



# NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS



## **N2KN: Need to Know Now**

Volume II: Issue 2

Developing Arts Education Curricula

## In What Ways do the National Core Arts Standards Support the Development of Curriculum?

The National Core Arts Standards are designed to serve an eminently practical purpose—to improve the teaching and learning of the arts in America’s schools, thereby improving the education of more than 50 million students annually. To accomplish this goal, the standards have been written mindful of the realities faced by our nation’s metropolitan, rural, suburban, and independent school districts in the 21st century. Key among those realities is increased attention to accountability for instruction and achievement. The new arts standards will help address this priority.

### Why It Matters to You

Standards are created at the national level, adapted or adopted at the state level and implemented at the local level. The central purposes of education standards are to identify the learning that we want for all of our students and to drive improvement in the system that delivers that learning. Standards, therefore, should embody the key concepts, processes, and traditions of study in each subject area, and articulate the aspirations of those invested in our schools—students, teachers, administrators, and the community at large. Moving from standards to instructional practice requires a translation of learning targets to demonstrable learning activities.

### Things to Consider

- Standards reflect a spiraling or scaffolding of learning in a continuum.
- Standards reflect developmental levels and ideas to be considered when creating curriculum.
- The underlying challenge to providing a robust arts education is how states, districts, and classroom teachers organize concepts, manage systems, and leverage resources to provide a better education for each child.
- The structure of the new arts standards suggests that they are learning events, progressing across grades and levels to create a sequential, standards-based approach to arts education. However, they also assume that learning does not happen out of context. Quality learning requires opportunity-to-learn conditions that create a rigorous and supportive learning environment.
- Standards are only one building block of quality arts education.
- While the standards are rooted in an outcomes-based approach, they are also built on a balance between the existing structure of American schools and an attainable vision of what that structure could and should be.

### Reflection Questions

- How can the standards serve as a guide to provide developmentally appropriate learning progressions?
- How does teacher pedagogical content knowledge define curriculum content and affect instructional quality?

- In what ways does inequity in opportunity to learn conditions affect teachers' ability to deliver quality arts instruction?
- How does access to instructional resources impact the efficacy of instructional practice?
- Why is high quality professional learning essential to the development and implementation of thoughtfully constructed curriculum?
- How do teachers arrive at instructional priorities to ensure what is being taught significantly contributes to student achievement?

## Resources for Attending to Access

Every student should have access to instruction in all art forms, which should be represented within the curricula of every school across the nation, and students should develop competence in all four Artistic Processes through instruction in each art form. While the National Core Arts Standards identify learning in dance, media arts, music, theatre and visual arts, they are supported by examples of best practices in the Model Cornerstone Assessments and student work samples located on the [NCAS website](#). Additionally, the NCAS Anchor Standards describe the general knowledge and skill that teachers expect students to demonstrate throughout their education in the arts. These anchor standards are parallel across arts disciplines and grade levels and serve as the tangible educational expression of artistic literacy.

[Opportunity to Learn standards](#) help encourage equitable delivery of arts education by outlining the resources necessary for students to succeed, illustrating a continuum of programming, allowing for program review, and articulating the basis for a comprehensive arts education.

In addition, the National Core Arts Standards website provides guidance on attending to the instructional needs of all learners with resources for teaching [exceptional children](#). Additional resources may be found on the The National Association for Gifted Children website; which offers a [Position Statement](#) on Arts Education for Gifted and Talented Students.

## Recommended Actions You Can Take

- The National Core Arts Standards have been written using enduring understandings and essential questions to help both educators and students organize the information, skills and experiences within artistic processes. Use essential questions as a check for understanding when writing curriculum and creating assessments of and for learning.
- Become familiar with the Opportunity to Learn Standards pertaining to your discipline and use them to leverage equitable access to quality arts instruction for all students.
- Engage stakeholders in thoughtful processes for curriculum development, including professional learning, peer to peer dialogue, and shared learning.

*Curriculum should help children make deeper and fuller understanding of their own experience.*

*Lillian Katz*

## Links

These are links to resources that focus on the development and refinement of standards-based curriculum.

National Core Arts Standards - <https://www.nationalartsstandards.org/>

Understanding by

Design-[https://www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/siteASCD/publications/UbD\\_WhitePaper0312.pdf](https://www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/siteASCD/publications/UbD_WhitePaper0312.pdf)

Universal Design for Learning-<http://www.cast.org/our-work/about-udl.html>

National Dance Education

Organization-[https://www.ndeo.org/content.aspx?page\\_id=22&club\\_id=893257&module\\_id=289521](https://www.ndeo.org/content.aspx?page_id=22&club_id=893257&module_id=289521)

Media Arts-

National Association for Music

Education-<https://nafme.org/my-classroom/standards/core-music-standards/>  
<https://nafme.org/my-classroom/nafme-tps-curriculum-units-2014-music-responding-standards/>

Educational Theatre Association- <https://www.schooltheatre.org/resources/standardsresources>

National Art Education Association- <https://www.arteducators.org/learn-tools>

