

IMPROVED STUDENT LEARNING

Engagement and Thoughtfulness

Arts-integrated units ask students to learn multiple subjects together. Students bridge subject matter boundaries, using their learning to link content as they produce new, often innovative creations. This puts learning in motion.

Students interact with peers and teachers as they consider the content they are learning, make decisions about how to use it, and construct novel projects highlighting knowledge connections. Students are thinking, conferring, deliberating, evaluating, deciding, bridging, planning, creating, and producing.

The evaluation team observed arts integrated and regular classrooms to examine student learning and applied two measures: the level of student **engagement** and quality of their **thoughtfulness**.

67%

of students are highly engaged in arts integrated lessons

Students are
4.4

times more likely to be highly thoughtful and highly engaged

Engaged Students:

- attend to the task at hand
- confer and interact with peers
- transition smoothly from one part of the lesson to another
- ask questions
- seek help
- get loud (within parameters)

Thoughtful Students:

- make design choices
- have to respond to teacher questions randomly rather than being able to volunteer
- use content-relevant and accurate language
- create artists' statements and/or offer descriptions and interpretations of their artwork
- formulate opinions and defend them
- direct their conversations with groups and organize themselves for tasks
- conduct and discuss research with peers
- apply criteria/rules to judge the degree they had completed a task well (or not too well)



A trio of students from Plainview-Elgin-Millville High School discuss their plans for an arts-integrated project in Joe Cerar's social studies classroom.

Observation of arts integration in classrooms in 2012-13 showed 50% of the students highly engaged and using high thoughtfulness, compared with 20% of students observed in classes with regular instruction. In 2013-14, similar observation of arts integration showed 67% of the students were highly engaged and using high thoughtfulness, compared to 15% in classrooms with regular instruction. In the 2013-14 project year, **students were observed to be 4.4 times more likely to be highly thoughtful and highly engaged in arts integrated units.** Comparing observations for 2013 and 2014, the percentage of arts integrated lessons that provoke student thoughtfulness and engagement increased over the two-year period, suggesting that teachers are getting better at designing lessons that invite students to engage deeply and thoughtfully.

Engagement and Thoughtfulness - Table 1

