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Making a Case for Arts Administrators: Maintaining Interdisciplinary Arts Programs in Public Schools

Samantha Jardon-Peppard
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MAKING A CASE FOR ARTS ADMINISTRATORS: MAINTAINING INTERDISCIPLINARY ARTS PROGRAMS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A Thesis
Presented to the Faculty
Of the
College of Visual and Performing Arts
In Partial Fulfillment
Of the
Requirements for the Degree
Of
Master of Arts
In
Arts Administration
Winthrop University

December, 2010

By
Samantha Jardon-Peppard
Abstract

For decades interdisciplinary arts programs have been developed and implemented in public schools throughout our nation. Much research has been dedicated to proving the benefits of interdisciplinary arts education, results of which can be found in reports such as *Champions of Change* and *Project Zero*. However, little research has been dedicated to how an interdisciplinary arts program is maintained in a school once it has been initiated and who is responsible for its development and sustainability. Chapter one of this thesis reviews some history of arts education, why the arts have become a vital part of education, and how arts education will assist the 21st century learner.

Chapter two explores a specific arts program, the A+ Schools Program, developed at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, highlighting its advantages and disadvantages. In addition this chapter establishes and defines the role of an arts administrator. In conclusion, chapter three suggests strategies that an arts administrator can implement to assist in the development, maintenance, and sustainability of an interdisciplinary arts program in a school.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my friends and family for their words of encouragement during the writing process of this thesis. To my editor Robin Hentz, my deepest appreciation for your knowledge, time, and patience while assisting me in becoming a better writer. With heartfelt admiration, I want to thank Dorothy A. Metzler for her motherly yet professional guidance. Dottie, the MAAA program and the writing of this thesis would not have been as meaningful a learning experience if not for you. I would also like to acknowledge Laura Gardner and Robert Weis as part of my committee, thank you for guiding my thesis through every draft. I dedicate this thesis to my son Aiden John Peppard. Aiden, because of you, I strive to accomplish new experiences I never imagined I could. I want you to know, Aiden, that you can achieve anything you set your mind to. Thank you for choosing me to be your mother and for teaching me that life is too short not to follow your dreams.
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Artistic, pARTnerships, and A+ Schools Program: what links these programs? In addition to several other arts programs, these interdisciplinary programs span numerous states and encompass a wide range of school districts. The arts are the tie that binds these programs to one another. Interdisciplinary arts programs are focused on developing connections between arts education and the knowledge students are required to attain in general subject areas such as reading, writing, and mathematics.

Findings from researchers and educators who promote the inclusion of interdisciplinary arts programs are found in books, studies, and articles, going as far back as the late 1950s. Jerome Bruner, Manuel Barkan, and Nelson Goodman, the founder of Project Zero at Harvard University, as well as other researchers and educators have theorized for decades that a rich integrated arts program engages a student’s critical thinking skills. These thinking skills assist learners in acquiring heightened academic and social performance inside the school environment as well as outside of the school environment. Hodson (1985) makes the point that:

Arts education comprises many factors. It can provide instruction in how to practice one or more art forms; it can impart knowledge (including critical evaluation skills) in one or more art forms; it can develop self-confidence, capacity for creativity and self-expression, and enhanced capacities in other subjects. (p. 247)
Chapter One
Laying the Foundation for Arts Education

Arts “HOT” Schools Program (Higher Order Thinking), SmART Schools, Artgenesis, pARTners, and A+ Schools Program: what links these programs? In addition to several other arts programs, these interdisciplinary programs span numerous states and encompass a wide range of school districts. The arts are the tie that binds these programs to one another. Interdisciplinary arts programs are focused on developing connections between arts education and the knowledge students are required to attain in general subject areas such as reading, writing, and mathematics.

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Much of the literature on interdisciplinary arts programs fails to address how to maintain the arts program in the school. Who advocates for the continuity of the arts program? How long can an interdisciplinary arts program last in a school without an individual designated to the sole position of implementing maintenance strategies and communications? In order to answer these vital questions, this thesis addresses why an on-site arts administrator is essential for the longevity and communication that is necessary to an interdisciplinary arts program's success. Studies such as *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning* (Fiske, 1999) substantiate that the arts are an essential part of educating the 21st century learner. Richard Riley, Secretary of the United States Department of Education at the time, noted (as cited in Fiske, 1999):

> American education is changing, and changing for the better. Who teaches, what is taught, where teaching takes place, and how teaching occurs are evolving dramatically in communities across America. And a key factor in changing American education for the better is to increase high quality arts learning in the lives of young Americans. (p. vi)

However, in *Champions of Change* it is hard to find information on strategies to sustain the longevity of an arts program. Other investigations of interdisciplinary arts programs discuss the development and assessment of these programs. But, little is written in relation to fostering and managing an interdisciplinary arts program once it has been implemented.

This thesis, which is a qualitative study, will provide information on how an arts administrator facilitating at an individual interdisciplinary arts (public) school may: (a) bridge gaps among administrators, core curriculum teachers, arts specialists, and the
school's community; (b) provide and initiate strategies for implementing a successful interdisciplinary arts program, leading to the future permanence and up-keep of the program; and (c) establish on-going professional development opportunities, reinforcing interdisciplinary teaching techniques, as well as educating newly hired staff to the arts program's mission.

In chapter one, this study demonstrates the foundation for arts education and promote an argument for the 21st century learner to thrive in an interdisciplinary arts program. Chapter two offers information on a specific arts program (A+ Schools Program). Chapter three concludes with suggested responsibilities for an arts administrator, supporting the success of, and sustainability for, an interdisciplinary arts program. Schools and school districts that have already implemented an arts program may use the information outlined in this study to assist them in molding an arts administrator's role to fit individual institutional needs.

Theory of Art Education

In order to comprehend the 21st century’s trend towards implementing interdisciplinary arts programs, as well as why the federal government in the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 gave the arts equal billing beside reading, math, and science (Ruppert, 2006, p. 1), one must explore the origins of interdisciplinary arts programs.

Elliot Eisner helped lay some of the ground work for interdisciplinary arts based programs while an undergraduate in the early 1960s at Roosevelt College in Chicago. While attending Roosevelt, he taught art classes for the American Boys Commonwealth...
Eisner (1991) wrote of his work at the ABCC, “My work with these children and adolescents, motivated initially by a desire to learn more about art by examining its sources, soon was converted into an interest in how art could be used to help children grow” (p. 12). This epiphany fueled Eisner’s theories of art education.

Eisner went on to obtain his masters degree in Art Education and a doctorate from the Department of Education at the University of Chicago. Coupled with Eisner’s education, he read works by Rudolf Arnheim, Susanne Langer, and John Dewey. In these academic and philosophical books, Eisner found his theories of cognitive thought and the arts vindicated. Eisner (1991) expressed his opinion by writing:

> My appreciation for the kinds of thinking that qualitative mediation and qualitative problem-solving elicited led quite quickly to the view that if education was to do more than develop a small part of human cognition, it had to give the young opportunities to work in the arts. The arts were mind-altering devices and the curriculum the major means through which such alteration could be fostered. (p. 13)

The education community (administrators, superintendents, core classroom teachers) has often looked upon the arts as frill. The ideology of many educators is that the arts should be taught separate from reading, writing, and math. Jane Carol Manner (2002), a core classroom teacher, theorizes on why educators are conditioned to think of the arts in such a manner:

> Part of our reticence to infuse art is created by the fact that we [classroom teachers] have been conditioned to conceive and perceive the curriculum as a series of neat and discrete pigeonholes....The pigeonholes are typically
differing in size and hierarchical in order. We might imagine reading, writing, and math as occupying the most commodious ones, with less-emphasized curricular areas relegated to smaller quarters. The arts would likely occupy the smallest chamber of all. (p. 18)

Manner, from my teaching experience, states clearly what core subject teachers have thought for years about the arts. In addition, many classroom teachers are resistant to change.

Eisner was not the only one experimenting with the theory of arts education. Howard Gardner, a cognitive psychologist, developed the theory of multiple intelligences in 1983, thus paving the way for a larger view on how the arts can contribute to the core teacher’s curriculum (Gardner, 1983). Towards the end of the 20th century, educators and researchers began to implement the ideology of interdisciplinary arts programs in schools across America.

Defining Interdisciplinary Arts Programs

Interdisciplinary or integrated arts education has a rich connotation. According to Kindler (1987), the term interdisciplinary or an integrated program is one in which the arts are simultaneously taught beside another subject. Kindler elaborates further by stating:

The arts are used to illustrate or reinforce concepts from other areas, such as English, social studies, biology, and history. They are included in the curriculum on the basis of the extrinsic rationale that points to the usefulness of the arts in other areas of learning and claims that the arts are instrumental in
achieving better results in other area of academic pursuit. (p. 52)

However, the expression interdisciplinary may vary from school to school depending upon the arts program that is being implemented.

For example, one interdisciplinary arts program, SmART Schools, aims to incorporate dance, drama, music, and the visual arts across disciplines including language arts, math, science, and social studies. SmART Schools aspire to provide a comprehensive arts education for all learners. “Their program’s approach makes learning accessible for all students at the elementary level, and helps teachers as well as students appreciate and value differences in abilities and learning styles” (Arts Education Partnership, 2002, p. 7). No matter the focus for the interdisciplinary arts program, each seeks to develop teaching that unifies the arts with the core teacher’s curriculum. For the purpose of this study, interdisciplinary arts education will be used to mean providing aesthetic arts experiences in order to teach students the goals and objectives of the core classroom teacher’s curriculum through the use of the arts.

21st Century Learner

Educating the 21st century student solely through logical, linear, left brain thinking is becoming as extinct as the Industrial Age. As our society shifts from the Information Age into the Conceptual Age, so must the education provided to the 21st century learner. Daniel Pink (2005) wrote:

In short, we’ve progressed from a society of farmers to a society of factory workers to a society of knowledge workers. And now we’re progressing yet again—to a society of creators and empathizers, of pattern recognizers and
meaning makers. (p. 50)

In short, teaching is no longer focused on the three key academics of reading, writing, and arithmetic.

In the 21st century, students’ learning and cognitive skills must transition from the ideas of the past to today’s rapidly changing world. Schools must adapt, educating students by creating a balance between the right and left hemispheres of the brain. According to Daniel Pink (2005), the left hemisphere of the brain is sequential; it breaks meaning down into small parts, and is responsible for understanding verbal communication. The right hemisphere of the brain sees all parts simultaneously; it provides the picture to the word. “In other words, leading a healthy, happy, successful life depends on both hemispheres of your brain” (Pink, p. 26).

Students of the 21st century require capabilities that will allow them to encode and decode using appropriate communication skills in response to today’s complex visual world. I agree with the following statement made by the executive director of the National Education Association, John Wilson, as cited in the North Carolina Public Schools (2005) document:

In today’s economy, an education focused on the ‘so-called’ basics may not be providing students with the skills essential for success and continued world leadership in the 21st century. To maintain our competitive edge, we need to balance instruction, encouraging our children to be creative and develop their imaginations. (p. 40)

Current ideas suggest that an arts education is needed now more than ever. The question now asked of educators and public school systems is how they are going to
teach creativity, problem solving, visual literacy, empathy, and globalization. Sandell (2009) specifies:

Students will need to master new cognitive abilities leading to a cultivated mind that is disciplined, able to synthesize, be creative, respectful, and ethical, along with the capacity to integrate ideas from different disciplines and an appreciation for those differences. (p. 288)

One way to accomplish these varied goals is to implement and maintain an interdisciplinary arts program. This will not be a quick fix, but rather a prerequisite for the future education of generations to come.

It is apparent that through ongoing arts education, students in the 21st century who learn about the arts from a young age are more likely to develop better cognitive thinking and problem solving skills. Jensen (2001) argues, “Arts are not a strategic solution to inject into an educational eco-system to get an immediate result. They [the arts] are best when implemented over the long haul, with an eye on the future, not the present” (p. 111). Adjusting to the needs of the 21st century learner is not going to be easy; however, if America wants to stay competitive in the Conceptual Age it should recognize that changes in our educational system are required in order to adapt to students’ needs in this new era.
Chapter 2
A+ Schools Program

History & Philosophy of the A+ Schools Program

As pointed out previously, there are several interdisciplinary arts programs that schools can implement for an arts integrated curriculum. I will concentrate on the A+ Schools Program. Due to my experience with the A+ Schools Program throughout my 14 years of teaching visual art, I have chosen this particular program to illustrate how an arts administrator can provide supervision and sustainability for the program once it has been initiated.

The A+ Schools Program aims to modify the way core subject areas are taught. According to the A+ Schools Program philosophy, core subjects are infused through the four main arts disciplines (music, dance, drama, and visual arts) and then presented in a way that maximizes students’ learning potential. The A+ Schools Program’s mission is to generate schools where students, teachers, administrators, parents, and the school’s community view the arts as a fundamental tool used for teaching (A+ Schools Program at UNCG: Mission Statement, n.d.).

The A+ Schools Program was first piloted in Wilmington and Southport, North Carolina in 1993. The program was initiated and promoted by the Kenan Institute for the Arts 1995-2003. The Thomas S. Kenan Institute for the Arts supports the creative development of strategic partnerships that promote visionary arts thinking (Thomas S. Kenan Institute for the Arts: Mission, n.d.). In 2003 the program was moved to the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) and continues to be managed as a Special Program within the SERVE Center at UNCG. The A+ Schools Program
currently includes 43 North Carolina schools representing varying demographics. The
A+ Schools Program is also expanding beyond North Carolina and is being
implemented in school districts in Oklahoma and Arkansas (A+ Schools Program at
UNCG: About A+ Schools, n.d.).

The philosophy of the A+ Schools Program is grounded in the A+ Essentials and
the theory of multiple intelligences (MI) (A+ Schools Program at UNCG: About A+
Schools, n.d.). Through the use of the eight A+ Essentials: Arts, Curriculum, Multiple
Intelligences, Enriched Assessment, Experiential Learning, Collaboration, Climate, and
Infrastructure, an A+ School is trained to reflect upon its progress towards becoming
A+. The A+ Essentials also provide documentation strategies that allow an adopting
A+ school to highlight the specific outcomes and goals the school wishes to achieve
through the program (A+ Schools Program at UNCG: A+ Essentials, n.d.). However,
the driving ideology of the A+ Schools Program is based on cognitive psychologist
Howard Gardner’s theory of the multiple intelligences. Buchbinder (1999) points out:

This cognitive psychologist [Howard Gardner] has helped educators recognize
that learning takes place through many means in addition to book reading, and
that children are best served by having opportunities to gain and demonstrate their
understanding in a variety of ways. (p. 1)

For the A+ Schools Program, this theory supports its vision of creating enhanced
learning opportunities for all students.

Gardner believes that all individuals learn through varying intellectual modes of
thought. He has firmly identified seven areas for analyzing new information in the
brain and is currently working on identifying others. Gardner (1983) states, “I believe
that human beings are capable of developing capacities of an exquisitely high order in at least seven semi-autonomous intellectual realms” (p. 48). The main intelligences are:

- linguistic intelligence effectively uses language to express oneself and to remember information;
- logical-mathematical intelligence consists of the capacity to detect patterns, reason deductively, and think logically;
- musical intelligence involves skill in the performance, composition, and appreciation of musical patterns;
- bodily-kinesthetic intelligence uses the potential of one’s whole body or parts of the body to solve problems;
- spatial intelligence is the potential to recognize and use the patterns of wide space and more confined areas;
- interpersonal intelligence is concerned with the capacity to understand the intentions, motivations, and desires of other people;
- intrapersonal intelligence entails the capacity to understand oneself, to appreciate one’s feelings, fears, and motivations (Smith, 2002, 2008, p. 4).

These intelligences are the essence of the staff development provided to schools who adopt the A+ Schools Program. Howard Gardner (1983) wrote of the multiple intelligences:

Armed with this kind of knowledge, parents and educators have the option of developing a child’s strengths, and of supplementing weaker areas, either through special training or through the use of prosthetics, which can often supplant modest endowment in a given intellectual domain. (p. 49)
A+ Schools Program aims to align the multiple intelligences, the core objectives and goals of the classroom teachers, and the objectives and goals of the arts specialists, thus maximizing educational effectiveness.

Each state involved with the A+ Schools Program uses its specific curriculum standards to assist in developing interdisciplinary lesson plan objectives. For example, in North Carolina core classroom teachers and arts specialists use the North Carolina Standard Course of Study when developing an interdisciplinary lesson plan. The program’s funding comes from numerous sources: NC General Assembly, grants from private foundations, fees for contracted services, participating school districts, UNCG, federal grants, and private agencies and foundations (A+ Schools Program at UNCG: *Becoming A+*, n.d.).

**Adopting an A+ Schools Program**

Before a school chooses to make the curriculum-altering decision to adopt an A+ Schools Program, several alternative arts programs should be researched. Administrators and key constituents must identify how each arts program/partnership constructs its arts education as an essential component of a student’s daily learning.

Once a particular program is selected, transparent communication with every faculty member strengthens the total school commitment to the interdisciplinary arts program/partnership. The following quote from Arts Education Partnership, *Strengthening State-Level Arts Education Partnership* (2000a), cements why the whole faculty is necessary for the success of any interdisciplinary arts program/partnerships:
Arts education partnerships have a lot in common with marriage. Different entities come together with shared hopes and dreams and a willingness to work together for the common weal. But no matter how hard they both might try, if the partners are not “of one mind,” or willing to yield some of their ground for the greater good, if they are not able to communicate without shouting or trust one another to do the right thing, they will spend more of their time wrangling over the problems of the partnership than resolving the problems of arts education. (p. 5)

Administrators and key constituents need to remain focused on the who that the program/partnership is serving; they need to keep their eyes on the prize: the students!

How does a school adopt the A+ Schools Program? Before deciding to execute the A+ Schools Program, an adopting school’s administration and key constituents attend pre-institutes. These pre-institutes are designed to assist in understanding the process of becoming a member of the A+ Network. The faculty of the adopting school then makes an informed decision about becoming an A+ interdisciplinary arts based school. Once the decision has been made to adopt the A+ Schools Program, a three-year implementation process begins that allows the adopting school to become fully infused into the A+ Schools Network. The funding for the initial year of adoption comes from the adopting school’s school district (A+ Schools Program at UNCG: *Becoming A+,* n.d.).

During the first year of implementation, the adopting school’s faculty attends a five-day professional development institute. The institute takes place during the summer and off campus in order to fully immerse administrators, core classroom
teachers, arts specialists, and other faculty members in the A+ mission. Eighty-five percent of a school’s faculty and 100% of its administration must be in attendance during all five days of the professional development (A+ Schools Program at UNCG: Professional Development, n.d.).

The five-day institute is taught by several A+ Fellows. An A+ Fellow might be a practicing A+ core classroom teacher, an arts specialist, an administrator, or a teaching artist. The A+ Fellows assist in building a supportive and collaborative environment in which to learn the A+ key components. The initial five-day institute highlights and explains Howard Gardner and his theory of the multiple intelligences to the administrators, core classroom teachers, arts specialists, and other faculty members. A+ Fellows model integrated lessons and provide core classroom teachers with the basic toolkit for teaching interdisciplinary lessons. They also oversee team building activities that provide core classroom teachers and arts specialists planning time as well as hands-on experience for designing interdisciplinary arts activities for students (A+ Schools Program at UNCG: A+ in Practice, n.d.).

Upon completion of the five-day institute, the adopting school appoints one core classroom teacher from each grade level to become its A+ representative. These representatives in turn are responsible for communicating with the principal and vice principal as well as the arts specialists (visual art, drama, dance, and music teachers) at their schools about the themes, objectives, and goals for monthly units. The information provided is then processed weekly during planning periods to coordinate core classroom teachers’ goals and objectives with the arts specialists’ curriculum. This planning time throughout the initial year of implementation is meant to be reflective and
experimental; all teachers involved offer ideas for interdisciplinary lessons that can be taught through the core academics or the arts.

During the second year of implementation, the administration and faculty of the adopting school attends a three-day institute. The three-day institute may be held on or off the school’s campus. The three-day institute is a re-affirmation for administrators, core classroom teachers, arts specialists, and other faculty members that the involvement of each is critical to the success and sustainability of the program.

During the third and final year of the implementation process, a two-day institute is attended by the faculty of the adopting school. This last professional development takes place at the school and includes strategies for working with area community arts resources and A+ partners (other A+ schools already in the A+ Network), and emphasizes building the school’s partnership with local, state, and national organizations. Upon completion of the three-year implementation process the A+ Schools Program promises to provide ongoing (at the school’s expense) professional development opportunities for adopting schools through A+ institutes and conferences, which are held throughout the year (A+ Schools Program at UNCG: A+ in Practice, n.d.).

Advantages and Disadvantages of the A+ Schools Program

In this thesis I am focusing on what I have experienced as the primary advantages and disadvantages of the A+ Schools Program.

1. The first advantage of the A+ Schools Program is the three-year implementation timeline for becoming an A+ School and part of the A+ Network.
The five, three, and two-day professional development institutes provide continuity when explaining the expectations and beliefs held by the program towards interdisciplinary arts education. These institutes are designed to modify the teaching approach of educators, confirming that students are best served when provided with several different options to gain and model understanding of the concepts being taught to them. Oddleifson (1995) reiterates:

Some of us cannot express ourselves easily through language, but we can in other ways--ways which are provided through the arts. And if this expression is pursued with the goal of quality, and with high standards, it becomes the highest possible expression of human thought. (p. 2)

It should become clear to educators that these institutes aim to develop not the left (sequential) side of a child's brain, but also the right (big picture) side as well, thus developing the whole child.

2. The second advantage of the A+ program is the extensive A+ Network available to guide and assist in assessing the interdisciplinary goals of a budding A+ school.

The A+ Schools Program timeline document states:

One of the strengths of the A+ Schools Program is the networking of A+ Schools that provides mutual support while they work to become successful art-based schools. In North Carolina, and in other states with which we have worked, we have developed a strong A+ Schools Network that includes within it a network of A+ principals, coordinators and A+ Fellows who meet twice annually to share successful practices and guide the Network. (A+ Schools Program at
Most notably the A+ Network provides a safety net, which can assist in supporting the sustainability of the program, if used properly and on a regular basis.

3. The third advantage of the A+ Schools Program is that it has been independently evaluated.

The first evaluation began in 1995 and spanned four years. Dr. George Noblit at UNC-Chapel Hill and two independent researchers, Dr. Bruce Wilson and Dr. Dick Corbit, studied the program and its effects. Their results can be found in *The Arts and Education Reform: Lessons from a Four-Year Evaluation of the A+ Schools Program, 1995-1999*. A second study was conducted in 2003 and resulted in a book written in 2009, both under the same title, *Creating and Sustaining Arts-Based School Reform: The A+ Schools Program*.

Below are listed some of the initial findings from the four-year evaluation:

- schools increased their organizational capacity and leadership to sustain the innovation;
- schools developed a more focused identity and increased channels of communication among staff and with parents;
- teachers changed their instructional strategies, resulting in more engaging and experiential learning for all students;
- school staff and parents found the A+ approach to teaching equally beneficial to all groups of students, regardless of cognitive development, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status;
- students were more engaged in the curriculum and improved their attitudes,
• students achieved assessment gains without teachers “narrowing” the curriculum (A+ Schools Program at UNCG: Research and Results, n.d.).

The conclusion of the evaluation highlights the implementation of the A+ Schools Program as being a significant influence on the cognitive learning development of a student (A+ Schools Program at UNCG: Research and Results, n.d.).

The disadvantages of the A+ Schools Program became evident to me after the program had been adopted and the institutes attended by administrators, core classroom teachers, arts specialists and other faculty members of the school.

1. The first disadvantage was that no other on-campus faculty professional development or follow up by the A+ Schools Program and its Fellows was provided after the five, three, and two-day faculty development institutes. This goes against the services the A+ Schools Program promotes. This resulted in waning enthusiasm for the program from the faculty. Myers (2001) emphasized the importance of continuing faculty professional development stating, “Nearly every arts education partnership involves professional development, but the typical models are often inadequate for true collaboration in the classroom” (p. 7).

Continuous professional development that provides faculty with interdisciplinary lesson plan ideas needs to be a key component of the program.

2. The second disadvantage of the A+ Schools Program is the lack of attention the A+ Fellows provided when teaching how the arts program should be communicated among administrators, core classroom teachers, arts specialists, and the school’s community.
Core classroom teachers as well as arts specialists have no set criteria for announcing the arts integration happening in their classrooms. Core classroom teachers and arts specialists should be held accountable by an arts administrator or the school’s administration for their arts integrated lesson plans.

3. The third disadvantage of the A+ Schools Program is time. Planning time between core classroom teachers and arts specialists needs to be structured by an arts administrator, thus maximizing collaboration and productivity when developing integrated lessons.

Lorimer (2009) wrote about collaborative planning time between core classroom teachers and arts specialist, “Moreover, rethinking the concept of time is critical. Because the notion of ‘there’s never enough time’ regularly permeates many educators’ conversations and way of thinking, reconceptualizing this challenge may bring about positive results” (p. 11).

Core classroom teachers and arts specialists not only need time for planning, they also need to be guided and held accountable for the concepts they are initiating.

4. A fourth disadvantage to the A+ Schools Programs is the position of the A+ Coordinator. The A+ Coordinator (in theory) should support and develop the program, on-site, while acting as a liaison between the school and the A+ Network (A+ Schools Program at UNCG: A+ in Practice, n.d.).

The issue with this position is that it is assigned to a teacher or person within the school who has limited background knowledge in the arts and who views the extra duties as a chore. What I am proposing is different because it highlights one person who is solely
responsible for coordinating the program. An arts administrator focused on supporting 
and developing the program would provide a much more coherent implementation plan.

It should be noted that any interdisciplinary arts program adopted by a school will 
experience advantages, disadvantages, and growth. In chapter three, I will illustrate how 
an on-site arts administrator can maximize advantages while minimizing disadvantages, 
thus maintaining the arts program and securing its longevity. Illustration 1 highlights the 
contribution of each constituent towards achieving the goals of the A+ Schools 
Program’s philosophy. This team is necessary to get the program off the ground before 
student involvement. To be truly effective these team members must be fully committed 
to the interdisciplinary arts program and there should be minimal staff turnover for it to 
succeed. I am not promoting the A+ Schools Program, rather this is a illustration that can 
be used as an example for any interdisciplinary arts program.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>4. Core Teachers</th>
<th>5. Arts Specialists (visual arts, drama, dance, and music)</th>
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<td></td>
<td>- Willingness to change the way they teach their subject area/s</td>
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<td>- Full buy-in</td>
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<td>- Collaborate and plan regularly with arts specialists</td>
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<td>- Support and carry out the arts program’s vision</td>
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<th>6. Parents and Community</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Funding</td>
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<td>- Materials</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Support the arts program’s vision</td>
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<td>- Resource for knowledge and skills</td>
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## A+ Schools Program Requirements

### Components Necessary

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Components Necessary</th>
<th>Contributions</th>
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| 1. Principal/Vice Principal | - Vision  
- Professional Development |
| 2. Superintendent | - Funding  
- Support the arts program's vision |
| 3. Arts Administrator | - Coordinate communication with the principal/vice principal, core teachers, arts specialists, and the parents/community  
- Support the arts program's vision |
| 4. Core Teachers | - Willingness to change the way they teach their subject area/s  
- Full buy-in  
- Collaborate and plan regularly with arts specialists  
- Support and carry out the arts program's vision |
| 5. Arts Specialists (visual arts, drama, dance, and music) | - Willingness to change the way they teach their subject area/s  
- Full buy-in  
- Resource for content area  
- Collaborate and plan regularly with core teachers  
- Support and carry out the arts program's vision |
| 6. Parents and Community | - Funding  
- Materials  
- Support the arts program's vision  
- Resource for knowledge and skills |
Chapter 3
The Role of an Arts Administrator

Personal Experience

I have taught visual art in North Carolina for fourteen years. The first thirteen years were spent teaching visual art to kindergarten through fifth grade students at two inner-city elementary schools. Both schools in which I taught adopted the A+ Schools Program. At these schools, I completed two five-day institutes, one three-day institute, and one two-day institute. The discussion and strategies for an arts administrator in this chapter is largely based upon my teaching experience.

The first school (School One) adopted the A+ Schools Program in 1999. The principal at that time pushed for the implementation of the program with little faculty input or commitment; this caused problems from the beginning. When the administration at the school changed, the A+ Schools Program was eventually cut from the curriculum. At School One, the intentions of the principal were noble; however, the experience of “doing” after the initial training was inadequately facilitated and met with resentment from its faculty. Dewey (2005) states, “Experience is limited by all the causes which interfere with perception of the relations between undergoing and doing” (p. 46). The A+ Schools Program would have been more successful at School One if better strategies had been coordinated by the principal and an arts administrator to hold the faculty accountable for planning, implementing, and teaching arts integrated lesson plans. The faculty at School One should have been consulted and included as well when making the decision towards becoming A+. The second school (School Two), where I taught kindergarten through fifth grade visual art, adopted the A+ Schools Program in 2005. The process of adoption was extremely transparent when making the decision to become an A+ school. The principal at School Two initiated the A+ Schools Program adoption by including the vice principal, team leaders from every grade level, and arts teachers in the decision-making process. School Two has had the foresight to implement strategies to support the success and sustainability of the A+ Schools Program. Art administrators have been focused on the coordination and alignment of the arts integrated lesson plans. Effective coordination and alignment of the arts integrated lesson plans is crucial to keeping the arts focused on the role of the arts. The arts administrator also understands the importance of the arts in providing students with opportunities to express themselves and develop critical thinking skills.
Program in 2008. The principal in School Two was extremely transparent when making the decision to become an A+ school. The principal at School Two initiated the A+ Schools Program adoption by including the vice principal, team leaders from every grade level, and arts specialists in the decision making process. School Two is currently in its third year towards becoming part of the A+ Schools Network. School Two has had the foresight to implement strategies to support the success and sustainability of the A+ Schools Program in its school. In addition to very transparent and inclusive communication another strategy of School Two was to hire an arts administrator to assist in keeping the school focused on the role of the arts. The arts administrator also supports core classroom teachers to continuously create and adapt interdisciplinary lesson plans.

Experiencing the adoption of the A+ Schools Program at two schools has given me the opportunity to reflect on how this particular interdisciplinary arts program can be a success or a failure. The commitment and buy-in of the principal/vice principal and faculty is a must in order for the arts administrator to successfully sustain the program. It is important that interdisciplinary arts programs remain in the schools where they are adopted because the arts are designed for the 21st century learner.

**Role of an Arts Administrator Defined**

Once an arts administrator's position has been established to assist in making the arts program a success, a newly arts integrated school and the school district need to keep in mind that it will take several years to develop a successful arts program. Morris (2009) summarizes:
Arts integration requires a commitment. It is a slow and never-ending process, but if done seriously and effectively, it can bring about positive change. It takes time, dedication, perseverance, and teamwork in addition to funding, resources, organizational support, and knowledge to create a true arts-integrated school.

When faced with a significant amount of change, faculty must accept that time and patience are necessary for the arts program to be fully implemented and successful.

An on-site arts administrator can continuously evaluate the effectiveness of the interdisciplinary arts program while holding the principal/vice principal, core classroom teachers, and arts specialists accountable for their participation in the arts program. The arts administrator in-turn is held accountable by the principal/vice principal of the school. With the use of an arts administrator, the faculty would feel less stress while creating a high-quality program.

In this chapter, I will suggest strategies and examples that an arts administrator may use to oversee the maintenance and sustainability of the interdisciplinary arts program adopted by a school. These strategies and responsibilities stem from my experiences with the A+ Schools Program and my research. They may be altered to fit any individual arts programs, not just the A+ Schools Program. There are many duties that an arts administrator may perform. The major responsibilities of an arts administrator should be to keep the adopting school focused on the role that the arts play towards the success of the program. The arts administrator needs to communicate effectively with the principal, vice principal, faculty, and community (parent and local businesses) about the activities happening with the arts program in the school. The arts
administrator should provide regular interdisciplinary professional development opportunities for the faculty as well as lead the arts program through adaptations by examining the internal/external school environment thus leading to the sustainability of the program.

Who Should Serve as the Arts Administrator?

The person appointed to the arts administrator’s position at an interdisciplinary arts school needs to be someone who is a well equipped leader and knows how to lead using the arts specialists and their curricula. From my experience, the arts administrator should have a strong background in the arts (they should have worked in the arts in some capacity), be effective when communicating with educators, and have experience with interdisciplinary lesson planning. The arts administrator’s position cannot be added to the already hectic schedule and duties of the principal or vice principal. The arts administrator must be an entirely separate position performed by an individual who will oversee the arts program.

The arts administrator’s position is a leadership position that is seen by other faculty members as being dedicated to making the interdisciplinary arts program successful by promoting, maintaining, and assisting in the sustainability of the arts program for future generations. Collins (2001) states, “A Level 5 Leader channels ambition into the company, not the self; sets up successors for even more greatness in the next generation” (p. 73). An arts administrator should be a Level 5 Leader.

One of the responsibilities of the arts administrator should be to establish core classroom teachers’ confidence when educating their students through the arts.
begin with, an art administrator needs to nurture the art form that the core classroom teacher feels the most comfortable teaching then branch out into other art disciplines when planning an arts integrated lesson. “The leader’s most important role is to instill confidence in people. They must dare to take risks and responsibility” (Heifetz & Laurie, 2001, p. 137). The arts administrator can encourage this confidence by creating a supportive environment within the school when mediating planning sessions between core classroom teachers and arts specialists.

The arts administrator should also exhibit empathy towards the needs of core classroom teachers as well as arts specialists, ensuring that each set of educators’ needs are being recognized. De Pree (2004) writes, “Understanding and accepting diversity enables us to see that each of us is needed. It also enables us to think about being abandoned to the strengths of others, of admitting that we can not know or do everything” (p. 9). Drawing from my experience, I have learned that if core classroom teachers and arts specialists are taught how to effectively collaborate and plan integrated lessons they will become one of the biggest advocates of the arts program.

The arts administrator’s position should lead the arts program through change by observing the internal and external needs of the school’s community. This would ensure smooth transition for the faculty when alterations need to be made to the arts program. Heifetz and Laurie (2001) argued, “A leader protects people by managing the rate of change” (p. 135). This awareness would ensure the sustainability of the arts program. The arts administrator must remain aware of adaptations that will continuously support the interdisciplinary arts program. After all, leadership is a
condition, the visible signs of which are expressed ultimately in its practice (De Pree, 2004).

Administration

The principal’s and vice principal’s vision of an interdisciplinary arts program in their school should be developed with an arts administrator and the faculty. The arts administrator, who has a strong background in the arts and leadership, can provide valuable insight when creating the arts based focus for the school and its faculty. The voices of the principal, vice principal, and arts administrator will establish the importance of regular interdisciplinary collaborations between the whole faculty as well as set the tone for accountability within the school. Nelson (2009) explained, “Principals must establish the expectation that professional development will be ongoing, interdisciplinary, and collaborative among the entire faculty. The nature and needs of children and preadolescents are uniquely accommodated when a whole faculty embraces a whole-child philosophy” (p. 17).

The principal, vice principal, arts administrator, and the leaders appointed from each grade level should continuously examine which interdisciplinary content will most benefit the students at their school.

One strategy the arts administrator could implement to assist in the sustainability of the arts program would be to meet weekly with the school’s principal and vice principal. The meeting should include the topic of interdisciplinary lessons being taught by core classroom teachers with arts specialists. These lessons should then be updated and posted regularly by the arts administrator in an established, highly visible
area in the office. This chart will provide administrators, core classroom teachers, and arts specialists a tangible visual record of the arts integration taking place in the school along with the curriculum connections being made among disciplines. This chart would be a great strategy for sustaining the arts program. I have experienced the need of core classroom teachers and arts specialists to do more than discuss; it would be most beneficial for them to see what they have planned.

Another strategy that could be implemented by the arts administrator, collaborating with the principal and vice principal, should be concerned with ways to better involve the school’s parent community and surrounding businesses. Lorimer (2009) emphasizes, “Principals must be proactive in developing an implementation plan and marshaling resources to support the arts throughout the school community” (p. 12). A poll conducted in 2005 regarding the attitudes of Americans about arts education cited that 79% of Americans believe that arts education is important enough for them to get personally involved (Ruppert, 2006, p. 5). The school’s principal and vice principal must continuously work with the arts administrator to ensure the advancement of internal/external community support towards becoming a successful arts learning organization. The school website, arts newsletters, PTSO meeting, the local Arts Council grants, Rotary Club, or Chamber of Commerce presentations will provide ways to answer how this work is being accomplished.

**Arts Specialists**

The arts administrator in an interdisciplinary arts program is the lead advocate for the arts specialist at the school. The arts administrator should make certain that each of
the main art disciplines (visual art, drama, music, and dance) is offered as part of the arts program’s weekly instruction, reaching the multiple learning styles of individual students. “Art, dance, drama, and music have rigorous content that challenge the brightest of young students, and develop ways of analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating that rival other subject areas” (Nelson, 2009, p. 16).

The arts administrator, in order to assist in the sustainability of the arts program, could organize a monthly arts newsletter highlighting the arts specialists’ curriculum, implement an arts grade-level flyer to be sent home through students, maintain a web page, and/or regularly update a centralized bulletin board. The news would inform community members about the arts integration being implemented in the school. The arts information could incorporate integrated lessons being taught, performances (formal and informal), information about arts clubs being offered and opportunities for parent involvement. Carrie Nordlund, art department chair from Independence, MO, keeps advocacy regularly in front of the public, “You have to toot your own horn a lot” (Arts Education Partnership, 2000b, p. 9). The arts administrator could use the newsletter as a means of showing the community the plethora of ways that the lives of those who are involved with the arts are enriched.

A night of arts-integrated performances could be coordinated by the arts administrator once a semester or annually, showcasing successful interdisciplinary lessons between core teachers and arts specialists. The integrated performance would provide the opportunity for core classroom teachers to involve themselves in the performance part of the arts as well as demonstrate their creativity in arts integration. It has been my experience that core classroom teachers begin to understand the amount of
work it takes to produce and perform a piece of art if they are involved in the process from its beginning. At School Two where I taught visual art to kindergarten through fifth graders, the Night of the Arts was a production solely produced by the arts specialists. I believe the core classroom teacher’s learning would have been more successful if the collaboration between the core classroom teachers and arts specialists had been showcased more efficiently.

Core Classroom Teachers and Planning

During the 14 years of my visual arts teaching career, I have observed that core classroom teachers believe they have limited time to restructure their curriculum to form a relationship between the arts and the subjects they are required to teach. In order to have a successful interdisciplinary arts program that is sustainable, core classroom teachers need to be committed, from the beginning of the arts program, to the change that is required in their daily teaching routine. The way to make arts integration easily obtainable for core classroom teachers is through regular collaborative planning sessions with the arts specialists and arts administrator.

These planning sessions would enhance a core classroom teacher’s knowledge and confidence in the arts as well as provide them with arts integrated lesson plans. As stated in the Arts Education Partnership article, *Gaining the Arts Advantage* (2000b), “Teachers who learn how to work with community organizations and to collaborate with other educators and administrators will become better cultivators of community support, better nurturers of external and internal partnerships, and better
‘connectors’ for arts education” (p. 7). The single most important factor in making arts integration obtainable for core subject teachers is time.

Collaborative planning between core classroom teachers and the arts specialists should take place every other week. Core classroom teachers need to meet once a week according to grade level/subject to discuss the ways their lessons can integrate the arts. Every other week the arts specialists should meet with the core classroom teachers to discuss, in further detail, how the lessons can become interdisciplinary. The arts administrator should schedule and lead each of the planning sessions, leading to collaborations that integrate the arts into the core teacher’s classroom and the core subjects into the arts specialist’s classroom. Buchbinder (1999) states, “Bringing teachers into the world of arts, and artists into the world of teaching, is another important element of successful arts programs” (p. 13). The arts administrator is responsible for constructing an environment where both sets of teachers, arts specialists and core classroom, understand that each is equally important in developing the whole child. Myers (2001) makes the point:

In the arts partnership classroom, it should be clear that artists, specialists, and classroom teachers work as a team in establishing a learning community. Modeling collaborative teaching and learning among themselves should set the tone for student attitudes and work habits. (Artists and teachers together, para. 6) The arts administrator needs to guide the planning session, making certain that the outcome is the development of quality lessons that align the arts standards with the core classroom teacher’s objectives.
To make interdisciplinary planning sessions more effective, the arts administrator could suggest that arts specialists and core classroom teachers create curriculum maps (see glossary). These maps would provide a visual chart of the goals and objectives that the collaborators feel should be the outcome of the lesson. The arts administrator and arts specialists could also supply the names of works by artists who correlate to the lesson. “Through curriculum maps teachers could see the correlation of arts integration within each subject area, and teachers could use it to study the vertical alignment between grades” (Morris, 2009, p. 20). It has been my experience that when core classroom teachers see the connections between the arts and their curriculum, their creativity through the arts comes alive. When core classroom teachers are exposed to various ways of teaching a subject, they push their integrated lessons to reach even their toughest students. For example, when teaching a times table lesson, instead of repeating drills verbally and in writing, core classroom teachers can have their students incorporate them into rap songs, dances, and even short plays.

The arts administrator could develop an arts planning manual for core classroom teachers to assist them during planning sessions with the arts specialists and on their own. The manual should include a brief description of the arts specialists’ goals, as well as a list of outside resources (community artists, arts organizations, web sites, etc.) that could help plan the integrated lesson and provide a system for documenting the lesson plan. The arts administrator could be present for support when a core classroom teacher is introducing an integrated lesson to his or her students, as this would give valuable support and feedback on what went well with the lesson and what could be improved.
Another strategy that the arts administrator could develop to further support integration would be to pair core classroom teachers with an arts specialist. One of the arts specialists or a community artist could be assigned to a grade level to help core classroom teachers learn about the various ways they can reach their students with the arts. The arts specialists in turn would be exposed to team teaching outside the arts while learning more about the core classroom teacher’s curriculum.

The arts administrator should routinely assess the needs of the core classroom teachers through a series of surveys given three times, at the beginning, middle, and end of the year. This would provide the administration, arts administrator, core classroom teachers, and arts specialists at the school with valuable information about the frequency and comfort with which arts integrated lessons are being taught in the classroom. Myers (2001) makes the point:

Only when the relationship between partnerships and high-quality teaching and learning is demonstrated can partnerships serve as a defensible example of how communities and schools cooperate for educational excellence. Moreover, only then can partnerships represent lasting change in the practice of arts education in schools. (Partnerships and the question of instructional quality, para. 7)

The arts administrator should continually reaffirm that integrating the arts is about meeting the diverse needs of students so that they can see themselves as a success, no matter the core or arts subject being taught.
Professional Development

An arts administrator can secure the quality and consistency of an arts integrated program from the beginning through well planned and regularly implemented professional development for the faculty. This is a strategy that would support the sustainability of the program. Through my experience, educators who are exposed to integrated lessons on a regular basis will support the program for years to come because they know that they will not have to spend a lot of time figuring out how to plan an integrated lesson. By providing arts integrated professional staff development opportunities, core classroom teachers and arts specialists will build upon their working knowledge of how to teach an interdisciplinary lesson as well as keep the ideas learned in the forefront of their minds when planning occurs.

For example, in a professional development activity, any arts specialist or core classroom teacher could illustrate an interdisciplinary lesson involving a selected art medium with a core subject objective. When I experienced this, I taught core classroom teachers one way to teach their geometric math objectives with clay. Core classroom teachers molded two dimensional clay shapes and then formed them into a three dimensional sculpture. I found that it is not the finished project that is important to core classroom teachers, rather the steps involved in teaching the process of the lesson to their students. Frequent arts integrated faculty development will begin to break down the misconception of core classroom teachers that their curricula should be the only ones supported through an interdisciplinary arts program. Art objectives are also met with art integrated lessons.
Core classroom teachers will begin to develop a personal portfolio to use as a resource when planning future lessons. Morris (2009) suggests, “Through quality professional development, teachers will be able to create personal portfolios of arts-integration ideas” (p. 20). They can also share their portfolios with one another, expanding their access to arts integrated lesson plans. An arts administrator could implement arts integrated faculty development programs on a monthly basis, incorporating school specialists and program philosophies in order to expand the knowledge base and sustain the enthusiasm of the staff towards interdisciplinary arts lessons. Myers (2001) argues, “Professional development for partnerships should involve representatives of partnering organizations, artists, and teachers in understanding the multitude and complexity of tasks involved in implementing high-quality teaching and learning through a partnership approach” (Pre-professional education, para. 4). These methods of sharing would continuously allow the core classroom teachers and the arts specialists to learn from one another.

Of course, not all professional development for an interdisciplinary arts school needs to be related to arts integration; however, the arts administrator should be aware of the climate within the school and listen to the educators’ needs when deciding when to implement a professional development involving the arts.

**Community Involvement**

An arts administrator’s efforts should include community engagement, thus promoting the positive effects the interdisciplinary arts program is having on the students. “An arts-rich learning environment can have far-reaching effects that extend
to the entire school and surrounding community” (Ruppert, 2006, p. 15). A strong collaboration between the community and the arts administrator can promote and connect what is happening in the school to the outside world.

In my experience with the arts, community members are more likely to contribute financially when they experience first hand the great things that are happening at the school. For example, the arts administrator could cultivate community engagement by sending out hand written invitations or personally contacting local businesses and community organizations to attend arts performances.

The arts administrator can regularly inform local news outlets about the arts events taking place in the classrooms and of any upcoming major performances. Nelson (2009) writes, “Publicizing success stories on how your arts program contributes to the development of the whole child garners greater interest in arts education and enhances the prospect that our nation’s children will grow to be intellectually, emotionally, and physically healthy” (p. 17). The arts administrator could coordinate performances and art exhibits with both private and public sector institutions, demonstrating the diversity of learning taking place through the arts integration.

The on-site arts administrator should be the main resource for the school when contacting the local arts council and cultural organizations. The arts administrator is aware of the arts programs happening within the school and can communicate about those programs effectively. “Many successful programs have built bridges between the schools and community cultural organizations; some have been able to attract additional support from the private sector” (Hodsoll, 1985, p. 250). To promote sustainability of the arts program, the arts administrator needs to make it a priority to involve the
community in the program. I have experienced that if parents and local businesses feel that the arts program is making a difference for the students, they will continue to support the program. This will help to ensure that future students will benefit from the interdisciplinary arts program’s success.

**Parent Involvement**

Parents can be the biggest supporters of an interdisciplinary arts program if their willingness to help, their various talents, and their time are all harnessed effectively. Through my experiences, I have discovered that it does not matter whether the interdisciplinary program is in a low socio-economic area or not, parents will volunteer labor and time if they are passionate about the substance of the curriculum being taught to their children. The A+ Schools Program favors parent involvement as stated in the A+ Schools Program, *A+ In Practice* (n.d), “Individual A+ Schools have found that promoting arts-integrated learning experiences forces them to look outside the school walls and draw on the talents and resources of parents and community institutions” (A+ and Community Partners, para. 1). Parent volunteers should be treated with as much respect as a nonprofit volunteer, with a follow-up thank you sent either by a teacher, the students, the arts administrator, or the school’s principal or vice principal.

The arts administrator could initiate a parent involvement survey, sent home to every student’s household at the beginning of the school year. The survey could ask parents and/or guardians in what area of the arts they possess a talent and whether they would be willing to share that talent in a classroom or whether they would be more comfortable assisting in a classroom during an arts integrated lesson. The arts
The administrator needs to assemble the information received from the surveys and call upon those parents who wish to share their talents or volunteer when opportunities arise. “Without exception, school districts with strong arts education credit supportive parents as the rock on which their community base is built” (Arts Education Partnership, 2000b, p. 4). The arts administrator can use parents to assist in creating a successful interdisciplinary arts program inexpensively as well. Illustration 2 is a visual summary of the art administrator’s tasks and the constituents that are involved with those tasks as well as who they benefit.
An on-site arts administrator is required in an interdisciplinary school, from the onset of the program, to ensure the arts where they belong, at the core of the curriculum, and in the foundation for the interdisciplinary arts program. Ruppert (2006) states: "...and it is the arts program that also forms the core of the interdisciplinary arts program." This is to ensure maintenance and sustainability of the arts program from its inception. To summarize some of the responsibilities and relationships, the arts administrator must support the classroom teacher in the development of arts integrated lessons, make adjustments as needed, and include other department heads, core classroom teachers, and arts specialists in order to ensure high levels of participation in the program. Arts integration is not an easy process, and it does not take place overnight. Total focus, an
Conclusion

An on-site arts administrator is required in an interdisciplinary school, from the onset of the program, to ensure the necessary actions that will place the arts where they belong, at the base of the educational pyramid, where they may serve as the foundation for the interdisciplinary arts program. Ruppert (2006) writes:

Action is needed to place the arts front and center on education agendas in both the statehouse and the schoolhouse. And in the current education policy climate, evidence-based action and advocacy are needed to make a compelling case for why the arts matter for all students at all levels of education. (p. 17)

An on-site arts administrator’s position is imperative not only for the maintenance and sustainability of an interdisciplinary arts program, but also for the effectiveness of all arts programs adopted by a school.

This thesis makes the case for how an on-site arts administrator can support the maintenance and sustainability of the arts program from its inception. To summarize some of the responsibilities the arts administrator will provide: support to core classroom teachers when creating arts-integrated lesson plans through structured planning sessions; utilize the arts specialists’ knowledge of the arts and teaching skills to promote the art program; regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the art program and make adjustments as needed; and hold the principal, vice principal, core classroom teachers, and arts specialists accountable for their participation in the program. Arts integration is not an easy process, and it does not take place overnight. Total focus, an
An enormous amount of time, energy, patience, and perseverance will get the job done (Morris, 2009).

An arts administrator will relieve the pressure principals/vice principals, core classroom teachers, and arts specialists might feel when creating a successful arts program. The arts administrator is necessary for bridging the gap between core classroom teachers and arts specialists. Integration should be second nature to a school with an arts focus. Bunchbinder (1999) summarizes: “Like any advance in education, it is difficult to design a program that is highly effective. Good arts programs require sustained effort and resources, an actively involved community, and significant professional development” (p. 4). To ensure the maintenance and sustainability of an interdisciplinary arts program the necessary steps, as outlined in this thesis, need to be taken in order for the program to succeed.


> There is more access to knowledge now than ever before, but knowledge without creativity and innovation forces one to focus simply on ideas rather than concepts. It requires inventiveness to answer questions, solve problems and accomplish goals.

Our educational system prepares students to be analytical and to solve scientific and mathematical problems. The future of medicine, engineering, science, etc. depends on it, but it also depends on creativity and innovation. (p. 42)
It is imperative that the arts stay in the forefront of educational systems across our nation in order for the students of today to become the problem solvers, creative thinkers, and leaders of tomorrow.

A+ Schools Program, administered at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, is an interdisciplinary arts program where the core subjects are taught together with four main arts disciplines (music, dance, drama, and visual art) in order to maximize students' learning potential.

Curriculum Maps are visual tools used by educators to record the essential information (goals/objectives/outcomes) that they believe will be taught to their students throughout the year or through a unit of study (Glathorn, Boschee, & Whitehead, 2009).

Interdisciplinary/Integrated Arts Program is a method for instruction in which all arts are simultaneously taught beside another subject, making both equally important to students by providing comprehensive arts education through aesthetic arts experiences.

Vertical Alignment is written format that allows educators to see what is being taught in the grade levels above and below theirs. In an interdisciplinary arts school the vertical alignment would include the arts (Glathorn, Boschee, & Whitehead, 2009).
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