THE
Right
Brain
INITIATIVE

2016-17
PROGRESS
REPORT
Fourth grade Right Brain students at Scouters Mountain Elementary in North Clackamas worked with BodyVox Dance to explore gravity, planets, and galaxies through creative movement.

THE YEAR IS 2007. Quatama Elementary School is preparing to open as one of three new elementary schools in the Hillsboro School District. The Right Brain Initiative is identifying its first twenty school partners and Quatama Elementary is among them.

The year is now 2017. Quatama and Right Brain are entering their tenth year of partnership. Arts integration has become an essential part of the school’s identity and we are sitting down to interview four key members of the Quatama community to better understand how Right Brain has become part of the fabric of Quatama over the last 10 years.

**The Right Brain Initiative transforms learning for all children through the arts, creativity, innovation and whole-brain thinking.**

Shawna Munson’s sixth grade class worked with Oregon Ballet Theatre to introduce movement into the study of the water cycle. 

*“It wasn’t until we worked with Right Brain artists from Oregon Ballet Theatre that we learned how to truly integrate the arts and use them every day.”* –Janis Hill, Quatama Principal, 2007-2014

**THE 2016-17 Right Brain PROGRESS REPORT**

**A Story of Partnership**

Quatama Elementary School and The Right Brain Initiative

Can you believe it? At Right Brain we are kicking off our 10th year of bringing arts integration to K-8 schools in Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington counties! We’ve learned new ways to empower educators and ensure that every student has the opportunity to think creatively and critically, imagine new possibilities, and take ownership of their own learning.

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**What was it like to start a new school and a new partnership with Right Brain at the same time?**

Janis Hill (principal of Quatama Elementary, 2007-14): I specifically remember the initial meeting in 2007 with our assistant superintendent and the other two new Hillsboro elementary school principals. She presented the idea of Right Brain and asked if we were interested and of course, we all were. I have always felt that the arts are an important part of learning, but I didn’t know how to get there. Right Brain seemed like a perfect fit. But it was scary for all of us at first, so I told my teachers, “We are asking our kids to be brave learners, so we’ve got to be brave learners, too. We need to put ourselves out there.”

**How has Right Brain impacted your teaching and how did you make the arts part of your daily routine?**

Shawna Munson (teacher at Quatama Elementary, 2008-present): Right Brain gave me a different outlook. It pushed me to learn and adapt and incorporate all these different strategies into what I was doing. And...
“With Right Brain, they’re able to show their smarts differently and it provides them with that feeling of success.”

-SHAWNA MUNSON, QUATAMA TEACHER 2008-PRESENT

I really saw a difference in my students and my teaching practices. I became more engaged. I was more excited. I was learning new things. It was like being a first time teacher all over again! I took risks with my students. I danced with my students, I sang with my students, we did crazy things together! And it was really fun. I modeled for them stepping outside my comfort zone and then they were able to do the same for me. The biggest thing that I’ve come to realize is that the arts aren’t just one more thing on my plate. They’re going to make my job easier. It’s actually a tool that I can use to help streamline what I’m doing. There’s a lot of informal peer-to-peer sharing happening in the hallways and classrooms all the time, but we also have time set aside at staff trainings, grade level meetings, and faculty meetings. Sometimes we post pictures on Twitter of a lesson we’ve done using the arts, and other teachers will see it and come ask us about it. It encourages friendly competition between us, like “what can I do to make my class look even more creative?”

The halls of Quatama are filled with students’ work. “You can walk around the halls here and all you see are students and their work. That’s what is up on the wall. It’s them.” –Christy Walters, Quatama Principal, 2014-present

Why is Right Brain important to students?

Cassandra James (student at Quatama Elementary, 2010-17): Doing Right Brain strategies with my teachers and working with the artists helps me learn in the other subjects, because when we get to use our hands and bodies, it makes it more fun and interesting.

Shawna Munson: For a lot of kids, Right Brain allows them to be successful in subjects where they may not have found success before. With Right Brain, they’re able to show their smarts differently and it provides them with that feeling of success.

How have the arts and Right Brain become part of the fabric of Quatama?

Shawna Munson: The arts are in every subject now! Even if we don’t realize that we’re integrating the arts, they’re automatically there.

Christy Walters (principal of Quatama Elementary, 2014-present): Being a Right Brain and STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, math) school has made the arts more accessible for everyone. We weave the arts into everything. Because there is so much creativity involved in science and engineering, even the teachers and students who don’t self-identify as artists feel empowered to say: “I am creative.”

Right Brain does a great job of introducing multicultural and inclusive teaching practices. You get to tap into all sorts of different mediums and different ways of forming ideas about the world. You can walk around the halls here and all you see are students and their work. That’s what is up on the wall. It’s them. It’s like that old saying about creating mirrors and windows in a school so students can see themselves and also see out into the world. Right Brain helps us do a great job of this in a safe way.
The Right Brain Initiative

How It Works

Collaborative residencies with teachers and teaching artists

Students think critically and creatively

Arts-embedded teaching and learning in the classroom

Commitment to professional growth and shared learning

Collaborations among students, families, administrators, teachers, teaching artists, and Right Brain staff

Systemwide reflective practice with districts, schools, administrators, teachers, teaching artists, and Right Brain staff

Whole school arts integration

Equitable learning opportunities that deepen understanding for all students

Culture of continuous improvement

“Creative thinking means you have a big imagination and use juicy words—magical phrases, and a creative mind.”

–Right Brain Student

PHOTOS THIS PAGE (FROM TOP): CHRISTIAN BARRIOS, FRANK HUNT

PHOTOS THIS PAGE (FROM TOP): LEAH VERWEY, CHRISTIAN BARRIOS
The Right Brain Initiative

2016-17 Schools

68 Total Schools

1,689 Teachers & School Staff Served

1,668 Unique Integrated Arts Experiences (classrooms served)

2,837 Individual Professional Development Hours

27,003 Students Served

Students Served:
Asian: 7%
American Indian/Alaska Native: 1%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander: 1%
Black/African-American: 8%
Latinx/Hispanic: 25%
Multiracial: 5%
White: 54%

816 Educators and Artists Participated

Photo by Frank Hunt
**THE Right Brain INITIATIVE Timeline**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event/Grant</th>
<th>Partner/Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Visioning Committee forms to create what is first known as Arts Partners</td>
<td>Portland General Electric Foundation awards $23,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Serve 20 schools</td>
<td>General Electric Foundation awards $25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Serve 23 schools</td>
<td>United Way of Oregon awards $25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Serve 25 schools</td>
<td>Oregon Community Foundation awards $15,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Serve 31 schools</td>
<td>First major fundraising event, SHIFT: An experiment in fashion design</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Serve 44 schools</td>
<td>JPMorgan Chase Bank Foundation awards $25,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Serve 49 schools</td>
<td>First annual Spring Colloquium to make student learning visible</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Serve 59 schools</td>
<td>First major fundraising event, SHIFT: An experiment in fashion design</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Serve 63 schools</td>
<td>First Tech Federal Credit Union awards $15,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Serve 68 schools</td>
<td>First major fundraising event, SHIFT: An experiment in fashion design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Serve 70 schools</td>
<td>First major fundraising event, SHIFT: An experiment in fashion design</td>
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**Additional Grants and Events:**
- The Collins Foundation awards $150,000
- Spirit Mountain Community Fund awards $25,000
- Wieden + Kennedy awards $75,000
- The Oregon Community Foundation awards $15,000
- DuBois Charitable Lead Trust awards $25,000
- First Tech Federal Credit Union awards $15,000
- Accept the Phi Beta Kappa $5,000 award for building creative exchanges with diverse audiences in the arts and humanities
- First major fundraising event, SHIFT: An experiment in fashion design

Please note that all grants are first time funding awards.
THE RIGHT BRAIN INITIATIVE worked with the Portland State University Center for Student Success to identify ways in which Right Brain’s arts-based strategies have impacted teachers’ instructional practices and students’ abilities to think critically and creatively.

Through surveys and interviews, teachers reported 1) the top two reasons they use Right Brain strategies in the classroom, and 2) how their students’ abilities to think critically and creatively was impacted by the use of Right Brain strategies.

“Arts integration can show all of the learning of a child—it allows children to show and use all of their intelligences. It helps children make meaning and sense of their learning.”

–RIGHT BRAIN PRINCIPAL

PERCENTAGE OF TEACHERS THAT OBSERVE THE FOLLOWING EVIDENCE OF STUDENT LEARNING AFTER USING RIGHT BRAIN STRATEGIES

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<tr>
<th>Evidence of Student Learning</th>
<th>Percentage of Teachers Reporting</th>
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<tr>
<td>Actively engage in discussion, offer their own ideas, appreciate others’ ideas</td>
<td>68%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seek solutions to problems, challenges or obstacles</td>
<td>39%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pose and respond to their own questions</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Find relevant evidence and draw conclusions supported by that evidence</td>
<td>33%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intentionally engage in the process of revision</td>
<td>29%</td>
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“Right Brain is a bank of arts-based strategies that teachers can use to help students access content.”

–RIGHT BRAIN TEACHER