

Leading with Arts Education

The newsletter for Vermont's Visual and Performing Arts Educators and supporters

April 2021

Agency through Action

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Looking Ahead

Arts education empowers students to embrace difficult learning, engages them in enduring processes, holds relevance in students' lives both in and outside of school, and is responsive to the academic and social emotional needs of students. These newsletters aim to reiterate these inherent qualities of arts education while expanding upon the need to sustain quality arts programs in schools. In doing so, it includes a discussion on the role of the arts in authentic, performance-, and project-based learning. It also includes information on upcoming presentations by Agency of Education (AOE) content specialists, a music technology pilot program coordinated with [Push the Sound](#) and the [Vermont Music Educators Association \(VMEA\)](#), the AOE's [Project-Based Learning document series](#), and the [Community Engagement Lab's](#) (CEL) upcoming Vermont Mural Project.

Authenticity, Agency, and the Arts

The arts can serve as an avenue to understand application of knowledge and skill; students can synthesize information from other disciplines, conduct research on a topic about which they are creating work or pieces, and respond to an important life experience. Arts education – and any performance-based curricula – allows teachers and students to reflect on and align student learning to their personal interests and context. For students, this offers opportunities for co-created curricula, whereby [assessment development and inquiry phases can be bidirectional between students and teachers](#). For educators, arts education, integration, and performance-based tasks can allow teachers to serve less as technicians who deliver assignments to students and more as facilitators who guide students and school communities through challenging learning opportunities (McComb, et al., 2019; Zeichner & Liston, 2014).

Arts integration has positive associations with student long-term retention of non-arts content as students can apply knowledge and skill to explore their understanding of material, supporting student engagement and self-motivation along the way (Moorefield-Lang, 2010; Hardiman et al., 2019). These are key desired outcomes of authentic performance assessments and Project-Based Learning (McTighe, et al., 2020; Larmer et al., 2015). As such, the arts are an essential element in implementing either. As schools look to develop their collective expertise in designing performance-based assessments and Project-Based Learning, they can look to arts education.

2021 Transition and Career Conference Arts Integration Presentation

The AOE Arts Specialist and ELA Specialist (Emily Leute: emily.leute@vermont.gov) will be delivering a presentation on Developing a Positive Sense of Self, Place, and Purpose with Arts Integration and Real-World Contexts at the [2021 VSAC Transition and Career Conference](#). The focus of the presentation will be on designing learning experiences that honor the diverse voices of students while applying their stories and worldview to real-world contexts. This presentation will support teachers from all academic disciplines in integrating elements of choice-based art challenges into any curriculum to teach transferable skills and application of content. This approach to arts integration will allow students to engage in personally authentic and meaningful learning. Participants will be guided through discussions on asset-based and culturally sustaining approaches to instruction by integrating the arts. These concepts are embedded throughout the processes and opportunities that this interdisciplinary approach requires. Students can, therefore, engage in the open-ended, arts-based challenge through their cultural lens. This approach can also use the arts as a tool to support holistic integration of social emotional learning (SEL). [SEL competencies](#) align directly with skills used throughout the conceptualization, production, and reflection phases of the creative process. These competencies are especially important to address as we enter new formats of learning following long-term social distancing. Strategies for embedding social awareness, agency, wellness, and social emotional learning via arts integration will be shared throughout this presentation.

2021 Assessment for Learning Conference

The AOE Science Specialist (Maggie Carrera-Bly: margaret.carrera-bly@vermont.gov), Arts Specialist, and ELA Specialist (Emily Leute: emily.leute@vermont.gov) will be holding a panel presentation on Empowering Learners through Authentic Performance Assessment at the 2021 [Assessment for Learning Conference](#). This session will guide participants through considerations for designing authentic performance assessments that support social emotional learning and culturally sustaining pedagogy. Using the Vermont Agency of Education's Interdisciplinary Performance Assessment Template as a framework, facilitators will share elements and phases of quality performance assessments (e.g., student voice and choice, degree of authenticity, feedback and revision, etc.). Student-centered and asset-based approaches are essential in supporting social emotional and culturally sustaining learning throughout the design and delivery of performance assessments; arts integration can serve as a tool to embed these concepts in practice. Facilitators will share resources and strategies to guide arts and non-arts teachers by identifying areas and concepts that can be integrated across content areas.

Push the Sound Pilot with Vermont Music Educators Association

Vermont Music Educators Association (VMEA) is coordinating with [Push the Sound](#) to unroll a pilot program for their curriculum. Push the Sound is a non-profit that designs music production and technology curriculum. [Details and VMEA's announcement can be found here](#). As stated in the announcement, this program supports equity of access to music education for VT students using browser-based digital audio workstations and NCAS-aligned learning.

AOE Project-Based Learning Document Series

The AOE has added to its [Project-Based Learning document series](#) to further support implementation of the approach. This series is an ongoing collection of documents produced by the AOE to support educators in effectively implementing Project-Based Learning across contexts. The documents have been produced in a scaffolded manner with the aim of guiding educators in gaining a foundational understanding of Project-Based Learning and its implementation. Readers are encouraged to interact with the documents following the sequence in the [document series cover page](#).

Community Engagement Lab's Vermont Mural Project

The [Community Engagement Lab](#) (CEL) is facilitating the Vermont Mural Project in coordination with [Vermont Folklife Center](#) and [Juniper Creative Arts](#). Those interested will establish mural teams and participate in a collaborative mural-making process with Vermont artists, focusing on making social or environmental change through the arts. Participants will plan a project to support the mural-making process at the CEL's [Project-Design Lab](#). Murals will be showcased at the [One World Festival](#) in Montpelier during September 24-26. [More information can be found here](#).

References

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