

The Value of Arts Education in a Global and Technological World

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Abstract

Arts Education is important because firstly, it can improve students' performance in other classes as well as beyond school. It provides an environment of active and non-punitive learning which can translate into greater interest and participation and higher school retention, as well as building self-esteem and self-confidence. It also fosters development of additional learning skills, such as critical and complex thinking, that can carry over into other classes and beyond.

Arts Education has value not only for what it offers with respect to other disciplines, but also in and of itself. In our increasingly global world, it encourages respect and appreciation for individuality and diversity. In our age of industry, technology and information, it keeps us in touch with our senses. It engages not only our minds, but also our imaginations, our emotions, our spirits, and reminds us of what it means to be human.

Introduction

When education budgets are cut, arts programs are among the first to feel the axe. Yet what is the ultimate purpose of education in today's world? If it is to create a future work-force that can be competitive in a global economy, then many studies have shown the arts to improve academic achievement including higher SAT scores even in mathematics. If it is to create a responsible citizenry that will uphold the values of democracy in a world threatened by terrorism, then the arts have been shown to foster these values: to think for oneself, to respect each individual. Further, the things we learn in school are important not only for their economic or political payoff, but also because they teach us something about ourselves. The arts are the mirror inviting us to reflect on who and what we are. In a world both increasingly global and increasingly technological, the arts remind us of what it means to be human.

Arts Education can improve students' performance in other classes and beyond.

In spite of the fact that the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 recognized the arts as part of the core curriculum,¹ arts programs in schools have been increasingly threatened by budget cuts, often affecting the schools and neighborhoods that need these programs most.² At the same time, numerous studies have shown that students participating in arts programs do better on their SAT's, as well as academically overall, than students who do not so participate.³ Improvements are seen not only in verbal but also in math areas. Moreover, the longer students participate in arts programs, the greater the benefits.⁴ Yet arts programs are often cut from schools in poorer neighborhoods serving the very children that the No Child Left Behind Act was supposed to address.⁵

¹ Information on The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 can be found at: <http://www2.ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml>, which includes the link to a copy of the act at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/index.html>. For discussion of the act, see especially: Ruppert, S. S., *Critical Evidence: How the Arts Benefit Student Achievement*. 2006. National Assembly of State Art Agencies and Arts Education Partnership. <http://www.nasaaarts.org/Research/Key-Topics/Arts-Education/critical-evidence.pdf>. pp.3-6.

² Kirkland, L. D. and Manning, M. Keeping the Arts Alive in a Test-Crazed Culture. *Childhood Education*. Summer 2011. p. 285; Ruppert, S. S., *Critical Evidence: How the Arts Benefit Student Achievement*. 2006. National Assembly of State Art Agencies and Arts Education Partnership. <http://www.nasaaarts.org/Research/Key-Topics/Arts-Education/critical-evidence.pdf>. p. 1.

³ Major overviews and collections of numerous papers on how the arts impact academic achievement include: Deasy, R. J. Ed. *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Achievement and Social Development*. 2002. Washington, D.C. Arts Education Partnership. <http://www.aep-arts.org/> and <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/ERIC-ED466413/pdf/ERIC-ED466413.pdf>; Fiske, E., Ed. *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning*. Arts Education Partnership and President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. 1999. artsedge.kennedycenter.org/champions/pdfs/ChampsReport.pdf; Goldhawk, S. *Young Children and the Arts: Making Creative Connections. A Report of the Task Force on Children's Learning and the Arts: Birth to Age Eight*. 1998. Arts Education Partnership, Council of Chief State School Officers, Washington, D.C.; Ruppert, S. S., *Critical Evidence: How the Arts Benefit Student Achievement*. 2006. National Assembly of State Art Agencies and Arts Education Partnership. <http://www.nasaaarts.org/Research/Key-Topics/Arts-Education/critical-evidence.pdf>. See also the Arts Education Partnership website (<http://www.aep-arts.org/>) for additional sources.

⁴ See Catterall, J. S., Chapleau, R., and Iwanaga, J. Involvement in the Arts and Human Development: General Involvement and Intensive Involvement in Music and Theater Arts. In Fiske, E. Ed. *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning*. Arts Education Partnership and President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. 1999. artsedge.kennedy-center.org/champions/pdfs/ChampsReport.pdf. pp. 1-18; Ruppert, S. S., *Critical Evidence: How the Arts Benefit Student Achievement*. 2006. National Assembly of State Art Agencies and Arts Education Partnership. <http://www.nasaaarts.org/Research/Key-Topics/Arts-Education/critical-evidence.pdf>. esp. p. 9 with additional source.

⁵ On the arts and disenfranchised youths, see, for example: Catterall, J. S., Chapleau, R., and Iwanaga, J. Involvement in the Arts and Human Development: General Involvement and Intensive Involvement in Music and Theater Arts. In Fiske, E. Ed. *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning*. Arts Education Partnership and President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. 1999. artsedge.kennedy-center.org/champions/pdfs/ChampsReport.pdf. pp. 1-18; Catterall, J. S. and Waldorf, L. Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education: Summary Evaluation. In Fiske, E. Ed. *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning*. Arts Education Partnership and President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. 1999. artsedge.kennedycenter.org/champions/pdfs/ChampsReport.pdf. pp. 47-62; Kennedy, J. R. The Effects of Musical Performance, Rational Emotive Therapy and Vicarious Experience on the Self-Efficacy and Self-Esteem of Juvenile Delinquents and Disadvantaged Children. In Deasy, R. J. Ed. *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student*

One issue for many who question whether arts programs really improve students' academic performance, for example on SAT's, is whether the relationship between the arts programs and the SAT scores is causal or correlative.⁶ In other words, did the arts programs actually *cause* improvements in scores, or is it just that students who happened to be involved in arts programs also scored higher on their SAT's? But does it really matter? If studies of enough students show a pattern that students involved in arts programs academically outperform students not so involved, then is not such a pattern enough to warrant keeping and financially supporting the arts programs?⁷

A second issue for critics concerns that of transfer: how can we tell that the skills fostered by Arts Education transfer over to other academic disciplines?⁸ But this question implies that the brain segregates skills or information that it derives from different life experiences, which is counter-intuitive. It also assumes that the arts are themselves segregated from other disciplines, which is not the case. Leonardo da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man* at once pays homage to human anatomy and geometric symbolism, and contemporary artist Tony Robbin's initial interest in Non-Western pattern

Academic and Social Development. 2002. Washington, DC. Arts Education Partnership. <http://www.aep-arts.org/> and <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/ERIC-ED466413/pdf/ERIC-ED466413.pdf>. pp. 119-120; Oreck, B., Baum, S., and McCartney, H. Artistic Talent Development for Urban Youth: The Promise and the Challenge. In Fiske, E. Ed. *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning*. Arts Education Partnership and President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. 1999. artsedge.kennedy-center.org/champions/pdfs/ChampsReport.pdf. pp. 63-78.

⁶ See Vaughn, K. and Winner, E. SAT Scores of Students Who Study the Arts: What We Can and Cannot Conclude about the Association. *Journal of Aesthetic Education*. Vol. 34. Nos.3-4. Fall-Winter 2000. pp. 77-89; Winner, E. and Hetland, L. Beyond the Evidence Given: A Critical Commentary on *Critical Links*. *Arts Education Policy Review*. Vol. 104. No. 3. Jan./Feb. 2003. pp. 13-15. See also Eisner, E. W. Does Experience in the Arts Boost Academic Achievement? *Arts Education Policy Review*. Vol. 100. No. 1. Sep./Oct. 1998. pp. 32-38.

⁷ See especially Catterall's and others' research on over 25,000 middle and high school students: Catterall, J. S. Involvement in the Arts and Success in Secondary School. In Deasy, R. J. Ed. *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development*. 2002. Washington, DC. Arts Education Partnership. <http://www.aep-arts.org/> and <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/ERIC-ED466413/pdf/ERIC-ED466413.pdf>. pp. 68-69; Catterall, J. S., Chapleau, R., and Iwanaga, J. Involvement in the Arts and Human Development: Extending an Analysis of General Associations and Introducing the Special Cases of Intensive Involvement in Music and in Theatre Arts. In Deasy, R. J. Ed. *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development*. 2002. Washington, DC. Arts Education Partnership. <http://www.aep-arts.org/> and <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/ERIC-ED466413/pdf/ERIC-ED466413.pdf>. pp. 70-71; Catterall, J. S., Chapleau, R., and Iwanaga, J. Involvement in the Arts and Human Development: General Involvement and Intensive Involvement in Music and Theater Arts. In Fiske, E. Ed. *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning*. Arts Education Partnership and President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. 1999. artsedge.kennedy-center.org/champions/pdfs/ChampsReport.pdf. pp. 1-18.

⁸ On the question of transfer: See Burton, J., Horowitz, R., and Abeles, H. Learning In and Through the Arts: The Question of Transfer. In Deasy, R. J. Ed. *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development*. 2002. Washington, DC. Arts Education Partnership. <http://www.aep-arts.org/> and <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/ERIC-ED466413/pdf/ERIC-ED466413.pdf>. pp. 66-67; Catterall, J. S. The Arts and the Transfer of Learning. In Deasy, R. J. Ed. *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development*. 2002. Washington, DC. Arts Education Partnership. <http://www.aep-arts.org/> and <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/ERIC-ED466413/pdf/ERIC-ED466413.pdf>. pp. 151-157. For the countering argument: Winner, E. and Hetland, L. Beyond the Evidence Given: A Critical Commentary on *Critical Links*. *Arts Education Policy Review*. Vol. 104. No. 3. Jan./Feb. 2003. pp. 13-14.

and decoration has evolved into explorations of the fourth dimension of space.⁹ Thus, a student reflecting on art reflects on more than art.

Arts Education provides an environment of active and non-punitive learning which can translate into greater interest and participation and higher school retention, as well as building self-esteem and self-confidence.

Many studies show that arts programs can improve students' attitudes, not just about the arts, but about school generally and consequently about themselves.¹⁰ Such change in attitude might have to do with the type of environment the arts provide. When children are young, they learn through play.¹¹ The type of play does not matter; what matters is that they are fully engaged and active participants. Moreover, they can throw and drop things, and make mistakes. Things change when they enter the classroom environment, and the further along in school they progress, the more this classroom environment seems to distance itself from that of childhood play. As students, they learn new and important values – discipline, self-control. They are told to sit down, behave, be quiet. Yes, they are encouraged to participate, but not out of turn. One raises one's hand, while everyone else

⁹ On Tony Robbin: Kozloff, J. et al. *Tony Robbin: A Retrospective*. 2011. Manchester, VT and New York. Orlando Museum of Art in association with Hudson Hills Press; Robbin, T. *Shadows of Reality: The Fourth Dimension in Relativity, Cubism, and Modern Thought*. 2006. New Haven and London. Yale University Press.

¹⁰ On the arts and students' attitudes toward school as well as themselves: see, for example: Andrews, L. J. Effects of an Integrated Music and Reasoning Instructional Approach on Fifth-Grade Students' Reading Achievement, Reading Attitude, Music Achievement, and Music Attitude. In Deasy, R. J. Ed. *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development*. 2002. Washington, DC. Arts Education Partnership. <http://www.aep-arts.org/> and <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/ERIC-ED466413/pdf/ERIC-ED466413.pdf>. pp. 102-103; Barry, N., Taylor, J., and Walls, K. The Role of the Fine and Performing Arts in High School Dropout Prevention. In Deasy, R. J. Ed. *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development*. 2002. Washington, DC. Arts Education Partnership. <http://www.aep-arts.org/> and <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/ERIC-ED466413/pdf/ERIC-ED466413.pdf>. pp. 74-75; Oreck, B., Baum, S., and McCartney, H. Artistic Talent Development for Urban Youth: The Promise and the Challenge. In Fiske, E. Ed. *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning*. Arts Education Partnership and President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. 1999. artsedge.kennedy-center.org/Champions/pdfs/ChampsReport.pdf. pp. 69-70; Ruppert, S. S., *Critical Evidence: How the Arts Benefit Student Achievement*. 2006. National Assembly of State Art Agencies and Arts Education Partnership. <http://www.nasaaarts.org/Research/Key-Topics/Arts-Education/critical-evidence.pdf>. p. 14.

On self-esteem, see esp.: Blatt-Gross, C. Casting the Conceptual Net: Cognitive Possibilities for Embracing the Social and Emotional Richness of Art Education. *Studies in Art Education*. Vol. 51. No. 4. Summer 2010. pp. 359-360 (including additional sources); . Kennedy, J. R. The Effects of Musical Performance, Rational Emotive Therapy and Vicarious Experience on the Self-Efficacy and Self-Esteem of Juvenile Delinquents and Disadvantaged Children. In Deasy, R. J. Ed. *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development*. 2002. Washington, DC. Arts Education Partnership. <http://www.aep-arts.org/> and <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/ERIC-ED466413/pdf/ERIC-ED466413.pdf>. pp. 119-120.

¹¹ On play and learning: Goldhawk, S. *Young Children and the Arts: Making Creative Connections. A Report of the Task Force on Children's Learning and the Arts: Birth to Age Eight*. 1998. Arts Education Partnership, Council of Chief State School Officers, Washington, D.C. <http://aep-arts.org>. Introduction, p. v.

is quiet and listening. And often the teacher is looking for a particular answer, because in school, unlike in play, there is a right and a wrong answer. So if a child gets it wrong, and everyone else is listening, how likely is that child to raise his or her hand again? How many wrong answers before one stops putting one's hand up? How long before one disengages?

Arts programs re-create the environment of play¹² in that the students are active participants in arenas that encourage rather than penalize risk-taking. "Practice" and "Rehearsal" institutionalize the opportunity for making mistakes, giving students permission to *not* get it right the first time. The arts teach students that learning is a process.

Even when students are not performing—even when they are the audience for a play or a dance or painting—not only their minds but their senses and imaginations are called upon. And because art is multivalent, because it operates on so many levels and involves both the artwork and the audience, there is room for interpretation, for different perspectives, for more than one right answer.

Howard Gardner and others have pointed out that there is more than one type of intelligence—that different people learn in different ways, but also that the same individual might call upon different types of intelligences at different moments, depending on the circumstances.¹³ Gardner's list of intelligence types included the expected linguistic and logical—mathematical types, but also types such as musical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, and others. The implications of Gardner's findings are, firstly, that students who are not strong linguistically or mathematically are not necessarily 'stupid,' but may be intelligent in a different way; and secondly, that there may be alternative ways for educators to help students learn. As studies have shown, integrating the arts and an arts-like environment into the general curriculum facilitates learning and thus allows previously marginalized students to demonstrate, to others but especially to themselves, that they actually *can* learn.¹⁴ To know that one *can* learn provides motivation to *want* to learn.

¹² On this topic, and on adopting such an environment in other classes, see, for example: Strand, K. The Heart and the Journey: Case Studies of Collaboration for Arts Integrated Curricula. *Arts Education Policy Review*. Vol. 108. No. 1. Sep./Oct. 2006. pp. 29-40.

¹³ See, for example: Gardner, H. *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. 1983, 2011. New York. Basic Books; Smith, M. K. Howard Gardner and Multiple Intelligences. 2002, 2008. *The Encyclopedia of Informal Education*. <http://www.infed.org/thinkers/gardner.htm>.

¹⁴ See, for example: Fiske, E. Ed. *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning*. Arts Education Partnership and President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. 1999. artsedge.kennedy-

Higher self-esteem is interconnected with better school performance.¹⁵ Students who are confident in themselves are more likely to participate, to interact with others, to put themselves out there and take risks, even if there is a chance of making a mistake or failing. But are these not also the characteristics we would like to see extend beyond the classroom and into the job market or the community?¹⁶ What is the point of investing years drilling subject matter into a child's head if, upon leaving the school system, he or she lacks the confidence to apply that subject matter in the real world? Self-image is interconnected with self-actualization. Moreover, it is not just future workers or voters that schools turn out, but human beings, whom one hopes will have the capacity for empathy, compassion, love, and selflessness. It is a risk and takes courage to open one's heart to a person, or a people, who might not reciprocate and who might even resent one.

Arts Education fosters development of skills such as critical and complex thinking that can carry over into other classes and beyond.

A chapter of a textbook, like any scholarly work, is written in linear prose. We move from beginning to end, toward a conclusion that tells us what we should have understood from that chapter, with main points boldfaced in between. Not so a play by Shakespeare, where time moves in either direction and words and people are more than what they seem. Nor so an abstract painting, which, to paraphrase Picasso, 'is removed from the reality of the retina, but conveys the sense of reality.'¹⁷ Nor a musical composition, where one relies on one's ears to discern rhythm, pattern, and variation.

It is not surprising that so many studies have found arts programs to foster critical and complex thinking skills.¹⁸ Artworks are complex and

center.org/champions/pdfs/ChampsReport.pdf. pp. viii-ix; Kirkland, L. D. and Manning, M. Keeping the Arts Alive in a Test-Crazed Culture. *Childhood Education*. Summer 2011. pp. 285-287.

¹⁵ See above, note 10.

¹⁶ See, for example, Matkin, K. and Smith, N. Arts Education for Life and Work. *A Fine FACTA*. Vol. 1. No. 1. Getty Education Institute for the Arts. Summer 1998. pp. 39-40.

¹⁷ Said Picasso, "Any form which conveys to us the sense of reality is the one which is furthest removed from the reality of the retina...." From a conversation of May 23, 1954, quoted in Ashton, D. Ed. *Picasso on Art: A Selection of Views*. 1972. New York. Da Capo Press. p. 82.

¹⁸ On the arts and the development of thinking, see especially: Blatt-Gross, C. Casting the Conceptual Net: Cognitive Possibilities for Embracing the Social and Emotional Richness of Art Education. *Studies in Art Education*. Vol. 51. No. 4. Summer 2010. pp. 353-367; Burton, J., Horowitz, R., and Abeles, H. Learning In and Through the Arts: Curriculum Implications. In Fiske, E. Ed. *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning*. Arts Education Partnership and President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. 1999. artsedge.kennedycenter.org/champions/pdfs/ChampsReport.pdf. pp. 38-42; Eisner, E. W. *The Arts and the Creation of Mind*. 2002. New Haven. Yale University Press; Eisner, E. W. The Arts and the Creation of Mind. *Language Arts*. Vol. 80. No. 5. May 2003. pp. 340-344.

multivalent, and they challenge students to engage on complex and multidimensional levels.¹⁹ Textbooks give students information. Artworks invite students to participate in alternate realities that ask them to make connections, hypothesize, and interpret.

Scholars have noted that the arts foster students' ability to handle not just complex thinking, but ambiguity.²⁰ Why would it be of value for students to feel intellectually comfortable with ambiguity? Firstly, there are many academic scenarios in which the answer is not clear-cut, such as issues involving how or why: Why did we go to war against this or that country? How could people have allowed the Holocaust to happen? How could there be a God if there is proof of evolution? These are the types of questions to which textbook information proves insufficient to answer, but that we should want students to ask so that they might grow not only academically, but also as human beings.

Moreover, as the world becomes more global, students will become increasingly exposed to people from culturally different backgrounds, if not in their hometowns or high schools, then at college or on the job, and most certainly in cyberspace. To be comfortable with ambiguity is to recognize that someone can have a different understanding of God, for example, but still be a good person.

Arts Education encourages respect and appreciation for individuality and diversity.

The arts by nature foster individualism and diversity. No performance of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is ever the same thing twice; if it were, people would stop going to watch. Likewise, Medieval and Renaissance versions of the Madonna and Christ-child can hang in the same museum, each one offering something new to the viewer; and how many contemporary singers give their own spin to an old standard? The script might be the same, but we

¹⁹ The examples are endless, but for one, see Nordlund, C., Speirs, P., and Stewart, M. An Invitation to Social Change: Fifteen Principles for Teaching Art. *Art Education*. Vol. 63. No. 5. Sep. 2010. pp. 36-41.

²⁰ See, for example: Blatt-Gross, C. Casting the Conceptual Net: Cognitive Possibilities for Embracing the Social and Emotional Richness of Art Education. *Studies in Art Education*. Vol. 51. No. 4. Summer 2010. esp. p. 356; Burton, J., Horowitz, R., and Abeles, H. Learning In and Through the Arts: Curriculum Implications. In Fiske, E. Ed. *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning*. Arts Education Partnership and President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. 1999. artsedge.kennedycenter.org/champions/pdfs/ChampsReport.pdf. esp. pp. 42-45.

look or listen for what has changed as much as for what sounds familiar. Yet while the script is the same, the experience is not, because every performer brings something new to it, and because the audience brings something as well: an emotion, a mood, a memory. Thus, the same song or book can be different to two different people, or even to the same person at two different moments. Unlike the script, we evolve. Like the performance, we are at every new moment unique.

Why should schools be concerned about the value of individualism? Individualism is interconnected with democracy, and democracy is interconnected with human rights.²¹ The struggles for democracy in past and recent history have been struggles to give voice to all individuals, all members of a society, not just those of the dominant political party, economic class, religious sect, ethnicity, or even gender. To have a voice in a democracy, or in a representational form of government that is 'of the people,' means to be able to vote for those who create the laws, but also to be treated fairly under those laws. It means having the same rights, opportunities, freedoms, and protections as everyone else, no matter how 'unimportant' or in the minority one is. Democracies are the hope and dream of so many in the world today because they value every individual, not by virtue of position or possession, but by virtue of simply being human.

Arts Education fosters appreciation for the senses.

We live in a technological world where cyberspace is the new hometown, and where students walk around glued to their mechanical devices, engaged in texting rather than engaging with the world around them, oblivious to neither people nor their surroundings. How much of life's beauty is lost when we become so mechanical? How can a phone-text compare to the nuance in a human voice, or the smell of newly-mowed grass, or the colors of a sunset? The arts invite students to put down the devices and become fully engaged, using not only their minds or even emotions but also their

²¹ For related discussions, see: Bastos, F. M. C. What Does Social Justice Art Education Look Like? *Art Education*. Vol. 63. No. 5. Sep. 2010. pp. 2-3; Dewhurst, M. An Inevitable Question: Exploring the Defining Features of Social Justice Art Education. *Art Education*. Vol. 63. No. 5. Sep. 2010. pp. 7-13; Nordlund, C., Speirs, P., and Stewart, M. An Invitation to Social Change: Fifteen Principles for Teaching Art. *Art Education*. Vol. 63. No. 5. Sep. 2010. esp. p. 40; Zwiirn, S. and Libresco, A. Art in Social Studies Assessments: An Untapped Resource for Social Justice Education. *Art Education*. Vol. 63. No. 5. Sep. 2010. pp. 30-35.

senses.²² Working through and with the senses, the arts foster an appreciation *for* the senses. For all of humankind's great intellectual achievements, it is the senses that provide the poetry of human existence. To smell a turkey and be brought back to a childhood Thanksgiving, to hear a song and recall one's first or last love. To hear the waves crashing on the shore and lose track of who is texting....

Conclusion

What does it mean to be human? We live in a technological age, an information age, a computer age. Computers can process and generate information automatically. We cannot. Little to nothing comes automatically for most if not all of us. To be human is to struggle, to sometimes—maybe often—fail, to hopefully try again. The arts remind us that the struggle is part of the process. Hopefully, too, we empathize with others who struggle. We may not intellectually grasp every nuance of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, but we are moved by the characters, because the alternate reality that the arts present to us is often, in some way, a reflection of our own reality.

Elliott Eisner writes about the importance of developing not just the brain but the mind, and of acquiring not just information but meaning.²³ The arts remind us that, often, what is most meaningful to us is not what we intellectually grasp but what we feel. We are less but more than computers. We take in the world with our whole beings, not just one part of our beings. We may not always understand or agree with our fellow humans, but when we see them struggle, we are hopefully moved to reach out to them.

To be human is to be imperfect, for 'only the gods are perfect.' To be human is to have limitations—the ultimate limitation being our own mortality—but to persevere in the face of these limitations. The arts immortalize humans' highest achievements and aspirations. From the earliest cave paintings to urban graffiti, they testify to humans' unwavering impulse to create, even in the face of great hardship, or perhaps as an

²² Also discussing the significance of the arts and the senses: Eisner, E. W. *The Arts and the Creation of Mind*. 2002. New Haven. Yale University Press; Eisner, E. W. The Arts and the Creation of Mind. *Language Arts*. Vol. 80. No. 5. May 2003. esp. pp. 341-343.

²³ Eisner, E. W. *The Arts and the Creation of Mind*. 2002. New Haven. Yale University Press; Eisner, E. W. The Arts and the Creation of Mind. *Language Arts*. Vol. 80. No. 5. May 2003. esp. p. 341. See also Blatt-Gross, C. Casting the Conceptual Net: Cognitive Possibilities for Embracing the Social and Emotional Richness of Art Education. *Studies in Art Education*. Vol. 51. No. 4. Summer 2010. pp. 353-367.

answer to it. The arts offer an alternative story to that of the catalogues of war and destruction recorded in history texts. They testify, to young people especially, that in spite of the struggle, the journey ahead is one of great beauty and promise.

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