



THE ARTS AND AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

A Research Synthesis



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*Among all the fields of study in our schools, the arts are at the forefront in the celebration of diversity, individuality, and surprise: “the possibilities for growth in and through the arts cease only when we do” (Eisner, *The Arts and the Creation of Mind*, 2002).*

The artist endeavors: to see, to know, to shape, to show. It is also true that by following in the footsteps of the artist we are led: to see, to know, to shape, to show, and thus come to recognize, humble or small, the artist in us all (Booth & Hachiya, 2004).

INTRODUCTION

Recent years have seen much discussion about the role and value of the arts—music, visual arts, drama, and dance—in and out of the school day. As school districts have had to turn their attention to the requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), many of them have cut back on the availability of the arts, especially in low-income areas. If the arts are not as available in the school day, where do they fit? And what do they have to offer that other subjects cannot provide? For many middle and upper class families, the arts might be accessible through summer programs or private lessons. For those without resources, engagement with the arts may not be an easy option. What then is lost?

One answer to this question is that the arts present another way for children to learn, and one that potentially provides opportunities for children to succeed where they might not in other traditional academic subjects. Where language, social status,

academic achievement or other factors work against them in a traditional classroom, the hands-on, individualistic strategy of arts teaching provides another way to approach a problem; teaching artists become alternative models of success and facilitate the development of a self-concept based on each student's individual talents (Americans for the Arts, 2004). Again, if the arts are undervalued in many school districts because of other pressures, where will these children receive the benefits of the arts, either as arts education or using the approach of the arts as a way to teach other subjects through arts integration? Afterschool programs have become one option.

There are few afterschool programs that would not acknowledge the fact that children enjoy and learn from the arts; whether taught only one afternoon, or using local musical talent to produce a musical--the arts in many cases are a major attraction factor. Many of these programs do not have trained art teachers and are unable to go beyond occasional activities. Unless they have been able to develop a partnership with an arts organization, train their own staff, or find funding for a visiting artist, more in-depth work with the arts is unlikely despite its acknowledged value (Stiegelbauer, 2007). If research has shown the arts to have value to learning and academic achievement, as well as to self-confidence and reaching disengaged youth, how can afterschool use this arts advantage in their programs? In what ways are the arts important; what does research have to say about how the arts have contributed to learning and self-efficacy? What is unique about the arts in Afterschool settings?

Over the last ten years, a large number of research studies and compilations of research on the effects of the arts have come forward. These studies cross the art forms—music, visual arts, drama, and dance, providing slightly different findings depending on the art form that was part of the research. After the first wave of general findings, researchers began to look more specifically at the intrinsic and extrinsic value of the arts as well as at the kinds of transfer occurring between arts instruction and academic achievement. In broad overview, all these research studies reinforce the idea that students exhibit enhanced learning and achievement when involved in a variety of arts experiences. Such studies showed that the arts¹:

- Reach students in ways that they are not otherwise being reached
- Reach students who are not otherwise being reached
- Connect students to themselves and each other
- Transform the environment for learning
- Provide learning opportunities for the adults in the lives of young people
- Provide new challenges for those students already considered successful
- Connect learning experiences to the world of real work
- Enable students to have direct involvement with the arts and artists
- Require significant staff development
- Support life-long and occasionally professional engagement with the artistic process.

¹ A number of studies of the arts mention similar factors, including *Champions of Change* (Fiske, 1999), the Wallace Foundation's *Gifts of the Muse* (McCarthy et al, 2004), *Critical Links* (Deasy, 2002), the Arts Education Partnership's *Third Space* (Stevenson & Deasy, 2005), and the Annenberg Foundation's *The Arts and School Reform* (2003).

Many of these same themes can be seen in research on the potential of afterschool environments as described by Miller in *Critical Hours* (2003). This synthesis of research found that afterschool programs provide students with opportunities to learn from adults and peers through hands-on activities that hold interest and develop skills and a sense of competence. This holds true regardless of the age (preschool to high school) or the locale of the student (urban to rural). The studies included in the *Critical Hours* synthesis show that:

- Students who participate in extracurricular activities and community service have higher academic achievement, even when other factors that affect school success are taken into consideration
- Students who attend afterschool programs are more engaged in learning
- Increased engagement in learning can result in higher academic performance
- Afterschool programs have a special role to play in reducing racial and income achievement gaps, especially in providing access to enrichment activities common to higher income students (Miller, highlights, 2003).

Definitions:

Intrinsic: has a value in itself, i.e. the arts have value just because individuals enjoy their experience with them.

Extrinsic: a value placed from the outside, i.e. the arts have value because they improve students' ability to problem solve.

Instrumental: the arts play an important role in achieving certain results, such as developing an improved capacity for math.

Transfer: what has been learned through one method can be moved to another, i.e. what is learned through the arts "transfers" to learning in other subjects.

THE NATURE AND LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH ON THE ARTS
OR ARTS IN AFTERSCHOOL

Conducting research on the value and effects of the arts is not an efficient endeavor. Whether the research looks at the impact of arts education (where work with one of the arts is the subject of research), or arts integration (where an academic goal is set using the arts as a strategy), looking for outcomes most often is done through a qualitative method—case studies, ethnographic work, observation and interviews—with, perhaps, a quantitative comparison added if the study requires it. A quantitative strategy would be to compare the students involved with the arts to students who are not involved and see what difference their grades are in a particular subject (music students and math: Catterall et al, 1999), or their academic outcomes in general (students with high arts involvement—more time with the arts—have better academic scores than students with low arts involvement (Burton et al, 1999). The quantitative outcomes may or may not be statistically significant. Many of the capacities often described as a result of arts learning (such as creative thinking, imagination, etc.) are also dimensions that can be attributed to learning in other subject areas (Burton et al, 2000).

Burton, Horowitz and Abeles (2000) in their research with 2,406 students in 12 schools on the question of transfer (arts skills to academic areas) struggled to create a research design that reduced other variables. Yet they say, “when considering our results, the reader should keep in mind that we worked within real school

settings....we did not introduce an experimental ‘treatment’ or only observe where teachers intentionally taught for transfer. By relying on children’s memories of their past arts experiences, we undoubtedly added error.... but made our results more convincing” (2000, 238).

Heath and Roach (1998) studied three out-of-school youth programs, one focused on athletics, one community centered, and one arts based. To their surprise, it was the arts based program that was the rich cognitive environment, an unanticipated finding given the three settings. Through their anthropological collection and analysis of statements made by students and adults involved with the program, they found that the arts program had the greatest effect on attitude, self-confidence, and skill development. They compare the research process to a comment an art student made: “in prose you try to tell everything that happened; in poetry you leave out things on purpose so that you can tell the truth” (1998, 33). They go on to say that “it is not possible—in prose or poetry—to portray all that goes on in the learning that happens through participation in the arts within youth organizations,” though, qualitatively, they can describe many of the outcomes and the essence of the organizational life that seems to create them. Qualitative research takes time, especially as it involves the development of youth who are changing before your eyes.

Likewise with afterschool research. Afterschool programs are as different as the people involved. They are different in community, in strategy and goals, in resources, in curriculum, in teachers and teaching, and in student populations. In

setting questions about the arts in afterschool environments, similar research strategies emerge: descriptive and qualitative to capture a portrait of the afterschool environment; statistical comparisons of students and student academic outcomes. Studies of the arts in afterschool are largely limited to evaluation projects (Snell-Johns et al, 2006; Ingram & Seashore, 2003; Wolf, 2003) with some exceptions (Heath, 1998, Fanelli & Klippel, 2001 as a sample). The majority of research addresses art education in school day settings, or independent programs in the arts; a few studies address arts integration or project-based learning (AEP, 2006).

Choosing Studies to Be Included in This Synthesis

Studies were selected from searches in the Educator Reference Desk, ERIC, EBSCO, databases with categories “afterschool” and “Arts” and “Programs” and “At-Risk” and “Arts Education” and “Artist Residencies” and “Museum educational programs” among others. Further articles were located by using initial research to search for other research. Also utilized were large searchable databases about and for the are: Americans for the Arts, National Educational Report Card, Kennedy Center, ArtsEdge, etc. Large meta-analysis, annotated bibliographies and research reviews were important pieces of data. Publications such as *Critical Links*, *Critical Hours*, and *Champions of Change*, were helpful not only in providing summaries but bibliographies that lead to other sources. Most of the studies included here are data driven utilizing qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method research strategies. An effort was made to find studies that had an empirical base or experimental model.

Further, the studies included were selected based on the following criteria:

1. They represent high quality national and international efforts to understand the value and application of the arts to learning
2. They include analyses of large samples, or
3. The study addresses a specific example of application, e.g. the relationship of music to mathematics learning, or visual arts to reading
4. Primary investigators are external, known and reliable
5. A reasonable causal link is made for findings

There are many studies that could have been included; and many that represent good descriptions or applications of a use of the arts for learning. However, they were excluded because they did not meet the broader criteria described above, or because they did not address one or more of the questions set out for investigation in this paper.

Questions used for structuring synthesis

In considering what we might want to know about the research on the arts that would be of value to afterschool, the following questions were developed to guide the synthesis:

1. What is the value of arts education and its relationship to learning as a general premise?
2. How have the arts been used by afterschool programs?
3. And, what effects might be seen in working with the arts, especially effects related to academic achievement and student self-efficacy, in either setting?

4. What recommendations come from research and expert opinion as to what is important for the arts or teaching with or through the arts in afterschool?

RESEARCH ON THE VALUE AND RELATIONSHIP OF THE ARTS TO LEARNING

The importance of the arts. A place to start in this section would be with two national compilations of research that stand as hallmarks for an increased interest and investigation of the relationship of the arts to learning. The first is the research presented by *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning*, a study conducted by the Arts Education Partnership in cooperation with the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities, and funded by the GE fund and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation (Fiske, 1999). This five-year study was conducted by seven teams of researchers looking at a variety of art education programs using diverse methods. These studies covered both in-school and out-of-school settings. The studies included:

- The Imagination Project at the University of Los Angeles, analyzing data on more than 25,000 students to determine the relation of engagement in the arts to student performance and attitudes (conducted by James S. Catterall).
- School programs for youth in poor communities—looking at the qualities that made programs in the arts, sports, and community service effective sites for learning and development. This study illustrated ways that involvement with the arts influenced success in and out of school (Shirley Brice Heath).

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- Arts education programs in elementary and junior high schools (Burton, Horowitz, and Abeles of Columbia University).
- The Chicago Arts Partnership in Education (CAPE), a partnership of 23 local schools, 33 art organizations and 11 community based organization that integrated arts with learning across the curriculum (James Catterall and the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory).
- The offerings of Arts Connection, the largest provider of arts education programming to the New York City public school system (National Center for Gifted and Talented, University of Connecticut).
- Two teacher training programs of Shakespeare & Company: the National Institute on Teaching Shakespeare and the Fall Festival of Shakespeare (Steve Seidel, Harvard University's Project Zero).
- The Creating Original Opera Program of the Metropolitan Opera Guild (Dennie Palmer Wolf, Harvard Graduate School of Education).

All of these studies found that learners could attain higher levels of achievement through their engagement with the arts, especially students from disadvantaged circumstances. The programs and institutions examined in these research projects were selected because they were making a difference and were “models of excellence”. They all had the following criteria:

1. They enabled young people to have direct involvement with the arts and artists
2. They provided the necessary staff development
3. They supported extended engagement in the artistic process

4. They encouraged self-directed learning
5. They promoted complexity in the learning experience
6. They allowed management of risk by the learners
7. They engaged community leaders and resources.

Important to all the studies was the phenomena of the arts as a learning strategy different from that in the school day. Students in these studies engaged in learning experiences that broadened their outlook in personal and academic ways. Many of them learned through strategies that would not have been accepted in a day school environment, might have even gotten them in trouble (Oreck et al, 1999). All benefited from involvement with adult models, such as artists, that offered them another way to see adult work and roles. These effects were particularly marked in disadvantaged communities.

If *Champions of Change* broke ground for public acknowledgement and further research of the role of the arts in learning, *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development* (Deasy, 2002) illustrated further how the arts work to broaden students' social and academic skills. This compendium summarizes and discusses 62 research studies, conducted in a variety of settings and methodologies. Taken as a whole these studies presented themes related to the following categories²:

² Catterall, James (2002). *A Summary of Findings from Critical Links*. The list shown here represents findings across a number of studies included in *Critical Links*.

- The arts and children at risk: the arts contribute to basic reading comprehension and achievement motivation through nurturing feelings of competence and engagement, especially for economically disadvantaged children. These children also showed increased attendance and fewer discipline referrals.
- Special populations: arts activities associated with outcomes related to writing and reading skills, oral language skills, and sustained attention and focus. Arts activities had special value to English Language learners, low SES students, special education, and students who responded to different learning strategies.
- Differentiated groups: the studies in *Critical Links* identify no fewer than 84 separately distinguishable, valid effects of the arts when differentiated among groups of children who benefit, from children at risk to all children.
- Literacy Skill development: the arts pay off greatly in the areas of reading skills, language development, and writing skills, as well as general academic skills.
- Fundamental Thinking Skills and Capacities: Learning in individual art forms, as well as in multiple arts experiences engages and strengthens such fundamental cognitive capacities as spatial reasoning, conditional reasoning, problem solving and creative thinking.
- Motivation to Learn: Learning in the arts nurtures motivation, including active engagement, disciplined and sustained attention, persistence and risk taking. It also increases attendance and interest in pursuing education.

- Effective Social Behavior: Learning in certain arts activities promotes student growth in self-confidence, self-control, self-identity, conflict resolutions, collaboration, empathy, and social tolerance, and attention to moral development.
- Specific contributions of each of the arts: many of the studies looked at music and classroom drama with their predictable effects on literacy and math; fewer looked at dance and visual arts. Highlights include:
 - *Music*: important impacts on brain functions related to spatial reasoning and spatial-temporal reasoning, or the relations of ideas and objects in space in time. This includes problem solving, mathematics, and creative scientific processes.
 - *Drama*: shows consistent effects on narrative understanding as well as on identifying characters and the motivations, reading and writing skills and interpersonal skills, collaboration and conflict resolution.
 - *Dance*: contributes to self-confidence, persistence, social tolerance, and appreciation of individual and group social development; indirectly also to originality, fluency, flexibility, and creative thinking.
 - *Visual Arts*: increases reading readiness in preschoolers, drawing helps communication and writing, contributes to science, history, and reading skills.

The 62 research studies that are a part of *Critical Links* range from “The effects of a movement poetry program on the creativity of children with behavioral disorders” to “Strengthening verbal skills through the use of classroom drama: a clear link” to “the

effects of three years of piano instruction on children’s cognitive development”.

While there are likely many other studies that could have been included in this national compilation, *Champions of Change* and *Critical Links* laid the foundation for putting elements associated with the arts into discussions about learning, cognition, instructional strategies, and curriculum content and design. The Arts Education Partnership (AEP), the publisher of *Critical Links*, currently publishes a quarterly newsletter featuring articles and resources on emerging issues related to arts education and promising practices³. As with *Critical Links*, their ongoing focus is to reveal the important relationships between learning in the arts and cognitive capacities and motivations that underlie academic achievement and effective social behavior.

The political environment of research. These two compilations of studies come out of a political and social environment where arts advocates are trying to emphasize that the arts are “basic” to education, not something to be disenfranchised by the emphasis put on academic subjects by the politics of the time. While No Child Left Behind states that the Arts are a “core subject,” in reality many School districts have redirected resources to work on improving literacy and math scores leaving the arts behind. Arts communities increasingly made a case for the arts in terms of their instrumental benefits to individuals and communities. This trend started with the late 1990’s with studies that looked at the relationship between arts education and academic growth. Many of these earlier studies were focused on the benefits of arts education in relation to its potential to level the “learning field” across socio-

³ <http://www.aep-arts.org>

economic boundaries. Catterall (1998, 1999) in his reviews of the Chicago Arts Partnership (23 schools, 33 arts organizations, 11 community organizations) and the Imagination Project, *Involvement in the Arts and Success in Secondary Schools*, found that sustained involvement with the arts makes a difference in academic proficiency (especially music and math) and developmental growth.

Burton, Horowitz and Abeles of Columbia University (1999) in looking at “Learning In and Through the Arts” found that students in the arts performed better than non art students on measures of creativity, fluency, originality, elaboration and resistance to closure; they took more risks in learning, and were more able to layer one thought upon another and to see problems from different perspectives. Further, they found that there is clear empirical evidence that children are less able to extend their thinking in a narrowly conceived curriculum in which the arts are either not offered or are offered in limited or sporadic amounts.

Dennie Palmer Wolf (2003) in her longitudinal study of student outcomes related to programs of Dallas ArtsPartners, an arts and cultural education service for schools and afterschool, found that students working with ArtsPartners-enriched lesson cycles showed significant growth on the Reading Texas Learning Index--6 percentage points higher than those students who did not receive ArtsPartners enrichment. This was particularly true of students of color. African American students involved with ArtsPartners curriculum were an average of 16.09 points higher than their peers; Hispanic students 4.98 points higher. Disadvantaged students showed generally more

accelerated growth than other groups. ArtsPartners infused curriculum had a positive impact on students across ethnic, socio-economic, and academic separations.

Ingram and Seashore (2003) working with the Annenberg Foundation, evaluated the effects of the “Arts for Academic Achievement Program”, an integrated arts program in the Minneapolis Public Schools (45 schools ranging from elementary to high school). They found a significant relationship between arts integrated instruction and improved student learning in reading and mathematics. Further, this relationship was more powerful for disadvantaged learners, helping to close the achievement gap. It was not the mere presence of arts integration that made the difference but the intensity of it that related to gains in student learning, especially in reading and math, intensity in this case meaning, using the arts or an arts strategy frequently, persistently, and for a long period of time. It may be valuable to remember that the arts reflect the senses--vision, hearing, touching, moving, speaking, and feeling--and as such provide different ways for the brain to collect and synthesize information (Stiegelbauer, 2000). As with multiple intelligences, the more pathways for learning, the more likely learning will occur.

The debate about benefits. The emphasis on the instrumental benefits of the arts has engendered a response requiring more evidence of the truth of benefits. *Gifts of the Muse: Reframing the Debate About the Benefits of the Arts* (McCarthy et al, 2004), a study commissioned by the Wallace Foundation, evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of the instrumental benefit arguments and made the case that a new

approach to understanding the benefits of the arts is needed. The authors call for a greater recognition of the intrinsic benefits of the arts experience, their value to individuals and their life paths, and link the realization of those benefits to the nature of arts involvement. They emphasize the importance of sustained involvement in the arts to the achievement of both instrumental and intrinsic benefits. The authors found that most of the empirical research on instrumental benefits suffered from conceptual or methodological limitations, especially as related to a lack of longitudinal study. The authors emphasize a need to examine the intrinsic benefits, such as pleasure, expanded capacity for empathy, cognitive growth, the creation of social bonds, the expression of communal meanings, and the phenomenon of rapt absorption that can move the individual away from everyday reality. They suggest that promoting early exposure to the arts and supporting or creating circumstances for rewarding arts experiences would go a long way to creating a context for both intrinsic and some instrumental benefits of arts exposure.

Harvard's Project Zero's Project REAP (Reviewing Education and Arts Project, Winner & Hetland, 2000) which conducted 10 meta-analyses of 188 reports investigating the relationship between one or more arts areas to one or more academic areas found that there was a clear causal link between education in an art form and achievement in a non-arts academic area, especially in the areas of music and spatial temporal reasoning and classroom drama and verbal skills. They caution however, that many of the studies, are not structured to test causal hypotheses and show results that might be based on other factors (Winner & Hetland, 2002). They suggest that an

important information base is not necessarily instrumental relationships, but what cognitive, affective, and social skills are taught and learned in arts classes, especially when taught well. In a high school study in process, Winner & Hetland describe how students are being helped to reflect about their work, to evaluate their work and that made by other, to learn from their mistakes, and to see in new ways (2002, 5).

Whether their art learning transfers or influences their work with other subjects is difficult to map.

The debate about intrinsic and instrumental benefits of arts instruction continues with *Critical Evidence: How the Arts Benefit Student Achievement* (Ruppert, 2006, for the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies in collaboration with the Arts Education Partnership), and *Third Space: Where Learning Matters* (Stevenson & Deasy, 2005, for the Arts Education Partnership). *Third Space* set out to examine arts instruction in ten case study schools with the goal of identifying strategies that educators could use to improve schools serving economically disadvantaged communities. They found that the lessons from the schools were more about how the arts changed schools, connected them with their communities and enabled them to create context and conditions for learning, than they were about the value of arts education alone. The book tells two stories, one about the strategies the schools used to sustain their arts education programming; the other about the nature and effects of the arts programming and how it created new opportunities for teaching, learning and building community; in the end both came to be about the “purpose” of schooling as much as about the nature and effects of work with the arts in education.

Continuing to explore the role and impact of the arts. The theme of looking for value and impact of the arts continues, in terms of various purposes, contexts, teaching strategies, and outcomes. Purnell et al. (2007) examined the nature of culturally responsive early childhood classrooms through the integration of literacy and art, and offer suggestions to teachers from their findings. Burnaford (2007) used participatory action research to document the interaction and effects of an arts partnership (external organization and schools) and set goals for improvement. Thomas (2007) conducted research on a community-based arts classroom where adolescent working class students work with an artist-printmaker. Her study found that these students came away outcomes that went beyond printmaking—particularly better communication skills and sense of creative work.

Summary. These studies emphasize that work with the arts has value to learning, especially for economically disadvantaged children, and especially when there is sustained involvement for students. Whether or not the arts have the instrumental benefits described by some studies, i.e. they transfer skills to greater academic achievement; the arts clearly make a difference to the students working with them. Students, teachers, community members, and artists--all report changes based on involvement with one or more art forms (Wolf et al, 2006; Arts Corps, 2004, 2005). Students exhibit more creative thought and ability to solve problems; disadvantaged students see another side of life and gain opportunities not found for

them in traditional classrooms alone; students improve in higher level thinking skills, regardless of background; students think more of themselves and what they can do.

In a variety of ways these are consistent findings across studies.

AFTERSCHOOL AND THE ARTS

Studies on afterschool environments are more complex than even school environments: populations change frequently, even staff populations; since all students are engaged in something in afterschool, it is difficult to sort what is the cause of what; children self-select to be in afterschool, perhaps for good reasons. Differences in results may only be about differences in neighborhoods. There is no control group, and everyone is the “treatment” group (Miller, 2003, 88). Further, afterschool programs can vary greatly in their goals, resources, and offerings.

Beth Miller, in *Critical Hours* (2003a), a synthesis of research commissioned by the Nellie Mae Educational Foundation on the effects of afterschool programming, describes how research over the last two decades has shown links between participation in afterschool programs and greater engagement in learning and higher academic performance. Other effects include fewer absences, higher scores on achievement tests, improved homework completion, and greater proficiency in English language skills for bilingual children (Miller, 2003b). Her overview provides examples of studies and sites that show benefits to youths, increase in engagement in learning, increase in educational equity, and build skills necessary for success in today’s economy. One study included looked at 18,000 students in 105 schools in

California and found, among other benefits, that grade-point averages in math, science, social studies, reading and writing increased after the second year in the afterschool program. Further, teachers reported that afterschool students have better attitudes and communication skills (Huang et al, 2000). Program strategies that nurture such results include experiential and adventure education, service and project based learning, mentoring and tutoring, and arts education. “All of these approaches can develop and engage early adolescents’ interests, bringing them ‘through the door’. Effective programs strive to meet young peoples’ need to experience success and competence, as well as develop health relationships with adults and peers, and a rich variety of skills, positive attitudes and behavior” (Miller, 2003b, 15). Note that the positive program strategies from her research synthesis include arts education, experiential education, and project-based learning, all aspects of a potential arts in afterschool curriculum, possibly in combination.

Shirley Brice Heath (1998) asked the research question: do low-SES at-risk students who are intensively involved in the arts through afterschool organizations perform better in school than those who are not so involved? She found that students involved in the afterschool arts programs stood out from the control group in a number of ways. They were:

- Two times more likely to win an award for academic achievement
- Four times more likely to win school-wide attention for academic achievement
- Four times more likely to participate in a math or science fair

- Three times more likely to win an award for school attendance
- Over four times more likely to win an award for an essay or poem
- Nearly twice as likely to read for pleasure
- Over four times as likely to engage in community service
- Eight times more likely to win a community service award

In another study, Heath and Roach (1999), researched three types of community youth programs: athletic-academic, community service, and arts. Their study showed that youth participating in community arts programs develop a greater range of skills and dispositions that enable them to cope and succeed in school, life and work, as defined by the study. In particular, the “highly frequent oral exchanges between youth and older peers and adults around problem posing and hypothetical reasons lead these youth in arts organizations to consider multiple ways of doing and being in their artistic work and beyond” (1998, 28). And, youth involved in arts programs were doing even better in school than those in programs that focused on sports and community involvement alone, a finding they did not anticipate.

Susan Otterbourg (2000) investigated the key elements of afterschool programs in a report for the U.S. Department of Education and the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program. Many of the key elements are what might be expected: goal setting, staffing, safe places, community partnerships, family involvement, enriching learning opportunities with a challenging curriculum, links to the school day and constructive evaluation--all recognized as critical to the success of programs

(2000, 9-10). She notes, however, that through arts education students have the opportunity to have “closer and more collaborative relationships with teachers, artists and each other” is the “...single most important factor in the success of programs” and positive effects on students (2000, 7). Smaller working groups or afterschool settings that facilitate collaborative relationships that made a difference to outcomes.

Huang, Gribbons, Kim & Backer (2002) conducted a study of the impact of the LA’s BEST 69 afterschool sites on student achievement, grouping and comparing students based on the number of years a student had participated in the program (high, medium and low groups) and their academic progress. Students with long-term involvement in LA’s BEST programs had the greatest positive achievement. Huang et al saw this outcomes as twofold: the programs of LA’s BEST are intrinsically more motivating than other alternatives, and, conjoined with the regular school’s efforts, together they influence academic performance. Within the programs sponsored by LA’s BEST, the arts play a major role. LA’s BEST sponsors visiting artists and encourages staff at sites to teach art forms they are comfortable with. They also offer regular professional development to staff across sites in arts education as well as other subjects.

The YouthARTS Development Project of Americans for the Arts (2003), through research with focus groups and independent interviews with representatives from arts programs for youth at risk, describes successful programs as those that recognize the value of art as a vehicle to engage youth in activities that increase their self-esteem.

The delivery of a successful arts program is a collaborative effort among the artists, the social service providers, teachers, agency staff, youth and family, recognizing the community in which youth live, and using dynamic teaching tactics such as hands-on learning, apprentice relationships, and the use of technology. Successful programs provide youth with opportunities to succeed and culminate in a public performance or exhibition in an effort to nurture participants' self-esteem through public recognition. Depending on the population and the talents of students and staff, special training might be needed to create an arts approach that works for all concerned. Their earlier study of three arts programs (YouthARTS Development Project, 1998) found that participation in these programs resulted in the following improvements for youth: work and social skills, attitudes and behavior, and fewer court referrals. They state: regular attendance and participation engages kids in "the thrill of creative and artistic expression". They also saw as outcomes--more community recognition through public exhibitions and demonstrations, learning new job skills, and learning to use the arts to communicate about difficult issues. Programs like the *ARTS Apprenticeship Training Program* in Pittsburg, *STARS* in Florida focusing on dance, creative writing and vocal arts, *Midnight Shakespeare* in San Francisco for at-risk Hispanic youth, all result in greater attendance and school skills. In the case of the *ARTS Apprenticeship Program*, they report that eighty percent of participants continued on to some college or university.

The arts in afterschool environments have particular benefits for disadvantaged and latchkey students in providing adult mentoring, modeling, motivating activities and

support for youth through these programs (Miller, 2003; Heath & McLaughlin, 1994; Wolf, 2003). Students work with artists and community members in developing skills and activities that enrich their afterschool-learning environment. Programs have the potential to integrate the students' own background and experience as part of the curriculum, as well as to connect to the community as a basis of support. The theme of engagement with community is another part of Miller's synthesis as well as mentioned in *Critical Links* as a significant factor in work with the arts and student developmental growth.

In another review of afterschool programs, Fashola (2002) describes programs and practices that can make a positive difference to successful outcomes. His summary includes program practices that focus on tutoring, language and reading skills, hands-on learning, community-based programs and partnerships, and enrichment strategies. He provides examples of program structures from a number of exemplary sites. He notes that effective programs use hands-on, experiential enrichment strategies that focus on the arts, science and language arts. But as Miller and others suggest, effective outcomes for students require quality programs, in the arts or otherwise, that extend over a period of time, even years. The research of Rodriguez et al (1999), Huang et al (2002), and as described in *Champions of Change* (Fiske, 1999) and other studies reinforce this idea: students who participated for one year or more had significantly greater academic success than those who had been in the program for a shorter period.

Summary of arts in afterschool. While research on the arts in afterschool is more limited than research on the arts in general, a number of findings are similar. One strong theme is the value of the arts and afterschool settings to “*students who face the greatest odds in our society*—low income youth, students from non-English speaking families, students who do not perform well in school, and those who live in chaotic, dangerous neighborhoods” (Miller, 2003b, 3). Where many of these students are disengaged in the school day and do not have the resources for independent exploration of the arts, the arts in afterschool present them with opportunities to develop self esteem and new skills. This seems especially true for at-risk youth.

Another clear theme is that of *time*: the longer students stay with a quality afterschool program, the more likely their academic skills and achievement scores will improve, given the variable of good attendance and quality of instruction. When students are engaged in something they like, can do, and interests them, they will continue to attend. Time and program quality are variables that programs have some control of. The third theme is that of *hands-on, real-world work*. The arts represent a way for students to engage with the real life world, find a point of interaction with it and themselves and to explore ideas in a less-evaluative setting. The arts in afterschool can address particular art forms; they can address community interests and needs; they can address identity and age related interests. An active curriculum, focused on youth interests, makes a difference to afterschool engagement. Finally--the arts in afterschool reinforce the theme of *community*: while it is often taken for granted,

community can be the greatest resource for programs and students, as well as the most appreciative of student performances and exhibitions.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF THE ARTS?

Putting the findings of research on the arts and on the arts in afterschool together, the effects of the arts can be classified in two ways. First, specific effects related to teaching and learning a specific art form, such as music, drama, dance, or visual arts. Secondly, effects related to teaching the arts in general, in afterschool or otherwise. Many of the effects described in the studies that are part of *Champions of Change* or *Critical Links* have mixed validity, i.e. effects might have been caused by factors other than arts involvement. A few do stand out, however:

- The relationship between music and spatial-temporal reasoning. While how this happens is not clear, listening and playing music seems to influence special skills. A strong causal relationship was found between learning to make music and spatial-temporal reasoning, for at-risk and general populations both. Catterall et al (1999) discuss finding that playing music contributes to students learning Math and science. They suggest that music involves forms of notation, understanding absolute values as in notes or math, the relative tonal distances between notes, a kind of pattern recognition and manipulation—all related to spatial temporal reasoning. Spatial-temporal skills could be helpful to learning in mathematics, geography, or science depending on the teaching strategy used (Winner & Hetland, 2000).

- Classroom Drama and verbal skills: a strong causal link was found between classroom drama and a variety of verbal areas. These included the understanding and recall of stories, reading readiness and achievement, oral language and writing. Drama not only helped children’s verbal skills with texts at hand but generalized to new texts and contexts (Catterall et al, 1999; Winner & Hetland, 2000; Dupont, 1992; Moore & Caldwell, 2002). Theatre also contributed to the development of empathy and tolerance, especially with low SES students, and as focused on social interactions that might involve understanding issues of race and well being (Catterall et al, 1999).

As Catterall et al state in their discussion of the findings related to theatre and social-language outcomes, “establishing causation in education and social science research is difficult. Any convictions that causation is involved depend mainly on three elements of the research—sound theory, supportive evidence, and ruling out rival explanations” (1999, 16). They note that music and theatre seem to have received more attention as to cognitive outcomes than dance or visual arts, thus limiting some potential findings. Other studies that are more phenomenological, including longitudinal studies of the meaning of the arts to students in different groups, have validity by repetition across studies. Some in this category are:

- The arts help motivate students, especially disadvantaged students. Whether the arts have the transfer value hypothesized by some studies, they clearly serve to motivate students and increase their interest in learning and their self-confidence to learn. This is especially true for children of disadvantaged backgrounds. Success with the arts frequently is a motivational factor for

- success in other areas. Many studies would suggest that motivation is one of the major values associated with arts education and this motivation provides an entry point for learning especially for non-academic students (Winner & Hetland, 2000; Heath, 1999; Heath & Roach, 1998). Winner & Hetland suggest that the arts should be seen more for their motivational value than instrumental value (2000).
- Students who are ‘high arts’ experience do better with academics than ‘low-arts’ students; extended time for involvement is important. Numerous studies remark on the difference between students who have longer and more intense arts experiences and those that have little or none (Catterall et al, 2002; Miller, 2003; Deasy, 2002; Ingram & Seashore, 2003); Huang et al, 2002; Burton et al, 2000; Ruppert, 2006). “Youngsters who are the beneficiaries of what we have called high-art experience tend to think they are good at reading, mathematics, and in school generally” (Burton et al, 2000, 254). Ruppert writing for the NASSA (2006) reports that students who took four years of arts coursework outperformed their peers who had one half year or less of arts coursework by 58 points on the verbal portion and 38 points on the math portion of the SAT. The more time a student is involved with the arts the more likely positive effects will be seen in other areas. In fact, *Gifts of the Muse* suggests that early exposure to the arts may lay a foundation for learning that shows benefits in later years (McCarthy et al, 2004).
 - The Arts contribute to enhanced reasoning, cognitive and critical thinking skills. There is strong evidence that the arts positively enhance various

cognitive skills. Reasoning ability, intuition, perception, imagination, inventiveness, creativity, problem-solving skills and expressing all are cognitive processes associated with the arts. Minton (2002) describes the relationship between the study of dance in high school and increased creative thinking skills as measured by a standardized index of creative thinking. Tishman et al (2002) tested a group of 162 children, ages 9 and 10, on their ability to look at works of art and reason about what they saw. She found that the children's ability to draw inferences transferred to their reasoning about images in science.

- The best programs for outcomes are experiential, active, hands-on, and real world. Ideally they involve small group collaborative working relationships where social and cognitive learning is combined. This is especially true for afterschool programming. The arts by their very nature are experiential and hands-on. This style of learning seems to benefit disadvantaged students in particular, but even for other students, shows greater learning outcomes than more passive strategies (Wolf, 2003; Miller, 2003a, 2003b; Huang et al, 2000; YouthARTS, 1998; Fashola, 2002). Otterbourg describes how small collaborative groups allow for closer relationships which significantly influences the success of programs (2000); Miller (2003a, 2003b) discusses how smaller collaborative groups have benefits in afterschool in providing mentoring, modeling, and learning from each other.
- Students who participate in afterschool arts see themselves as more able to express themselves and approach life tasks. Arts Corps' Program Evaluation

Reports (2004, 2005) conducted surveys of students, parents, and program staff to examine the impact of their program to date. Their survey of a sample of parents found that parents saw their child as more outgoing, more involved in schoolwork, happier—wants to go to school, talking with them more and wanting to do more activities, more confident in social situations, better at expressing their individuality in school, working with art at home. 87% of the parent sample reported seeing positive changes in their child since they started in the arts in afterschool. Heath (1998) describes the confidence that afterschool programs instilled in youth; Miller (2003a) discusses positive effects for disadvantaged and bilingual children. The issue of increased positive social skills and confidence through the arts is also demonstrated in studies with at-risk youth: Kennedy (2002), Ross (2002) and Barry et al (2002) all describe the effects of instruction in the arts (guitar, dance, visual arts, respectively) on increased self confidence, persistence, tolerance and sense of success in at-risk youth.

- The arts and afterschool provide a vehicle for positive interaction and modeling from adults. Studies show that the involvement of artists as models of alternative approaches to adult life, and of collaborate working relationships with other adults in projects, mentoring, or apprenticeships, positively influences youth's view of themselves and their capacities. Especially for at-risk youth, these adult interactions can be fundamentally different from other interactions they might have in traditional academic settings and help them see their own worth in a different context (Oreck et al,

1999; Davis, 2005; Miller, 2003a, 2003b; Arts Corps 2004, 2005; YouthARTS, 2003; Wolf et al, 2006).

- The Arts and the Arts in Afterschool benefit not only students but families, communities and teachers; they enhance a positive school environment. The arts have the potential to “change the culture of learning” and to create community “in and out of schools” (Stevenson & Deasy, 2005). Numerous studies, especially in afterschool, remark on the ability of the arts to unite and involve communities, as a resource, as a sounding board, and as part of arts projects (Miller, 2003a, 2003b; Heath 1998). Further, the arts as a teaching strategy, especially on a project basis has the potential to change how people work together within a school, to look at planning, teaching strategies, and personal relationships as a collaborative strategy and support (Stevenson & Deasy, Snell-Johns et al, 2006). Nelson’s evaluation of A+ schools in North Carolina (2002) found that beneficial effects go beyond growth in student outcomes to include increased teacher collaboration and enhanced partnerships with parents and the community.
- The arts have strong cultural and intrinsic value. The arts are a fundamentally important part of culture, without them we live in an impoverished society. They are time-honored ways of learning, knowing and expressing. Further, the arts offer a way of thinking unavailable in other disciplines (Winner & Hetland, 2000). Whether the arts have extrinsic or instrumental value, i.e. they affect success with other subjects or cognitive domains, they clearly have intrinsic value--they contribute to quality of life, make life pleasurable and

provide a way to increase enjoyment, something that can continue after schooling (McCarthy et al, 2004).

THE ARTS AND AFTERSCHOOL: RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ARTS

The National Assessment of Educational Progress Report (NAEP, 1998) describes two major components of learning expected of students who participate in the study of the arts. The term “arts” specifically refers to the visual arts, dance, music, and theatre. The learning components put forth in the NAEP report are:

1. Students should gain knowledge and understanding about the arts, including the personal, historical, cultural and social contexts for works; and
2. Students should gain perceptual, technical, expressive, and intellectual or reflective skills when working with the arts. These skills are built into the hands-on work with the arts, as well as exposure to the arts through involvement with arts partners or performers.

These components reflect in broad terms the standards for the arts described in the National Standards for Arts Education (2003). They also reflect the idea that developing skills and understandings in the arts contributes to self-confidence and learning strategies that can be applied to other academic areas (Fiske, 1999).

Afterschool environments are an opportunity to enhance a sense of accomplishment and well being among young people, especially in and through the arts, where the capacity for “creation” and success is more individualized and supported. Frequently children who are not successful in school, because of structures, routines or other

reasons, are often successful in afterschool where there is a different environment for learning.

Developed by the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations (under the guidance of the National Committee for Standards in the Arts), the National Standards for Arts Education is a document that outlines basic arts learning outcomes integral to the comprehensive K-12 education. The Consortium published the National Standards in 1994 through a grant administered by MENC, the National Association for Music Education. These standards suggests that students should:

1. Be able to communicate at a basic level in the arts disciplines, including knowledge and skills in the use of basic vocabularies, materials, techniques and intellectual methods of each art discipline.
2. Be able to communicate proficiently in at least one art form, including the ability to define and solve artistic problems in that art form.
3. Be able to develop and present basic analyses of work of art.
4. Have an informed acquaintance with exemplary works of art from a variety of cultures and historical periods
5. Be able to relate various types of arts knowledge and skills within and across arts disciplines, and apply to other disciplines as relevant (i.e. integrated or project basis).

Through working with these standards, students would develop a sense of the arts in terms of a broad base of knowledge, skills, and values and can apply that in a meaningful way to their own personal life and humanity. These National Standards

are reflected in State Standards and have been organized into smaller and more specific learning expectations for each of the content areas of the arts at different grade levels.⁴

Promising Arts Practices

In considering promising practices for the arts in afterschool environments, a combination of the requirements presented in the National Standards and findings from research on the value of the arts and the arts in afterschool, have been utilized.

The Arts Practices presented here are as follows:

1. Applying art skills, techniques and processes in creating and communicating meaning.

Being proficient in at least one art form means that a student has enough disciplined practice with it to be able to be successful in expressing themselves in that medium, whether it is music, visual arts, drama or dance (National Standards for Arts Education, No. 1, 2). The practice and the self-discipline transfer to other endeavors: “the skills learning through the arts are transferable to other areas of life” (NAEP, 1998); The effects of practice playing the piano are documented in a study conducted by Rauscher et al (1997) where mastering a musical instrument aids in developing mathematical understanding and special-temporal reasoning (Raucher & Shaw, 1998); also discussed by Catterall et al, 1999).

2. Creating art experiences that express the self or environment.

Numerous studies of afterschool setting and the arts discuss the value of providing a method and context for self expression, including Heath & Roach (1999), Burton et al. (1999), Oreck et al (1999), YouthARTS (2003), Wolf, Keens & Company et al (2006), Davis (2005), Arts Corp (2005, 2006): “You can see the way I look in my drawing. Being happy

⁴ For National Art Standards and content standards see www.education-world.com/standards/national/arts/index.shtml or www.artsedge.kennedy-center.org/teach/standards.cfm

makes me feel like I am made up of all different kinds of colors on the inside”: student comment, Dallas ArtsPartners, (2003).

3. Making connections to history and culture through the arts.

This idea is reinforced in the National Standards: “Have an informed acquaintance with exemplary works of art from a variety of cultures and historical periods” as a means of providing a knowledge base and context for works of art (2003, No. 4). It is also described in studies of afterschool settings where the community and its culture is an important element (Winner & Hetland, 2002; Miller 2003, YouthARTS, 2003, Arts Corps 2004, 2005). Student involvement with their own culture and history allows them to explore personal and local issues and interact with their community in a positive way. Community collaborations about history and culture are a way to gather support and acknowledgement of the students’ efforts. McCarthy et al in Gifts of the Muse see promoting early exposure to the arts, through school, community, or museum based programs as a way to start a process of involvement as well as to establish a context for why the arts are important to history and culture (2004).

4. Engaging students in analyzing and communicating about works of art.

The National Standards describe talking about art as a way to facilitate a deeper understanding of its method, meaning and context: “Be able to communicate at a basic level in the arts disciplines, including knowledge and skills in the use of basic vocabularies, materials, techniques and intellectual methods of each art discipline” (skills and understanding), as well as “Be able to develop and present basic analyses of work of art,” as in a “critique” (2003, No. 3). The value of analyses and talking about works of art, whether they are visual, musical, dramatic, or theatrical, lies in the student’s use of art related vocabulary and understanding of how the art form works. Talking in itself has value to cognitive skills and social behavior. A number of afterschool & arts studies describe the relationship of theatre to memory skills, presentation skills, reading, and self-confidence (Caterall et al, 1999, Burton et al, 1999, Seidel, 1999, Winner & Hetland, 2000, Dupont, 1992). Tishman et al (2002) in particular, describe the impact of training students in reasoning about works of art and how it transfers to other subjects, science in particular. As students learn to “really look” at images they are able to use that skill in investigating other kinds of images.

5. Integrating the arts with other subjects (project or problem-based, or as a strategy)

The National Standards describes integrating the arts across art forms (visual arts and music, music and theatre, music and dance, theatre and dance, etc.) as well as a way to understand other subject areas: “Be able to relate various types of arts knowledge and skills within and across arts disciplines, and apply to other disciplines as relevant (i.e. integrated or project basis, 2003, No. 5).” The issue of integration and integrated strategies emerges as a theme in much of the afterschool research. Miller describes project-based learning as an effective method of developing problem-solving skills, critical thinking, ability to make connections across academic disciplines, and cooperative teamwork and planning (2003). Ingram and Seashore (2003) in their study of Minneapolis Schools found a significant relationship between arts integrated instruction and improved student learning and achievement. This relationship was more powerful for disadvantaged learners, and helped to close the achievement gap. The relationship of arts integration and reading achievement was stronger for students in free and reduced lunch programs and English language learner programs. They state that their findings show it was not the mere presence of arts integration but the intensity or persistent use of it that related to gains.

6. Involving family and community.

The issue of community is fundamental to afterschool, but also important to schools. Stevenson & Deasy in their research in ten schools about how the arts contribute to the improvement of schools that serve economically disadvantaged communities (Third Space: When Learning Matters, 2005), found that arts programming had profound effects on building community within and around the schools, community that sustained and learned from the interaction. YouthARTS found that successful afterschool programs recognize and involve the community,, and that programs that involve the youths’ families provide the opportunity for greatest impact (2003). It is communities that sustain programs; that come to performances; that watch their children grow. Family and community are essential elements of afterschool and the arts.

In terms of developing quality arts programming or enrichment, these standards and suggestions from the research on the arts and the arts and afterschool suggest that a quality program:

- Is intentional and standards based.
- Is relevant to age and interests of students.

- Engages students in real-world, hands-on activities.
- Utilizes an arts process of doing, performing or exhibiting, and reflecting
- Builds skills, understanding, and enjoyment of the arts as a part of students' personal and academic/professional lives (intrinsic outcomes).
- Includes and involves artists, families and communities.
- Seeks artists or art partnerships to fill in the gaps in teaching the arts
- Uses the strategy of integration or project-based learning to address the arts and other subjects, or addresses in depth at least one of the arts, or both.
- Is informed by ongoing assessment of student needs and progress.
- Is delivered by well-trained staff.
- Develops a broad range of resources to support and sustain programming, especially local resources including people, material, space and financial resources.

Teaching Strategies: Arts Integration

Arts integration has increasingly been discussed as a way to gain the benefits of the arts as well as learning about other academic subjects (Burnaford et al, 2007). It can be used to learn about the arts, or, more commonly, to use the arts and arts strategies to learn about other subjects. This is usually approached through a Project-based curriculum that integrates the arts and other subjects around a common theme, such as pirates, or the undersea world, or Cinco de Mayo, as examples. In these cases, all of the subjects involved--measuring (math), history, science, writing, designing and construction may all come together as a learning experience, perhaps with a final presentation to an audience. The arts play a major role in the designing and

performing of the content, while other subjects provide an information base supporting student learning and expression through the arts.

Arts Integration is also a way to gain the collaborative benefits of working in small groups, having adult mentioning, providing a context for interchange and discussion of ideas, and having an outcome that everyone feels proud of. It is important to mention that arts integration is not the same as teaching about the arts, though in some cases it can cross art forms. The more common meaning is that the arts are used as the entry point to learn about other subjects, with the arts as the vehicle of learning. In many settings, this strategy is helpful in addressing a number of academic concerns, and can make learning fun. However, it is also important to learn about the specific arts, and build art skills and understandings, to have some of the benefits described in the research studies, especially those related to transfer between one art form and other subjects (i.e. music to math).

CONCLUSIONS

In considering the value of the arts to education and to afterschool, and after all this discussion of research findings and standards, it is perhaps appropriate with two reminders. The first is the statement made by the National Standards in the Arts in presenting the Arts Standards.⁵

⁵ retrieved from www.ed.gov/pubs/ArtsStandards.html

“The Importance of Arts Education Knowing and practicing the arts disciplines are fundamental to the healthy development of children's minds and spirits. That is why, in any civilization--ours included--the arts are inseparable from the very meaning of the term "education." We know from long experience that no one can claim to be truly educated who lacks basic knowledge and skills in the arts. There are many reasons for this assertion:

* The arts are worth studying simply because of what they are. Their impact cannot be denied. Throughout history, all the arts have served to connect our imaginations with the deepest questions of human existence: Who am I? What must I do? Where am I going? Studying responses to those questions through time and across cultures--as well as acquiring the tools and knowledge to create one's own responses--is essential not only to understanding life but to living it fully.

* The arts are used to achieve a multitude of human purposes: to present issues and ideas, to teach or persuade, to entertain, to decorate or please. Becoming literate in the arts helps students understand and do these things better.

* The arts are integral to every person's daily life. Our personal, social, economic, and cultural environments are shaped by the arts at every turn--from the design of the child's breakfast placemat, to the songs on the commuter's car radio, to the family's night-time TV drama, to the teenager's Saturday dance, to the enduring influences of the classics.

* The arts offer unique sources of enjoyment and refreshment for the imagination. They explore relationships between ideas and objects and serve as links between thought and action. Their continuing gift is to help us see and grasp life in new ways.

* There is ample evidence that the arts help students develop the attitudes, characteristics, and intellectual skills required to participate effectively in today's society and economy. The arts teach self-discipline, reinforce self-esteem, and foster the thinking skills and creativity so valued in the workplace. They teach the importance of teamwork and cooperation. They demonstrate the direct connection between study, hard work, and high levels of achievement.”

The second statement comes from Ellen Dissanayake, an arts philosopher who has written a number of books on why the arts are important, from the viewpoint of

evolutionary biology and cultural anthropology (from Stiegelbauer, 2002, see also Dissanayake, 1988):

“Ten reasons why the Arts are Important:

1. The arts help create a sense of identity both collective and personal
2. The arts build or celebrate a sense of community and reciprocity in working together on something
3. The arts provide an opportunity for us to use our hands and bodies in both physically and psychologically satisfying ways.
4. The arts appeal to and access nonverbal parts of our minds that may become neglected in our over-literate lives.
5. The arts help us learn. They are ways into other kinds of knowledge, thinking and creative problem solving.
6. The arts enhance and enrich the natural and man-made environments. They mark significant places, times and events.
7. The arts help us deal with anxiety, e.g. our mortality or that of other, illness, suffering. They give us “something to do” in times of uncertainty. They give a “form to feeling.”
8. The arts put us in touch with life concerns, which in our day-to-day life we often have not time for, e.g. the importance of love, redemption, desire, loss, hope, what life is all about.
9. The arts acknowledge things we care about, allow us to mark or to celebrate.
10. The arts awaken us to deeper self-understanding and higher levels of consciousness.”

Given these two statements, it is no wonder that the arts have a significant effect on any population or educational setting. In fact the question may be “why not the arts?” rather than “why the arts?” and the necessary proofs. The research and standards presented here provide lots of evidence as to the benefits of the arts, to schools and

afterschool settings, especially to disadvantaged learners. Given the anthropological perspective of Dissanayke or the humanist perspective of the National Standards' statement, the arts are an extension of being human, both process and product.

Working with the arts allows students to use all of themselves and to trust themselves to explore and express the information of the senses. Further, it helps them transform that information to communicate their understandings, even in traditional academic modes. If there is any goal in education, it must be that, to be “more of a human being” in all that might imply for an individual. The arts are, and have always been, a major path to that end.

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