

Visual and Performing Arts Instructional Recommendations and Resource Compendium

Purpose

This document offers general instructional considerations and recommendations to support Vermont arts programs in developing meaningful visual and performing arts experiences for students. Educators are encouraged to consider the core considerations (e.g., social emotional learning, asset-based pedagogy, and arts integration) as they design their units and lessons.

Introduction

Teachers and schools should provide opportunity for students to develop and sustain skills in artistic literacy while demonstrating proficiency in the [National Core Arts Standards](#) (NCAS) disciplines and domains. Approaches for providing these opportunities are described in this document in an effort to support Vermont schools in providing a holistic learning experience and in upholding the [Education Quality Standards](#) (EQS) as they pertain to the arts:

- **2120.5. Curriculum Content.** Each supervisory union board shall ensure the written and delivered curriculum within their supervisory union is aligned with the standards approved by the State Board of Education. Each school shall enable students to engage annually in rigorous, relevant and comprehensive learning opportunities that allows them to demonstrate proficiency in:
 - f. artistic expression (including visual, media and performing arts)

Considerations and resources to support a holistic learning experience while upholding the EQS and aligning curriculum to NCAS are organized as follows:

1. Essential Components of Visual and Performing Arts Education
 - a. Social Emotional Learning
 - b. Asset-based Pedagogy
 - c. Arts Integration
2. The Arts and SEL Resources
3. General Resources

Preserving the arts is critical and requires a well-rounded and arts integrated education. These considerations can serve to support preservation of the arts in schools, and the essential skills and qualities obtained from arts education, while balancing the myriad demands on schools and educators.

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Essential Components of Visual and Performing Arts Education

Outlined in this section are three major components for maintaining a strong visual and performing arts experience. These include **social emotional learning (SEL)**, **asset-based pedagogy**, and **arts integration**. Arts educators have knowledge of and expertise in designing individualized creative learning experiences, implementing [NCAS](#) domains and approaches anchored in personally relevant and culturally responsive teaching and learning, designing and delivering performance-based assessments, and applying inquiry-based models to open-ended challenges. Considering this expertise, arts education should be fully utilized to support district- and school-wide initiatives in any or all three of these components. This will offer students a holistic experience that supports their understanding of transferrable skills, self-care, and their roles as lifelong learners (see [A Vermont Portrait of a Graduate and the Arts](#)).

Social Emotional Learning

The visual and performing arts can serve as a powerful tool for supporting SEL in schools. [CASEL's](#) five SEL core competencies (e.g., self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making) align directly with skills used throughout the conceptualization, production, and reflection phases of the creative process. These competencies are especially important to address as we enter new formats of learning following long-term social distancing; students might be struggling with identifying new and complex emotions, communicating those emotions responsibly and ethically, finding motivation to learn or complete at-home-learning tasks, building and maintaining relationships, and fostering a positive sense of place, purpose, and self.

Self-Awareness

Characteristics

- Integrating personal and social identities.
- Identifying personal, cultural, and linguistic assets.
- Identifying one's emotions.
- Demonstrating honesty and integrity.
- Linking feelings, values, and thoughts.
- Examining prejudices and biases.
- Experiencing self-efficacy.
- Having a growth mindset.
- Developing interests and a sense of purpose.

Alignment with the Arts

Students might still be developing the vocabulary or language skills to identify, understand, or communicate new and complex emotions. Artists find relationships with colors, lines, forms, shapes, movements, imagery, and sounds to communicate experiences and feelings. Students can investigate ways to identify and interpret their emotions through viewing, listening, and creating artwork or performances.

Consider visual art analysis as a tool for exploring means to communicate emotions. In addition to [supporting analytical thinking and evidence-based reasoning](#), visual analysis can guide students to identifying and understanding mood and purpose (i.e., identifying emotions).

Expanding on analyzing artwork, exploring one's identity through the arts is another tool for supporting students' self-confidence, accurate self-perception, and strengths. This can be done in a number of ways, including representative self-portraits, abstractions of emotions and experiences, and found-object photographs.

Resources

- [Arts Impact: Lessons & Resources](#)
- [The Pocket Project](#)

Suggested Artworks to Explore when Identifying and Analyzing Emotions:

- [Descent, 2013, Amber Lelli](#)
- [The Giant Asian Girls series, Misoo Filan](#)
- [Adaptation, 2019, XPayne](#)
- [A Clear Unspoken Granted Magic, 2017, Amy Sherald](#)
- [The Wounded Deer, 1946, Frida Kahlo](#)

Self-Management

Characteristics

- Managing one's emotions.
- Identifying and using stress management strategies.
- Exhibiting self-discipline and self-motivation.
- Setting personal and collective goals.
- Using planning and organizational skills.
- Showing the courage to take initiative.
- Demonstrating personal and collective agency.

Alignment with the Arts

A key contributor to self-motivation and discipline is engagement. In addition to [Personalized Learning](#), the arts can make school experiences relevant and personally meaningful to support student engagement in authentic learning.

Goal setting in any learning context is important, and the arts provide the opportunity to track progress with evidence (i.e., performance and product). Students can establish clear measurable goals when they are able to plan, refine, and engage in a well-documented process with well communicated competencies. Additionally, evidence of the art-making process (e.g., art products, performances, planners, sketches), allows students to objectively self-evaluate and

determine appropriate steps and strategies to improve their skills in and understanding of content knowledge.

Resources

- [Studio Habits of Mind](#)
 - [Hopes and Dreams \(Responsive Classroom\)](#)
 - [Encouraging Growth Mindset through Art](#)
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Social Awareness

Characteristics

- Taking others' perspectives.
- Recognizing strengths in others.
- Demonstrating empathy and compassion.
- Showing concern for the feelings of others.
- Understanding and expressing gratitude.
- Identifying diverse social norms, including unjust ones.
- Recognizing situational demands and opportunities.
- Understanding the influences of organizations and systems on behavior.

Alignment with the Arts

There are many ways to see and interpret the world. The visual and performing arts are a means by which students can learn, understand, and appreciate other lenses and backgrounds. Researching and exploring works and performances by racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse artists adds to this appreciation. Guiding students through viewing and interpreting works that celebrate underrepresented groups or address contemporary and historic social issues can raise their social awareness.

As a platform to communicate issues surrounding social justice, the arts can also serve as a tool to engender social change. Consider these questions when designing learning around social justice:

- What current issues might students care about?
- Can they identify these issues?
- Can they communicate why they care about these issues?

Resources

- [Art as a Tool for Social Advocacy](#)
- [5 Steps to Make your own Political Art](#)
- [The Beat as an Object of Celebration and Concern in Segregation-Era America](#)
- [Music for Social Justice with Aisha Fukushima](#)
- [How Black Art can Spark Conversations with Children](#)

Artists to Support Social Awareness

- [Roberto Lugo](#)
 - [Tamara Natalie Madden](#)
 - [Nick Cave](#)
 - [Howardena Pindell](#)
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Relationship Skills

Characteristics

- Communicating effectively.
- Developing positive relationships.
- Demonstrating cultural competency.
- Practicing teamwork and collaborative problem-solving.
- Resolving conflicts constructively.
- Resisting negative social pressure.
- Showing leadership in groups.
- Seeking or offering support and help when needed.
- Standing up for the rights of others.

Alignment with the Arts

Establishing and maintaining an emotionally safe and structured environment in any classroom is an enduring task. The visual and performing arts are a natural fit for building relationships, teaching teamwork, engaging socially and collaboratively in rigorous learning, and developing communication skills.

The arts can support students and classrooms in continuing a sense of community and relationship building throughout remote learning. Students can view and provide feedback for each other's art and performances with pre-established guidelines that would allow them to communicate clearly and engage in social collaborative critique and revision phases of the creative process.

Resources

- [29 Collaborative Art Projects to Build Community in your Art Room](#)
- [Seven Leadership Skills Fostered in Arts Education](#)
- [The Art of Relationships: Correlations Between Art, Education, and Society](#)
- [Foster Authentic Collaboration in the Art Room](#)

Responsible Decision Making

Characteristics

- Demonstrating curiosity and open-mindedness.
- Learning how to make a reasoned judgment after analyzing information, data, and facts.

- Identifying solutions for personal and social problems.
- Anticipating and evaluating the consequences of one's actions.
- Recognizing how critical thinking skills are useful both inside and outside of school.
- Reflecting on one's role to promote personal, family, and community well-being.
- Evaluating personal, interpersonal, community, and institutional impacts.

Alignment with the Arts

Responsible decision making is at the core of the art-making process. In the arts, students must identify a problem or analyze a situation (be it a personal arts-based challenge or real-world design challenge), investigate and explore why the problem matters to them, develop and determine a solution to that problem, consider the audience in clearly communicating their solution, and continuously reflect on and refine their process and product.

Resources

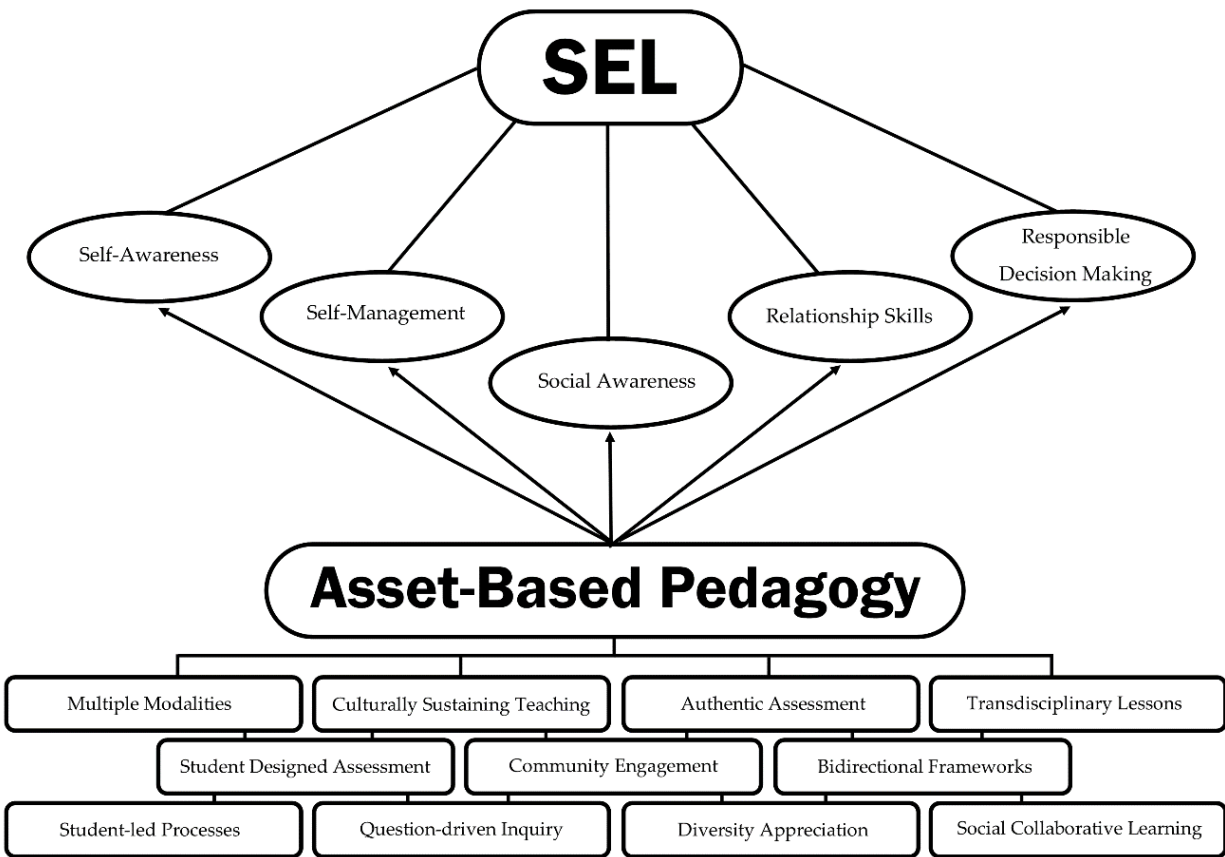
- [Showing Art Students the Value of Problem Solving](#)
 - [Thinking About Art-Making: Questions for Reflection](#)
 - [Studio Habits of Mind](#)
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A major aim of Arts and SEL integration is to support students in understanding their positive attributes and [guide them to gaining a positive sense of self](#). Understanding strengths can encourage students to apply their own interests and skills to school learning, help establish roles in collaborative work, and support self-directed at-home learning.

Asset-Based Pedagogy

[Asset-based pedagogy](#) can serve as the foundation for social emotional learning and arts integration. NCAS lays the groundwork for students to explore and expand upon their identity and their strengths (i.e., their assets) through learning in the arts. In addition to offering an [equitable education](#), instructional approaches that allow students to identify and apply their assets (e.g., culture, interests, etc.) to the learning process can support engagement, student agency, and culturally sustaining learning contexts. Applying asset-based approaches with the arts can support essential components of asynchronous, culturally responsive, student-driven learning while adding to students' social emotional competency. Students can also enter the school year [focusing on their strengths](#) and what they have learned since remote learning started last spring, supporting their agency as learners and interests in new learning contexts. Therefore, the purpose of teaching and learning with an asset-based focus is two-fold:

- Asset-based pedagogies (e.g., NCAS aligned arts instruction) can allow schools ample opportunity to provide equitable and relevant learning experiences focused on SEL and learner agency.
- Components of asset-based pedagogies can suit multiple and varying learning models due to their student-centered nature.



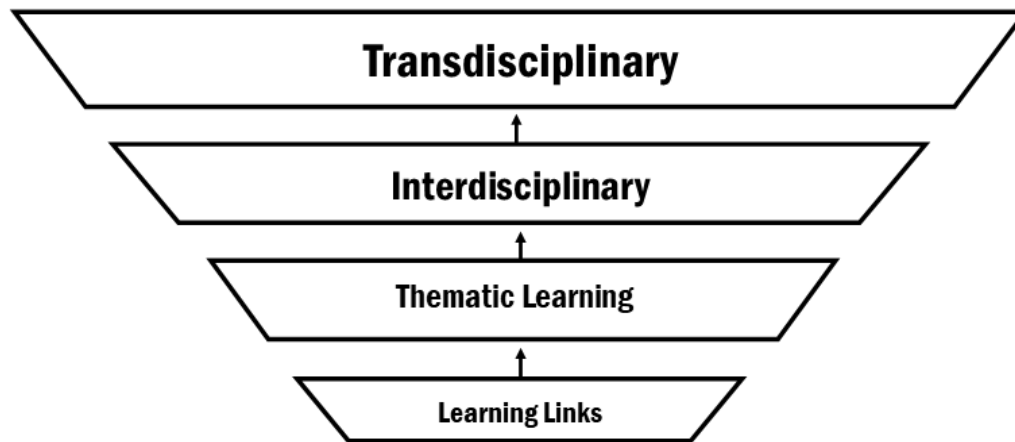
Visual and performing arts instruction can prioritize asset-based pedagogy to ensure [students maintain a positive self-image; understand how to utilize their strengths, interests, culture, and identity](#); and develop a strong learner identity by marrying academic content with personal interests and concerns.

Arts Integration

Arts disciplines can add opportunities to make learning in school connected, personally relevant, and culturally responsive. Arts-based activities have also been shown to improve student [memorization](#) of non-arts content, [long-term retention of non-arts content](#), and [metacognitive processes](#). Additionally, interdisciplinary learning can [maximize instructional time during complex or limited schedules](#) while maintaining student engagement in socially distanced or virtual environments.

The information below offers different categories of integrated learning, adapted from [Meeting Standards through Integrated Curriculum](#). Included are definitions and explanations for each level through an arts lens. These categories can be viewed as levels, but it should also be noted that an interdisciplinary learning opportunity can include elements of thematic learning, connected learning, and transdisciplinary learning. Though some levels lend themselves to more rigorous, authentic, and relevant learning for students, these should be viewed as fluid; each level can happen within another and each level has a place in a student’s learning experience. These levels can be considered when planning, preparing, and implementing arts integrated learning opportunities.

Levels of Integrated Learning



Learning Links

These are connections to other disciplines that allow students to see how some skills, knowledge, or language from school subjects can fit into each other. In the visual arts, students might be challenged to create a drawing of a building using linear perspective. This strategy involves understanding the illusion of depth via linear perspective as well as basic measuring and geometric principles (e.g., parallel lines), a connection with art and math.

Thematic Learning

Thematic learning, which could also be considered multidisciplinary integration, includes opportunities for students to investigate broad concepts that exist in multiple disciplines. Students might study “multiple perspectives” in arts and ELA, but they are studied within their respective discipline separately. Additionally, universal concepts can be [explored through thematic learning](#). The exploration of these concepts do not necessarily “crossover” into the arts and ELA throughout the learning process without intentionally designing the lesson to support integration and transfer. However, working within themes allows students to direct themselves to identifying connections between subject areas and determine how those connections can work to support learning that is more interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary.

Interdisciplinary Learning

Interdisciplinary learning (or cross-disciplinary) includes opportunities to simultaneously investigate knowledge and skill across disciplines. Key knowledge learned and explored in interdisciplinary learning should be symbiotic; several subject areas should be evident in final products from interdisciplinary learning. This level of integration, along with multidisciplinary learning, are the most common. Project-Based Learning units are interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, or both, while most STEAM lessons that emphasize the [creative design process](#) and [design thinking](#) can be applied to meet one objective and ensure intentional arts integration.

Transdisciplinary Learning

[Transdisciplinary learning](#) transcends learning that happens in traditional school subjects and settings. Learning in this degree is directly applied to a real-world context. The products of these units have lasting effects on the community (e.g., an invention that solves a problem, a campaign that aims to engender social change, etc.) and students engage in the same inquiry processes as one who works professionally in a similar field of study (e.g., interviewing community members, collecting raw data, etc.). Transdisciplinary learning experiences challenge conventional instructional processes by re-structuring the learning space (i.e., taking it beyond the classroom) and making the design bidirectional (i.e., students and teachers work together in the development and implementation of the lesson). Students and teachers design transdisciplinary learning together and work simultaneously to become experts in the subject. These experiences can be viewed as a collaborative learning experience for teachers, students, field experts, and the community.

Conclusion

These considerations can be used to support student engagement, learner agency, and social emotional competency in all arts and non-arts learning experiences. Many of these approaches can be adapted to a variety of contexts. Integrating creative processes and expression via the arts is integral to [students' education and overall well-being](#). Visual and performing arts instruction emphasizes transferrable skills and is an effective vehicle to preparing students for college, career, and life.

The Arts and SEL Resources

[Arts as a Vehicle for Teaching SEL Skills](#)

[Arts Education and Social Emotional Learning Outcomes for K-12 Students](#)

[Teach Rock: Distance Learning Resources](#)

[SECDLab.org](#)

[Culturally Responsive Education Hub: Remote Learning](#)

[The Art of Ed: Art Ed and The Coronavirus](#)

[CASEL: Core Competencies](#)

[Arts Integration and Social Emotional Learning: A Partnership for Success](#)

[Art and Well-Being: Toward a Culture of Health](#)

General Resources

[The Effects of Arts Integration on Long Term Retention of Academic Content](#)

[How Interdisciplinary PBL Can Solve This Year's Scheduling Dilemmas](#)

[Teaching World Culture Through The Visual Arts](#)

[Deliberate Use of Creative Problem Solving in Art Making](#)

[Meeting Standards Through Integrated Curriculum](#)

[Turn STEM to STEAM with the Design Thinking Process](#)

[The Design Process in the Art Classroom: Building Problem-Solving Skills for Life and Careers](#)

[An Asset-Based Approach to Education: What It Is and Why It Matters](#)

[The Principles of Strengths-Based Education](#)

[Creating Strength-Based Classrooms and Schools](#)