

Joint Statement on Integration of the Arts with Other Disciplines and with Each Other

by

The Ad Hoc Consortium of National Arts Education Associations

American Alliance for Theatre and Education

Music Educators National Conference

National Art Education Association

National Dance Association

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The arts education associations believe that (1) all students at every level, early childhood through high school, should be provided with a balanced, comprehensive, and sequential program of instruction in art, music, theatre, and dance in their schools, (2) these programs should be taught by qualified art, music, theatre, and dance teachers, and (3) art, music, theatre, and dance should be an integral part of the basic education of all students.

The associations are concerned about the practice in some schools of reducing the time devoted to instruction in the arts on the grounds that arts instruction is being "integrated" into instruction in other disciplines. The arts can provide powerful means to enhance other instructional activities and should be so utilized when appropriate. However, this type of instruction should be considered supplementary to content-based instruction in the arts. It cannot substitute for a discrete program of instruction in each of the individual arts because it cannot teach the skills and knowledge comprising each of the arts in a comprehensive and sequential manner.

Similarly, the associations are concerned about the practice in some schools of seeking to teach all of the arts in a single "integrated" course. Such a course may be valid and useful when well designed and well taught, but frequently, such courses consists merely of a succession of mini-courses in the various individual arts, often taught by separate teachers, with little or no coordination or synthesis. Again this type of course cannot substitute for a discrete program of high quality instruction in each of the individual arts.

The arts education associations believe that, when appropriate, instruction in the arts may be used to facilitate and enrich the teaching of other subject matter. The arts must maintain their integrity in the curriculum and be taught for their own sake as well, rather than serving exclusively as aides to instruction in other disciplines. The use of the arts as an instrument for the teaching of nonartistic content should in no way diminish the time or effort devoted to the teaching of each of the arts as distinct academic disciplines in their own right.