
APPENDIX C

SAMPLE CURRICULUM PHILOSOPHIES

EXAMPLES OF PHILOSOPHIES FOR ALL OF THE ARTS

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EXAMPLES OF PHILOSOPHIES FOR ALL OF THE ARTS

Philosophy Created by Connecticut's State Arts Guide Committee

A comprehensive arts education is an essential part of children's preparation for life.

Unique Contributions of the Arts

First and foremost, citizens need an arts education so that their experiences with the arts will enrich and illuminate their lives. The arts fulfill a human need to express and respond to life experiences. This universal need has led to the development of artistic expression in all societies, past and present. All citizens, regardless of their vocation or lifestyle, need to understand and participate in arts experiences. All citizens also make choices throughout their lives regarding the arts experiences in which they will participate. In order to understand and participate fully in arts experiences, and to make informed aesthetic choices, citizens require a systematic education in the arts.

Second, citizens need an arts education to develop their artistic intelligences so they can participate in and contribute to their culture. Cultures flourish and grow because of the contributions of individuals. Each society develops institutions for transmitting its culture from one generation to the next. In our society, that institution is public education. Every individual has intelligences essential to understanding, interpreting and creating each of the arts. Systematic education in each of the arts, beginning at an early age and continuing throughout students' formal schooling, is required in order to nurture those intelligences fully. Additional opportunities also must be available for students with exceptional potential who wish to prepare for careers in the arts.

Third, citizens need an arts education to develop their understanding of diverse peoples and cultures. The arts express the deepest thoughts, feelings and values of each culture. To understand and value the arts of a particular culture is to understand and value the people of that culture in the most profound way possible.

Roles of the Arts Within the Broader School Community

Providing students with opportunities to study the arts benefits students, schools and society in other important ways. The arts are a key component for the development of the total child. Students who receive a quality arts education tend to develop self-discipline, task focus, creativity, the ability to work effectively as members of a team, and a positive attitude toward school. When integrated into the broader educational program of the school,

the arts also can improve learning in other subjects by addressing individual students' varied interests and learning styles.

Hamden Public Schools

The fine arts (dance, music, theatre and the visual arts) play a unique and central role in the educational experience. The arts are essential to education as independent disciplines, and also furnish the ideal avenue for significant interdisciplinary experiences. The arts enable students to explore and refine their innate creative and intellectual abilities. Dance, music, theatre and visual arts provide opportunities for expression of emotion and ideas, and develop students' sensitivity to the expression of others.

The arts provide a balance among verbal, analytical and intuitive experiences, while promoting an awareness and appreciation of cultural and historical diversity. The act of making art fosters creative thinking, problem solving, self-awareness, self-esteem and interpersonal skills. The arts broaden the range of possible career opportunities. Preparation in the arts enables students to understand and participate fully in them, and to make informed aesthetic choices throughout their lives.

In our highly technical and rapidly changing society, the arts remain a constant link with the past, help in understanding the present and establish a path to the future.

Middletown Public Schools

The visual and performing arts play a central role in the educational experience of all children. Through authentic artistic experiences such as creating, performing and responding to art works, students will be prepared for cooperative and expressive participation in our contemporary society. By developing an appreciation of past and present art forms, our children will develop a deeper understanding of our own and other cultures. In light of this, they will become more discerning participants in the creation of the future culture of our society.

The visual and performing arts are essential to education, both as independent disciplines and as an integral part of learning in all areas of curriculum. The arts enable students to develop higher-order thinking skills, creative problem solving, self-discipline and the ability to collaborate with others. Arts education heightens students' awareness of aesthetic experiences, therefore enriching all aspects of life.

As technology continually evolves, the arts remain at the forefront of our transformation into a multimedia society. At the same time, the arts provide a necessary stabilizing force which has a humanizing affect on our lives.

EXAMPLES OF DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC ARTS PHILOSOPHIES

Dance/Movement New Haven Public Schools

This curriculum affirms that dance/movement, as an essential communication skill that is different from the written or spoken word, is the product of intentional and intelligent physical actions. As with other school subjects, dance/movement education is a matter of discipline and study.

Dance/movement education in New Haven, beginning at the elementary level, emphasizes children's natural love to move and learn through engagement of the whole self. They become literate in the language of dance in order to use this natural facility as a means of communication and self-expression, and as a way of responding to the expression of others. Dancing and creating dances develops their mathematical and kinesthetic forms of multiple intelligences and provides them with the skills and knowledge necessary for all future learning in dance, while giving them a way to celebrate their humanity.

Dance/movement education begins with an awareness of the movement of the body and its creative potential. Students become engaged in body awareness and movement exploration that promote a recognition and appreciation of self and others. Students learn basic movement and choreographic skills in musical/rhythmic contexts. The skills and knowledge acquired allow them to work independently and with a partner in creating and performing dances.

Experiences in perceiving and responding to dance expand students' vocabularies, enhance their listening and viewing skills, and enable them to begin thinking critically about dance. Students learn to compare works in terms of the elements of space, time, and force/energy and to experience the similarities and differences between dance and other disciplines.

Through dance/movement education, students also can come to an understanding of their own culture and begin to respect dance as a part of the heritage of many cultures. As they learn and share dance from around the globe, as well as from their own communities, they gain skills and knowledge that will help them participate in a diverse society.

Through creating, performing and responding to dance, middle school students can continue to develop skills and knowledge that enhance the important development of self-image and social relationships. Cooperation and collaboration are emphasized at this age, fostering positive interactions. Students are encouraged to take more responsibility for the care, conditioning and health

of their bodies, thus learning that self-discipline is a prerequisite for achievement in dance.

High school students need to continue to dance and create dances in order to develop more highly their ability to communicate in ways that are different than all other symbol systems. Because dance involves abstract images, students can develop higher-order thinking skills through perceiving, analyzing and making discriminating judgments about dance. Education in dance, which has been an integral part of human history, is also important if students are to gain a broad cultural and historical perspective.

To meet the standards, students must learn vocabularies and concepts associated with various types and styles of dance and must exhibit their competence at various levels in visual, oral, kinesthetic and written forms.

Music Education Simsbury Public Schools

Music has been an integral part of society throughout history and, as such, is an essential component in the well-rounded education of all children. It is a unique mode of learning and understanding with a distinct body of knowledge, skills and ways of thinking. The ability to create, perform and respond to music emotionally and intellectually is something that makes mankind uniquely human. It helps students to make qualitative judgments about questions that have more than one answer.

Through music, students will gain a knowledge and understanding of and appreciation for their own as well as other cultural heritages, past and present. Music helps students develop self-esteem, independence and responsibility. Through music education, students develop the skills to analyze, reflect upon and refine work over time toward a standard of quality. They develop elements of self-discipline, commitment and creativity that transfer to all learning. Music builds positive personal relationships with others and prepares them to live and work in a culturally diverse society.

Students need to learn to be informed consumers as well as active participants in music. Music provides students with lifelong skills which can enrich their lives and may lead some to a career in music.

Theatre/Drama New Haven Public Schools

This curriculum affirms that drama/theatre, viewed as a process of social, intellectual and creative exploration, develops from the human need to communicate. As with other school subjects, drama/theatre education is a matter of discipline and study.

Drama/theatre education in New Haven targets knowledge of others and self. On the simplest level it involves imitating life in order to understand life. On a more sophisticated level it involves the creation of a metaphor for society. Drama and theatre reveal human experiences through character interactions which create change.

As young children develop communication skills, they explore their immediate environment and learn to interact with persons in it. As such, they will naturally and spontaneously explore drama as a means of communication. Children enter school already using dramatic play to make discoveries, order their universe and test ideas. With a continuous strand of drama in education, students' interests, involvement and skills will continue to expand and develop both within and outside the school environment. Learning environments are necessary where both student and teacher responses are sought and respected, where learning builds on prior knowledge, and where active learner involvement is constantly evident.

Drama/theatre is a collaborative artistic expression, to which some of the world's greatest artists have contributed. Because it explores the idea, "I am human; therefore, nothing human is alien to me," theatre encourages us to share intellectually and emotionally, to explore universal concerns, and to renew the spirit.

Drama/theatre is an integral part of the academic curriculum which uniquely integrates major aspects of other fields of study into its own. The content includes text, oral reading, script writing, acting, directing, designing, technical skills and audience. Each is influenced by time, place, culture and personal individuality. Based on the eight national standards for elementary/middle school education, the term drama here denotes not only an improvisational process, but also the use of scripted materials that encourage students to act out their perceptions of the world in order to understand it. Students may have formal experience in play going and play production, but the primary emphasis of dramatic activity is on personal development and creative expression at the pre-K to eighth grade levels.

While dramatic activities are appropriate in all subjects of the curriculum at all levels of schooling, it is at the secondary level that the standards for systematic study of theatre as an art form and academic discipline begin. By creating, performing, analyzing and critiquing dramatic performances, students develop a deeper understanding of personal issues and a broader world view that includes global issues. At all levels, drama/theatre education is process oriented, always more concerned with the integrity of work well done than with applause. Advanced study includes not only participating in theatre, but also film, television and electronic media productions.

To meet the standards, students must learn vi-

sual, aural and oral aspects of drama/theatre and the vocabularies and skills to exhibit competence and proficiency in their presentations and productions.

Visual Arts Education Simsbury Public Schools

The philosophy of the Simsbury Board of Education places the intellectual, social, emotional and physical development of the student at the heart of the education system. Simsbury is a distinguished system because of the high degree of accomplishment of its students. As a faculty we are fortunate to have the support of parents in the educational endeavor, as we strive to empower our students with the life skills that are essential for their success.

The times we are living in present us with serious challenges to the goals we have set, as our children are confronted with a plethora of life choices. One indicator of a well-educated person is his or her ability to prioritize, to organize and to produce, which is also an indicator of a healthy society. What values do we as members of society hold in the highest place? What opportunities to achieve personal fulfillment does our society offer its citizens?

The arts present a long history that answers these questions. When education can no longer assure the economic well-being of our citizens a higher set of values must be utilized to guide us. Art has always been the indicator of a civilization's level of achievement. While much has been made of art's role in the marketplace, few masterpieces have been created with economics in mind. Rather, the expression of human aspirations has been a prime motivator. The cultivation of an ability to see reality in terms of its aesthetic components has been the mark of a developed human being. The history of societies' attempts to relate to the life process has been made material through art.

The art department faculty acknowledges the tremendous responsibility we feel as leaders of our educational community charged with passing on and advancing the rich tradition of the visual arts. Art education builds on that tradition by teaching students to express and define their emotions and experiences while providing a means to understand the decisions and choices they'll make. While personal success is the starting goal of every student, more universal goals have to be met as well. The elaboration of human experience through art is a goal inherent in our biology. Art predates written language. The artist gives of himself or herself and can refine material existence to a higher level.

The arts are a form of cultural literacy that is everyone's birthright. Our mandate is to guide every student to achieve his and her place in the continuum of civilization.