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A Comparative Analysis of Missouri Elementary School Arts Curriculums

Shenicquel LaRene Spotts
Lindenwood University

A Comparative Analysis of Missouri Elementary School Arts Curriculums

by

Shenicquel LaRene Spotts

A Dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Education

School of Education

A Comparative Analysis of Missouri Elementary School Arts Curriculums

By

Shenicquel LaRene Spotts
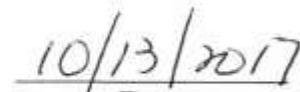
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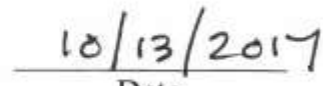
Doctor of Education

at Lindenwood University by the School of Education

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Dr. Rebecca Panagos, Dissertation Chair   10/13/2017
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Dr. Joseph Alsobrook, Committee Member   10/13/2017
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Dr. Sherrie Wisdom, Committee Member   10-13-17
                                                                              Date

Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work here at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree here or elsewhere.

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Abstract

Since the beginning of recorded history, artists of distinction have contributed to society's aesthetic sensibilities through their media of choice. The lives of these artists continue through their visually recorded work. We see their best products featured in history books and films, thus generally contributing to our day-to-day lives. Despite the influence of art on society, this deep and multi-faceted subject is often among the first to be cut during periods of economic instability or budget constraints.

While funding may reflect the impact of arts programs on the educational experience, the true value of arts programs emerges when their usefulness extends beyond the classroom to have a direct, positive impact on society. Thus, this research discusses the perception that limited funding decreases arts proponents' abilities to champion the arts in school curricula. Although the current body of research indicates that educators view the application of arts programs in school curricula positively, arts education in the public school arena is often viewed through four contexts: purpose, application, usefulness, and funding. This research describes the arts in these contexts in the attempt to determine how to best assess the value of an arts education program.

Through a mixed-methods design study, this research incorporated quantitative and qualitative data through surveys and focus groups with respondents who were either elementary-school principals or elementary-school fine arts teachers. Among the goals of this study was to expand the existing body of research on the importance of arts education. Moreover, this study set out to compare and analyze the possible relationship between Missouri elementary schools whose students participated in arts-related classes, and those schools that did not have an arts-related curriculum.

Specifically, this research studied Missouri Assessment Performance (MAP) scores, attendance, socioeconomic status, and school funding. Throughout this study, arts curricula and their implementation with elementary-school principals and Fine Arts teachers in Missouri were explored. Continued research will be necessary to further examine arts integration in education, develop a better understanding of the long-term effects of the arts on society, and to create a multi-career approach explaining the economic power of the arts on society.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Gelonch-Viladegut (2015) defined the term, Artist, as one who "engages in an activity deemed to be art" and who expresses himself or herself "through a medium" (para. 1). From a qualitative perspective, the term Artist referred to "a person who demonstrates creativity, skill, or innovation in an artistic practice" (Gelonch-Viladegut, 2015, para. 1). It could be said that there is an artist in us all; that everyone possesses an artistic ability that can both duplicate other works and create wondrous objects. Such people demonstrated great skill and vision in making products, goods, and services out of materials that at times were next to nothing. But even as we marveled at the often-spectacular creations of the artist, we struggled to define the term artist and to measure the development of the artist as a student.

Gelonch-Viladegut (2015) stated, "The term, artist, may also be used loosely or metaphorically to denote highly skilled people in any non-art activities, such as mathematics, mechanics, or medicine" (para. 3). "While discussions on the meaning of the terms artist, technician, and artisan may arise, it is important to bear in mind that the word art derives from the Latin ars (stem art), which, literally defined, is skill method or technique" (Gelonch-Viladegut, 2015, p. 1). Thus, artists were people who used their imagination, talent, or skill to create works that others deemed to have aesthetic value, and the term 'art' implied a creation of beauty that manifested in a variety of forms, such as painting, sculpture, dance, music, or writing. Clearly, given the subjective nature

"Art historians and critics define artists as those who produce art within a recognized or recognizable discipline" (Gelonch-Viladegut, 2014, para. 3). By contrast, workers skilled in media in the decorative or applied arts may be labeled artisan,

craftsman, or attributed terms that reflected their particular line of work; e.g., silversmith, goldsmith, potter, or similarly craft-specific terms. As stated in Gelonch-Viladegut (2014) in the Renaissance period, "The status of artists such as painters of fine art were able to raise their status, yet by the 20th Century, the distinction between a painter of 'fine art' and an artist who had mastered a craft was significantly diminished" (para. 3). The transition of the term artist was further demarcated by the distinctions between the types of craftsmanship or products that served the community. Various practical skills, such as metal work, though unique but still common and perceived intellectual endeavors, such as geometry and logic, were associated with the works of the visual artist. The visual artist was often considered of lesser importance than its contemporaries. But throughout the period known as The Renaissance, a reevaluation and elevation of the visual artist emerged. "The most formidable champion of the visual arts was Leonardo, who more than anyone else was responsible for creating the idea of the painter as a creative thinker" (Chilvers, 2004, p. 409). Thus, to understand the modern-day use of the term artist was to engage in a journey of both activity and semantics. The definition of the word artist had taken on several meanings throughout history. What would become of the definition of the artist began to be more defined by the art, rather than the artist: the emphasis began to focus on the product, rather than the producer. According to Gelonch-Viladegut (2014), the term artist already existed in Italy during the Middle Ages, and the meaning more accurately described a craftsman (para. 6). Based on this context, one could conclude that being designated a craftsman would indicate that the craftsman had achieved a certain level excellence in his craft. During the Middle Ages, society's needs were reflected in the popular perceptions of art, and products, such as textiles were more

valued and were therefore more expensive than paintings or sculptures. With such a wide range of definitions for the term 'artist,' when and why did the term begin to develop new meaning? The artist's historical impact began to transform culture and industry.

> The first division into major and minor arts dates back at least to the works of Alberti (1404–1472), *De re aedificatoria, De statua, De pictura*, which focused on the importance of the artist's intellectual versus manual strengths even if in other forms of art, the artist was working on a tangible project. (Gelonch-Viladegut, 2014, para. 7)

The modern term, artist, actually traces back through history and various cultures to shed light on a wide swathe of activities, goods, and services that ordinary people developed and perfected to meet the perceived needs of their communities. The practice of metalworking and metallurgy highlighted the artistry and innovation necessary to manipulate a complex metal, like iron, first into blades and tools, and then into a more complex metal like steel, throughout history. "Steel is iron that has been purified and alloyed with small quantities of other elements, producing an extremely strong material that is a basic element in modern industry" (Chilvers, 2004, p. 360). The talent and mastery of such skills as communication, language, mathematics, ironwork, cobbling, and weaving were considered artistic, as they pertained to the level of skill reached by the person.

Gelonch-Viladegut (2014) stated that the Greek word, technĕ, often translated as art, implied a mastery of any sort of craft (para. 6). The adjectival Latin form of the word, technicus, became the source of the English words technique, technology, and technical (Rey, 2016, para. 2). Gelonch-Viladegut (2014) stated that "with the Academies in

Europe (in the second half of the 16th century), the gap between fine and applied arts was definitely set" (para. 9). However, as indicated, the definition of aesthetic value was subjective, and may be influenced by local culture, and therefore, defy a standardized definition. "The French word *artiste* which in French, simply means artist was imported into the English language, in which it means a performer frequently in Music Hall or Vaudeville" (Gelonch-Viladegut, 2014, para. 13). "The word "artiste" can also be used as a pejorative term" (Gelonch-Viladegut, 2014, para. 13). With the advent of industrialization, artistic goods and services began to be mass-produced, first within factories and then by machines. Schwartz (1999) maintained that trends in industrialization during the mid-1700s began to reduce the number of opportunities for skilled artisans (para 2). Such an example was a French family of cloth makers, dyers, and other products named Gobelin, who developed factories to produce their goods, which were eventually assumed control of by the French Monarchy of Louis the XIV in 1662. "For much of the 18th century it retained its position as the foremost tapestry manufactory in Europe" (Chilvers, 2004, p. 296). "In the 1800s, skilled artisans were often confused with the petty bourgeoisie, as artisans were able to enter into long-term apprenticeships without compensation – a form of training that was unavailable to the less economically privileged" (Schwartz, 1999, para. 2). As stated by Schwartz (1999), "At the beginning of the 19th Century, after an apprenticeship, a young man hoping to become a skilled artisan would complete what was known as a Tour of France, where he would go from city to city to hone his skills" (para. 3). "He would become a member of a *compangonnes*, a trade-based organization that served as a surrogate family for a young man in a particular trade" (Swchartz, 1999, para. 3).

"The history of art is replete with artists of distinction who have contributed to progressing and questioning aesthetic sensibilities through their media of choice" (Daichendt, 2010, p. 3). While Daichendt (2010) indicated that artists' visually recorded works created a strong legacy, he also pointed out that very little was known about the same artists' teachers (p. 3). "The products of teachers are often much more fleeting" (Daichendt, 2010, p. 3). While there were permanent records of successful teaching, many other records had long been forgotten or destroyed. Thus, the return to the question, what do we make of the art teacher? The education imparted by the art teacher, whether formal or informal, was the very art that developed the artists, who later became renowned for their works. Often established artists in their own right, art teachers often dedicated their lives to educating or training others. As Daichendt (2010) asked, "How then are we to begin an examination of the complex interrelationship between art-making and art teaching? A significant contributor toward trends in art education is the preparation or education of future teachers" (p. 3). Teaching art takes many forms, depending on the teacher and the system as "educational institutions stress the importance of artistic study and pedagogical preparation in different combinations" (Daichendt, 2010, p. 3). "Although there are many possibilities in these combinations, the role of art-making can be virtually nonexistent to encompassing the entire program" (Daichendt, 2010, p. 3).

The artist, by any definition, influenced society and its evolution by developing products and services that once sustained small communities. These products and services were later mass-produced, some even in factories. The artist enhanced society by developing artistic expression through fields that propelled innovation and invention,

such as architecture, music, drama, and language (Daichendt, 2010). What the artist

actually produced was examined and appreciated throughout the ages. How the artist as a

person was developed, was often little more than recognition of the individual's talent,

thereby separating artistic talent from the academic process. With the advent of programs,

such as Arts Integration in school districts around the United States, the focus shifted to

incorporating the finished product of such specialties as Dance, Vocal Music, or Drama

into curricula and lesson plans for academic development (Daichendt, 2010). How to

determine the success or failure of such integrations was the key to appreciating the

artist's finished product and knowing how to develop artistic ingenuity in all students.

This development of the student's artistic ability may have had the potential to transform

education. Developing successful methods to incorporate artistic talents into the

classroom was still challenging, but improving nonetheless. However, developing

successful ways to assess the impact of the artist in the classroom remained elusive

(Daichendt, 2010).

Purpose of the Dissertation

The purpose of this study was to compare and analyze the possible relationship

between elementary schools in the state of Missouri whose third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade

students participated in arts-related classes and those schools that did not have an arts-

related curriculum. Specifically, this research studied Missouri Assessment Performance

(MAP) scores, attendance, socioeconomic status, and school funding. Throughout this

dissertation, the researcher explored arts curricula and their implementation by

elementary-school principals and Fine Arts teachers in the state of Missouri. This

research analyzed the effectiveness of art programs, as they relate to MAP scores and

attendance, as compared to the outcomes of curricula that excluded arts programs. This study assisted in determining the viability and usefulness of arts programs at elementary schools and identified ways to duplicate positive results. Finally, this study assisted in identifying those art programs that had little or no impact on MAP scores and attendance, and were therefore not cost-effective for a district or school.

Rationale

Research indicated that students benefitted from the arts in education (e.g., music, dance, drama, and visual arts) in many ways. Depending on the viewpoint and life experiences of the student, the influence of art could be incalculable. According to Ponick (2007),

> If our young people are to be fully educated, they need instructional programs in the arts that accurately reflect and faithfully transmit the pluralistic purposes, skills, and experiences that are unique to the arts-a heritage that also deeply enriches general education (p. 16).

This researcher believed that the state of arts education in the public school arena was often viewed through four contexts: purpose, application, usefulness, and funding. Thus, this paper describes the arts in these contexts in the attempt to determine how to best assess the value of an arts education program. "Educators at these schools believe that the arts can contribute appreciably to students' capacity to solve problems, acquire and apply knowledge, deepen engagement, and develop the persistence and dedication that are hallmarks of good scholarship and learning" (Farbman, Wolf, & Sherlock, 2013, p. 5). Moreover, this study may encourage a further understanding of the complex relationship between the arts and academic disciplines in the educational process.

"Involvement in the arts is associated with gains in math, reading, cognitive ability, critical thinking, and verbal skill. Arts learning can also improve motivation, concentration, confidence, and teamwork" (Smith, 2009, para. 2). With further understanding of the complex relationship between the arts and remaining elements in a curriculum, the continued involvement of the student assessment process, including studies such as this, will produce continuing data for review.

This researcher believed that the school districts that included arts education in their curricula determined the purpose of their art programs. Thus, while schools may employ a variety of methods to achieve overall academic success, their overarching goals and objectives were typically similar. As stated by Ponick (2007), "Young people need instructional programs in the arts that accurately reflect and faithfully transmit the pluralistic purposes, skills, and experiences that are unique to the arts-a heritage that also deeply enriches general education" (p. 16). According to Bennett (1987b), "The arts are an essential element of education, just like reading, writing, and arithmetic . . . music, dance, painting, and theater are all keys that unlock profound human understanding and accomplishment" (para. 1).

At the time of this writing, the current body of available research indicated that educators viewed the application of arts programs in school curricula as an opportunity to align real cognitive learning skills and life lessons that ensured a positive societal impact. As Farbman, Wolf, & Sherlock, (2013) noted, "Quality arts education can sometimes provide opportunities to help children develop skills that can enhance learning – whether contributing to habits of persistence through careful practice; greater awareness of how to collaborate" (p. 6). "With all that children stand to gain from arts participation – at school

and throughout their lives – it is no surprise that many educators and policymakers

champion efforts to include the arts as a core feature of public education" (Farbman, et

al., 2013, p. 9).

This research study addressed the gap that existed in literature that would help

determine the efficacy of arts education on existing curricula. In addition, this research

will add to the body of literature in the study of arts education by examining various data

pertaining to non-arts educational programs. Then-current literature often highlighted the

usefulness of arts programs: such programs were diverse and productive, and their

influence often extended beyond the arts class and more deeply into the school

experience. "For students, the psychological effect of knowing they could excel in arts

classes had positive impacts elsewhere in school, too" (Farbman et al., 2013, p. 46). As

Murgel explained,

> If you are struggling in math class, for example, but you know that in a half hour
>
> you'll get to music and will be able to succeed there and feel good, then you are
>
> able to get through the challenging part of the day (as cited in Farbman et al.,
>
> 2013, p. 46).

Thus, this researcher believed that the true value of arts programs emerged when

its usefulness extended beyond the classroom and had a direct positive impact on society.

"Throughout history, our greatest inventors and scientists have merged scientific

knowledge and discovery with artistic creativity" (Prey, 2014, para. 2). Finally, the power

of funding may reflect the true impact of arts programs on the educational experience.

Resource allocation, including teacher and staff time, could help to determine the

viability and success of the program and the students. "For these reasons, the reduction of

time for arts in our nation's schools diminishes not only students' opportunities to experience, engage, and practice these endeavors, but also educators' capacity to make these classes and activities worthwhile" (Farbman et al., 2013, p. 10). This research discussed the perception that limited funding decreased arts proponents' abilities to champion the arts as an accepted element of curricula.

Yet, these same champions must also confront the reality of finite resources of both money and school time, along with the current structure of public schooling in America today, which together can compel educators to rank some forms of education above others, with the arts often relegated to a lower rung (Farbman et al., 2013, p. 9).

With the state of educational funding consistently in flux, and while federal and state budgets were heavily scrutinized to ensure that educational spending was maximized to its fullest extent, the arts disciplines were continually assessed to determine whether they represented a true economic and academic value. However, an accurate evaluation was often inconsistent with how the success was truly measured.

Years of research show that it's [arts education] closely linked to almost everything that we as a nation say we want for our children and demand from our schools: academic achievement, social and emotional development, civic engagement, and equitable opportunity (Smith, 2009, para. 1).

Continued research will be necessary, even if there were a definitive and holistic examination of arts integration in education, or an understanding of the long-term effects of the arts on society, or a multi-career approach explaining the economic power of the arts on society.

Research Questions, Perspectives, and Hypotheses

Research questions and perspectives. The following research questions guided the study:

Research Question 1: How do the state of Missouri Elementary Schools design and implement the arts into their curriculum?

Research Question 2: How have meaningful arts learning experiences made difference in students' educational journeys?

Research Perspective 1: If an elementary school in the state of Missouri has an arts program then arts will be integrated into the content area courses, as measured by surveys of elementary school principals with the data provided by the researcher.

Research Perspective 2: If an elementary school in the state of Missouri has an arts program, then arts will be integrated into the content area courses, as measured by the responses given in focus groups of elementary fine arts teachers, using the data provided by the researcher.

The following hypothesis was analyzed for this study.

Hypothesis: There is a difference between a school that has an arts program and one which does not, in academic achievement assessments, socioeconomic status, attendance, and school funding.

Definition of Terms

Approach to teaching. "Refers to how something is taught rather than what is taught" (Silverstein & Layne, 2010, p. 2).

Art, artistic: "Peculiar to art when art is performed by professionals or skilled amateurs. In this domain, learning is inherent to professional artistic processes or connoisseurship" (Chemi, 2014, p. 373).

Artfulness – "cognitive and emotional response to stimuli that individuals experience as situated within artistic or arts-based environments that they share with others" (Chemi, 2014, p. 373).

Arts integration – "a complicated term with no one universal meaning, can be explored as a dynamic process of merging art with another discipline(s) in an attempt to open up a space of inclusiveness in teaching, learning and experiencing" (Lajevic, 2013, p. 42).

Blueprint Arts Curriculum –

The Blueprint not only provides teachers with a path to follow that helps them to determine the work they should be doing in each art form, it also indicates what children should know and be able to do in the arts at critical junctures in their intellectual, physical, and emotional development. The Blueprint also provides school administrators with tools to appropriately supervise arts teachers as well as to recognize and share with parents the potential their children have for achievement in the arts. (Hirschfeld, 2001, p. 4)

Charter Public School –

Charter schools are public schools operating under a contract entered into between the school and its authorizing agency. . . The charter allows the school with significant operational autonomy to pursue specific educational objectives. . .

Nearly all charter schools receive public dollars. (National Charter School

Resource Center, n.d., para. 1)

Connect – "Connections can also be made between a specific art form and a

school's concern or need" (Silverstein & Layne, 2010, p. 4).

Differentiated instruction – "The notion is that one teacher instructs a diverse

group of kids, but manages to reach each one at precisely the appropriate level" (Petrilli,

2011, p. 50).

Evolving objectives – "Objectives evolve and unfold over time as students'

experience and understandings develop" (Silverstein & Layne, 2010, p. 8).

National Core Arts Standards –

Are designed to guide the delivery of arts education in the classroom with new

ways of thinking, learning, and creating. The standards also inform policy-makers

about implementation of arts programs for the traditional and emerging models

and structures of education. (National Core Arts Standards, 2015, p. 1)

School leadership – "As noted, school leadership traditionally focused on the

principal but today it is recognized that there can be many leaders in a school, including

deputy principals, heads of department, program and committee chairs and teachers"

(Dinham, 2007, p. 265).

Socioeconomic status – "SES is relevant to all realms of behavioral and social

science, including research, practice, education and advocacy" (American Psychological

Association, 2015).

Student tracking –

[Teachers] could break their students into reading groups, with the bluebirds in one corner, tackling advanced materials at warp speed, and the redbirds in another, slowly making their way through basic texts Teachers could target their instruction to the level of the group or the class. (Petrilli, 2011, p. 49)

Transformational leadership – "The ability to get people to want to change, improve, and be led. It involves assessing associates' motives, satisfying their needs, and valuing them" (Balyer, 2012, p. 581).

Limitations and Assumptions

Limitations in the study included the fact that samples were limited to third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade elementary school principals in the state of Missouri, and sample sizes were smaller than larger-scale studies. The research design also influenced the limitations of the study, as listed:

1. 1) The participants' geographic locations were a factor in choosing between online surveys and focus group participants.

2. 2) The online survey data were limited to the respondents who chose to complete and submit the survey.

3. 3) It was expected that all respondents answered all questions honestly.

4. 4) Researcher bias with working in the field of Fine Arts Education.

Sample demographics. For this study, survey and focus group sessions were implemented to gather data across the elementary schools and arts educators in the state of Missouri. As part of the stratified sampling, the researcher e-mailed surveys to 700 elementary school principals; of the 700, only 31 participated in the study over the 30-day timeframe.

Figure 1 shows the locations of the elementary school principals who participated in this study.
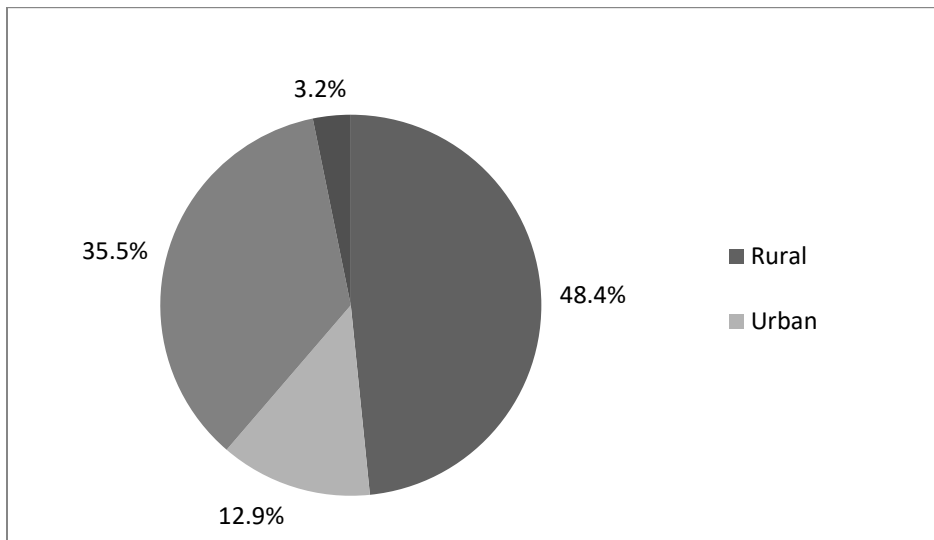
Figure 1. Geographic locations of participants in the state of Missouri.
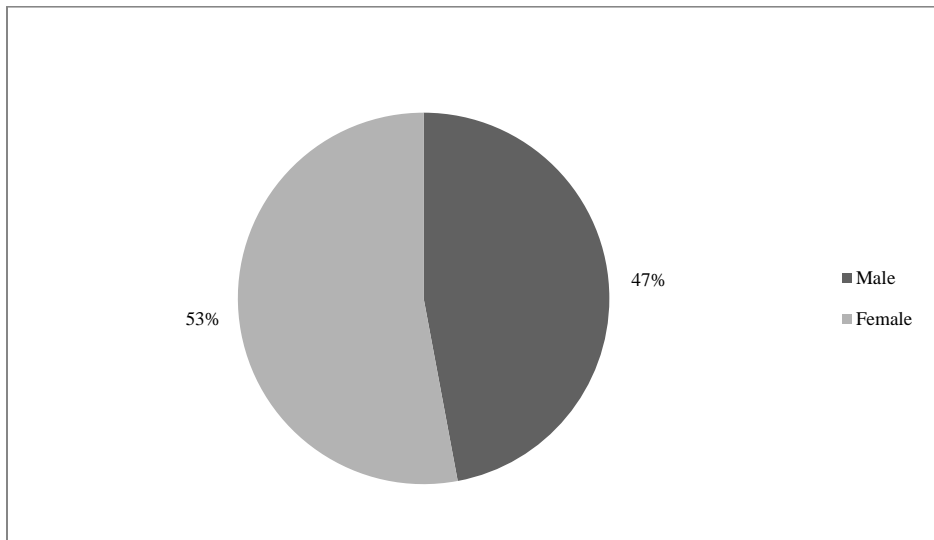
Figure 2. Gender of participants in Fine Arts Teacher focus group sessions. Nine women and eight men volunteered to be a part of this study.

Out of the 300 invitations to participate in specific focus group sessions for arts educators, 17 urban arts educators participated in three sessions within a 20-day period.

The demographic breakdown of the focus group participants is depicted in **Error! Reference source not found.**.

  Survey instrument. To gather data from elementary schools (third through fifth grades), the researcher conducted surveys of principals across the state of Missouri. The researcher also developed the survey and held a bias on the topic of the fine arts education, as indicated in the Research Perspective statements. In addition, survey and focus group participants volunteered their time, which could have indicated that some participants may have possessed a greater bias on the topic than non-respondents. Furthermore, the focus group of fine arts educators was specifically chosen for the study, due to their understanding and knowledge of the topic, and it was a general assumption that all respondents answered honestly.

  Generalizations. The research was a mixed-method design of quantitative and qualitative research. Research projects utilizing qualitative methods often involved instruments, such as focus group sessions and survey questionnaires.

Summary

  The terms, artist and art, evolved over the centuries, with definitions reflecting changes in the social and economic landscapes through the Middle Ages and Industrialization. Regardless of the origins of the definitions, at the time of this writing, art historians and critics defined artists as those who produced art within a recognized or recognizable discipline. Moreover, at the time of this writing, educators saw the application of arts programs in school curricula as an opportunity to align real cognitive learning skills and life lessons that ensured a positive societal impact.

This research study was intended to assess the efficacy of arts education on existing curricula in elementary schools. In addition, this research may add to the body of literature in the study of arts education by examining various data pertaining to non-arts educational programs.

To develop this study, the researcher used a mixed-methods design that incorporated data, surveys, and focus groups to add to the existing body of knowledge and ongoing dialogue. The study contributed then-current and relevant data to the topic of the value of arts education. In conducting this study, the researcher developed the following research questions, perspectives, and hypothesis for consideration:

Research Question 1: How do the state of Missouri Elementary Schools design and implement the arts into their curriculum?

Research Question 2: How have meaningful arts learning experiences made difference in students' educational journeys?

Research Perspective 1: If an elementary school in the state of Missouri has an arts program then arts will be integrated into the content area courses, as measured by surveys of elementary school principals with the data provided by the researcher.

Research Perspective 2: If an elementary school in the state of Missouri has an arts program, then arts will be integrated into the content area courses, as measured by the responses given in focus groups of elementary fine arts teachers, using the data provided by the researcher.

Hypothesis: There is a difference between a school that has an arts program and one which does not, in academic achievement assessments, socioeconomic status, attendance, and school funding.

Chapters Two and Three provide a literature review and a description of the problem and purpose of the study. Throughout this paper, the researcher also addresses the methodology in this mixed-methods study, as well as the instrumentation, method of data collection, and procedures analysis. The overarching goal of the study was to add to the existing body of research, thereby empowering fine arts educators and elementary school administrators.

Chapter Two: The Literature Review

Introduction

        Chapter One presented a background and definition of the terms 'art' and 'artist',

and provided a historical context of the evolution of both terms. In addition, the central

research questions, research perspectives, and hypothesis were addressed. Building on the

terminology and the body of research, Chapter Two presents a review of the literature

that guided this study. Research showed there were many ways students benefited from

arts in education; for example, through music, dance, drama, and visual art. Depending

on the viewpoint and life experience of the student, the art influence could be

incalculable. "The arts are one of humanity's deepest rivers of continuity" (Ponick, 2007,

p. 5). This researcher believed the decision to study the outcome of the arts on student

achievement could be answered as easily as looking at the Saturday morning cartoons or

appreciating the music video rotation on such channels as Music Television (MTV), to

viewing classical paintings at the art museum. "The arts illustrate the diversity of

intelligence and provide practical ways of promoting it" (Robinson & Aronica, 2015a, p.

143). For all these reasons and many more, the arts have been an inseparable part of the

human journey. "Indeed, we depend on the arts to carry us toward the fullness of our

humanity" (Ponick, 2007, p. 5).

        The images of movie and television characters seem to have enthralled and

inspired students of all ages. "The challenge is to create and sustain those experiences

within schools" (Robinson & Aronica, 2015a, p. 72). Countless students have been

motivated and stirred by the music orchestrated by renowned artists, from Beethoven to

John Lennon and Paul McCartney. "Art reflects and encourages the emotional,

physiological, and intellectual development of the student" (Stevens, 2002, p. 20). These

artistic images have moved civilizations, politics, and religions, and have contributed to

the shaping of societies, both negatively and positively. "Wherever you look, education is

high on the agenda of governments around the globe" (Robinson & Aronica, 2015a, p. 6).

Society encouraged the student and all citizenry to reflect on the influences of the

numerous media outputs as to how or why the arts could be an asset in the classroom.

"When students engage with the arts, they may be able to develop skills that facilitate and

enhance their learning throughout the school day and that will benefit them throughout

their lives" (Farbman et al., 2013 p. 5-6). "Young people who had intensive arts

experiences are more likely to choose a college major that aligns with preparation for a

professional career, which could position them for higher-paying, professionally

rewarding jobs" (National Association of Elementary School Principals [NAESP], 2012,

p. 7). However, there still could be a perceived disconnect as to the relationship between

the arts and education and how best to utilize that relationship. "The arts may be

employed in multiple ways – to stimulate active learning, deepen understanding, and

provide primary sources for powerful and imaginative symbols that allow for intellectual

growth" (Stevens, 2002 p. 23). Thus, the arts may be looked upon to enrich the student

and even society beyond the intellectual growth and a powerful imagination of the

person. "The arts are about the qualities of human experiences" (Robinson & Aronica,

2015a, p. 142). The arts have been known to transcend a person's attitude from a

negative outlook to a positive one; thereby, helping to improve the surrounding

environment as well. "A comprehensive, articulated arts education program also engages

students in a process that helps them develop the self-esteem, self-discipline, cooperation,

and self-motivation necessary for success in life" (Ponick, 2007, p. 7). This researcher

believed an even more intrinsic perspective was how the arts could make the student and

the person feel.

Problem and Purpose Overview

Budget constraints continued to drive the re-evaluation of effective educational

practices. "Paradoxically, as arts electives continue to be eliminated first in budgetary

belt-tightening, and as parents continue to dissuade their children from majoring in art,

the arts are being recognized as essential to innovation" (Wynn & Harris, 2012 p. 42).

Further study is needed to determine which subjects are most likely to lead to academic

success. In addition, more research could help to identify which methods would lead to

the greatest student achievement. Historically, the arts were regarded as a topic of interest

for those who were involved in budget crises, as well as those associated with the task of

curriculum development. Some educators looked upon the arts favorably as a viable

resource to augment understanding of certain subjects, such as language arts and

comprehension. However, others looked upon the arts negatively, believing that

resources were better allocated to fortifying the existing fundamentals of other core

subjects or expanding to other avenues of research. There was still a need for a solid tool

to determine if the investment in the arts as a part of the curriculum had paid the

dividends of the resources allocated and how to duplicate that success; or whether the

investment was best served by defunding the arts and reallocating the funds for areas

where the research had proven more effective in curriculum development and student

achievement.

The purpose of this study was to compare and analyze the possible relationship between all Elementary Schools in the state of Missouri, whose third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade students participated in arts-related classes, and those who did not. Specifically, this research was intended to study MAP scores, attendance, socioeconomic status, and school funding. This researcher also explored arts curriculum and implementation with the principals and fine arts teachers in the state of Missouri. The research will provide an analysis of the effectiveness of art program curricula pertaining to MAP scores and attendance, as compared to curricula where arts programs were absent. This study may assist in determining the viability and usefulness of programs within a curriculum, and may identify how to select and then duplicate positive results. In addition, this study may assist in identifying programs that may have little or no impact on MAP scores and attendance and thereby not provide cost effectiveness for a district or school.

The Arts and Education

In the past, any relationship between the arts and the educational experience may have been overlooked, when in actuality the arts may have empowered the student to enjoy the educational experience more fully. "Education through the arts enriches a person's life by increasing the capacity to use his or her senses joyfully in experiencing the environment" (Stevens, 2002, p. 21). "As avenues of self-expression and meaning making, they are personally meaningful activities fulfilling the engagement dimension of purpose" (Malin, 2015, p. 270). "Art experiences can communicate ideas, express feelings, strengthen self-concept and cognitive skills, develop imagery, foster social interaction and appreciation of different viewpoints, and provide a record of growth" (Stevens, 2002, p. 21). According to Ponick (2007), art "benefits the student because it

cultivates the whole child, gradually building many kinds of literacy while developing

intuition, reasoning, imagination, and dexterity into unique forms of expression and

communication" (p. 6). The researcher believed that the arts were so rudimentarily

ingrained in our learning culture that even something as important as learning the

alphabet was reduced to a basic nursery rhyme that introduced young children to the

relationship between knowledge and art. "The words used in nursery rhymes and songs

help a child develop language comprehension as they learn to associate key words with

people, objects, and events in their daily lives" (KBYU Eleven, 2010, p. 6). As described

by Stevens (2002), music was the first form of the arts to be part of the American public

school curriculum, and was introduced more than 150 years ago. That arts and school

experience continued to evolve and included the advanced language and capabilities of

the modern computer, as well as a staple in practically every classroom. "In an

increasingly technological and complex society, the arts have the potential of enabling

transformation by allowing students to do those things that come naturally to them while

reaching a better understanding of themselves and the world around them" (Stevens,

2002, p. 22).

As society embraced the idea that education was a holistic component that may be

important to life's success, the arts should have been defended as equally important. "The

arts are basic to individual development, enabling students to express, communicate, and

become emotionally involved" (Stevens, 2002, p. 21). The importance of the arts in the

emotional and intellectual development of children was underscored in the No Child Left

Behind legislation of 2001, which was "backed and signed by President Bush [and

placed] the arts on the same level as other academic subjects" (Henry, 2002, p. 34). In the

past, even though the arts were viewed as a benefit to the educational process that

transcended any subject or student, there was still the perspective that the arts were to be

ignored or were misinterpreted as a hindrance to the educational experience. The arts

were perceived as a burden that detracted from the academics and not to be taken

seriously, especially if it meant diverting funds from the academic side of the curriculum.

"When attempting to streamline budgets and expel all but the essentials, the arts are

typically viewed as dispensable" (Manner, 2002, p. 18).

　　　　Failure to recognize the values of the arts may introduce a conflict in the

relationship of the arts to the educational process, which continues to permeate various

levels of the academic and political conversation. "The arts are often perceived as the

"icing" – nice if you can afford it, but dispensable if you can't" (Manner, 2002, p.18).

The researcher stated that funding was allocated based on the importance of debate, not

on the value of the benefits, even when the benefits were simple and obvious. "The arts

teach to the heart and the mind . . . They enhance memory and learning" (Stevens, 2002,

p.20). In the past, the arts were viewed as having a stepfamily-member niche where it

was great if we all got along; but, in the back of one's mind there was always a symbol of

discontinuity. This relational incompleteness stemmed from the perception that the arts

and academics were related, but neither were they the same nor of equal importance.

　　　　Stevens (2002) stated that a specific attempt to improve the perception of the arts'

standing as an asset to the educational process was made by raising the standards

associated with the teachers. One example was encouraging that all teachers of the arts be

certified in their particular specialty genre. "Until lately, art, music, theater, and dance

teachers were largely unaffected by clarion calls for more standards, benchmarks, targets,

assessments, accountability measures, standardized tests, and international achievement

comparisons" (Zemelman, Daniels, & Hyde, 2005, p. 199). This researcher believed that

change toward more standardization would not only improve the educational product, but

the perception of the arts, as well. "What the standards can do is provide a positive and

substantive framework for those who teach young people why and how the arts are

valuable to them as persons and as participants in a shared culture" (Ponick, 2007, p. 8).

In past research, examination of standards for the arts and the educational process was an

attempt to elevate the arts to the equivalent of the academic side, which satisfied some

critics. "The standards provide a basis for knowing what is important about the arts and

can serve to guide instruction, ultimately providing a more complete education" (Henry,

2002, p. 33).

Past research indicated that during such times, great efforts were placed to

prioritize components of the educational experience by levels of importance. "The arts

may be employed in every subject throughout the curriculum and at every grade level"

(Stevens, 2002, p.33). This researcher believed that as these standards became

incorporated into the curriculum as arts integration, it enhanced the potential for student

success. "That means schools with exemplary arts programs will have a balance of arts

discipline teaching and arts integration across the curriculum" (Zemelman et al., 2005, p.

204). By creating such a balance, schools could further enrich their students with the

intellectual and emotional stimulation created by arts integration. As Amorino (2008)

claimed, "If the full measure of one's intellect encompasses sensory, emotional,

kinesthetic, and cognitive processes, and if academia is defined by intellectual

engagement, then the arts must be classified as profoundly intellectual and academic

subjects indeed" p. 190).

This researcher believed that more proponents were communicating the viability

of the arts as a key component to educational success. According to Henry (2002),

"Recent initiatives in education underscore that a quality education must include the arts"

(p. 34). Thus, as proponents examined their findings, they highlighted and proposed the

positive aspects of the arts despite the often-deaf ears of the critics. The Goal 2000:

Educate America Act (1994) recognized that the arts were an essential component of a

well-rounded education, and mandated that students demonstrate competency in English,

mathematics, history, civics and government, geography, science, and foreign language.

Research showed that a continuous debate with how to appropriately include the

arts in the educational process was essential to fully understanding the relational

importance. There may be a debate as to how best measure the arts' impact on society,

but there seems to have been little debate on the influence of the arts in society and how

the arts could enrich society as a whole.

> "If our young people are to be fully educated, they need instructional programs in
>
> the arts that accurately reflect and faithfully transmit the pluralistic purposes,
>
> skills, and experiences that are unique to the arts-a heritage that also deeply
>
> enriches general education." (Ponick, 2007, p. 16)

Building on this argument, we must recognize that life experiences were not

necessarily taught in the classroom through 'traditional' subjects; however, life

experiences were documented and chronicled through art. This argument was bolstered

by Manner (2002), who stated, "Even when we recognize the utility of organizing

curriculum by strict subjects, the life experiences for which we are preparing students

will not do so, and art is all around us as the chronicle of everything we do" (p. 18).

In past research, the first reason was to understand the role of the arts in education

that may have improved the educational experience with factors like good grades and

high test scores. Another validation of the importance of an arts education was that it

could be instrumental in preparing students to engage on a broader level with society. As

Goodman (2015) indicated, art was instrumental in giving students a voice with which to

"communicate their concerns about the world and their community" (para. 1). It appeared

that critics looked at the arts as having little to no redeeming quality when it came to the

educational experience. This chasm tended to separate the arts from academics in the

educational experience that transcended such concept as making Adequate Yearly

Progress (AYP) or allocating funds to the district budget. In the past, research showed

that in these instances, the arts were often ranked at the lowest level of importance; and

therefore, the results were misinterpreted and the application to curricula incorrect. But

when examined by the influence on the culture and society, the arts became an

undeniable force of change and inspiration that required additional assessment through

research and study.

Public Policy and Arts Education

Various perspectives in the existing literature existed, both generally and

specifically, regarding rationale-based advocacy of the arts and arts education, with a

focus on building lifelong skills in elementary level students. However, as with any issue

that became polemic and political, there was some degree of obfuscation regarding this

importance. Unfortunately, when one considered larger trends in the literature, studies

showing the benefits of arts programs tended to be ignored in many cases, when it comes

to actual policymaking, showing a rift between theory and practice in which empirical

evidence was being avoided, whether out of short-sightedness or other motivations, and

then re-presented. The trend possibly started with the revamping and reintegration of

Title I programs, that were at one time considered failures, as will be discussed further in

this writing. In terms of general trends as background, however, the literature overall was

fairly biased in favor of arts programs and their perpetuation; it was relatively difficult to

find empirical studies which showed the benefits of slashing arts programs at the

elementary school level. However, that very policy was what, in many cases, was

enacted. "Building on the premise that the ultimate objective of educating students is to

create a pathway to their success, we must acknowledge that an arts education enables

students to further develop their capabilities and contribute to the world around them"

(Fiske, 1999, p. 8). In examining prevailing educational trends and opposition to those

trends in then-current literature, one must look through various rationale-based studies to

find gaps in knowledge, and find studies specifically focused on benefits that could be

translated from theory to reality, in order to benefit arts programs in Missouri elementary

schools.

Arts Education in Public Schools

When it came to general themes and issues observed in extant literature, further

background was in order regarding how arts education was handled in public schools

then-currently. These programs were threatened by President Donald Trump's new

budget priorities, but in place as they were, to give access to arts programs throughout

various educational levels. Although some panic at the then-current state of affairs, the

American educational system had arguably always been in a state of flux and constantly

evolving reform, and the present, at the time of this writing, was no different in that

regard. The challenge of the future would be to compare future performance to then-

current standards, just as past standards were applied to the present. Generally, the

literature on the subject tended to focus on advocacy of keeping "the content standards

for the arts, the importance of the National Assessment of Educational Progress, gateway

policies for K-12 students, and arts study and college admissions" (Hatfield, 1999, p.

104).

As recently as the 2010 school year, studies showed statistics regarding the types

of arts programs that faced particular threats. These studies and statistics showed possible

gaps between, for example, music and drama programs. Not all arts programs were the

same, just like not all districts were the same. In other words, when it came to cutting

budgets on programs, schools and districts often first went to the arts, but then faced

more choices as there were various arts to consider, beyond thinking in narrow terms of

visual arts. Priorities shifted depending on regional trends, as well. During the mentioned

period, statistics show that for the 2009-2010 academic year, music education was almost

universally available in public elementary schools, including those in Missouri, "with 94

percent of schools offering instruction that was designated specifically for music" (Parsad

& Spiegelman, 2012, p. 2).

Thus, while many schools at the time of this writing had arts programs in effect,

these programs remained threatened and may have been unevenly applied in favor of

some programs, and at the possible expense of others. Again, the connotation was that

these programs were somehow less useful to the academic and social futures of students,

which connotation flies in the face of established evidence. In comparison to the quoted

statistics regarding music education, and additionally visual arts programs, Parsad and

Spiegelman (2012) found that funding tended to lag when it came to dance and drama

programs, often in a statistically significant way: "3 percent of elementary schools

offered dance instruction and 4 percent offered drama/theatre instruction in 2009–10.

Both of these percentages represent a decrease from 20 percent in 1999–2000" (p. 2),

showing a general downward trend when it came to arts education programs being

funded, specifically at the elementary school level. Reversing this trend was going to be

an important part of the challenge of the future for professionals.

When it came to assessing then-current practice, the existing literature showed

some bipolarity in terms of support and opposition; there existed the cultural critique of

the arts regarding their usefulness in an increasingly competitive, technology-driven

society. Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) increasingly became

the watchword. From this point of view, the arts were simply not as necessary to pursue

through study within an educational system that habitually downgraded their importance

in the face of empirical proof otherwise. In terms of opposition, there were also studies

which highlighted the value of an arts-enhanced education; it seemed rather narrow-

minded to conceptualize technology, mathematics, and science as being totally separate

from, and not influenced or cross-pollinated by, the arts and humanities.

When one thinks of human capital theory and education, the real value of arts

programs becomes apparent in the near-universal applicability. After all, one may ask

where science would be in general without its necessary bioethical component, and in

answer, various nightmare scenarios present themselves. Therefore, arts education programs could be advocated; in addition,

> Successful arts learning outside of schools can enhance the sense of accomplishment and wellbeing among young people. Realizing the full potential of learning in and through the arts for all U.S. children requires heroic acts from all segments of society. Involvement with the arts must be a basic part of the learning experiences (Fiske, 1999, p. 1).

Fiske's (1999) quote was typical of those studies advocating the extension of arts programs, which was also mentioned, make up the majority of the existing literature on this subject. There was an interesting polarity of sources in this regard, which formed a sort of inverse image of programmatic reality.

Fortunately, or unfortunately, schools were not in a position to simply choose programs based on the feedback of local stakeholders; public education was controlled nationally. One could also look to existing literature to get a general background of the impact of external organizations and policies on educational planning, such as the National Education Association (NEA), an advocacy group that fought to keep arts programs in school. Another example was The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, legislation that restored failed Title I programs, in an effort to make schools more standardized, accountable for performance factors, and efficient. In terms of the former, this organization was a valuable resource for arts programs, and represented taking a stand of advocacy for arts programs as social justice imperatives dedicated to the protection and preservation of culture. In terms of the latter, the tone of existing literature tended to be more critical. In fact, when it came to much of the literature on arts

programs, NCLB's efforts were largely perceived as misguided and counterproductive.

For example, to paraphrase one source, funding for schools was linked to achievements

in reading and mathematics, and non-assessed subjects received less attention, regardless

of legal mandates (Beveridge, 2010). In some cases, according to Beveridge (2010),

states would assess programs to maintain some level of arts curriculum, but this was not

tied to accountability factors (p. 4). This lack of attention made the arts seem like an

afterthought, and a non-essential subject, while arguably and as noted, most sources of

empirical evidence asserted otherwise, and pointed towards the contributions that such

programs made, not just in esoteric ways, but in ways that were demonstrable through

empirical evidence, statistics, and other quantitative measures. To make progress uphill

against such a status quo, direct action was warranted.

The NEA was an organization that, as also noted, sought to advocate for the

inclusion of arts programs at various levels of education, from elementary to college. As

an organization, it existed in a support role that dovetailed with educational policy

implementation. The organization provided resources for teachers and other professionals

alike, working in school districts where looming cuts so often threatened arts programs as

a first measure of sacrifice, and as such, the organization could be holistically considered

a community resource. Like many other organizations, the NEA was grounded by the

basic assumption that arts education should be an integral part of one's comprehensive,

modern education, and this view was supported by public and private policy statements.

However, as stated by Heilig, Cole, and Aguilar (2010), "Unfortunately, despite such

statements and a long history of success in schools, over the years, the arts have often

taken a backseat in educational curricula" (p. 136). In the then-current climate of testing

and accountability at elementary schools, the National Education Association for the Arts

(NEAA) worked to help point out deleterious situations as a means of keeping an eye on

the goal of sustaining high-quality arts education programs. As the organization's site

stated, "The National Education Association's commitment to the arts and arts education

is well documented." "As noted in NEA Resolution B-45, NEA believed that high-quality

arts education taught by licensed, certified arts educators was part of a balanced,

comprehensive education" (National Education Association for the Arts Advocacy

[NEAA], 2017, p. 1). The organization then, in turn, represented this belief by advocating

various projects, including the expansion, rather than shrinkage of arts education

programs nationwide.

     The NCLB Act, as noted, was originally passed as a reform measure seeking to

even out the United States' school performance by punishing poorly performing schools

and rewarding those that performed well; it also sought as part of its impetus to

standardize performance measures through instigating a series of high-stakes tests that

largely determined a student's passage from one grade to another. When NCLB went into

effect, there was a great deal of talk about accountability, standards, and high-stakes tests,

and less talk about what the program meant for arts education. NCLB focused on

performance-based metrics in core subjects that were measurable through standardized

tests, that did not generally have open-ended answers or assignments. These high-stakes

tests became controversial, as they arguably pressed teachers to teach to test.

     The rubric of performance, as noted, under NCLB, did not consider the arts to be

mandatory, nor did it present a standardized way of assessing arts programs. When it

came to its effects on education, opinions were mixed about NCLB; when it came to

literature on the arts and education, the pendulum swung more towards an expression of

attitude and belief that ran contrary to the national program and its various degrees of

standardization and focus on high-stakes testing. As one source of the literature on arts

education and NCLB typical indicated, since the passage of NCLB legislation, "71% of

the nation's 15,000 school districts have reduced the hours of instructional time spent on

history, music, and other subjects to make more time for reading language arts and math

. . . 20% reported similar cuts in art and music. "Other studies, including one by Harcourt

Assessment, have reached similar conclusions" (Packer, 2007, p. 3). As noted, when it

came time to put programs on the metaphorical chopping block, most districts avoided

cutting more popular programs, like sports, even though relations between sports

performance and later status in life was not something that had been statistically

demonstrated, to the extent that studies demonstrated the effect of support for the arts.

     In the face of such cuts and threats to the future of arts programs nationwide, as

largely reported in then-existing literature, it is important to retain, in terms of rationale

for the arts' continuance, a solid foundation for the exact purpose of the arts. This

purpose is going to be individuated, and this question can be answered in a number of

ways. Fortunately, there were multiple studies that informed the reader about the exact

purpose of an arts education, and how that purpose was achieved, realized, or illustrated

by example. From one perspective, a background in the arts was vital because it

established a paradigm of diversity, creativity, and dynamism that was arguably

applicable to roles in a purpose-driven, modern society. "American education is

changing, and changing for the better. Who teaches, what is taught, where teaching takes

place, and how teaching occurs are evolving dramatically in communities across

America" (Fiske, 1999, p. 8). Of course, perspectives differed temporally about change

and hope.

Fiske's (1999) observation rang especially true when one considered that

technological and communications-based developments had not been static, standardized,

or homogenized; rather, the leaps and bounds of technological progress had been driven

by the same sort of creativity as an arts education engendered. From this perspective, the

arts could be seen in terms of diversity; also, one must consider that what went into an

arts program was, in many cases, directly related to what came out of it. In this regard,

one researcher found that a combination of parent and community support, including the

presence of arts specialists, as well as arts specialists in school leadership and staff, had

significant effects on the reported adequacy of resources (Miksza, 2013). In addition,

student and school principals' engagement in arts events had significant effects (Miksza,

2013, p. 25). Miksza (2013) considered arts education in terms of its applicability, rather

than the possibility of its being defunded, denuded, or otherwise compromised externally

within a larger system that determined educational funding according to property tax

values, and traditionally cut arts programs before sports programs at the public school

level.

Another purpose of the arts in school, especially at the elementary-school level,

was to expose students to cultural and arts-based opportunities outside the classroom,

forging an environment in which learning opportunities extended beyond the school bell

or when classroom doors were closed. These were skills that students could retain for life.

From this perspective of lifelong learning, what was needed were initiatives that could

increase the level of attention paid to arts education, expand arts programs, and reduce

the tendency of districts to cut these programs, as a first order of defense when budgets become tightened or underwent periods of crisis. That situation, as a status quo, needed to be reversed.

Arguably, it was at these crisis points that arts education was needed the most. Therefore, during these crisis points, it was important for local and state resources to continue to advocate the improvement of learning-based opportunities that extended beyond the classroom. "The influences of participation in the arts on language show up in the dramatic increase in syntactic complexity, hypothetical reasoning, and questioning approaches" (Fiske, 1999, p. 8). Not only language, but other skills were affected as well.

In many cases, the mentioned extension was accomplished proactively by arts programs. For students who were not able to fill their free time with such activities as practicing a musical instrument; rehearsing lines for a play; or learning to paint, draw, and assess their surroundings, the likelihood increased that unstructured time would result in negative effects, even to the extreme of children engaging in risky behavior, such as drugs and gang activity during unsupervised time. This time could be potentially dangerous. The arts, on the other hand, could fulfill their needs for socialization in a more positive and contributory way during the hours when extracurricular programs gave children monitored instruction, in addition to giving them skills that would last a lifetime. In the face of this logic, it was doubly a source of general consternation in the existing literature on the subject that arts electives were generally the first to be eliminated during budget cuts, and that parents tended to discourage their children from majoring in art. The paradox was that at the same time, the arts were perceived as drivers of innovation and advances in all fields. (Wynn & Harris, 2012, p. 135).

One gap that seemed to appear in then-existing literature was the one in which the interrelation of arts education was proposed in an interdisciplinary manner, not just specifically to STEM classes, but to all other core subjects as well, from a perspective of advocated elevation or arts programs, at the very least to the level that team sports and school clubs were elevated. As Fiske (1999) noted, "While learning in other disciplines may often focus on development of a single skill or talent, the arts regularly engage multiple skills and abilities" (p. 7). This general diffusion of the arts across disciplines was a mark in its favor that came up often in the literature, at the time.

Value of the Arts

As some of the purposes of the arts were already covered thus far in Chapter Two, it is now appropriate to move on to examine how the existing literature treats the subject of the value of the arts. Again, this definition was inherently personal, as one individual may not be able to think of life without the arts, while another may have no actual conception of or familiarity with them. Arguably, then, aside from individualistic differences that existed on the micro level, the value of an arts education, even at the elementary school level, could be divided into two categories, those of intrinsic value and extrinsic value. In the case of extrinsic value, the focus was on how the arts could give students lifelong skills that were, despite common presumptions, translatable to other, non-arts subjects that were possibly more lucrative and careerist, but nonetheless employed and required skills of creative problem-solving, thinking outside the box, and knowing how and why to innovate existing structures; as that source continued, "Recognizing that the best art students are those with highly developed intellectual and technical skills, and the best science students are those whose creative imaginations have

been nurtured, we explore the movement toward collaborating with STEM teachers"

(Wynn & Harris, 2012, p. 135).

This movement, seen as productive in Wynn and Harris' (2012) study, was

something that remained counter-intuitive to many educational administrators, parents,

and even teachers; however, as the common presumption was that the arts and sciences

were held to separate and unequally, without any cross-representational themes (a

demonstrated fiction which turned into a persistent and insidious reality). When one

talked of intrinsic or inherent value, there was the given argument in existing literature,

supported by many sources, that arts education was valuable in and of itself. From this

perspective, the arts needed no defending; one either understood the value of an arts

education or one did not, and thought along the lines of the accepted status quo that other

programs should be cut last, and arts programs first. In other words, arts education had its

own internal value, whether or not it could be applied to some sort of career path or

socioeconomic benefit, but not everyone agreed on that value, or even found it to be

inherent. There was also the notion of extrinsic value, or the worth of arts education

assigned by external factors. This notion was covered in Wynn and Harris' (2012)

research on the relationship between arts education's basic assumptions and those of

STEM studies, as well as the notion of the arts representing dynamism and diversity as

broad themes applicable to progress and development, both social and cognitive, through

an arts-based curriculum. In fact, the prevalence of the arts in a given community may be

a significant differentiator among professionals seeking to relocate to a new community.

In particular, highly skilled professionals, who had a significant economic impact on a

community, may be more attracted to areas that boast greater artistic diversity.

(Guetzkow, 2002).

Studies that concentrated on the arts' inherent values also tended to contend that,

as in one researcher's estimation, they were in fact multidisciplinary and naturally

community-oriented; and therefore, had a value that could be passed on to a larger, macro

level of local and regional grounding points (Sabol, 2013). As Sabol (2013) noted, the

outcomes of an arts education were seen in other disciplines as students developed and

refined their abilities to accomplish tasks, express themselves, develop personal visions,

and develop a greater understanding of the world around them. Of course, the results

could perhaps best be conceptualized as optimal. As noted, most studies tended to agree

that arts programs had value, but as to the exact quantification of that value, there was a

lack of standardization of answers. Most tended to point towards social, cognitive, and

creative functions; however, rather than the (perhaps outdated) concept of the renaissance

person or the 'gentleperson's C.' This latter consideration, however, arguably still has

value, as well; though less so at the time of this writing, since grades had become

competitive and, arguably, overvalued. When it came to the application of the arts, some

points had already been made in terms of the cross-disciplinary connections between the

arts and STEM classes, when it came to ideals, such as creative thinking. More

specifically related to elementary level programs was the assumption that any application

of the arts also involved the formation of a framework or base of knowledge that,

especially if it was established early, would lead to tangible rewards later in life for the

students, as they advanced along their pathways of knowledge. From this perspective, as

Chapman (2005) noted,

Elementary instruction influences how later studies are shaped, including the

extent to which learning becomes remedial in the upper grades. Second, there is

more detailed information on elementary school policy and practice than for

secondary schools. (p. 118)

Even if one was to accept careerism as the end goal of the American educational

system, having as broad-based an education as possible was arguably more necessary

than ever in the complicated and competitive workplaces of the time. When it came to

application, the theory of human capital investment again came to the fore in the context

of discussions that advocated the continuation and expansion of arts programs, rather

than their diminishment. Again, the gulf between theory and reality was highlighted, as

these results of positive application were largely ignored by districts seeking to make

programs more cost-effective, usually leading to a situation in which arts teachers must

first buy their own materials and equipment, and then see their rolls and classes shrunken

or eliminated. According to Fiske (1999), youth who may be left unattended throughout

the day would invariably seek alternate sources of knowledge; where they went for that

knowledge may ultimately shape their ideas, skills, and self-confidence in the future.

In much of the existing literature, the application of the arts was dealt with in an

esoteric and advocacy-oriented, rather than an example-oriented narrative that necessarily

produced quantitative empirical results in every case. The value of flexible research was

also established, as it could lead to new questions and ways of looking at the issue being

proffered. However, in McMahon, Klopper, and Power's (2015) study explicitly related

to the concept of applying the arts, the authors conducted a generalized case study

analysis "based on a decision of a school leadership team to extend their existing program

of excellence to include the visual arts, such as painting, drawing and sculpture" (p. 136).

These authors found that the school leadership team in this example, made up of both

teachers and administrators, was driven by several factors to expand their arts programs,

rather than taking the status quo direction and shrinking them. These results could then be

generalized and expanded in terms of impact on constructive practice. One of these

factors of expansion in the case focused upon was that, in terms of the school's

immediate environment of the physical plant, there were tangible examples of award-

winning art created by students over the years, lining the halls and displayed prominently

in the buildings for all stakeholders to see.

The situation discussed by McMahon et al. (2015) led to a school setting in which

arts programs were not thought of as abstract or esoteric, but rather, as contributory and a

part of the familiar pattern of the school's quotidian operations, more like a tradition to be

respected and continued than a useless limb to be severed and cast away at the earliest

opportunity. In addition, these authors found success in a program in which, specifically,

a teacher's aide had taken the initiative to lead ad hoc art-making activities; other arts,

such as dance and music were already available to students as extracurricular activities in

the school's Excellence program. In terms of application, extracurricular arts programs

went back to the notion of giving students, particularly in elementary and middle school,

a productive and engaging positive solution to filling those after-school hours, when

many parents are still at work. Such a solution also gave children a stable foundation in

the arts. Application of the arts was not a new subject in the then-existing literature,

although it continued to be a subject that produced an abundance of critical scholarship.

Aside from modern case studies, such as McMahon et al.'s (2015), advocacy for arts

programs could also come from more classical sources in the existing educational

literature, including those varied contributions of a theorist and scholar who founded

much of the framework of the U.S. educational system, at least in terms of theoretical and

philosophical directions, Dewey (1990). Many of Dewey's (1990) original criticisms of

the educational system (the 1920s was a time when, like today, America was severely

stratified socially, with a small and shrinking middle class) could be applied directly to

schools at the time of this writing, and in terms of the diversity and well-roundedness of

education advocated by Dewey (1990), could provide support for arts programs.

Consider, for example, Dewey's (1990) decades-old theory that education had a

narrow, one-sided focus and was guided by outdated concepts of learning. Moreover,

Dewey (1990) maintained that education appealed more to intellectual rather than

creative development (Dewey, 1990). The emphasis on creation could be directly applied

to both arts programs and the creative directions they engendered in other studies, as

well. Even as this necessity became more pronounced, however, the arts were facing an

uphill struggle in many districts and schools; since, students now were generally more

focused on career paths than the traditional notion of receiving a well-rounded education.

However, this tradition of providing a well-rounded education had power and value, as

education should be a vehicle to expand thought, rather than simply serve as a track for

moneymaking. In too many cases, a predetermined career track became the bottom line

of the educational system.

If we were to introduce into educational processes the activities which appeal to

those whose dominant interest is to do and to make, we should find the hold of the

school upon its members to be more vital, more prolonged, containing more of

culture. (Dewey, 1990, p. 28)

In addition, in terms of further applicability to be found in Dewey's (1990)

assertions, active versus passive education was often a matter not just of variety and

choice, but of standing up for programs that were known to have an active and

demonstrable value and application to future success. Children were active, and the role

of educators was to give direction to that activity. By providing direction, teachers could

help the children produce art rather than merely express themselves thoughtlessly.

Studying the arts may not be the fast-track to a high-paying career, but it could produce a

student that was a well-rounded, creative, effective decision-maker. In addition, the arts

could be argued for from a position of their status as generally active, rather than passive,

pursuits. In terms of the usefulness of the arts, one must think beyond what studying

theater or visual arts gave one, in terms of product over process, which was arguably the

dominant view. In other words, from a mainstream perspective, education in the United

States at the time of this writing, even at the elementary level, was about preparing for the

students' future in society, with a focus on careerism or the thought of 'What do you

want to be when you grow up?'

This focus was instilled early and then gradually intensified as the student moved

from elementary school to middle school, and on to high school and college. From this

status quo view, an arts education program, such as drama classes in middle school,

would not be seen as productive, because the narrow view of product was that of getting

a part in a TV show, play, or movie (against which the odds were stacked). However,

when one broadens that narrow view, one could see that theater teaches skills that were

equally valuable in a high-pressure business situation: public speaking, remaining calm

under pressure, adapting to one's audience, and achieving analytical thinking involving

the intersection of roles. "In addition to the risk of sharing work with peers, the constant

anticipation of a critical audience infuses life at these organizations with an orientation

toward the uncertainty of public reaction" (Fiske, 1999, p. 6).

Similar to Fiske's (1999) example, one might think of a visual arts education as

having a narrowly defined and conceived end result, being the production of a painting or

sculpture, a product which may sell for thousands of dollars. Alternatively, there was the

perception that the processes learned in getting that education, in terms of creativity,

brain theory, color theory, and rules of composition and scale, were applicable to a wide

variety of fields outside of painting, drawing, and sculpture. Following this set of

assumptions and contrasts, O'Donoghue (2015) noted regarding the tangible versus

intangible aspects of arts education,

> If a turn to experience in art education shifts attention away from equating art
>
> education exclusively with the production of objects of a physical nature (from
>
> which the initiated can make determinations and appraisals), it calls us to consider
>
> and imagine other ways of making and, therefore, it has the potential to engage us
>
> differently in thinking about making processes. (p. 103)

The ability to think differently became a byword of the ongoing technology

revolution, in a field considered generally to be separate and distinct from the art world

(although again, this distinction or separation may not be actually applicable in reality).

In the context of NCLB and other educational reform measures that continued to

(de)evolve in the present time of this writing, a question remained puzzling to the

commentators, scholars, and researchers who devoted time to the subject of arts

education. This question was how, in a culture where the actual worth of education was

determined in an increasingly standardized manner, was there room for the type of

individual expression and creativity that arts programs sought to bring out in young

people? Cultural rights were a subject increasingly conflated with politics and ideology in

the present time of this writing; in contrast, a cohesion rather than a separation was

reflected in arts education, which emphasized the value of arts and humanities, placing

emphasis on both the individual and the interrelated web of diverse community

influences. As Fiske (1999) put it succinctly, "Young artists report hearing a melody on

the radio, seeing a billboard design, or witnessing a fight on the subway; all the while,

they report that they can be thinking about transforming these moments into their own

art" (p. 8).

Traditional notions of culture and progress may pull society in one direction,

while innovators and others strove to move against that grain. In the context of the future

of arts programs, one must ask the correlation and collusion between various forces of

progress and retroactivity in society. In a world where homogeneity was increasingly

becoming favored, one must still find room for diversity. This diversity, concentrated in

the arts, could be seen as the wellspring of hybridity, creativity, and newness; whereas,

convention was more about a closed loop of endless and eventual cynical reinvention.

America needed to look more towards its history as an innovator, while also facing the

challenge of the future, in terms of protecting its culture by protecting the continuation of

vital arts programs nationwide. Beginning in the early 1900s, interest and investment in

the arts grew as progressive reforms took hold; but, waned during times of austerity and

conservative reforms. "From 1950 and into the 1980s, justification for arts education

limited to intrinsic value rather than including self-esteem or improved reading as

legitimate rationales" (Smithrim & Upitis, 2005).

In further terms of application, Holcomb (2007) again using a methodology that

focused on case study examples, examined a teacher who was committed to showing her

students how the arts could be applied to a wide variety of disciplines (para. 24). Looking

at limited sample sizes was arguably counterproductive to drawing general conclusions

across wider populations. Smithrim & Upitis' (2005) results could also be seen in terms

of the relative rarity of arts programs that contained an integral element of self-

justification. From another perspective, this element, absent in other core disciplines,

should not even be a requirement. According to Holcomb (2007), the teacher in question

was a case study in effective blending of arts programs along the lines of linking these

programs to future potential career-oriented applications, representing a sort of middle

ground between education as the advancement of careerism and education as true human

enrichment that was non-monetary, but rather based on notions of human capital theory.

> She tells them everything they touch was created by an artist: industrial designers
>
> made the cars they ride in and the furniture they use, fashion designers made the
>
> clothes they wear, and graphic artists illustrated the video games they play.
>
> (Holcombe, 2007, p. 1)

From this point of view, arts education could be applied in the classroom in a

manner that proved the relationship between the arts and future societal roles, even at

early elementary levels, while maintaining the concept of education as preparation for the

job market. The arts represented more than a set of skills; they represent a set of ideas. As

Pinker (2006) pointed out, ideas shaped our lives. The great humanities philosophers shaped our government, economy, and laws, as well as our notions of about education, family and relationships. Additionally, according to Pinker (2006) the arts served as a barometer of how we viewed and judged our public and private interactions (p. 1). From this perspective, the application was inherent and basic; it could even be related positively to careerism, although this state of being should not arguably be the main concern of educational institutions in the first place, which arts programs accentuated and realized. Descriptions of arts programs minimized specific principles and practices of individual disciplines, while emphasizing practices with a broader utility. Therefore, according to Carpini (2007) less emphasis was placed on the impact the arts majors had on our various fields (p. 38). For this change to take place, though, funding remained the root concern. It remained a simple fact that most districts targeted arts programs first when facing budget cuts.

Summary

In conclusion, the current investigation examined the general literature on arts education. Much of this literature was relatively slanted or weighted in favor of arts education programs, but also pointed out the dearth or gap that existed between theory proving the value of these programs, and application advocating their diminishment or elimination. It was the contention of this literature review that overall, saving threatened arts programs and ensuring their perpetuation was a vital goal; it was relatively difficult to find non-opinion-based, empirical studies which showed any possible benefits of slashing arts programs at the elementary school or any other educational level. "In a society that values measurements and uses data-driven analysis to inform decisions about

allocation of scarce resources, photographs of smiling faces are not enough to gain or even retain support" (Fiske, 1999, p. 7).

In fact, literature pointed towards these programs' continuance in the elementary grades as integral to building a solid foundation on which to base later social, cognitive, and academic achievement. In examining prevailing educational trends and opposition to those trends in then-current literature, it was important to view studies in terms of advocacy of the issues, which focused on the benefits of arts education, and could provide some sort of bulwark against the resource drain that then-currently threatened many of our country's major systems, including education. "Decision making, thinking ahead, and building strategies make up most of what adults have to do in their everyday lives. But facility in these does not come easily" (Fiske, 1999, p. 7).

The challenge of the future was to continue to find ways to turn theory into productive reality, and continue to act as an advocate for the expansion of arts education. One must separate the optimal from the typical, and continue to act as an advocate for arts education, despite threats, from both a perspective of ensuring human capital for the future, and remaining true to past ideals of progressive education that emphasized dynamism and action, rather than passivity. Chapter Three describes the methodology that guided this research study, including the research questions and hypotheses. In addition, Chapter Three describes the setting, population and sample, instrumentation used, and data collection procedures involved.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

To better understand the importance of the methodology used in this research, it is important to restate the underlying problem identified in Chapter Two. According to the Arts Education Partnership (AEP, 2015), the "lack of access to an arts-rich curriculum and high-quality arts learning opportunities is not an isolated problem in high-poverty schools; it is in fact one symptom of larger, more systemic problems that plague such schools" (p. 6). "Advocates for arts education in the public schools are also typically concerned with issues of equity and access for all segments of the pre-K–12 student population" (Miksza, 2013, p. 25). As stated by Sabol (2013), "Students who had intensive arts experiences demonstrated higher levels of civic engagement than their non-arts-engaged peers" (p. 42).

Chapter Three re-states the problem and purpose of the study, then addresses the methodology of the mixed-methods study. The problem and purpose of the study are followed by the research questions and null hypotheses, a description of the methodology of the research, the research design, and an explanation of the population and sample. In addition, the instrumentation, method of data collection, and procedures analysis are discussed. This mixed-methods study includes the collection, analysis, and comparison of a sample of perceptions of public school curriculum directors and music educators regarding the status of K-12 fine arts education. The overarching goal of the study is to add to the existing body of research, thereby empowering fine arts educators and elementary school administrators.

Research Questions, Perspectives, and Hypotheses

Research questions and perspectives. The following research questions guided this study:

Research Question 1: How do the state of Missouri Elementary Schools design and implement the arts into their curriculum?

Research Question 2: How have meaningful arts learning experiences made a difference in students' educational journeys?

Research Perspective 1: If an elementary school in the state of Missouri has an arts program then arts would be integrated into the content area courses as measured by surveys of elementary school principals with the data provided by the researcher.

Research Perspective 2: If an elementary school in the state of Missouri has an arts program, then arts would be integrated into the content area courses as measured by the responses given in focus groups of elementary fine arts teachers, using the data provided by the researcher.

Null Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis: There is no difference between a school that has an arts program and one which does not, in academic achievement assessments, socioeconomic status, attendance, and school funding.

Null Sub-Hypothesis a: If a school has an arts program, then students will not have higher academic achievement scores, as measured by Missouri Assessment Performance (MAP) data provided by MODESE.

Null Sub-Hypothesis b: If a school has an arts program then students will not come from above average socioeconomic status families, as measured by school data provided by MODESE.

Null Sub-Hypothesis c: If a school has an arts program then students will not have higher attendance, as measured by school data provided by MODESE.

Null Sub-Hypothesis d: If a school has an arts program, then schools will not have more funding as measured by MODESE.

Research Design

This research is a mixed-methods design study that incorporated data, surveys, and focus groups to add to the existing research and ongoing dialogue concerning fine arts curricula. The study contributed then-current and relevant data to the topic of the value of an arts education. When employing mixed-methods research, "its advantage is that by using multiple methods, researchers are better able to gather and analyze considerably more and different kinds of data than they would be able to using just one approach" (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2015, p. 550). Moreover, per Maxwell (2013), then-existing literature identified a number of purposes for combining methods (p. 102). This study focused on three of these purposes: First, the choice of using principal surveys was predicated on obtaining a wider range of responses to add to the focused topic of arts education. Second, utilizing the focus group process enabled participants to respond freely to the questions and study topics. Third, the data collection enabled the researcher to examine and correlate then-current trends and explore the topic of the effectiveness of arts education.

Quantitative data analysis. To collect data on Missouri's third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade assessments, attendance, socioeconomics, and school budgets, this researcher leveraged websites from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MODESE, 2014a; 2014b, 2014c), Kids Count Data Center (Annie E. Casey Foundation [AECF], 2014), and the Governing the States and Localities (2014) website. The data collected are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Data to be Collected

Missouri Assessment Performance	Academic Achievement (Annually)	Language Arts Math Science	www.dese.mo.gov	MODESE	Secondary
		2013-14 2012-13 2011-12			
Attendance	Percentage	2013-14 2012-13 2011-12	www.dese.mo.gov	MODESE	Secondary
Socioeconomic Status	Race Gender Free and Reduce lunch Zip Code	2013-14 2012-13 2011-12	www.datacenter.kids count www.dese.mo.gov	Kids Count MODESE	Secondary
Budgetary Fund	Per Pupil Resources	2013-14 2012-13 2011-12	www.governing.com	Governing The States & Localities	Secondary

Note: Available from the MODESE (2014), *Kids Count* Data Center (AECF, 2014)*,* and Governing the States and Localities (2014)

Qualitative data analysis. Missouri elementary school principals submitted their data to the researcher, and were asked to respond anonymously through Survey Monkey (2016). A total of 31 principals participated in the study. The volunteer Fine Arts Educators focus groups were conducted at the Regional Arts Commission in St. Louis,

Missouri. A total of 17 participants attended on the dates of September 24, 2016; October 1, 2016; and October 14, 2016.

Triangulation. Triangulation of results was provided by the collection of data from the surveys, focus groups, and numerical data collection. According to Maxwell (2013), "This strategy reduces the risk of chance associations and of systematic biases due to a specific method, and allows a better assessment of the generality of the explanations that one develops" (p. 128). In the triangulation design, "The researcher uses both quantitative and qualitative methods to study the same phenomenon to determine if the two converge upon a single understanding of the research problem being investigated" (Fraenkel et al., 2015, p. 559).

Analysis of Data

The focus groups were recorded, with the permission of the participants. In addition, notes were taken during the focus group, with the permission of the participants. The recordings were transcribed; transcripts and notes were categorized by question, then by common themes.

Each of the participants in the qualitative component of the study, all employed in the state of Missouri, were specifically invited to participate, based upon his or her experience in K-12 public school fine arts. Elementary school principals in the state of Missouri were requested via email to participate in this study. Once the participant accepted the invitation to participate, the following materials were emailed to the participant: a letter of introduction and a letter of informed consent, which included a request to indicate the preference of the date, time, and place of focus group session. In

addition, participants were given the option to request the results of the study, upon completion.

The following sections provide a more in-depth description of the phases, results, and analysis.

Phase 1

Phase 1 of this study noted the quantitative elements of the study. In this phase, the researcher developed an online survey that was distributed to a random sample of 700 elementary-school principals in the state of Missouri. A total of 31 surveys were anonymously completed online and submitted to the researcher.

Quantitative Data Collection

Data from this study representing MAP scores, attendance, socioeconomic status, and school funding were secondary in nature. The researcher conducted a quantitative content analysis to investigate and analyze the possible relationship between elementary schools in the state of Missouri whose third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade students participated in arts-related classes and those schools that did not have an arts-related curriculum. The researcher determined the variance for the composite scores for each individual competency, then used a two-tailed z-test for the difference of means to test the null hypotheses. The critical values for a 95% confidence level were +1.96 and -1.96. The identified level of significance was .05.

Demographic data. Missouri Elementary Schools' principal population consisted of approximately 1,200 to 1,250 administrators. Of these, 700 principals were e-mailed; 31 participated in this educational study that assessed third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade students, within a 30-day time frame. The school district reported Missouri elementary

schools' demographic information to the state, and the MODESE (2014) made the

information public by posting it on their website.

Null Hypothesis

      Null Hypothesis: With an arts program, there is no difference in academic

achievement assessments, socioeconomic status, attendance, and school funding.

      Null Sub-Hypothesis a: If a school has an arts program, then students will not

have higher academic achievement scores, as measured by Missouri Assessment

Performance (MAP) data provided by MODESE.

      For the general population, the more fine arts classes taken, the higher the student

achievement on all measures (including Terra Nova scores, STAR assessment, and scores

on the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP).

      While this researcher cannot claim that participation in fine arts courses caused

higher academic achievement, study results definitely suggested opportunities for fine

arts education in Missouri elementary schools should be increased or, at the very least,

maintained. There was no evidence that fine arts courses or instructional time in the arts

should be cut as districts worked for higher test scores, as required by the provisions of

federal legislation.

      Null Sub-Hypothesis b: If a school has an arts program then students will not

come from above average socioeconomic status families, as measured by school data

provided by MODESE.

      For students eligible for free and reduced-priced lunch (an indicator of family

socioeconomic status), the more music and arts classes taken, the higher the student

achievement on all measures. For students across racial and ethnic groups, the more music and arts classes taken, the higher the student achievement on all measures.

Null Sub-Hypothesis c: If a school has an arts program then students will not have higher attendance, as measured by school data provided by MODESE.

"Attendance rates are higher for districts with higher levels of student enrollment in the arts when compared to districts with lower levels of arts participation" (Scheuler, 2010, p. 12).

Null Sub-Hypothesis d: If a school has an arts program, then schools will not have more funding as measured by MODESE.

Because arts programs enriched the overall learning experience, it followed that students could better stimulate their imaginations, advance their critical thinking skills, and develop the kind of creativity that would be required as they entered the workforce (National Assembly of State Arts Agencies [NASAA], 2015)). National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) also indicated that state arts agencies invested heavily to promote arts education – as much as $56 million – and professional and curriculum development, apprenticeships, and social events such as festivals. "About 15% of arts education grants awarded are in the form of operating support — flexible dollars that can be used to support operations in accordance with an organization's specific needs" (NASAA, 2015, p. 1).

Phase 2

Phase 2 of this study employed focus groups to develop data. Three focus groups were held, with 17 participants in total, representing a typical sample. The researcher collected data from fine arts educators spanning across grade levels from elementary

through high school. Qualitative data were gathered from multiple sources, including

individual focus group sessions. Data gathered from focus group interviews were

digitally recorded and transcribed by the researcher, and then stored on the researcher's

password-protected computer.

Research Question and Perspective

      Research Question 1: How do the state of Missouri Elementary Schools design

and implement the arts into their curriculum?

      Research Perspective 1: If an elementary school in the state of Missouri has an

arts program then arts would be integrated into the content area courses as measured by

surveys of elementary school principals with the data provided by the researcher.

      Therein lays the need for this study and more research. This researcher found that

there was a discontinuity between studies when formulating a strategy for how the arts

were to be designed for each district, school, grade and subject. This researcher reviewed

data that appeared to suggest a random and inconsistent design pattern for arts programs.

The research also revealed that districts varied in their implementation of their arts

programs. This varied approach to implementation produced results from school districts

that could not easily be compared to other districts. The overall results of the research

suggested that there was a need for a consistent element of design and implementation of

arts integration throughout the state of Missouri. This would allow for the development of

an assessment mechanism to be applied in a unilateral way.

      Research Question 2: How have meaningful arts learning experiences made

difference in students' educational journeys?

Research Perspective 2. If an elementary school in the state of Missouri has an arts program then arts would not be integrated into the content area courses as measured by the responses given in focus groups of elementary fine arts teachers, using the data provided by the researcher.

The survey provided data for useful arts professional opportunities for school-based arts teachers and non-arts teachers, as well as challenges to providing arts instruction in the near future.

Qualitative Process

Data collection began with conducting focus group interviews with participants over a three-week time frame to gain insights about the fine arts educators' instructional practices and perceptions of the effects of arts integration on student learning. Each focus group interview was approximately 90 minutes in length and followed the interview protocol (Appendix B). All interviews were digitally recorded and downloaded to a password-protected computer. Each participant's name was coded with a letter pseudonym to protect participant confidentiality. The interviews consisted of six open-ended questions designed to gain insight and understanding into the teachers' perceptions about using arts integration in their classrooms, the practices teachers found to be the most effective in integrating art into the curricula, and the impact arts integration had on the students' learning and levels of engagement. The focus group interview format enabled the participants to freely provide additional input regarding their personal beliefs about arts integration, their definition of arts integration, their feelings concerning the school's administration pressure and/or support for using arts integration, and their preferred practices for integrating art into their classrooms. The focus group sessions

served as an integral component of the research, providing insight and understanding into the practices concerning arts integration in the elementary classroom.

Demographic data. The MODESE website included the email addresses of approximately 100 to 150 fine arts educators. The 100 fine arts educators were emailed, and 17 volunteered to participate in the focus group for this study. The 17 who participated in this educational study taught fine arts content in the educational system. Most of the focus group participants in this study came from urban school districts, with diverse teaching content (see Figure 3), ages, years of experience (see Figure 5), and grade levels (see Figure 6).

Instrument interview response analysis. Data for this study were gathered across multiple sources to include focus group interviews. The focus group interviews were digitally recorded and downloaded onto a password-protected computer. Transcripts of the interviews and field notes taken during discussions of the sessions were also downloaded and saved on the researcher's computer. For the analysis phase of the research, all participants were assigned pseudonyms in order to protect their identities and preserve their anonymity. In preparation for data analysis, the focus group interview transcripts, field notes, and typed notes were organized into a spreadsheet to facilitate the identification of commonalities and themes. The researcher used open and axial coding of data gathered from the focus group interviews and content analysis of data gathered from observations. Following a thematic analysis approach to data analysis allowed the researcher to carefully examine and code each participant's response to the focus group questions regarding his or her use of arts integration in the academic classrooms.

The researcher began the initial stage of data analysis by transcribing each of the 17 individual responses, by first listening to the response and then transcribing the recorded response verbatim. To ensure accuracy in the transcripts, the researcher then listened and reviewed each recorded response, while comparing them to typed transcriptions. By transcribing the responses and listening to the interview data repeatedly, the researcher gained a familiarity with the data and a clearer understanding of the responses. During the next stage of data analysis, the researcher coded the data using an open-coding process. Through the review of each phrase and sentence recorded in the transcripts, the researcher color-coded words, phrases, or concepts that participants consistently repeated during the individual interviews. The identified word or phrase was documented in order to accurately identify possible emergent themes.

In the next stage of data analysis, the researcher applied axial coding. The researcher searched for patterns within the coded data by applying axial coding, in which the text was reread and reviewed in order to identify text that supported the concepts and categories identified through the open coding process. Through axial coding, the following themes were identified to address the research questions guiding this study: (a) Theme One: Purpose is to ascertain the value of the Arts; (b) Theme Two: Application is to determine how to integrate the data in conjunction with curriculum; (c) Theme Three: Usefulness in increasing the importance as AYP is tied to accreditation; and (d) Theme Four: Funding represents the data results that can affect district assessments thereby affecting federal funding. The researcher analyzed participant responses to the interview questions for data related to facilitation of student learning, dissemination of content, student engagement, and assessment of student knowledge.

Focus groups. The purpose of this qualitative piece of the study was to gain insights from fine arts educators who are responsible for implementing arts integration strategies and ensuring their students' academic success. Through the focus group session discussion, the researcher sought to gain the teachers' perceptions of arts integration as well as insight into how they implemented arts integration into their classroom curricula. For this qualitative study, the researcher conducted three, structured, focus group sessions, which were guided by six open-ended questions (Appendix B). Participants were K–12 school fine arts educators. During each focus group session, the researcher used specific questions to seek information in order to understand the instructional practices of arts integration and perceptions of arts integration's effect on student learning.

Focus group sessions were conducted at the Regional Arts Commission of St. Louis, Missouri on September 24, October 1, and October 26, 2016, selected by the researcher. Participants were required to read and sign the letter of agreement prior to the start of the focus group sessions. Each participant was assured anonymity and encouraged to speak openly about his or her experience regarding arts integration. Then, the participants gave consent for the focus group session to be recorded and for the researcher to take additional notes during the focus group session with the understanding that data would be confidentially held in the possession of the interviewer for three years then destroyed. The time allowed for each focus group session was 1.5 hours.

Results were provided in graph format as well as in very general headings. There were shorter questions utilized for participants' responses with the results for the open-ended questions. When asked about arts integration training or professional development

in the school or district, responses indicated (as shown in Figure 9 that only 65% of

educators had some form of arts integration training, and 35% had not been formally

trained in incorporating the arts into the school academic curriculum. The other question

that showed a mixed response was Question 5: "On a five-point scale (where 5 is very

prepared and 1 is not at all prepared), how prepared do you think your students are?"

Qualitative Data Collection

Instrument survey item analysis. Upon gaining IRB approval from Lindenwood

University, as a part of the initial correspondence, the researcher contacted each potential

participant through school e-mail and invited him or her to participate in the research

study. Each potential participant was provided a description and purpose of the study,

along with the consent of participation (Appendix D) as an attachment to the school email

address marked Confidential, through the *SurveyMonkey* account. The data collection

process extended over the time period of one month and consisted of individual data

collection. The researcher then used open and axial coding of data gathered from the

surveys collected. By following a thematic analysis approach to data analysis, the

researcher was able to carefully examine and code each participant's response to the

survey questions regarding his or her use of arts integration in his or her facility. The

researcher compared the insights gained from the arts educators' focus group questions

and survey questions (Appendix B; Appendix E).

The researcher began the initial stage of data analysis by first reading each

question and answers to ensure accuracy in the transcription. During the next stage of

data analysis, the researcher coded the data using an open coding process. Through the

review of each phrase in the transcriptions, the researcher color-coded words, phrases, or

concepts that participants consistently repeated during the individual survey. The identified word or phrase was documented in order to accurately identify possible emergent themes.

In the next stage of data analysis, the researcher applied axial coding and searched for patterns within the coded data, in which the text that supported the concepts and categories were identified through the open coding process. Through axial coding, the following themes were identified to address the research questions guiding this study:

(a) Theme One: Purpose is to ascertain the value of the Arts.

(b) Theme Two: Application is to determine how to integrate the data in conjunction with curriculum.

(c) Theme Three: Usefulness in increasing the importance, such as AYP, is tied to accreditation.

(d) Theme Four: Funding represents the data results that could affect district assessments; thereby, affecting federal funding.

In allowing for the best utilization of the knowledge and experience of each participant to be relevant and valid, the constructivist theory and multiple intelligence theory were used as guidelines (Seidel, Tishman, Winner, Hetland, & Palmer, 2011). The survey study participants were allowed to respond to the questions, based on their own knowledge and strengths each possessed, by exploring their own environments and testing related hypotheses. The participants were then able to communicate by drawing relevant suppositions, based on the questions presented. Each participant thereby constructed the response based on his or her own knowledge and unique experiences with

the world, and the meaning he or she gave to those experiences. Figures and graphs are

discussed further in the findings of this study.

Findings

As part of this study, 31 survey questions were developed to explore the effect of

arts integration on improving student learning, as well as the instructional practices

believed most effective in implementing arts integration in the elementary classroom. The

data collected revealed information that addressed the research questions, research

perspectives, and null hypothesis, with its four null sub-hypotheses.

Limitations

Limitations in the study included the fact that samples were limited to third-,

fourth-, and fifth-grade elementary school principals in the state of Missouri and sample

sizes were smaller than larger-scale studies.

The data were evaluated by coding the qualitative focus group results, then cross-

referencing the data to the quantitative survey results. Transcriptions of the focus groups

discussions were classified by questions, common responses, and themes, and aligned

with the two research questions, two research perspectives, and one null hypothesis.

Responses from the arts educators, elementary school principals, and student data were

compared for commonalities and differences.

Research Question 1. How do the state of Missouri Elementary Schools design

and implement the arts into the curriculum?

According to Lajevic (2013), best practices in arts integration indicated that

encouraging teachers and students to become immersed in the 'overlapping spaces' of art

helped to make academic content more exciting. Further, as the President's Committee

on the Arts and the Humanities (2011) indicated, ongoing professional development for teachers of art, including arts specialists, was critical for effective arts integration programs.

Research Question 2. How have meaningful arts learning experiences made a difference in students' educational journeys?

According to Chemi (2014), teachers' instincts led them to conduct new experiments to investigate the impact of the arts on the learning process, despite their lack of formal knowledge or education in arts-based teaching. Because arts integration in curricula encouraged new ways of interpreting learning, educators may find "meaningful connection between themselves and the rest of the world, thus embodying curriculum" (Lajevic, 2013, p. 43). Bolstering this argument was the Presidential Committee's findings that schools reported greater achievements when the arts had been integrated into curricula as a means of improving and reforming schools (President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities [PCAH], 2011).

Research Perspective 1. If an elementary school in the state of Missouri has an arts program, then arts would not be integrated into the content area courses as measured by surveys of elementary school principals with the data provided by the researcher.

"Although many principals would like to infuse the visual and performing arts into classroom instruction, most are limited by lack of time or knowledge, as well as their primary concerns about meeting mandated curriculum standards" (Lorimer, 2009, p. 11).

Research Perspective 2. If an elementary school in the state of Missouri has an arts program then arts would not be integrated into the content area courses as measured

by the responses given in focus groups of elementary fine arts teachers, using the data

provided by the researcher.

"When implemented effectively and with rigor, students receive both high quality

arts instruction and subject matter instruction in reading, math, science and other subjects

within an integrated lesson plan" (PCAH, 2011, p. 39).

Null Hypothesis. There is no difference between a school that has an arts

program and one which does not in academic achievement assessments, socioeconomic

status, attendance, and school funding.

Null Sub-Hypotheses a. If a school has an arts program, then students will not

have higher academic achievement scores, as measured by Missouri Assessment

Performance (MAP) data provided by MODESE.

"This is scary for many teachers especially since they have prescribed academic

content that they must teach the student, and school principals often do not support arts

integration as it does not represent the format of the mandated standardized tests"

(Lajevic, 2013, p. 51).

Null Hypotheses b. If a school has an arts program then students will not come

from above average socioeconomic status families, as measured by school data provided

by MODESE.

"There is increasing evidence that the students in schools that are most challenged

and serving the highest need student populations often have the fewest arts opportunities"

(PCAH, 2011, p. 32).

Null Hypotheses c. If a school has an arts program then students will not have

higher attendance, as measured by School data provided by MODESE.

Null Hypotheses d. If a school has an arts program, then schools will not have more funding as measured by MODESE.

"It is possible that elementary school arts programs are more flexible or perhaps less costly than secondary arts programs and can be aligned with students' interests more easily" (Miksza, 2013, p. 30). "There is great stress now on arts programs as school boards around the country wrestle with budget woes, faced with the question of whether they can afford to preserve arts offerings — let alone expand what they have traditionally provided" (PCAH, 2011, p. 30).

Setting

This study took place at the Regional Arts Commission building (RAC, 2017), located in St. Louis, Missouri, during the fall semester of 2016. The RAC (2017) was founded in 1985 to promote, encourage, and foster the arts and cultural institutions in St. Louis City and County (para 2). RAC's (2017) operations manager provided Conference Room A, located on the third floor. The room was equipped with 15 to 20 chairs, a round conference table, a projector table, a check-in area, coffee, water, and a doorman.

Population and Sample

"Population to sample applies when the research question seeks to define or describe a sample or predict its actions using data about the general population" (Machi & McEvoy, 2012, p. 120). In order to quantify the findings, researchers must narrow results to a sample of the population. The sample of the population is "when the question of inquiry uses a representative sample of a defined population to determine the qualities of that population, use the sample to population argument pattern type" (Machi & McEvoy, 2012, p. 120). This mixed-methods study employed two phases.

In Phase 1, the researcher obtained the data for the third-, fourth-, and fifth-grades of elementary schools in the state of Missouri through MODESE. Surveys were made available to all third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade elementary school principals throughout the state of Missouri via the Internet. A total of 700 surveys were disseminated via each building principal with a minimum of 30 responses expected. A total of 31 surveys were completed and returned online. Each survey recipient, while remaining anonymous, indicated on one of the questions his or her geographic location. All survey data came from then-current elementary school principals and from the fine arts teachers' focus groups sessions, in the state of Missouri.

The method of stratified random sampling was chosen in an effort to solicit a maximum number of responses, thereby strengthening the data regarding the individuals' perceptions. The sample was stratified by geographic region and by elementary principals that service third, fourth, and fifth grades, to assure proper distribution of the sample. A description was given of the online survey population along with rationale for the specific pie charts and bar graph surveys. This was followed by the four themes, with qualitative and quantitative data supporting each theme. A coding system was created as a means to report focus group sessions and open-ended survey questions, with all data handled in a confidential manner. The 17 participants in the arts educators focus group in the study were referred to through use of codes: FA1 through FA17. The 31 elementary-school principals, who were survey participants in the study, were referred to through use of codes: P1 through P31. "Stratified random sampling is a process in which certain subgroups, or strata, are selected for the sample in the same proportion as they exist in the population" (Fraenkel et al., 2015, p.96). "Purposive sample consists of individuals who

have special qualifications of some sort or are deemed representative on the basis of prior evidence" (Fraenkel et al., 2015, p. 108). These two types of sampling were utilized in the study: stratified random sampling and purposive sampling.

In Phase 2, focus group sessions were conducted with 17 individuals to strengthen the data triangulation in the study. In total, 17 public school fine arts educators volunteered to participate in the discussion of the study topic. All focus group sessions resided in the state of Missouri and participants were invited due to their teaching content area in the educational system with the public schools and the potentially varying perceptions of the fine arts. Descriptions of the focus group sessions were provided to the participants. In addition, the participants received a description of the process used to collect, code, and process the qualitative data. In keeping with Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2015), during the focus group interview, the interviewer asked a small group of people to think about a series of questions (p. 454).

Instrumentation

From the onset of the research project, "it should be noted that for the type of instrument used to collect data, there is not a major difference between quantitative and qualitative methodologies" (Fraenkel et al., 2015, p. 555). A mixed-methods research design was deemed the best choice for this study. To collect qualitative data for the study, a survey (see Appendix E) was conducted in Phase 1, and focus group questions (see Appendix B) were created and delivered to participants during the focus group meetings, in Phase 2.

In Phase 1, the design of the survey was deliberately set for a maximum number of responses. The principal survey included 13 questions; 10 multiple-choice questions,

and three open-ended questions. The survey was distributed to 700 elementary school principals across Missouri. A total of 31 principals participated in the survey, for a response rate of 4.42%. An e-mailed letter of request, inviting participation via the web address, was made available to 700 elementary school principals in the state of Missouri (see Appendix A). Included in the terms of the survey was an explanation that all data obtained would be kept confidential and securely stored for three consecutive years, and then destroyed.

In Phase 2, questions were derived from gathering and analyzing information from academics and arts educators. The design of the focus group was deliberately set for a maximum of 90 minutes, to allow arts educators to speak freely and openly in their responses to the topic. The arts educators' focus group included discussion of six questions; three multiple choice questions with a request for an explanation of why or why not, and three open-ended questions with a request for an explanation of why or why not. The invitation to participate in the research focus group was sent to 100 arts educators across Missouri via a letter of invitation, by using the school district electronic communications (see Appendix A). In total, 17 arts educators accepted the invitation to participate and selected their preference from among the three available dates.

Data Collection Procedures

For this study, there was one hypothesis tested, with four sub-hypotheses, which were quantitative in nature. These five were be evaluated at a level of significance equal to 0.05. Additionally, the decision rule used incorporated the p-value; that is, if the p-value of the test statistic was less than the level of significance (0.05), there was sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis and support the alternative or research

hypothesis. In Phase 1, a survey was deemed to be the most appropriate method for gathering qualitative and quantitative data for the study. The survey was made available to 700 elementary-school principals in the state of Missouri. The online survey data were collected over a 30-day period and subsequently analyzed using the online survey tool, *SurveyMonkey* (Survey Monkey, 2016). The survey data were collected concurrently with the focus group data during Phase 2. For Phase 2, the focus group participants were in attendance on a voluntary basis. Each focus group session took one hour and 30 minutes and was recorded with permission from the participants. Throughout the interview, the researcher took notes. All focus group sessions were transcribed and compared with the notes of the researcher, as well as the survey data. All data were analyzed and compared for common themes. Participants were assured that all documentation would be stored in the possession of the researcher for three consecutive years, and then destroyed. In addition, all electronic data would be password protected and stored in the possession of the researcher for three years, and then destroyed.

Data analysis. For both Phases 1 and 2, the researcher created pie charts, bar graphs, and tables to present the varied responses among the stakeholder groups. The data were evaluated by coding the surveys and focus group participants. The transcriptions of the focus groups and survey were categorized by questions, common responses, and themes.

Summary

The primary goal of this study was to expand the existing body of research on the importance of arts education. The researcher collected and analyzed data through a mixed-method of qualitative and quantitative research. In Phase 1, surveys were

distributed to 700 principals, and 31 participated. In Phase 2, invitations to participate in focus group were distributed to 100 arts educators, and 17 participated. Chapter Four presents an analysis of the data and reveals the results of the study.

Chapter Four: Analysis of Data

Chapter Four provides an analysis of the data collected in this study. The purpose of this study was to compare and analyze the possible relationship between all elementary schools in the state of Missouri, whose third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade students participated in arts-related classes and those who did not; specifically studying MAP scores, attendance, socioeconomic status, and school funding. A mixed-methods study was employed to explore arts curriculum and implementation with the principals and fine arts teachers in the state of Missouri.

Research Questions and Research Perspectives

The following research questions guided the study:

Research Question 1: How do the state of Missouri Elementary Schools design and implement the arts into their curriculum?

Research Question 2: How have meaningful arts learning experiences made difference in students' educational journeys?

Research Perspective 1: If an elementary school in the state of Missouri has an arts program then arts would be integrated into the content area courses as measured by surveys of elementary school principals with the data provided by the researcher.

Research Perspective 2: If an elementary school in the state of Missouri has an arts program, then arts would be integrated into the content area courses as measured by the responses given in focus groups of elementary fine arts teachers, using the data provided by the researcher.

Hypothesis and Sub-Hypotheses.

Hypothesis: There is no difference between a school that has an arts program and one which does not, in academic achievement assessments, socioeconomic status, attendance, and school funding.

Null Sub-Hypothesis a: If a school has an arts program, then students will not have higher academic achievement scores, as measured by Missouri Assessment Performance (MAP) data provided by MODESE.

Null Sub-Hypothesis b: If a school has an arts program then students will not come from above average socioeconomic status families, as measured by school data provided by MODESE.

Null Sub-Hypothesis c: If a school has an arts program then students will not have higher attendance, as measured by school data provided by MODESE.

Null Sub-Hypothesis d: If a school has an arts program, then schools will not have more funding as measured by MODESE.

Phase 1

Phase 1 of this study noted the quantitative elements of the study. In this phase, the researcher developed an online survey that was distributed to a random sample of 700 elementary-school principals in the state of Missouri. A total of 31 surveys were anonymously completed online and submitted to the researcher.

Quantitative data. For this study, there was one hypothesis, with four sub-hypotheses, tested. These were evaluated at a level of significance equal to 0.05. Additionally, the decision rule incorporated the p-value; that is, if the p-value of the test statistic was less than the level of significance (0.05), there was sufficient evidence to

reject the null hypothesis and support the alternative or research hypothesis. The

hypotheses may be verified through the use of a *t*-test for two independent samples. A

two-tailed test was used as there were no directions assumed in the research hypotheses.

Using statistical notation, the hypotheses could be written as H_0: $\mu\_(var)_{ART}=$

$\mu\_(var)_{NOART}$ vs. $H1$: $\mu\_(var)_{ART} \neq \mu\_(var)_{NOART}$, where *var* may be one of the

following: academic achievement assessments, socioeconomic status, attendance, and

school funding.

In Table 2, each achievement level represents standards of performance for each

assessed content area (Communication Arts, Mathematics, and Science) for grades three

through five. "According to correlational analysis, districts with higher levels of student

enrollment in the arts showed better performance on Math tests than districts with lower

levels of student arts participation" (Scheuler, 2010, p. 14).

Null Sub-Hypothesis a: If a school has an arts program, then students will not

have higher academic achievement scores, as measured by Missouri Assessment

Performance (MAP) data provided by MODESE.

The alternative hypothesis is that those students enrolled in schools that have an

art program will have higher achievement scores.

This case was tested through a one-way ANOVA. Additionally, the alternative

hypothesis will be left-tailed in nature as it has been hypothesized that the first group

(those in schools with art program) has a higher score compared to the second group, as

shown by the statistical notations $H0$: $\mu\_{acadART} = \mu\_{acad\_NOART}$ vs. $H1$: $\mu\_{acadART} >$

$\mu\_{acadNOART}$.

Table 2

Map Data for Grades *3-5 in 2012, 2013, and 2014*

2011-2012 (grade/subject)	# of students scoring below basic on MAP	% of students scoring below basic on MAP	# of students scoring basic on MAP	% of students scoring basic on MAP	# of students scoring proficient on MAP	% of students scoring proficient on MAP	# of students scoring advanced on MAP	% of students scoring advanced on MAP	# of students scoring below basic and basic on MAP	% of students scoring below basic and basic on MAP	# of students scoring proficient and advanced on MAP	% of students scoring proficient and advanced on MAP
3 ELA	5,315	7.9%	30,853	46%	18,249	27.2%	12,624	18.8%	36,168	53.9%	30,873	46.1%
4 ELA	5,457	8.2%	25,993	38.9%	20,845	31.2%	14,447	21.6%	31,450	47.1%	35,292	52.9%
5 ELA	4,649	6.9%	27,321	40.5%	21,786	32.3%	13,728	20.3%	31,970	47.4%	35,514	52.6%
3 MA	3,604	5.4%	28,282	42.1%	26,676	39.8%	8,543	12.7%	31,886	47.5%	35,219	52.5%
4 MA	3,794	5.7%	28,861	43.2%	26,970	40.4%	7,200	10.8%	32,655	48.9%	34,170	51.1%
5 MA	3,861	5.7%	26,544	39.3%	24,165	35.8%	12,948	19.2%	30,405	45%	37,113	55%
5 SC	6,510	9.8%	25,695	38.6%	18,124	27.2%	16,214	24.4%	32,205	48.4%	34,338	51.6%
2012-2013												
3 ELA	5,198	7.7%	29,541	43.8%	18,712	27.7%	14,005	20.8%	34,739	51.5%	32,717	48.5%
4 ELA	5,437	8.1%	25,629	38.4%	21,111	31.6%	14,631	21.9%	31,066	46.5%	35,742	53.5%
5 ELA	4,713	7.1%	26,656	40%	21,519	32.3%	13,792	20.7%	31,369	47%	35,311	53%
3 MA	3,573	5.3%	29,252	43.3%	26,401	39.1%	8,289	12.3%	32,825	48.6%	34,690	51.4%
4 MA	3,675	5.5%	29,269	43.7%	27,117	40.5%	6,857	10.2%	32,944	49.2%	33,974	50.8%
5 MA	3,883	5.8%	26,509	39.7%	23,941	35.9%	12,427	18.6%	30,392	45.5%	36,368	54.5%
5 SC	6,319	9.5%	25,759	38.6%	18,749	28.1%	15,919	23.9%	32,078	48.1%	34,668	51.9%

Continued

2013-2014	# of students scoring below basic on MAP	% of students scoring below basic on MAP	# of students scoring basic on MAP	% of students scoring basic on MAP	# of students scoring proficient on MAP	% of students scoring proficient on MAP	# of students scoring advanced on MAP	% of students scoring advanced on MAP	# of students scoring below basic and basic on MAP	% of students scoring below basic and basic on MAP	# of students scoring proficient and advanced on MAP	% of students scoring proficient and advanced on MAP
3 ELA	6,582	9.7%	32,565	48%	17,445	25.7%	11,238	16.6%	39,147	57.7%	28,683	42.3%
4 ELA	5,226	7.8%	30,978	46%	21,244	31.5%	9,916	14.7%	36,204	53.7%	31,160	46.3%
5 ELA	4,150	6.2%	28,845	43.1%	22,217	33.2%	11,668	17.4%	32,995	49.3%	33,885	50.7%
3 MA	4,051	6%	29,398	43.3%	24,829	36.6%	9,609	14.2%	33,449	49.5%	34,438	50.7%
4 MA	4,403	6.5%	34,129	50.6%	23,258	34.5%	5,653	8.4%	38,532	57.1%	28,911	42.9%
5 MA	4,765	7.1%	26,834	40.1%	23,760	35.5%	11,575	17.3%	31,599	47.2%	35,335	52.8%
5 SC	5,973	8.9%	28,761	43%	21,038	31.5%	11,059	16.5%	34,734	52%	32,097	48%

Note: Percentage of students scoring proficient and advanced on the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) (MODESE 2014b).

Results show that $F(3, 200) = 0.000258$, $p < 1.000$. Since the test statistic

(0.000258) is not greater than the critical value (1.61), the null hypothesis is not rejected.

In other words, there is sufficient evidence to say that there is no difference in the Map

score performance of students, year-to-year.

Null Sub-Hypothesis b: If a school has an arts program then students will not

come from above average socioeconomic status families, as measured by school data

provided by MODESE.

This hypothesis was examined in terms of the classification of being located in a

city, suburban, town, or rural area. The alternative hypothesis, on the other hand, was that

there is at least one inequality among the number of schools in the four different types of

developed human settlements. This was tested through a one-way analysis of variance

(ANOVA). A two-tailed test was used, as there was no direction assumed in the research

hypothesis. Using statistical notation, the hypotheses could be written as $H_0:\mu_{city} =$

$\mu_{suburban} = \mu_{town} = \mu_{rural}$ vs. H_1:*at least one inequality exists*. For this scenario, the critical

value at the specified level of significance was 2.65. However, results showed that $F(3,$

$200) = 3.87$ and $p = .01$. Since the test statistic (3.87) was greater than the critical value

(2.65), the null hypothesis was rejected. In other words, there was sufficient evidence to

say that at least at least one type of developed human settlements was different from the

others.

It must be noted that one of the limitations of the said statistical technique was

that it could not be determined which group was causing the difference. All that could be

concluded was that at least one group did cause this. In order to determine which was

causing this, a post-hoc analysis, such as the Tukey's test should be concluded.

"In addition to giving our children the science and math skills they need to compete in the new global context, we should also encourage the ability to think creatively that comes from a meaningful arts education" (PCAH, 2011, p. 19).

Table shows the students in Missouri, Grades 3 through 5 by percentage of gender and race; who participated in an arts discipline within the elementary school. An analysis of gender ratios in these Missouri schools over the years of 2011-2012, 2012-2013, and 2013-2014 shows, on average, 51% male and 49% female were consistent throughout the years. These percentages have remained virtually unchanged since the 2011-2012 school years. Schools that specialized in the arts, on the other hand, were 49% female and 51% male, a disparity that had grown slightly larger over the years. There was a slight difference in 2013 and 2014 with White students' percentage of 73% versus 74%.

Table 3

Missouri Student Characteristics

Year	% Female Students	% Male Students	% Asian Students	% Black Students	% Hispanic Students	% Indian Students	% Pacific Islander Students	% White Students	% Multiracial
2012	49%	51%	2%	14%	6%	<0.5%	<0.5%	74%	4%
2013	49%	51%	2%	14%	6%	<0.5%	<0.5%	74%	4%
2014	49%	51%	2%	14%	6%	<0.5%	<0.5%	73%	4%

Note. (MODESE, 2014c).

The null hypothesis is that there is no difference in the year-to-year percentage of students per state in terms of their gender or ethnicity classification of being Asian, Black, Hispanic, Indian, Pacific Islander, or White. The alternative hypothesis, on the other hand, is that there is at least one inequality among the percent of students in the different types of gender or ethnicity, year-to-year. Like the previous case, this was tested through a one-way ANOVA. A two-tailed test would be used as there are no directions

assumed in the research hypothesis. Using statistical notation, the hypotheses could be

written as H_0:$\mu_{gender} = \mu_{male} = \mu_{female}$ vs. H_1:*at least one inequality exists;* H_0:$\mu_{ethnicity} =$

$\mu_{Black} = \mu_{Hispanic} = \mu_{Indian} = \mu_{Pacific} = \mu_{White}$ vs. H_1:*at least one inequality exists*. For this

scenario, the critical value at the specified level of significance is 3.55. However, results

show that $F(3, 200) = 0.0000573$, $p < .9999$. Since the test statistic (0.0000573) is not

greater than the critical value (3.55), the null hypothesis is not rejected. In other words,

there is sufficient evidence to say that there is no difference in gender nor in ethnicity

percentage when comparing year-to-year.

"Nearly all students in Missouri public schools have opportunities to participate in

fine arts education, particularly in the areas of Visual Art and Music" (Scheuler, 2010, p.

2).

Table 4

Missouri Free and Reduced Lunch Status Percent of Enrollment

Year	Total Students Enrolled	Students Enrolled Qualifying for Free Lunch Status	Students Enrolled Qualifying for Reduced Lunch Status	Students Enrolled Qualifying for Free or Reduced Lunch Status	Percent of Students Enrolled Qualifying for Free or Reduced Lunch Status
2011-2012	947,083	386,081	71,079	457,160	48.27%
2012-2013	951,609	394,203	69,600	463,803	48.7%
2013-2014	950,936	399,866	69,202	469,068	49.3%

Note. (MODESE, 2014c).

Table shows results for elementary students. Notice that the patterns in the

percentage category are similar throughout the years of enrollment in 2011 through 2014.

For instance, when examining stable attenders, the percentage of free or reduced-price

lunch students was 48.27% (2011-2012) compared with 49.3% (2013-2014) a difference

of 25.5 percentage points. The pattern was the same for 2011-2012, 2012-2013, and

2013-2014 for the percent of students enrolled qualifying for free and reduced lunch.

The number in the percent of students enrolled qualifying for free or reduced

lunch status column is used to determine reimbursement to the school districts in

Missouri (MODESE, 2014c). Using the numbers of students eligible for free or reduced-

price lunch as an extent of school poverty, no measurable differences were found that

employed fine arts specialist. Though, variances did occur in the use of fine arts

specialists. Precisely, compared to high-poverty schools, larger percentages of low

poverty elementary schools reported the use of fine arts specialists for visual arts

instruction (by 64.5 percentage points) and music instruction (by 87.1 percentage points)

(Figure 10).

The null hypothesis is that there is no difference in the year-to-year

number/percentage of students per state in terms of their participation in the free and

reduced lunch program, year-to-year. The alternative hypothesis, on the other hand, is

that there is at least one inequality among the percent of students in participation in the

free and reduced lunch program, year-to-year. This case was tested through a one-way

ANOVA. A two-tailed test would be used as there are no directions assumed in the

research hypothesis. Using statistical notation, the hypotheses could be written as

H_0:$\mu_{Free/Reduced} = \mu_{Not\ Free/Reduced}$ vs. H_1:*at least one inequality exists*. For this scenario, the

critical value at the specified level of significance is 5.317. However, results show that

$F(3, 200) = 0.00000673$, $p < .993$. Since the test statistic (0.00000673) is not greater than

the critical value (5.317), the null hypothesis is not rejected. In other words, there is

sufficient evidence to say that there is no difference in the number or percentage of

student participation in the free and reduced lunch program, year-to-year.

Null Sub-Hypothesis c: If a school has an arts program then students will not

have higher attendance, as measured by school data provided by MODESE.

Error! Reference source not found. of this study shows, "the percentage of

Missouri students attending class were 90% of the time" (MODESE, 2014c).

Furthermore, there is no difference in the state of Missouri daily attendance in 2012 and

2013 with showing an increase in 2014 to 89.3% of students. In the state of Missouri, the

analysis of gender showed no differences in attendance with boys versus girls in third

through fifth grades in the public schools.

Table 5

Average Daily Attendance

Year	2012	2013	2014
Percentage	87.8%	87.8%	89.3%

Note. (MODESE, 2014a).

If the null hypothesis is not rejected, then the building proportional attendance

rate is the same in 2014 as it was in 2012. The alternative, on the other hand, is that the

attendance rate in 2014 is higher. A *t*-test for independent samples, assuming unequal

variances, was appropriate for this scenario. Additionally, the alternative hypothesis will

be left-tailed in nature, as it was hypothesized that the attendance in 2014 was higher

compared to the earlier year, which was 2012, as shown by the statistical notations H_0:

$\mu\_2012 = \mu\_2014$ vs. H_1: $\mu\_2012 < \mu\ 2014$

The critical value for this situation is -1.645, which was notably the critical value

if the one used the *z*-test. This is because the *t*-distribution approaches the normal

distribution as the sample size increases (Bluman, 2009). The test statistic is $t(4418) = -$

2.05, $p = .02$. On this note, there was sufficient evidence to support the claim that the proportional attendance total was greater in 2014 than it was in 2012, as the null hypothesis was rejected.

It must be noted that the assumptions for doing both the ANOVA and the *t*-test hold. That is, the observations are assumed to be independent and normally distributed. If there were gross violations in these statements, then the results may not be as valid as initially explained.

Integration of the arts into the overall school experience had a positive impact on student attendance and participation, teacher success, and participation of the parents and the community at-large. "Attendance rates are higher for districts with higher levels of student enrollment in the arts when compared to districts with lower levels of arts participation" (Scheuler, 2010, p. 2).

Typically, the financial formula determines state funding for individual school districts is based on daily attendance levels; the higher the attendance, the higher the funding (Scheuler, 2010). Conversely, schools with lower attendance scores would receive lower levels of funding. An important note is that schools may experience higher attendance rates by actively engaging their students. This is validated by PCAH Initiatives, "If students are more engaged in school because of the arts programming, attendance rates may rise, marking higher levels of student engagement" (PCAHH, 2015, p. 50).

In Table 3, the annual revenue and spending per pupil shows the total revenue, the state revenue, local revenue, and the instructional spending. "Increasingly in most districts, principals have discretion over how priorities are set and resources allocated"

(PCAH, 2011, p. A). What is not there is a separate fund for the fine arts programs, which

is a requirement to offer these courses (music, art, and physical education) in every

elementary school in the state of Missouri. "Arts expenditures entered under general

categories are not captured as budgeted arts expenses" (NYC Department of Education

[NYCDOE], 2015-2016, p. 112).

Table 3

Missouri Annual Revenue and Spending Per Pupil in Nominal Dollars

Year of funding	Total Revenue	State Revenue	Local Revenue	Total Spending	Instructional Spending
2012	$11,139.00	$4,607.00	$5,419.00	$9,436.00	$5,661.00
2013	$11,179.00	$4,721.00	$5,462.00	$9,597.00	$5,728.00
2014	$11,382.00	$4,778.00	$5,600.00	$9,875.00	$5,871.00

Note: Only per pupil spending totals shown in chart are adjusted for inflation (Governing the States and Localities, 2014).

Null Sub-Hypothesis d: If a school has an arts program, then schools will not

have more funding as measured by MODESE.

The alternative hypothesis is that in schools that have an art program will have

greater funding. This case was tested through a one-way ANOVA. Additionally, the

alternative hypothesis will be left-tailed in nature as it has been hypothesized that the first

group (those in schools with art program) has a higher score compared to the second

group, as shown by the statistical notations $H0$: $\mu\_f_{undingART}= \mu\_f_{undingNOART}$ vs. $H1$:

$\mu\_f_{undingART}> \mu\_f_{undingNOART}$.

For this scenario, the critical value at the specified level of significance is 3.88.

However, results show that $F(3, 200) = 0.0095$, $p < .990$. Since the test statistic (0.0095)

is not greater than the critical value (3.88), the null hypothesis is not rejected. In other

words, there is sufficient evidence to say that there is no difference in the amount of

funding, year-to-year. The first group, with arts participation, did not receive greater funding than the other two groups.

"Having a specific line item in the budget for the arts can contribute to ensuring a close alignment between educational goals and student learning needs" (PCAH, 2011, p. 3). "Similarly, many school-level expenses do not have art-specific titles, but may contribute to arts programs" (NYCDOE, 2015-2016, p. 112). "Having a specific line item in the budget for the arts can contribute to ensuring a close alignment between educational goals and student learning needs" (PCAH, 2011, p. A).

Phase 2

Phase 2 of this study employed focus groups to develop data. Three focus groups were held, with 17 participants in total, representing a typical sample. The researcher collected data from fine arts educators spanning across grade levels from elementary through high school. Qualitative data were gathered from multiple sources, including individual focus group sessions.

Qualitative Findings

Research Question 1: How have meaningful arts learning experiences made difference in students' educational journeys?

Research Question 2: How have meaningful arts learning experiences made difference in students' educational journeys?

Research Perspective 1: If an elementary school in the state of Missouri has an arts program then arts would be integrated into the content area courses as measured by surveys of elementary school principals with the data provided by the researcher.

Research Perspective 2: If an elementary school in the state of Missouri has an arts program, then arts would be integrated into the content area courses, as measured by the responses given in focus groups of elementary fine arts teachers, using the data provided by the researcher.

Six focus group interview questions were developed to explore the effect arts integration had on improving student learning, as well as the instructional practices believed most effective in implementing arts integration in the elementary classroom. The data collected revealed information that addressed Research Question 2, Null Hypotheses 1, and Research Perspective 1.

The fine arts educators in this focus group session were asked to assess their experience in a wide variety of areas relevant to their fine arts teaching in education. In total, 17 fine arts educators participated in the focus group session over three dates. This study incorporated qualitative methods to analyze data from the recording of sessions and the note-taking during the focus group sessions. The qualitative methods are broad in scope and address various components of arts education.

The first focus group session consisted of one arts educator and the researcher; this study took place at the Regional Arts Commission of St. Louis, Missouri on September 24, 2016. The second focus group session consisted of four arts educators and the researcher; this study took place at the Regional Arts Commission of St. Louis, Missouri on October 1, 2016. The third focus group session consisted of 12 arts educators and the researcher. Each focus group participant answered the same interview questions about arts education.

Research Question 2: How have meaningful arts learning experiences made a difference in students' educational journeys? The meaningful differences that the arts have on students' journeys are often misapplied or misinterpreted as to their true meaning and not be truly ascertained. The core subjects, to which the arts may be partnered with for integration, are often attributed to the success of the student. The failure of the student then is attributed to a lack of a successful impact of the arts. The researcher believes that this type of assessment prevents a true evaluation of the arts and its impact.

While the researcher cannot claim that participation in fine arts courses caused higher academic achievement, study results definitely suggested that opportunities for fine arts education in Missouri schools should be increased or, at the very least, maintained. As before, there was no evidence that fine arts courses or instructional time in the arts should be cut, as districts worked for higher levels of student achievement.

Research Perspective 2: If an elementary school in the state of Missouri has an arts program, arts would be integrated into the content area courses, as measured by responses provided in focus groups, using the data provided by the researcher.
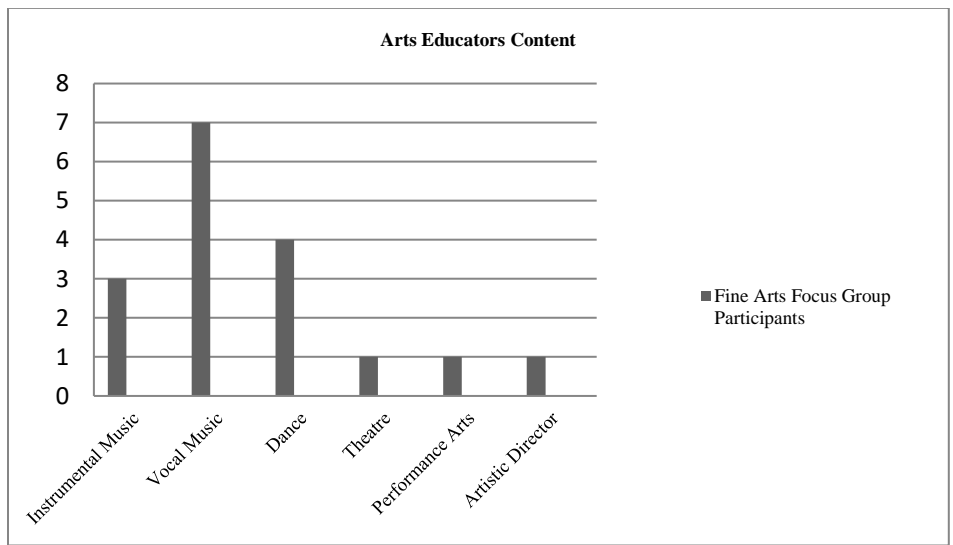

Figure 3. Fine arts focus group participants' teaching content.

Focus groups consisted of elementary-school fine arts teachers. "However, integrating the arts in meaningful, accessible, and strategic ways can be challenging for teachers who are uncomfortable with the arts or unwilling to engage with new strategies" (PCAH, 2015, p. 20). The data collected revealed information that addressed the primary research question and the two null hypotheses.

The arts are essential to a well-rounded education, and should be included with basics, such as English, mathematics, and science. This study explores the relationship between arts practices in the educational system. "Yet, when it comes to instituting the arts in public education, classes in dance, drawing, theater, and even music often hold a fragile place" (Farbman et al., 2013, p. 4). Drawing on interviews with selected artists, the educator examines the constructions of art practice and their perceptions of how they engage with learners. The arts provide a language for the communication of ideas and emotions. (Devlin, 2010). "Arts programs have a variety of purposes that are closely linked to the communities and contexts in which they operate" (Seidel et al., 2011, p. 17).

The findings from this study highlight the opportunities afforded by artist-led teaching and student learning, while drawing attention to some of the challenges. The fine arts content examines the involvement of arts integration — across all academic disciplines in the multi-grade levels. Secondly, it examines the potential importance of sustained involvement in the academic disciplines. Thirdly, as said by Bennett (1987a), "music, dance, painting, and theater are keys that unlock profound human understanding and accomplishment (p. 4). "Children should be handed these keys at an early age" (Bennett, 1986b, p. 39). In

Figure , the age attribute is important for the correlation with the focus group

participants. As shown in Figure 4, most teachers in attendance for this focus group were

ages 40 to 49 years at 29%, ages 60 and over years at 24%, ages 30 to 39 years at 23%,

50 to 59 years at 12%, and 20 to 29 years at 12%.
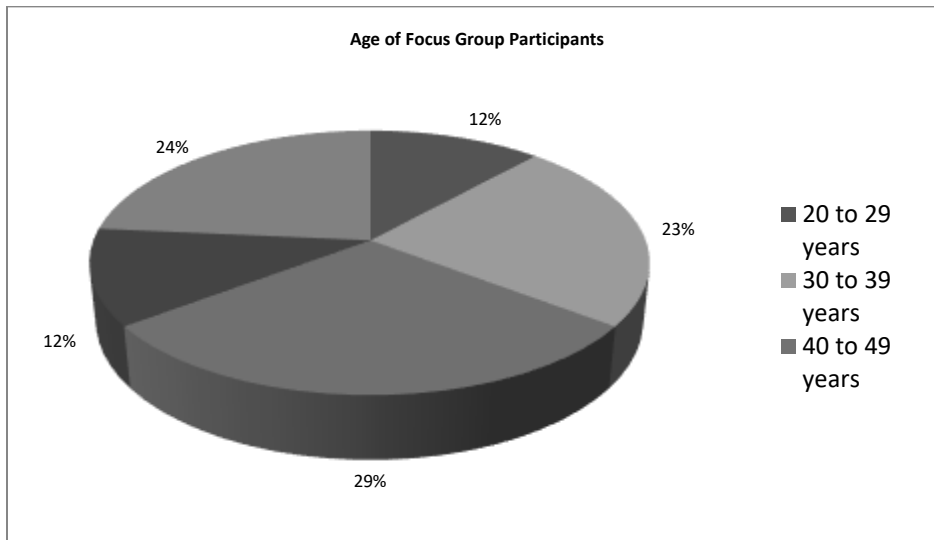
Figure 4. Fine arts participants' range of ages.

The wide range of ages from 20 to over 60 years showed a different perspective

on the arts education in the school system. Each age group shared different strategies of

getting the same results of student success and achievement through arts integration. By

the same token, due to the range of ages the participants' input was just as impactful from

teaching students to describing results of student learning.
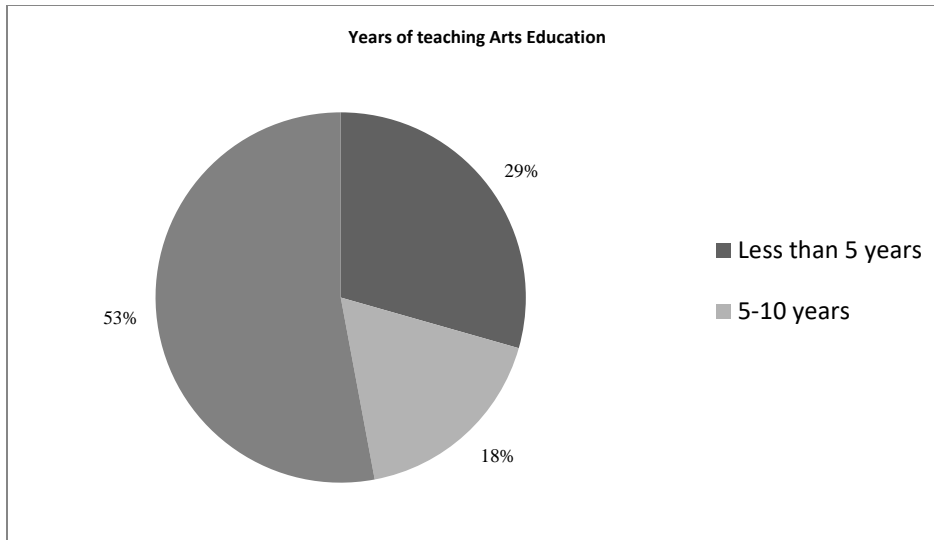
Figure 5. Arts educators: Years of teaching.

Figure 5 shows a wide range of experienced educators that participated in the fine arts focus groups for this study. Less than five years were 53%, more than 10 years in the school system were 29%, and 5 to 10 years of experienced educators were 18%. **"**The various federal and state teacher accountability policies implemented over the last 15 years intended to improve the quality of entering teachers may have raised the profession's status" (Lankford, Loeb, McEachin, Miller, & Wyckoff, 2014, p. 444).

Figure shows the inconsistency in fine arts educators, such as academic educators with a common attribute of fewer than five years within the school systems.
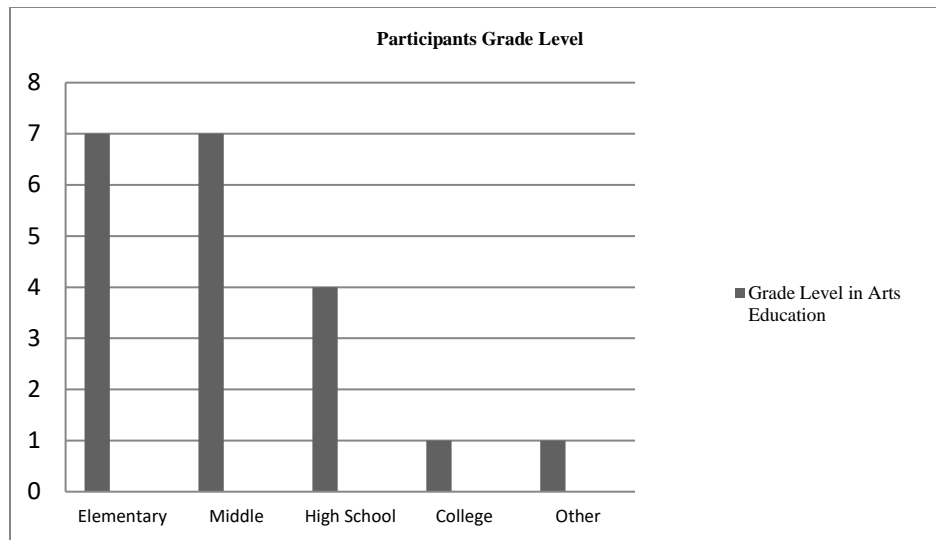
Figure 6. Arts educators' grade levels.

This researcher developed a six-question analysis about the importance of fine arts integration into the classroom. The following are a few of the questions and answers from the focus group sessions.

The first interview question was, how would you rate the importance of arts integration into the school curriculum? The first fine arts teacher said, 'I feel having the arts integration at a young age helps students develop various forms of thinking and various forms at looking at a subject that you are trying to pursue.' "Many arts educators and their collaborators care deeply about the lives of our young citizens, with special concern for those most often denied access to excellent arts education" (Seidel et al., 2011, p. 6). Then the third fine arts teacher chimed in the discussion by saying, 'The imagination and the creation all helps with developing ones understanding of reading, writing, and arithmetic.' "As children play music, as they paint or draw or design, as they dance or act or sing, many develop new passions, come to express themselves in creative ways, and discover innovative pathways to success" (Farbman et al., 2013, p. 4).

As all the teachers continued to speak about the importance of arts integration, the sixth fine arts teacher mentioned, 'The integration widens the scope of learning and understanding in the arts and subjects that include history, math, science, and communication arts.' During the teacher responses, 82% agreed that arts integration was important in the curriculum, and 18% agreed that the arts integration was moderately important.

The Importance of the Arts

18%

82%

■ Very Prepared 5

■ 4

■ 3

■ 2
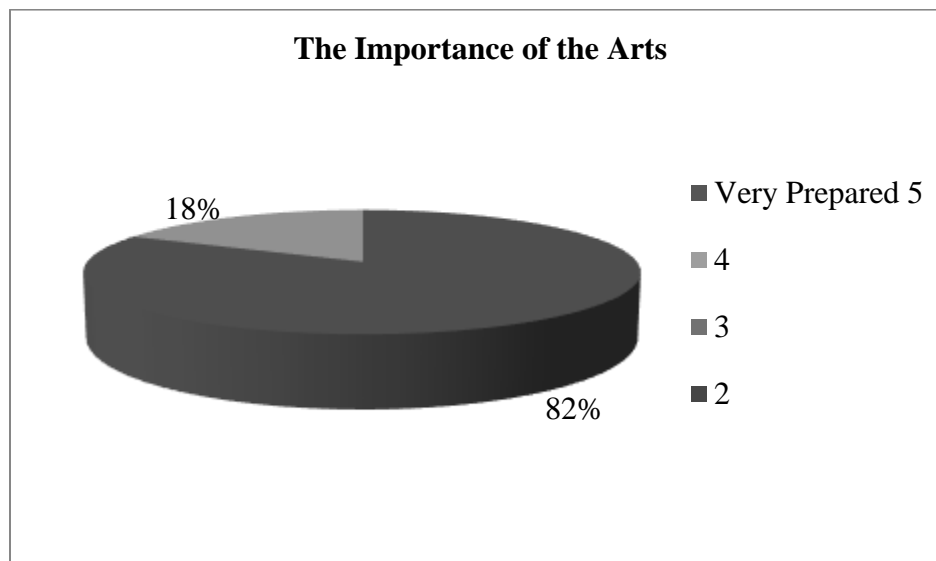
Figure 7. Response to the Fine Arts Educator, Question 1.

"It is proposed that when the arts are taught for balance, depth, and meaning, there is greater potential for positive change for students" (Barrett, Anttila, Webster, & Hasseman, 2016, p. 6). Responses to Research Question 1 are presented in

Figure .

"Over the last 30 years — and, in particular, during the last decade, when there has been intense focus on achieving proficiency in reading and math above all — arts education has occupied a shrinking place in the life of schools" (Farbman et al., 2013, p. 4). The second interview question that was asked to the fine arts teachers was, what do

you believe the role of the arts should be in your school?" The researcher decided to ask

the teachers to write before answering the questions and after a few minutes, the first fine

arts teacher responded, 'That's one of the things I love that the arts can do and that is

change the cultural of the school.' The third fine arts teacher said, 'I think it should be

just as important to generate a sense of community: the arts should be just as important to

develop a sense of community as it is to basically keep the lights on.' The seventh fine

arts teacher explained, 'The role of the arts should be just as important as the core

subjects. They must carry value!' When asked about arts integration training or

professional development in the school or district, the first fine arts teacher replied, 'The

art teacher at our school gave a schoolwide PD that was more hands-on for the staff and

our district gave a district-wide, full-day PD, with a Grammy-nominated educator that

talked about some great things that we all can incorporate in our classrooms.' "Art

integration is an approach to teaching in which students construct and demonstrate

understanding of a subject or content area through an art form" (Jane & Kelly, 2016, p.

92). Lastly, the 11th fine arts teacher mentioned, 'Reinforce the core curriculum and

provides students the opportunity / success of expressing themselves of learning who they

are and find value in their skills and talents.'

The third interview question to the fine arts teachers was, do you think your

colleagues share your perspective on this topic? As everyone wanted to answer all at the

same time, the researcher asked for each teacher to take a moment and write their answer.

The 13th fine arts teacher said, 'I would say intellectually yes, but practically no.' The

15th fine arts teacher said, 'My colleagues are supportive, but there could be more

participation and involvement in arts.' Then the 16th fine arts teacher explained, 'My

colleagues are very supportive and looking forward to positively praising our students . . .

this is my first year with this program in this school building.'

  As the facilitator, the researcher explained the difference between Arts Integration

(AI) and Response to Intervention (RTI), before the teachers could answer this next

interview question; have you received any professional development or training in Arts

Integration (AI) with the curriculum? Another arts teacher responded, 'The district's

Professional Development Programs do not provide for real such professional

developments that are of any benefit, not for the school or staff.' "It helps to engage

students in experiential learning, the process for losing one's way and making meaning

directly from the learning experience as opposed to academic learning, or the study of an

already found subject" (Lajevic, 2013, pp. 42-43). And the third arts teacher answered,

'Most of the music teachers in our district participate in the Professional development

(music), Ready Readers, and Integrating Literacy Workshops outside of the district.' Out

of the 17 arts teacher participants, 65% participated in one or more arts integration

training or professional development, and 35% had never participated in an arts

integration training or professional development.
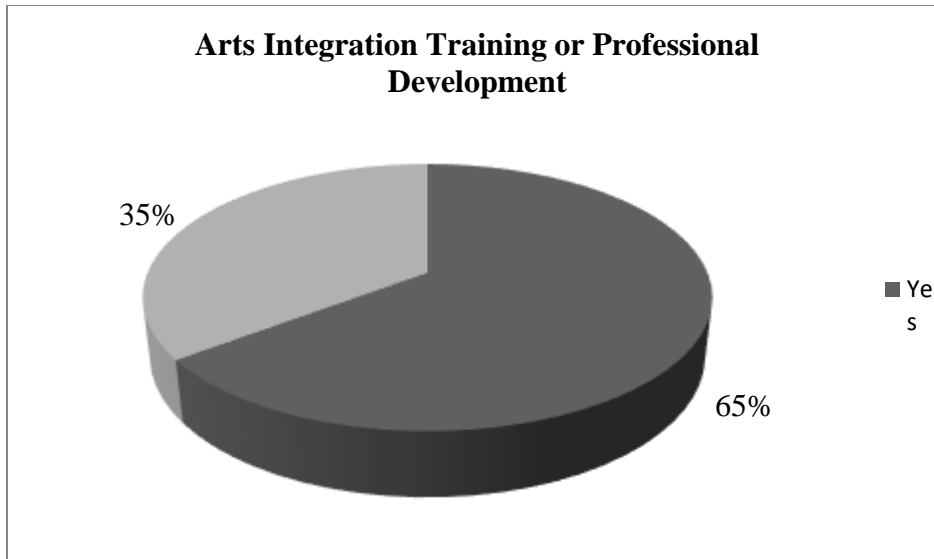
Figure 8. Response to the fine arts' educator question 4.

The next interview question for the fine arts teachers was on a five-point scale (where 5 is very prepared and 1 is not at all prepared), how prepared do you think your students are to master the curriculum with arts? The sixth fine arts teacher said, 'Students can become well-rounded in their learning when all subjects / classes help to prepare students with insight and creativity.' The ninth fine arts teacher said, 'I can only speak to arts as being most prepared and they are on a steady continuum for growth. Academics are too spotty to say, they could master it as we don't see them enough to see steady growth there.' The 14th fine arts teacher said, 'We do a good job but many students only have music for 50 minutes a week, which falls short of mastery.' The 16th fine arts teacher said, 'Ten weeks is not enough time to master anything, but students do experience sense of accomplishment.' The 17th fine arts teacher responded, 'Very prepared but with structure and some planning time.' As the fine arts teachers raised their hands for student mastery, the pie graph shows 65% were neutral, 29%, were prepared, and 6% were very prepared.
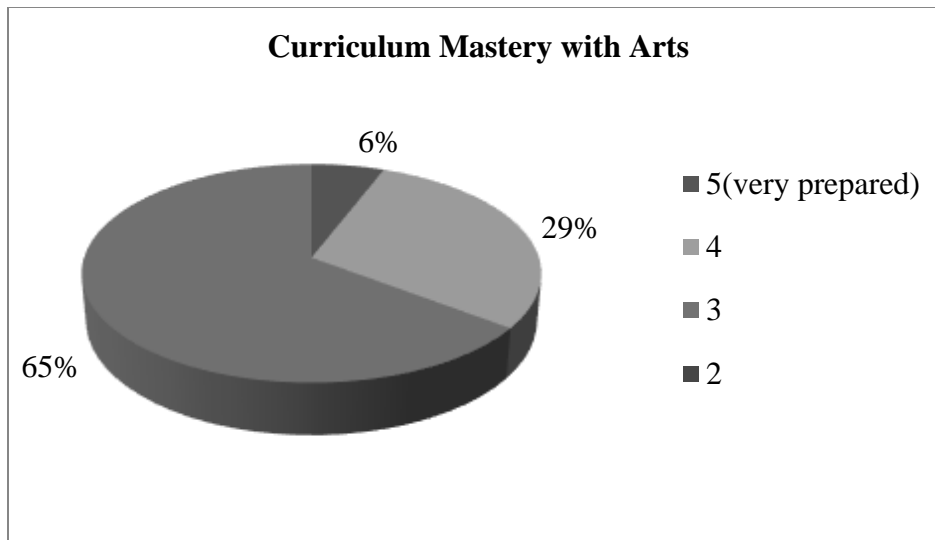
Figure 9. Response to the fine arts' educator question 5.

The last question in the fine arts teacher focus group was; How have meaningful arts learning experiences made a difference in students' educational journeys? As all the teachers took a deep breath to think about their students' accomplishments, the fifth fine arts teacher mentioned, 'I have had some students that went on to Broadway, dance companies, and dance schools.' The sixth fine arts teacher said, 'The experiences in the arts help to develop confidence self-discipline, character, and self-esteem. Experiences in the arts inspire students and opens opportunities for career paths. . . . I have witnessed this in past students over and over.' The seventh fine arts teacher chimed in, 'I was fortunate to have been nominated to shoot the commercial for the lottery for the state of Missouri with my former student, and in the commercial he asked me (Why did you put me out of class?), and I said to him that it was the best thing I could have ever done for you.' 'He went on to cut out the foolishness that he used to do in class and began to take school serious. It made him what he is today; a professional dancer, teacher, choreographer, nationally and internationally, and that's why it is meaningful.'

In conclusion, the data showed that the fine arts educators experience with integrating into the academic curriculum varied in many ways, and there is always room for improvement throughout the educational system. Research showed what is important is to have consisted edifice in arts education, for clear goals about the steps needed to reach all or most students in the education system.

Process of Analysis

In the study, focus group sessions and surveys were collected concurrently. All three focus groups consisted of a discussion of each of the focus group questions, as well as additional questions for clarity, in an effort to gain increased insight which would enrich the study. To analyze and compare the responses of the 17 arts educators and the 31 principal surveys, all of the data were categorized by questions then divided by similar responses. After analysis was made of the responses, then data were organized by common themes. The bar and pie graphs were created representing the focus group and survey data. The graphs reflected the data collected regarding the emerging phases and themes. Both stakeholder groups were represented on graphs to analyze the arts educators' and the elementary principals' similarities and differences of arts education and to compare the responses between the two groups. The analysis of the perceptual similarities and differences of arts educators and principals on pertinent issues enriched the study.

Qualitative Data and Online Survey

In an effort to invite all elementary school principals to participate in the online survey, a letter was sent via email to 700 elementary building principals in the urban, suburban, and rural regions. The online letter included an explanation about the study, as

well as a request to complete the attached Letter of Informed Consent and the hyperlink to the survey. The online survey was available 24-hours a day, seven-days a week for 30 consecutive days, after which time 31 surveys had been submitted for the study. The survey reflected the changes in data collection in the then-current year. Data on arts instructional time for students in the elementary grades were presented for the 2016-2017 school year only.

Research Perspective 1: If an elementary school in the state of Missouri has an arts program then arts would be integrated into the content area courses as measured by surveys of elementary school principals with the data provided by the researcher.

Principal surveys: "As the top building-level leaders, school principals play a key role in ensuring every student receives a high-quality arts education as part of a complete education" (AEP, 2011, p. 3). The first survey question to the principals: Do you have an arts program in your school? If so, how many days a week do the students attend, and for what length of time? As most principals agreed with the first principal response, 'We have Art class for all K-5 students. Students attend Art and Music weekly. In some instances, students might participate in the classes twice a week since we have a 4-day special class rotation (PE, Library, Music, Art).' Some principals agreed with the third principal, 'Yes, once every three days. Every fifth day they attend an extra thirty minutes.' The 11th principal mentioned, 'Two times a week for 50 minutes - Vocal Music 5 days a week for 50 minutes - Instrumental Music and Theatre is seasonal.' A few agreed with the 16th principal, 'Our K-6 program receives 45 minutes, 1 day a week of art class. Music is every other day for 30 minutes for these same students. Averages 75 minutes a week every 2 weeks, since we have block schedule.'

Which arts program(s) do you offer in the school? In the state of Missouri, 31 schools said 87.1% had vocal music, 64.5% had visual arts, 45.2% had instrumental music, 22.6% had other arts resources, 9.7% had theatre, and 6.5% had creative writing.
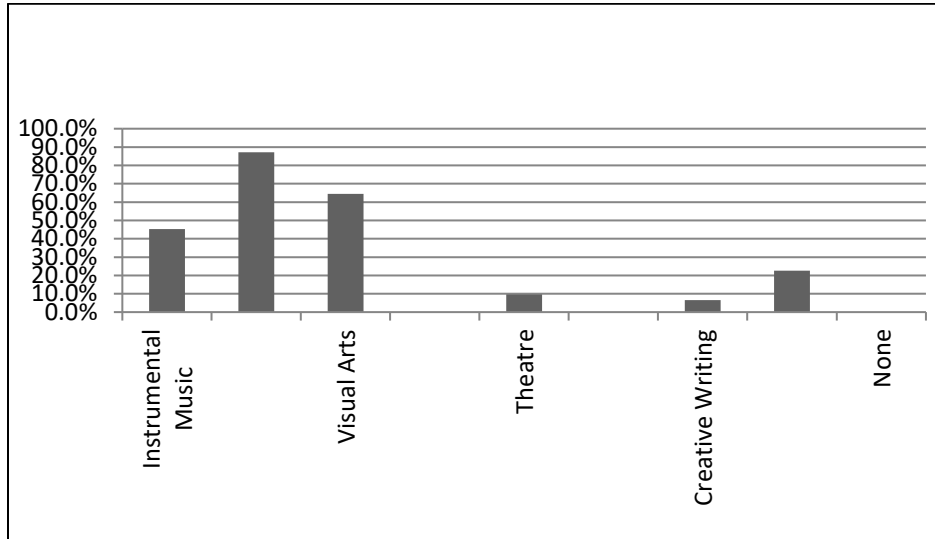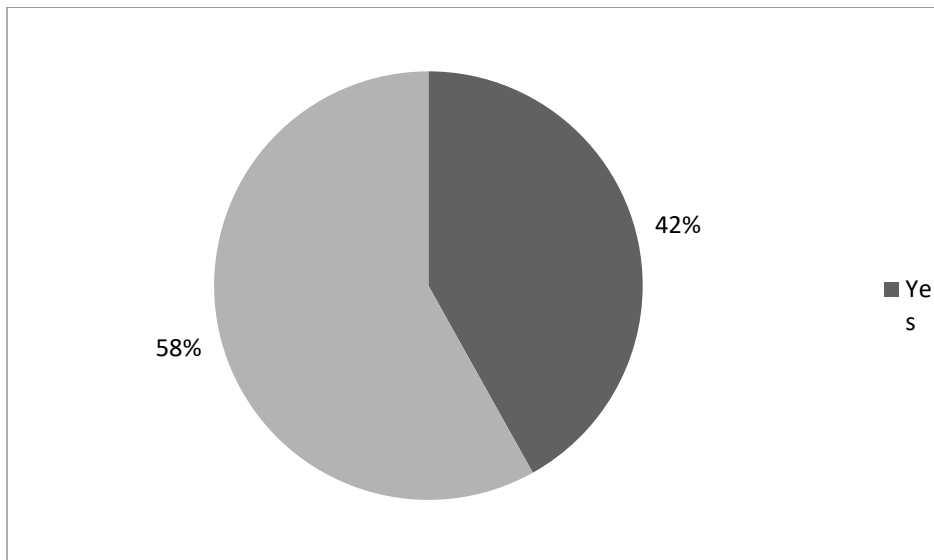

Figure 10. Responses to principal survey question 2.

Of responding schools that served third- through fifth-grade students in 2015-2016, nearly all 31 schools reported providing visual arts and or music instruction to all the elementary students. In comparison, creative writing, dance, and drama were less commonly taught in elementary schools; 6.5% of elementary schools offered creative writing, 10% offered drama/theatre instruction, and none offered dance instruction. "Despite the No Child Left Behind Act, most schools do not have full-time arts teachers in all arts disciplines, and many do not have even one specialist arts teacher" (Seidel et al., 2011, p. 52).

When asked survey question three, if principals are familiar with arts integration, 58.1% said no, and 41.9% said yes. "School principals play a pivotal role in articulating goals associated with a high quality and equitable arts education for every student" (PCAH, 2011, p. A). "The arts were used to build student engagement, to increase

attendance, to build parent understandings and buy in, to build student non-cognitive skills, and to meet student learning needs" (PCAH, 2015, p. 60).

Figure 11. Responses to the principal survey question 3.

"A strong principal carries a clear vision and conviction for the arts and prioritizes the time and structures needed for implementation" (AEP, 2015, p. 16).

As seen in

Figure *2*, when the principals were asked about their training to support teachers in integrating the arts across the curriculum, 51.7% said far too little (15 response count), 34.5% answered too little (10 response count), and 13.8% said about right (4 response count). "The most exemplary principals were active participants and leaders of arts professional development, and worked hard to demonstrate their personal commitment to the arts, whether performing in the school musical or emceeing showcase performances" (AEP, 2015, p. 17).
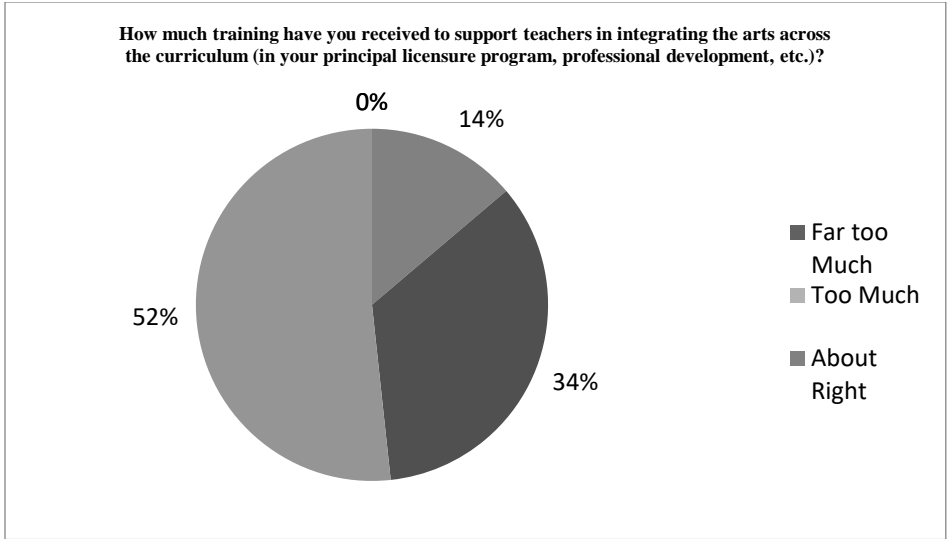
Figure 2. Responses to principal survey question 5.

"In developing arts across the school, principals provided high-quality professional development opportunities and collaboration time for their teachers on a regular, ongoing basis" (AEP, 2015, p. 16). "In order provide new strategies and approaches to teachers, schools used a combination of external professional development support, on-staff specialists, and community organizations" (AEP, 2015, p. 36). In

Figure 3, the elementary school principals were asked of their overall level of familiarity with adding arts integration into mathematics and english/language arts and literacy; 54.8% said mathematics were not at all familiar, 41.9% said ELA / literacy were not at all familiar, 32.3% said ELA / literacy were slightly familiar, 29% said mathematics were slightly familiar, 19.4% said ELA /literacy were somewhat familiar, 16.1% said mathematics were somewhat familiar, and 6.5% said ELA / literacy were very familiar. "Classroom teachers were most successful when offered two strategic supports to arts integration — training and support in specific and highly useable arts-based teaching

strategies, and the opportunity to work side-by-side with an art specialist or teaching
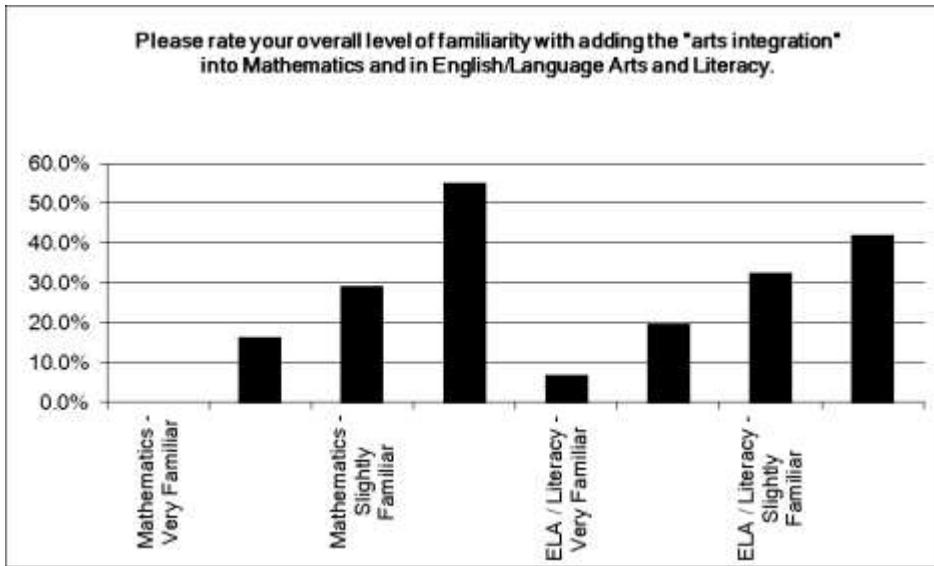
artist" (AEP, 2015, p. 20).

Figure 3. Response to principal survey question 4.

"Arts specialists generally embraced this opportunity with vigor—increasing

visibility and the number of student performances or exhibitions they led and relishing

their new role as both collaborator and advisor to classroom teachers seeking to integrate

the arts" (AEP, 2015, p. 18).

In

Figure *4*, the question for the elementary school principals was, how many

resources are designated within your school that is specifically appropriate for the

purpose of arts classes (or) AI? The percentage of the principals responded as55.2% said

about right, 27.6% said too little, and 17.2% said far too little. "However, principals can

enhance arts-infused learning through advocacy and faculty support" (Lorimer, 2009, p.

11).

How many resources are designated within your school that is specifically appropriate for the purpose of Arts classes (or) Arts Integration?

0.0%

17.2%

55.2%

27.6%
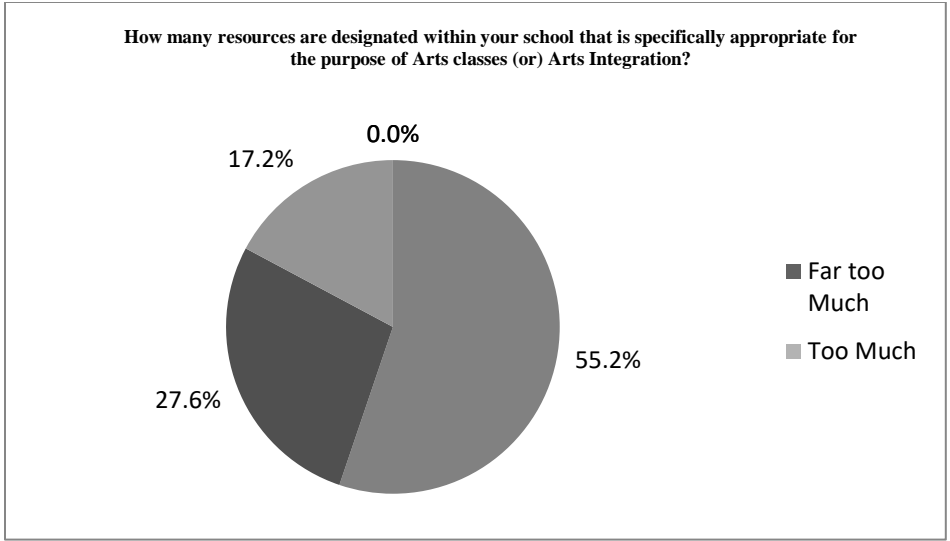
■ Far too Much

■ Too Much

Figure 4. Designated resources.

School administrators and boards emphasized the arts as the means to transform schools and encourage creative thinking. "This collaboration can result in the planning of rich and engaging units of learning that infuse the visual and performing arts in authentic and meaningful ways" (Lorimer, 2009, p. 11).

How often do you actively foster a school-wide culture that embraces the Arts?

3.3%   6.7%

16.7%

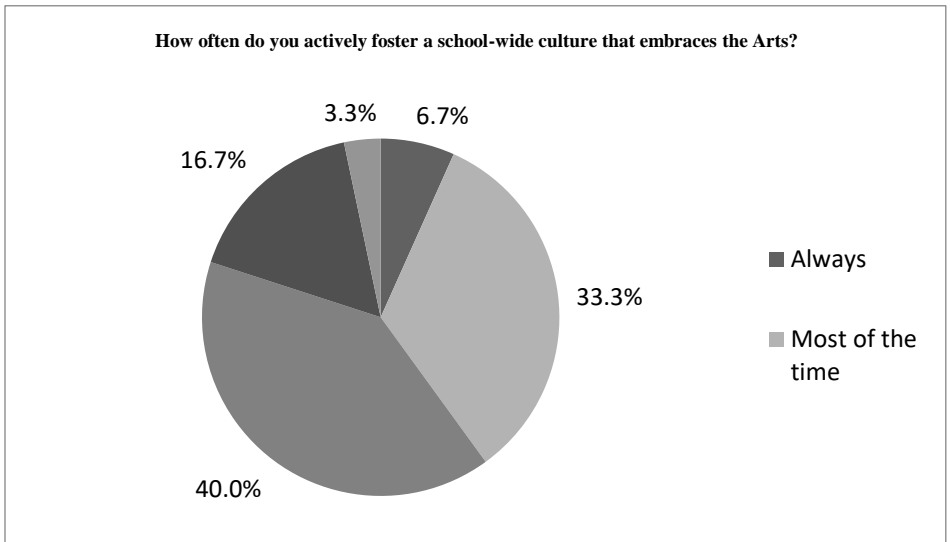33.3%

■ Always

■ Most of the time

40.0%

Figure 5. Responses to principal survey question 7.

School leaders played a critical role in expanding the arts in schools and beyond the classroom. "By being pro-active in communicating the benefits of learning in and

through the arts, the principal can play a key role in marshalling support from the larger

community" (PCAH, 2011, p. C).

To the question, how often do you actively foster a school-wide culture that

embraces the Arts, 40% of the principals said sometimes, 33.3% said most of the time,

16.7% said rarely, 6.7% said always, and 3.3% said never. "Rather than covering the

classroom teacher's planning time, arts teachers should be provided an opportunity to

meet with classroom teachers or teachers of other subjects to decide collaboratively how

best to address the school's educational goals or student learning needs" (PCAH, 2011, p.

C).

The elementary school principals were asked how often do you look for evidence

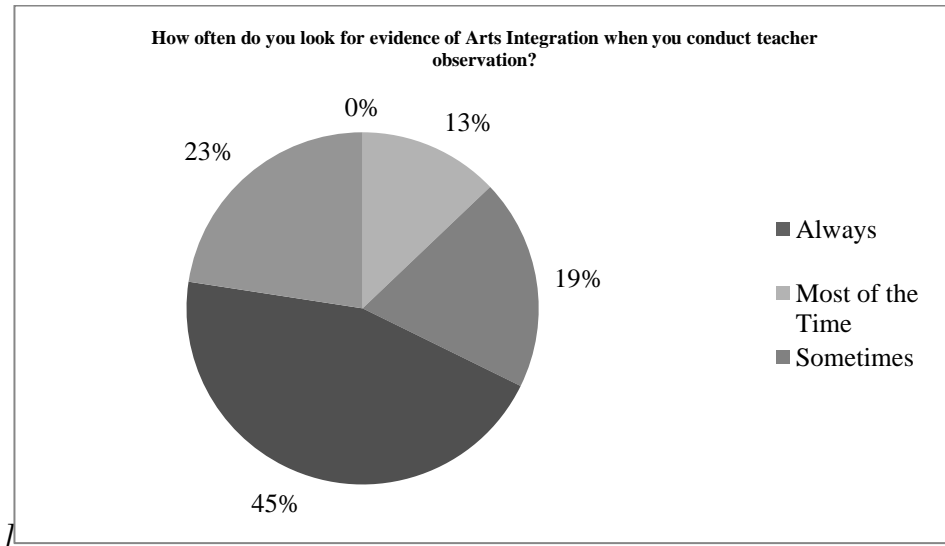of Arts Integration when you conduct teacher observation?

Figure 6. Responses to principal survey question 8.

Figure *6* indicates that the percentage of principals responded 45.2% said rarely,

22.6% of principals said never, 19.4% of principals said sometimes, and 12.9% of the

principals said most of the time. "This can be a powerful way of evaluating the teacher's

strengths according to predetermined criteria, arguably the most valid way to describe

performance" (Steele, 2013, p. 151).

"Teachers seem to hold a contradictory state of mind; the arts are valuable but a

low priority for teaching and learning" (Steele, 2013, p. 148).

In

Figure 7, the elementary school principals were asked, how often do you motivate

your teachers to integrate the arts using incentives. The response of the principals were

43.3% of the principals said sometimes, 30.0% said never, 20.0% said rarely, and 6.7%

said most of the time. "Two key factors are required for arts education success: an arts-

minded philosophy and strong leadership skills" (Lorimer, 2009, p. 11). By emphasizing

the arts and including it in not just the curriculum, but in formal and informal discussions,

principals can shape the direction and inclusion of arts programs. "School principals also

can reinforce the emphasis on using the arts in teaching by making it a part of classroom

observations, teacher discussions and the evaluation process" (PCAH, 2011, p. B).
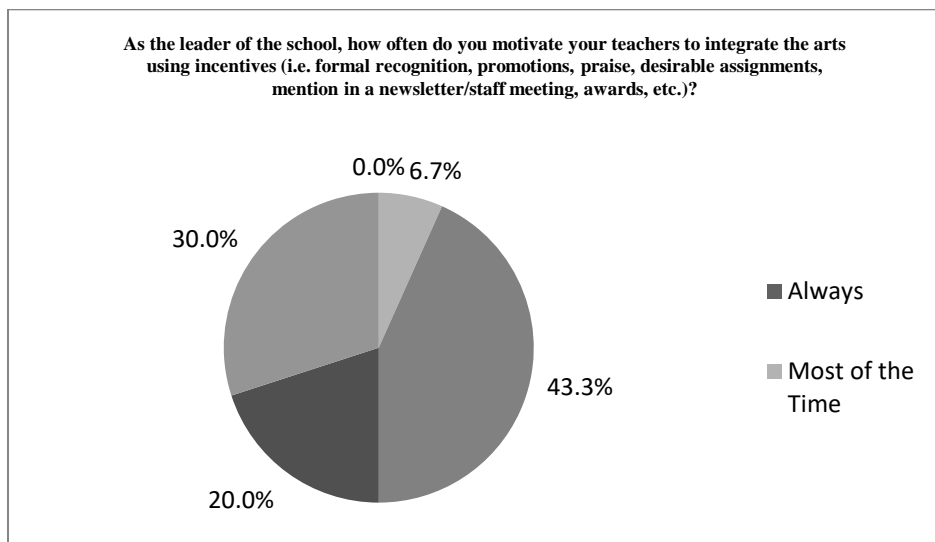

Figure 7. Responses to principal survey question 9.

"Teachers who were initially skeptical of the use of the arts in their classroom were won over by the training and support provided by their peers" (PCAH, 2015, p. 38).

In

Figure 8, when asked the question to the elementary school principals, what were the greatest challenges with the Arts in their school, the response from most were time constraint and financial constraint. "Although many principals would like to infuse the visual and performing arts into classroom instruction, most are limited by lack of time or knowledge, as well as their primary concerns about meeting mandated curriculum standards" (Lorimer, 2009, p. 11). Inclusion of the arts in day-to-day instruction was clearly beneficial, but competing demands and emphasis on academics stretched resources. "Schools that made time for training and collaboration between teachers and arts specialists/teaching artists were able to more intentionally and rapidly expand arts integration" (PCAH, 2015, p. 20). "Because the notion of 'there's never enough time' regularly permeates many educators' conversation and way of thinking, re-conceptualizing this challenge may bring about positive results" (Lorimer, 2009, p. 11).
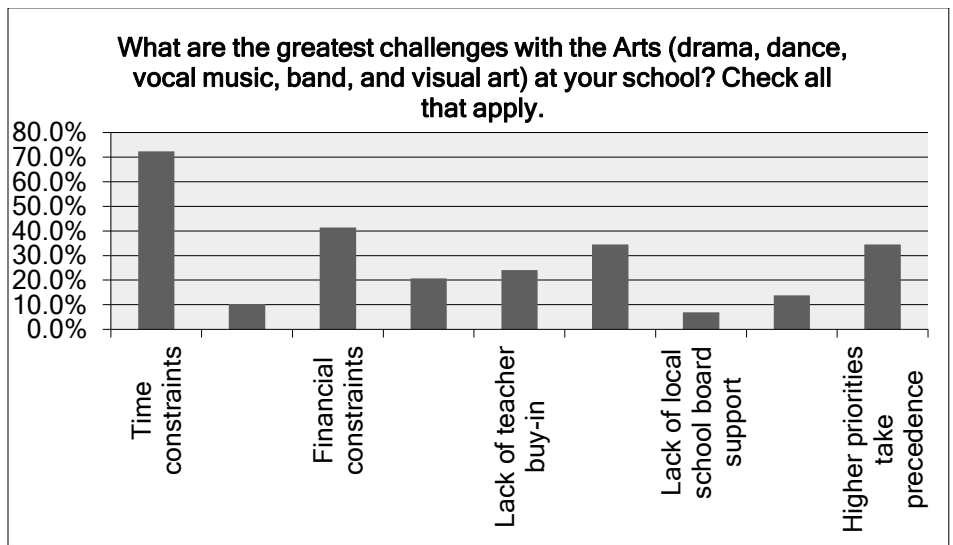

Figure 8. Facing challenges with integrating the arts.

The answers to the question, what are the greatest challenges with the Arts, were 72.4% of principals said Time constraints, 41.4% said Financial constraints, 34.5% said Lack of community resources and Higher priorities take precedence, 24.1% said Lack of teacher buy-in, 20.7% said Lack of technical expertise, 13.8% said Lack of State Department of Public Instruction support, 10.3% said Lack of parental support, and 6.9% said Lack of school board support. "Principals must be proactive in developing an implementation plan and marshaling resources to support the arts throughout the school community" (Lorimer, 2009, p. 12).

In the question asked to elementary school principals, in what other ways are you supporting Arts Education at your school? Out of 31 elementary school principals, 15 answered the question. "Arts education is not only a pathway to further participation in the arts; it is by itself a vital mode of arts participation" (Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011, p. 22). The third principal said, 'Art fair, community outreach, art club, honor choir, and the shining star (fine arts) nights.' The 23rd principal said, 'As a district on the elementary level we are focusing on special area teachers to look at ways they can conduct lessons with interdisciplinary connections in order to reach math, literacy, science and social studies.' "Most important, the greatest gains in schools with arts integration are often seen school-wide and also with the most hard-to-reach and economically disadvantaged students" (PCAH, 2011, p. 19). The fifth principal said, 'Pro Musica is a local arts program that brings in musicians from around the world - local concerts include school assemblies when in town and the Spiva Center for the arts field trips.' The 31st principal mentioned, 'We participate in community activities where student work is requested. Our Choir travels and performs to several activities during the school day as well as outside of

the school day. They perform in front of a variety of audiences.' Lastly, the other

principals mention school-wide performances.

Understanding the Arts

"A student who meets the rigorous standards of artistic literacy has acquired the

knowledge and understanding needed to participate authentically in the arts and the

ability to transfer that knowledge and understanding in making connections to other

subjects and settings" (Arts Education Partnership [AEP], 2015, p. 5). The final survey

question was only answered by 10 elementary school principals, thus 21 skipped the

question: Is there anything else you would like to add to help us understand Arts classes /

Arts Integration at your school? The ninth principal said, 'It is hard to fine and keep Art-

certified teachers for this small of a school.' After reading through the comments from

the surveys, keeping fine arts teachers were difficult for all districts for various reasons.

Most principals agreed with the 20th principal, 'We need more arts!' Other principals

agreed with the 23rd principal, 'The arts are an integral part of student creativity and

given the right platform with the right direction I think it would certainly benefit students

especially with the large push to incorporate STEM/STEAM activities within the

curriculum.' Lastly, the 31st principal said, 'I believe our staff understands the

importance of Arts. The programs add to our school facility climate with art work

displayed as well as our music department enhancing the climate with performances.'

Themes

As the qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed and compared for common

trends, four themes emerged: the purpose regarding fine arts education, the application

regarding the fine arts education, the usefulness regarding fine arts education, and the funding regarding the fine arts education.

Theme One: Purpose. The purpose was to ascertain the value of the arts. The failure of incorporating the arts integration into academic standards was noticeable. As lofty as the educational standards were, there was little room for artistic engineering that the arts mandated, demanded even. The richness of the artistic experience, as it pertained to the developmental process, could appear at times to be incongruent with the rigors and assembly of the educational standards. The evaluation of student advancement and achievement was an ongoing process. With the inclusion of various factors from economic and environmental causes, as well as progress from the expansion and growth of new technology and industry, the education field was always in a constant flux to remain current and relevant for accurate student assessment. Infusing any variable into the curriculum effects the assessment of not only the curriculum but the student data, as well.

Theme Two: Application. The application was to determine how to integrate the data in conjunction with curricula. The merging of standards and the arts was a priority that initially hindered the clarity of fully appreciating the effectiveness of arts integration into the classroom and curriculum. Arts instruction and arts integrated instruction — lessons teaching skills and content of an art and non-art subject in tandem — engaged students and increased learning and achievement (AEP, 2013). A study by Schwartz (2015), addressed seven important factors when understanding the impact that the arts would have if implemented properly. The importance of understanding the purpose of proper arts integration begins with understanding its purpose and its value.

Misunderstanding its value was tantamount to misunderstanding the purpose and value of the computer in the classroom. The computer was never designed to eliminate the pad and pencil, just as the delete key was not designed to eliminate the eraser. All instruments should work together as tools of a functioning unit to advance the ultimate purpose of developing students for the educational and learning process. By enabling the student to embrace the learning process, which was the ultimate goal of the educator, the student could begin to establish his or her role and place within the community and society, as a whole. The acceptance of involvement of sports disciplines on the student was often touted as a positive influence. The student athlete's sports background was often looked upon as advantageous to the employer and community. Therefore, there was little, if any, resistance to the athletic components of a district and school agenda. The community that rallied around the sporting event as an inevitable part of the student experience did so with little opposition, because of the proposed long-term benefits. The arts, on the other hand, could have a direct impact starting in the classroom, as well as in the future with the employer and the community. However, this aspect was often looked upon as being unnecessary and, at best, ambiguous.

Theme Three: Usefulness. Increasingly, the importance of AYP was tied to accreditation. The researcher stated that the critics looked at the arts as having little to no redeeming qualities when it came to the educational experience. This chasm tended to separate the arts from academics in the educational experience that transcended such concepts as making AYP or allocating funds to the district budget. Past research showed that, in these instances, the arts were often ranked at the lowest level of importance; and therefore, the results were misinterpreted and the application to curriculum misapplied.

However, when examined through the lens of the arts' influence on culture and society, the arts became an undeniable force of change and inspiration that needed more research and study to properly assess. In distributing financial support, funders generally examined school districts' horizontal and vertical equity levels. To address horizontal equity issues, funders would determine a set amount per student across the state. On the other hand, according to Crampton (2010) to address vertical equity issues, funding was allocated to the students who appeared to need additional resources to become successful academically (p. 4).

     Theme Four: Funding. Data results could affect district assessments, thereby affecting federal funding. "The recent No Child Left Behind legislation backed and signed by President Bush (2001) also places the arts on the same level as other academic subjects" (Henry, 2002, p. 34). In the past, even though the arts were viewed as a benefit to the educational process that transcended any subject or student, there was still the perspective that the arts were to be ignored or misinterpreted as a hindrance to the educational experience. The arts were perceived as a burden that detracted from academic pursuits and not to be taken seriously, especially if it meant diverting funds from the academic side of the curriculum.

     "When attempting to streamline budgets and expel all but the essentials, the arts are typically viewed as dispensable" (Manner, 2002, p. 18). This researcher maintains that failure to recognize the value of the arts introduces a conflict in relation to the educational process; this conflict continued to permeate various levels of the academic and political conversation. "The arts are often perceived as the 'icing' – nice if you can afford it, but dispensable if you can't" (Manner, 2002, p. 18). Thus, the researcher

maintains that funding was allocated, based on the importance of debate, not on the value of the benefits, even when the benefits were both simple and obvious.

While socioeconomic factors were often perceived as the most critical elements in assessing academic outcomes in urban schools, adding arts education as a proponent of change became even more problematic for cash-strapped districts and schools. Urban school districts also had a higher incidence of at-risk students who required additional fiscal resources to be academically successful. The search for solutions was dependent on the availability of resources, as opposed to the functionality of the application.

> The stark reality is that urban school districts require a higher level of per-pupil funding than most other types of school districts. There are two major reasons for this: cost factors associated with urban areas and the higher incidence of at-risk students. (Crampton, 2010, p. 36)

Summary of Findings: The arts representation in Missouri's public elementary school system varied greatly. While nearly all schools offered arts programs, the range of program content and frequency varied between school districts, and even individual schools. More schools placed an emphasis on low-budget programs, such as vocal music, while fewer had musical instrument and theater programs. School budgets and priorities also varied widely and were reflected in the types of arts programs and frequency of attendance. Further, review of non-arts academic performance showed a correlation between arts exposure and proficient to advanced performance on the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) scores. While no causation could be established, the data appeared to demonstrate that increased investment and emphasis on the arts in public education systems contributed to an increase in overall academic performance.

Summary

Chapter Four analyzed the data collected in this study, which compared and analyzed the possible relationship between all elementary schools in the state of Missouri, whose third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade students participated in arts-related classes and those who did not. The quantitative and qualitative analysis specifically addressed MAP scores, attendance, socioeconomic status, and school funding. A mixed-methods study was employed to explore arts curriculum and implementation with the principals and fine arts teachers in the state of Missouri, based on their experience in K-12 public school fine arts. Guiding this study were the following research questions:

Research Question 1: How do the state of Missouri Elementary Schools design and implement the arts into their curriculum?

Research Question 2: How have meaningful arts learning experiences made difference in students' educational journeys?

In Phase 1, the researcher developed an online survey that was completed by 31 participants. In Phase 2, the researcher conducted three recorded focus groups to develop data. Using open coding and axial coding, the researcher was able to identify emergent themes, as follows:

(a) Theme One: Purpose is to ascertain the value of the Arts.

(b) Theme Two: Application is to determine how to integrate the data in conjunction with curriculum.

(c) Theme Three: Usefulness in increasing the importance as AYP is tied to accreditation.

(d) Theme Four: Funding represents the data results that can affect district

assessments thereby affecting federal funding.

Theme development was guided by constructivist theory, and multiple intelligence theory

as the conceptual framework of this study. A summary of the research, limitations of the

study, conclusions, recommendations for future research, and summary are presented in

Chapter Five.

Chapter Five: Discussion and Reflection

To properly reflect on the findings of this research study and make recommendations, it is important to review all the preceding chapters.

Chapter One described the evolution of the terms 'art' and 'artist,' and traced the historical impact of trade, culture, and society. The chapter tracked the meanings of the words through the Middle Ages and the Industrial era, and provided a modern-day definition to provide context for the remainder of the research study. Within that context, the chapter discussed today's application of arts programs in elementary school curricula, making the claim that the inclusion of the arts in elementary school programs provided an opportunity to align real cognitive learning skills with life lessons to ensure a positive societal impact.

In addition, Chapter One presented the fundamental research questions used to guide this study. The following research questions and perspectives guided the study:

Research Question 1: How do the state of Missouri Elementary Schools design and implement the arts into their curriculum?

Research Question 2: How have meaningful arts learning experiences made difference in students' educational journeys?

Research Perspective 1: If an elementary school in the state of Missouri has an arts program then arts would be integrated into the content area courses as measured by surveys of elementary school principals with the data provided by the researcher.

Research Perspective 2: If an elementary school in the state of Missouri has an arts program, then arts would be integrated into the content area courses as measured by

the responses given in focus groups of elementary fine arts teachers, using the data

provided by the researcher.

Hypothesis and Sub-Hypotheses

Hypothesis: There is a difference between a school that has an arts program and

one which does not, in academic achievement assessments, socioeconomic status,

attendance, and school funding.

Sub-Hypothesis a: If a school has an arts program, then students will have higher

academic achievement scores, as measured by Missouri Assessment Performance (MAP)

data provided by MODESE.

Sub-Hypothesis b: If a school has an arts program then students will come from

above average socioeconomic status families, as measured by school data provided by

MODESE.

Sub-Hypothesis c: If a school has an arts program then students will have higher

attendance, as measured by school data provided by MODESE.

Sub-Hypothesis d: If a school has an arts program, then schools will have more

funding as measured by MODESE.

Chapter Two presented a review of the then-existing body of research and

literature surrounding questions of the efficacy of including the arts in elementary school

curricula. By examining the then-current body of work available, the researcher

determined that much of the work previously done on the arts in education was slanted in

favor of arts education programs; however, the literature also exposed the gap between

the theory of the value of art and its application in elementary schools. Moreover,

Chapter Two discussed the socioeconomic factors involved in establishing arts programs

at elementary schools, particularly those in urban areas. The Chapter concluded with

recognition that a future challenge lies in continuing to find ways to transform the theory

of art instruction into a productive reality, as it relates to elementary education.

Chapter Three presented the overall goal of this study, which was to expand the

existing body of research on the importance of arts education and to examine the

influence of arts education on elementary schools in the state of Missouri.

In addition, the chapter described the methodology used in this study – a mixed-

methods study; wherein, qualitative and quantitative data were gathered in two phases.

The chapter restated the research questions and null hypotheses, and went on to describe

the study methodology and analysis in specific detail. Moreover, the chapter described

the population and sampling methods, as well as the instrumentation and data collection

procedures. Phase 1 involved surveys distributed to several hundred elementary-school

principals in the state of Missouri. Phase 2 involved conducting focus groups with more

than a dozen arts educators.

Chapter Four described the process of conducting the mixed-methods study, the

data analysis, and the four overarching themes and accompanying data. The themes, in

the context of elementary school arts education, were Purpose, Application, Usefulness,

and Funding. The data were presented in a series of bar and pie charts representing the

survey data on behalf of each of the four themes or research questions.

Limitations of the Findings

The limitations of the study were influenced by the research design and the

geographic area of the study as listed below.

1) The online survey data were limited to elementary school principals who chose to complete and submit the survey.

2) It was expected that all respondents answered all questions honestly.

3) Researcher bias with working in the field of Fine Arts Education.

The remainder of this chapter will present personal reflections, recommendations for the program and future research, and a final summary.

Personal reflections. In both Phases 1 and 2 of this research study, the researcher asserted that critics looked at the arts as having few to no redeeming qualities, when it came to the educational experience. While past research indicated that the arts were often ranked at the lowest level of importance, school systems also noted that the arts were an undeniable force of change and inspiration to elementary-school students. This researcher believed that the arts were a force of change, not only for elementary-school students, but for their parents and communities, as well. Thus, perhaps the best way to convey the importance of the arts in school curricula is through a personal story.

I have had the privilege of serving as the chairperson of the Arts Department at a performing arts elementary school for the past eight years. This school has a reputation for being one of the best performing arts elementary schools in the entire city/county area. Given my association with the school, I have worked with some of the most talented artists and teachers in the district. The school's reputation for high standards and excellent performing arts has driven local demand for admission and participation, and prominent families in the district and the city are particularly vocal about their desire to be associated with the school. One of my primary responsibilities is to continue to

produce the type of performances that reflect the level of excellence the community has come to expect.

In a performing arts school, the ability to assemble multiple disciplines into a cohesive performance can be comparable to being the conductor of a world-class orchestra. When coordinating students, staff, and families into a harmonious unit, one must also take into account personalities, egos, and agendas, as well as varying levels of talent. One must take into account personal and professional sensitivities, community values, and other factors that influence human interactions.

From a logistical perspective, the involvement of the community in the form of donations, material support, and volunteering must all be woven together so that everyone who wants to be involved has every opportunity to do so. Classroom teachers who indicate an interest in participating in a major performance, regardless of their reasons for being interested, are quickly encouraged to show their support by lending a helping hand. At this point in the time-consuming process, the entire school is excited and everyone is involved. Among the performing students, the infectious buzz extends to the school staff and the students' parents. Local businesses begin to take more of an interest, and have started to contribute costumes or props. The arts staff is busy coordinating student rehearsals under the chairperson's leadership and direction. The performance is going to be at the Fox Theatre and the community is excited because the Saint Louis Public School District is going to be represented at a venue that the students and parents will cherish forever. Parent and teacher volunteer organizations have begun to coordinate the after-school rehearsals, and the performance preparations for costumes, props, music, and cameras are underway.

When the performance finally takes place, all participants feel that they have made history. The community has united behind this program and transcended any real or perceived socioeconomic, cultural, or political differences. When the students receive a standing ovation, the community feels a common sense of pride. The positivity that results from stories, such as this one, can be replicated, across the district, state, nation, and world. While we must maintain a focus on achievements across the entire curriculum, we must also recognize that a celebration of the arts can lead to positive outcomes for entire communities.

Recommendations to the Program

After conducting this research study, it is possible to make a number of recommendations to the program to better integrate the arts into elementary-school curricula throughout the state of Missouri. Initial recommendations include the following:

a) Create systematic and sustainable fundraising initiatives for schools state-wide to ensure the availability of funds for arts programs. Fundraising initiatives could include art sales, ticket sales, or calls for volunteers to participate in staging theatrical productions.

b) Continue to highlight the positive benefits of arts programs to elementary-school students as they grow and mature. This can take the form of artists from various disciplines relaying their personal experiences at community events as a means of enhancing awareness.

c) Identify mechanisms by which elementary schools in the state of Missouri can develop partnerships with local businesses and government institutions. This can take on the form of sponsorships for specific arts-related initiatives, such as

exhibits, concerts, or writing contests. Such initiatives can also help in raising

awareness about the importance of the arts in educational endeavors.

d) Develop community youth and adult programs that feature local artists. Such

programs could involve collaboration with local media outlets to advertise artistic

endeavors, such as exhibits, performances, or readings.

Clearly, these are just a few recommendations for the program to pursue. By

implementing small recommendations on an incremental basis, we can continue to raise

awareness about the importance of including the arts in elementary school curricula, and

see the positive outcomes emerge.

Recommendations for Future Research

As indicated in this research study, the researcher believed that the state of arts

education in the public school arena was often viewed through four contexts: purpose,

application, usefulness, and funding. To that end, themes that emerged from this research

study reflected four contexts, as do the recommendations for future research. In terms of

the first theme, purpose, future research into the issue of arts integration into elementary-

school curricula should investigate exactly why and how the arts constitute an important

element in developing a well-rounded education. Such research could better expose the

significant social, cultural, and professional benefits associated with inclusion of the arts

in standard curricula. In further researching the purpose of the arts in elementary-school

curricula, it may be possible to develop more example-oriented narratives that offer

additional quantitative data with regard to the developmental impacts of arts programs on

both students and the educational system.

In terms of the second theme, application, this researcher recommends further research in assessing how to better integrate arts programs in elementary-school programs, and how to quantify the associated benefits. More research needs to be completed to assess the various techniques available to art teachers and to develop new ones. Ultimately, the goal of teachers is to help students embrace the learning process and to develop students so that they can be more prepared to define themselves in their communities. The arts can have a direct impact on student development, beginning in the classroom and leading toward the employer and the community.

In terms of the third theme, usefulness, more research is recommended to counter critics who believe the arts have limited value in the context of the educational experience. Potential research projects include assessing elementary schools and integrated arts programs on the national and international levels to determine whether the influence of arts programs at the elementary school level can lead to a broader world view and greater acceptance of diversity in culture. With regard to the fourth theme, funding, this researcher recommends that further studies be conducted on a national level to determine if federal programs such as No Child Left Behind is being implemented in the manner in which it was conceived: to give the arts the same importance as other academic subjects. In researching and documenting deficiencies in implementing the No Child Left Behind Act, it is possible to establish a platform to lobby for additional funding for arts programs in elementary schools.

Conclusion

The terms 'art' and 'artist' have undergone multiple definitions and evolutions throughout history. From definitions that described function, rather than product, to

product, rather than function, the arts have been as versatile as their definitions. As

history and our understanding of art has progressed, society in general has witnessed the

benefits of integrating arts programs into the educational system. However, arts programs

are frequently the first to be cut when schools face budget challenges. This research study

attempted to show the positive outcomes of including arts programming at elementary

schools in the state of Missouri. The benefits are not limited to Missouri, or the greater

United States, however. On the contrary, the inclusion of arts programs throughout the

academic process provides multiple benefits to the students as individuals and as

members of society. In turn, these benefits can have a lasting impact on society and

culture.

In relaying a personal reflection, this researcher noted at a high level, just a few of

the steps that go into coordinating and managing a full performance production. While

the process of implementing a production may differ, depending on the logistics,

personalities, or venues, there are several fundamental concepts that do not change. For

example, performances require discipline, a skill that individuals need regardless of their

age, socioeconomic status, or academic level. The ability to collaborate and communicate

with others, despite differing interests, agendas, or even cultures, is another much-needed

skill in society. Budgeting, fundraising, and financial management are all part of the arts

production process, and are skills that arts students can take into the workplace in almost

any capacity. These skills are not fleeting ones – the skills children develop from being

exposed to and involved in the arts are lifelong. As indicated in this study, "The arts can

motivate and engage students; stimulate curiosity and foster creativity; teach 21st century

skills such as problem solving and team work; and facilitate school-wide collaborations"

(PCAH, 2011, p. 48).

Despite the positive benefits and outcomes of an arts-integrated education, federal

and state budgets continue to be heavily scrutinized to ensure that educational spending is

maximized. In times of economic hardship, it is most often the arts program that is cut as

a means of conserving funds. Moreover, as indicated in this research study, the arts

disciplines are continually assessed to determine whether they represent a true economic

and academic value. Until society can accept and promote the benefits of integrating the

arts in academic curricula, this struggle will continue.

On an international scale, in an increasingly globalized world, present at the time

of this writing, youth will be expected to communicate with their counterparts and peers

around the globe as they transition into adulthood and the workplace. The arts have had a

universal appeal for centuries, and often represent the first common interest across vastly

different cultures. Moreover, early education in the arts enables children – tomorrow's

leaders – to begin to understand other cultures and peoples through a non-commercial

lens. The arts also help youth to better understand and implement concepts, such as self-

expression and free expression.

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Appendix A:

Invitation to Participate in Research – Focus Group:

Dear Fine Arts Teacher,

You are invited to participate in a research focus group conducted by Shenicquel Spotts under the guidance of Dr. Rebecca Panagos. The purpose of this research is to compare and analyze the possible relationship between 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students who participate in art related classes and those who do not. I will explore curriculum development and implementation through Fine Arts Teacher focus groups.

It is expected this focus group will take about 60 minutes – 90 minutes to complete.

Completion of the focus group constitutes your consent to participate in this research. The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we make public we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. Research records will be kept in a locked file; only the researcher will have access to the records. All data obtained will remain confidential. The researcher will respect and protect the identities of the participants in this study.

I do not anticipate any risks to you participating in this study and there are no benefits to you. All results will be distributed to Lindenwood University Education Department upon completion of study. In some studies, using small sample sizes, there may be risk of identification.

The research study has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board at Lindenwood University. You may also ask questions of or state concerns regarding your participation to the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board (IRB) through contacting Dr. Rebecca Panagos, Chair at (636) 949-4959.

If you wish to participate in this research, please read and sign the attached consent form. Please return the signed form to Mrs. Shenicquel Spotts, who will secure the forms in a locked cabinet.

If you have any questions about this research before completing this survey, please contact the researcher, Shenicquel "Nikki" Spotts by phone (314) 504-1727 or email at nikkispotts1@gmail.com.

Your participation is greatly appreciated,

Shenicquel "Nikki" Spotts

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information, and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study of this research with Mrs. Shenicquel Spotts.

Your Signature _____ Date _____

Your Name (printed)

_____

This consent form will be kept by the researcher for at least three years beyond the end of the study.

Appendix B:

Focus Group Questions:

Key to how each question relates to the study questions:

(RQ1) = Research Question #1
(RQ2) = Research Question #2
(HQ1) = Hypothesis Question #1
(HQ2) = Hypothesis Question #2
(HQ3) = Hypothesis Question #3
(HQ4) = Hypothesis Question #4
(HQ5) = Hypothesis Question #5
(HQ6) = Hypothesis Question #6
(HQ7) = Hypothesis Question #7

[Turn on audio recording device]

Focus Group Opening Script

Once again, thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. As you know the purpose of my study is to compare and analyze the possible relationship between 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students who participate in art related classes and those who do not. We will explore curriculum development and implementation through the Fine Arts and integration throughout the "academics courses." We have reviewed the informed consent together and you have signed it.

Please remember:

☐ Nothing you say is wrong! We want to hear all of your opinions – even if they conflict with somebody else's.
☐ You are experts in your own experiences – Therefore we want to find out about your feelings, intentions, motivations and attitudes.
☐ We will not be analyzing you personally! Rather I will analyze all of the opinions I collect as a whole from a few focus groups.
☐ Please be as open and as talkative as you like.
☐ Feel free to go into detail and explain why you feel something.

And finally:

1) I am not interested in what you think - I am interested in what you have to say!

1. Any questions before we begin?

2. This session lasts about 90 minutes…I want to hear from everyone…I apologize in advance if I need to interrupt you to move on to another person or question.

I'll be recording the session today to make sure we don't miss anything. I will not use the recording for anything other than the reasons I've described.

Getting to know the group (4 minutes)

In a circle, go round and tell everyone your name, what subject you teach and what interests you about your arts content.

Let's get started. My first question is:

Focus Group Questions
What is Arts Integration?

Arts Integration is a model of education that uses fine and performing arts as the catalyst for learning across content areas. Teachers use arts content with content and concepts from other subject areas to enhance or deepen student connections, understanding and learning. For example, a 4th grade teacher would use the arts within regular classroom instruction. She may collaborate with the visual arts teacher to create complimentary lessons that incorporate both visual arts and social studies curricula.

1. **How would you rate the importance of arts integration into the school curriculum? (RQ1)**

Arts Integration for example: Music-mathematics *(time, frequency, and connections to abstract algebra)*, drama/acting-reading/writing *(critical reading and effective writing)*, dance-science *(movement through space; force, motion, energy)*, and visual art-history *(historical cultural context; pictures, paintings, drawings, statue, books, etc.)*.
By a show of hands:

- o 5 (very important)

- o 4

- o 3

- o 2

- o 1 (not at all important)

- o DK (I don't know)

Why? or Why not?

2. **What do you believe the role of the arts should be in your school? (RQ2)**
Why? or Why not?

3. Do you think your colleagues share your perspective on this topic? (RQ2, NH7)

Why? or Why not?

4. Have you received any professional development or training in Arts Integration (AI) with the curriculum? (RQ1, RQ2)

- o Yes
- o No

Why? or Why not?

5. On a five-point scale (where 5 is "very prepared" and 1 is "not at all prepared"), how prepared do you think your students are to master the curriculum with arts? (RQ1, RQ2, NH1, NH2)
By a show of hands:

- o 5 (very prepared)
- o 4
- o 3
- o 2
- o 1 (not at all prepared)
- o DK (I don't know)

Why? or Why not?

6. How have meaningful arts learning experiences made a difference in students' educational journeys? Why? (RQ2, NH1, NH5)

Closing Script

That's all I have unless you have any questions or further comments. I appreciate you taking time out of your schedule to meet with me. Thank you.

[Turn off audio recording device]

Appendix C:

Thank you note to teachers

Dear Teachers,

Thank you for meeting with me yesterday. I appreciate you allowing me to facilitate the focus group and you being a part of my research project to compare and analyze the possible relationship between 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students who participate in art related classes and those who do not. If you are interested in the results of my study, I would be happy to share my completed project with you.

I wish you the best of luck as you continue to make a difference in arts education.

Sincerely,
Shenicquel "Nikki" Spotts
Doctoral Student
Lindenwood University

Appendix D

Informed Consent

Lindenwood University
School of Education
209 S. Kingshighway
St. Charles, Missouri 63301

Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activities

Principal Investigator Shenicquel Spotts_____
        Telephone: 314-504-1727   E-mail: slb279@lionmail.lindenwood.edu

Participant_____
Contact info _____

Dear Principal,

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Shenicquel "Nikki" Spotts under the guidance of Dr. Rebecca Panagos. The purpose of this research is to compare and analyze the possible relationship between all Elementary Schools in the state of Missouri, who's third, fourth, and fifth grade students participate in art related classes and those who do not; specifically studying MAP scores, attendance, socioeconomic status, and school funding. The researcher will also explore arts curriculum and implementation with the Principals and Fine Arts Teachers in the state of Missouri. This research will provide an analysis of art program curriculum effectiveness pertaining to Map scores and attendance compared to a curriculum where the arts program is absent. This study will assist in determining the viability of programs that can be interpreted as useful within a curriculum as well as identifying how to select and then duplicate positive results. Also, this study will assist in identifying programs that may have little or no impact on MAP scores and attendance and thereby not being cost effective for a district or school.

Your participation will involve completing a survey on curriculum development and implementation of the Survey Monkey through your school email account. The amount of time involved in your participation will be 20-30 minutes to complete. There are no anticipated risks associated with this research.

There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study. However, your participation will contribute to the knowledge about Fine arts and Education and may help provide an analysis of art program curriculum effectiveness pertaining to Map scores and attendance compared to a curriculum where the arts program is absent.

Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this research study or to withdraw your consent at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. You will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or to withdraw.

We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. As part of this effort, your identity will not be revealed in any publication or presentation that may result from this study and the information collected will remain in the possession of the investigator in a safe location. In some studies, using small sample sizes, there may be risk of identification.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may call the Investigator, Shenicquel "Nikki" Spotts at (314)504-1727 or the Supervising Faculty, Dr. Rebecca Panagos at (636) 949-4959. You may also ask questions of or state concerns regarding your participation to the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board (IRB) through contacting Dr. Marilyn Abbott, Provost at mabbott@lindenwood.edu or 636-949-4912.

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. Completion of the electronic survey constitutes your consent to participate in this research. All data obtained will be kept confidential.

If you wish to participate in this survey, please proceed to the questionnaire by clicking the provided link. If not, close this e-mail.

Your participation is greatly appreciated,

Shenicquel "Nikki" Spotts

Appendix E:

(Created through Survey Monkey at www.surveymonkey.com)

Principal Questionnaire:

The purpose of this survey is to better understand how school administrators in Missouri approach the Fine Arts in their school buildings. This survey will define if the fine arts are being used as a catalyst for learning across the curriculum in all areas where teachers use arts content and concepts with other subject areas to enhance or deepen student connections, understanding, and learning.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your feedback is valued and appreciated.

- o **Do you have an arts program in your school? If so, how many days a week do the students' attend and length of time?**

- o **Which arts program(s) do you offer in the school?**
(Check all that apply). *This question is required.

    - Instrumental Music
    - Vocal Music
    - Visual Arts
    - Dance
    - Theatre
    - Photography
    - Creative Writing
    - Other _____
    - None

   3. Are you familiar with Arts Integration (AI) with the curriculum?
What is Arts Integration?
Arts Integration is a model of education that uses fine and performing arts as the catalyst for learning across content areas. Teachers use arts content with content and concepts from other subject areas to enhance or deepen student connections, understanding and learning. For example, a 4th grade teacher would use the arts within regular classroom instruction. She may collaborate with the visual arts teacher to create complimentary lessons that incorporate both visual arts and social studies curricula.

- o Yes

- o No

4. Please rate your overall level of familiarity with adding the "arts integration" into Mathematics and in English/Language Arts and Literacy.

Mathematics
o   Very Familiar

o   Somewhat Familiar

o   Slightly Familiar

o   Not At All Familiar

English/Language Arts and Literacy

o   Very Familiar

o   Somewhat Familiar

o   Slightly Familiar

o   Not At All Familiar

5. How much training have you received to support teachers in integrating the arts across the curriculum (in your principal licensure program, professional development, etc.)?
o   Far too Much
o   Too Much
o   About Right
o   Too Little
o   Far too Little

6. How many resources are designated within your school that is specifically appropriate for the purpose of Arts classes (or) Arts Integration?

o   Far too Much
o   Too Much
o   About Right
o   Too Little
o   Far too Little

7. How often do you actively foster a school-wide culture that embraces the Arts?

☐   Always
☐   Most of the time

☐ Sometimes
☐ Rarely
☐ Never

8. How often do you look for evidence of Arts Integration when you conduct teacher observation?

- Always
- Most of the Time
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

9. As the leader of the school, how often do you motivate your teachers to integrate the arts using incentives (i.e. formal recognition, promotions, praise, desirable assignments, mention in a newsletter/staff meeting, awards, etc.)?

- Always
- Most of the Time
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

10. In what type of setting is your school located?

1. Rural
2. Urban
3. Suburban
4. Other _____

11. Check All That Apply
What are the greatest challenges with the Arts *(drama, dance, vocal music, band, and visual art)* **at your school? Check all that apply.**

1) Time constraints
2) Lack of parental/guardian support
3) Financial constraints
4) Lack of technical expertise
5) Lack of teacher buy-in
6) Lack of community resources (e.g. art museums, art councils, etc.)
7) Lack of local school board support
8) Lack of state Department of Public Instruction support
9) Higher priorities take precedence

10) Other _____

12. In what other ways are you supporting Arts Education at your school? Please explain below.

13. Is there anything else you would like to add to help us understand Arts classes /Arts Integration at your school?

Vitae

Shenicquel L. Spotts currently serves the St. Louis Public School District as the Arts Department Chairperson and Dance Educator. Over the past decade she has researched and effected many studies in the general education and the fine arts curriculums. With a broad base of knowledge, she has instructed learners in all age groups including elementary, middle, high school, and university students.

Her academic studies have resulted in a B.F.A. in Dance Education, M.A.T. in Education, M.A. in School Administration, Educational Specialist in Educational Administration, and one of the first to receive the certification to teach K-12 dance in the state of Missouri. Academic interests are instructional leadership, performance educator, and research and development.