

# Advocating for Arts Education

*"...the arts provide a special way of coming to understand something" - Graeme Sullivan (2015, p. 24)*

## **The Young Learner:**

Pre-K to Primary/ Junior

*The benefits of arts education for young learners (from toddlers to the first half of their elementary school experience) are:*

- An improvement of fine motor skills through completing hands-on, creative tasks such as, colouring, cutting with scissors and holding a paint brush.
- Increases in language development.
- The strengthening of problem-solving, critical-thinking skills and decision making.
- Enhances the development of visual-spatial skills.
- Introductions to and increases a child's knowledge surrounding cultural awareness through various art-based medias.
- An increase in higher academic scores, specifically in literacy and numeracy.

**Source:** pbs.org

## **School Aged to High School:**

Junior- Intermediate/ Senior

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*The benefits of arts education for young learners (from the senior years of elementary school to high school) are:*

- The ability to transform environments for learning, where schools become places of discovery and imagination.
- An increase in higher academic scores, specifically in literacy and numeracy.
- Greater involvement in arts education made a positive impact on students' engagement with learning, and for students from indigenous communities, leads to improved attendance.
- An improvement in verbal and non-verbal communication skills.
- An improvement in abilities to think critically and imaginatively.
- Lower dropout rates.
- An increase in peer engagement and collaboration.

**Source:** Government of Ontario's  
Ministry of Culture

## **Post-Secondary:**

For students studying in the field of the creative arts

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*Studies have shown that students who continue to study the creative arts throughout their post-secondary education....*

- Are less likely to drop out of their post-secondary education as a direct effect of the arts and additional institutional factors.
- Gain a sense of belonging.
- Find their own self and/or student identity.
- Display higher academic scores.
- Have access to hands-on and/or real-life experience in the field of the creative.
- Has the opportunity to increase one's social-capital through making connections with faculty, staff, peers and/or working professionals.

\*Please note that some of these benefits of arts education at the post-secondary level are transferrable across a variety of disciplines.

**Source:** Karns. K – *Institutional Factors That Influence Creative Arts Students to Peruse Further Education Post-Baccalaureate in an Education-Based Program* (2020)

## **Continuing Education:**

### **Adult Learner and The Aging Population**

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*The benefits of arts education for adult learners of all ages are:*

- Supports positive-health and positive aging.
- Provides a greater sense of well-being and quality of life.
- Bridges the gap between generations (often through sharing music, photos and old and new art).
- The improvement of memory later in life (The act of reminiscing).
- Encourages a sustainment of self-autonomy.
- Encourages self-affirmation.
- Is often a new outlet for self-expression.
- Provides the opportunity to fulfill a childhood and/or recent goal/ dream.

**Source:** Creech, A., Hallam, S., Varvarigou, M., Gaunt, H., Mcqueen, H., & Pincas, A. (2014). The role of musical possible selves in supporting subjective well-being in later life. *Music Education Research*, 16(1), 32-49.

## Additional Recourses on Arts Education

- Eisner, E., (2002). What the arts teach and how it shows. The arts and the creation of mind (pp. 70-92). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Sullivan G. (2006). Research acts in art practice. Studies in Art Education: A Journal of Issues and research, 48(1), 19-35.
- Laes, T. (2015). Empowering later adulthood music education: A case study of a rock band for third-age learners. International Journal of Music Education, 33(1), 51-65.
- [http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/WW\\_Engaging\\_Arts.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/WW_Engaging_Arts.pdf)
- <https://www.artsnetwork.ca/sites/default/files/Benefits%20of%20Arts%20Education%20E1.pdf>
- [https://www.artsnetwork.ca/research\\_reports](https://www.artsnetwork.ca/research_reports)

*"Art practice is a profound form of human engagement that offers important ways to inquire into issues of ideas of personal, social and cultural importance."*

*- Graeme Sullivan (2015, p. 24)*



## **About The Researcher**

This research was completed by Kaitlyn Karns (M.Ed) who is a graduate of the University of Windsor's Master of Education program. Kaitlyn's focus is in curriculum theory and development and completed a thesis exploring the relationship between higher education and the creative arts. Aside from her work, Kaitlyn is also an active member of both the performing arts and music communities in Windsor, Ontario.



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