THE FUN FACTOR:
Relevance, Rigor, and FUN Can and Should Coexist in the Classroom
Presented by Edward Varner & Christiana Varner
for the 2015 PAIS Boarding School Conference
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Relevance, Rigor, and FUN Can and Should Coexist in the Classroom

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When we think about teaching children it is important to consider the ways in which children learn, the principles involved in the learning process, and the best way to apply these principles to learning. Three basic types of learning that are of particular interest to teachers are psychomotor learning- that is, learning that involves mental processes that control muscular activity; cognitive learning, which deals with the acquisition of knowledge; and affective learning, which concerns itself with emotional responses. The art of teaching happens when one is able to achieve a balance that addresses a variety of learning styles while remaining focused on the desired curricular outcome.
WHO ARE YOU?
YOU WERE BORN TO DANCE, SING, ACT, CREATE, MAKE MUSIC AND PLAY.
AND THEN- LIFE HAPPENED!

All learning needs to be active and fun. Students need to respond to their academic life by moving, singing, playing instruments, creating, and having fun. The linking of academic information with actual life experiences encourages students to be actively involved. This active involvement, the fun factor, will lead to better assimilation and retention of information. It will also encourage greater student interest and motivation and help to establish a more efficient environment for learning. Relevance, rigor, and fun can and should coexist in the classroom.

CREATING, PERFORMING, RESPONDING FOR SUCCESS
Abgo, Ahmi
A West African Rhythm Game from Ghana

Abgo, Ahmi is a simple rhythm game using vocalizations to teach rhythm and pulse. The primary purpose of the game is to help reduce the affective filter and create a fun space where students can find success at school. At this point, our focus is entirely about creating student success. I will block out the opening “ceremony” and the three primary components to the piece. Insert the opening ceremony between each of the three primary sections. Remember, this is a game and is intended to be fun. The Fun Factor is a crucial element to success.

Opening Ceremony (form a circle):
Call and response –
Teacher: Abgo (this means “attention”)
Students: Ahmi (this means “I’m listening”)

- Clap, clap, clap (clap your hands in front of body)
- Pat, pat, pat (pat your shoulders, crisscross)
- Wiggle, wiggle, wiggle (point fingers towards middle of circle and wiggle)
- Yeah (Swoop/scoop hands into the air)

#1 – Boom = clap hands in center, cha = clap neighbor’s hands as illustrated, flip = reverse hands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boom-cha, boom-cha, flip</th>
<th>Boom-cha, boom-cha, flip</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boom-cha, boom-cha, flip</td>
<td>Boom-cha, boom-cha, flip</td>
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</table>

#2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boom-cha, boom-cha, lean</th>
<th>Boom-cha, boom-cha, lean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boom-cha, boom-cha, lean</td>
<td>Boom-cha, boom-cha, lean</td>
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</table>

#3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boom-cha, boom-cha, clap clap</th>
<th>Boom-cha, boom-cha, clap clap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boom-cha, boom-cha, clap clap</td>
<td>Boom-cha, boom-cha, clap clap</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AND THE BRAIN GUYS SAY...

Neurologists have found that musical and language processing occur in the same area of the brain, and there appear to be parallels in how musical and linguistic syntax are processed (Maess & Koelsch, 2001).

Many educators report success using instrumental music as a warm up and relaxation tool, as background for other activities, and as inspiration for writing activities (Eken, 1996)

The Arts offer an alternative approach to education that supports, reinforces, and expands traditional conceptions of education and can improve the very scores that traditionalists seek to improve (Jensen, 2001).

1. Learn the rhyme. Perform as a canon:

(A) Ta-co ta-co ta-co please

(B) Filled with lots of yum-yum cheese

(C) Ta-co crunch and ta-co munch

(D) Ta-cos are my favorite lunch

2. Add body percussion:
   - Line A: stamp
   - Line B: pat knees
   - Line C: clap
   - Line D: snap fingers

3. Add instruments:
   a. “please” = triangle
   b. “cheese” = tambourine
   c. “crunch” = glockenspiel glissando up
   d. “munch” = glockenspiel glissando down
   e. “Tacos are my favorite lunch” = tone block

4. Add ostinato:
   “Tacos are my favorite lunch” on egg shakers or maracas.

5. Perform a canon with body percussion, instruments, and ostinato.
The Arts Are Motivating

The arts help our students to:

**Succeed in School**
- Students who are involved in the arts are:
  - 4 times more likely to participate in a math and science fair
  - 3 times more likely to win an award for school attendance

**Stay in School**
- Low socioeconomic status [SES] students with a high participation in the arts have a dropout rate of 4 percent, but their peers with a low participation in the arts have a dropout rate of 22 percent.

**Succeed in Work**
- 72% of business leaders say that creativity is the number one skill they are seeking when hiring.

DID YOU KNOW?

- In the 2012-2013 School Year, students studying music scored 56 points higher on their reading SATs and 43 points higher on math.
- Second graders who studied piano scored 27 percent higher on math tests.
- Close to 100 percent of the winners in the prestigious Siemens Westinghouse competition in math, science, and technology played musical instruments.
- Brain scans of performing musicians show their performance covers the entire cerebral cortex.
- Researchers in 2007 compared elementary students in schools with high-quality music education, schools with low-quality music education, and schools with no music education program. Students in the high-quality schools scored 22 percent better in English and 20 percent higher in math on statewide exams.
- Source – PSEA The Voice for Education, September 2013
TEACHING WITH THE BRAIN IN MIND &
TEACHING ARTS WITH THE BRAIN IN MIND

The work of Eric Jensen

- Music making contributes to the development of essential cognitive systems, which include reasoning, creativity, thinking, decision making, and problem solving.

- Music enhances the development and maintenance of our brain’s memory systems in two ways. First, it activates our attention systems. **What we pay attention to increases our likelihood of remembering it.** Second, it activates and strengthens multiple memory systems for both explicit and implicit memory. By activating multiple memory pathways, we can dramatically improve our chances for retention and recall.

- Music is a language that can enhance the abilities of children who don’t excel in the expression of verbal thinking.

- Good quality education encourages the exploration of alternative thinking, multiple answers, and creative insights.
MOVING TO GREATNESS- USING THE ARTS AND ARTISTIC ACTIONS TO LEAD WITH ALL CONSTITUENTS

The creation of new ideas does not come from minds trained to follow doggedly what is already created. Creation comes from tinkering and playing around, from which new forms emerge.

-Selma Wasserman, “Serious Play in the Classroom: How Messing Around Can Win You the Nobel Prize”

Music creates inspirational moments and opportunities to make sense out of chaos.


Absolutely fascinating data in support of the Arts (Music, Visual Arts, Theatre/Drama, and Dance)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coursework in High School</th>
<th>Critical Reading</th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
<th>Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acting or Play Production</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>592</td>
<td>590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art History or Appreciation</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama: Study or Appreciation</td>
<td>518</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music: Study or Appreciation</td>
<td>533</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>524</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Performance</td>
<td>529</td>
<td>533</td>
<td>521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photography or Film</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>518</td>
<td>506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studio Art and Design</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>526</td>
<td>511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Arts</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>497</td>
<td>464</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2010 National Total Group Seniors SAT Scores
Source: The College Board, College Bound Seniors Report
ART THOUGHTS!

The following thoughts about the arts are anecdotal observations of student body populations in all types of demographic situations as observed in classrooms in California, Nevada, Washington State, and Montana.

1. American students can write what they say and can read what they write;
2. American students can write what they sing and can sing what they write;
3. American students can draw what they say and read/share what they draw;
4. American students can dance what they feel and draw/write/read what they dance;
5. American students can write what they act and read what they write.

Remember, the term art refers to **music, visual arts, theatre/drama, and dance**. It is of extreme value that American students understand and apply arts knowledge and skills. Our students can and should demonstrate thinking skills using artistic processes as they communicate through the arts. We should encourage students to make connections within and across the arts, to other disciplines, life, cultures, and work.

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DR. ELLIOT EISNER, PROFESSOR OF EDUCATION AT STANFORD UNIVERSITY OFFERS TEN LESSONS THAT THE ARTS TEACH:

1. The arts teach children to make good judgements about qualitative relationships. Unlike much of the curriculum in which correct answers and rules prevail, in the arts, it is judgement rather than rules that prevail.
2. The arts teach children that problems can have more than one solution and that questions can have more than one answer.
3. The arts celebrate multiple perspectives. One of their large lessons is that there are many ways to see and interpret the world.
4. The arts teach children that in complex forms of problem solving, purposes are seldom fixed, but change with circumstance and opportunity. Learning in the arts requires the ability and willingness to surrender to the unanticipated possibilities of the work as it unfolds.
5. The arts make vivid the fact that words do not, in their literal form or number, exhaust what we can know. The limits of our language do not define the limits of our cognition.
6. The arts teach students that small differences can have large effects. The arts traffic in subtleties.
7. The arts teach students to think through and within a material. All art forms employ some means through which image become real.
8. The arts help children learn to say what cannot be said. When children are invited to disclose what a work of art helps them feel, they must teach into their poetic capacities to find the words that will do the job.
9. The arts enable us to have experiences we can have from no other source and through such experiences to discover the range and variety of what we are capable of feeling.
10. The arts' position in the school curriculum symbolizes to the young what adults believe is important.

* Source: [www.giarts.org](http://www.giarts.org)
MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES:
HOWARD GARDNER

We all learn in our own unique way. This creates a challenge for educators as it is our responsibility to tailor our instruction to the learning style needs of our students. It is no longer unreasonable for educators to be expected to have an **individual education plan for each student**. We should strive to understand where our kids are coming from and meet them, to the best of our ability, where they are so that we might help them progress the next level of their learning. This is no longer a theoretical conversation for academics. It is now a duty and responsibility that we all share as we endeavour to improve American public education. Dr. Howard Gardner deserves a big thank you for insisting that we think about multiple intelligences.
• Logical/Mathematical
  - This intelligence is often referred to as scientific thinking. It deals with inductive and deductive thinking/reasoning, numbers, and the recognition of abstract patterns.

• Visual Spatial
  - This intelligence relies on the sense of sight and being able to visualize an object (including the ability to create mental images and pictures).

• Bodily/Kinaesthetic
  - This intelligence is related to physical movement and the knowing and wisdom of the body (including the brain's motor cortex which controls bodily motion).

• Musical/Rhythmic
  - This intelligence is based on the recognition of tonal patterns, including various environmental sounds, and sensitivity to rhythm and beats.

• Naturalist
  - This intelligence deals with the recognition, appreciation, and understanding of the flora and fauna of the natural world.

• Interpersonal
  - This intelligence operates primarily through personal relationships and communication.

• Intrapersonal
  - This intelligence relates to inner states of being, self-reflection, meta-cognition (thinking about thinking), and awareness of spiritual realities.

• Verbal/Linguistic
  - This intelligence, which is related to words and languages (written and spoken), dominates most Western educational systems.

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**SO, WHY SHOULD WE USE SONGS AND MUSIC?**

• Children like songs and music and have strong personal preferences about what they like.

• Songs often include repetition that helps to make language memorable.

• Songs contain chunks of language that children can remember and use.

• There are many songs about issues of interest to multiple age groups.

• Music can help promote a relaxed, stress-free atmosphere in the classroom.

• Music can stimulate strong feelings that can be channelled to enrich the learning experience.
MORE LANGUAGE AND MUSIC SAMPLES

TAKE TIME IN LIFE!
THE EFFECT OF MUSIC ON SECOND LANGUAGE VOCABULARY ACQUISITION

“Music is a viable vehicle for second language acquisition to the same extent as other nonmusical means... songs can no longer be regarded as recreational devices, having little instructional value. Consequently, educators might consider giving music a more prominent role in the second language curriculum. This can easily be accomplished by increasing the frequency with which songs are used in the curriculum. Not only can children benefit from additional exposure to the second language; songs can provide the classroom teacher with an alternative means of promoting second language acquisition apart from nonmusical means such as oral stories.”

Suzanne L. Medina, Ph.D.,
California State University, Dominguez Hills

CONDUCTING LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH ACTIVITIES IN LITERACY CENTERED CLASSROOMS

CHRISTIANA RENNIE, MA
HACC & EDUCATIONAL THERAPIST

What is LEA?

LEA stands for Language Experience Approach. Essentially, LEA uses meaningful, student-centered experiences to develop a student’s ability to manipulate language. In an academic setting, LEA helps students develop all four strands of the Language Arts (speaking, listening, reading, and writing).
Advocating Effective Educators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What the Teacher needs to Know</th>
<th>What the Students Want (regardless of age)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who students are as people, recognizing their knowledge and experience level as well as attitudes</td>
<td>To not be bored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who their students are – culturally, developmentally, cognitively, psychologically</td>
<td>To not be embarrassed</td>
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<tr>
<td>How to present information in a manner that benefits the student population and individual personalities</td>
<td>To not feel threatened</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To be liked</td>
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<td>To have options</td>
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<td></td>
<td>To be accepted</td>
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<td></td>
<td>To have predictability</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To be noticed according to their level of security and need of attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To find one good reason to go to school</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To feel connected to something</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

KEY FACTORS TO CONSIDER

• Academic Achievement:
  • Neurologists have found that musical and language processing occur in the same area of the brain, and there appear to be parallels in how musical and linguistic syntax are processed (Maess & Koelsch, 2001).
  • Research shows that vocal and instrumental music should no longer be viewed and used only for recreation or entertainment purposes because it is also a practical tool for language acquisition (Medina, 2000).
  • There are strong ties to the study of instrumental music and academic performance in reading and math (Klinedinst, 1990).
  • Students in high quality school music programs score higher on standardized tests as compared with students from schools with deficient music programs (Davenport, 2010).

• Level of Motivation:
  • Music stimulates the mind, it supplies an emotional outlet for students, and it develops social skills (Harris Interactive Poll, 2006).
  • Participation in music education encourages and motivates students to remain active in school (Harris Interactive Poll, 2006).
  • High quality music education programs are considered to be strong contributors to improved graduation rates (Harris Interactive Poll, 2006) – i.e. motivated and active students stay in school.
RESOURCES


THANK YOU FOR COMING!
MORE ARTS IS MY ANSWER TO EVERYTHING!

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VINCENT
Composed and performed by Don McLean