

Arts Enrich Academics at Abingdon

Abingdon is one of two elementary schools in Arlington chosen to participate in the successful Kennedy Center arts-integration program called Changing Education Through the Arts (CETA). Arts-integrated teaching makes natural and significant connections between subject areas and art forms. Abingdon teachers are trained to integrate dance, drama, music, visual arts, poetry and storytelling with core academics, such as language arts, social studies, science and mathematics. Students master learning objectives in both the subject area and the art form.



Since 1976, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts has reached out to local teachers in the Washington, D.C. area to help them incorporate the arts as an integral and necessary component of a comprehensive education. One of the benefits of arts-integrated instruction is that it involves students in active learning by drawing on students' multiple intelligences and various learning styles. They observe and respond, imagine, analyze, hypothesize, create, reflect, revise,



evaluate and revise again.

Recent studies have found a significant improvement over a four-year span in academic achievement and effort grades. For example, CETA students' 3rd grade standardized test scores in English and history improved significantly over time compared to control groups.

A teacher talks about the CETA program: "I found that using drama to explore curriculum subjects was a meaningful way to reach every learner. It also helped students understand concepts that may have been inaccessible through read-

ing and discussion alone. I found that through our drama rehearsals, students were able to visualize, internalize and comprehend a huge amount of vocabulary and content."

A 3rd grade student on the drama strategy of tableau: "Just reading a book doesn't make things stick in your head, but when you do a tableau, what you read really sticks in your head."

To find out more about Abingdon and its community support organization, FANS (Friends of Abingdon Neighborhood School), visit <www.friendsofabingdon.org> or call Amy at 703-820-0656.

Contributed by Amy Suardi.



Abingdon students internalize their understanding of literature through the drama strategy of tableau. Photo courtesy of Kerry Brown.