Art Integration with reading

What can you do when the arts are missing from the classroom? “Dr. Howard Gardner, the master of multiple intelligences (MI), observed, "Kids go to school and college and they get through, but they don't seem to really care about using their minds. School doesn't have the kind of long-term positive impact that it should."” Research shows the need for integrated curriculum in the classroom to provide for students multiple intelligences and learning styles. There are many ways to integrate forms of the arts into the classroom. These ways include, but are not limited to visual art, drama, and dance.

Blending art into reading allows the student to entirely understand the content of what they are reading and be able to complete a project and make connections through drawing pictures. “Coloring pictures that pertain to the readings students work on in class can help students visualize the text and make connections with characters.” Younger students should also be able to handle simple assignments, such as drawing or painting a picture of a favorite scene from the book. The projects may become more complex as the students come into the higher grades for example, “Teachers may pair books that have important social or historical themes with art projects such as collages that require students to do independent research or think creatively to complete.”

“Arts integration seems to be the best form of differentiation out there because it taps into so many different interests and abilities and forms of learning.” Integrating art projects into reading does not require any type of training. It is important to gradually step into integration versus diving into it without totally understanding and researching what works best. “Integration requires collaboration, research, intentional alignment and practical application on behalf of the teachers who take on this challenge.”