

The Value of Arts Education to Student Learning and Development

*An Annotated Bibliography, Summary of Recent Research
and Recommendations*

A Paper Commissioned by
the Saskatchewan Arts Alliance

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October 2019



**Saskatchewan
Arts Alliance**

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INTRODUCTION:

This report is written as a scan of recent studies and articles on the value of arts education to student's learning and development. Attention was given to the development of creativity in students. The information is structured in the format of an annotated bibliography dated in order starting with the most recent research and with a summary and recommendations at the end. The synopsis of each reference is completed with an overview of the information and specific results of the data from each topic.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Snow, Georgia. "Taking Part in a Creative Activity Can Boost Mental and Emotional Well-being." *The Stage Website*. May 9, 2019 URL: <https://www.thestage.co.uk/>

Additional References:

The Stage Website: <https://www.thestage.co.uk/news/2019/taking-part-in-a-creative-activity-can-boost-mental-and-emotional-well-being-report/>

The BBC – Get Creative Website: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0778tx6>

The Report and Study Summary:

<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0211362>

In this article, Georgia Snow summarizes a new study done by the BBC Arts that shows a large-scale research investigation exploring creativity and how it manages mood and emotions. This is one of the first studies that has focused on collecting data from over 50,000 participants. The study was done in partnership between the BBC Arts and University College London. Daisy Fancourt, who was the senior researcher in this study, indicated that other studies have shown benefits of arts education, but this study shows the actual cognitive strategies the brain uses in order to regulate emotions when one is participating in creative activities.

The actual report can be found on the BBC Arts – Get Creative Website for their 2019 Festival. You can also take the 'Feel Good' test on this site in which they promise to reboot your creativity and offer ideas on how you can do this. The study used the Emotional Regulation Strategies (ERS) for Artistic Creative Activities scale. All factors show a strong reliability. It was concluded that while doing creative activities, participants were using three different strategies:

1. Avoidance strategies (distraction, suppression and detachment)
2. Approach strategies (acceptance, reappraisal and problem solving)
3. Self-development strategies (identity, self-esteem and increased agency)

These are areas that help people who are going through challenging times in their life. While engaged in creative activities, people can use these strategies to manage emotions and help us cope

with stress. In particular, face to face activities such as choir or painting classes were more effective. It can distract us from what is causing us stress and helps us be in the moment. It can also put us in a contemplative space in which we can reassess our problems. Additionally, it can help us feel better about ourselves and find ways to express ourselves. These three approaches all benefit us in regulating our emotions and mood. This study confirms the many benefits of being involved in creative ways.

2. Website: SI News – “*Can an Arts Education in School Improve Academic Performance?*” Mar 2019 by Study International Research

URL: <https://www.studyinternational.com/news/can-an-arts-education-in-school-improve-academic-performance/>

Additional Reference:

Winsler, A., Gara, T. V., Alegrado, A., Castro, S., & Tavassolie, T. (2019)
“*Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts.*” Advance online publication. URL:
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/aca0000222>

On this website, an article published in the *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity and the Arts* is summarized. The researchers followed pre-school children up to grade 6, 7 and 8. Forty percent took some kind of art elective course during middle school. Students involved in an arts elective in middle schools showed significantly higher GPA’s and math and reading scores. It was noted that the odds of suspension have decreased for these students compared to those not exposed to the arts. This coincides with a 2013 study that showed those who study music have better grades in all subjects.

A reference was additionally made to a New Mexico School for the Arts, a public high school, on Edutopia, in which their experience and research shows students benefit from Arts Education in the following ways:

- Resilience, grit and growth mindset
- Confidence
- Improved cognition
- Communication
- Cultural and Self-understanding.

3. Kiseda B., Bowen D. “Investigating Causal Effects of Arts Education Experiences: *Experimental Evidence from Houston’s Arts Access Initiative.*” Research Brief for the Houston Independent School District. February 12, 2019

URL: <https://kinder.rice.edu/sites/g/files/bxs1676/f/downloads/Brief%20-%20Investigating%20Causal%20Effects%20of%20Arts%20Education%20Experiences.pdf>

This report begins by noting that since the 1980s there has been a decline in arts education opportunities in the United States. The reason was linked to the increase of standardized testing. The authors indicate that what you assess, you focus on and therefore arts education in schools has been the target of budget cuts. The response to this has been a collaboration with arts education partnerships.

Houston, Texas had an Arts Alliance Initiative (AAI) that focused on this approach. The vision for this alliance indicated that “every student in Houston will have the opportunity to benefit cognitively, creatively, emotionally and academically through the arts” (Kesida and Bowen, p. 1). Participation was voluntary and 42 campuses were randomly chosen to participate over a two-year period from 2015 to 2017. “In addition to being an impartial method for selecting AAI schools, this process was conducive to conducting a cluster randomized controlled trial, making it the first ever large-scale randomized control trial of an arts education program implemented in an authentic educational setting” (Kesida and Bowen, p. 2).

The schools were able to choose the arts programs that aligned with their goals. They were given an average budget of \$14.67 per student. The breakdown of the programs is as follows: 54% theatre based programs, 12% dance, 18% music, 16% visual arts and one school participated in a creative writing alliance. In addition, some programs were on campus, some in the field, some had professional artist performances, some were teaching artist residences and there were some that extended beyond the school hours. The students that participated were in grades 4-8 and a total of 10, 548 students were involved.

The study focused on the following areas:

- Student-school engagement
- College aspiration
- Arts facilitated empathy
- Compassion for others
- Tolerance
- Desire for cultural consumption
- Disposition for arts transfer
- Perceived value of the arts

There were three statistically significant positive results.

1. Students who were involved with the arts experiences had less disciplinary infractions.

2. Students increased their overall writing achievement scores.
3. Students showed greater compassion for others.

Although there was improvement in other areas, these three areas were the most significant. It was also noted that the elementary students had better results. The authors concluded that when you have people invested in fostering and supporting these experiences, the arts can play a critical role in positively affecting school outcomes.

4. People for Education (2018). Arts education. Toronto: People for Education.

URL: <https://peopleforeducation.ca/report/arts-education-2018/>

People for Education is a registered charity working to support public education in Ontario. They completed a tracking survey in consultation with parent groups. In 2018, they conducted a survey examining several factors that could contribute to a quality arts program.

The first factor was looking at the way budgets impact programs. The results included information for budgets from \$500 up to \$20,000 and involved the budgets of elementary and high schools. It was found that budgets have a significant impact on any arts education opportunities. The arts budget in elementary schools was only 4% and in high schools was 7%. A lack of funding resulted in the inability to repair instruments and maintain costs. It also limited access to see live performances, had reduced performing or displaying of the students' art, showed a lack of participation in school choirs or band, limited learning an instrument in school hours and reduced the likelihood of working with a professional.

Looking at Statistics Canada and identifying families that are considered high poverty, it was evident that these families are unable to raise funding for schools. Those in low poverty areas, mixed with high parent education had up to 10 times more budget in the schools and the ability to raise additional funds. It was concluded that the budget does impact the ability to deliver a quality program. In addition, principals commented on a lack of specialists. It was evident that the larger schools had greater access to specialists. In addition, communities that have parents with high education also had more schools with Arts Ed Specialists.

The factors of budgets, parent's education and access to specialists create an inequity in the exposure of and the ability to participate in a quality Arts Education program in schools. The Education Quality and Accountability assessments found that 43% of grade 3 and 39% of grade 6 students participate in art, music or drama at least once a week. In the lower arts budgets, students were more likely to say they 'never' participate in art, music or drama activities outside the school day.

“Considering the significant role arts education plays in supporting students' learning and development, our public schools should have equitable access to the resources and programs that support learning in the arts” (People for Education, p.9).

5. McClanahan, W. PH.D., Hartmann, T. PH.D. “Designing for Engagement: Experiences of Tweens in the Boys’ and Girls’ Clubs’ Youth Arts Initiative” Executive Summary. November 2018

URL: <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/RFA-MAI-Desinging-for-Engagement-Executive-Summary.pdf>

With support of the Wallace Foundation, a pilot initiative involving 1,280 youth between 2014 and 2016 focused on whether quality after school clubs/classes offered to tweens in a high poverty area could make a difference in their engagement with the Arts. They incorporated ten principles for success, which include professional artists, dedicated spaces, hands-on skill building, community engagement and physical/emotional safety. They collected qualitative and quantitative data.

The results indicated that parents and club staff noted an improvement in leadership, artistic and teamwork skills. They also felt that they learned competencies related to self-awareness, self-management and relationship building. The majority of students gave feedback that they enjoyed the programs offered. A significant piece of data was that more students came back to the club in the subsequent years in larger numbers than those who did not participate in the club.

6. Vitols, I. “Americans Believe the Arts Strengthen Communities” Americans for the Arts. Sept. 27, 2018

URL: <https://www.americansforthearts.org/news-room/press-releases/americans-speak-out-about-the-arts-in-new-public-opinion-poll>

In one of the largest public opinion polls done in the United States, a national sample of 3,023 adults were asked questions about their perspective and attitudes towards the Arts and Art funding. The results of this data include:

- 91% believe that the Arts is a part of a well-rounded education
- 73% believe the arts help them understand other cultures better
- 72% report being involved in some sort of arts event
- 69% indicated that the arts help improve personal well-being and quality of life
- 64% support government funding for the arts

Robert L. Lynch, who is the president and CEO of Americans for the Arts, summarizes this poll indicating that the arts make our community healthier, stronger and more vibrant. He notes that the survey results have improved over the 2015 survey showing that attitudes toward the arts have intensified.

7. Hopkins, Rob. *Imagination is our Strongest Weapon – “Kyung Hee Kim on the Creativity Crisis”*. Sept. 18, 2018

URL: <https://www.robhopkins.net/2018/09/20/kyung-hee-kim-on-the-creativity-crisis/>

Rob Hopkins interviewed Kyung Hee Kim, who is a professor at the College of William and Mary in Virginia. Hee Kim completed a PhD under the supervision of Dr. Ellis Paul Torrance who is known as the father of creativity. He is known for the Torrance Test for Creative Thinking. Although he passed away in 2003, Hee Kim has continued the research into creativity.

Hee Kim did a number of studies looking at linking creativity to high IQ tests, and the results were not conclusive. She said that Americans focus too much on test scores, which is not their strength, when they should be focusing on the way that they use their imagination and their creativity. She clearly links imagination to creativity. Hee Kim indicated that imagination is all about out-of-the-box thinking. It's not about coming up with something new, but rather it is based on expertise. So, she says that the basis for creativity is also about expertise. Imagination requires some material to tinker with. You don't just come up with ideas out of the blue. It is based on experiences, knowledge and skills.

8. Wolff, K., Fulton, M. “The Importance of Arts Education in the Workforce” September 7, 2017.

URLS: <https://ednote.ecs.org/the-importance-of-arts-education-in-workforce-preparation/>
<https://www.aep-arts.org/>

This website discusses the importance of arts education in the work place. In 2017, Kate Wolff and Mary Fulton wrote about this concept on the Education Commission for the States website. They summarize information taken from an Education Trends Report called *Beyond the Core: Advancing student success through the arts*. The research in this report indicates that arts education has dramatic effects in the areas of creativity, teamwork and perseverance. The report also indicated that while all students benefit, students that are disadvantaged or at-risk often have even greater success.

A survey done in January 2019 surveyed more than 500 senior executives in the United States. 45% of those surveyed believe that Americans lack deeper skills such as communication, collaboration and creativity. What this survey resulted in was that as a key employment and economic growth strategy, arts education assists students in developing these skills. References were made to research studies dating back as early as 2002 that indicated that children who study the arts are:

- Four times more likely to be recognized for academic achievement.
- Elected to class office within their schools three times as often.
- Four times more likely to participate in a math and science fair.
- Three times more likely to win an award for school attendance.
- Four times more likely to win an award for writing an essay or poem.

In addition, in the AEP (Arts Education Partnership) report, students are better equipped for assessments of creativity if they receive an education rich with arts education. Those who study the arts show higher test scores when measuring the ability to analyze information and solve complex problems. The AEP will move towards the goal that in 2020, all students in America will have equal opportunities to access high quality arts learning opportunities.

9. Davis, Susan. “Arts Education is Vital to Help Foster Creativity and Innovation” May 22, 2017

URLs: <https://www.aare.edu.au/blog/?p=2218>

https://www.oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk/downloads/academic/The_Future_of_Employment.pdf

Susan Davis is the Deputy Dean of Research for the School of Education and the Arts at QC University in Australia. She argues that the STEM program (Science, Technologies, Engineering and Mathematics) is missing the Arts piece, which would make it STEAM. She is an advocate for how creativity and innovation need to be cultivated across the education system. Davis investigated the research done by Oxford University in which they conclude that growth in the work sectors need to have individuals with creative capacities and social interactions. In her advocacy for the Arts, she indicates that in order to cultivate innovation for the future, governments need to pay attention to the importance of creativity and the way it promotes problem solving, inventiveness, social innovation and entrepreneurship, as well as communication and expression. While this reference is more about an opinion than facts, Davis does draw upon the research from Oxford to support her views.

10. Bradshaw, R. D. (2016). Art Integration Fosters Empathy in the Middle School Classroom. *Clearing House*, 89(4/5), 109–117.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00098655.2016.1170441>

After noticing a decrease in student empathy in a middle school over a number of years, the author felt that arts integration into non-arts classrooms could develop more empathy in students. A lack of empathy in schools leads to decreased caring and compassion, and increased bullying and victimization.

The qualitative action research study was conducted in a public middle school over 4 months and one of the units is highlighted in this article. Persuasive writing and environmental art were integrated to provide a foundation for 82 students in grade 6 to collaboratively create art in English Language Arts classes. Goals for the study were to enhance students’ knowledge of persuasive text

through examination of artists' visual messages; develop students' skill in analysing visual messages in art; and for students to work collaboratively to create art.

Students began with discussions about what they knew about or perceived to be environmental art. An environmental artist was introduced and students worked in small groups to examine photographs of art works to determine what they inferred from the photos and what evidence supported their claims, then the groups shared their findings with the class. A subsequent activity involved watching a film about the artist creating works out in nature. At this point, students were asked to write letters to a gallery curator to advocate for the artist and his work to be brought in using specific evidence and descriptive language to support their argument. The unit continued with the introduction of several other environmental artists who create works about issues such as water conservation, animal rights and oil pollution. In discussion groups, the author observed students openly sharing knowledge with each other about environmental issues such as climate change and dying coral reefs. Some of the artists' images made students feel sad for the wildlife or deeply concerned about trash and waste. Collaboratively, students brainstormed messages of social and ecological importance that they wanted to communicate, drew up plans, created their installation works on campus and photographed their works.

Several examples of students displaying empathy emerged. One group was concerned about a particular flowering plant on campus that was attractive to butterflies, but that was often trampled by careless students. One group noticed that one of their members was standing off to the side, unable to quickly process the ideas and directions of the others; without adult intervention, the other two members noticed and asked the third student to direct them and take charge. Some groups argued and found it challenging to work together, but all persevered to bring their ideas to fruition.

In creating their environmental art installations on campus, students became more aware of global and local issues, and began to feel like they had a voice and agency to make changes at all levels. One change came from a new awareness of the amount of trash that was in and around their campus that students acknowledged custodians had difficulty keeping up with; this inspired students to meet with their Parent Association to initiate and maintain frequent student led grounds clean-ups.

11. National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). “How Creativity Works in the Brain”

July, 2015.

URL: <https://www.arts.gov/publications/how-creativity-works-brain>

In 2014, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the Santa Fe Institute (SFI) met in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The 15-member working group came together to look at the research on creativity and to explore new knowledge of cognitive psychology, neurobiology, learning, complex systems, and the arts. As they discussed 30 years of trends for defining creativity, it became evident that while no generalized theory was apparent, there were components that emerged: memory, divergent

thinking, convergent thinking and flow. They noted that convergent thinking is necessary for children progressing through the school system in order to write standardized tests. From there, they listened to two presentations that explore the components of creativity and possibly look for alternative techniques for measuring student engagement with learning.

The second presentation, Mariale Hardiman of Johns Hopkins University, conducted a study that focused on memory in an arts-integrated approach in an inner-city school in Baltimore. Her team's research incorporated dance movement and other techniques in other courses to test whether arts-integrated methods would produce better retention of the material. This research does support the findings that arts-integrated approaches to science helped students retain more information long term than students who began with stronger reading and writing skills (NEA, p. 11).

Ivonne Chand O'Neal, at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, conducted studies of creative arts and learning in 16 arts-integrated and 16 matched-control schools in the Washington, DC-area. Her research supported multiple cognitive components of creativity, especially in the ability to generate a greater number of original ideas, including the dimension of flow. It was also reported that students in these classes showed improved self-confidence, participation, and persistence in problem-solving compared to the control group (NEA, p.11).

After hearing these presentations and several others, the Senior Advisor Senior Advisor, Bill O'Brien observed that "the idea of measuring and optimizing creativity resonates with many different policy imperatives at the national level, yet it remains an overheated, under-resourced topic" (NEA, p. 12). The executive summary suggests that research needs to continue in this area.

Other definitions of creativity were note-worthy in this report:

"Steve Jobs said, 'Creativity is just connecting things.' We're excited about how connecting these banks of knowledge in this setting may lead to new insights" (NEA, p.14).

"I believe creativity is part of what it means to be human. We all have it. Most of us need to fulfill more of it" (NEA, p. 14).

—Mark Runco, E. Paul Torrance Professor of Creativity Studies, University of Georgia

In conclusion, the working group had discussions that were infused with evidence and recognized that creativity is part of what it means to be human. They invited any further studies to submit their results.

12. Thomas, M., Singh, P., & Klopfenstein, K. (2015). Arts education and the high school dropout problem. *Journal of Cultural Economics*, 39(4), 327-339. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44289570>

This study tracked 175,000 9th grade students for 5 years to determine if arts education plays a role in engaging high school students in their learning and in decreasing dropout rates. Reasons for dropouts are numerous, from challenging life events to boring classes, and the authors believe that the best prevention is to increase student engagement with arts education as one of many means.

Arts courses require active learning, creativity and engagement. Practicing and performing with peers can help students form bonds with others and develop a sense of belonging to a group as well as to the school. Students become active in their own learning and can bring their own ideas and experiences into class. The arts, unlike some other subjects, do not need a 'right' answer, becoming a safe place to fail and learn. Students develop non-cognitive skills such as perseverance, attention, motivation and self-confidence in the arts that can transfer to other subjects and their lives.

The authors used rigorous methodology to examine the connection between taking arts classes and dropout behaviour. They attempted to control for a variety of socioeconomic levels, ethnicities, at-risk students and those who took full and/or partial arts credits. They accounted for the risk of attending high-dropout schools, high and low achievers, boys and girls, those who took the bare minimum arts classes vs those who took more credits than required, student and school characteristics that affect arts participation as well as dropout, and the number of credits in math, english, science and social studies that students earned. The authors admit that there are still many unknown or unobservable variables that cannot be factored in, for example, whether or not students with multiple arts credits would have graduated anyway even without taking arts courses in high school.

Results of the 5-year study showed that the risk of dropout was higher for students without full arts credit each year and that cumulative credits in the arts were consistently associated with reduced dropout, particularly for girls and students who were struggling academically. The researchers are convinced that even less than full arts participation reduces high school dropout, and that arts courses should not be cut from schools, especially those schools with high dropout rates.

13. Bowen, D., Greene, J., & Kisida, B. (2014). Learning to Think Critically: A Visual Art Experiment. *Educational Researcher*, 43(1), 37-44. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24571246>

This article examines the effect of the arts on students' ability to engage in critical thinking. The study involved 3,811 students, placed into 80 groups, who participated in school visits to the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art where they interacted with several works of art. They were guided by professional museum educators and encouraged to think critically about the works.

There were 40 applicant groups with students in grades 3 -12 who were randomly awarded, by means of a lottery, a guided tour of the art museum in the spring of 2012 (the treatment group), while the other 40 groups had their tours deferred to the fall of 2012 (the control group). Each treatment group had one half-day visit to the museum with pre and post visit materials for 4-5 works of art along with potential essential questions and art work previews. Even with this minimal exposure, there were significantly positive benefits in the students' "ability to think critically about a work of art that they had not seen previously" (Bowen et al. p. 42).

During the visit, students were encouraged to talk and that their ideas were important to the process of a student-driven discussion. Facilitators guided students to think and discuss together as well as determine their own unique interpretations of the art works.

Several weeks after the treatment group's museum visits, students from both groups completed surveys that contained a critical thinking exercise. In addition to questions about demographics, art experiences, and art knowledge, students were also asked to write as much as they could in 5 minutes about a new, previously not seen work of art that answered two questions: What is going on in this painting? What do you see that makes you think that? Researchers independently coded responses and did not know students' grade levels or if they were part of the treatment or control group.

The students in the treatment groups, particularly in grades 3 -8, showed significantly stronger critical thinking skills when asked to analyze a new painting. "Researchers found that treatment generated significantly more instances of the critical thinking skills of observation, interpretation, association, comparison, flexible thinking, and evidence. In a separate report focusing on the eighth-grade sample only, researchers found that treatment group students grew in their aesthetic and critical-thinking skills and that these skills transferred to their writing skills (Desantis, 2009)" (Bowen et al. p 38). The effects were even greater for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, a group for which access to the arts has declined more than for other demographic groups with cuts to arts funding. The results of this study show the importance of making policies to restore and expand access to the arts in schools.

14. Greenfader, C., & Brouillette, L. (2013). Boosting Language Skills of English Learners through Dramatization and Movement. *The Reading Teacher*, 67(3), 171-180. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24573649>

In the span of 10 years from 1998 to 2008, the United States noted an increase of 51% of English learners in schools, and that 1 in 4 children in the state of California spoke another language at home. The question arose as to how to overcome these language barriers, particularly oral language. The answer was the arts.

This article reviews evidence of the benefits of drama and movement through a teaching artist program to build confidence and increase language ability in young children for whom English is not their first language.

San Diego implemented a two-year program with 5 school groups and 16 teachers known as the Teaching Artist Project (TAP) to provide an opportunity for students to practice speaking and listening skills in a safe and fun setting. TAP facilitates professional development for K-2 teachers to create stimulating verbal interactions in their classrooms. During the first year, teachers co-plan and co-teach drama and movement lessons with a teaching artist. In the second year, the classroom teachers facilitate on their own.

Young children naturally employ dramatic play and creative movement in their lives, and by acting out stories they are able to use their imaginations which develops greater comprehension of the words' meanings. Students have the opportunity to practice pronunciation, tone, and gesture, which all lead to expressing their ideas confidently and clearly. Using movement and voice together boosts comprehension and memory. The authors cite supporting research that oral language development is important to future reading ability, academic achievement and social well-being.

A mixed-method study was conducted using standardized tests, interviews and focus groups to determine the effects of TAP on early literacy skills of English learners. Most teachers found the TAP lessons helped to improve literacy skills and engagement for both native English speakers and English learners. They also noted that the arts activities helped to create a comfortable classroom environment, build confidence in shy students who were afraid to speak and decrease behavioural issues. Additionally, classroom teachers found themselves integrating the arts into other subject areas to enhance learning because of the success in language arts.

15. Walker, E., Tabone, C., & Weltsek, G. (2011). Research Directions: When Achievement Data Meet Drama and Arts Integration. *Language Arts*, 88(5), 365-372. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41804290>

This article discusses the results of The Education Arts Team (EAT), a non-profit performing arts organisation in New Jersey, after receiving grants to study the effects of integrating drama into social studies and language arts in grades 4 and 5 and then later with grades 6 and 7. Their studies concluded that "...the integration of the arts into these subject areas contributed significantly to students' achievement in language arts" (Walker et al. p 365).

Two questions guided their studies:

1. To what extent are students' language arts and mathematics performance, as well as their engagement with school, positively impacted by being in a classroom setting in which theater strategies are integrated into their language arts instruction?
2. To what extent are students able to sustain their learning gains in language arts performance from a theater-integrated curriculum once they return to traditional language arts instruction?" (Walker et al. p 365).

This article focuses on the more recent work with grades 6 and 7.

EAT developed a yearlong project of 40 integrated lessons to teach students and teachers how to use voice, movement and visual representations to interpret a variety of novels from their language arts curriculum. Students were from mixed ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds as well as different genders in both the study and control groups. The lessons followed state standards for reading and literary interpretation, built on students' personal knowledge, scaffolded deeper understanding of works of literature and developed student confidence and expression of ideas through writing. Students explored sections of their novels through theatre games, scenery design activities, improvisation, script writing and enactment.

The study showed a strong correlation between arts integration and improved academic success. There were statistically significant results for the integrated groups who had higher state exam passing rates in mathematics and language arts over the control groups. Even as 8th graders who had integrated drama in grade 7, students continued to have higher exam passing rates over those without arts integration. Results of this study are echoed by research done by Stevenson and Deasy (2005), Catterall and Waldorf (1999) and Catterall (2002), cited in this article.

16. Shin, J. (2011). An Investigation of Participation in Weekly Music Workshops and its Relationship to Academic Self-Concept and Self-Esteem of Middle School Students in Low-Income Communities. *Contributions to Music Education*, 38(2), 29-42. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24127189>

The non-musical benefits of music education in schools correlates to standardized test scores, self-esteem, academic achievement, and academic self-concept. The author cites numerous studies to support these claims. Some results on self-esteem were inconsistent or lacked systematic documentation and this study aimed to fill that gap with a mixed methods approach to measure students' self-esteem and self-concept after involvement with the I Am a Dreamer Music Program (IDMP).

The I Have a Dream (IHAD) program in public schools in New York's low-income communities was developed to empower children to achieve higher education and leadership roles. IDMP is a pilot project of IHAD to enable students to participate in weekly music workshops for seven weeks with the goal of enhancing feelings of self-worth by learning how to create and perform music.

Eighteen students were selected and most had not had any music classes prior to the program. Over the course of the seven weeks, students learned percussion and rhythms, sang songs, improvised music, learned how to follow a conductor, and collaborated to create movement sequences to music. The program was student driven, not teacher driven, and students' ideas, skills and attempts were valued and respected.

One week before the program, students completed an initial questionnaire of 42 questions on academic and non-academic areas, scored on a 5-point scale. A post-program questionnaire was completed three weeks after the program ended. Students were interviewed about their musical experiences in school, their most and least favourite activities in the program, future musical plans, and their self-esteem before and after the program. Parents also completed a survey on their children's self-esteem.

Results of the student surveys showed a positive relationship between the IDMP and students' academic self-concept. Data also showed marginally higher scores in math, reading and general school self-concepts, with the latter having the most significant difference. This is important as general school concept is directly related to academic achievement. Results of the parent surveys and the student interviews concurred that the children were proud of their musical accomplishments, were more positive and confident, were more likely to set and complete goals, and were more determined to advocate their own ideas. Some of the students' interview comments are included in the article to highlight the results. One student was not overly concerned about making mistakes because there wasn't a right or wrong answer; another felt that the program itself was very positive; several commented on the safe and positive environment; one recognized that each student had their own strengths and everyone was accepted; and another tried harder on the drums because he

had the support and encouragement of the drum teacher. Encouragement and support from the teachers, and acknowledgement of individual strengths can be an important factor in positive self-esteem. Many students commented on how proud they felt in the final performance in front of friends, family and teachers and how happy they were to receive praise and encouragement from their audience members. It would appear that there is definitely a positive link between music education in schools and students' self-esteem, which is consistent with other studies.

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION:

This scan of the recent research shows a wealth of results linking many significant factors to the importance of Arts Education. The following are the note-worthy results:

- Arts education benefits student's overall well-being, including improved resilience, confidence, cognition, communication and self-understanding.
- There is a link between those who have access to arts programs and their academic success. This includes the ability to think critically. Several studies have been done to show evidence of a strong correlation between participating in arts programs and academic performance. Those from low poverty areas are at a disadvantage due to the inequitable access to resources and programs, and this makes a significant difference. There is a connection between the success of those exposed to the arts and the dropout rate of those who are not. This indicates that schools cannot ignore the results of these studies when making considerations about funding and support for the arts in schools.
- One study showed that students who were taking arts classes had less disciplinary infractions.
- There is an expressed connection between those who take arts education in school and the skills they bring to the workplace, including creativity, teamwork and perseverance. Several studies indicated that there is a need for more critical thinking skills in the workplace, which arts education promotes. The ability to problem solve, be inventive and have social innovation is welcomed and sought after by employers.
- Because working with the arts does not require students to have a 'right answer', taking arts education allows them a safe place to fail, learn and risk-take.
- There has been a connection between the arts and people's ability to be empathetic. Several studies refer to evidence that those exposed to arts education develop positive characteristics about themselves (self-esteem, self-concept) and being compassionate in responding to those around them.
- One study demonstrated that those who do not speak English overcame language barriers by working through artistic expression.

Creativity is a key component within the arts that increases students' ability to develop skills which will benefit them personally, academically and in the likelihood to be successful in life. The following are the results taken from the above scan of information:

- Creative activities allow people to develop strategies for avoidance, approach and self-development. Several articles relate arts education to the ability to develop these strategies for coping with stress and manage emotions.
- One article identifies that the basis for creativity is about expertise – using one’s own experiences, knowledge and skills
- The need for using a creative approach in the workplace is needed. Students are better equipped for creativity if they receive an education rich with the arts.
- Creativity is not easy to measure. Most link creativity to imagination and the student’s ability to risk-take and try something that is new. While students may use creativity in other subjects, the arts provides a continual and consistent chance to enjoy the freedom of exercising a creative approach.

While there is a vast array of ideas and results, all of this information shows the benefits of Arts Education, with an emphasis on how it develops our creativity. There is no question that the value of arts education to student’s learning and development is significant.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **Arts Education needs to be an integrative part of all education programs.** There is extensive evidence that clearly links arts education to the well-being and development of the individual. From developing self-awareness, self-concept and self-determination to communication and critical thinking skills, the connection between having an effective Arts program and developing these skills is significant.
2. **School Divisions must create equitable funding for all levels of education.** Access for all students to participate in the arts is a critical element. School divisions need to embrace inclusive practices to both support these programs and provide equitable funding to ensure student success. Research cannot be ignored that links academic and personal success to exposure to the arts. Therefore, School Divisions need to fund and support effective arts programs to ensure that no matter where the child lives or what the age, condition, location or population of the school, that there is equitable access to resources, materials and teacher expertise.
3. **The Ministry of Education, along with School Divisions, need to put an emphasis on Arts Education as a means to meet all student needs.** We continually emphasize and value inclusive education. It was evident in the studies in this report that those students who struggle with academics and other personal issues can thrive through the Arts. Schools already recognize that teaching the whole child is important and the connection needs to be made that through the Arts we reach students in ways that other subjects do not.
4. **Schools need to prepare students for their future careers by including the skills that Arts Education programs build.** Many work places look for employees that have the ability to

problem solve, be inventive and have social innovation. If we want students to have these necessary skills, we need to provide a means by which they can nurture these skills. Arts Education arguably does better than any other subject area.

5. **Schools working with second language learners need to embrace the benefit of Arts Education as a means for communication.** The arts transcend language barriers. Studies show that there is merit in using the arts as part of the process to help students speak a new language. The arts are a universal language. The arts have always been a way for students to express themselves. Students speaking another language are able to demonstrate their emotions, intentions and their words through a visual or creative form. In addition, there have been many places that have used the arts as a form of healing. Grieving groups, for example, use the arts as a means to express deep emotion that cannot be put into words.
6. **We need to find ways to work with business and industry to see the value of developing creativity in students through the Arts.** Studies already connect this link and we know that developing creativity benefits individuals, work places and communities. Having Arts Education Programs in schools is an integral part of embracing creativity so children can grow and progress through their education in a way that captures the essence of this important quality.