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### Coloring Outside of the Lines: The Role of the Arts in Enhancing Education

Abstract: Government officials, educators, scholars, and parents alike have debated the role of the arts in education and how to provide students with consistent and equitable access. This project aims to address the following questions: How does exposure to the arts impact K-12 students' emotional development and academic performance? How do the effects on students differ between arts exposure through public education versus community organizations?

Initial research revealed that, though the arts can be accessed through public education and supported by government funding, non-profit organizations have more freedom and flexibility to provide arts education that better meets the needs of specific communities and enhances students' emotional and academic development. In further exploring these questions, an interview with Flintridge Sacred Heart Academy's Chair of Visual and Performing Arts revealed that arts access through community organizations requires additional time and transportation, making it inequitable. Service with various organizations in the Pasadena area demonstrated the importance of publicity and community outreach in nonprofit work, while planning and hosting an Improv workshop reinforced that activism and advocacy require time, experience, and careful planning. After completing each stage of the project and compiling further research, it is clear that arts education provided through both curriculum integration and community organizations specializes the student experience and expands access.

#### I. Introduction

The concepts taught in K-12 classrooms inspire students and allow them to develop into active and responsible citizens, shaping society. When establishing educational policy, lawmakers must consider the needs of students, demands of parents, and different abilities of school districts and teachers (Colwell). These stakeholders have differing perspectives when it comes to the inclusion of arts in education: some argue for public arts education integrated into curriculum, while others believe arts access is best provided through community organizations. Furthermore, many explore the correlation between arts access and academic performance, questioning whether or not this association is based on empirical evidence. All of these considerations have led to the formation of the following questions: How does exposure to the arts impact K-12 students' emotional development and academic performance? How do the effects on students differ between arts exposure through public education versus community organizations?

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## II. Literature Review

Previous literature analyzing the effects and implementation of arts education reveals the four categories the arts are separated into, the constant evaluation of evidence as circumstantial and social versus empirical, and the variables involved in determining where and how the arts are disseminated. Researchers classify art education as either visual art, theater art/drama, music, or dance to assess the specific effects of each. Authors cite a lack of empirical evidence as motivation for their studies or literature reviews and reveal the complexity inherent in the

provision of arts education, while stakeholders weigh whether arts education should be provided by schools and mandated by State governments or made accessible by community organizations and nonprofits. The debate does not end there, however, as authors also consider the two ways in which arts education could be implemented in schools: integration into academic curriculum or provision through separate arts courses. Advancing the discourse around the impact of the arts, professors and educational experts continue to study and analyze the impacts, availability, and feasibility of arts education.

In their introduction to a larger journal, professors Ellen Winner and Lois Hetland explain how they select and summarize featured reviews, what is already known about arts education's impacts, and the potential future of arts education, all to encourage further research on the topic. The authors question the common assumption that arts have positive "social, motivational, and academic repercussions," asking if this correlation promotes "unsupported advocacy" (Winner and Hetland 3). Winner and Hetland first explain how they comprehensively searched all studies, physically combed through journals, and reached out to scholars requesting unpublished academic reviews. Once this data was collected, the authors used meta-analysis to describe the relationship between two variables (arts study and academic outcomes). Winner and Hetland also detail the flaws of this method, highlighting other variables that should be considered, like research design, outcome measure, and duration of arts study. The authors then explain that, while students who choose to pursue the arts are often strong academically, it does not mean that studying the arts leads to higher academic achievement; there is an existing correlation between high academic achievers and those who choose to study the arts. Furthermore, the authors acknowledge the difficulty of studying this correlation, because so many variables, like student academic history and parent expectations, cannot be controlled or are hard to measure. Next,

Winner and Hetland suggest the absence of a correlation between arts access and academic performance because researchers have only focused on test scores and grades as indicators. They do suggest, however, that arts education could build skills like “persistence, revision, [and] close observation” that translate to academic success in other disciplines (Winner and Hetland 5). Additionally, the authors offer recommendations for researchers, stating that they should conduct quasi-experimental, theory-driven studies that evaluate more than quantitative measures like test results.

More recent academic journals continue Winner and Hetland’s work, focusing on current practices and additional applications of the arts. In her academic review, Genna Ohrenberg synthesizes previous publications discussing art education and provides anecdotal evidence to convey how art education creates a positive school environment and allows students to express themselves and their ideas in ways other than writing or verbal communication. Ohrenberg analyzes a related work that discusses how art can be taught as a form of communication when students are learning English as a second language. In this case, art education does not just enhance academics but is crucial to performance. Furthermore, the author examines art integration in academic disciplines like science and history, portraying how this involvement of art in other subjects increases “depth of knowledge” (Ohrenberg 3). Ohrenberg also expands her review by discussing art education’s impacts outside of the classroom, focusing on scientific experiments that reveal how “certain art skills develop and enhance sensory, motor, attention, emotional, and language processes” in dementia patients (Ohrenberg 4). Ohrenberg also touches on art’s ability to encourage critical thinking and consideration of multiple perspectives or attitudes, claiming that art education is crucial in educating future leaders and independent thinkers. The author concludes her essay by explaining how art education’s flexibility fosters a

positive learning environment and allows students with “different needs to pave their own path” (Ohrenberg 6).

Scholars expand on Ohrenberg’s commentary by detailing possible improvements to art implementation. In his overview, “Policy and Assessment,” Professor Richard Colwell details current impacts and considerations in the education reform and arts education movements, stating initial concerns, the history of education reform, and how arts policy depends on cultural and social circumstances. Colwell begins by expressing the considerations in general education policy, stressing that, while “State government” plays a key role in policy formation, stakeholders like “school boards, school administrators, and unions” are the true drivers of change (Colwell 2). Colwell also explains that education initiatives are heavily influenced by politics and trends. The author then provides a history of United States arts education, detailing that music education, specifically, has not been distinguished from the general categorization of “the arts,” even though its effects on academic learning could be significantly different from those of other artistic pursuits (Colwell 4). Colwell moves beyond current and previous practices, revealing that there is no real way to enforce education policy. Because of this, Colwell argues, trust is an essential component of the dissemination of arts education policy, and can be promoted through frequent assessments, advocacy, and the establishment of a philosophy that lays the foundation for policy-making. To contextualize his information about the United States, Colwell frequently draws parallels to the education research and policy in other countries, mostly Britain, Taiwan, and Germany, emphasizing their focus on integrated arts education and conveying how these countries’ different histories and cultures impact their arts education policy. The author underscores this comparison by suggesting the difficulty of promoting the arts in a capitalistic society, as focus on economic growth stunts art growth. Colwell concludes by suggesting an

approach to arts policy that involves “context, input, curriculum, and the teacher’s pedagogical skills” (Colwell 12).

While some scholars argue that arts education is nearly impossible under capitalism, others seek to provide empirical data to assess current arts availability and evaluate this claim. In his academic article, “Access to Arts Education in America: The Availability of Visual Art, Music, Dance, and Theater Courses in U.S. High Schools,” Professor Kenneth Elpus seeks to create a national survey of the proportion of schools that offer curricular coursework in the arts, the types of courses offered, and how that varied based on school type, urbanity, region, socioeconomic profile (students eligible for free lunch and ethnic/racial composition), school size, and schedule. Using an ongoing survey of high schools conducted by the NCES and verifying the code used to account for differences in course titles, Elpus determines which schools offer what courses. His study is limited because a school’s catalog may list a course as offered, but may not generate enough student interest to actually run during a school year, so his results are based on a best case scenario. Although student body size is most indicative of what arts offerings look like at a school, Elpus finds that, based on the six factors, the schools with the highest art availability are public, rural, in the western region of the United States, and have 0% of the student body eligible for free lunch, as arts offerings are more comprehensive in wealthier areas. Elpus also concludes that racial/ethnic composition and schedule type have no effect on arts offerings, and questions why, when there are “relatively equitable patterns of access yield” there are still “relatively differential patterns of uptake” for students of color (Elpus 18). He also states that visual art was the most available nationwide, followed by music, theater, and dance. While Elpus provides empirical evidence about the state of the arts in schools, others discuss removing the arts from the school system entirely.

In her academic article, “Economic Discussion of Conflict between Public Education Policies and Common Good Arts in the United States,” Professor Yuha Jung argues, from an economic lens, that arts access should not be provided through public schools because education and the arts are different types of goods (public and common, respectively). Jung then proposes that community organizations and nonprofits are better suited for the provision of arts access because the country’s population and diversity has increased, so public consensus on allocation of funds is harder to reach. Through overviews of the United States’ theory of goods, arts education policies, and National Coalition for Core Arts Standards (NCCAS), Jung covers the history of arts in public schools and supports her classification of the arts as an optional, common good rather than a necessary, public one. The author also outlines conflicts between the public school system and the NCCAS, as the NCCAS advocates for more comprehensive and widespread arts offerings in schools while the public education budget for the arts has “decreased by more than thirty percent in the [last twenty years]” (Jung 1). In detailing this issue, Jung displays the difficulty with providing the arts through public education. After defining the arts as a common good, Jung explains that, under a capitalist system, nonprofits “exist to preserve, produce, and promote common goods,” and should therefore be the source of arts access in the United States (Jung 4). Furthermore, Jung emphasizes that, because nonprofits are not standardized or regulated by the government like schools are, they can provide more diverse and specialized arts education that prioritizes the type of art (music, visual, theater, dance) that a certain community prioritizes. Jung’s argument about the benefits of private sector art access is applied as researchers evaluate factors that could improve the success of nonprofit arts provision.

In his academic article, “An Examination of the Perceptions of Stakeholders on Authentic Leadership in Strategic Planning in Nonprofit Arts Organizations,” Anthony S. Rhine conducts a

study that analyzes arts nonprofits by focusing on the relationship between authentic leadership and “strategic planning”, a tool to “coordinate resources, develop strategies... assess environmental changes, and ensure that organizational stakeholders understand the current status of an organization” (Rhine 1). Identifying stakeholders at eight nonprofit arts organizations in Detroit, Michigan, researchers conducted telephone interviews during which respondents voiced their level of familiarity with strategic planning in their organization, as well as how they feel about it and how it relates to authentic leadership. Rhine ultimately reveals that most interviewees believed that authentic leadership traits within an arts nonprofit “improve the quality of the strategic planning process” (Rhine 9). The next portion of the interviews assesses the respondents' perceptions of authentic leadership traits. Drawing on both previous research and interviewees' responses, Rhine highlights passion, inclusivity and collaboration, a sense of community, and a balance between the arts and businesses as traits essential to a leader in an arts nonprofit. Rhine concludes his article with a data summary and call to action, expressing the need for inclusion of all stakeholders in the planning of nonprofits and how the “gap between the artistic and business perspectives” must be filled (Rhine 20).

Elaborating on Rhine’s conclusions about leadership, Linnea L. Rademaker, in her case study review, examines arts education advocacy group Arts Collaborators Inc. (ACI) to draw conclusions about the most effective components of arts advocacy and community outreach. Detailing why ACI’s informational work is important, Rademaker analyzes its effect on art education policies, connections in the art community, and fundraising, stating that only a community that is aware of all the ways to access art will support it. The author also addresses critiques of ACI’s methods, mentioning that ACI has the power to choose what type of art they promote and who they promote it to, and must consider “equity and access to knowledge,” and

“the idea of cultural domination by one group” (Rademaker 2). Rademaker then lays out ACI’s strategies, discussing their informational hotline, website, local magazine editorials, free coupons for arts events, advertisements, and catalog of public art. Interviewing board members, Rademaker brings up ACI’s different goals and attempts to improve their programs. For example, one board member expressed a desire to expand their representation beyond just “symphony, opera, ballet, and theatre” and help smaller artists with unique art forms market their work (Rademaker 5). Rademaker concludes by listing that the “difference between arts exposure and arts education” must be recognized, that trained arts professionals remain crucial in connecting arts to academics, and administrators should “take full advantage of the resources and connections that groups such as ACI can offer” (Rademaker 11, 12). Although Rademaker’s case study promotes community organizations as effective providers of arts education, others deem the in-school approach to arts education as more feasible and comprehensive.

This public approach recently gained political and fiscal support in California. California Proposition 28 establishes that “a minimum source of annual funding” be provided to K-12 public and charter schools to finance art education programs, detailing how this amount will be calculated, when it will be calculated by, and how it will be divided amongst schools and spent (The Arts 2). Adding onto Section 8 of Article XVI of the California Constitution, this act designates that one percent of revenues received by state and local educational institutions is to be included in calculations of the minimum budget for arts programs. Specifying that these funds will only be available for “up to three fiscal years,” and will then be “reallocate[d]... to all local educational agencies,” the act assures that these funds be properly and promptly spent by each institution (The Arts 3). Further specifying how funds are to be distributed, the act includes measures to account for schools with a higher percentage of economically disadvantaged pupils,

defined as “a pupil who is eligible for the federal National School Lunch Act” (The Arts 5). Furthermore, to guarantee accountability and transparency in this process, this act requires each local educational institution to submit an approved report to the Superintendent that summarizes what the funding is used for and will be published on each institution's website. While proposition 28 lays out how funding for public arts education will be designated, it does not discuss the form arts education will take in public schools.

In his academic report, “Enhancing Student Learning Through Arts Integration: Implications for the Profession,” David E. Gullatt proposes a specific strategy to implement public arts education: arts integration. He describes the history of arts education, different arts implementation strategies and their effects on different students, and how arts affect each discipline, all to communicate the irony of budget cuts for many arts programs across America. The author provides empirical rather than theoretical evidence to support his various claims. Gullatt advocates for an integrated arts curriculum that employs various creative activities in the classroom that would yield “higher order thinking skills, risk taking, and creativity” in students (Gullatt). For example, students could use drama and the theater arts to re-enact historical events or complete an art project using geometry. The author provides examples of arts education in Japan, Hungary, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, highlighting how these countries value arts education as a discipline in itself. Gullatt also discusses the “four styles of arts integration in classrooms... the subservient approach,” which uses the arts as an added “spice” to curriculum, “the co-equal cognitive integration approach” which offers the arts as an integrated academic discipline through which students contextualize other studies, “the affective approach,” which immerses students in the arts through things like playing relevant music during study time or displaying visual art pieces, and finally “social integration,” which complete curriculum

through performance-based activities that usually involve parents (i.e. a school play). Gullatt ultimately reveals, through his explanations of these integration styles, that both parents and teachers would have to embrace the arts as an educational tool so that students' learning could be effectively enhanced (Gullatt). Gullatt emphasizes important factors in arts implementation like the differences between students with different learning styles, students of different backgrounds, and possible discrepancies between mandated curriculum and actual practices. The author concludes his report by listing considerations for those who create arts policy (budget issues, teacher qualification, evaluation of effectiveness), detailing benefits to the education profession, and explaining that arts are important because they add dimension to academic study by allowing students to “construct meaning for themselves” (Gullatt).

As these benefits grow more apparent, researchers examine an educational model that does not just include the arts, but centers around them: the arts school. In his overview, “Performing and Visual Arts Schools,” Rod Daniel describes the growing interest in art schools, provides a list of criteria for successful art-focused institutions, and summarizes art education practices at art-focused schools, specifically elementary school programs, middle schools of the arts, high schools of the arts, magnet art schools, arts centers, and residential art schools. Daniel discusses the differences between elementary school programs and art schools for older students, explaining that the “most recent growth in new schools of the arts appears to be at the elementary school level,” due to a movement to accommodate different learning styles at young ages and the belief that younger children can afford to spend more time on the arts because they are not yet concerned with college or workforce preparation (Daniel 3). Mentioning the difficulty in maintaining continuity in arts education, Daniel touches on art school accessibility by detailing that art schools can be public, private, or magnet/charter schools at which students are selected

by lottery. He also uses current successful art schools to illustrate that those who plan new schools for the arts must consider time frame, size and quality of facilities, staffing, grade configuration, admission criteria, and course offerings. Additionally, Daniel emphasizes the growing popularity of art-focused institutions based on the belief that “foster problem solving, higher order thinking, communication, teamwork, and creativity” (Daniel 1).

Art-focused institutions, however, did not originate as a way to promote creativity or teamwork but as a solution to economic decline. In his academic article, Malcolm Quinn examines the evolution of Britain’s art education programs, analyzing both public and private approaches to art education provision. Quinn traces the origins of the art school to an 1835 economic decision by the House of Commons to declare that the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures shall “inquire into the best means of extending a knowledge of the Fine Arts” (Quinn 2). Building on this information, Quinn points out that this declaration occurred after factory work had failed to educate Britain’s middle and lower classes in how to enter the workforce. Quinn reviews past literature on the relationship between art schools and manufacturing, pulling important quotes and discussing other scholars’ comments on them. For example, Quinn points out that one scholar refuted an author’s claim that art schools were created out of necessity but didn’t take into account the author’s “accompanying and paradoxical assertion that [publicly-funded art schools] had no place in a laissez-faire economy” (Quinn 4). Further describing the evolution of Britain’s publicly-funded art school, Quinn analyzes primary sources from the mid-19th century, like a former art school president’s biography that claimed that certain testimony was omitted from public records. Quinn emphasizes the political divides in the British government at the time, explaining how clashing ideologies reveal themselves in the “difference[s] between political economic principles and actual business practices” (Quinn 8).

As interest in school-provided arts education grows, academics gather evidence analyzing the effects of its implementation. In her study, “In-School Arts Education and Academic Achievement: A Child Fixed Effects Approach” Abigail Todhunter-Reid analyzes the impact of in-school arts education on academic performance in reading and mathematics to inform “decisions to increase [time spent on arts]” (Todhunter-Reid 1). The author focuses her control group by only studying students in grades kindergarten to 5th. Through meta-analyses of previous studies on this correlation, Todhunter-Reid points out flaws in these studies, highlighting that they do not allow for researchers to make causal inferences due to their inconsistent methodologies, cross-sectional designs, or selection bias. The author only focused on impacts in reading or mathematical achievement, also considering how implications and arts education change as time passes. By adjusting her analysis of previously collected data to account for factors like student race, gender, or socioeconomic class, Todhunter-Reid isolates the correlation between arts instruction and academic achievement and provides a study from which inferences can be drawn. The author concludes that “minutes per week of in-school arts education was positively associated with achievement in reading and mathematics” (Todhunter-Reid 4). Furthermore, Todhunter-Reid’s focus on change in impacts over time reveals that academic performance improved the most from kindergarten to third grade and third grade to fifth grade. Todhunter-Reid addresses limitations like unavailable data on teacher salary or the inability of the study to reveal why this positive correlation exists. Furthermore, the author acknowledges the pre-existing correlation between high academic achievers and those who pursue the arts, but believes that the “intrinsic value of the arts is not diminished by” this fact (Todhunter-Reid 5).

As researchers gather empirical evidence to draw conclusions about current arts access and hypothesize improvements, policymakers and community organizers can use their findings to take action. Whether provided through public schooling or after-school nonprofit programs, arts education access allows students to explore a new discipline and develop into well-rounded individuals.

### III. Fieldwork and Plan of Action

One way to implement these findings is to engage with various community services like Door of Hope (DoH), Arroyo and Foothills Conservancy (AFC), and Union Station Homeless Services. These organizations can help volunteers learn about activism and advocacy first hand and apply it to initiatives like the provision of arts education. Talking with experts in arts education also reveals the specifics of being on the provisional side of education and provides anecdotal evidence of the nuanced differences between public and private arts access.

Ms. Heather Kent, the chair of Flintridge Sacred Heart Academy's Visual and Performing arts Department, offers insight on arts education in private schools, explaining that the arts play an important role in school attendance and student achievement. Kent also touched on the types of in-school arts education, revealing that art integration, specifically the "co-equal cognitive integration approach" in which students do things like act out historical events, is typically done at younger ages (Gulatt). As students get older, Kent commented, the arts act as a medium through which students learn important skills like perseverance through failure, planning, and problem solving. Furthermore, if schools opt for a separate art curriculum rather than classroom integration, the arts can improve attendance because, as Ms. Kent puts it, "for some kids, arts are why they come to school." Additionally, Kent offered an explanation of the benefits of in-school

art provision, detailing that it ensures equitable access, while there barriers like time and transportation make private or nonprofit art programs less universally accessible.

Door of Hope hosts an annual Winter Carnival at which local groups set up booths to hand out food, games, and toys to current and past DoH families. Participation in this fieldwork demonstrated the importance of community organizations in the lives of underserved populations. Reviewed literature focuses on how the arts could be implemented in schools or classrooms, but after witnessing the positive and community-building effects of service, it's clear that community organizations could effectively provide engaging and comprehensive art programs (Elpus, Colwell, Gullatt, Todhunder-Reid). Specifically, nonprofits like Door of Hope are supported by many volunteers and donors, and can focus all of these resources on one mission, rather than allocating funds to several sectors like a school does.

Additionally, while participating in an Arroyo and Foothill Conservancy Restoration Day, the importance of consistency in activism became apparent. Visiting the preserve for the first time since taking a hiatus from working with AFC, the progress was astounding; a plethora of native species have been planted and the trail was extremely well-maintained. This experience aligned with previous literature about nonprofits, in which Linnea Rademaker surveys whether or not community members were aware of the existence of certain organizations; this author concluded that if no one knows about an organization, they cannot get involved, so the organization's scope is limited (Rademaker). AFC sends newsletters and provides online information to make sure that community members have opportunities to get involved and support their mission through volunteerism. This fieldwork prompted me to focus on advertising for my improv workshop and emphasized the necessity of awareness; if people were to attend my workshop, they would have to know about it.

Working with Door of Hope at a childcare session revealed how volunteerism is not always strait-forward or simple, and organizations must react to the needs of the community in the moment. During the scheduled volunteer hours, no kids needed care, so I was sent home by the supervisor. My experience at Door of Hope exemplified Professor Yuha Jung's argument that services are better provided through nonprofits than public institutions like schools, as this nonprofit had the flexibility to simply send volunteers home when they weren't needed (Jung). A public school may not have this freedom, as their faculty may have certain designated hours that cannot be altered. This work reinforced a lesson learned through the implementation of my action plan: activism and advocacy can seem feasible in theory, but difficult to actually realize. What's important, though, is that activists do not become discouraged and continue to pursue their goals.

Additionally, working with Union Station Kitchen preparing and serving meals for individuals facing homelessness revealed that volunteer coordinators must really make use of the time they have the volunteers for to maximize productivity. The service coordinator made sure that the volunteers were always helping out; even when we were done preparing today's meal, he had us start on prep for the next one. This work recalls Anthony S. Rhine's study on authentic leadership, where he emphasizes the need for collaboration and inclusivity in nonprofit efforts (Rhine). The coordinator made sure volunteers were included, maximizing our labor and ensuring that the meal's quality was high and its preparation was seamless. This efficiency fostered by inclusivity informs my leadership in the improv workshop I will be conducting. Inclusivity will be key in fostering an environment in which kids feel comfortable so that the workshop can be a success.

All of this work inspired me to host a workshop that provides children with exposure to the arts. I was at first interested in working with Door of Hope to teach a musical workshop, but realized the costs of providing instruments to children would be prohibitive.

After pivoting to hosting an improv workshop for K-12 students, I faced communication complications when several groups I contacted either did not respond, were not interested, or expressed interest, but had full schedules. I finally got in touch with the YMCA, where I met with service coordinators to plan and market this event. Their marketing team designed and sent me flyers, which I posted at local elementary schools after getting them approved by the district. This approval process was an unforeseen institutional obstacle that delayed the workshop's publicity by a week.

Two workshops, spaced a week apart, were conducted at the YMCA. Parents reached out through email to register their children. Challenges arose with email communication, and two kids registered did not show up, so only four children attended the both sessions. Despite the small size, I received positive feedback from parents indicating excitement for the next session.

At the next session, however, there were only three children in attendance as there was one cancellation and one no-show. I distributed a flier with more information and resources regarding improv and local art programs.

#### IV. Findings

Based on previous literature, fieldwork, and the experience of conducting activism, I learned that while arts education provided by private nonprofits is ideal, the difficulty of implementing out-of-school programs as well as accessibility barriers facilitate a need for arts education through both schools and outside programs. While nonprofits are less restricted by the government, their smaller staffs, limited resources, and approval processes can make it difficult

to implement desired programs. Every step of conducting the improv workshop (the agenda, publicity, etc.) had to be approved by either the YMCA or the La Canada Unified School District, delaying the process and restricting the pool of interested participants. This vetting was necessary, however, as it legitimizes nonprofit programs, increasing their credibility to that of public schools. Furthermore, even when the workshop was planned and publicized through flyers, only four to seven children attended. This smaller number of participants represents the accessibility barriers families face when it comes to out-of-school arts education. Attending this workshop required transportation to and from the YMCA as well as the time of each parent and child. As Ms. Kent discussed in her interview, in-school art education would provide more equitable access to the arts, even if it were less personalized. This surface level exposure to the arts would invite students to experiment in different art disciplines and seek further (private) art programs, like local workshops, if desired. A combination of in-school arts provision and extracurricular involvement allows students to choose whether or not to participate and “specialize” their activity to satisfy their interests while providing general arts instruction for children who would not be able to access it otherwise (Jung).

Although attendance at the workshops was lower than anticipated, the execution of the Action Plan and communication with parents and nonprofit organizations revealed that activism and advocacy are possible through perseverance and planning. The long process of repeatedly reaching out to various organizations revealed that performing activism and advocacy requires not only the bandwidth to contact these groups, but allotted time for this searching process. Once an organization like the YMCA was willing to help, however, their openness and helpfulness in planning and marketing the workshop suggested an eagerness and excitement to further connect with the community. Once the workshop was planned and kids registered, there was a difficulty

in maintaining their attention and focusing the content. Children ages ten to twelve were expected, but the children who attended were, on average, nine years old. Because I have never worked with children, this proved a difficult age to teach and having a teaching partner or other authoritative presence may have helped to keep the students engaged.

Although I faced challenges in contacting community organizations and hosting the workshop, the goal of disseminating information about the arts and increasing exposure to the arts was effective. I received positive feedback from both the parents of attendees and the YMCA and every family accepted the offered QR-code resource page. These families now have additional resources to continue their kids' art education outside of school.

## V. Conclusion

Initial research showed that, when compared with in-school public provision, nonprofits are better suited to provide art education access to improve students' academic performance and emotional development. After reviewing additional literature, interviewing experts, and conducting activism, it is clear that a combination of in-school arts education and nonprofit arts access would best allow students to customize their art exposure so that it meets their specific needs. While nonprofits are less restricted and therefore more flexible to meet specific community needs (Jung), the increasing popularity of art schools (Daniel), art-curriculum integration (Gulatt), and funding for arts education in public schools (The Arts) signals a shift in the public's perception of arts: experts (like Ms. Kent), parents, teachers, and students desire a more equitable and comprehensive way for children to access the arts. Ideally, this equitable access through public schools would be supplemented with private, non-profit arts education for specialized and in-depth art instruction.

In completing fieldwork and conducting an action plan, I faced communication and demand barriers; organizations either did not respond, were at capacity for volunteers, or did not have the time to accommodate an additional workshop within the proposed time frame. Because of these barriers, planning the workshop more in advance could have yielded better results with the first organizations contacted. Additionally, social media marketing posts could have helped to promote the workshop and improve access to the workshop.

As artificial intelligence evolves and education increasingly emphasizes subjects like science and technology, teachers, parents, and students question the role of the arts in childhood development. Through integration of the arts into curriculum as well as extra-curricular activities, students can continue to foster their creativity and discover how to implement it in an ever-changing world.

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**Rubric on next page:**

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
<b>Format</b>	Paper is well organized into 4 sections with little to no formatting errors. Excellent MLA Citations.	Paper is organized into four sections with some overlap. There are a few formatting errors. Good MLA citations.	Paper is organized into four sections but has considerable overlap. There are numerous formatting errors. MLA citations need improvement.	Paper is not organized into four sections and does not meet formatting requirements. MLA citations have multiple errors.
<b>Content</b>	The research question is arguable, specific, engaging, and provides a complex analysis of the topic. Project proposal compliments the student's research and is	The research question is arguable and engaging, but needs to be more specific. Project proposal has a good connection to student's research and should be	The research question is too broad, unclear, and or largely informational in its present form. Project proposal is vague and/or overly simplistic. The student's plan for	The research question is unfocused, vague, and/or presents very little information. Project proposal does not illustrate what the student has learned during the course

	manageable for allotted time. The student thoroughly covers their topic with details and examples. Includes a strong thesis statement and thoughtful reflection on how they will conduct research and the importance of their research.	manageable for allotted time. Includes essential knowledge about the topic. Includes a clear thesis statement and a solid plan on how they will conduct research. They have considered the importance of their research.	completion needs revision in order to be realistic for allotted time and the next phase needs more careful consideration. Includes essential information about the topic but there are 1-2 factual errors. Thesis statement and overall importance of their research is unclear.	of their research and/or cannot be completed during allotted time. Content is minimal, is largely incomplete and/or there are several factual errors. No thesis statement and student has not examined how they will conduct their research or the significance of their project.
<b>Language and Style</b>	Excellent use of word choice and tone. Sentences vary in length and complexity with	Good use of word choice and tone. Some attention given to sentence	Adequate use of word choice and tone. Limited attention given to sentence	Poor use of word choice and tone. Little to no attention given to sentence

	little to no spelling/grammatical errors.	structure and variety with a few spelling/grammatical errors.	structure and variety with multiple spelling/grammatical errors.	structure and variety with numerous spelling/grammatical errors.
<b>Originality</b>	Product shows a large amount of original thought. Ideas are creative and inventive.	Product shows some original thought. Work shows new ideas and insights.	Uses other people's ideas (giving them credit), but there is little evidence of original thinking.	Uses other people's ideas, but does not give them credit.