

# Making the Connection to Project Based Learning in Your Curriculum

**"I have never been disappointed  
with the amount of time or energy  
I spend reaching out to teachers.  
It's a blessing. And when they come into  
the store, it's a double blessing."**

—Patti Haltom, Stamp.A.Dee.Do.Da  
Rubber Stamp Art,  
Milwaukie, OR



## Introduction

The Hobby Industry Association (HIA) believes that imaginative project-based activities, particularly crafting activities, directly tied to the school curriculum can help children build basic learning skills and self-esteem. Through the **Making the Connection** initiative, HIA has explored how craft & hobby retailers can support local educators by becoming a creative resource for the teachers in their communities.

The Making the Connection initiative gives educators and retailers strategies that will open lines of communication and build working relationships. Through these partnerships, HIA hopes to inspire a generation of children that graduate from elementary and middle school with craft and hobby skills that keep them actively engaged in learning throughout their lives.

HIA's *Making the Connection to Education* brochure provides retailers with advice on how they can support educators and expand their resources. This publication offers guidelines for the educator. It includes specific tips and actions that can be taken by all teachers to establish beneficial relationships with local store managers

To meet the wide ranging needs of educators around the country, we have organized these guidelines into three separate sections:

- » **Make Your Connection to Craft & Hobby Retailers**
- » **Grow Your Connection to Craft & Hobby Retailers**
- » **Sustain Your Connection to Craft & Hobby Retailers**

HIA encourages you to reach out to your local retailers- start by introducing yourself to the staff at your local craft store. The rewards may be great, from new relationships and collaborative opportunities to project sheets, classes and tips on saving money on crafting resources.

Crafts.

Discover life's little pleasures.

## Make Your Connection to Craft & Hobby Retailers

- » Visit your local craft retailer before the school year begins. Use the opportunity to introduce yourself and leave information on the projects you will be doing with your students. This will ensure the materials you need will be in stock in the quantities you need them.
- » Apply for teacher discount cards at all nearby stores.
- » Inquire about upcoming classes and how to sign up for special mailings.
- » Look for project sheets throughout the store that many provide you with new curriculum based ideas. If you don't see project sheets, ask the store manager if any are available.
- » Put your school's address on the store's mailing list. Indicate to the front office that it should be placed in the teachers' lunch room.
- » Provide retailers with photos and stories of the projects created with materials purchased in their stores for insertion in their newsletters and press releases.
- » Ask your retailer to display student projects during the school year. This is a good way to celebrate student work in the community at large.
- » Suggest that your school's tax exempt number be kept readily available.
- » Have store mailings sent to your home address where you are more likely to have the time to read and act on the information.



*Students at the Columbus School in Mt. Vernon, NY designed one-of-a-kind bugs that become part of a December school bulletin board called Jingle Bugs.*

*"It helps when teachers give me a list of the materials they will need at the beginning of the school year. That way I can be sure I have the right quantities of everything available."*

—Tom Schultz,  
Michaels Arts & Crafts  
Geneva, OH

*Creating "personality cubes" helped sixth grade students at the Ottosom Middle School in Arlington, MA learn more about themselves.*

## Grow Your Connection to Craft & Hobby Retailers

- » Sign up for in-service programs offered at the store or on-site at district schools. If no craft-related in-service programs are currently offered, contact your store manager to see how a program can be organized. Sessions can be designed to focus on new products, new uses for existing products, new crafting techniques or craft demonstration techniques.
- » Inquire as to how you can provide feedback to the store staff on materials and classes.
- » Encourage the store manager to reach out to your school's parent-teacher organizations to identify opportunities that incorporate crafts into school fairs or other school sponsored programs.
- » Provide your fax and email address so that informal updates on projects, tips or techniques can be forwarded frequently and inexpensively.
- » Add the store manager to your school's newsletter mailing list.
- » Ask for in-school make-it; take it presentations at special times throughout the school year.
- » Find out if the store would like to provide the paper for your school or PTA newsletter.
- » Invite the manager to make a presentation on the store's educational resources at a staff meeting in your school.
- » Explore if any special crafting equipment, such as die-cutting or sewing machines, is available for teacher use if materials are purchased in the store.

*"When I know what a teacher is going to assign as a project, I am ready with a list of products when the children arrive. It gives them the opportunity to choose the materials that best matches the design they have imagined."*

—Carol Levosky,  
owner/manager,  
Playtime Retail Stores,  
Arlington, MA

## Sustain Your Connection to Craft & Hobby Retailers

- » Work with the store manager to celebrate your successful partnership with the store. Jointly submit an article and photos of student crafting activities to the local news editor of daily and weekly publications that serve your community.
- » Find out if your store sponsors a "Making the Connection to Education" fundraising program. On sales days, suggest that customers be given an opportunity to divert their savings to a local school program.
- » Ask the store manager to designate a "Making the Connection to Education" staff liaison to coordinate the local outreach to teachers.
- » Suggest that project sheets be created on the history of crafts and the multicultural aspects of each craft.
- » Find out when closeouts and other discount opportunities are scheduled so you can build up your inventory of craft tools and supplies.
- » Look for a "Making the Connection to Education" section in the store.
- » Ask that a drop-off box be placed in the store for new and unused craft supplies that will be donated for classroom use.
- » Suggest that the store staff organize craft camps for kids and hire elementary school teachers who are also crafters as instructors.
- » Collaborate on exhibiting student work at a local library or other public building.



*Sixth grade students at St. Joan of Arc School learn about toy making, braiding and painting through creating their own African Bottle dolls.*

*"I think HIA's Making the Connection to Education project is wonderful because it encourages teachers to challenge their children to be creative. All of us want to help teachers in every way we can."*

—Dana Cannito,  
manager, Jo-Ann's,  
Crossroads Mall,  
Roanoke, VA

## Here's what *Making the Connection* educator participants say about linking crafting to the curriculum:

"The Asian masks project was so popular that I have been asked to expand it into an after-school program next semester for other classes. The children are curious and have asked for more books and pictures of Asian art. Each new bit of learning motivates them to ask more questions. It has been quite rewarding."

—Jeannine Perez, Ph.D.  
Sky City Community School, Acoma Pueblo  
Acoma, New Mexico  
Grades 2, 3 and 4

"In the process of making their own looms and learning how to weave, my students experienced new techniques of weaving and painting. They learned about color families, measuring, repetition, patterns, sharing materials and peer evaluation. What I enjoyed most about the process was the students' reactions and the final products."

—Stan Karnoscak  
Freeman Elementary School, Aurora, IL  
Grade 5

"What I enjoyed most about the process of creating personality cubes was the enthusiasm of the students. With simple materials they were able to interpret abstract concepts and express them in a concrete, visual arts project. This class was superb. I enjoyed them and the process immensely!"

—Nancy Crasco  
Ottosom Middle School, Arlington, MA  
Grade 6

*Sixth graders at the Sky City Community School learn about Asian culture, mask-making history and three-dimensional art as they create and decorate their own Asian masks.*



"This paper quilt project is part of a year-long Language Arts unit for second through fourth grade developmentally delayed students. During the first week of each month, they make a 'quilt' using a variety of materials and patterns to accompany literature that represents that month. This was a delightful project. Can't wait to do next month!"

—Sherry Johnson  
Mt. Pleasant Elementary School, Roanoke, VA  
Grades 2-4

"I assessed student growth with this African bottle doll project through the 'eyes of admiration' of the older students who had done the project in previous years. Their main comment was, 'Oh, I remember doing that and I still have mine.' In other words, the children feel, 'It's a keeper!' The children were delighted with the results and were anxious to take them home after they were viewed by the Diocesan Superintendent of Schools."

—Leah Davidson  
St. Joan of Arc School, Boca Raton, FL  
Grade 6

"What I enjoyed most about the mural project process was the way the children worked together. They were very respectful of each other's work. I also enjoyed how they discovered new ways to create effects with paint and sponges."

—Dorothy Brady  
The Fieldston Lower School, Riverdale, NY  
Grade 3

[Click here for a complete list of \*Making the Connection\* Educators and Participants.](#)

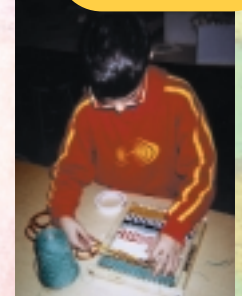


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*HIA is an international trade association of more than 4,800 craft & hobby merchandisers. Our mission is to facilitate the sales growth of the craft & hobby industry.*

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*Grade five students at the Freeman Elementary School learning to weave on their hand-crafted looms.*



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