

# Ford Foundation grant integrates art into elementary education

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**S**aint Mary's Kalmanovitz School of Education students studying for the Multiple Subject Credential necessary for teaching children in elementary school are benefiting from a Ford Foundation grant.

The Multiple Subject Teacher Education Program is a member of the Arts in Education Initiative, directed by Professor Paul Ammon, of UC Berkeley, which distributes funds to preservice credential programs at Saint Mary's, Mills College, CSU East Bay, CSU Humboldt and other schools UC Berkeley.

The Arts in Education Initiative is funded by both the Ford Foundation and the Clarence E. Heller Charitable Foundation. The Ford Foundation supports the AEI through funding and ongoing meetings. As a consortium, the AEI members write the grants.

As the only Ford grantee explicitly focused on teacher education, the grant funds efforts to develop new teachers' confidence and competence in order to integrating the arts into children's education. The program operates on the belief that the arts can enhance learning in all regular subject areas.

Joan Skolnick, Professor, and Nancy Dulberg, Associate Professor, both of Saint Mary's Multiple Subject Credential Program, assert that using the arts teaches critical thinking and habits of mind that lead to academic success. To this end, Saint Mary's is using the arts in their classes as well.

"The arts, taught well, lead to the development of such habits of mind as persisting, engaging, reflecting and imagining," says Skolnick.

Our teachers, she observes, are teaching the next generation of adults — those who will help solve global warming, health care problems, poverty, ethnic conflict.

"We need thinkers!" she exclaims.

Integrating music, an important art, into the classroom, comes easily for Dulberg. She brings her guitar. Folk songs through the years have helped her students see history and to hear the "voices in the song." Integrating music can lead to developing perspectives, different ways of looking at prob-

lems. It also works toward increasing classroom cohesiveness.

The visual arts aren't ignored. Painting, photography, sculpture and bookmaking are all explored. Students look at the artwork of Japanese-American internees, at photos of nineteenth century child laborers, and so forth, and then participate in "artful thinking" to delve deeper into history and its meanings.

"Art is the pathway to empathy," states the educator, Maxine Greene of Columbia University. Saint Mary's program agrees wholeheartedly.

In the student teaching seminar, participants go through an arts module which includes meeting local artists and arts educators who demonstrate their work and help the students experience their processes.

"We're passionate to empower teachers to develop models for students so that we can all be artists," states Skolnick. The departmental goal is to have Saint Mary's students see themselves as artists who can integrate their art with curriculum.

Skolnick and Dulberg design their own arts infusion program for Saint Mary's and write sub-grants to fund their projects. The focus is on art, deepening knowledge, and improving all ways of learning for all children. They serve an "equity agenda," says Skolnick, seeking to empower children from all cultures and backgrounds.

At Saint Mary's, in the Multiple Subject Credential program, the emphasis is on social justice, making a better world, and helping the whole teacher and the whole child.

"Teachers are the dream keepers," Skolnick quotes educator Gloria Ladson-Billings as saying.

"We feel so strongly that today's children have so many challenges," says Skolnick. "Kids bring their problems and cultures with them each day. Art can help them in bringing their lives to the curriculum."

Teaching children and adults to develop empathy helps them become problem solvers. Dulberg is proud of how Saint Mary's supports the new teachers as their careers begin. Both of the professors are convinced that bringing the arts into the classroom helps them meet standards in reading.

## How the program helps...

Comments and quotes from Multiple Subject credential students about the arts integration program, responding to questions about what they found most valuable, and how the program contributed to their own thinking:

"...has allowed me to tap into diverse ways of thinking."

"...has helped me to see other perspectives."

"...helped me in myriad ways — my confidence is up — I have more ideas for adapting projects for multiple ages. There are many alternatives I can use to generate higher order thinking and promote learning in all curricular areas."

"...doing the arts projects in class helped me to see how the different dynamic contributes to learning in a new way. It's exciting and fosters cooperation as well as gives a chance for various students to experience success and pride."