

# EDUCATION & the Arts

## The Arts Make the Grade

### Strengthen Academic Performance

Because the arts stress creative thinking and analytical skills, students who have a strong background in the arts are more likely to outperform academically their peers who do not.

According to a study by the Business Committee for the Arts, students who study the arts perform 30% better than those who do not.

Source: *Why Business Should Support the Arts: Facts, Figures, and Philosophy*, Business Committee for the Arts.

### Improve SAT Scores

Because the arts are closely associated with important ideas and events in history and contemporary life, students who have a good background in the arts are likely to have more information and insight to draw upon than those who do not.

Thus students in strong arts programs score well above their peers on SAT exams. In a recent study, SAT takers who studied the arts for more than four years scored 53 and 37 points higher on verbal and math respectively.

Source: The College Board Profile of SAT and Achievement Tests Takers for 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993.

## Why the Arts Are Basic to Education

- The arts enhance students creativity and increase creative thinking and problem-solving abilities.
- The arts use of both hemispheres of the brain, development of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills and learning styles.
- The arts increase communication skills vitally needed in today's complex society.
- The arts enhance basic literacy skills including cultural literacy and non-verbal stimuli.
- The arts enable students to acquire aesthetic judgement, a skill which enhances daily life and affects individual choices.
- The arts develop self esteem and help students gain a more positive self concept.
- The arts provide students better cross-cultural understanding through knowledge of civilizations and cultures past and present.
- The arts improve the school atmosphere and can aid in improving student attendance and decreasing the dropout rate.
- The arts provide numerous career opportunities both in the commercial and entertainment industries.
- The arts improve student performance in other subject areas.
- The arts are a valuable teaching tool in working with students with physical or mental disabilities and those with limited English proficiencies.

Source: *Arts for Everykid: A Handbook for Change* by Cory Ann Alperstein and Ronnie B. Weyl. See ERIC Document:ED365572

## Interdisciplinary Learning and the Arts

The visual arts in the school curriculum can be an ideal core for interdisciplinary learning. Few subjects lend themselves so well to the presentation and examination of the scope of human endeavor, especially because many artworks both predate and extend beyond written records and therefore serve as unique historical and cultural markers.

Several reasons support why the arts lend themselves to an integrated curriculum.

- Although we may debate specific meanings, the messages of great art are universal and understandable to all, regardless of divisions by time and culture.
- Because works of art are frequently the most valid records of past civilizations and societies, the visual arts can serve as time machines transporting students to prehistoric times and ancient cultures.
- Art is a common experience, a thread through the centuries and all cultures and civilizations.
- A uniquely human activity, the making and appreciation of art marks an important stage in human intellectual development.
- The creation of art is fundamental and necessary. In most non-Western cultures, art-making is an essential part of the culture, not a separate entity.
- The creation of art has sparked invention and exploration in other disciplines.

Source: "Teachers Program Guide" for *Connections in Art* by Cynthia Colbert and Rebecca Brooks. Davis Publications, 2000.



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**800.533.2847**

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