

# Art and Education Report Summaries

## **Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development** edited by **Richard J. Deasy, Arts Education Partnership, 2002.**

“Schoolchildren exposed to drama, music and dance may do a better job at mastering reading, writing and math than those who focus solely on academics, says a report by the Arts Education Partnership.

“Notions that the arts are frivolous add-ons to a serious curriculum couldn’t be further from the truth,” says James Catterall, education professor at the University of California Los Angeles, who coordinated the research.

“The report is based on an analysis of 62 studies of various categories of art—ranging from dance, drama, music and visual arts—by nearly 100 researchers. It’s the first to combine all the arts and make comparisons with academic achievement, performance on standardized tests, improvements in social skills and student motivation.

“Catterall says the studies suggest that arts education may be especially helpful to poor students and those in need of remedial instruction.....

Learning in early childhood music training led to better cognitive development.

### Learning in the visual arts led to improved:

Content and organization of writing  
Sophisticated reading skills & interpretation of text  
Reasoning about scientific images  
Reading readiness

### Music

Music listening instruction led to better spatial reasoning and spatial temporal reasoning, quality of writing, and prolixity of writing  
Piano or keyboard learning led to mathematics proficiency and better spatial reasoning.  
Music performance learning led to increased self-efficacy and self-concept.  
Instrumental training led to better reading results and SAT verbal scores.  
Music with language learning led to better English skills for ESL learners.

### Drama instruction led to improved:

Story comprehension (oral and written)  
Character identification & motivation  
Increased peer interaction  
Writing proficiency & prolixity  
Conflict resolution skills  
Concentrated thought  
Understanding of social relationships  
Ability to understand complex issues & emotions

Problem-solving  
General self-concept

Dance instruction led to improved:

Self-confidence  
Persistence  
Reading skills  
Nonverbal reasoning  
Expressive skills  
Creativity in poetry  
Social tolerance  
Fluency of creative thinking  
Originality & flexibility in creative thinking

Integrated arts & academic school experiences led to improved:

Reading, verbal & math skills  
Creative thinking  
Achievement motivation  
Cognitive engagement  
Professional culture of the school  
School climate  
Community engagement and identity

Arts-rich school environment led to improved:

Creativity  
Engagement/attendance  
Range of personal and social developments  
Higher-order thinking skills

The Arts Education Partnership is a coalition of more than 100 national education, arts, philanthropic and government organizations.

**From Learning Through the Arts, by Dee Dickinson, New Horizons for Learning, 1997-2002.** (This report synthesizes a lot of research done during the 1990s.)

“The arts offer especially valuable tools to facilitate learning for those who are primarily visual and kinesthetic, in addition to making it possible for all students to learn more effectively, retain what they have learned, know how to apply what they have learned in a variety of contexts, and feel more positive about learning.”

“In a University of California study, preschoolers who received daily group singing lessons and weekly keyboard instruction for 8 months performed much better on tests of spatial reasoning (which is the basis for mathematical thinking) than children who had no music lessons. CAT and PET scans show that musical and spatial reasoning function in the same areas of the brain.”

“First graders who were taught the rhythm and melodies of folk songs 40 minutes a day for 7 months showed significantly higher reading scores than a control group.”

**From a Policy Letter signed by Education Secretary Rod Paige, July 2004, on ed.gov**

“The arts, perhaps more than any other subject, help students to understand themselves and others, whether they lived in the past or are living in the present.”

“Based on a review of data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study, UCLA researchers determined that students who were highly involved in arts instruction earned better grades and performed better on standardized tests. They also performed more community service, watched fewer hours of television, reported less boredom in school, and were less likely to drop out of school. These findings were also true for students from the lowest socioeconomic status quartile of the 25,000 students surveyed.” (The study referred to is also the Critical Links study referenced earlier.)

**Why the Arts Are Critical to Your Child’s Education**, by Karen Hafenstein, Director, The Northeast California Arts Project at CSU Chico. Printed in Shasta Parent Magazine.

She states that if one could get higher scores on achievement tests without a basic or integrated arts curriculum, “we would be left in a world where the best that we have to offer is a high-test-score graduate, but a person who can’t work with others, be creative and express himself, solve real-world problems, or do it with civility.”

**Americans for the Arts**, the nation’s leading arts information clearinghouse, with a 40 year record of objective arts industry research, says that young people who participate in the arts for at least three hours on three days each week through at least one full year are four times more likely to be recognized for academic achievement, four times more likely to participate in a math or science fair, and four times more likely to win an award for writing an essay or poem.

**From Arts for Academic Achievement: What Does Arts Integration Do For Students?** Oct 2003, a study prepared for The Minneapolis Public Schools, by Debra Ingram & Eric Riedel, Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement, College of Education and Human Development, University of Minnesota.

Scores on reading tests were higher for third grade students whose teacher integrated the arts into English & reading lessons. The same was true in math tests for third graders, for fourth grade reading and fifth grade math.

“Students whose teacher integrated the arts a lot into English/reading lessons had significantly higher gain scores on the reading tests than students whose teachers integrated the arts to a lesser degree.”