



4 The Lowe Art Museum is a partner in a new innovative program that teaches learning through the humanities.

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Program uses the visual arts to support learning

Artful knowledge

Sixth-grade student Lucia Gomez sits in her language arts class at Shenandoah Middle School and improves her critical thinking and verbal skills by looking at an image of Carmen Lomas Garza's *The Faith Healer* and describing what she sees.

Down the hall in a social studies class, seventh-grader Alejandra Tabata is learning a lesson in geography—not by studying a map but by analyzing a piece of Native American pottery.

Students all over this Miami-Dade school are using a new and very unusual technique to learn about the environment, technology, and other subjects. Instead of reading textbooks,

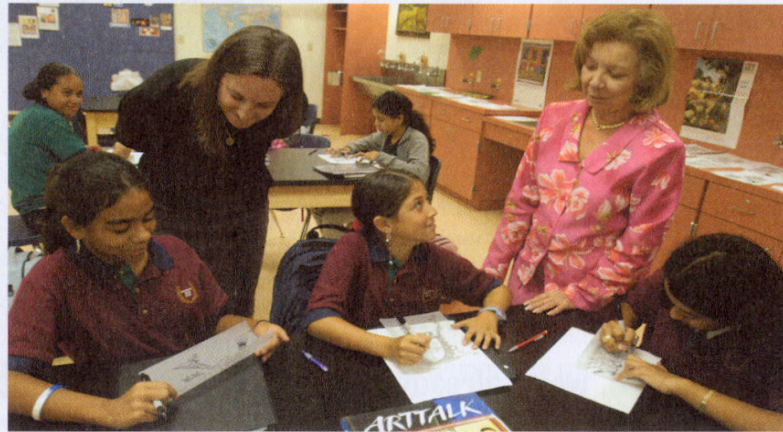
that uses instructional strategies based in the humanities to teach a variety of subject matter.

"The goal is not to change the content of what teachers teach but to modify the way they teach in a way

that the visual arts can support learning," says Wendy Wolf, curator of education at the Lowe Art Museum, one of five museum partners in the program. "In addition to using textbooks and lit-

erature, teachers will also use paintings, sculptures, or field trips in the community looking at historic buildings to reinforce learning."

Using an innovative teaching technique called visual thinking strategies, which stresses critical thinking and visual literacy, Shenandoah language



Learning through art: The Lowe's Wendy Wolf, left, and Shenandoah Middle School Principal Lourdes Delgado review the work of students enrolled in the school's Museums Magnet Program.

arts and social studies teachers will use art images from the Lowe to support student learning in four areas: environment, identity, technology and change, and communication.

Sixth-grade Shenandoah students studying geography, for example, will learn about different regions of the world not by memorizing the countries on a map but by studying the natural

resources in different regions of the world that are available to artists to create objects.

Students will learn how art represents culture and cultural practice, what a piece of art can teach them about a particular region, and how technological advancements, such as the advent of the railroad, helped effect the spread of art.

Many of their lessons will culminate in visits to the Lowe and other

museum partners involved in the program, which include Florida International University's The Wolfsonian, the Miami Art Museum, the Historical Museum of Southern Florida, and Dade Heritage Trust.

Lourdes Delgado, principal of Shenandoah Middle, believes the visual thinking strategies will help produce higher FCAT scores for her school. "There's definitely a connection," says Delgado. "This strategy encourages students to think outside the box."

"The goal is not to change the content of what teachers teach but to modify the way they teach."

in some instances they are looking at paintings, sculptures, and other forms of artwork from the University of Miami's Lowe Art Museum.

The innovative practice is part of Shenandoah's Museums Magnet Program, an initiative spearheaded by Miami-Dade County Public Schools

ON THE CUTTING EDGE