



What Is the Immediate Impact on Students of Getting Arts Funding?

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INTRODUCTION

Art classes can be classified as having to do with visual arts, such as art spectrum, glassblowing, etc. They can also include drama and music classes, but we decided to focus on visual art classes (art spectrum, glass blowing, etc). Some schools around the area have art programs that are underfunded. It may not be in our vicinity, but we should still be aware that some students do not have the materials that we have at Paly.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

My inquiry approach is Action Research. My data collection tool was interview questions.

My data analysis technique was descriptive statistics.

In the beginning of my research, I was planning to get quantitative data, but I couldn't find any that was useful.

I ended up going with interviews because I wanted to have personal insight from teachers.

Teachers took a survey that asked them about their experiences being at schools that have underfunded art programs.

DATA AND FINDINGS

Theme Key:

Access/Opportunity

Importance of Funding

Positive Impact

Questions Asked:

1. What opportunities for art exist at your school?
2. In your opinion, how well funded are the arts in your campus? Explain.
3. Have you worked at a school where the arts were either underfunded or devalued? Yes or No?
4. What impact did you see on students and their learning?

Teachers who were interviewed:

1. Augustina Matsui from Los Gatos High School
2. Kate McKenzie from Palo Alto High School
3. Courtney Jasiulek from Westmont High School
4. Deanna Messenger from Gunn High School

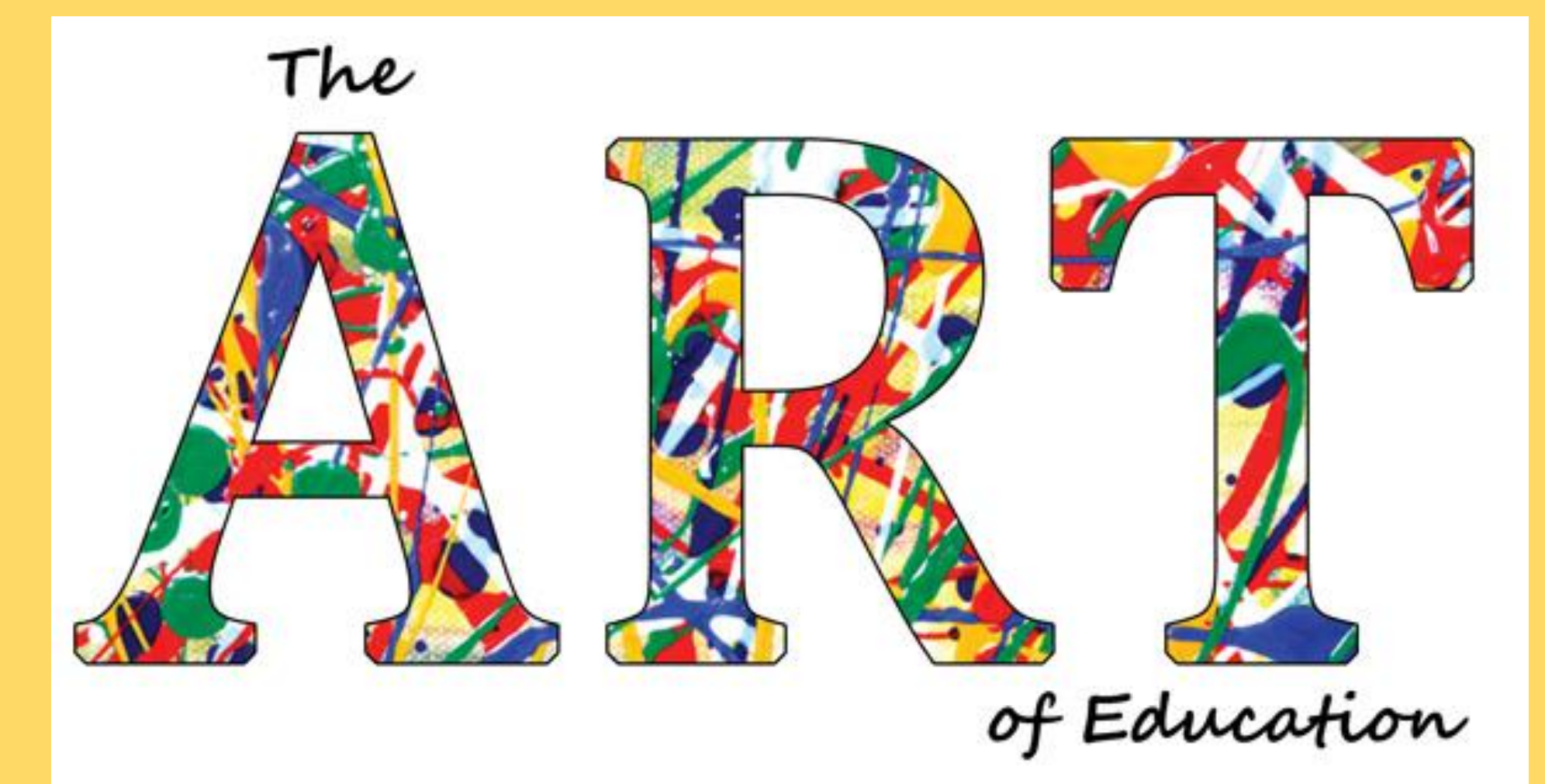
DISCUSSION, ANALYSIS, AND EVALUATION

AM	KM	CJ	DM
In Visual Arts (VPA), LGHS offers 3D Design (Sculpture), Ceramics, Digital Photo, Painting and Drawing, (Art) and Graphics Design. In Applied Arts, Woods, Metals, and Fashion Design. Yes, this was a large part of why I left my previous school. It was the responsibility of the teacher to fundraise for materials for the classroom. The school/district provided teachers with only 500 dollars a year for materials. This has improved since I have left, by how much, I would not be able to say. This question can be interpreted in several ways. Of course, if there aren't enough materials for the students, there will be limitations on what they can create as well as the size, quantity and quality due to having to use inferior/cheap materials. From a teacher perspective, it is exhausting for the teacher to have to fundraise or personally provide for their students. This "psychological" toll could affect the mood and performance of the teacher in the classroom. The time spent fundraising for materials could be better spent developing curriculum in the classroom.	We offer a four year drawing and painting program, which begins with a survey class called Art Spectrum and ends with the option to take AP Studio Art. We also offer two years of Graphic Design and Photography, and we have a three year ceramics and sculpture/glassblowing program, which also ends with an AP option. We also offer AP Art History. I believe that our school has made a commitment to help fund the painting and drawing program. We let parents know that donations are accepted to help defray costs and they end up helping pay for about 40% of our program. I also put in for grants to cover our costs every year. The grants help me buy art books, larger expenditures and extras, such as a camera. That depends upon what sort of learning you are talking about. We teach our students to persevere and to think abstractly and critically (interpreting, look for clues about meaning, using symbols, problem solving, imagining possibilities, creative thinking--the creative process. We also teach our students to think aesthetically and to consider the emotional/psychological aspects of life. We ask them to look at social issues and to comment on a wide range of topics. Additionally, we teach them a wide variety of artistic skills.	Funding for the visual arts programs has decreased over the years (with no explanation as to why). The amount of funding is determined by the administration (principal). The amount of funding varies, although financial needs have increased due to student enrollment, prices of materials/supplies, and decisions of the program curriculums. A little funding comes from student donations (in lieu of a "course fee," which is not permitted anymore), but that is dependent on the amount of voluntary participation. Rules/procedures for obtaining funding are always changing. A little funding also comes from PTSA Mini-grants (2 per school year). Parents/families are generally not aware of the needs of the visual art programs. The availability of funding for the visual arts impacts the curriculum that can be taught year to year. The amount of funding determines the amount and quality of art materials that can be purchased. If students do not have access to higher quality art materials (for high school level courses), the students' motivation to do well and continue in the program can decrease. Without proper art supplies, it becomes difficult to teach assignments that require higher-level critical thinking skills. Students will not want to take a 2nd or 3rd year of art. Enrollment in the advanced-level courses could decrease, which can affect the ability of the teacher to keep their job. Students will also miss out on authentic learning experiences that allow them to use "real" art supplies, like clay, ceramic glaze, glass, oil painting, printmaking, and mixed media. If they do not get these experiences at the high school level, they are less likely to explore these routes later on (for some of our students, this might be their only experience with ceramics or painting). Thus they miss out on pursuing creative careers (which includes more than the "fine arts," such as toy design, fashion design, animation, product design, curator, illustration, architecture, web design, etc).	Visual Arts: Photography 1; Advanced Photography; Ceramics 1; Advanced Ceramics; AP Studio Art 3D; Graphic Design 1; Advanced Graphic Design; Drawing and Painting 1; Advanced Draw/Paint 1 & 2; AP Studio Art—Drawing; AP Studio Art—2D. And then there's Performing Arts. Inflation increases, funding decreases and there is no way we could run our programs the way we are on Site or district funding. We are dependent on State Block Grants; PIE, PTSA and Site Council grants, as well as the Donations from parents. I've worked at Gunn for 19 out of the 20 years I've taught. My first year at Pescadero High, the Arts weren't valued nor funded well, and it took a lot of effort and time to get the funds to build a somewhat comprehensive program and classroom with supplies and equipment. I believe the arts have a significant impact on student learning. Critical thinking, creative problem-solving and being resourceful and resilient are all qualities that are fostered in the arts. The flexible thinking that is required to make art builds resiliency, and adolescent emotional development is enhanced through the arts.

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND NEXT STEPS

Many of the teachers who were interviewed believed that the lives of students were made better because of art. Their skills and experiences helped them to truly understand the meaning of art. They gained valuable skills and used equipment that is not always offered at other schools.

Having the equipment and funding was an issue for many of the teachers interviewed. They believed that underfunding art programs was not right for the students, as they believed that the students were not getting as much as they should out of the arts. Without the necessary tools at their disposal, the students would never become critical thinkers or emotional developed. Having an art education is very important in the lives of these students, because they get a chance to enhance their skills and they become better people as a result.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS / REFERENCES

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