UNIT 2

LESSON 4: DISSCUSS THE BENEFITS OF THE ARTS

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[Andrew Harris = Host; Maggie Curtis = Science Correspondent; Mark Branch = Music Therapist; Bruce Nelson = Psychologist; Carla Burgess = Art Therapist]

Andrew: Good evening. You're listening to WBQX, and I'm Andrew Harris. Tonight's broadcast will focus on the benefits of using the arts to help people of all ages—children, teens, adults, and the elderly.

Science correspondent Maggie Curtis has our report.

Maggie: The arts have been used in a variety of therapeutic ……..1 for some time—in schools where students might be having trouble with their schoolwork, and in hospitals and nursing homes where patients face physical and psychological ……2. How do the arts help? I asked music therapist Mark Branch earlier today.

Mark: Well, all people naturally have strong ……3 responses to music and other art forms. For example, a beat or melody can affect how we feel, depending on whether it's loud and ……4, or quiet and soothing. But we also know that music affects us physically—it affects the way we breathe and how fast our heart beats. It even has an effect on our body chemistry, and this can cause our mood to change. Dance has a similar effect on us, especially since it also involves music. In my work we use both music and dance with our patients.

Maggie: So what kind of patients have you been working with?

Mark: I work with a lot of patients who have intellectual disabilities. These are people with IQ scores of 70 or lower, who learn at a slower rate than most people. This disability also affects their ability to ……5 and interact socially. I find that involving these patients in group singing or dancing to music permits them to express their ……6 through the music. When one patient is really into the music, others want to join in too. We see definite improvements in their ability to interact with others.

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Maggie: Right now I'm standing with Bruce Nelson, a psychologist who has been using drama therapy—that is, using theater to help troubled teens. Hello, Doctor Nelson.

Bruce: Hi, Maggie.

Maggie: So tell us how drama therapy works.

Bruce: Well, most of the teens we work with are suffering from ……..7—that is, many of them have had bad experiences that have left them unhappy and depressed for longer than normal.

Perhaps their parents have divorced, or they have been kicked out of school. The best thing we can

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do is offer someone for them to talk to. But as you probably know, even teens who don't have problems can be moody and a bit difficult. It can be very hard to get teens to talk—especially when they're feeling so unhappy. So in drama therapy, we use role play or drama to provide a safe way for them to act out situations that are similar to their own. Actually, acting out a scene often creates an emotional …….8 that helps teens express their feelings and talk to a therapist about what's going on.

Maggie: Isn't role playing a situation like their own very painful for them?

Bruce: Sometimes it is. But using theater to focus those feelings is more often a relief for them. They've been keeping their feelings inside for a long time. What I find so rewarding about drama therapy is how much it helps these patients.

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Maggie: Yesterday, I joined art therapist Carla Burgess during one of her visits to assisted living centers and nursing homes for the elderly. I asked her to describe her work.

Carla: You know, whether we look at art or create art, we are emotionally affected by art. It reminds us of things that make us …….9—sometimes it even brings up childhood memories. So what we do is we encourage our elderly residents to paint or draw regularly. And we use the art they create for discussion afterwards. We treat each therapeutic session like an art class—so it's a group activity in which these seniors socialize by showing each other their work and talking about it. And I'm always amazed at the artwork they produce! When you consider that many of these seniors have lost a husband or wife, art therapy has a really ……10 emotional effect on them. Some of my seniors have told me that what they like most about art therapy is the time they spend socializing with others.

Maggie: So today we learned about three different ways in which the arts are used as therapy. Next week we'll take a look at how some professionals are using the arts to help young students improve their performance at school. I'm Maggie Curtis.

Back to you, Andrew

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