THE STUDENTS WERE, IN FACT…

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“The Students Were, in Fact, Extremely Brilliant”: Arts Integration Builds Deeper

Reflection on Early Preservice Field Experiences

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Abstract

This mixed methods research study explored the written reflections of four cohorts of preservice teachers ($n = 76$) participating in an early field experience in a teacher education program in the mid-South. Given that students could attend traditional observation-based field experiences or hands-on experiences rooted in arts integration, we sought to understand if there were any quantitative or qualitative differences between the two sets of students over time. Analysis revealed that the treatment (arts integration) group wrote deeper reflections than did the control and that those reflections focused on beliefs about learning, instruction, students, and the role of a professional teacher—important aspects of educator development.

Keywords: Teacher education, arts integration, mixed-methods

“The Students Were, in Fact, Extremely Brilliant”: Arts Integration Builds Deeper Reflection on Early Preservice Field Experiences

The arts are a pathway to many potential benefits for students, teachers, and schools. In their ArtsIN framework, Hartle, Pinciotti and Gorton (2014) argue that the arts “have the power to transform an experience, self and others” (p. 291) because they are a universal window into the human experience: engage the entire body; enable communication of ideas, thoughts, feelings and imagination; and involve a constructive, creative and critical learning process. The ArtsIN framework seeks to value arts infusion—instances where art is added to or blended into parts of the curriculum—and arts integration, where curriculum is taught through an art form with evolving objectives in both. The arts and aesthetic education can create awareness, foster empathy (Bertling, 2015), and promote socially just classrooms and practices (Pinhasi-Vittorio & Vernola, 2013). Arts integration—the teaching of an arts discipline in tandem with content-area curriculum—is a method by which classroom teachers can access the benefits of the arts.

Schools of education are in constant need of developing experiences for preservice teachers that improve and inform their future practice. As evidenced in the following literature review, the field understands the benefits of arts integration to student achievement and learning is growing, as is the literature on the use of arts integration with inservice and preservice teachers. Recently, Grohman (2015) described an experience of having preservice teachers model their educational philosophies with clay so “they will be able to base their teaching on those beliefs as they navigate the tough eddies of standards, funding crises and political attacks on their schools and students” (p. 14). The use of arts integration in teacher training is still limited in scope, due in part to the current focus on testing and accountability in public schools.
(Wakeford, 2004), and our knowledge of how arts integration affects preservice teachers is still emerging.

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects that arts integration has on preservice teacher reflection when students work with arts integration concepts in the university classroom and engage in arts-integrated practice in their first significant field experience in local schools. Studio Project (all names are pseudonyms), the program developed by faculty members in concert with the local public schools, is presently in its sixth year of existence. The program was designed, in part, to put future teachers in classrooms with more purpose than to merely observe teachers teaching, and an arts focus was a natural manner of doing just that (Holland, Shepard, Goering, & Jolliffe, 2012). Since the college students participating in the Studio Project hailed from the secondary content areas of English, foreign language, math, science, and social studies, arts integration was the foundational building block for the program.

**Review of the Literature**

No single definition exists for arts integration, though many have studied and written about it. In describing arts integration as “a complicated term with no one universal meaning” LaJevic (2013) defines the construct as “a dynamic process of merging art with (an)other discipline(s) in an attempt to open up a space of inclusiveness in teaching, learning, and experiencing.” (p. 4). The transformative power of arts integration is an important aspect that should not be missed when striving for definition. Rabkin (2004) refers to arts integration as a “change strategy” in which “students receive rigorous instruction in the arts and thoughtful integrated curriculum that makes deep structural connections between the arts and other subjects […]It is designed to use the emotional, social, and sensory dimensions of the arts to engage students, and leverage development and learning across the curriculum” (p. 8-9). At its core, arts
integration is powered by the belief that artistic experience and knowledge empower students to learn generally as well as artistically (Wakeford, 2004).

Fortunately, there are organizations that have taken up the mantle of arts integration, devoting time and resources to its implementation and study in schools. The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts defines arts integration as “an approach to teaching in which students construct and demonstrate understanding through an art form. Students engage in a creative process which connects an art form and another subject area and meets evolving objectives in both” (Silverstein & Layne, 2010, p. 1). The Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE), which has studied arts integration extensively, defines arts integration as “teaching and learning in which arts learning and other academic learning are connected in ways in which the arts learning AND the other academic learning are both deepened.” (Aprill, 2010, p. 7). Arnold Aprill, the Founding and Creative Director of CAPE argues that much of what is passed off as arts integration fails to live up to its fundamental principles:

[G]immicky exercises that lack depth in either arts learning or in other academic learning areas are not arts integration. Arts integration is not about “jazzing up” other content with arts activities to make it more palatable for students…and serious arts integration results in extraordinary art work that is both conceptually compelling and aesthetically sophisticated. Rigorous approaches to arts integration not only promise to deepen thinking in other academic areas, but also promise to deepen thinking in the arts (p. 7)

For the purposes of this study, we synthesize the work of Rabkin (2004), Wakeford (2004), and Aprill (2010) to define arts integration as the thoughtful integration of the arts with content area curriculum and instruction so that artistic experiences and knowledge promote learning in the arts and academic disciplines.
One point that is clear about arts integration is that it improves learning and it holds especially promising potential for schools in low socioeconomic areas and disadvantaged learners (Rabkin & Redmond, 2004). Unfortunately, the arts have taken a relegated role in many schools during the current era of accountability and standardized testing. In his review of arts education history, Wakeford (2004) suggests that the “seeming lack of connective tissue” between the arts and “the basics” is one reason why arts integration is not widely embraced in the modern era of standardized testing, despite the fact that “arts have been an integral part of what schools have tried to teach” (p. 82). As a university-based preservice teacher education program that prepares teachers to work in a multitude of settings, including those that have high percentages of disadvantaged students, we are interested in the potential that arts integration has for our teacher candidates and their future students.

**Effects on Student Achievement**

It might surprise “back to basics” advocates to discover that there is a growing and rigorous body of research that supports the use of arts integration to improve standardized student achievement. The aforementioned Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE) co-develops and implements programs with a network of schools, artists and arts organizations. They also conduct research on arts integration through the Supporting Communities Through Arts Learning Environments (SCALE) program. The research from this program has uncovered a number of affordances and benefits made possible through arts integration. For instance, students attending the CAPE arts integration programs performed better in reading and mathematics than control groups, though the difference was only statistically significant at the elementary level (Catterall & Waldorf, 1999). Arts integration has demonstrated promise for closing the achievement gap between low and high achieving students. Lower achieving students
whose teachers were involved in CAPE arts integration professional development programs raised their scores to the point where the difference between low achievers and high achievers was no longer statistically significant (Scripp & Paradis, 2014).

Other groups arrive at similar findings when looking at the relationship between arts integration and student achievement. Barry (2010) found that students attending Oklahoma A+ Schools (OAS), which emphasize arts integration, generally met or exceeded state and district averages on performance on standardized tests over a five-year period. In Minnesota, third-grade students in the Arts for Academic Achievement program produced higher reading scores when the arts were integrated into literacy lessons (Ingram & Reidel, 2003). Walker, Tabone and Weltsek (2011) found that 6th- and 7th-grade New Jersey students in an arts-integrated classroom were 77 percent more likely to pass the state assessment for language arts and 42 percent more likely to pass the state assessment for mathematics. The benefits extend to even the youngest of students. A two-year project in which prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers participated in the Wolf Trap arts integration professional development program led to significantly higher gains in mathematics achievement for students in treatment schools when compared to comparable control schools (Ludwig & Song, 2014).

In addition to standardized student achievement, research has also demonstrated that arts integration can have a positive influence on school climate and culture. A five-year longitudinal study of a single middle school that implemented arts integration found an increase in student achievement, reduction of student suspensions, and improvement in overall school climate (Snyder, Klos & Grey-Hawkins, 2014). Brouillette, Childress-Evans, Hinga, and Farkas (2014) found that arts integration was linked to a reduction in student absences, and a significant improvement in students’ speaking and listening skills. Robinson’s (2013) review of 44 arts
integration studies between 1995 and 2011 revealed positive effects for drama integration and multi-arts integration, as well as potentially positive effects for dance integration, visual arts integration, arts integration for students with disabilities, and arts integration as a means to improve school environment.

Perhaps one of the most important research findings regarding arts integration and student achievement reveals that maximizing the benefits of arts integration can depend on the level of integration. In their review of six arts integration programs, Rabkin and Redmond (2004) found that programs with higher levels of arts integration had greater gains on standardized tests than programs with lower levels of arts integration. We find this to be particularly interesting given the drastic cuts that have been made to arts education in recent years due to the emphasis of standardized testing.

Effects on Standardized Student Achievement

While it is fortifying to know that arts integration has positive effects on student achievement, more importantly, we find ourselves concerned about the underlying benefits of arts integration, those that cannot be measured in simplistic ways. We agree with Chemi (2014), who warns that “it is easy to imagine the downside of the exploitation of learning potential, where its role becomes rigid and ancillary and expected to serve purposes other than artistic (i.e., we have to play music because we become better mathematics students” (p. 375-376, emphasis in original). Looking beyond (or perhaps underneath) standardized student achievement, arts integration benefits students because it helps create a “Third Space” where learning is more important than testing and students connect meaningfully to what they study, thereby providing learning opportunities to all students, developing self-efficacy, increasing intrinsic motivation, and helping students apply lessons to other situations (Stevenson & Deasy, 2005).
Arts integration takes advantage of how students learn in order to promote understanding of content and the development of learning dispositions. Arts integration increases the probability that learning will occur by combining several learning modalities (Scheinfeld, 2004) by fostering the connection between cognition and creativity, an effort that dates back to the 1940’s, when arts educators correlated their pedagogical practices to practices used in other subjects (Wakeford, 2014). Arts integration helps improve long-term retention of content because it involves processes that promote such retention including rehearsal, elaboration, generation, enactment, oral production, effort after meaning, emotional arousal, and pictorial representation (Rinne, Gregory, Yarmolinskaya, & Hardiman, 2011). Research illustrates how arts integration promotes complex cognitive processes and student dispositions towards learning. DeMoss and Morris (2002) found that an arts integration after-school program generally engaged all students in complex and analytical cognitive processes. Specifically, their principal findings were that arts integration: (1) created more independent and intrinsically motivated investments in learning; (2) transformed students’ characterizations of “learning barriers” into “challenges” to be solved; and (3) inspired students to pursue further learning opportunities outside of the classroom. In addition, arts integration presents additional entry points for content discovery (Gullat, 2008), and as Baker (2013) explains, affords educators the opportunity to incorporate art thematically using constructivist principles without forcing unnatural connections to content:

Instruction, even instruction based on a standard course of study, can be guided by thematic objectives interwoven with the arts to yield rich and complex forms of learning for children that promote conceptual and intellectual development through their interrelatedness to overall instructional concepts and objectives. Through arts integration, hierarchical implementation of instructional objectives including use of context and
culture can be incorporated across instructional units to promote cognitive variables related to intellectual development (pp. 15-16)

These connections to content have resulted in significantly improved long-term retention of content, especially for the lowest achieving students (Rinne et al., 2011). In addition to the previously detailed benefits for mathematics achievement, effective curricula have also been created by integrating visual art with literacy and science content (Poldberg, Trainin & Andrzejczak, 2013). In a study of 215 eighth grade students, Richardson and Brouillete (2013) found that the use of historic and ethnic music in geography instruction led to greater gains in geographic knowledge and students’ attitudes towards geography when compared to a control group. Burton, Horowitz, and Abeles (1999) also found that transfer occurred when arts-related competencies were promoted in other content areas.

Beyond the explicit goals of teaching for content knowledge, arts integration has been found to benefit students’ dispositions and academic competencies. For instance, three K-8 Chicago public schools implementing the SCALE arts integration program met and exceeded programmatic goals for building students’ awareness of productive use of time, adaptation to spaces for learning and working, and student-adult working relationships (Watts, 2014). Additionally, Burnaford, Vazquez, and Tan (2008) found that students participating in arts-integrated after-school programs relied on self-motivation, did not worry about grades and felt as though the learning environment was less stressful. In fact, after-school arts programs had even more positive effects with low-income students than did sports or community service programs (Heath & Roach, 1999).

From the educator’s perspective, we can appreciate that arts integration promotes exposure to other cultures, reinforcement of aesthetic qualities, enhanced communication skills
and encouragement of risk taking (Gullatt, 2008). One study of teachers participating in a program focusing on drama-based instructional techniques reported a 30% increase in the percentage of students engaged in lessons and saw student outcomes consistent with authentic instruction (Cawthon, Dawson, & Ihorn, 2011). We care about authentic instruction, student engagement, and critical thinking. Arts integration can promote critical consciousness, community, and imagination in cross-cultural settings (Wootton, 2008) and in conjunction with critical study of history and social movements (Pennisi, 2012). Ultimately, we agree with Aprill (2010), who expresses the belief that arts integration is successful when it “helps generate an atmosphere of intellectual challenge, creative and critical thinking, of inquiry and expression, of reflection and community building” (p. 10).

**Implementing Arts Integration**

Arts integration models are based on the ideals of wholeness and democracy proffered by those such as Dewey, Eisner, and Gardner (Chemi, 2014). The artful teacher takes artistic detours and the resultant learning is "embodied, easier, more fun, more personal, and more motivating" (p. 380). Artful teachers become creative guides "able to design and implement learning environments that include differences, diversity, and differentiated learning approaches. (p. 381). Chemi’s (2014) conceptual model for arts integration in schools speaks to the importance of artfulness, which the author defines as “a cognitive and emotional response to stimuli that individuals experience as situated within artistic or arts-based environments that they share with others” (p. 373). Artful teachers: (1) successfully implement curriculum, taking time to focus on art; (2) cultivate length and depth of content and work; (3) focus on skills and artistic drive; (4) optimize the use of educational time and give students time to think or digest their work; (5) cultivate students’ self-expression through specific means and procedures of works of
art; and (6) encourage cognitive and educational output by means of aesthetic and artistic
attention to medium, matter, and meaning (p. 381).

In practice, arts integration can take on a number of different forms. Rabkin and
Redmond (2004) describe these as including but not limited to: (1) an artist’s residency not
directly related to the school’s curricular goals; (2) artist-prepared teachers using art in lessons;
(3) teacher-artist teams integrating and reinforcing concepts between subjects in unified lessons;
and (4) artist, art teacher, and/or a classroom teacher addressing the same theme through
different subjects. A review of the Center for Arts Education teacher-artist teams in New York
(Baker, Horowitz, Bevan, Rogers, & Ort, 2003) found that integrated instruction included similar
key features that included: (1) links between an art form and subject area; (2) meaningful
connection to students’ experiences; (3) balance between academic content, academic skills, arts
skills, and arts content; (4) centrality of student group work; (5) scaffolding from basic to higher-
order content area skills; (6) public presentation of student work with connection to school and
community culture.

Teachers assume multiple roles in the integration of art into the content area. In their
ArtsIN framework, Hartle, Pinciotti, and Gorton (2014) suggest that teachers should see
themselves as artists and researchers who “carefully examine their existing beliefs and
preconceived boundaries so they can openly explore the possibilities that exist first in
themselves, then in the relationship with children, families, the design of the environment, and
learning experiences in the classroom or within the larger community” (p. 295). The authors add
that teachers should also be advocates for the arts, co-constructors in the learning process, and
designers who harness the environment to impact creativity and artistic work. However, artists
and teachers do not necessarily speak the same language or inhabit the same cultures, which
makes interdisciplinary collaboration, and professional development all the more important (Rabkin & Redmond, 2004). As April (2010) argues:

Quality arts integrated teaching is best developed through co-planning between co-equal partnering educators, but those partners can be arts teachers, classroom teachers, and/or visiting artists in any configuration or combination…the finest integration results when ALL THREE work together—breaking down the isolation of both classroom teachers and arts teachers, and connecting teachers (and students) to the work of practicing artists (p. 8)

Research into the professional development of teachers who utilize arts integration suggests that teachers need a great deal of support, indeed scaffolding of their own, to feel comfortable with the process. Teachers can be reluctant to set higher-order goals for their students early on in their arts integration experience (Richard & Treichel, 2013). Saraniero, Goldberg and Hall (2014) found that teachers who had the benefit of coaching after attending an arts integration institute reported greater confidence with arts integration, implemented more arts standards, and used arts integration more frequently than teachers who only attended the institute. Both groups reported greater confidence and increased student engagement with instruction, though the non-coached teachers were more likely to encounter roadblocks to implementation. Then there are the concerns that arise within specific instructional contexts. For example, Lee, Cawthon, and Dawson (2013) concluded that the lack of self-efficacy in secondary teachers who were implementing drama-based instruction in their classes was likely due to their concerns about engaging and managing older students. Our study involved future secondary teachers and their experiences integrating art in the context of a pre-service field experience.
Preservice Teacher Training

Early university-based preservice field experiences, like the one utilized for this study, typically focus on observation and working with individual or small groups of students (Capraro, Capraro, Parker, Kulm, & Raulerson, 2005). Research on teacher preparation field experiences indicates that preservice teacher learning is contextualized (Ritter, Powell, & Hawley, 2007) and that meaningful field-based learning experiences should be aligned theoretically and practically with university methods courses (Allsopp, DeMarie, Alvarez-McHatton, & Doone, 2006). Ideally, preservice teachers take part in “systematically structured, intensive field experiences involving reflection and inquiry that link theories with personal learning experiences” (Capraro, Capraro, & Helfeldt, 2010, p. 134). One purpose of this study was to align the students’ learning about arts integration in their university courses with their field experiences in local schools. In fact, research shows that preservice teacher candidates who participated in inquiry-based field experiences that were aligned with their inquiry-based methodology courses perceived themselves to be better prepared than students taking part in traditional field experience (Capraro et al., 2010).

Arts Integration

A small but growing body of research exists on the implementation of arts integration into preservice teacher training. The current literature suggests that preservice teachers often struggle with arts integration, while also benefitting from their attempts to implement it. For example, Brewer and Brown (2009) found that preservice teachers are often unable to determine appropriate junctures for arts and subject area integration, which leads us to conclude that instruction in this area should be purposeful. In terms of planning and teaching, Donahue and
Stuart (2008) worked with preservice teachers to integrate art into their coursework and field experiences. The authors found that students struggled to implement lesson plans in their field experiences that found balance between “making” art and “analyzing” art. In the “making art” lessons, preservice teachers asked students to recreate art products from another time or culture with the goals of learning craft knowledge, providing outlets for creative expression, and developing problem-solving abilities. “Analyzing” art lessons use art to promote analytical thinking by connecting art to subject area knowledge and concepts, with the goals of promoting art in the curriculum, seeing beyond art’s aesthetic value, and demonstrating art’s potential as a way of knowing. Balanced lessons give equal treatment to these two modes, asking students “to learn how to make art, develop habits of minds, and apply them across more than one discipline” (Donahue & Stuart, 2008, p. 9).

New teachers are bound to struggle, especially with complex instructional theory and practice. However, research also demonstrates that preservice teachers benefit from arts integration in their field experiences. Using a streamlined version of the Artful Learning model, Pool, Dittrich and Pool (2011) had preservice math teachers experience art through inquiry centers, inquire by taking and describing photographs, create collages from their imagery, and reflect on intelligence pedagogy, mastery of content, differentiation of instruction and participatory, arts-based inquiry. The preservice teachers taking part in this study could articulate opportunities for exploring and enhancing content, connect instruction with achievement in the content area, target areas of student strength, and reflect on their mindset regarding content, instruction, and assessment. Colley (2012) found that integrating the performing arts into preservice social studies teacher preparation promoted engagement and learning while also giving voice to students who were not as vocal. The preservice teachers studied a script for a
play, attended a professional performance of the play and participated in four workshops facilitated by a teaching artist. Learning to integrate the arts into instruction is a participatory process, not one that can be learned from the instructional sidelines. Recognizing that teachers’ confidence with art interaction is an important prerequisite for effective arts integration, Whitin and Moench (2015) found that low-risk, open-ended viewing experiences such as the Critical Eye Exploration helped to improve preservice teachers’ confidence with engaging visual art and creating multimodal projects. For our study, then, it was important that the preservice teachers experience similar learning opportunities.

**Research Methods**

This study employed a mixed methods research design (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014) to determine differences in participants’ reflections on field experience. Research was conducted at a flagship state research university in the mid-southern region of the United States. Participants included secondary preservice teacher candidates enrolled in a prerequisite field experience course designed to prepare them for a one-year Master of Arts in Teaching program in a variety of secondary content areas. The field experience involved with this study was the first for most of the students and would be followed by a year-long intensive field experience in local schools upon entrance to the program. Data collected were inclusive of the 2012-2014 academic years, two semesters per year, for a total of four academic semesters. Overall, there were 76 total student participants who returned informed consent forms and participated in the study. A breakdown of participants by semester is presented in Table 1.
Table 1

*Student Reflections by Semester and Group*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Arts Integration</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2012</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2013</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2013</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2014</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Arts Integration Field Experience*

The process of integrating art into the curriculum was iterative and began in 2010, with two years of refinement prior to this study. Each of the local schools at which preservice teachers were placed had a university site supervisor tasked with leading, coordinating and evaluating the teacher candidates. The site supervisors participated in a five-day arts integration workshop training led by facilitators from the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts to become familiar with the concepts and principles of arts integration in the classroom. Additionally, they worked alongside university faculty and artists to develop the knowledge and aptitudes necessary to fulfill their roles. Their interactions with preservice students occurred in the university classroom for a series of four workshop meetings throughout the semester as well as thrice-weekly field experiences in local schools. The site supervisors led the students through readings associated with arts integration and facilitated arts integration activities during the workshop meetings in order to demonstrate arts integrated instruction to the students before they entered the public school classrooms. Ashley Beason-Manes facilitated data reduction and assisted with manuscript preparation. Hung Pham served as a program coordinator for the Arts Integration Field
Experience as well as a site supervisor and lead facilitator of the university course associated with the experience. Christian Goering served a program co-founder and principal or co-principal investigator of funding related to the program. In this case, the second, third, and fourth authors were familiar with arts integration, though at varying degrees, with Goering and Pham having received and delivered training on arts integration and conducted arts integration with college and K-12 students; Jason Endacott was conversationally familiar with the concept and had included it in courses taught.

**Field Experience Context and Data Collection**

The six schools that participated in the arts integration field experiences were located in three communities that were close to the university. The participating schools were selected in part because their student body included a high percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunch as well as a relatively high percentage of students designated as English Language Learners (ELL). For example, in 2012, 79% of students from participating schools received free or reduced lunches and 53 percent were classified as ELLs by their districts (ADE Data Center, n. p.). The aforementioned research on arts integration (Rabkin, 2004) indicates that the students at these schools may be particularly suited for arts integration. Due to scheduling and travel conflicts, students naturally grouped into either the arts integration field experience or the traditional field experience. They are represented here as control and treatment groups. They were not pre-selected and assigned to these groups as one might expect in experimental or quasi-experimental research. There are no discernible differences between the two groups: all members were preservice teachers planning towards entering a secondary Master of Arts in Teaching program and simply participated in the option that fit their course schedule and travel limitations. The preservice teacher candidates in the control group performed observations and other
activities associated with the traditional field experiences (e.g. tutoring, small group assistance, grading papers) during the school day. The stated requirement of this experience was that these future teachers observed and reflected on those observations; these experiences were not monolithic but it is fair, we believe, to assume that arts integration was not part of the experiences of the observers. The treatment group performed similar in-school observations and assistance, though their experience differed with the participation in the after-school program. Treatment students participated in after-school or in school programs that were designed to implement arts integration and the stated requirement was for each student to co-plan and co-lead arts integrated instruction in the various contexts (in school or after-school classrooms).

Demographically, the two groups of students were representative of the overall program enrollment by subject area and gender. Of the 76 participants, 39 were male and 37 were female. In terms of subject area, the MAT program enrollment varies from year to year, though is generally 33% English, 33% social studies, 15% science, 12% math, and 7% foreign language. The participants in this study approximated the overall enrollment with 29% English, 26% social studies, 18% science, 18% math, and 3% foreign language students participating. Table 2 below presents a detailed breakdown of the control and treatment groups by semester, subject and gender.
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Table 2

*Participant Breakdown by Semester, Group, and Gender*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Control Male</th>
<th>Control Female</th>
<th>Arts Integration Male</th>
<th>Arts Integration Female</th>
<th>Total Male</th>
<th>Total Female</th>
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<td>Fall 2012 (n = 26)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Foreign Language</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>Social Studies</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>English</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foreign Language</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Fall 2013 (n = 18)</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2014 (n = 19)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Language</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Collaboration between site supervisors, teaching artists and the preservice candidates was purposefully fostered during these field experiences. The teaching artists represented multiple genres including music, photography, quilting, tableau, poetry, performance art, and video production. Data were collected at the conclusion of each of four consecutive semesters between
2012 and 2014 when all participants wrote reflections based on the standard prompt provided (Appendix A). The students’ written reflections were loaded into Dedoose! qualitative analysis software and served as the data set for analysis. It is important to note that Goering, Pham, and Beason-Manes were involved with varying levels of data collection, data processing, data analysis, and manuscript preparation, while Endacott led data analysis and manuscript preparation efforts. Endacott was not involved with the programming of the Arts Integration Field Experience.

Analysis

We employed a mixed methods approach that linked quantitative and qualitative data at the quantitizing level (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014). Participant excerpts from both groups were coded qualitatively for both depth of reflection and meaning. The expression of a complete thought served as the unit of analysis and varied in length from a single utterance to an entire paragraph. Coding for depth and meaning included a series of eight steps: (1) initially reading every response to get a sense of the whole; (2) jotting down impressions of possible underlying meaning; (3) creating an initial list of topics generated from key words or phrases repeated in the responses; (4) coding the data with the initial list of topics; (5) combining and grouping conceptually congruent topics into categories; (6) creating codes for each category; (7) recoding each response by category; and (8) assembling the data by category for analysis (Creswell, 2009). The first three steps were completed outside of the computer-based software. Each complete thought was highlighted in the Dedoose! software and became an excerpt that was coded for steps 4 and 5. Since many of the excerpts combined multiple ideas into a single complete thought, it was possible for an excerpt to have more than one code application. Table 3 provides examples of excerpts that were assigned multiple codes or a single code.
Table 3

Sample Excerpts with Multiple and Single Code Applications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example Excerpt</th>
<th>Coded for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When I had to present my lesson plan on reader's theater I was given the task to make sure all students, no matter the learning style, understood the lesson. I met this challenge by researching the various learning types: auditory, visual, and kinesthetic. I brainstormed about the ways I could reach all students no matter the learning style. Because reader's theater is a visual production, I felt that the visual learners would be accommodated but just to be sure I gave the students a copy of our script so they could physically see all aspects of reader's theater. For the auditory learners, I made sure to explain everything in detail before, present reader's theater, and did a summary of the main points after. This way auditory learners knew what to look for, saw the presentation, and then had reinforcement of what key points were used. For kinesthetic learners, we allowed the students to do a reader's theater as a class. This way everyone, especially kinesthetic learners, were allowed to feel out reader's theater for themselves. This helped the kinesthetic learners by allowing them to tangibly learn and experience reader's theater. I noticed that when I incorporated all learning styles, each student fully understood the concept of reader's theater and that each student felt confident in executing one by themselves. If I had not made the point to make sure all learning types were included, I'm not sure my lesson would have been received and understood as well as it was. I will be using this multi-style teaching method in my classroom because I have seen first-hand how beneficial it is to students.</td>
<td>Observations About Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uniqueness of Learner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beliefs About Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall, the students required little classroom discipline and did little to exacerbate teacher frustration. The teachers I observed utilized various methods of classroom management techniques</td>
<td>Classroom Management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Complete code co-occurrence tables can be found in Appendices A and B. Upon completion of the coding process, the data set included 322 coded excerpts with 942 code applications (Table 4).
Table 4

Frequencies for Excerpts and Code Application

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Reflection Papers</th>
<th>Coded Excerpts</th>
<th>Codes Applied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts Integration</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>457</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prior to assembling the data for analysis, we applied the constant comparative method (Merriam, 2009) to regroup all of the responses by category and re-checking coded answers for consistency within categories until the categories were exhaustive, mutually exclusive and conceptually congruent. As a final step of analysis, the data were prepared as categories with associated excerpts and we built toward overarching themes within and between categories (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). The two overarching themes of “Surface Reflection” and “Deeper Reflection” served as the basis for quantifying the qualitative data. Utilizing the code co-occurrence table produced by the Dedoose! software, we converted code counts into percentages by depth of reflection and theme. Table 5 provides definitions for each theme according to its corresponding depth of reflection.
Table 5

**Coding Themes and Definitions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Deep Reflection</th>
<th>Surface Reflection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs About Learning</td>
<td>Reflection on the nature of knowledge and/or importance of constructivist/arts integration in learning</td>
<td>Stereotypical or unreflective discussion of beliefs regarding student learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>Reflection on specific current or future instruction that advances beyond the mechanics of instructional delivery</td>
<td>References (without reflection) to mechanics of instruction and/or specific instructional strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge vs. Understanding</td>
<td>Reflection on the difference between the acquisition of factual knowledge and the development of conceptual understanding.</td>
<td>Discussion of acquisition of factual knowledge without consideration for conceptual understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Practice</td>
<td>Observation to Reflection - Discussion of specific observational event that leads to reflection on current or future practice</td>
<td>Observation Dead End - Specific observation that does not lead to substantive reflective thought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations About Students</td>
<td>Reflection upon the manner in which students engage with meaningful learning experiences connected to the themes in this code set</td>
<td>General or specific observations about observable student behavior made without connection or reflection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of the Teacher</td>
<td>Reflection on the role of the teacher in developing an instructional/learning environment and interacting with students in order to promote meaningful learning experiences</td>
<td>General or specific observations of teacher’s role in facilitating mechanics of instruction and/or acquisition of factual knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uniqueness of Learner</td>
<td>Specific reflection upon students’ experiences as individual learners – especially as it relates to learning modalities, cultural relevance and differentiation of instruction</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Management</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Specific references to specific instances and/or mechanics of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To present our quantitative findings, we generated a percentage count of excerpts coded by theme and subtheme for both control and treatment groups. We conclude with a qualitative description of themes and subthemes in order to provide context and depth to the quantitative differences between the control and treatment groups’ reflections.

**Findings**

Overall, the treatment students’ reflections were coded more frequently for deeper reflection (82.6%) than the control group (42.1%). Conversely, the control group reflections were coded more frequently for surface level reflection (76.8%) than the treatment group (48.1%). To be clear, both groups demonstrated a fair amount of fairly shallow reflection in their written pieces, which is to be expected of preservice teachers finishing their very first field experience. Most of the reflections written by students were coded for both surface and deeper reflection, often within the same paragraph. However, when we look at how the students reflected on a deeper level (Table 6), and consider the qualitative nature of their reflections, the benefits of arts integration in the field experience become more apparent.
Table 6

Percentage of All Excerpts Coded by Theme and Subtheme for Control and Treatment Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Deep Reflection</th>
<th>Surface Reflection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control (n = 164)</td>
<td>Treatment (n = 158)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs About Learning</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge vs. Understanding</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Practice</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>57.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations About Students</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>55.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of the Teacher</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>55.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uniqueness of Learner</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>39.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Management</td>
<td>63.2%</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 6 illustrates, the majority of the students’ surface reflection, for both groups, fell under the themes of reflective practice, observations about students, and the role of the teacher. We treat the theme of classroom management separately because under the themes developed for this study, we considered “deep” reflection on classroom management to fall under one of the other themes since reflection on classroom management beyond the surface observation almost inevitably leads to rumination on the role of the teacher, uniqueness of learners, observations about students, and so on. However, it was possible for students to make surface level reflections on classroom management without going further to reflect on the dynamics behind those interactions. When looking at Table 6 with this knowledge in hand, it is
easy to understand why the treatment group was coded far more frequently for observations about students (55.3% to 21.1%), role of the teacher (55.3% to 13.2%), and uniqueness of the learner (39.5% to 15.8%), while also having far fewer excerpts coded for surface-level classroom management reflection (31.6% to 63.2%).

In the sections that follow, we describe the qualitative differences between the surface and deeper reflection found in the students’ reflections and discuss how arts integration likely played a role in the depth of their reflection.

**Qualitative Analysis**

It is important to preface our qualitative analysis by informing the reader that there were high levels of code co-occurrence and that very few of the excerpts were coded for just one theme. The students’ reflective writing often resulted in connection of multiple ideas through narrative, exposition and even argumentation. Therefore, the findings we present are the result of considering single excerpts within multiple contexts. However, when presenting data to illustrate our findings, it is difficult to divorce the individually coded excerpts from the surrounding text without losing sight of the passages’ overall meaning. As a result, many of the data excerpts we present below are lengthy and could arguably be used to support multiple findings. For the section on surface level reflection, we discuss the reflections written by students in the control group who did not participate in the arts integration program.

**Surface Reflection**

As previously mentioned, the students’ surface level reflection was present in both groups and was most commonly associated with observations about classroom management, students and the role of the teacher. Vague and generally expected comments such as “one's personal teaching style and strategies must be ever-evolving and adapt to meet the varying needs
of individual students and classes” were common. In our view, it is rare to find a preservice
candidate who does not share this view, though it is much rarer to find one who can explicate it.
In our analysis, we considered reflection or explication beyond variations on this vaguely worded
statement to be deeper reflection.

Classroom management was one prevalent source of surface level reflection, with
students frequently writing about “controlling” students or classes for the purposes of teaching.
This type of reflection focused on what was visibly observed during the act of teacher-student
disciplinary interaction, without going further to reflect on the principles or dynamics that
underlie successful management of a learning environment to the benefit of all. We found that
students exhibiting surface level reflection often viewed her or his experiences only through the
lens of the teacher, such as the student who wrote,

I admired the calmness and sincerity that she used when she addressed her students. Even
though I witnessed a few instances of her students breaking some of her rules, such as
phone usage in the classroom, she never lost her temper in front of the students.

While not losing one’s temper is generally good teaching advice, this particular student failed to
consider the difficulty of such a task, the role students play in testing teachers’ patience, the
importance of classroom rules and procedures, and any other of a number of factors that would
affect such a scenario.

Similar observations were made about students as preservice teachers discussed direct,
but surface level observations of student behavior and/or learning tendencies without reflecting
on what might be hiding behind the observable behaviors. As with the reflection on classroom
management, the observations about students were often written from a detached perspective
without much investment in the classroom proceedings.
We started off the semester reading the book *Wonder*, which many of the kids enjoyed. Right away, I learned that students have different ways of reading. Some of them wanted to read silently by themselves, while others preferred to read aloud in groups. We adapted our plans to fit the individual needs of students. Those that wanted to read quietly were allowed to find a place where they could do that. Those that wanted to read in groups took turns reading to each other. A few students wanted to be read to, so one of the mentors would read aloud to them.

This student was obviously trying to understand what was happening in the classroom and how the teachers were trying to meet the observable needs of the students, though as the section on deeper reflection will show, this sort of reflective thinking failed to penetrate beyond the general knowledge of “some students wanted to be read to.” In some instances, the students in the control group filled in his or her lack of knowledge about the students with assumptions of their own. Reading these was often difficult as pre-conceived notions often went unchallenged during the field experience. One such student wrote,

> Of course, I understand that every learner comes to the material with a certain level of ability, but the classroom I observed at the school merely placated the students, who, being short-sighted teenagers, were understandably unaware of the opportunity for education that they were missing and did the bare minimum of work.

After reading this reflection, we wonder whether this conclusion was reached as a result of experience with students in the school, or the failure of that experience to challenge this student’s apparent convictions about teaching and teenagers.

It is important to note that the students in the control group did not simply sit on the sidelines and observe for their entire experience. An integral part of their field experiences was
tutoring or teaching students individually or in small groups, which is one reason why we believe that Arts Integration made a qualitative difference in their experiences. When the control group students reflected on the role of the teacher, surface level reflection was far more common than deeper reflection (52.6% to 13.2% respectively). Students often made direct, but surface level observations of the teacher’s role as a lesson facilitator. Comments about specific instructional examples and/or techniques that the observer “liked” and would like to incorporate into their own teaching were common, though they were rarely followed by further reflection on how specific aspects of teaching, needs of students, or their own personal strengths would factor into adopting a technique they “liked.” This theme was also frequently connected to the theme of classroom management as students discussed specific examples of how a teacher managed student behaviors or problems without reflection on dynamics of teacher-student relationship. As a result, the reflections typically failed to demonstrate an understanding of the integral part that classroom and student factors play in shaping the role of the teacher, instead portraying the teacher as one who imposes their will upon the students and learning environment.

We conclude this section on surface level reflection by clarifying that we do not necessarily consider the lack of depth in the control students’ reflections to be a weakness on the part of the students. Rather, we question whether or not their field experiences afforded them the opportunity to engage in reflection that revealed the complexity of classroom teaching and human relationships within the learning environment. It is also important to note that while similar excerpts also originated from the treatment group, they were far more prevalent in the control reflections. In the sections that follow, we describe how the reflections from students participating in the arts integration field experience differed qualitatively in regards to depth of reflection.
Deeper Reflection

Many students demonstrated deeper reflection in their written reflections, and as was illustrated in Table 6, this deeper reflection occurred more frequently with the treatment group after their participation in the arts-integrated field experience. Deeper reflection often took the form of “observation to reflection” in that students frequently used events or interactions they witnessed in the classroom as a gateway into reflecting on the role of the teacher, observations about students and uniqueness of the learner. While there were a variety of ways in which this type of reflection was coded, there was a prevailing theme of consideration for the students as individuals and as a part of the symbiotic learning process that underlie nearly all of the description that follows. We believe this demonstrates how arts integration helped our students reflect on the symbiotic relationship between teacher and student, perhaps summed up best by the student who wrote, “I learned that teaching is a two-way street and the influence of my students on me could be just as profound and my influence on them.”

Beliefs About Learning

It is difficult for students who are just beginning to study the learning process to reflect in a substantive fashion on their beliefs about learning and how students learn. However, the interaction and “closeness” of the arts integration activities allowed the students to see the learning process from multiple perspectives, thereby helping many of them reflect more deeply on the differences between knowledge and understanding, the importance of relevance to diverse groups of students, and going beyond “fun and interesting” to develop student engagement. One example, which makes for an insightful contrast between the surface level reflection discussed in the previous section, is how some students in the treatment group were able to reflect in a more
specific way about relating learning to their students’ uniqueness rather than just writing in generalities such as “make it meaningful to their lives.”

Throughout the semester, we asked students to develop a precept, or a rule to live by, that was meaningful to their lives. Some students grasped the concept right away while others needed to be pushed a little. The students came up with some profound precepts that reflected their passions and their struggles. Many of the precepts had to do with being open minded, being kind to each other, and being kind to the earth. This activity gave me a lot of insight into what is important to these students and what they’re dealing with in their lives. I learned that when students are given the opportunity to express themselves and what matters to them, they often respond in positive ways and produce meaningful, intelligent material.

Excerpts such as this one demonstrate how the humanity of the arts and artistic thinking can help teachers accomplish the difficult challenge of truly making learning meaningful to a diverse group of students. In addition, the student who wrote this excerpt learned something about the benefits of affording students the opportunity to vary the manner in which they communicate their learning.

Students in the treatment group also reflected deeply on their beliefs about learning by discussing the manner in which learning styles affect the learning process.

In my group of students in Studio Project, we had every possible type of learner. When I had to present my lesson plan on reader's theater I was given the task to make sure all students, no matter the learning style, understood the lesson. I met this challenge by researching the various learning types: auditory, visual, and kinesthetic. I brainstormed about the ways I could reach all students no matter the learning style. Because reader's
theater is a visual production, I felt that the visual learners would be accommodated but just to be sure I gave the students a copy of our script so they could physically see all aspects of reader's theater. For the auditory learners, I made sure to explain everything in detail before, present reader's theater, and did a summary of the main points after. This way auditory learners knew what to look for, saw the presentation, and then had reinforcement of what key points were used. For kinesthetic learners, we allowed the students to do a reader's theater as a class. This way everyone, especially kinesthetic learners, were allowed to feel out reader's theater for themselves. This helped the kinesthetic learners by allowing them to tangibly learn and experience reader's theater. I noticed that when I incorporated all learning styles, each student fully understood the concept of reader's theater and that each student felt confident in executing one by themselves. If I had not made the point to make sure all learning types were included, I'm not sure my lesson would have been received and understood as well as it was. I will be using this multi-style teaching method in my classroom because I have seen first-hand how beneficial it is to students.

This excerpt illustrates how one student was able to move past “appeal to multiple learning styles” to actually document how it was accomplished through arts integration. The preservice candidate was able to research learning styles, design materials that appeal to multiple learning styles, play to the strengths of reader’s theater, and observe the effect these efforts had on their students’ confidence and understanding. The theme of student engagement through arts integration was common throughout the treatment students’ reflections. While some discussed the issue directly, many addressed student engagement more implicitly by writing about the manner in which students invested their attention and energies into the arts integrated activities.
The benefits of student engagement are obvious, though we were really impressed by one student who reflected on how just the appearance of engagement is not enough. “It is important to realize that there is a difference between student engagement and compliance. A student who is merely complying, just doing what he is told, is far less likely to learn than a student who is engaged, participating because he is interested.”

**Instruction**

Closely connected to the students’ beliefs about learning were their reflections regarding instruction. The traditional field experience typically involves preservice teachers learning about instruction from experienced mentor teachers. However, we found that some of the students in the treatment group actually wrote more about how much they learned from the artists working alongside them in the classroom. In the excerpt that follows, a student describes one such learning experience involving an artist that came on the heels of an observation period in which she felt the class lacked engagement and focus.

In contrast I cite a School Writers session led by performance poet Peter Nevland. Nevland spoke to the sixth grade students about how to write powerfully. He talked about nouns, verbs, and adjectives, things that have great potential for generating boredom. Even so, every single student was fully engaged in his lesson. Nevland was active, humorous, contagiously enthusiastic, and when he transitioned from teaching to performing one of his pieces it was hard to tell a difference between the two. Watching him reminded me that teaching is a lot like performing. It requires planning, rehearsal, and should strive to captivate the audience.

The subtheme of student engagement appears here again as this student reflects on what it means to successfully apply affect, energy and enthusiasm for teaching into the “performing” of
THE STUDENTS WERE, IN FACT...

a lesson. Other students reflected on the results of that same lesson in a different way by looking at the experience from multiple perspectives—the students’ and their own. They recognized how arts integration activities sparked creativity in their students and led to impressive results, though not just in the products of student learning. The students did frequently marvel at the products of student learning, but they were also impressed by the creative abilities their students demonstrated when engaged in learning activities designed to evoke them.

The song writing experience taught me that writing activities don’t have to fit a certain standard. The students really responded to the activity because it allowed them to think about the music and the artists they love. They were allowed to look up lyrics to their favorite songs for inspiration. The results were impressive. The students expressed their feelings through the songs and they were proud of what they created. By tying writing to something they all enjoy and relate to, we saw many students discover that they liked to write and they had a real talent for it.

Clearly the theme of instruction is closely tied to the students’ beliefs about learning as it is with the other themes to follow. This was not one of the most frequently coded themes (28.9% for the treatment group) but reflection in this area was important because it demonstrated that some of the students were able to discuss what it can look like for instruction to vary, depending on the situation and how the outcomes of effective instruction can be observed outside the formal assignment.

Observations about Students and Uniqueness of Learners

The arts integration field experience allowed the preservice teachers time to work with students as co-creators, which took them outside the normal roles of teacher and student, and afforded them the opportunity to interact with students in a manner that encouraged rapport and
mutual understanding. These interactions led students to reflect on their students in a way that went far beyond observations on classroom management. As the next two excerpts show, the students participating in arts integration had a different view on students’ abilities (former) and motivations (latter) in the classroom.

As my time continued with the Studio Project, I began to realize that the students were, in fact, extremely brilliant. The problem wasn’t that they weren’t trying, but that the subject matter in many cases far exceeded their mastery of the English language. The students automatically feel like they are drowning in words they do not understand such as, convert, energy, chemical, and in some cases, store. It can be extremely overwhelming because they have barely scratched the surface of what really is photosynthesis. It is not surprising then, that when the definitions pile up faster than their brains can process, they shut down.

Groups that were most excited about their work, and thus were more likely to use their time wisely and think more deeply about their projects, seemed to have adopted a sense of purpose and attachment to their work that superseded external motivation; they were driven by an internal desire to connect their art with history, and impelled by the process of creating.

These preservice teachers recognized that the students they worked with were motivated to do well when properly engaged and capable of more than they are often given credit for. While they may have made similarly astute observations without the benefit of arts integration activities, the nature of their reflections suggest that arts integration drew out observations, conversations, interactions and reflections that may not have happened otherwise. Other essays’ reflections described the importance of arts integration to the cultural relevance of their students’
learning and how their learning experiences were powerfully influenced by individual differences. It was not surprising then, that there was a high level of code co-occurrence with the “uniqueness of learner” theme.

The co-creator relationship also put preservice teachers in a position to collaborate with their students to discover how their prior experiences shaped their learning as this particular examples illustrates.

[Student’s] first picture featured a still shot of her shoes, but she explained to me that she wasn’t happy with the picture because it didn’t convey anything especially unique about her personality or interests. I then began asking her questions about her hobbies and talents. She told me she had grown up in Germany and traveled extensively through Europe and that she might be interested in centering her project on her experiences overseas. Eventually, [Student] and I agreed that trying to stage a picture and write a poem which captured the essence of an entire continent couldn’t readily be accomplished during our forty-five minute session. We continued brainstorming, and I continued to learn more about her. By the end of that day’s session, she had decided what she wanted her project to focus on: her love of figure skating. Ultimately, she took the most impressive photo and wrote one of the most descriptive poems of the students at S. Junior High. Her poem was as equally attention grabbing as her picture. She used concrete metaphors to describe her time on the ice as she practiced figure skating, the most striking being a metaphor likening her cold cheeks to cherry red tomatoes.

This student’s experience demonstrates how arts integration served the dual purpose of focusing on artistic thinking along with academic content. The use of photography and poetry
appears to have inspired this student’s creativity for metaphoric language, which was one of the content area objectives for the lesson.

**Role of the Teacher**

We saved this for our final qualitative finding because the other themes presented here feed into how students reflected on the role of the teacher. Consistent with the other themes, we found that students emphasized the importance of differentiation, and they did so by using specific examples of how their arts integration experiences taught them the importance of differentiation through developing understanding of their students’ uniqueness:

One of the most important lessons I learned over the course of the semester was to not give up on a student who is initially distant or removed. [Student], a fourteen-year old Marshallese girl, was difficult to get to know during the first few weeks. While she was engaged with her close friend [Student], she hardly responded to my questions or my attempts to get her to complete the activities we had prepared. Finally, I decided to simply ask her questions about her day to day life, what her hobbies were, and how she passed her time outside of school. To my surprise, she reciprocated, asking me questions about my job and family.

Discussion of the teachers’ role in managing a classroom was a consistent theme across all of the students’ reflections. However, some of the students in the treatment group connected classroom management to the importance of developing professional relationships and rapport with students. Again, we see the proximity afforded teachers through the co-creator relationship as one of the benefits to developing these relationships and the reflection that resulted from them.

While I’m pleased that [Student] likes me as a person, I’m more pleased that I was able to help her as she completed her projects throughout the semester. [Student] and I began
forming a relationship that day at the library, which opened the door for me to
currently guide her as she wrote poems, precepts, and tableaus. [Student] taught me not
to give up on a student who doesn’t immediately seem interested in the task at hand. She
taught me that the majority of students want to have a positive relationship with an adult.
Most importantly she taught me how to be patient and kind but firm in the expectations I
have for my students.

It would not be realistic to expect a teacher to develop a close professional relationship
with all of their students. However, the arts integration preservice teachers discussed how their
interactions with students, and the focus on supporting and recognizing their efforts rather than
their achievements, shifted emphasis to an intrinsic motivation to improve rather than an
extrinsic motivation to produce. In our eyes, this is an important learning experience for future
educators.

Discussion

Students participating in the arts-integrated field experiences reflected on a deeper level
more frequently than students in the control group. The interconnectedness of the themes was
one of the best aspects of our study. Students wrote in detail about students, learning, teaching
and what they learned in an integrated fashion. Of course, not all students in the treatment group
reflected deeply, or did so in a manner that would allow us to infer that arts integration played a
role in their reflection. Likewise, there were students in the control group who reflected deeply
without benefit of the arts integration activities. It would not be possible to attribute all of the
treatment group students’ deeper reflection to their participation in arts integration activities
during their field experience. However, there were many excerpts, some of which we included
here, that explicitly discussed arts integration in concert with their reflections on teaching and
learning. This allowed us to conclude that arts integration benefited these students and played a role in their development into professional educators.

The preservice teachers participating in this project worked with the same group of students for an entire semester in contrast to the observation or tutoring experiences their non-program peers had. Perhaps another key element of this work is the sustained relationships between all parties and professional teaching artists. This was an intentional and important aspect of the program framework. Each site had multiple visits per semester by teaching artists with the idea of giving both students and university-based participants a stronger grounding in the given art form to be used that semester.

The present study contributes to the research base on arts integration by positioning preservice teachers to integrate arts in a discipline, not simply as a means to learning content in preservice education courses as referenced in other studies (Colley, 2012; Pool, Dittrich, & Pool, 2011) but as actors in their own classroom settings.

Implications for Future Practice

Research shows that arts integration improves teacher confidence and efficacy (Saraniero, Goldberg & Hall, 2014; Whitin & Moench, 2015), and connecting learning that occurs in the university classroom to teaching practice in the field experience is an important aspect of preservice teacher development (Allsopp, et al., 2006). Arts integration is one option that teacher education programs have for promoting stronger preservice teacher development and ultimately the achievement of their future students. As a component of a field experience regimen that includes traditional field experiences and observation, arts integration holds promise for preservice teacher development. Incorporating authentic arts integration experiences is not a simple undertaking. The program involved with this study included collaboration with
artists of all types as well as the development of relationships between schools, artists, mentors, and preservice teacher education programs. Such a process takes time, thoughtful planning and revision. It took our program several years of iterative versions of the classroom-field experience before we felt as though arts integration was being effectively utilized, with programmatic tweaks happening every year.

The preservice teachers were exposed to arts integration as a foundational teaching strategy and were able to observe the outcomes and impacts on the classroom students. However, they were not asked to either devise or implement arts integrated projects on their own. The site coordinators did that primary planning, and when the foundation of the classroom/project structure was established, the site coordinators had the preservice teachers take on smaller and then bigger tasks. The stated expectation was that each preservice teacher taking part in the program would by the end of the semester plan and implement at least one period-long lesson. This is a pertinent example of scaffolding and gradual release of responsibility that increases the likelihood of success with “complex instructional theory and practice” like arts integration. Preservice teachers weren’t responsible for the whole show, but they were not allowed to sit on the sidelines, either.

**Limitations and Future Research**

As an exploratory study, this piece of research came with limitations, some of which we intend to explore in future studies on arts integration and preservice teacher training. There was only one data point used for analysis in this study, and that data point was summative. There would certainly be opportunities in the future to collect other forms of data (e.g. observations, interviews, student products) so that our findings could be triangulated and the benefits of arts integration better explained. Since we used the standard reflection prompt that was used across
all sections of the field experience course, the prompt did not explicitly ask students to reflect on arts integration as a part of their development. Doing so might help uncover contrary data from participants who felt that they did not benefit from arts integration. It would also be possible to ask students to rank or describe the usefulness of their experiences in order in which they perceived them to be helpful to their development. Also, the participants in this study were limited to preservice secondary teacher candidates and their experiences were mixed between schools. Some schools were partners in the arts integration project, while others were not. Context is an important aspect of teacher development, and controlling for context was not possible with this study.

Future research in this area might incorporate multiple data points to triangulate data analysis, being more purposeful about the dimensions of teacher confidence, self-efficacy, and the themes discovered in this study. Longitudinal research could also be very beneficial to see how arts integration “sticks” with students as they progress towards becoming teachers and even in their first years of inservice teaching. Finally, it is important to note that the perceptions and perspectives of the middle school students were missing from this study and would be an important part of future research. We read a great deal about how our preservice teacher candidates perceived the relationships, co-creation, academic progress and dispositions of the middle school students, but we did not hear from those students as a means to provide a balance as well as triangulation. This would be a crucial aspect of future research in this area.

Conclusion

This exploratory study examined the benefits of incorporating arts integrated learning activities into an early preservice field experience. The benefits to students included deeper reflection on their beliefs about learning, instruction, students and the role of a professional
teacher. The specific fashion in which many preservice teachers explicitly connected arts integration activities to their reflection on these aspects of educator development and the learning process suggests that there is likely to be even more potential waiting to be discovered. While the preservice teachers who participated in this programming have experiences and background that others do not, we are unsure of lasting effects of this work, especially given the contested and problematic nature of schools and schooling. To what extent these arts integration-savvy preservice teachers will enter student teaching internship placements and careers where these approaches are valued seems dubious at best. Creating the types of schools where arts integration is not just accepted, but expected, remains our overarching goal.
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The students were, in fact…

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Appendix B

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