

# Art and Science Position Statement

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***We find the authentic integration of art and science in the classroom to be a highly productive approach to pedagogy.***

## **Why do we do this work?**

Artists and scientists are often viewed as opposites; the intuitive, expressive artist and the orderly, rational scientist are common stereotypes, and the imaginative nature of art is seen as being at odds with the factual nature of science. However, a comparison of these two fields highlights aspects of each that are often overlooked, such as the underlying rigor of art and the essential creativity of science. Examining the thinking skills involved in each field reveals genuine connections and synergies.

In an education context, connecting art and science through these common skills provides valuable learning opportunities for students. One goal of this approach is to generate learning experiences that foster a creative, inquisitive mindset. Problem solving, critical thinking, and creativity are skills that will serve students well throughout their lives and careers. Another goal is to increase students' ability to negotiate between disciplines, and to recognize similarities and differences between them. In our modern world, it is no longer realistic to view any disciplines as completely separate; more and more cross-disciplinary work and integration are taking place. The traditional educational approach of learning each discipline in isolation does not prepare students well for this reality.

## **What does it look like?**

Our approach to integrating art and science in the classroom focuses on the process rather than the product. Students are engaged in problem-solving and elements of design thinking as they explore a content area through different lenses. Rigorous elements of art and science are always present, and students learn things about both fields. The thinking skills involved in each activity that are common to art and science are made clear to the students, who have opportunities to reflect metacognitively on their experiences. We also introduce authentic materials for students to interact with whenever possible.

## **What makes our approach distinct?**

Many curricula that attempt to integrate art and science do not treat both fields with rigor and balance; some are essentially science activities with a poorly conceived art project tacked on, or art activities with a thin thread of connection to science content. Our collaboration brings together educators with genuine expertise in each field, resulting in authentic integration that meets rigorous learning goals for both art and science.

Other curricula may integrate art and science through the lens of a specific piece of content or a specific end product, which limits the scope of the work. Our approach of focusing on the common thinking skills fosters a sustainable connection between art and science that can be applied to a wide array of topics across every grade level.