

Literacy in Fine Arts Classrooms

Literacy is an important concept in all academic areas. Rather than being a stand-alone subject area, literacy provides a pathway for cognition, enabling students to learn content efficiently and express themselves effectively.

The arts, like all subject areas, help to reinforce literacy through the careful study of discipline-specific vocabulary, the review of primary sources in the content, and a variety of engagement opportunities specifically in the artistic domains of “Respond” and “Connect.”

The Tennessee Standards for Arts Education prioritize the principles of artistic literacy, such as visual thinking strategies, aural literacy (audiation), and notation literacy (decoding symbolic systems of music notation to create and interpret meaning). To the goals of college and career readiness, it would be counter-productive for school leaders to suggest that an arts teacher limit the implementation of the Tennessee Standards for Arts Education during instructional time in order to reinforce learning in English language arts classrooms.

Arts teachers’ instructional efforts are best leveraged when creating synergy among the multiple meanings of literacy instruction, and the multiple meanings are embedded as appropriate to each arts discipline in the Tennessee Standards for Arts Education.