

# Synopsis of Arts Education Research

Studies are piling up that show both the intrinsic value of arts education, its impact on academic learning and the positive effects that employment in the arts has in the economy.

As arts educators, we must continue to share the case for arts education and bring the proof of its value to others daily.

**Ways of discussing the value of arts education:**

**1**

**Emphasize the impact arts education is having on overall K-12 academic achievement and preparation for postsecondary education.**

**2**

**Refute the common perception that “you can’t make a living as an artist,” which leads to an obvious and, to us, dangerous corollary: Why teach the arts?**

**“A culture populated by a people whose imagination is impoverished has a static future. In such a culture there will be little change because there will be little sense of possibility.”**

**—Elliot Eisner, Lee Jacks  
Professor of Education and professor of art, Stanford University**

**Arts education and academic achievement**

Studies continue to draw a reliable connection between arts education and engaged, successful students.

**Literacy and language development:**

Arts learning in music, drama, media arts and spoken word relates to high achievement in reading and writing and high verbal SAT scores. (1) Music training relates to stronger performances in learning a second language with greater improvement in expressive fluency and competency. (2)

**Mathematics achievement:**

Studies find a relationship between music and high mathematics SAT scores. Relationships also exist between dance and media arts learning in high school and high achievement in math. (3)

**Overall academic achievement:**

Research suggests a significant positive relationship between arts study and high school students’ overall academic achievement as measured by standardized tests and student grades. (4)

The Perpich Center for Arts Education recently published “Building a Legacy,” the first statewide assessment of K-12 arts education in Minnesota.

Two correlations between student achievement and arts education were identified in Minnesota.

**1**

**A positive relationship exists between a school’s Focus Rating (part of the Minnesota’s Multiple Measurement Rating or MMR) and higher levels of arts education (as measured by the arts education index).**

**2**

**There is a positive relationship between a school’s scores for the Graduation Required Assessment for Diploma (GRAD) reading assessment and higher levels of arts education.**

These positive correlations still hold when controlling for other “confounding” variables such as income, minority status or geography. Higher levels of arts education coincide with higher Focus Ratings (MMR) and GRAD reading scores. (5)

**Research finds that students who experience arts integrated curricula meet or significantly exceed state and district standardized test averages, even in schools with high populations of at-risk students. (6)**

**Underserved populations:**

There is a strong body of research that demonstrates ways in which the arts contribute to academic success for high school students from low socio-economic backgrounds, English-language learners and students with special needs. These populations demonstrate the greatest relative improvement in academic achievement when participating in the arts. (7)

**“As a matter of social justice, we must be concerned when students are denied access to a high-quality education—one that includes learning in and through the arts—simply because of where they live or go to school.”**

**— Sandra S. Ruppert, director of the Arts Education Partnership**

**Studies measuring creative thinking, critical thinking, problem solving and reasoning all find these functions increase and improve when arts education is added to the educational mix. (8)**

Correlative studies also show a strong relationship between arts education and:

- positive emotional development that leads to stronger abilities to self-regulate
- deep engagement in learning
- motivation to learn for understanding
- a decrease in disciplinary issues in schools
- self-awareness, self-concept and self-expression
- self-efficacy and self-confidence



## Synopsis on Arts Education Research — Continued

The creative industries are America's largest export with more than

**\$60 billion** annually in overseas sales. **97%**

of employers say creativity is of increasing importance but

**85%**

of employers concerned with hiring creative people are unable to find the applicants they seek.

Creativity-oriented jobs have gone from just over 10 percent of the U.S. economy to more than **30%.**

Sources: U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

### Arts education, employment and contributions to a healthy economy

An article in Business Week magazine said, "The game is changing . . . It isn't just about math and science any more (although those are surely important disciplines). It's about creativity, imagination and, above all, innovation."

*"Creativity is now the most important leadership quality for success in business, outweighing even integrity and global thinking."*

— IBM study of more than 1500 corporate heads and public sector leaders across 60 nations and 33 industries

### A number of materials point to the growing importance of creativity in today's economy:

A new report from the National Endowment for the Arts, "Artists in the Work Force: 1990-2005," shows that:

- There are now almost two million Americans who describe their primary occupation as artist.
- The size of the artistic community gives the group enormous aggregate income—approximately \$70 billion annually.
- Compared to other U.S. workers, American artists tend to be better educated and more entrepreneurial.
- The number of artists in the U.S. has remained constant as a percentage of the population for the past 15 years.

### Interviews with industry leaders looking at employment trends through 2016 for arts-related jobs predict that:

- Employment of artists and related workers is expected to grow 16 percent, faster than the average for all occupations.
- Employment of game designers is projected to grow by 14 percent.
- Employment of art directors is expected to grow by 12 percent.
- Employment in the motion picture and video industries is expected to grow 11 percent.
- Employment of interior designers is expected to grow by 19 percent.
- Employment of multimedia artists and animators is projected to grow by 13 percent.
- Employment growth by arts-centric businesses since 2007 was 11.6 percent, more than four times the rise in the total number of U.S. employees of 2.4 percent. (9)

*"The time has come to insist on an obvious but overlooked fact—artists are workers. They make things and perform services, just like other workers, and these goods and services have value"*

— Dana Gioia, chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts

*"I work with a lot of Fortune 500 companies, and they're always saying, 'We need people who can be innovative, who can think differently.'"*

— Sir Ken Robinson, author of *Out of Our Minds*

### "Artists Count: The Economic Impact of Minnesota's Individual Artists (2007)," a

statewide study conducted by lead organization Minnesota Citizens for the Arts (MCA), Springboard for the Arts and The Minnesota Crafts Council (MCC), found that of the 19,676 artists surveyed:

- Their economic impact in terms of their own spending was \$295 million.
- They supported 5,937 full-time-equivalent jobs.
- They generated \$24 million in state and local revenue.

The study also showed that artists are engaged in their communities, volunteering and voting to a higher degree than the rest of the population. (10)

1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8. The details of the studies cited may be found at <http://www.artsedsearch.org/summaries/14/17/32>

5. <http://www.pcae.k12.mn.us/survey/legacy.html>

9. Sources: Americans for the Arts, National Endowment for the Arts, U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Entertainment Software Association

10. <http://www.mncitizensforthearts.org/learn/artsresearch/artists-count-2/>