

Research and Reports

A plethora of published and ongoing research related to arts education and arts learning exists both on the web and in print publications. This document includes recent Arts Learning research applicable to the work of arts educators, teaching artists and arts organizations.

- ❖ Web Resources
- ❖ Publications
- ❖ Research Fact Sheet

For more information contact the Arts Learning Department at the Arizona Commission on the Arts.
<http://www.azarts.gov/who-we-are/staff>



WEB RESOURCES

- **Arts PROPEL** - Student-directed learning is the goal of Arts PROPEL, a five-year, collaborative effort involving Harvard Project Zero (<http://www.pz.harvard.edu/>), the Educational Testing Service (ETS), and the teachers and administrators of the Pittsburgh Public Schools. Model programs combining instruction and assessment were developed for middle and high school students in three art forms: music, visual arts, and imaginative writing. Arts PROPEL researchers developed two major instruments that use an ongoing process of assessment and self-assessment to reinforce instruction. One, the domain project, encourages students to tackle open-ended problems similar to those undertaken by practicing artists. The other instrument, the portfolio or process folio, traces the developments of examples of student work through each stage of the creative process.
<http://www.pz.harvard.edu/Research/PROPEL.htm>
 - **ARTS SURVIVE** - A three-year national research study that began in July 1997 and investigated arts education partnerships in schools in order to ascertain why some partnerships survive and others do not. The study provides a greater understanding of what survival means to arts education partnerships and, specifically, what circumstances, activities, and interactions among teachers, parents, administrators, artists, community members, students, and others, are essential to build and sustain lasting partnerships. <http://www.pz.harvard.edu/Research/ArtsSv.htm>
 - **Congress on Research in Dance (CORD)** - A non-profit organization dedicated to encouraging research in dance and related fields, fostering the exchange of ideas, resources, and methodology, through publication, international and regional conferences, and workshops, and promoting the accessibility of research materials.
<http://www.cordance.org/>
 - **Highlights from Key National Research in Arts Education** - Presented by the Americans for the Arts, findings are listed in the following categories; multiple arts, dance, drama, music and visual arts. The findings from various studies recorded on this website are presented with a quick introduction to some of the high quality work being done regarding the effects of arts in education on children.
http://ww3.artsusa.org/get_involved/advocacy/advocacy_004.asp
 - **How the Arts Can Enhance After-School Programs** - Presented by the U.S. Department of Education and National Endowment for the Arts, this report provides a brief introduction to the role of the arts in those programs. It consists of a brief summary of recent research findings about both arts and after-school programs, a description of the key elements of successful programs and some key examples that showcase partnerships between schools and community-based organizations. <http://www.arts.gov/pub/ArtsAfterSchool/artsedpub.html>
 - **Reviewing Education and the Arts Project (REAP)** - Arts are often given a role in our schools because people believe the arts cause academic improvement, however instrumental claims for the arts are a double-edged sword. It is implausible to suppose that the arts can be as effective a means of teaching an academic subject as the direct teaching of that subject. And thus, when we justify the arts by their secondary, utilitarian value, the arts may prove to have fewer payoffs than academics. Arts educators should never allow the arts to be justified wholly or even primarily in terms of what the arts can do for mathematics or reading. The arts must be justified in terms of what the arts can teach that no other subject can teach. REAP has conducted the first comprehensive and quantitative study of what the research on academic outcomes of arts education really shows. <http://www.pz.harvard.edu/Research/REAP.htm>
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PUBLICATIONS AND PDFS

- **Arts With the Brain in Mind** - Eric Jensen. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2001. <http://www.amazon.com/Arts-Brain-Mind-Eric-Jensen/dp/0871205149>
- **Best Practice: New Standards for Teaching and Learning in America's Schools** - Steven Zemelman, Harvey Daniels and Arthur Hyde. Published in 1998, the authors suggest that a new, coherent education philosophy is reaching across the curriculum and up through the grades. They believe this philosophy embodies best practices in teaching and learning and present thirteen interlocking situations and processes that underlie the movement. <http://www.amazon.com/Best-Practice-Standards-Teaching-Learning/dp/0325000913>
- **Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning** (PDF) - Compiles seven major studies that provide new evidence of enhanced learning and achievement when students are involved in a variety of arts experiences. <http://www.aep-arts.org/files/publications/ChampsReport.pdf?PHPSESSID=cce00f0a23d5b2ead0b891c35e7a4a8c>
- **Creating Islands of Excellence: Arts Education as a Partner in School Reform** - Carol Fineberg. Underscores how the integration of arts-based instruction can create breathtaking educational moments in and out of the classroom as the author guides teachers, administrators, and curriculum developers around the problems that can derail well-intended reform efforts. <http://books.heinemann.com/products/E00603.aspx>
- **Creative Communities** (PDF) - Developed as a collaboration among the National Guild of Community Schools of the Arts, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the National Endowment for the Arts, this initiative brought high-quality arts instruction to underserved children and youth in public housing communities. This 53-page report summarizes its impact on students, teaching artists, partnering organizations, and communities and offering strategies for sustaining such programs. <http://www.nationalguild.org/programs/creatcomm.htm>
- **Critical Evidence: How the Arts Benefit Student Achievement** (PDF) - Published by the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) in collaboration with the Arts Education Partnership (AEP), Critical Evidence responds to the needs of policymakers, educators, parents, and advocates for fact-based, non-technical language documenting the most current and compelling research on the value of arts learning experiences. <http://www.nasaa-arts.org/publications/critical-evidence.pdf>
- **Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development** (PDF) - This compendium of arts education research studies and explores critical links between learning in the arts and the nation's ability to successfully meet this goal. Critical Links brings together a group of studies focused on understanding the cognitive capacities developed in learning and practicing the arts and the relationship of those capacities to students' academic performance and social development. <http://www.aep-arts.org/files/publications/CriticalLinks.pdf>
- **Current Research in Arts Education: An Arts in Education Research Compendium** - A publication of the California Arts Council intended as a resource for policymakers, educators, art leaders, business leaders, foundation officers and parents as they assume positive leadership roles in making the arts basic. Including annotated summaries of recent books, reports and articles in several areas the compendium lists downloading and/or ordering information for all entries. <http://www.cac.ca.gov/artsinfo/publications-artsed.php>
- **Imagine! Introducing Your Child to the Arts** (PDF) - Published by the National Endowment for the Arts, 2004. This reprint of the 1997 NEA publication revises and updates the previous edition's material on introducing children to the arts. Made for parents, the publication includes activities and suggestions in literature, dance, music, theater, visual arts, folk arts, and media arts aimed specifically at children ages 3-8 years old. <http://azarts.gov/artslearning/imagine%20introducing%20your%20child%20to%20the%20arts.pdf>

- **An Introduction to Scientifically Based Research - Monograph** (PDF) - The intent of this monograph is to familiarize the state art agency field and its colleagues with an understanding of scientific research as a tool for making informed recommendations. The information provided is a useful guide for planning and initiating diverse research agendas. http://www.nasaa-arts.org/publications/arts_ed_monograph.pdf
 - **Leader's Guide to Standards: A Blueprint for Educational Equity and Excellence 2002** - Douglas B. Reeves. Offers practical recommendations for assessing and nurturing teacher performance, setting up balanced assessment and accountability policies, and making the case for standards to the public. In addition, the book addresses the vital role that policymakers from the local school board to state and national leaders play in the successful implementation of education standards. <http://ww2.americansforthearts.org/vango/core/orders/product.aspx?catid=3&prodid=237>
 - **Learning Partnerships** (PDF) - Presents the major impacts on school policy and practices, the principles of effectiveness and key questions to be addressed at each stage of development of successful arts education partnerships. (1999) <http://www.aep-arts.org/files/publications/LearningPartnerships.pdf>
 - **Powerful Voices: Developing High-Impact Arts Programs for Teens** (PDF) - Commissioned by the Surdna Foundation (<http://www.surdna.org/>), Spring 2002, Richard Evans evaluates the design and impact of arts programs. Through this interim look, we learned much about the design, effectiveness and impact on young people of extended artmaking experiences with artists of stature. Overall, the evaluators found that the best work "takes a holistic approach to the creative development of young people, combining a search for significant artistic advancement with purposeful development of individual life skills. http://www.surdna.org/usr_doc/powerfulvoices-eng.pdf
 - **Renaissance in the Classroom: Arts Integration and Meaningful Learning** - Gail Burnaford, Arnold Aprill and Cynthia Weiss (Editors). Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Assoc. Publishers, 2001. <http://www.amazon.com/Renaissance-Classroom-Integration-Meaningful-Learning/dp/0805838198>
 - **Schools, Communities and the Arts: A Research Compendium** (PDF) - A selection of available applied and academic research, this publication is designed as a tool that can help address the kinds of questions local government, business, and community leaders might ask about arts education. It provides concrete information on topics from student achievement and perceptions to the status of arts education. Developed by the Morrison Institute for Public Policy (<http://asu.edu/copp/morrison/index.html>); commissioned by the National Endowment for the Arts (www.nea.gov). <http://www.asu.edu/copp/morrison/public/schools.pdf>
 - **Teaching Partnerships** (PDF) - 13 exemplary partnerships convened at Lincoln Center, New York, NY to determine best policies and actions needed to insure that the arts are being well taught in America's education system. Report examines collaborations between colleges and universities, public education system at the state and local level and arts and cultural organizations. http://www.aep-arts.org/publications/info.htm?publication_id=18
 - **Third Space: When Learning Matters** (Excerpts) - Based on a three-year research study this publication describes the process of transformation in ten elementary, middle and high schools serving economically disadvantaged students in urban and rural regions of the country. It draws on current research in cognitive science, student engagement, and youth development to explore how and why the arts have enabled the schools to succeed where other often fail. <http://www.aep-arts.org/resources/toolkits/thirdspace/read.htm>
 - **A Well-Tempered Mind: Using Music to Help Children Listen and Learn** - Peter Perret. Documents an acclaimed music and education program developed a decade ago by Perret, Winston-Salem Symphony conductor and music director. The program's aim was to try to improve the general academic performance of at-risk, economically disadvantaged children in a Winston-Salem public elementary school. Its intent was not to educate the children about music itself, but rather to use music as a means to learn. The results have been significant and thought provoking. Published by the Dana Press. <http://www.dana.org/news/danapressbooks/detail.aspx?id=1208>
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RESEARCH FACT SHEET

What is research?

Research is a systematic process of collecting and analyzing objective evidence in order to establish facts and reach new conclusions. The purpose of research is to increase common knowledge and understanding in an area of interest or concern.

What is the research process?

1) The scientific research process usually begins with a specific **research question** or problem, often linked to prior research or a related theory.

The National Research Council places research questions into three categories:

- Description--What is happening?
- Cause--Is there a systematic effect?
- Process or mechanism--Why or how is something happening?

2) Researchers use **systematic, empirical methods** to obtain evidence. Scientific research designs are either **experimental** or **quasi-experimental**. Both involve manipulating one or more independent variables and measuring a dependent variable. For example, a study might examine whether lessons that involve dramatizing stories (the independent variable) improve fourth graders' reading comprehension (the dependent variable).

3) Researchers follow an explicit, coherent chain of reasoning in arriving at their conclusions.

4) Researchers submit their study results for peer review.

What is the difference between experimental and quasi-experimental studies?

In experimental studies, subjects are randomly placed in two comparison groups. The groups are alike except that one group receives the intervention and the other (a control group) does not. In this way, the variables not being studied are less likely to affect the results. Experimental studies provide the strongest evidence that an intervention made a difference.

In quasi-experimental studies, subjects are not randomly assigned, but either a control group or multiple measures are used. Statistical methods may be used to adjust for variables that cannot be controlled. Education researchers often use quasi-experimental designs since experimental designs often are not feasible, ethical, or legal in a school environment.

What are the requirements of No Child Left Behind?

The Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (No Child Left Behind) does not mandate experimental designs.

The law stresses "rigorous, systematic, and objective methodology to obtain reliable and valid knowledge

relevant to education activities and programs.” It also stresses the need to obtain “acceptance by a peer-reviewed journal or approval by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective, and scientific review” and to “present findings and make claims that are appropriate to and supported by the methods that have been employed.”

Also cited is the importance of “making claims of causal relationships only in random assignment experiments or other designs (to the extent such designs substantially eliminate plausible competing explanations for the obtained results).”

Data used to support a claim should come from multiple sources. **Triangulation**--approaching the same measurement from three or more independent routes--is often used to confirm results or examine a result more completely. **Mixed method** research combines quantitative and qualitative techniques to ensure both rigor and depth.

The methods used to collect the data should be:

- **Valid** - the method measures what it is supposed to measure
- **Reliable** - the method can be used effectively and consistently
- **Objective** - the data collected through the method can be verified by independent inquiry
- **Acceptable** - the method will yield data that is credible and understandable to those who will use it

Action research can be described as a family of research methodologies which pursue action (or change) and research (or understanding) at the same time. Typically, action research alternates between action and critical reflection. Methods, data and interpretation are continually refined as understanding develops.

What are some things to consider when designing research methods?

What is action research?

Resources

Leedy, P. (1996) *Practical research*. 6th edition. Prentice Hall.

National Academies Press. (2002). *Scientific Research in Education*, www.books.nap.edu/books/0309082919/html

National Science Foundation, *User-Friendly Handbook for Mixed Method Evaluations*, www.ehr.nsf.gov/EHR/REC/pubs/NSF97-153/start.htm

Action Research Resources website. www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/arhome.html

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