

Arts Integration

Artmaking motivates learners and inspires creative and authentic use of language, and literacy development.

Why Arts for Language & Literacy?

When learners engage in an artistic process, they learn to think and work independently, take imaginative risks, discover and develop their ideas, and collaborate. Students learn to communicate through body, facial, and vocal expression, and can express complex ideas and understanding through their artmaking. Authentic art-making opportunities provide a safe space for language learners to develop their voice and make meaningful choices

Why language learning in the arts?

Artmaking uses nonverbal expression and playful exploration of language to create a safe, inviting space for language learners building on the many ways that children communicate. This helps young students communicate beyond their proficiency level and to grow their self-confidence. Arts integration provides an equitable and inclusive base for everyone to deepen learning, and apply their skills to verbal and written communication, increasing comprehension.

While learning to work and think like an artist, students use language to:

- Understand concepts & vocabulary of the art form
 - Brainstorm ideas & make artistic choices
 - Explain their choices to others
 - Describe what a work of art communicates to them
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Language Learning through the Arts

The artmaking space is inherently conducive to language development. Arts and language learning are enhanced by teaching strategies and language supports such as visual aids, discussion prompts, protocols, and graphic organizers.

Through artmaking and play kids discover the storytelling tools of design, movement, sound, music & speech. Physical and vocal expression activities give kids the chance to make concrete personal connections to new vocabulary and concepts. Puppets are manipulatives for literacy. Kids create, adapt and retell stories collaboratively using the tools of play, puppetry, and theater- movement, sound, words. Teachers are able to provide cognitive ramps by mapping complex language onto the students' concrete experiences and artistic choices.

Lowering the Affective Filter Through the Arts

Low motivation can hinder language acquisition because it blocks language stimulation from reaching the brain. This block is known as the "affective filter." High motivation results in an increased ability to learn and use a new language. When students lower their affective filter in the arts, they make themselves more open and available for learning.

The Engagement Zone

Language learning takes place within a context that is either basic or complex, and either supported or unsupported. The learning environment can enhance or hinder language development. Arts learning takes place in the 'engagement zone' where the learning is both complex and supported - an ideal context for language learning.
