

LITERACY & The Performing Arts

Our neighbors in Connecticut have considered with some subtlety how language arts with humanities content relate to the rest of the curriculum. It is not so much a matter, it appears, of teaching *more* English language skills *per se* – for the amount of time devoted to teaching the language arts in Connecticut schools is over half the total time devoted to *all* subjects taken together! It is, rather, the manner in which the content is conveyed and the package used for delivery of these skills.

Here is the Connecticut take on the subject:

Consider, for example, the current national focus on reading. Educators understand that reading is an enormously important skill. Educators *also* know that students learn to read best when they have developed a broad foundation of language arts. Such a foundation includes skill not only in written language (i.e., reading and writing), but also in the other four key dimensions of language (i.e., speaking, listening, viewing, and acting/enacting).

Educators therefore promote a balanced approach to language arts learning. Such an approach acknowledges the interrelatedness of language skills, and the realities of communication in our 21st century society, which relies increasingly on multiple media – typically abbreviated as "multimedia" – to convey ideas. For these reasons and more, the definition of "text" in Connecticut's language arts documents includes media as well as print.

-- Scott C. Shuler, "*When No Curriculum is Left Balanced...*"
CT State Dept of Education 2004

Media of all sorts – let's read here "technological tools" – prove singularly effective at conveying basic messages about communication and cultural modes that convey important content about who we are as people and what we do that makes us different from others.