

Support Social and Emotional Wellbeing

All learning is a social and emotional experience, and competence in these areas is essential for success. Arts-integrated teaching strategies provide child-centered activities for supporting social and emotional well-being and develop resiliency.

All Learning is Emotional

The social and emotional realm refers to the social abilities and emotional capacities that students need to learn effectively: all learning is a social and emotional experience, and competence in these areas is essential for success. Classwide engagement in arts activities in each art form can improve emotional literacy and social skills.

A 2019 report from the Aspen Institute titled "[From A Nation at Risk to A Nation of Hope](#)" summarizes years of research and provides resources for teachers to improve students' social and emotional skills.

Personality Preferences

Psychology provides many frameworks for understanding human behavior and improving interpersonal relationships. The information below-describing learner types is from Breaking the Learning Barrier for Underachieving Students by George Nelson. The Myers-Briggs research categorizes personality preferences to build respect for individual needs and increase appreciation and respect for various perspectives. Five principles of teaching that increase the ability to reach all students are identified as Principles of Nexus teaching. Arts-integrated teaching strategies provide child-centered activities for teaching in the nexus.



GOLD LEARNERS

- Need structure and order
- Generally obedient to authority
- Hardworking, responsible
- Like clear details and deadlines
- Motivated by good grades
- Careful to observe rules
- Excel at traditional paper-and-pencil tests

GOLD TEACHING STYLES

- Create structured learning environments
- Focus on mandated standards and objectives
- Create neat and orderly classrooms
- Expect students to be responsible
- Rely on traditional grading methods



BLUE LEARNERS

- Appreciate feeling centered
- Don't care how much you know until they know how much you care
- Relationships come first
- Dislike conflict, competition
- Enjoy collaboration, teams
- Intuitive
- Like assignments that utilize their creativity

BLUE TEACHING STYLES

- Seek to nurture students and foster one-on-one interactions
- Focus on feelings and emphasize educating the whole student
- Create harmonious, peaceful learning environments
- Use creative and individualized instructional approaches
- Find ways to grade effort as well as achievement



GREEN LEARNERS

- Analytical and logical thinkers
- Competence driven
- Often learn best in solitude
- Like to use teacher as a resource
- Value meaningful applications of learning, resistant to busy work
- Independent, unique
- Like to delve deeply in their special interests

GREEN TEACHING STYLES

- Seek to inspire and develop the intellect of their students
- Use scientific exploration as a means to foster deeper learning
- Create research-based projects
- Encourage divergent thinking
- Strive to maintain a high level of content knowledge and/or subject competency



ORANGE LEARNERS

- Seek fun and excitement
- Learn kinesthetically
- Competitive, like to win
- Frequently impulsive
- Like jokes and surprises
- Motivated by tangible rewards
- Need organizational support

ORANGE TEACHING STYLES

- Create interactive and hands-on learning environments
- Facilitate fun, engaging lessons
- Encourage busy and varied activities, tolerate on-task noise
- Use multiple forms of discipline including negotiation and humor
- Often create unique own approach to required course content /grading

PRINCIPLES OF NEXUS TEACHING



FROM GEORGE NELSON'S *BREAKING THE LEARNING BARRIER FOR UNDERACHIEVING STUDENTS*
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One of the main theses of George Nelson's work on education and personality preferences is that teachers can reach the diverse needs of learners when practicing teaching in the nexus. Teaching in the nexus includes the principles listed below and addresses a specific lesson structure in the accompanying timeline.

1. Allow choice.
2. Enjoy the humor of life.
3. Do the unexpected.
4. Relate to the values of the students.
5. Elevate thought.

Practice Resiliency

Creativity is resiliency in action. Creating anything involves significant trial and error coupled with multiple failures. Participating in the arts provides students with opportunities to persevere through the uncertainty embedded in the creative process, building persistence through practice. Along with learning the craft of each art discipline, students develop the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional skills necessary for practicing resiliency in their learning and their lives. The following statements describe how participating regularly in each art form actively engages the brain and body in unique ways to foster resilience.

- **DANCE:** Dance engages the whole body in movement to increase flexibility, coordination, agility, and develops the intuitive aspects of the mind/body connection.
- **DRAMA:** Drama includes reading body language and expressions, building shared meaning of experiences and eliciting empathy.
- **MUSIC:** Music refines listening skills and internalizing beat rhythm and tempo, increasing synchronicity within ourselves and with others.
- **VISUAL ARTS:** Visual arts sharpens visual acuity, perception, observational skills, and the ability to interpret meaning from icons and images in the vast visual world.

THE FIVE-STEP FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPING RESILIENCY

In the book *Teachers' Guide to Resiliency Through the Arts* by Flox, Sadin and Levy, the creative process is described in five steps. Designed for application in day-to-day life to develop habits for resiliency, this five-step process can be used daily in classrooms or for large scale projects as a framework to optimize performance.

When using this five-step process to address a challenge, step one and step two can be reversed if you choose. Start in the place that feels most comfortable; these five steps are also useful in implementing a previously created teaching vision for the year.

1. ENVISION

Read, consider, and revise your vision for how you would like your life and work to be. Or, imagine how you would like to feel right now. What would you like to have happen? Breathe and relax.

2. OBSERVE

Observe/notice/take Inventory of the current situation. Ask yourself these questions and write the answers.

- How do I feel?
- What do I think?
- What happened?
- What choices do I have?
- What am I in charge of and not in charge of?

3. ALIGN

Actively align the situation by asking: how can I align the present situation with my vision? Take the following steps to practice alignment.

- Align internally: move, stretch, and move some more; dance, sing, draw, and/or act out characters.
- Align the external world: change or move what needs to be changed or moved. Create the product as desired.
- Whose help do you need to succeed?
- How can you win people over?

4. REFLECT

Reflect on what is working and what needs to be changed. And continue working to align further.

5. CELEBRATE

Celebrate what works and move forward, acting on the new thoughts and behaviors.

TEACHER SELF-CARE

As a craft, teaching is a performance of trial and error that requires creativity and resilience. Teachers can serve students by modeling resilient behaviors and providing experiences for students to practice their resiliency.

Teaching is a physically, mentally, and emotionally demanding profession. Teachers must self-manage with diligence to continue learning and growing, as well as to avoid burnout. Teachers are the most important factor for student learning within the classroom. Teachers must manage their individual needs and improve their resiliency to build relationships with many children and adapt to an ever-changing environment.

Many various strategies exist that foster resiliency. Mindfulness, recreational activities, art engagement, and even simple rituals, such as playing your favorite CD in your car, all contribute to developing resilience. While building skills in the arts, teachers can regularly use the arts to nourish their mind and body.

Consider these ideas:

- Make a playlist of your favorite songs
- Sketch your favorite scenes.
- Tell stories with friends and family.
- Design or redesign a space in your home.
- Enjoy a family dance party.
- Attend a community performance.
- Visit a museum.
- Tap out rhythms on your steering wheel.
- Decorate a cake.
- Photograph family keepsakes.
- Write a poem about your day.

The basics matter. Make arrangements to sleep and eat regularly. Schedule bathroom breaks as needed. (This is not always intuitive with the time demands in a teacher's day.) Move and exercise during your school day with the students. Create habits for self-management and teach self-management explicitly to students.

Self-management starts with knowing what you want. At the beginning of the year, envision what you want for your life and your classroom. Clearly express your vision in your sketchbook. Describe and illustrate your vision with details in your sketchbook. Mark the pages for easy reference. This vision can guide your decision making during the year. When a challenge arises, use the five-step framework to relax, examine options, and creatively address the situation.





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