



ARTSEE

A Curriculum for Arts-Based Social and Emotional Explorations

Overview

Artsee is a four year, arts-based curriculum focused on building grit and resilience while cultivating regulation, agency, self efficacy, and empathy. The curriculum is designed for delivery to children in first through fourth grades. 45 minute lessons are formatted in a structure that provides predictability and consistency while following the natural organization of the brain. Creative explorations are used as metaphors to practice and develop social, emotional, and academic skills and interpersonal interactions. It is encouraged that students be given opportunities to apply skills practiced in class to real life situations throughout other portions of the program or school time. The curriculum features a heavy emphasis on celebration and invites family members, friends, and community members to participate in recognizing the accomplishments of students. All lessons were designed to be led by experienced teaching artists, but an initial 20 hour training in **artsee's** specific teaching methodology is required with

ongoing support for teaching artists provided.

Foundation

Artsee was developed in response to academic and behavioral challenges observed in the elementary school girls served by the Girl First organization, headquartered just outside Philadelphia in a small, urban community. The goal was to provide interventions for students who experience overwhelming feelings of stress, anxiety, and anger, but delivered in such a way as to universally promote positive youth development for all students. Drawing upon elements from the well-researched and proven methodologies of the Neurosequential Model in Education, the Buildabridge Safe Spaces Classroom Model, and the Pillars of Trauma Informed Care, **artsee** promotes equitable learning experiences in a psychologically and physically safe environment while providing students with skill building opportunities led by experienced, caring teaching artists trained specifically to work within the

unique intersection of arts, academics, and social and emotional learning.

Logistics

Artsee's four year curriculum addresses the five core social and emotional learning (SEL) competencies (self awareness, self management, social awareness, relationship skills, and decision making) throughout its themes of self regulation, personal agency, self efficacy, and empathy. Each theme corresponds to a grade level from first to fourth and is delivered over 54, 45-minute lessons. The curriculum is evenly divided into three sessions, each delivered through a different art form. Each session explores the same curricular units to both reinforce learning through repetition and offer students various ways to connect to material depending on personal relevancy and association.

Before transitioning to the next session, a student exhibition and performance is held. This not only encourages students to work towards a final project to be shared, but engages family, friends, and community members in the recognition and celebration of the students' work.

Evaluation methods

Artsee's curriculum is accompanied by rigorous assessment tools that evaluate both changes in skill and knowledge in the areas of arts, academics, and social and emotional learning as well as behavior changes. Teaching artists' observations capture student progress in skill building across all three target areas and classroom behaviors using a 3 point rubric that clearly defines progression of skill demonstration from developing (1) to excellent (3). Additional pre and post assessments are administered to measure change in skills and knowledge. These research based assessments include the Fast Track Project Child Behavior Questionnaire, Self Determination Student Scale, Self Efficacy Scale (Child), and the Toronto Empathy Questionnaire.

Teacher training

Teaching artists leading the ***artsee*** curriculum are expected to possess at least minimal experience teaching and leading creative explorations. Prior to implementing the curriculum, teaching artists are required to participate in 20 hours of training. Training topics include biological brain development and the effects of adversity on that development;

classroom management techniques that encourage compassionate discipline and offers opportunities for positive growth; how to employ creative explorations for academic, social, and emotional skill building; and how social and emotional skills can positively impact academic performance, increase prosocial behaviors, reduce emotional distress, and build resilience. Bi-weekly check ins provide teaching artists with continued support and opportunities to workshop behaviour challenges and creative ideas with their cohort and trainer.