

The Modesto Bee

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DECEMBER 6, 2016 4:06 PM

Eye on (arts) Education special section on front porches Saturday

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First-graders in Rebecca Lacau's class practice mirroring each other's movements, an arts standard, during a transition between lessons at Salvadore Elementary in Napa, on Sept. 9, 2016. The school is an arts magnet, infusing all subjects with sequential arts instruction at every grade. **Nan Austin** naustin@modbee.com

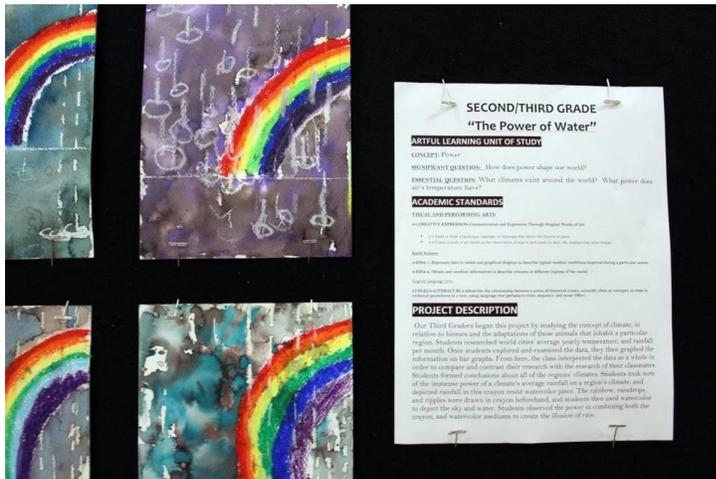
Another [Eye on Education](#) special section will plop on doorsteps in the Modesto Bee and Merced Sun-Star Saturday, this one on the evolving role of the arts in education.

Fear not for bare refrigerators. The joy of youngsters making what one teacher called “the winter wonderfals” is evergreen.

But a new rainbow is rising over the tech-rich landscape of math and science classes.

This more enlightened approach recognizes what art-loving educators already knew: That engineers need to be creative, scientists need to collaborate,

mathematicians need to communicate and technology without critical thinking misses the mark.



Rainbow art of second- and third-grade students at Salvador Elementary in Napa illustrates a science lesson on weather while fulfilling arts standards on painting daily life and landscapes, on Sept. 9, 2016. **Nan Austin** naustin@modbee.com

In other words, all the creative skills the arts develop, and the collaborative ways performers master, matter.

Common Core-aligned visual and performing arts standards, replacing the 2001 version, will be adopted by 2019 under legislation that passed last summer. A progression of arts skills marching up the grades will remain, but links to core subjects should help spread their use to classrooms focused only on reading and math.

COMMON CORE-ALIGNED VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS STANDARDS WILL BE ADOPTED BY 2019. A PROGRESSION OF ARTS SKILLS WITH LINKS TO CORE SUBJECTS SHOULD HELP SPREAD THEIR USE TO CLASSROOMS FOCUSED ONLY ON READING AND MATH.

What advocates call arts integration weaves art lessons into history, science and other projects. For example, kids who help produce a weekly school news show learn about broadcasting, but also have to compose scripts that are articulate and concise, know about the events and why they matter, and understand the value of teamwork.

Those broadcasts will likely get a boost from legislation introduced Monday by state Assemblyman Patrick O'Donnell, D-Long Beach. Assembly Bill 37 would update state standards in media arts – video production, web design, sound

engineering and virtual-reality programming. The California Department of Education sponsored the bill.

“Classes in media arts teach young people how to express themselves creatively using the technology of today and the emerging technologies of the future,” said former teacher O’Donnell in a joint announcement with State Superintendent of Public Instruction (and former science teacher) Tom Torlakson.

Digital industry insider-turned-teacher Brad Cornwell brought video game-design classes to Johansen High School in Modesto several years ago.

“This is indeed what we’re already doing at Johansen as students are learning animation, cinema, digital sound production, imaging design, interactive design, and virtual design through the two pathways (digital-media broadcasting, and digital-media arts and game arts) in the DATA program,” Cornwell said Tuesday, referring to the Digital Arts and Technology Advancement pathway program.

Common core-aligned standards exist for [arts, media and entertainment](#). But emerging technology has opened new possibilities for digital crafts and linking them to other lessons.

“For example, new standards could require students to design 3D models of human settlement on Mars, complete with agricultural and energy production, and designs for architecture, transportation, tools and clothing,” notes a Torlakson statement on the bill.

WE LOVE THE HAND TURKEYS, THE THIRD-GRADE PLAY, THE TRIP TO THE OPERA. BUT STUDENTS NEED SEQUENTIAL INSTRUCTION. Robin Hampton

Arts instruction as school “glue” is gaining momentum. Barbara Nemko, Napa County superintendent of schools, supported arts education in her county to achieve larger goals of higher achievement and upbeat schools full of positive kids.

Bringing arts into the mix helps with both, she said.

“You have kids who are excited about learning and therefore learn more – it isn’t rocket science!” Nemko told arts supporters at the [Arts Now California](#) Napa Summit held in Napa on Sept. 9.

The summit was organized by the [California Alliance for Arts Education](#), a nonprofit helping community advocates harness locally controlled school funding to bring back the arts. In Napa, private funders and a community consortium formed the [Arts Council Napa Valley Education Alliance](#) to offer a progression of art skills-building, kindergarten through high school.

“We love the hand turkeys, the third-grade play, the trip to the opera. But students need sequential instruction,” said alliance Coordinator Robin Hampton.

As Napa Valley Unified teacher Lisa Sullivan put it: “We don’t expect kids to ace algebra class without having had adding and subtraction as elementary students.”

Footnotes

- The Modesto City Schools Board subcommittee on student equity, co-chaired by Cindy Marks and John Walker, held its first meeting and is moving forward with some early ideas. Among them is a proposal by member Rickey McGill to give every freshman a personalized graduation checklist laying out what classes they need to pass to graduate. The information is already available, but students do not always look for it until they are far off track. Other ideas are social/work skill-building in etiquette and punctuality. Besides Walker, Marks and McGill, the panel has three high school students, MCS teacher Jamie Lynn Bianchi, and community members Sandy Riggins and Debra Vincent.
- The Merced County Office of Education is asking assistance from the community for the SEAL of Biliteracy program. The seal is listed on student transcripts in recognition of proficiency in English and another target language. MCOE is seeking community members proficient in writing, speaking and reading other languages to help score essays and interview students. The target languages are Portuguese, Punjabi, Hmong, Hindi, Gujarati, Filipino, French, Cantonese, Mandarin, Indonesian and Tagalog. Contact Amelia Jimenez at [209-381-6761](tel:209-381-6761) or email her at ajimenez@mcoe.org.
- The final \$800 John L. Hollis Scholarships, named in honor of a former Modesto City Schools trustee, will be awarded this coming year by the Christian Public Servants. Awards are for college study toward a career in public service and based on academic achievement, church participation and community service. Applicants must submit a letter of application by March 15. For information call [209-324-1517](tel:209-324-1517) or email randncline@hotmail.com.

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