CultureCase

Arts engagement has a range of benefits for young people

This research was conducted by **Andrew J. Martin and five other people** at the **University of Sydney and the Australia Council for the Arts**

Summary

This paper is about the role of arts engagement on the academic and non-academic outcomes of children and young people. It reports a large and multi-faceted study that found that even after controlling for other relevant factors, arts engagement was associated with increased academic and nonacademic performance (measured by enhanced self-esteem, life satisfaction motivation and engagement). The research found that the home life of the children made a bigger difference than school and community factors. In-school arts tuition tended ‘to be associated more strongly with academic outcomes than non-school factors’. Both academic and nonacademic outcomes were more strongly correlated with active arts participation than attendance at arts events.

The research measured the effect of the young people engaging in the arts in school, at home, and in community settings

The researchers followed 643 children at 15 different schools on the east coast of Australia for 12 months. Just over a quarter were aged 11-12, a similar number aged 15-18 and the remaining 46 per cent were 12-15. The 15 schools comprised a mix of educational and governance types (eg state or independent, co-educational etc.). All students completed a survey at the start of the research and again one year later. The surveys measured their participation in arts education, their academic outcomes, nonacademic outcomes, and a range of demographic data.

Arts engagement comprised numerous forms of encounter with visual art, dance, drama, film/media, and music

These were arts attendance, active arts participation, parent-child arts interaction (including discussions about art or music), home arts-based resources (such as whether there were musical instruments in the home), external arts tuition, in-school arts tuition, and arts engagement. This final form of engagement was measured by asking the students to rate the extent to which they agreed with 'cognitive ("I believe I can do a good job in this subject/activity"), affective ("I'm happy to continue with this subject/activity through my schooling") and behavioral ("I persist at this subject/activity even when it is challenging or difficult")' aspects of their experiences. This metric 'speaks to the quality of young people's involvement, not simply its quantity'.

Keywords

Australia **satisfaction** **self-esteem** **school** **survey** **motivation** **education**

Title	The role of arts participation in students' academic and nonacademic outcomes: a longitudinal study of school, home, and community factors.
Author(s)	Martin, A. J., Mansour, M., Anderson, M., Gibson, R., Liem, G. A. D. & Sudmalis, D.
Publication date	2013
Source	Journal of Educational Psychology, Vol 105, Iss 3, pp 709-727
Link	**http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0032795**
Author email	**andrew.martin@sydney.edu.au**

By **Culture.Case** | 15 May 2014 | **Impacts of arts and culture** , **Educational impacts of arts and culture** , **Other social impacts of arts and culture** |

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