

# 3 WAYS TO ADVOCATE FOR ARTS INTEGRATION

*“Conformity is the jailer of freedom and enemy of growth.”*  
- John F. Kennedy

Integrating the Arts has been in the forefront in my teaching toolbox since I was first introduced to it five years ago. While some of my coworkers resisted this shift in teaching, it quickly became second nature to me.

Arts Integration is a hidden treasure in the current district where I teach. What I thought “everyone” knew, I quickly realized only a few knew. As a result of my struggles, I want to offer three ways to become an advocate of Arts Integration in a school where it isn’t embraced (yet).

## STAND OUT!

When I finally let go and went back to integrating art throughout my units, I began to feel like myself again and felt that drive and passion spark back to life.

So, don’t be scared to stand out! The research proves that Arts Integration is a powerful tool for children to connect with the curriculum. Practice what you preach and be an individual!

## START SLOW!

When presenting an idea to administration, start small and build up. Come prepared. Show the research that backs incorporating art into the curriculum.

Plan a lesson out from start to finish and present it to your principal ahead of time so he/she can see what you plan to do. Explain your objectives and anticipated results. Implement your plan in the classroom. Then, follow up! After you are finished with your lesson, gather your data, schedule a meeting, and prove to your administration what we already know. This gains credibility.

## SUPPLEMENT YOUR KNOWLEDGE!

Here are some ways I have found to foster my creativity:

- Subscribe to Periodicals (EducationCloset)- If you are reading this, you’ve already taken the first step, so pat yourself on the back and mark today a win!
- Follow Relevant Web Pages – Arts Edge is a good starting point for a variety of lessons and research.
- Follow Bloggers – My personal favorite is Amanda Koonlaba. Her lessons are straightforward and easy to follow.
- Go-to Conferences during the summer – EducationCloset has an amazing online conference planned! Many local and regional Art Commissions also put on a Summer Institute for teachers.

## STAY COMMITTED

It is so easy to throw in the towel when “everyone” else is doing something different. If you are like me and in a setting that has not fully embraced Arts Integration, I challenge you to make a plan of action for this upcoming school year. Set a meeting with your administration and request to teach ONE Arts Integration lesson. Or, go out and write a grant for your entire school to have professional development in integrating the arts. Wherever you are in your journey, just know that you are not alone. Stay committed. This is what the students want and need!