Does Experience in the Arts Boost Academic Achievement?

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About the National Art Education Association

The National Art Education Association is the world's largest professional art education association and a leader in educational research, policy, and practice for art education. NAEA's mission is to advance art education through professional development, service, advancement of knowledge, and leadership.

Membership includes elementary and secondary art teachers, artists, administrators, museum educators, arts council staff, and university professors from throughout the United States and several foreign countries. It also includes publishers, manufacturers and suppliers of art materials, parents, students, retired art educators, and others concerned about quality art education in our schools.

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More often than we would like, arts educators receive requests to justify our professional existence or the existence of the arts in our schools on the basis of their contributions to non-art outcomes. I cannot recall the number of times I have been asked about the contribution the arts make to increasing test scores in math, or in reading, or in any other academic subject that the inquirer believes to be more important than any of the arts—or all of them for that matter. What research, callers want to know, demonstrates that experience in the arts boosts academic achievement? They sometimes go on to ask if more exposure to the arts advances school reform?

All too often arts educators are all too ready to oblige. Those of us in arts education are apparently "faster than a speeding bullet, more powerful than a locomotive, able to leap tall buildings in a single bound..." I cannot help but wonder if we sometimes claim too much.

As someone who receives the requests I have described, I understand the drive of those who are desperately looking for ways to upgrade our educational system and to improve the performance of those within it. So many failed "solutions" have been tried: why not try the arts? I sometimes ask myself if those who inquire ever considered reversing the question. Have they ever thought about asking how reading and math courses contribute to higher performance in the arts? I must confess I have never come right out and asked them—but I have come close.

That questions about the contributions of the arts to academic achievement are raised by those for whom the arts are personally marginal is understandable: When the arts are not a part of your own life it is hard to know what they can contribute to it or to the lives of others. What is troublesome is the image of arts educators who know what the arts have to offer trying to give the customers what they want, whether or not there is evidence to support it. Too often we promise more than we can deliver, a practice that by definition leads to disappointment.
What can we claim? What are the contributions that the arts legitimately can be expected to make to the education of the young? Just what does research say about the relationship between experience in the arts and academic achievement? When pressures arise to justify the place of the arts in education, how shall we respond?

Let's first start with what research has to say about the relationship between experience in the several arts and academic achievement. For our purposes here let's define experience in the arts as the number of courses taken in school—elementary or secondary—in any of the arts. Let's define the arts as courses in the visual arts, music, theater, and dance. I recognize that the definitions I have provided are to some degree arbitrary. Courses taken say nothing about the quality of experience or the kind of curriculum used. In addition, the quality of teaching matters and nothing that I have said pertains to the quality of teaching. I enter these caveats for two reasons: first, to indicate that I am aware of them, and, second, to adumbrate the complexities of the kind of research that is needed. The criteria I have just identified are general. Given these general criteria, what do we find?

**Research on Experience and Academic Achievement**
To review the research on the relationship between arts courses and academic achievement we turned to the literature published from 1986 to 1996. We were looking for studies describing relationships between these two areas of human performance, experimental studies if possible, but correlational studies if necessary. We did not include advocacy essays in our review. Furthermore, we preferred publications that did not simply summarize the results of studies, but presented the studies themselves so that the data and methods could be appraised. We also preferred studies published in refereed journals because we believe that refereed journals are more likely to provide the kind of methodological scrutiny that empirical studies deserve.


Let's look at what studies in these journals and reports have to say.

First, we found that although there is much material published that claims the arts cause academic achievement scores to increase or that the arts courses "strengthen" academic performance, it is often difficult to know the basis upon which the claims are made. One
publication presents histograms describing student performance and is accompanied by testimony from principals that arts courses “impact” test results in the Maryland Student Assessment Program in 1993-94, yet the material is impossible to evaluate. The conclusions are entirely unsupported by the research they are presumably based upon because the bases for the claims are not provided in the text, nor is there a reference to a report one could consult. Nevertheless, the title of the document in which these claims appear is *The Arts and Children: A Success Story* (1995). It is also of no small interest to note that what constitutes success is higher academic achievement scores as a result of enrolling in arts courses, not accomplishment in the arts.

Another publication claiming the arts increase academic performance is titled *Eloquent Evidence: Arts at the Core of Learning* (1995). Given the title, one might expect to find eloquent evidence. This brochure claims that “students of the arts continue to outperform their non-art peers on the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT), according to the College Entrance Examination Board. In 1995, SAT scores for students who studied the arts more than four years were 59 points higher on the verbal and 44 points higher on the math portion than students with no course work or experience in the arts” (Murfee, 1995, p. 3). One cannot help but wonder if students who elect to study the arts for 4 or more years have the same academic background as those who never took an arts course. Clearly one factor that differentiates the two groups is that one group made such a choice. Is it the arts courses or other personal features of those electing the arts that account for the differences in SAT scores? The information needed is not provided in the brochure. The reader is referred to the compendium in which a summary of the study is to appear. There is nothing in the compendium that refers to the study.

Another publication, *Building a Case for Art Education: An Annotated Bibliography of Major Research 1990* (1991) lists 12 areas in which the arts are purported to make a contribution. These areas include contributions to creative thinking; development of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills; and learning styles, communication skills, literacy skills, cultural literacy, individual choice-making, as well as group decision-making, increase in self-esteem and so forth. One of the 12 areas is titled, “The Arts Improve Student Performance in Other Subject Areas.” What do we find?

We find that of the 19 “studies” cited only 2 are published in journals. Of the 2 published in journals we find, in a study (Forseth, 1980) of the relationship between art activities and art attitudes and achievement in elementary mathematics, that although art activities seem to positively influence students’ attitudes towards mathematics, they have little or no effect on their achievement.
In a study of the effects of two forms of reward on achievement in mathematics, Madsen (1981) found that rewarding students with books or with televised music lessons influenced their performance in mathematics. Each form of reward was effective. This study is essentially a study of the effects of reinforcement on learning in mathematics rather than a study of the contributions music makes to academic achievement.

Schools, Communities and the Arts: A Research Compendium (Welch & Greene, 1995), was prepared on behalf of National Endowment for the Arts. This compendium is a selection of the best evidence collected from over 500 studies. It contains five sections the editors call Broad-based Studies, Targeted Studies, Compilations, Attitudes and Public Opinion, and Status Studies. The sections relevant to our purposes are Broad-based and Targeted Studies. Of the studies summarized in these two sections, 6 studies are broad-based and 17 are targeted. Of the 6 “broad based” studies, not one appears in a refereed journal. Of the 8 studies, 5 were relevant to the aims of this paper, only 2 of which we were able to obtain.

Analysis of these studies indicates that the use of creative drama to enhance the reading scores of a population of remedial or low-ability fifth graders enrolled in a compensatory program proved effective at the .05 level compared to the performance of two other groups of students using methods that did not include creative drama (Du Pont, 1992). It must be noted that the aim of the program was to increase reading performance, not to teach creative drama, and that the population was a special population of fifth graders in need of reading skills, not a population of average students. In short, given the aims of the study and the population studied, the results are limited to like populations.

In another study of narrative writing, Moore and Caldwell (1993) found that experience in drama and writing increases the quality of writing of students in the primary grades. But again, the aim of the study was to improve writing, not to improve drama or drawing performance. Indeed, no assessment of growth in these areas was made. How shall we appraise an arts program whose effects are measures solely on non-arts tasks?

Perhaps the study that most closely addresses the topic is one carried out in 1992-93 by Luftig (1993) to test a program called Spectra. It was followed by a second study in 1993-94 that purported to demonstrate that the arts influenced performance in a number of areas, including self-esteem, locus of control, creative thinking, appreciation of the arts, and academic achievement in the following: total reading score, reading vocabulary, reading comprehension, total math score, math application, and math comprehension (Luftig, 1994). The results reported in the 1992-93 study, which included experimental, placebo, and control groups, showed no differences on any of the academic achievement measures,
except in one school district where differences on total math scores were found by gender. Significant differences in favor of the experimental group were found on creativity measures and on measures of art appreciation.

Despite these findings this study was offered as providing evidence of the contribution the arts make to academic achievement. In fact *Eloquent Evidence* tells the reader that in this study: “The most gains in total reading, reading vocabulary, and reading comprehension were made by elementary students in the Spectra arts program in Ohio, compared to the control group” (Murfee, 1995, p. 4).

*What Eloquent Evidence* does not say is that the differences were statistically non-significant and, in my view, educationally trivial. Indeed, the original report itself says, “For academic achievement in the A district there were no significant differences found in total reading, reading vocabulary, and reading comprehension” (Luftig, 1993, p. 25). For the B school district, the experimental conditions needed to implement the experiment could not be employed, though differences were found in favor of performance in math by males. What is telling is that where differences were found, namely in creativity and in art appreciation, *Eloquent Evidence* does not say so. Are we to infer that achievement in these areas is of no account?

What about the follow up study of Spectra (Luftig, 1994)?

What we find in the follow-up study is that in school district A there were no statistically significant differences in reading scores on either the total test score or on the two subtests. Differences were found between experimental and control groups on math scores. In school district B differences were found in both math and reading scores. However, the design of the study was modified for school district B; it could be that a Hawthorne effect generated levels of motivation that account for the differences. Nevertheless, this is the only study in which the data are given to the reader and where a careful effort is made to describe the study’s methods. While its author is to be commended, the evidence, even when combined with other studies, provides a very slender reed on which to hang the claims that are made about the impact of the arts on academic achievement.

As for other research studies, Hamblen (1993) looked at both research and implementation practices of programs designed to have instrumental outcomes. She points out that the preponderance of evidence is anecdotal. She writes, “Teachers of art programs similar to those in Florida [where instrumental outcomes from art courses were sought] report increases in critical thinking skills, concept organizational skills, and applications of
divergent thinking. However, specific assessment of academic achievement in these programs is weak or nonexistent” (p. 195).

Reports of the effects of arts education on academic achievement appear to be most notable in programs that are specifically designed to help students with reading problems learn to read through the arts. As educationally virtuous as such effects might be, these programs are specifically designed to teach reading; the arts are resources to this end.

It must be granted that the achievement of transfer of learning is an ambitious and noble aim. It has been so since Thorndike (1914) did research to test his theory of identical elements around the turn of the century. Some contemporary social scientists (Lave & Wegner, 1994) have little optimism that transfer can be very wide. Learning or cognition, they claim, is situated and its utility is limited, more or less, to contexts like the ones in which it is situated. Yet it seems obvious that some transfer must occur, otherwise learning would be so situation specific that it would not occur elsewhere. After all, no two situations are ever identical; time changes among other things. However, when we talk about the effects of arts education on academic achievement in reading or in mathematics, we are expecting transfer of wide scope. To expect that is to expect a great deal. At this moment I can find no good evidence that such transfer occurs if what we count as evidence is no more than anecdotal reports that are often designed for purposes of advocacy.

**What Would a Convincing Study Look Like?**

If the studies that are now available are not as convincing as they might be, what would it take to make a study so? Let me describe the design features that such a study might have.

First, if someone claims that students who enroll in arts courses benefit academically from their experience in such courses, one would need to compare the academic performance of students who have had arts courses in, say, secondary school with those who have not. To some degree we would expect that the more arts courses taken, the greater the effect on academic achievement. Thus, the analyses would compare performance on academic measures with the number of arts courses taken.

Because the academic accomplishments of the students in the two groups, experimental and control, need to be comparable at the outset of the experiment, the students would need either to be randomly selected and randomly assigned to experimental and control groups or matched on academic achievement on the relevant achievement variables. Where random selection and assignment are not feasible, gain-scores-differences between pre-experimental and post-experimental scores would be used to compare the performance of students in each group at the end of the experiment.
To know what might make a difference in the academic achievement scores between the two groups, the form and content of the experimental treatment, in this case the curriculum of the arts courses in which students in the experimental group were enrolled, would need to be monitored and described. In addition, the course aims and content of the students in academic classes would have been monitored and described to ensure that they were comparable. If the experimental group’s academic curriculum provided content more closely aligned with the achievement tests used to measure academic accomplishment than that used in the control group, differences in academic achievement scores could be due to a better fit between what the experimental group was taught and the tests used to measure achievement than because of the benefits of their arts courses.

Another feature of the design of such a study is the need to pay attention to the quality of teaching provided to students in each group. If, for example, the experimental and control group used the same curriculum, but the experimental group had better teachers in their academic subjects, differences in academic performance could be due to the differences in the quality of teaching the experimental group received.

Because the content and aims of the academic courses in which students enroll matter, it is necessary to use assessment procedures to assess achievement in content that matters educationally. It is not inconceivable that students could be assessed on tasks that have little academic or intellectual merit. Put another way, if the arts do contribute to academic achievement, it only matters if they do so on academic accomplishments that have educational worth. Achieving higher scores on trivial outcomes is no victory.

Finally, appraising the educational effects of an experiment is not merely a matter of finding statistically significant differences between groups or correlations that are statistically significant. The differences, if differences are found, must also be educationally significant. Educationally significant differences may or may not be statistically significant. Statistical significance is an arbitrary level of a probable difference between two or more groups. The level required is specified by common agreement as the .05 or .01 level of probability that the differences between two or more groups is not a chance difference. Even when probabilities reach the required magnitude, a difference between two or more groups might be regarded as educationally significant at lower levels of probability. The main point here is that what matters educationally depends not upon statistics, but upon educational judgment. What is needed is an appraisal grounded in reasons why the differences effected by the experimental treatment are educationally consequential.

These design conditions are at minimum necessary to produce a credible claim that arts courses influence the academic performance of students.
What I have not mentioned is that understanding why arts courses have such effects, if in fact they do, requires a theory that relates the skills developed through the arts to the demands made upon students in academic classes. Perhaps it is not skills at all that the arts courses develop, perhaps it's the promotion of certain kinds of attitudes, attitudes that promote risk-taking and hard work. Perhaps the effects—if effects there are—of arts courses on academic achievement are due to the motivational effects of arts courses; perhaps students in arts courses enjoy school more and therefore attend more regularly. If higher motivation is the source of academic achievement, other motivating experiences might have the same effects. What is needed more than corrections or statistically significant differences between groups is a theory that links experience in the arts with academic achievement. We need a theory that explains the connection between the cognitive skills that work of all kinds in the arts develop and the functions that these skills perform in academic work. To create these links, the arts programs in which students are enrolled need to be carefully described, as do their academic programs.

Why Be Concerned About the Relationship of the Arts to Academic Achievement?
The subhead above takes us back to first principles. When a body of work in a particular field of study makes significant and valuable contributions to a wide array of skills, dispositions, or understandings, the value of that field increases. We all like “twofers”; and if we can get them, so much the better. Thus, I have no objection if experience in the arts helps raise test scores in math, reading, or sentential calculus. Problems begin to emerge when the values for which the arts are prized in schools are located primarily in someone’s version of the basics, when those basics have little or nothing to do with the arts. The perils of such justification, whether those justifications pertain to the so-called basics or to versions of arts education that regard its primary function as fostering cross-cultural understanding, are profound. The core problem with such rationales for arts education is that they leave the arts vulnerable to any other field or educational practice that claims that it can achieve the same aims faster and better. If one wants to help students understand the lifestyles of other cultures, it strikes me that anthropological studies would be a more direct route and, even if we imagine for a moment that they are not the most direct route, to use the arts primarily to teach what is not truly distinctive about the arts is to undermine, in the long run, the justifying conditions for the arts in our schools.

What instrumental justifications of the kind I have described also do is to legitimate the marginal position assigned to the arts by those looking for such justifications. When arts educators accede to their expectations it’s a way of saying, “You’re right, the arts are not really important in their own right. Their importance is located in their contributions to more important subjects.”
Let me turn to a way of thinking about what the arts have to teach. What is it that the arts have to offer? What is their educational value?

**Ways of Thinking About What the Arts Teach**

Given the analysis I have provided so far it is possible to identify three levels or tiers to which arts education might be expected to make a contribution. I call the first tier *Arts-based Outcomes of Art Education*. The second tier is called *Arts-related Outcomes of Arts Education*. The third tier is called *Ancillary Outcomes of Art Education*. Tier 1 holds arts educators responsible for outcomes that are directly related to the subject matter that an arts education curriculum was designed to teach. For example, if an aim of the curriculum is to enable students to hear and be able to talk discerningly about the form and content of a piece of music or of architecture, or a cubist painting, or a play by Tennessee Williams, an arts-based assessment would disclose the extent to which those outcomes or outcomes like them were achieved. Such outcomes reside in perceptions and discourse unique to the arts. Outcomes like these, *including those outcomes pertaining to performance within the art form*, we shall call Arts-based Outcomes.

Outcomes that pertain to the perception and comprehension of aesthetic features in the general environment constitute Arts-related Outcomes. For example, arts courses that enable students to notice and respond to the aesthetic configurations of phenomena such as cloud formations, the dynamic flow of a city street, the cacophonies of a city during rush hour are examples of Arts-related Outcomes of Arts Education. The difference between responding to the qualitative and expressive features of the general environment and responding to works of art is significant. All objects and processes have formal features, including works of nature; the qualitative features of a tree or the pattern of shadows upon a wall can be perceived and described from a strictly formal perspective as completely and in as much detail as a sculpture by Louise Nevelson. A critical difference between the two is that Nevelson works with a tradition, Nevelson has intentions, Nevelson has something to say that she herself, working within her tradition, both constrains and makes possible. Trees, to consider a work of nature, have no intentions as far as I know, participate in no tradition save their own genetic necessities, and provide no symbolic meaning except those we assign. The difference between works of culture and works of nature is, critical. Arts-based Outcomes pertain to those outcomes that require an understanding of the culture and the personal side of the artist's work. Formal analysis alone simply does not go far enough.

As you can see, I am attempting to differentiate between the perception of forms as "mere" forms and forms that are members of a class we call "art." This distinction does not mean
that aesthetic experience cannot occur when one interacts with cloud formations. It can. Art forms are those forms artists create that participate in a tradition that gives them a potential for meaning not found in works of nature or culture when those works are not created for artistic perception—unless, like Duchamp, they are construed that way by the peripient.

Thus far, I have distinguished between Arts-based Outcomes and Arts-related Outcomes. The former pertains to outcomes specifically germane to works of art, the latter to outcomes germane to the aesthetic features of the general environment. But what about Ancillary Outcomes of Arts Education?

Ancillary Outcomes of Arts Education are those outcomes like the effects of arts education on student performance in reading, math, or other academic subjects. Ancillary Outcomes of Arts Education pertain to outcomes that transfer skills employed in the perception, creation, and comprehension of the arts to non-arts tasks. For example, the kind of qualitative judgments required in the creation of any of the arts requires judgments made in the absence of formula or rule; one must judge, as Goodman (1978) calls it, rightness of fit. What one typically seeks is coherence among relationships within a complex form. Does the ability to experience such relationships in any of the arts enable those who do so to do so in other areas of life? Does such experience enable students to make better practical judgments where formulas do not work? If so, such outcomes can be counted among the Ancillary Outcomes of Arts Education.

The three tiers that I have described—Arts-based Outcomes, Arts-related Outcomes, and Ancillary Outcomes of Arts Education—allow us to sort out the kinds of justifications or rationales for arts education that are being advanced. Requests to demonstrate or justify arts education in our schools on the basis of advancing academic achievement in other subjects is a third-tier ancillary rationale for arts education. In saying that such an aim for arts education is an ancillary rationale as contrasted with a primary—or first-tier rationale for arts education I am, of course, invoking a set of values, employing a conception, embracing a model of what matters in arts education. Others may hold other views. My claim, at base, is that arts education and the several art fields that constitute it ought to give pride of place to those unique contributions that only the arts make possible, that when justifications for arts education that are not distinctive become primary, the place of arts education in our schools and their potential contribution to the student's education is compromised. My argument is for arts educators to avoid becoming side-tracked onto paths that others can travel as well—and perhaps even better.

How does one justify arts education without using an ancillary rationale? One way to find out is to look to the arts themselves and to ask about the demands they make on those who
would create, perceive, or understand them. It is to this agenda that we now turn. My attention to this agenda will address both first and second tier outcomes. That is, I am interested in both what students learn that pertains to the arts themselves and what they learn that pertains to the aesthetic aspects of the general environment. In short, I am interested in the contributions arts education makes to both the arts and to life beyond them. There are four such outcomes I wish to identify.

1. Students should acquire a feel for what it means to transform their ideas, images, and feelings into an art form. One could argue that at the core of arts education is the development of the students' ability to create art or, as some might say, art-like creations. Whether one calls students' work art or art-like, the point is that getting a feel for the process through which works of art come into being is fostered best by having experience trying to do so yourself, even if the most telling outcome of such experience is to recognize how much distance exists between our best efforts and the work of masters. But even such a recognition is not an unimportant outcome of arts education. More important, is the contribution experience in the studio provides for getting in touch with the arts. The struggle to create compelling images, whether in sound or sight, becomes part of the experiential continuum one brings to the work. Such experiences can help the student recognize both the qualities of works of art and the accomplishment of the artist.

You will notice that in writing about such outcomes I have resorted to metaphors such as "getting a feel" for the process and "getting in touch" with the arts. I do so because I have no literal words that will say as well as these the meanings I intend. Both metaphors, getting in touch and getting a feel, relate to bodily processes. Both convey a sense of "getting into it." Both intimate a kind of carnal knowledge, of knowing in the biblical sense. Both convey a sense of knowing that is not reducible to words, certainly not the literal use of words, hence, metaphor.

2. Arts education should refine the student's awareness of the aesthetic qualities in art and life. Here we have a first- and a second-tier outcome at the very heart of arts education. If arts education is about anything, it is about helping students become alive to aesthetic qualities of art and life in the worlds in which they live. Put more directly, arts education should help students learn to use an aesthetic frame of reference to see and hear. What does this mean educationally? It means that students will know what they can listen for in music and what they can look for in the visual arts. It means also that when they are asked about the works or situations they encounter they will be able to say something about them with insight, sensitivity, and intelligence. It means that they will know not only what they like or respond to in a work or a walk, for that matter—but why. This means that they will have reasons for their preferences, they will be able to bring to a work what they need to render the work intelligible.
As I suggested, the student’s sensibilities should not be limited to what we call the fine arts. They should be applicable to the qualities of the general environment. Furthermore, at its best arts education should influence what psychologists call the conative aspects of cognition, that is the desire to frame the world as an object of enjoyed perception. Both ability and desire are critical to the success of an arts education program.

3. *Arts education should enable students to understand that there is a connection between the content and form that the arts display and the culture and time in which the work was created.* This outcome is intended to situate the arts within culture and to advance students’ understanding that the problems that artists tackle and how they do so are influenced by the setting in which they work. Art and artists participate in a tradition that both liberates and constrains, and at times artists violate the expectations or norms of that tradition.

Why is such an outcome important? It’s important because the quality of experience the arts make possible is enriched when the arts are experienced within a context of ideas relevant to them. Understanding the cultural context is among the most important ways in which such enrichment can be achieved. Such an outcome, I believe, is a reasonable expectation for students enrolled in arts programs.

To say that students should understand that the arts are culturally and historically situated is not to say that a student is expected to have an encyclopedic knowledge of the cultural context of every art form or individual work of art. It is to say that the idea of the relationship of culture and art at the level of principled generalization should be understood and that at least one or more examples of that idea should be a part of the student’s intellectual repertoire.

4. Finally, I wish to identify a particularly important set of outcomes for arts education. This one pertains to dispositions that are difficult to assess, let alone measure, but they are dispositions that appear to be cultivated through programs that engage students in the process of artistic creation. I speak of dispositional outcomes such as the following:

- A willingness to imagine possibilities that are not now, but which might become.
- A desire to explore ambiguity, to be willing to forestall premature closure in pursuing resolutions.
- The ability to recognize and accept the multiple perspectives and resolutions that work in the arts celebrate.

There is, of course, a question as to whether these dispositions are first-, second-, or third-tier outcomes. After all, developing a willingness to cope with ambiguity, to forestall
premature closure, or to imagine a world that one might create are dispositions that could be applied to non-art domains. In this sense they could be considered third-tier aims. Yet, if one regards such outcomes as essential to the process of artistic modes of thinking, something fundamental to the very act of making art, they could be seen not as second-tier, but as first-tier outcomes. Making art seems to require such dispositions. In that sense they are about the cognitive dispositions basic to the arts. Given this perspective they are first-tier aims and outcomes.

What's the Point of It All?
What I have tried to do in this essay is to examine the research basis for claims about the effects of art experience on academic achievement. There are some, but they are very limited. The effects of the arts appear to be greatest when the arts are intentionally used to raise academic achievement in reading and writing. What I have also tried to do in this paper is to provide a perspective, an analysis, an argument, and a set of distinctions I have called tiers that is intended to help sort out our reasons for being in arts education. I have tried to describe a way of recognizing the type of justification that is being advanced for the arts in education.

The four aims that I have described provide a broad educational agenda as demanding as it is important in arts education. We do the arts no service when we try to make their case by touting their contributions to other fields. When such contributions become priorities the arts become handmaidens to ends that are not distinctively artistic and in the process undermine the value of art's unique contributions to the education of the young.

Sometimes it is better not to give customers what they want but, rather, to help them understand what they ought to want. Such a conception of our professional role is not paternalistic. I believe it is a part of our educational mission. We must interpret what arts education can contribute to the young. We need to help parents understand what the arts can mean as a part of their children's education, and we must cease trying to become whatever people want us to be. We would do well to go back to first principles. In the long run, it's the only place where the arts can be made secure for the generation of students who populate our schools.
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Footnotes
1I wish to thank Lissa Soep for first-rate assistance in preparing this paper. I also wish to thank Shiffrn Schonemann for a very helpful, critical reading.
2The Hawthorne effect represents the outcome of an experiment whose causes reside in the attention paid by the researcher to those studied rather than to the features of the experimental treatment. Paying attention to individuals tends to increase motivation and as a result productivity is increased. When such outcomes emerge, and when they are due to increased attention, the outcome is called a Hawthorne effect.