

How is Arts and Cultural Education Relevant for Today and Tomorrow?

As our world faces new challenges associated with technological advancements, climate change and ageing demographics, we believe that Arts and Culture education plays an increasingly vital role in equipping the future generation with specific skill sets to tackle them. Cultivating creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, communication, and cross-cultural understanding through arts education becomes imperative as employment in the creative sectors continues to grow and employees increasingly find themselves navigating complex societal issues. The authors recommend that our current education system evolve to seamlessly integrate arts into STEM disciplines. Doing so not only prepares our students to take on work in the creative sector but also enables them to contribute to positive outcomes across other domains of society.

Skills cultivated through Arts and Cultural Education

By providing a platform for exploration and sharing, Arts and Cultural education is key to nurturing the following essential skills, which are crucial for adapting to the evolving workforce and navigating societal problems.

CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

In the evaluation of an art-based programme in a Chilean high-school, participation in two workshops was shown to have increased their scores in the graphical section of Torrance’s Test of Creative Thinking by 0.55 standard deviation.

(Egana-delSol, 2023)

CRITICAL THINKING AND PROBLEM-SOLVING

Studying artworks teaches individuals to be observant and analyse the world in greater depth, building the foundation for critical thinking.

(Chung and Li, 2021)

COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION

Sharing creative experiences builds teamwork and collaboration as individuals engage in meaningful dialogue.

(Olaoye and Samon, 2024)

CROSS-CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING AND EMPATHY

A 2023 Indonesian study revealed growing intergroup prejudice amongst youths. Art education can help to counter this by catalysing empathy, fostering understanding across cultures.

(Xia, 2024)

Relevance of Arts and Cultural Education

The importance of Arts and Cultural Education lies in its ability to nurture the very competencies imperative for both meeting the demands of the burgeoning creative economy and adeptly navigating complex future societal challenges.

The growing need for a creative economy workforce

Between 2011-2019, growth in Cultural and Creative employment has outpaced growth in overall employment by **4.3%**, signalling increasing demand for skills like creativity, innovation, and problem-solving that arts education cultivates.

(OECD, 2022)

Navigate complex and sensitive societal problems

47% of experts believe life will worsen for most by 2025 due to worsening economic inequality and the spread of misinformation showing the vital need for skills such as that arts education develops such as cross-cultural understanding and empathy.

(Anderson et al., 2021)

STEAM Approach

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Incorporating Arts in the conventional STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) approach prepares students to not only understand STEM but also know how to apply principles from these disciplines to creatively solve problems (Marr, 2020). The end results are students who take thoughtful risks, engage in experiential learning, persist in problem-solving, embrace collaboration and work through the creative process (The Institute for Arts Integration and STEAM, 2020).

Read more about the importance of Arts and Cultural Education and the studies used below:

Anderson, J., Lee, R. & Vogels, E.A. (2021) Experts say the ‘new normal’ in 2025 will be far more tech-driven, presenting more big challenges, Pew Research Center.

Chung, S. K., & Li, D. (2021). Issues-Based STEAM education: A case study in a Hong Kong secondary school. International Journal of Education & the Arts, 22(3).

Egana-delSol, P. (2023). The impacts of a high-school art-based program on academic achievements, creativity, and creative behaviors. npj Sci. Learn. 8, 39

Marr, B. (2020). We need steam, not STEM education, to prepare our kids for the 4th Industrial Revolution. Forbes.

OCED (2022). Cultural and creative jobs and skills: Who, what, where, and why it matters, OCED iLibrary.

Olaoye, G.O., & Samon, D. (2024). Art Education’s contribution to developing communication and collaboration skills during educational transitions.

The Institute for Arts Integration & STEAM. (2020). STEAM Education in K-12 Schools: A Review of Evidence Required. The Institute for Arts Integration and STEAM.

Xia, S. (2024). Art as bridge of empathy: Lessons from cross-cultural collaborations – academia. The Jakarta Post.

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