

Some Important Concepts To Consider Regarding Arts Integration

Mike Smith- The University of Northern Colorado

There are three concepts that are central to an understanding of the importance of arts integration:

- Arts integration is an important concept across the curricular spectrum. Arts integration enhances and enriches learning in all areas.
- Because of budgetary constraints and state and national cutbacks, many non-arts educators will be required to be arts educators, despite a lack of training or artistic ability.
- Teaching has become a very political endeavor, and the arts by their very nature inflame political passions. Educators must be prepared to deal with the politics of arts education, and they must have some insights into societal attitudes towards the arts.

Our ideas and attitudes regarding the arts are based on many factors—

- Our cultural upbringing (this affects our notions regarding the importance of art, our notions of good and bad art, and our notions regarding the function of art in society)
- The arts education we received in school (was it limited or wide-ranging; did it encompass all of the artistic disciplines, or just focus on visual art and music?)
- Our religious upbringing, and our particular religion's views regarding art (as well as individual devotion to religious principles)
- Our willingness to be exposed to arts from unknown sources, as well as our willingness to be provoked/challenged by art (this will often be determined by the earlier-cited factors)
- What we know about particular artists (if we know and approve of their art from past experiences, we are more likely to accept more challenging art works from them)

Many of our perceptions regarding art are determined by factors that have more to do with sociology than they do with art. Some of those sociological concepts are—

- Belief Structures
- Mores
- Class
- Race
- Ethnicity

Some Questions to Ponder Regarding the Arts

What is art? What is the function of art?

Should art works strive to promote beauty, or should art be provocative? Should this question be dependent on the funding source?

Does the government have a role to play regarding arts promotion or art preservation? Should the government play a role, and if so should the artist strive for art that does not offend?

What role does politics play in regard to publicly funded art?

What role does religion play in regard to publicly funded art? Do artists have a responsibility to consider religious tolerance when creating art?

How do the questions regarding artistic expression change across the artistic disciplines? Are the questions of the appropriateness of art the same regardless to whether one is thinking of a song lyric or a painting; a photograph or a poem?

If one does not “get it” right away, did the artist miss the mark? Should art reveal itself right away?

What should the criterion be by which a work of art is judged? What should the standard be by which a work of art is judged?

Do we, as Americans, hold the arts in high regard? Do we value the arts? Do we have a cultural connection to the arts?

Some Questions Regarding The Arts and Education

Are the arts an essential element in the development of the whole person?

Do the arts constitute a distinct and important way of knowing?

Are the arts as important as science within the overall curricular picture (or math, language arts, etc.)?

What art works should a student be exposed to before leaving elementary school? What art works should a student be exposed to before leaving high school?

Are arts magnet schools and charter schools a good idea, or do they potentially keep certain students from being exposed to the arts?

Attitudes Toward Art- A Student Survey

My view of art is shaped mostly by—

- 1) My family background/ upbringing
- 2) My cultural/ethnic heritage
- 3) My faith/religious upbringing
- 4) My educational exposure to the arts/lack of educational exposure
- 5) My own personal tastes and beliefs independent of other forces
- 6) My experiences as an artist
- 7) My favorite artists and their work
- 8) Other factors _____

(Art Survey Continued)

The art forms/styles that appeal to me are-

- 1) Mostly modern
- 2) Mostly traditional
- 3) A mix of modern and traditional
- 4) Very conservative
- 5) Very avant-garde/innovative
- 6) Somewhere between avant-garde and conservative
- 7) Mostly inspired by popular trends

Complete this sentence:

Art in the twenty-first century should _____

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