

Research Facts Sheet: Student Engagement

The Arts facilitate increased rates of classroom participation and engagement.

USA 1999: the arts engage those students who were otherwise difficult to engage, connect students to themselves, to each other as well as to the world, transform the learning environment, and importantly, challenge those students who were already successful. (*Champions of Change*-summary by Ewing, p.13)

Canada, 2007-9: Over 1200 students were surveyed at 15 sites over two school years. 30% of students reported an increase in experiences of engagement (doing, feeling, and learning) as they encountered unique contexts, content, processes, and/or outcomes of learning through artistic inquiry. (*ArtsSmarts' Impact on Student Engagement: First Research Report*, p. 5)

UK 2005-6: Arts participation led to reported increases in social skills and self-esteem. ("Right to Read" program cited in *Cultural Learning Alliance*, 2011 Key Research Findings)

The Arts intrinsically increase self-confidence, awareness of enjoyment and creativity.

EU 2011: Students who practise educational theatre and drama feel more confident in reading, understanding tasks, communication, and humour than non-drama students. Students who regularly participate in educational theatre/ drama are more likely to feel creative, like going to school more than their peers, and enjoy school activities more. (*Drama Improves Lisbon Key Competences in Education* (DICE) 2011)

AUS, 2004: Involvement in arts programmes has a positive impact on students' engagement with learning and, for students from Indigenous communities, leads to improved attendance at School. (Bryce, J. et al in Ewing, p.24)

AUS, 2005: Children of 5-15 yrs in 28 schools perceived the arts as having an important meaning in their lives, as a way of expressing and communicating thoughts and feelings. They identified reflective thinking, problem solving, skill development, as well as practice and hard work as features of arts participation. (Barrett and Smiegel in Ewing, p.25)

USA 2004: The "intrinsic benefits" of arts experiences include: the pleasure and emotional stimulation of a personal, "felt" response, captivation by an imaginative experience, an expanded capacity for empathy leading to the potential for creating social bonds and shared experiences of art, cognitive growth in being able to make sense of art, and the ability to find a voice to express communal meaning through art. (*Gifts of the Muse* McCarthy et al. 2004)

Students from low-income families who take part in arts activities at school perform better academically and socially; they "tend to perform more like average higher-income students". (James Catterall in *Reinvesting in Arts Education* 2011)

USA 2007: Over three years, three arts integration-focused schools substantially reduced the achievement gap between high-poverty minority students and other students. The school with the highest percentage of minority and low-income students reduced the reading gap by 14 percentage points and the math gap by 26 percentage points. In the comparison schools, the number of proficient students actually decreased by 4.5% over the same time period. ("Real Visions" in *Reinvesting in the Arts* 2007 p. 21)