

**UNCW UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP
COVER PAGE**

APPLICANT NAME: Caitlin Brooks

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MAJOR(S): Elementary Education

EXPECTED DATE OF GRADUATION: May 2010

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DEPARTMENT WHERE YOU PLAN TO WORK: Elementary Education

FACULTY ADVISOR NAME: Dr. Kathy Fox

PROJECT TITLE: The Effect of the Arts on Learning in the Regular Elementary Classroom

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT NEEDED FOR PRESENTATION: No special equipment needed

For Faculty Advisor:

I have read the proposal and can attest to the project's significance. I have discussed the project with the student and can confirm that the student has written the proposal; that he/she is a rising junior or senior; that he/she has completed at least one semester at UNCW; and that he/she has the ability to complete the project in a timely, conscientious way. I agree to supervise this student in the above project and will be responsible for evaluating the student's performance. I also agree to ensure that a final report on the project's findings be submitted to the Director of CSURF, Dr. Kate Bruce, by the last day of the Spring semester 2009.

Signature: Dr. Kathy Fox

For the Department Chairperson:

I have read this proposal and the necessary support for the applicant is available within our department.

Signature: Dr. Brad Walker

The Effect of the Arts on Learning in the Regular Elementary Classroom

Caitlin Brooks

INTRODUCTION: My project is mainly inspired by a study done by Marie B. Schubert and Steven A. Melnick at Penn State Harrisburg entitled *The Arts in Curriculum Integration*.

Schubert and Melnick (1997) looked at “the effects on individual students of integration of the visual, performing and/or musical arts, within their civics, English, history, and geography curriculums.” At the conclusion of their study, Schubert and Melnick (1997) found:

Analysis of the data from the interviews indicates that students make connections between different subject areas thus gaining a deeper understanding of content in all related subject areas. Its also suggests that incorporation of curricular content in various intelligence areas provides opportunities for those students who may have difficulty in verbal or mathematical areas to learn and express for their knowledge. The findings also suggest a significant increase in students’ positive attitude toward school and in students’ self-concept. It appears that integration of the arts into the regular curriculum has positive effect on students. (Schubert and Melnick)

Another paper I am looking at is *Learning Through the Arts* by Dee Dickinson. This paper looks at academic achievement and the arts, the human brain, intelligence, the different aspects of the arts, as well as individual differences. It looks into what is meant by arts education and how it can be integrated into schools.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE OR RESEARCH QUESTION: It is my belief that the regular elementary school teacher should do more to incorporate the arts into the curriculum. By looking at teachers from four different elementary schools, I hope to see whether or not teachers are currently integrating the arts in within the curriculum. I also want to look at which elements of the arts are being integrated and which are not used often as well as which subjects the arts are

being integrated into. I am also interested in seeing what some of the reasons that teachers have for not integrating the arts into their lessons. Finally, I am interested in what are student attitudes towards lessons that integrate the arts. I hope to find that students are more excited about coming and participating in school when the arts are used throughout their school day.

JUSTIFICATION OR RATIONALE: This project is relevant to the field of education because there is currently a lot of discussion about the inclusion of the arts in education. However, most of the discussion is about keeping the arts involved in schools but as separate classes. I feel that the integration of the arts into the regular classroom curriculum will be beneficial to elementary age students. In the age of No Child Left Behind and now with a new administration, we are looking at how to improve our education system and make it more effective for our students.

METHODS OR CRITICAL FRAMEWORK: Throughout my entire research process I will be completing a literature review looking at the research that has already been completed in the realm of arts integration. I will also look at the benefits the arts have on learning, such as how music has been shown to help improve math and problem solving skills. I am also distributing a survey to four elementary schools. I choose three elementary schools from New Hanover County as well as one elementary school in Wake County. Two of the schools are traditional elementary schools, one is a science/math/technology based magnet school, and the final is an arts based magnet school. After the surveys are completed, I will ask each school if there are any teachers who are willing to be interviewed about their incorporation or lack of incorporation of the arts in their regular curriculums. I have already submitted and received approval from the Institutional Review Board for my study.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRODUCT: The final product will be a paper that includes the results of my literature review, information from a survey of four different elementary schools, and interviews.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Schubert, M., & Melnick, S. (1997, January 1). The Arts in Curriculum Integration. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED424151) Retrieved January 22, 2009, from ERIC database.

Dickinson, Dee (1997). Learning Through the Arts by Dee Dickinson. Retrieved February 3, 2009, from New Horizons for Learning Web site:
http://www.newhorizons.org/strategies/arts/dickinson_lrnarts.htm