but also to the children, school and community.

The results also indicated that the children learned in both language and music through the interdisciplinary lessons. Notwithstanding the differences in learning pace and classroom behavior among the three groups, most children showed understanding of the plot and moral of the fable and of antonyms, homophones and contractions studied in language arts class. Moreover, they learned about musical form and style. While they progressed in their abilities to sing, play musical instruments, dance, act and draw through the integrated experience, they also learned how to compose and improvise musical/linguistic works.

As a result of the integrated experience, children were also able to make connections between all forms of communication, predictions and choices made in both music and language, and between form in music and form in language. Moreover, problem solving and critical thinking skills were developed and independent learning became more and more evident as the study evolved.

Several contextual elements that contributed to the successful integrated arts/language experience were identified. Despite the differences of student behavior among the three groups, results indicated that children were motivated to learn. Consequently, the types of activities including acting, dancing, drawing, singing, playing musical instruments and composing incorporated into a fables unit in the language arts curriculum contributed to the motivation demonstrated by the children.

Pedagogical styles and strategies used in the interventions were also recognized as another element that helped to make the experience a successful one. A mixture of Kim's extravert teaching style, where learning by doing was emphasized and my mostly introverted teaching style, where reflecting on the learning experience was stressed, seemed to help the students learn the music and language concepts and establish connections between them. In addition, the incorporation of several compositional activities appeared to help students to synthesize their learning.

Supportive, positive, respectful, and flexible attitudes from all participants seem also to be key elements that contributed to the success of this integrated study. Furthermore, participation from all classroom teachers and the music specialist at different levels according to each person's needs, personality and personal and professional priorities was respected throughout the study. If all teachers would have been asked to participate at the same level, maybe the outcomes of the study would have been different.

Teachers insisted that a resource arts consultant must be hired to work with the classroom teachers in their classroom environment in order to ensure a successful arts/language integrated experiences in the schools. They added that the manner in which the interventions were planned and delivered in this study was ideal for them. Therefore, we can conclude that the collaborative involvement of Kim and I (resource teachers) in the classroom setting also contributed to the success of this project. Since this type of assistance is not always available, teachers added that time for the music specialist to meet with classroom teachers to plan integrated units must be organized and allocated in each school.

Adaptation seemed to be a key issue prevalent throughout the research process. Adaptation to the needs of the teachers influenced the research design, the development of the lesson plans which included activities involving all art forms, and the performance of the Fables for the public as an end-product of the integrated experience. Adjustment to the demands of the language curriculum had a direct impact on the choice of the fables unit and themes and

concepts studied in the integrated lessons. Moreover, being attentive to the learning rhythms and styles of the children had an effect on pedagogical strategies implemented in the classroom. In fact, adaptation to the whole learning environment, as was done in this study, is required in any collaborative research if dual outcomes are to be expected (Bednarz et al., 1999).

The data also revealed that, at the end of the project, both children and classroom teachers acknowledged the benefits of this arts/language integrated experience. Moreover, teachers gained confidence and expressed their levels of comfort in trying out some of the integrated activities on their own.

Since learning comparisons were not sought between children who learned music, arts and language in a fragmented manner as opposed to those also learning these subject areas in an integrated fashion, the results of this study cannot confirm that children learning music and language through interdisciplinary lessons performed better than those learning these subjects through separate music and language classroom instruction such as studies undertaken by Lowe (1997b, 1998b, 1998c). However, this study does reveal that music and language learning outcomes determined for all interdisciplinary lesson plans were met. In addition, the children were enthusiastic and motivated throughout the experience, made connections between common elements existing in arts and language and acknowledged the learning experience as meaningful because they were able to connect music education with daily learning. In this not one of the ultimate goals of music and arts education? Moreover, the results of this study determined several contextual elements emerging throughout the experiment. In fact, student motivation, a teaching pedagogical style which includes learning by doing followed by reflection, pedagogical strategies which involve singing, acting, playing musical instruments, dancing and composing were conducive to the positive outcome of this study. In addition, supportive, positive, respectful, flexible attitudes, respect of individual levels of participation of the teachers involved and a collaborative teaching effort by resource teachers working in the classroom environment contributed to the successful integrated arts/language learning experience. Notwithstanding the positive results of this study, more research needs to be done to investigate whether this type of integrated experience would produce similar results in a school environment where the arts were not at the centre of the curriculum.

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About the author

Anne Lowe holds a Bachelor of Music Education from l'Université de Moncton (1975), a Masters in Music from the University of Western Ontario (1985) and a Doctoral degree in Music Education from The University of Illinois (1995). She has a broad experience in teaching music in New Brunswick and Ontario Canada, at the primary, secondary and university levels. She presently is Associate Dean and Chair of Graduate Studies at the Faculty of Education of l'Université de Moncton and teaches music education methods classes to both education and music majors. Dr. Lowe has published and presented at several conferences on the incorporation of music education into the language arts curriculum.