



# Links & Threads

A Newsletter for Arts Partners Published by the Ohio Arts Council and the Ohio Department of Education **Volume II Issue II**

*Links and Threads* is an electronic newsletter for district and school leaders who value arts learning as an integral part of the core curriculum. Its purpose is to assist school leaders in achieving the greatest advantage possible from the arts for their schools and districts. The publication will build upon the knowledge gained through the 2004 NEA Summer Institute for School Leaders, promote dialogue about the role of arts learning in school improvement, share success stories, and keep schools and districts informed about arts-related developments and opportunities.

## Leadership Voices

### Research in Arts and Achievement

*Third Space: When Learning Matters*, a new report by Lauren M. Stevenson and Richard J. Deasy of the Arts Education Partnership presents compelling case studies of ten arts-focused schools that serve economically disadvantaged students. With links to learning theory and a graceful interweaving of descriptive detail, student work, and the words of educators, students, and parents, the case studies paint a vivid portrait of a “third space” where high-quality arts education and integration of the arts with other subject areas transform teaching and school culture. In this space, students’ learning converges powerfully with their experiences in life, community, and the imagination.

Newton D. Baker School of Arts in the **Cleveland Municipal School District** is one of the ten schools profiled. This K-8 school, which enrolls students from all parts of the district through a lottery system, was recently honored by the U.S. Department of Education as one of 16 No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon Schools.

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Art work on lockers and walls at Cleveland’s Newton D. Baker School of Arts reflects students’ knowledge of culture and their community spirit.

## SiteLines

*Participants are continuing the learning that began at the 2004 Summer Institute.*

Teachers from the **Columbus Public Schools** spent a day engaged in rich professional learning that centered on how an understanding of African art and culture can powerfully influence the literacy development of African-American students.

The session, held October 21, 2005, launched *Teaching Literacy Through the Arts*, a professional development series sponsored by the Institute for Education and the Arts and the Ohio Arts Council. Each session focuses on a different art form and the cultural heritage of one population in Columbus. For each session, a researcher, an artist, and a community leader who share the heritage being explored lead the learning.

Cynthia Dillard, Associate Professor of Integrated Teaching

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And More

# Newsbreaks

**NASAA Publishes Critical Evidence for Arts Education.** A good tool for school leaders who are arts education advocates is *Critical Evidence: How the Arts Benefit Student Achievement*, a report issued by the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies in collaboration with the Arts Education Partnership. Using research as its basis, the report makes a concise but compelling case for viewing the arts as a core subject and integrating the arts with other subject areas. The report can be downloaded free from [www.nasaa-arts.org](http://www.nasaa-arts.org).

## Sitelines

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and Learning in The Ohio State University College of Education, discussed the African world view that still powerfully influences African-American children. Tei Street, Director of Education for the City of Columbus, described how arts education “rescued” her as an adolescent. Suzan Bradford and the Thioossane West African Dance Group presented African drumming and dancing.

For a transcript of *Integrating Literacy, Learning and Arts Education: Building on the African-American Experience*, see [www.artsedinstitute.org](http://www.artsedinstitute.org)

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Teachers in the **Dayton City Schools** are exploring how to integrate music and visual art with other subject areas. In a professional development experience with Dayton artist Willis “Bing” Davis, they will broaden their knowledge of non-Western art. Davis also is working with some Dayton students to create an after school art club called Kuumba (Swahili for creativity). The club will meet monthly for enriching arts experiences.

## ODE Update: *New Standards-Based Arts Lessons*

Are you an arts educator or curriculum specialist looking for instructional ideas that align with Ohio’s fine arts standards? Be sure to explore the second set of 30 sample lessons that was recently posted on the ODE Web site in the Instructional Management System (IMS). There are seven new lessons in dance, six in drama/theater, ten in music, and seven in visual arts. Go to [www.ode.state.oh.us](http://www.ode.state.oh.us) and select IMS (*Model Curricula*) from the Quick Links menu.

The Ohio Department of Education thanks the outstanding team of arts educators and the committee of advisors who developed and reviewed the lessons over the past two years. To view their names, go to the ODE Web site and follow the *Academic Content Standards* link to the *Arts*. Lessons currently posted were field-tested by teachers from all four arts areas.

## Leadership Voices *continued from page 1*

The curriculum is arts-integrated, and students have regular instruction in dance, music, drama, and visual art. Each year, students in all grades address a cultural theme that requires them to create and perform works of art, develop and apply a range of academic skills, and gain a deeper understanding of their own and other cultures. The school’s passage rates in reading, which exceed the state average, are one indicator of success. Other indicators are the students’ engagement and excitement, their strong sense of identity, and their acceptance of others, says Janet Hall, an artist and the school’s arts coordinator. “Integration,” she says, “increases their success in learning.”

“We were drawn to the school because it is academically strong,” says Nancy McCrickard, a parent. “But what also excites me is the students’ opportunity to give back to their community through the arts.”

Ms. McCrickard is the current president of Circle of the Arts, Inc., a non-profit organization formed by Newton D. Baker parents. Principal Juliane Shepard, a non-voting member of the group, says parents’ fundraising activities have enabled the school to repair the stage, pay a string teacher for instrumental music, and, through major support from the Eaton Corporation, maintain the quality of its dance program.

Also vital, says Ms. Shepard, is planning time for teachers: “Grade level teams meet for 50 minutes per week with arts educators to plan. Teachers also have another 50-minute period during the week that they can use to meet again as a team, plan individually, look at data, or meet with parents.”

*To learn more about the Third Space research, you can download portions of the report from the Arts Education Partnership Web site ([www.aep-arts.org](http://www.aep-arts.org)). The report also can be purchased through the Council of Chief State School Officers ([www.ccsso.org/publications](http://www.ccsso.org/publications)).*

# Institute Reflections

based on an interview with David Bloome

The scholarship of David Bloome, Professor of Language, Literacy, and Culture in The Ohio State University's College of Education, suggests that literacy development should be embedded in activities that reflect students' identities, cultures, and social relationships.

The implications of that approach for arts learning are exciting. "Integrating the arts with other subjects can be beneficial across the board," says Dr. Bloome. "When students create or analyze a work of art—whether it is visual art or performance art—they are developing a widely useful ability to manipulate varied and complex symbol systems."

Working with written words, visual images, music, and other symbol systems in isolation is becoming out-dated, he adds. "Students who will

thrive in the workplace and as leaders will be those who are skilled in the integration of symbol systems."

His recommendations include more integration of video and photography with the written word and the use of not only fine art but also the art found in popular culture and students' everyday lives.

Approaches vary, but the key to effective integration, he says, is enthusiastic teachers: "I get inspired by teachers who understand that they need to do more than teach to standards, who want students to acquire intellectual curiosity and passion for their work, who study and reflect on how they are integrating the arts with other literacies, and who orient lessons to their specific students in ways that connect to students' lives and communities."

## Learning Links

Need to learn more? These Web sites are valuable resources:

**National Assembly of State Arts Agencies**  
<http://www.nasaa-arts.org>

Download *Critical Evidence: How the Arts Benefit Student Achievement*, a concise overview of research. Also available is the monograph *An Introduction to Scientifically Based Research*, which is an invaluable reference for those who want to look more critically at research studies.

**Arts Education Partnership**  
<http://www.aep-arts.org>

Go to this site to learn more about *Third Space: When Learning Matters*, a three-year study of ten schools that have been transformed by the arts.

**Institute for Education and the Arts**  
<http://www.edartsinstitute.org>

Click on Publications for a transcript of "A Principals' Discussion on the Value of Integrating the Arts" and the Columbus professional development sessions mentioned in Sitelines.

**Poetry Out Loud**  
<http://www.poetryoutloud.org>

Explore resources for teaching poetry memorization and recitation.

## Looking at the Arts in the Context of Research

Should school leaders advocate for comprehensive arts education by linking arts learning to achievement in other subject areas? The authors of a report from Harvard University's Project Zero caution against doing so. "The arts are the only school subjects," say Ellen Winner and Lois Hetland, "that have been challenged to demonstrate transfer as a justification for their usefulness."<sup>1</sup>

The arts are core academic subjects, according to the U.S. Department of Education. The arts greatly enrich our lives and shape our culture. They are a treasure that no generation has ever failed to pass on to the next. No other arguments should be needed to justify quality arts education for all students.

Still, a review of research makes increasingly distinct the possibility that arts learning and achievement in other academic areas are linked.

Although conclusive scientific evidence will be difficult to obtain because of the complex environments in schools and the vast variety and necessary subjectivity inherent in the arts, quantitative evidence does exist.

Consider these studies:

-Schools that implemented the SPECTRA+ arts integration program in Hamilton, Ohio, achieved higher passage rates on the Ohio Proficiency Tests in reading and math than did two sets of control groups, according to a study conducted by Dr. Richard Luftig of Miami University and funded by the U.S. Department of Education.<sup>2</sup>

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## Research

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-In a monograph published by Americans for the Arts, James Catterall reports that data on more than 25,000 students from the National Educational Longitudinal Survey show better grades and higher standardized test scores among students who took advantage of arts-related classes and opportunities.<sup>3</sup>

-Data from the College Board show that students with more years of arts courses tend to have higher verbal and mathematics scores on the SAT.<sup>4</sup>

-*Critical Links*, a research compendium by the Arts Education Partnership, provides results from a number of studies suggesting that the use of drama aids reading comprehension and enhances writing skills.<sup>5</sup>

Adding to the impact of the “hard data” is the rich evidence that is detailed in the *Third Space* case studies<sup>5</sup> and other qualitative research. (See cover story for more about *Third Space*.) It is hard to dismiss the detailed pictures those studies provide of economically disadvantaged students who exhibit engagement with learning and rigorous thinking.

Furthermore, such studies can meet the National Research Council’s criteria for what makes a study scientifically based, according to the National Assembly for State Arts Agencies monograph *An Introduction to Scientifically Based Research* by Deborah Ingram and Michael Sikes.<sup>7</sup>

See page 6 for citations.

## The Arts: Essential for All Students

Based on an interview with visual artist and educator Willis “Bing” Davis

Dayton artist and former OAC Council member Willis “Bing” Davis retired in 1998 from his position as art department chair at Central State University, but he continues his lifelong pursuits of traveling, making art, and creating a “third space” for new generations of young artists and arts educators both in his studio and through his visits to schools. After spending a delightful afternoon with 50 young students who had been studying a unit on his work, he shared his insights with Links & Threads.

**Are comprehensive arts education and arts integrated instruction only for the artistically gifted?** My experience has been that all kids respond to meaningful, exciting learning opportunities in the arts. I believe that young people who engage in well-developed arts integrated learning experiences develop creative, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills that transfer either directly or indirectly over to other areas.

**Are arts integrated lessons a way to engage the disruptive or “hard to reach” kids?** The arts can be a door to reconnection for students who have been turned off by bad school experiences. But the arts are an important vehicle to reach and teach all students. Students who are science-oriented, for example, become more fluid in their thinking and learn to use their intuition through arts learning.

**Are lessons in non-Western art particularly helpful for engaging African-American students and others whose origins and cultures are non-Western?** Of course seeing their own culture gives them a sense of pride, but all students respond pleasantly to the richness of non-Western art. They often notice its similarities to Western art and respond when they see a mother and child depicted or people farming or working. They see the human connections that unite us all.

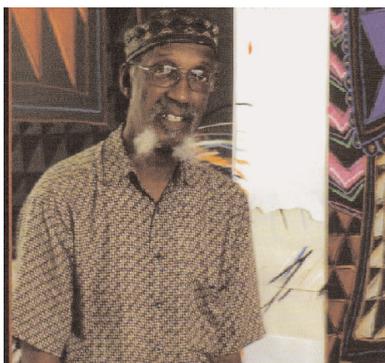


Photo by Ittishia McGuire

Willis “Bing” Davis is an internationally known painter, sculptor, and photographer who lives and teaches in Dayton. Shown on the right is his *Ancestral Spirit Dance #296* (oil pastel).

## OAC Update: *Powerful New Planning Tool*

Capturing ideas, refining decisions, and conveying results are familiar challenges for anyone who plans new programs or projects. To meet those challenges with more efficiency and clarity, download the Ohio Arts Council's iTool.

The iTool is the first piece of a comprehensive planning toolkit called *Focusing the Light: The Art and Practice of Planning*.

The seven-volume series, which includes a variety of planning information and tools, will be available this summer. The *Focusing the Light* iTool provides planning teams with an easy and informative way to compile the pieces of a plan into a program logic model.

A program logic model is a graphical representation of a plan that clearly connects vision, mission, inputs, activities, and outcomes. It can enhance all stages of the planning process, as well as the implementation and evaluation of the program, by helping teams align plan components and communicate the logic of their programs to constituents, funders, and evaluators.

A wizard, which explains each step, makes the iTool easy to use. Completed logic models can be printed or saved.

To download iTool, go to [www.oac.state.oh.us](http://www.oac.state.oh.us) and click on *Resources-Arts Learning-Focusing the Light iTool*.

## Poetry Out Loud *Reviving an Ancient Art*

Memorizing and reciting poetry once again is becoming part of American high school students' education. The impetus is *Poetry Out Loud*, a new educational initiative developed by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the Poetry Foundation.

The initiative centers on education and a national poetry recitation competition. This year, students from the capital region of Ohio will compete at the school level for a pilot state competition to be held on April 29 in Columbus. The state winner will then go to a national competition in Washington, D.C.

"We are hoping the competition will become an annual, statewide event," says Mary Campbell-Zopf, the Ohio Arts Council's Director of Arts Learning.

Why a return to this ancient tradition when "memorization" so often is viewed as a form of learning that lacks depth?

"When you memorize a poem, it's like making a friend for life," says Sandra Miller, a critically acclaimed poet and an educator. Ms. Miller is the Ohio Arts Council's project coordinator for *Poetry Out Loud*. With help from other Ohio poets, she is visiting classrooms and providing professional development and support for teachers participating in the project.

She says the benefits of recitation extend far beyond appreciation: "A student is projected into the poet's position, embodying fully the emotions and ideas of the poem as conveyed through language. Students also become aware of the connections between traditional poetic forms and contemporary ones. Memorizing poetry "classics" also is an excellent way to learn techniques and tools for their own future writing and reading."

The *Poetry Out Loud* Web site provides a wealth of online resources for teachers, including an online anthology of poems, curriculum materials, and tips for recitation. The OAC Web site provides a self-assessment rubric and other information and materials for supporting teachers.

### *Poetry Out Loud Details*

In this year's *Poetry Out Loud* pilot, schools in the capital region of the state will compete on April 29 from 1:00-2:30 p.m. at the Southern Theater in Columbus. High school students who win their school competitions will vie for prizes and the chance to represent Ohio at the May 2006 national recitation contest in Washington, D.C.

To explore the curriculum and other resources, go to [www.poetryoutloud.org](http://www.poetryoutloud.org).

For updates and Ohio-specific resources, go to [www.oac.state.oh.us](http://www.oac.state.oh.us) and click on *Resources-Arts Learning-Poetry Out Loud*.)

You can email Sandra Miller, the project coordinator, at [sandra@journal1913.org](mailto:sandra@journal1913.org) with questions.

Also helpful for teaching recitation are audio or video examples. You can find some of these at [www.poets.org](http://www.poets.org) and [www.favoritepoem.org](http://www.favoritepoem.org).

## References From Page 3

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## Institute Participants

- Botkins Local School District
- Cincinnati City School District
- Clark County Educational Service Center
- Cleveland Municipal School District
- Columbus City School District
- Dayton City School District
- Hamilton City School District
- Lakota Local School District
- Lima City School District
- Mississinawa Valley Local School District
- Stark County Educational Service Center
- Steubenville City School District
- Toledo City School District
- Yellow Springs Exempted Village School District

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## ODE Mission

The Ohio Department of Education supports high achievement for all students every year by setting clear and high expectations for all students; by making sure that educators have the skills, knowledge and resources to help students improve; by fostering the ability of families and communities to help students succeed; and by measuring, publicizing and rewarding achievement results.



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## OAC Mission

The Ohio Arts Council is a state agency that funds and supports quality arts experiences to strengthen Ohio communities culturally, educationally, and economically.

### Ohio Arts Council

A STATE AGENCY THAT SUPPORTS  
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