



COMPREHENSIVE ARTS EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE

The following statements reflect the philosophy and practice of the Southeast Center for Education in the Arts whose mission is to bring about change in education by implementing comprehensive programs in discipline-based arts education for all children through professional training, curriculum development and implementation, and arts education advocacy.

- Every child has a right to expect an education rich in knowledge of the arts as have students in societies dating back to ancient civilizations. We know that arts education provides avenues to crucial modes of thinking and learning. It helps students on many levels with all academic subjects as well as developing an understanding and appreciation of various disciplines of the arts. Also, it is through exploration of pieces of art and through inquiry into the making of the arts that understanding of human experiences are gained and cultural values are transmitted.
- Discipline-based arts education is a conceptual approach to teaching the arts in a preK-12 general education setting to all students, not just to those deemed gifted and talented.
- In discipline-based arts education, the concepts, processes, and values inherent in music, theatre, and visual arts are studied and explored through four methods of inquiry: production, history, aesthetic, and criticism. Each of these interrelated approaches provides a different perspective for experiencing, understanding, reflecting upon, and valuing the arts.
- Inherent in the discipline-based approach is the belief that students learn to interpret and derive meaning from works of dance, music, theatre, and visual art that they hear, read, view; create; explore; share, present, perform; and experience as audience members.
- Comprehensive arts education is inherently exciting and stimulating involving students as active rather than passive learners. The diversity of authentic activities provides opportunities for discovering talents and developing transferable life skills for all students regardless of experience, social status,

cultural background, or handicapping conditions. The creative challenges, in-depth experiences, and leadership opportunities encourage students to reach their fullest potential. By participating cooperatively and constructively, students develop understanding and respect for the abilities and efforts of both themselves and others. This creative involvement in a variety of problem-solving experiences expands intellectual and philosophical horizons, preparing students to become well-rounded individuals and appreciative consumers of music, theatre, and visual art.

- The study of the arts in a comprehensive arts education program actively involves students as observers, creators, and evaluators in a diversity of challenging imaginative experiences developing the whole person physically intellectually, and emotionally. The arts develop language and communication abilities, higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills, and creativity. They stimulate logical and intuitive thinking, personalize knowledge, and yield aesthetic pleasure. By clarifying attitudes and ethical and moral standards of behavior, the study of music, theatre, and visual arts promotes positive self-concepts, social awareness, and empathy. The arts also motivate and facilitate learning in other content areas and improve learning retention through multisensory instruction.
- A discipline-based arts education curriculum should be a sequential and cumulative learning continuum.
- Comprehensive arts education accommodates a variety of teaching techniques and methodologies. However, there are three cardinal principles. (1) Instruction should be student-centered, active, and multi-modal. (2) Students should engage in activities that enable them to see the totality of each art form from various perspectives as artist and audience. (3) The concepts, processes, and values inherent in the arts should be studied and explored through four methods of inquiry: production, history, aesthetics, and criticism.
- Strategies for assessing student progress and achievement should be authentic and embedded within instructional activities whenever possible.
- When presented in a sequential and cumulative continuum building upon a spiral of concepts and processes, a comprehensive arts education program can rejuvenate school curricula and make learning more meaningful. The dynamic interplay between teachers and students encourages the exploration of creative possibilities, the application of personal resources, and the expansion of critical acumen as students develop knowledge, skills, and insights useful for interaction with dance, music, theatre, and visual art in school and throughout life.

- A comprehensive arts education program requires a support network for successful implementation.
 - To ensure that dance, music, theatre, and visual arts are an integral part of the basic education of all students, DBAE programs should be implemented in every school throughout the entire district.
 - There must be community and administrative support from school board and parent organization members who understand and value the arts, and a school administration committed to improvement and curriculum reform.
 - A school-based Arts Leadership Team comprised of the principal, arts specialists, classroom teachers, and community members should collaborate and engage in ongoing long-range planning for implementation.
 - Teachers should have access to local, state and regional arts resources including performing and visual arts organizations, artists, and instructional materials.
 - As with any academic discipline, there must be ongoing professional development, appropriate instructional space and materials, and annual assessment of students, teachers, and the program.