



ARTS EDUCATION KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 7

Overview — 2010

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Arts Education — Kindergarten to Grade 7

Arts education is an integral part of the educational growth of all students. From Kindergarten through Grade 7, all four arts education subjects — Dance, Drama, Music, and Visual Arts — are required areas of study. The Prescribed Learning Outcomes for all four arts education subjects are therefore required at every grade level.

The curricula for the four arts education subjects have been designed to allow flexibility in organizing and implementing programs to best meet the needs of students, teachers, and communities. Schools can use a wide variety of methods, programs, and resources to deliver these curricula. Schools may also choose to develop programs that integrate more than one of the arts education subjects.

The arts education curricula — Dance, Drama, Music, and Visual Arts — are available online at the Ministry of Education’s Curriculum web site.

Rationale

People participate in the arts for a variety of reasons:

- to learn and play
- to communicate
- to honour rites of passage
- to define, strengthen, and preserve culture and heritage
- to nurture the emotional, social, intellectual, physical, and spiritual self.

The arts are important to our understanding of society, culture, and history, and are essential to the development of individual potential, social responsibility, and cultural awareness. They also contribute significantly to the intellectual, aesthetic, emotional, social, and physical development of the individual. The study of the arts reveals distinct and common characteristics of societies throughout history. Dance, drama, music, and visual arts are central to the expression of cultural identity, and are means of both reflecting and challenging the values and norms in a pluralistic society. The arts are expressed in and influenced by personal contexts (e.g., gender, age, life experience, beliefs, values), social and cultural contexts (e.g., ethnicity, belief systems, socioeconomics, evolving technologies, the environment), and historical and political contexts. An understanding of the arts fosters respect for and appreciation of the diverse cultural heritages and values within Canada and around the world.

Each of the arts education subjects has its own essential skills, techniques, and processes that provide students with unique insights and ways of assimilating and expressing all learning. As students engage in the arts, they devise and solve problems and apply these problem-solving processes to concrete experiences. Arts education activities and experiences foster development of students’ critical-thinking skills, including skills for describing, analysing, interpreting, and evaluating creative works.

Dance, drama, music, and visual arts offer expressive means for students’ self-discovery and exploration of the world around them. Through the creative process, students are able to communicate, giving form and meaning to their ideas and emotions. Arts education stimulates students’ imaginations, innovation, and creativity. It also develops self-discipline, self-motivation, and self-confidence, and skills and competencies useful to their future education and careers. Through the arts education subjects, students also find a source of pleasure and enjoyment and gain a deepened awareness of themselves and their place in their environment, community, culture, and world.

Common Areas of Learning in the Four Arts Education Subjects

Collectively, the curricula for Dance, Drama, Music, and Visual Arts are referred to as arts education. Because each subject is distinct — requiring unique knowledge, skills, and attitudes — each subject has its own curriculum document.

However, all four arts education curricula do provide opportunities for growth in three common areas of learning:

- creating, expressing, perceiving, and responding
- knowledge, skills, and techniques
- personal, social, cultural, and historical contexts.

The common areas of learning make it easier for teachers to integrate instruction in arts education at the elementary level. Such integration offers many advantages for both students and teachers, provided the unique characteristics of each subject are respected and made evident to students. In planning instruction, teachers will also want to consider that the three common areas of learning are themselves closely interrelated — none can be properly addressed without reference to the others.

The view of arts education embodied in the Dance, Drama, Music, and Visual Arts curricula reflects the belief that instructional approaches should

- emerge from and reflect the diverse experiences of people throughout the world
- allow all students to be actively involved in arts education through opportunities to create, respond to, and present dance, drama, music, and visual arts throughout their educational program
- reflect the variety of media and contexts through which people experience the arts.

A balanced program in dance, drama, music, or visual arts is one that provides a range of experiences. In particular, teachers should endeavour to include artistic styles representative of the cultural makeup of the community. These experiences can serve as the basis for exploring concepts articulated by the arts education curricula. A wider variety of experiences provides greater possibilities for students to refine their use of the skills and structures of the art form, their creativity and production skills, their perceptions and responses, and their knowledge of the role of the arts in society.

Making Connections among Subjects

From Kindergarten to Grade 7, learning and instruction often take place in an integrated manner and do not always stay within the boundaries of a particular subject. Learning in arts education offers great potential for connections among subjects: the common areas of learning in dance, drama, music, and visual arts build on and reinforce one another. These subjects also become richer and more relevant for students when linked to topics and skills in subjects beyond arts education.

The “Common Areas of Learning” chart on the next page shows some of the topics and strategies that can be used to make connections among the four arts education curricula. In addition, the table provided at the end of this document (Arts Education K to 7: At a Glance) illustrates the commonalities among the subjects by curriculum organizer. The “Connections between Arts Education and Other Subjects” chart suggests some of the ways the four arts education subjects are connected to other curricular areas.

Whatever the approach used to facilitate connections among these subjects, it is important to maintain the curricular integrity of each individual subject.

Common Areas of Learning in Dance, Drama, Music, and Visual Arts

The four arts education subjects overlap in many areas, including

- creative processes and structures
- arts as means of expression and communication
- the arts as means of exploration (e.g., self, ideas, societal issues)
- thoughts, images, and feelings evoked by and represented through the arts
- cultural, social, and historical contexts for the arts
- art forms that incorporate elements of more than one arts subject area (e.g., musical theatre, soundscape, dance drama, tableau, film)
- use of one art form to enhance another (e.g., use of music in drama, use of visual arts design principles in dance sets and costumes)
- specific skills and elements such as
 - pattern, line, and form (e.g., choreographic form based on musical form)
 - metre, rhythm, and tempo
 - texture and harmony
 - relationships and dynamics
 - use of space
- use of production elements and media
- rehearsal and performance process
- roles and responsibilities
- common arts themes and strategies (e.g., Festivals and Celebrations, Children’s Entertainment, the Arts in BC and Canada, the Arts in the Media)

Connections between Arts Education Subjects and Other Subjects

Social Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cultural, historical, and environmental contexts of the arts; artistic contexts of culture and history • arts as a means of expressing and preserving cultural identity
Language Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emergent process of notation and visual symbols relates to the emergent process of writing • language learning strategies apply to learning the language of dance, drama, music, and visual arts • forms of communication • story making, storytelling • relationship between the revision and editing process in writing and the creative process in the arts • metre in poetry • scriptwriting, lyric writing • writing reviews and critiques • multimedia productions
Health and Career Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • careers and lifelong opportunities related to dance, drama, music, and visual arts • rehearsal and performance process (e.g., co-operative working strategies and respect for the contributions of others) as a transferrable skill • health, fitness, and safety issues • learning in the arts as a means of expressing identity and maximizing potential • respect for diversity
Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • classification skills and processes • physical properties of colour, light, and sound • chemical properties of materials • human anatomy • experimenting, problem solving

Mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • patterns and shapes • spatial relationships • sequencing • fractions in metre and rhythm
Physical Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • health, fitness, and safety issues • the aesthetics of movement (e.g., figure skating, synchronized swimming, aerobics, gymnastics, martial arts, freestyle skiing) • body awareness
Second Languages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • value of an additional language for learning the arts from those cultures • language learning strategies apply to learning the language of dance, drama, music, and visual arts

Safety Considerations

To ensure a safe learning environment, teachers should address the following questions prior to, during, and after an activity has taken place:

- Are students aware of established rules and procedures for safety? (e.g., hearing conservation, health procedures when sharing instruments or costumes, warmup and cooldown, vocal safety, safe use of materials and technologies) Do they fully understand the instructions?
- Is the activity suitable to each student's interest, confidence, and ability?
- Has the instruction been sequenced progressively to ensure safety?
- Are students being properly supervised?
- Are the facilities and equipment suitable and in good repair?

In addition to physical safety, teachers should consider the emotional safety of students when planning a Dance, Drama, Music, or Visual Arts program. Be sensitive to individual students; be prepared to respond to unique situations; and develop creative strategies to deal with rivalry, stress, fear of failure, stage fright, etc. As well, be aware of activities that may cause emotional or psychological stress for individual students (e.g., blindfolding, working in closed environments, solo performance, body contact, heterogeneous groupings), and be prepared to offer alternative strategies as necessary.

Creating, Presenting, and Responding in Arts Education

Three broad, interrelated approaches apply to all arts education subjects. These are

- *creating* (students create their own dances, dramas, music compositions, or visual images)
- *presenting* (students prepare and perform or exhibit dance, drama, music selection, or visual images)
- *responding* (to live, recorded, or print presentations and exhibitions).

Creating

To facilitate students' creative development, teachers play an interactive role through coaching, guiding, and discussion with students at all stages of the creative process. Depending on the particular requirements and students' prior experiences teachers may at first need to develop activities that are more structured in order to allow students to gain confidence with the skills and processes of creation. Once students become familiar with these skills and processes, activities can become less teacher-directed.

Many teachers will recognize that some students become less willing to take creative risks as they get older. Part of the important role for teachers in the classroom is to nurture students' creative explorations (e.g., by providing a range of stimuli and inspirations for creation along with time, guidance, and encouragement), and to teach students at all grade levels to understand the value and purpose of many different approaches to creative expression.

Creating Dance, Drama, Music, and Visual Arts

The following suggestions can help teachers structure activities for creating in dance, drama, music, and visual arts. In practice, these activities will vary in sophistication and scope according to the time available and the developmental level of students.

- Establish an accepting, and non-judgmental atmosphere where students feel safe and free to take creative risks. Show enthusiasm. Join with students in the activities when appropriate to help establish trust.
- Set ground rules to keep the lesson running smoothly. For example, students should know if they are to start and stop on a signal from the teacher and where the boundaries are.
- Ensure the creative experience is flexible enough to suit students with varied artistic backgrounds (e.g., some students may come to class with previous extra-curricular music or dance experiences.)
- Provide opportunities for individual and group activities.
- Use a variety of stimuli and senses to inspire students' imaginations and assist in the creative process (e.g., pictures, poetry, stories, key words, tactile experiences, topical themes from other subjects). Use a variety of images to encourage students to explore several possibilities.
- Encourage students to keep journals or sketchbooks to record ideas for creation.
- Guide students as they create. Assist them as they:
 - decide on a focus (e.g., expressing a feeling or an idea, matching sounds with visual images, interpreting a poem or story, creating a soundtrack for a cartoon, exploring specific elements or skills, transforming a previously created work, solving a given problem)
 - explore and collect (vocal and movement elements, rhythmic patterns and melodic phrases, materials and technologies, visual elements)
 - combine and sequence into compositions (e.g., based on selected principles of design, a given form)
 - refine and reflect on their work.
- Allow time for learning a skill, practising the skill, and refining the work.
- Use repetition. Students gain satisfaction and confidence from learning and repeating a skill or technique.
- Discuss objectives and establish criteria for assessment.
- Provide opportunities for students to reflect on and assess their work.
- Allow time for students to respond to their peers' work.
- Help students extend and redirect their experiences. Encourage them to
 - share their work with student buddies or mentors
 - refine or rehearse their work for performance or exhibition
 - view or listen to examples of dance, drama, music, or visual arts that illustrate the same principles they used
 - adapt or expand their original ideas to create new works
 - apply their creations to other arts education subjects (e.g., use a drama role as a stimulus for a visual artwork).

Performing and Exhibiting

The four arts education subjects all include consideration of both process and product. Although it not the intent of these curricula that presentation will be the primary focus, all students from Kindergarten to Grade 7 should have some opportunities to participate in formal or informal presentations of their own work. Performing and exhibiting allows students to develop their abilities in the three areas common to all arts education curricula: skills and techniques, expression and creation, and context. Students also gain personal satisfaction and accomplishment when they are given opportunities to prepare, polish, and present their own work. Presentation for peers, parents, or the public provides a focus and an end point to the creative problem-solving process.

When their work is to be presented, it is important for students to be involved in the selection and decision-making process. Provide opportunities for all students, not just the most able ones, to present their work.

Performing and Exhibiting

When designing activities related to performance and exhibition in Dance, Drama, Music, and Visual Arts, consider the following points to maximize the learning potential of the activity:

- Inform students at the outset of a project if the work will be performed or exhibited.
- Ensure all students' work is included in the presentation.
- Discuss with students the audience, purpose, and venue for the presentation (e.g., to showcase a particular skill or technique, to support a wider theme or event), and involve them in the decision-making process to select the most appropriate works or repertoire for that presentation purpose.
- For Dance, Drama, and Music, review specific expectations for the performance setting, such as
 - appropriate warmup activities
 - performance skills as appropriate to the given situation (e.g., following the conductor, director, or leader, and directing the ensemble themselves as appropriate; entrances and exits; technical accuracy; maintaining individual parts and roles while respecting the work of the ensemble; interpretation and effect)
 - commitment to the rehearsal process (including individual out-of-class practice as appropriate)
 - use and application of production elements (e.g., sound, video, lighting, sets, costumes, staging).
- For Visual Arts, involve students in organizing and mounting the display. Ensure that the display is arranged to show the works at their best (e.g., consider height of works displayed, mounting, matting, lighting). Have students act as docents to guide guests through the display, explain or demonstrate processes learned, and so on.
- Ensure that students have had ample time to prepare and develop their work.
- Provide a focus for the audience to respond to the presentation.

Responding

Opportunities for listening, viewing, and responding to live and recorded performances and exhibitions are integral to arts education. These opportunities broaden students' exposure to the arts, and enable students to become more culturally literate — familiar with and appreciative of the vast range of dance, drama, music, and visual arts that exist in their world, and the role of the arts in society.

Responding to the arts is an interactive process. Students bring their own varied perspectives and associations, including their unique cultural and personal backgrounds, to a presentation. Because of this, an atmosphere of trust and respect is required. A safe and nurturing environment allows students to feel comfortable about expressing their personal opinions, knowing that their personal perspectives will be represented and will enhance other students' response experiences.

In providing opportunities for students to respond to performances and exhibitions, look for ways to enable a variety of aesthetic responses, including emotions (feelings evoked by the presentation), associations (with previous personal, social, and cultural experiences), and intellect (analysis and interpretation).

Responding to Performances and Exhibitions

The following steps can help teachers to structure formal response activities. These steps may be combined or rearranged as appropriate to each situation (e.g., students responding to their own work, to the work of their peers, or to community and professional performances and exhibitions).

- Preparation — establish the focus for viewing or listening to the work.
- First impression — encourage students to respond spontaneously (no wrong answers).
- Description — ask students to describe what they saw.
- Analysis of content and effect — encourage students to:
 - examine how the components (e.g., performers, music, conductor, choreography, production elements, visual elements, principles of design) worked together to achieve certain effects
 - identify evidence of particular cultures, styles, or time periods represented in the work
 - use appropriate, subject-specific terminology to describe skills, techniques, elements, form, and design
 - consider the expectations for the given context (e.g., Is this a final production or a work-in-progress? Student or professional? What level of performance or skill should be expected for the particular situation?)
- Interpretation — encourage students to:
 - reflect on and discuss what the work means to each of them
 - analyse how their responses are influenced by their own experiences and perceptions of the world
- Background information — provide opportunities for students to learn about the various contributors to the dance, drama, music, or visual artwork (e.g., performers, composer, choreographer, writer, artist) and the historical and cultural context in which the work was created and presented. This might include:
 - the origin of the work
 - the purpose of the work (e.g., social, ritual, ceremonial, celebratory, occupational)
 - the physical and political geography of the creator's country of origin
 - the beliefs and customs of the culture or society
 - any historical events that might have influenced the work
 - the symbolism, if any, used in the work
- Informed judgment — ask students to consider their first impressions and whether or not their initial opinions have changed as a result of discussions, research, and reflection.

Working with the Arts Community

All aspects of learning in arts education can be enriched when arts practitioners from the community are involved. Teachers are encouraged to provide these experiences for their students whenever possible.

The broad nature of the arts as envisioned by these curricula requires that students be exposed to a variety of art forms. It is particularly helpful to use experts from the community when presenting culture-specific art forms and contexts to avoid misrepresentation, offence, and misappropriation of culture. Community artists can also act as mentors for students, providing feedback for their work in dance, drama, music, or visual arts.

Consider the following when working with guest arts practitioners:

- familiarize yourself with school and board/authority policies for involving guest instructors in the classroom (e.g., reference checks)
- arrange for a meeting to discuss appropriate learning expectations, and to decide which areas of the curriculum are to be addressed
- ensure that age-appropriate material is used
- prepare students for the experience (e.g., discuss the expectations for process and etiquette, provide relevant background information)

- determine the needs of the presenters (e.g., space, technology, materials)
- debrief with students and guests.

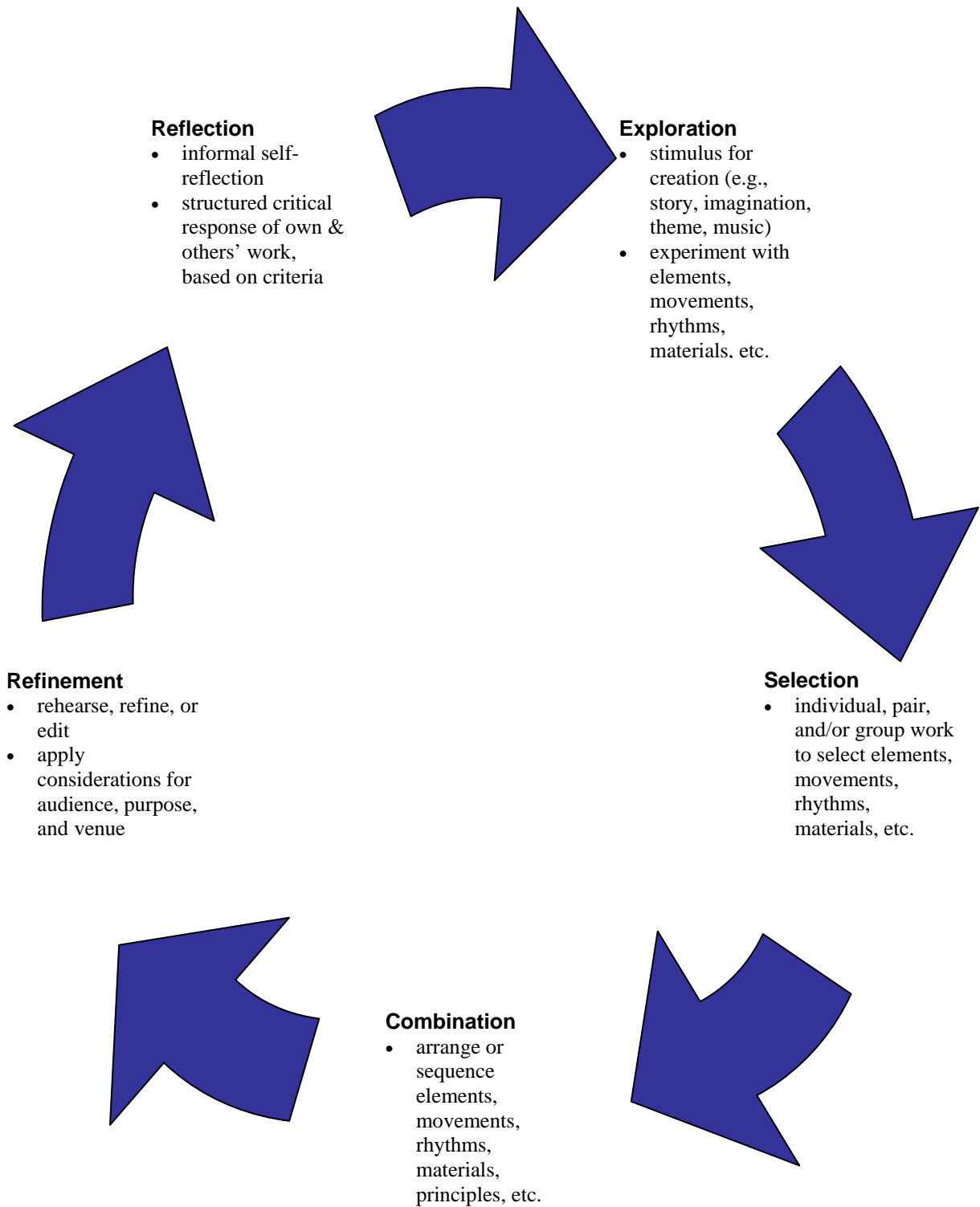
The arts education curricula can also be enriched when students have opportunities to work as arts practitioners themselves, creating dance, drama, music, and visual art with or for use by peers, younger students, and the community at large. When students are themselves working as choreographers, dramaturges, conductors, or visual arts teachers, encourage them to consider the following:

- What are participants able to reasonably accomplish at that grade level (i.e., in terms of their experience and their physical, cognitive, and psycho-social development)?
- What safety factors must be kept in mind?
- Which warmup and cooldown activities need to be incorporated?
- Is the work appropriate for a school setting?
- Do you have a plan for working through and sequencing the various parts of the work?
- What are your criteria for success?

Many community and web resources exist that can be use for broadening the range of learning opportunities in arts education, including

- professional studios, performance groups, galleries, and associations
- high school, college, and university arts departments
- school and public libraries
- arts teachers' associations
- community, provincial, and national arts councils
- arts regulating and policy-making authorities
- Aboriginal artists and performance groups
- cultural associations, artists, and performance groups
- continuing education programs
- community and recreation centres
- arts periodicals and publications
- local radio and television stations (for access to audio-visual equipment)
- arts broadcasting
- arts and cultural festivals
- advocacy organizations.

The Creative Process



Arts Education K to 7: At a Glance

Dance	Drama	Music	Visual Arts
<p><i>Creating Dance</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creative process • stimuli for dance (e.g., music, ideas, stories, feelings) • exploration • informal creation and play; formal choreography • self-exploration and reflection 	<p><i>Exploring and Creating</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creative process • imagination and play • role exploration and interaction • sources of / stimuli for creating drama • self-exploration and reflection 	<p><i>Exploring and Creating</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creative process • playing and singing • listening and responding • improvising and composing • thoughts, images, and feelings 	<p><i>Creative Processes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creative process • image sources; creation for a variety of purposes • exploration of and creation with specific materials & processes, visual elements, principles of design, and image-development strategies • self-exploration and reflection
<p><i>Elements of Dance</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • elements of movement — body, space, time, dynamics, and relationship • responding to beat & music • principles of movement • choreographic forms • health and safety (e.g., injury prevention) 	<p><i>Drama Forms, Strategies, and Skills</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vocal elements • movement elements • drama forms (e.g., story theatre, role drama, mime, scripted play) • health and safety for body and voice 	<p><i>Elements and Skills</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • structural elements of music: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – rhythm – melody – elements of expression: tempo, dynamics, articulation, timbre, texture – form • notation • health and safety (e.g., care of voice, hearing conservation, sharing instruments) 	<p><i>Skills and Strategies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognizing and applying visual elements, principles of design, image-development strategies, and materials, technologies & processes • health and safety (e.g., safe use of materials and tools); environmental considerations for materials (e.g., recycling, avoiding waste)
<p><i>Context</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cultural, social, and historical contexts of dance (e.g., purposes, roles) • dance as a means to reflect and affect social values • personal opportunities in dance 	<p><i>Context</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cultural, social, and historical contexts of drama (e.g., purposes, archetypes) • drama as a means to reflect and affect social values • personal opportunities in drama 	<p><i>Context</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cultural, historical, and social contexts of music (e.g., structures, purposes, roles, environment) • music as a means to reflect and affect social values • media literacy in music • personal opportunities in music 	<p><i>Context</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cultural, social, and historical contexts of visual arts (e.g., purposes, meaning) • visual arts as a means to reflect and affect social values • ethical considerations • personal opportunities in visual arts
<p><i>Presenting and Performing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • performance skills, rehearsal process • audience engagement and response • critical response 	<p><i>Presenting and Performing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • performance skills, rehearsal process • audience engagement and response • critical response 	<p><i>Presenting and Performing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rehearsal and performance process • ensemble skills • audience engagement and response • critical response 	<p><i>Exhibition and Response</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • willingness to present and display • organizing/presenting a display • critical response