



Big Idea = *Compass*

***Charting territory in your
Program / Curriculum Design***

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Project AIM - Arts Integration Mentorship project



- Teaching practice that weaves visual, media, performing and literary arts into classrooms to engage students in their own learning
- Professional development for teachers and artists
- Builds school-based leadership infrastructure to sustain the practice

AIMprint definition of Arts Integration

1. An educational field that specializes essentially in relationships - between people, ideas, curricula, places, themes, and areas of study, with an emphasis on arts learning at the center of these relationships.
2. Working with curricular intention to merge learning in the arts with learning in other academic subject areas.

What is a Big Idea?

A generative, overarching concept that helps shape an entire arts-integrated unit of study. The big idea is explored through multiple lenses across the curriculum and through various art forms as a way to generate new questions and to deepen learning on a particular subject or concept.

AIMprint: New Relationships in the Arts and Learning

“What is worth learning? - The more complex the problem, the more important to study it from various perspectives.”

Steve Seidel - key note address for ArtsConnection 2005 Symposium: Beyond Arts Integration

How does a Big Idea function?

- Big conceptual ideas provide a framework for both art and academic content strands.
- The big idea provides a container - or frame to unify the parts into a more meaningful whole.

What constitutes a good Big Idea?

- Conceptual and content driven as opposed to skills driven
- An idea that is essential among all curriculum areas being integrated

Quality Big Ideas = Strong Compass

Ideas about what constitutes quality in arts education were, for most of these people, inextricably tied to fundamental issues of identity, purpose, and values as an artist, an educator, a citizen in the world. This deep subjectivity was the source of strength at the core of these visions of quality. This was the compass that guided the many aspects of the countless decisions these educators make, defining in so many ways why they do what they do in the way they do it.

From *The Qualities of Quality*, a study of excellence in Arts Education produced by Project Zero at Harvard's Graduate School of Education

Reviewing the evidence

Looking at Big Ideas in AIM units

- Democracy
- Coming of Age
- Identity
- Community
- Relationships
- Transformation

Big Idea = States of Matter

Aim Unit in Dance and Science - 1st Grade

Qualities of solidness and fluidity exist in human movement and in matter

States of Matter - 1st Grade Unit with Science and Dance

Big Idea = Identity & Symbolism

AIM Unit in Language Arts and Visual Arts - 7th Grade

Through a study of artist, Kehinde Wiley and the book, *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton, students will investigate the physical attributes, personality traits, and internal complexity of individual characters.

Identity & Symbolism Unit - 7th Grade

Big Idea = Close Observation/Patterns

AIM unit in Poetry and Science- 7th Grade

Students write poems inspired by close observation of objects at both naked eye and cellular levels. They will investigate patterns and sequences in both writing and cellular science.

Close Observation Unit - 7th Grade

Some criteria...

- Open-ended and generative
- Transferable to different contexts
- Why is this idea important to me?
- Will this idea be important to my students?
- Does it yield good, rich conversation?

How do you identify the compass?

- A Concept Example: Adaptation
- A Process Example: Cell Division
- An Issue/debate Example: Liberal vs. Conservative
- A Paradox Example: Poverty amidst plenty
- A Theory Example: Manifest Destiny

Getting Started

- Dialogue with your partners
- Identify shared vocabulary & concepts
- Explore connective tissue
- Look at standards

Using the Standards

a guide to what we will teach

- Common Core Standards: <http://www.corestandards.org/>
- Literacy Standards (Language Arts, Social Sciences):
<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy>
- Math: <http://www.corestandards.org/Math/>
- Speaking and Listening:
<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/SL/introducton/>
- Core Art Standards: <http://www.nationalartstandards.org/>
- Illinois Arts Learning Goals:
http://www.isbe.net/ils/fine_arts/standards.htm

Select your compass - Group work

- Discuss concepts & language that are essential to your artform
- Identify & Explore the overlap between content areas
- Look at the standards for your art form at a common grade level
- What's a Big Idea that could guide the inquiry?
- Test it against the set of criteria
- Discuss essential questions
- Share back and discuss

Steady the course

- How do you use the Big Idea to guide you?
- Is it visible throughout the unit?
- Are you using it to check progress?
- How can you help students use the Big Idea to guide their journey?



Final Thoughts...