



# CALGARY ARTS ACADEMY

## POLICY MANUAL

### ARTS IMMERSION

#### **Background**

#### **Integration, Infusion and Teaching through Arts Immersion.... Is there a difference?**

The Calgary Arts Academy is unique. It delivers the Alberta curriculum through Arts Immersion. This is not the same as integration of the Arts or infusion of the Arts.

**Integration** involves finding the links between subjects to make learning more meaningful and connected by looking at the topics from a position of a problem, issue or concern rather than discrete subject areas.

**Infusion** is similar to integration; except that it goes further to describe how one would teach subject matter from one area through a particular type of activity or theme. Infusion can be considered the ultimate form of integration. Schools in other districts clearly integrate music, drama, art and dance into the curriculum. It has taken years for these schools to incorporate the concept of infusing the arts into the curriculum.

#### **Immersion**

At the Calgary Arts Academy, the Arts will be taught all day and the core subjects (social, science, language arts and math) will be the content that is explored through the Arts. Students will be immersed in the Arts while learning the Alberta curriculum.

Rather than focusing on subjects that constitute the "core" disciplines and then fitting the arts into program delivery, as is presently done through integration and infusion; at the Calgary Arts Academy the arts are the "heritage disciplines", those enduring showcases of knowledge that have been with us since our species appeared. 'Core' disciplines are then immersed into the 'Heritage Disciplines.' The vision is to have the Arts always taught by those who have both passion and knowledge every single day, while addressing the 'core' disciplines for 100% of the time.

In 1902, Dewey wanted the curriculum to have a natural connection to the everyday life of the child, provide motivation, and be presented in a manner that students can internalize. He visualized a school with areas for children to connect their artistic, athletic, musical, scientific, mathematical, and creative talents to experiences that 'unify life's factors into a whole." He saw the need to provide students with realistic experiences that could be directly applied to every day life experiences. The Calgary Arts Academy will provide the learning environment that will tap into each student's strengths and potentiality to facilitate his or her growth.<sup>1</sup>

The teachers who are artists in their own right and artists who are learning to be teachers would facilitate the setting of goals, raise the bar, shrink or widen the ring, provide training, create the conditions and provide the resources and the models so that students experience mastery.

In the 1997 issue of *Transforming Ideas for Teaching and Learning the Arts*, Wharton states: "It is critically important that arts specialists working in the schools be excellent dancers, artists, musicians, or thespians; and it is just as important that they be skilled as teachers. Though these teachers may, and it is hoped, will continue to be productive in their chosen disciplines; it is crucial that they find major satisfaction in the growth of others for whom they open the wonders of the arts. Teaching is hard work; it requires imagination and diligence to plan the steps that lead to understanding. Arts educators are those dancers, musicians, artists and thespians who devote their lives to teaching."

The method of curriculum delivery at the Calgary Arts Academy attests to the fact that there is more to education than traditional approaches defined by the limitations of large organizations.

At the Calgary Arts Academy, we wish to act on what we know. We wish to take advantage of an adaptive culture that nourishes spirit, soul and individuality. Our schools will be a model for delivering Alberta curriculum as a creative experience.

This approach advances the bar one step further than infusion, which is the highest level of integration. This **significantly different approach** complements and adds to existing local programs, as is the Charter School mandate by Alberta Education. Research states that the Arts are essential and basic components of a full education. This approach provides distinct value to a child's potential educational experience.

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<sup>1</sup> Dewey, J. (1902). *The Child and the Curriculum*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.