

The Visual Arts – A Rationale

The Visual Arts is a vital and basic component in the development of all human beings. It is a necessary and legitimate part of all students' education, regardless of their innate talent or academic ability.

Education in the visual arts enhances our perception by teaching us to use our senses qualitatively. The visual arts allow us to develop and use our creative potential, to see the value of our own ideas and feelings, and to respect those of others. The visual arts give us a chance to think divergently, to search out beyond the boundaries of what is known.

The visual arts involve students intellectually, personally, physically, and emotionally like no other subject in the curriculum. Art offers all students the opportunity to express their own unique visions of the world. Art allows students to have expectations for dealing with divergent outcomes as well as opportunities to seek out creative solutions beyond the boundaries of accepted wisdom.

While the visual arts have their own intrinsic value, they also share many attributes with other content areas. For example, in social studies, students begin to appreciate cultural differences and similarities by examining the arts of the culture. Both art and science encourage students to observe and analyse content critically. In reading and writing, the learner interprets meaning from a symbol system. Likewise, in the visual arts, learners read, write, and construct meaning with visual images or symbols.

It is critical to recognise the importance of visual arts as its own discipline. Visual arts education is much more than making things. It enables students to develop and creatively express their ideas and solve problems.

The inventive spirit is an important attribute of humankind; in fact, our society depends on the ability to create new and better solutions to the challenges that continue to face us. Individuals who can think creatively, feel sensitively, and see clearly will be our greatest resource for the future. These individuals will invent the future. Visual arts education contributes to the development of the individual inventive spirit, provides a means for understanding oneself, and provides a means for understanding the diverse world in which we live.

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