

Arts Integration: Overview of Research

Prepared by the Perpich Center for Arts Education, July 2012

Arts for Academic Achievement, Minnesota

Evaluation of the three-year Arts for Academic Achievement arts integration project, a Minneapolis Public Schools initiative, found significant positive impact on student learning, including **correlation of student achievement in reading and math with increased student participation in units of study using arts integration**. Other findings include:

- **Increased student leadership** often unanticipated by past academic performance
- Teachers acted as facilitators of learning rather than as dispensers of knowledge
- The **quality of student-to-student communication** increased

Source: Ingram, D. & Seashore, K.R. (2003). *Arts for academic achievement: Summative evaluation report*. Center for Applied Research and Education Improvement, College of Education and Human Development, University of Minnesota.

A+ Schools Program, North Carolina

The central vision of the A+ Schools Program is to create enhanced learning opportunities for all students by using arts-integrated instruction which incorporates theories of intelligence and recent brain research. In addition to the usual measures of student achievement and school success (expected gains in test scores, student and teacher attendance, student discipline, and parental involvement), evaluators identified the **unique contributions that the arts in education make to students' intellectual, social, and emotional growth... Schools have continued to achieve growth on North Carolina's accountability tests** comparable to that of other schools statewide without "narrowing" the curriculum. Data also indicated **increased parental communication, community involvement, teacher collaboration, and substantive assessments**.

Source: Corbett, D., McKenney, M., Noblit, G., & Wilson, B. (2001). *The arts, school identity, and comprehensive education reform: A final report from the evaluation of the A+ Schools Program*. Winston-Salem, NC: Kenan Institute for the Arts. In *Arts Integration Frameworks, Research, and Practice: A Literature Review, 2007*.

Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE), Illinois

CAPE advances the arts as a vital strategy for improving teaching and learning by increasing students' capacity for academic success, critical thinking and creativity. The CAPE arts integration program was integrated into many public schools. In a two-year study, in which CAPE school student achievement was compared to that of students in all Chicago public schools. On reading and mathematics standardized tests, **students in CAPE schools outscored other students on all 52 comparisons**.

Source: Catterall, J. S., & Waldorf, L. (1999). "Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education: Summary evaluation." In E. B. Fiske (Ed.), *Champions of change: The impact of the arts on learning* (pp. 47-62). Washington, DC: The Arts Education Partnership. In *Arts Integration Frameworks, Research, and Practice: A Literature Review, 2007*.

Perpich Arts Integration Project, Minnesota

The Perpich Arts Integration Project is a professional development project with goals to increase student learning in the arts and other content areas, as well as build teacher capacity. In its first year, **high levels of student proficiency based on state standards** in multiple subject areas were reported. Non-academic student outcomes, such as **ownership of and pride in work, perseverance and motivation**, were highlighted. Greatest teacher gains from the project were seen in increased understanding of arts integration; learning to collaborate with colleagues; and in designing assessments that align with standards, benchmarks, and learning goals.

Source: Treichel, C. J., & Paepke, A. (2012) *Perpich Arts Integration Project: Year 1 Evaluation Report*, The Perpich Center for Arts Education. <https://sites.google.com/a/pcae.k12.mn.us/legacy/>

Arts Integration: Overview of Research, Continued

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Oklahoma A+ Schools (OAS)

OAS students' **performances on standardized tests generally meet or significantly exceed state and district averages**, a striking finding considering that OAS schools serve a greater proportion of ethnic minorities and economically-disadvantaged students. Other findings include better attendance for students and teachers; decreased disciplinary problems in schools; joyful, engaged students; happier, more effective educators; creative, focused instruction; and more parent and community involvement.

Source: Barry, N. H. (2010). *Oklahoma A+ Schools: What the research tells us 2002-2007. Volume three, quantitative measures.* Oklahoma A+ Schools/University of Central Oklahoma.

Professional development for arts teachers: Building curriculum, community, and leadership

Network-based professional development involving arts specialists across a district has the potential to make large, lasting impact. In the professional development in this study, arts specialists developed strong peer-relationships and became leaders in their schools working with their principals and becoming collaborators on arts integration with non-arts teachers. Arts specialist also became involved in school improvement processes. **Through the leadership of the arts specialist, school change began.**

Source: Burnaford, G. (2009). *A study of professional development for arts teachers: Building curriculum, community, and leadership in elementary schools.* *Journal for Learning through the Arts*, 5(1).

Learning Through the Arts (LTTA): Lessons of Engagement

In the third year of the program, students in the LTTA program **scored higher than the two control counterparts on tests of mathematic computation and estimation.** The benefits of the LTTA program in mathematics achievement occurred for children of all socioeconomic classes. LTTA had a positive effect on achievement on the mathematics test after three years, indicating that the **effects of arts on student achievement are not sudden but gradual and require sustained access to arts instruction.** The data indicated that involvement in the arts went hand-in-hand with engagement in learning at school, with benefits extending to cognitive, physical, emotional, and social aspects.

Source: Smithrim, K., & Uptis, R. (2005). *Learning through the Arts: Lessons of Engagement.* *Canadian Journal of Education*, 28(1/2), 109-127.

Effectiveness of Arts-Based Curriculum for Second Language Learners

Students in the arts-based program demonstrated significant gains over the comparison group in all areas tested. They made **large gains in English skills and reading skills.** When comparing the pre- and post-test scores on standardized proficiency and achievement tests in reading and English, the control group showed an overall gain of less than half as many points in the reading assessments and one quarter as many points in the English assessments than their arts treatment group counterparts.

Source: Spina, U. (2006). *Worlds together... words apart: An assessment of the effectiveness of arts-based curriculum for second language learners.* *Journal of Latinos & Education*, 5(2), 24.

Achievement Data, Drama, and Arts Integration

Using randomized control trial design, the study shows that drama-integrated language arts instruction **not only increases language arts achievement, but math achievement as well.** Since the New Jersey mathematics test places significant weight on a student's ability to write about how he or she arrived at a particular answer, writing skills are useful for the mathematics test. Overall, the results imply that the program would increase student achievement across all subjects that require writing skills.

Source: Walker, E., Tabone, C. & Weltsek, G. (2011). *When achievement data meet drama and arts integration.* *Language Arts*, 88(5), 365-372.