



INSTITUTE for EDUCATION and the ARTS
Education Alive!

A Continuum of Integrating the Arts into K-12 Education

The arts appear in schools in a variety of ways with varying levels of intensity, depth and frequency. The following describes a continuum of arts experiences ranging from arts exposure, to actual methods of instruction and learning about the arts, to instruction and learning about other disciplines through the arts. School systems that fully embrace the value of the arts in a student's education will incorporate all elements of this continuum for comprehensive, systemic arts integration.

Arts Exposure – Extracurricular – Arts Classes – Arts as an Instructional Method



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Arts Exposure

Definition: A performance or exhibit as a field trip or in the school.

Characteristics: May or may not be directly connected to a particular unit or lesson and often viewed as opportunities to expose students to the arts, not instruct in the arts.

Example: Students attend a play as a field trip that might include pre- and post-performance discussions.

After School or Extracurricular

Definition: Classes in dance, drama, music and/or visual arts offered to students as part of a school-based after school enrichment program or extracurricular clubs.

Characteristics: Usually provided and taught by individual artists or arts organizations, school staff or volunteers. Students work toward a performance or exhibition.

Example: Artists from a local arts organization provide a series of after-school painting classes for elementary school students.

Arts Classes

Definition: Music, visual arts, dance, and/or theater classes taught as part of the school academic program.

Characteristics: Classes have specific curriculum, content knowledge, methods, and assessments and are taught by certified arts specialists on school staff or contracted teaching artists. Elementary school level arts classes may be offered only once or twice a week. Secondary level offers classes in specific arts disciplines.

Example: High school theater classes are offered to students as electives. The students learn creating, writing or appreciating plays; how to use the body to communicate character, plot, theme, and emotions; the sharing of the theater with audience; and the development of skills necessary not only in theater but in other areas of life as well.

Art as an Instructional Method

Definition:

- A. The arts are used to teach other subjects (math, science, social studies, and other arts).
- B. Intentional integration of arts knowledge and skills with other subjects to understand interconnections between and among the arts and other subjects.

Characteristics:

- A. A method to engage students and enhance their learning in subjects across the curriculum.
- B. Combination of one or more arts disciplines with one or more other academic subjects creating a curriculum that teaches both the arts disciplines and the content and skills of other subjects.

Examples:

- A. Drawing and journal exercises that require biology students to sketch and write about their lessons in the laboratory and in the field. Then the teacher assesses student biology knowledge through a combination of the written and drawn observations, attention to detail, accuracy and meeting the assignment.
- B. Elementary social studies curriculum and unit on poetry to analyze *corridos* – story songs that have served as a way to chronicle Hispanic history. School provides training on instruments used and the students learn to play *corridos*. Students learn reading, writing, social studies and music. Teachers use multiple assessment methods, including student performances.