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The Positive Impacts of Art Education On Inner-City Students

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THE POSITIVE IMPACTS OF ART EDUCATION ON INNER-CITY STUDENTS

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The Positive Impacts of Art Education on Inner-City Students

Abstract

This literature review focuses on the impact that art education and effective teaching practices have on inner-city students. Intensive research through case studies, literature, observations, and scholarly journals provided a thorough understanding of why art education is critical to urban schools, and how several art mediums such as Graffiti, Placed-Based, Ceramics, and Photography can be used to effectively reach students in these communities. Information was gathered to explore ways in which art educators can not only create effective lesson plans, but support the inner-city student by connecting to their culture, experiences, needs and future goals.

The literature review will also explain some of the behaviors inner-city students display, and guide the reader in understanding these reactions and how to effectively respond. The study reveals that art education affects and supports inner-city students in various ways, providing a positive outlet for expression that can lead to community involvement and changes in their attitudes towards themselves and others. The average inner-city student is a person of color, and many who teach within these communities are also of color. Research proves that mentorship is a key component to being able to tap into a student's potential. The primary goals of this study are to provide art educators with approaches and techniques that inner-city students respond best to, along with a guide towards dismantling disengagement, embracing self-care, and creating meaningful connections with inner-city students through art.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This researcher's personal experience with inner-city students is the driving force behind this literature review. As an art teacher in a high-risk community, the researcher was drawn to research relevant ways in which art educators could actively engage with students who are statistically categorized as unsuccessful. This research supports the belief that art education is a key component to student success. Through research study examinations and personal observation, it was found that inner-city students who have access to art programs are positively impacted and less likely to go down the wrong path.

Over the past few decades, art education in urban school districts has been drastically reduced. Due to the expansion of standardized test accountability, many under-resourced schools have been pressured to focus on other subject areas. As a result, art education within inner cities has become almost nonexistent. A federal government study found that, "schools designated under No Child Left Behind as needing improvement and schools with a higher percentage of minority students were more likely to experience decreases in time spent on arts education" (Government Accountability Office, 2009). However, as educators and researchers fight to keep the arts in inner-city schools, new studies regarding the benefits of art education have found that art has a remarkable impact on the academic, social and emotional outcomes of inner-city students. Kisida and Bowen (2019) conducted the first large-scale, randomized controlled study that focused on efforts to restore arts education in urban communities. The findings provided solid evidence that students who experience art education strongly develop socially and academically.

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The Inner- City Student and Teacher

The term "inner-city" refers to an area in which lower-income populations reside, and who typically have social and economic challenges. Inner-city students reside in urban communities, in which there are often many single parent homes, and much violence, crime and drugs. The school drop-out rate for inner-city youth is estimated at 80%, thus the potential for graduating only has a 20% expectancy. Existing data suggests that the dropout rate of black teens from inner-city schools remains persistent (Ford, 1993), and that Latino teen dropouts are on the rise (Chapa & Valencia, 1993). Moreover, the behavioral and emotional needs of these students are either overlooked, superficially dealt with, or left in the hands of police officials. Suspensions, school transfers, and even expulsions are typical remedies for these adolescents. Family involvement, such as volunteering, and monitoring emotional and behavioral development is minimal; as most parents often work multiple jobs to support their family.

Educators who teach in urban communities struggle to bridge the achievement gap which is the result of inequitable opportunities. Historically, inner-city schools are under-funded and show poor academic performance. "High poverty schools lack the capacity to substantially improve student learning and do not have sufficient incentives or flexibility to improve instruction" (Jacob & Ludwig, 2009, p. 56). Teaching inner-city students can at times be very stressful, and it is not uncommon for educators to feel overwhelmed, understaffed, and under-resourced. Generally, inner-city educators can be categorized as either successful or unsuccessful. While all teachers are at risk of experiencing burnout, an unsuccessful educator has lost their spark to teach altogether and their focus tends to be on just making it through the day, with no true desire to

actively engage with students and peers. An increase in complaining and irritability are tell-tale signs that a teacher is suffering from burnout and defeat. On the other hand, successful educators are motivated and do not treat their positions solely as jobs. They realize that lives are in their hands and believe that education is a responsibility that should not be taken lightly. "Successful teachers in urban poor schools know that their resources and students may be unique and that different teacher behaviors may be required" (Gehrke, 2005, p. 16). All in all, there is hope for both types of teachers, but it almost always requires a time of self-reflection, and active support from the school and school district.

All educators should allocate time towards self-care. This is utterly important in high-risk communities because urban school teachers are 12 to 18% more prone to behavioral and violent actions than any other school setting (Vaszsonyi, Flannery & DeLisi, 2018). Professional Development seminars are one way for educators to feel rejuvenated in the classroom. For those who teach art or integrate art into their classroom teaching, organizations such as The Inner-City Arts project offer countless PD workshops and online art trainings and resources for teachers who are dedicated to teaching in inner-city schools. This Los Angeles based program recognizes the need for students to be engaged in art; thus, they created a Professional Development Institute that provides training for art educators around the world. "Teachers who receive training and support, including instruction in the arts, are more likely to remain in their profession" (Inner City Arts, 2019).

In order to be effective, educators must understand the population in which they teach. The fears and judgements that some inner-city teachers subconsciously create will

hinder them from becoming remarkable educators and role models. Moreover, when educators do not find ways to connect to inner-city students, not only is engagement lost but behavioral issues tend to rise. The consequences of disengaged students are seemingly dreadful, and "some educationists consider engaging disengaged pupils to be one of the biggest challenges facing educators as over 66% of students are considered to be disengaged" (Harris, 2008).

Cornell (1996) encourages educators to remember the days of their youth and destroy the negative ideas they have created when viewing and dealing with inner-city students. Cornell's research specifically focused on minority teachers who taught in urban communities, and found that many minorities who grew up in urban communities left once they reached adulthood; yet, those who stayed learned the art of paying it forward by serving as "role models, mentors, and cheerleaders" (Cornell, 1996, p. 1.). Relationship building and mentorship is a two-way street, so the more educators learn about their students, and take time to embrace their own self-care, the better equipped they are to share pieces of their own world which leads to exciting and meaningful connections.

Ruppert (2006) surveyed the attitudes that Americans had towards art education and found that over 93%, "believe that the arts are vital to providing a well-rounded education for children" (Ruppert, 2006, p.5). Nonetheless, art education received the brunt of funding cuts as districts made changes to accommodate the No Child Left Behind policies. As an art educator who teaches in the inner-city, this writer has seen these effects firsthand, and inner-city schools are most commonly impacted, compared to schools in middle to high income communities. While suburban white schools spend time

critiquing pottery in ceramic classes, our urban schools are stripped of creative opportunities to express and explore various art mediums. On the surface, Americans strongly believe in visual arts and understand its importance in education; yet many schools continue to cut art programs. The purpose of this study is to demonstrate why art needs to be in inner-city schools because research shows that students who have art in school typically flourish in and out of the classroom. "Young people who are involved in making something beautiful today are less likely to turn to acts of violence and destruction tomorrow" (Farnum & Schaffer, 1998).

CHAPTER II : LITERATURE REVIEW

Every human being yearns to be understood, appreciated and ultimately find their purpose in life. As children grow up, they explore the world through the lens of their surroundings, but oftentimes inner-city youth are exposed to unwarranted and unideal situations that are out of their control. As a result, a large percentage of inner-city students are found to be emotionally disturbed and struggle with anxiety, depression, hallucinations, and suicide attempts. The connection between mental health and urbanization is complex, but studies show that the "exposure to noise and lack of adequate green space -key features of the urban environment - can cause psychological distress, hypertension and hearing impairment" (Anakwenze & Zuberi, 2013, p. 147). For inner-city students, going to school is one of the only times they are free from the trials and tribulations of their personal lives, and, according to Downey (2008), teachers play a major role in a student's academic success. "The quality of the relationship between a student and their teacher will result in a greater degree of learning in the classroom" (p.59).

Educators who teach within urban communities face many obstacles, and it is not uncommon for frustrations to run high when dealing with inner-city students. Nonetheless, educators must be mindful and sensitive to the needs that this population has because "children's health and well-being not only affects their educational performance and achievement whilst they are children, but it can influence their health, well-being and achievement throughout their lives (Robinson, 2011, p. 207). When inner-

city students are treated as though they are feared, or disliked, educators subconsciously create atmospheres that are filled with hostility and resentment. Negative ideologies are common towards urban communities, but a Cornell (1996) study found that "successful urban school districts demonstrate winning behavior because they come into the game with a sense of victory. Never let defeating behavior stall dreams or stifle creativity" (Cornell, 1996, p. 10). As educators prepare students for the future, they must keep in mind that the educational setting they create directly impacts the successes or failures that students can have both in and outside of the classrooms.

Researcher, Jennifer McCormick (2012) did a study in her New York school to show what happened when inner-city students are treated discriminatorily. Due to an increase of crime in NYC high schools, administrators began classifying students by how dangerous or harmless they were to the school setting, and those labels provoked an environment of hopelessness, aggressiveness, and defeat. Making matters worse, the Board of Education began placing metal detectors in these schools that "were so powerful that students had to take their belts off to move through school entrances" (McCormick, p. 112). In addition, school security guards made students spread their legs and put their hands above their heads before they could even attend class. And once inside, the presence of metal locks that blocked entrances and exits were constant reminders that the students were viewed more as delinquents than candidates moving towards a bright future. Imagine having to go through this daily routine before being able to eat your first meal, or attend your first class. The only difference between this and a prison setting was that students were able to leave the premises at the end of the school day.

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For many inner-city students, going to school is one of the only opportunities that separates them from gangs, violence and drugs. It is the only channel where they can creatively express themselves and learn past what they are exposed to on a regular basis. Inner-city students tend to face unusual difficulties that are not as commonly seen with students who attend suburban schools, and, without proper adult support, at-risk students are more prone to travel down the wrong path. The study by Bishop et al. (2017) found that, "gangs are often attractive options to young adults who lack a sense of approval, respect, love, and trust from the adults in their environment. When we consistently blame teens for failure, label them as lazy, troublesome, dishonest, and stupid; they become prime targets for undesirable affiliations" (Bishop, Hill, Gilman, Howell, Catalano & Hawkins, 2017). Art educators can specifically provoke change by first meeting students where they are, relating their own life experiences to their students, and connecting those exchanges to the curriculum. "Art becomes a means by which participants and students communicate and bond" (Bussert-Webb, 2001, p.8). Students thrive when they have teachers who listen, display strength, and respect them. Ultimately, students do not need more discipline; they need more teachers who provide mentorship and guidance.

Without direction, students will find outlets and other ways to express themselves. For instance, both tagging (the writing of a nickname or mark on a surface) and graffiti are two silent languages that countless inner-city youth use for expression. Research shows that tagging reasserts identity, preserves memory and often makes students feel alive by seizing a moment that cannot be erased, even after the writer is gone. McCormick (2012) found that her students used tagging to show the disparity they faced in the school system, and at home. They were tired of being treated like criminals

in their schools, so tagging was a way to express these feelings. Nonetheless, once proper guidance was established, these same students began displaying their pain and raw emotions through various art forms, which served as a therapeutic release mechanism. "I once stood with a young man in the school cafeteria before a mural that depicted former students. There is no movement in these scenes, only the rough edges of a stance—arms straight to the side, legs stiff. The painter has portrayed teens who do nothing but wait. I do not remember why I stood staring at the wall, but I remember the story that boy told" (McCormick, 2012, p. 118). All in all, art helps students express experiences that are challenging to verbalize; it is another reason why educators should fight to maintain the arts in education.

Classroom Instruction; Engaging the Inner-city Student

When art teachers in urban communities embrace the unique challenges they face, it opens the door for healthy dialogue and effective teaching habits that can positively engage inner-city students. Art teachers have the exclusive power to challenge student creativity through activities that promote their artistic expression. Art teachers can utilize current trends and pop culture as a connection to urban youth and also create curriculum that directly connects students to the outside world in an artistic way. The positive avenues that art education creates for students is phenomenal, but the research also shows that stand-alone art programming in inner-cities is not enough to influence higher standardized test results, which is a critical component for school districts who review whether or not they can keep their art programs. "A study by Peppler (2014) found that integration matters, and that the transfer between art education and higher standardized

test scores is dependent on building bridges across the curriculum." Collaboration, rather than stand-alone arts programming, is an effective teaching strategy that can help produce academic achievement and inner-city student engagement.

Core curriculum is important; thus, inner-city art educators must work towards cross-connecting subject matter in an attempt to improve student achievement. For example, if a geography teacher is working on a unit that explores Mexico, she could brainstorm with the art teacher to create a more hands on unit that includes art. Perhaps in geography class, students explore Mexican folk art and its importance in Mexican culture. Then in art class, students can be grouped together to create Mexican alebrijes (brightly colored Mexican folk-art sculptures) out of plaster, along with exploring the color wheel and how bright colors are highly recognized in Mexican folk art. This type of integration ultimately helps students learn more of what they were originally going to learn, and also promotes group work and engagement within subject matter. Killion (2015) in a study on collaborative teaching found that, "nearly all teachers in the study (90%) reported that their collaboration was helpful and that student outcomes increased significantly" (Killion, 2015, p. 64). Surprisingly, collaborative teaching segues into collaborative learning, which makes way for students to work with other students and collaborate together. Studies show that collaborative learning for inner-city students helps develop higher-level thinking skills, boosts confidence and self-esteem as well (Le, Janseen & Wubbels, 2016). In that same study, the biggest obstacle that occurred was that students lacked collaborative skills. Thus, teachers had to guide groups by first assigning roles, helping group members understand why it was important to listen attentively to other group members, and also how to accept and move past different

viewpoints. The study found that these three essential skills helped maximize the collaborative learning environment. (Le et al., 2016).

The Flipped Classroom Model

The beauty of art education is that there are various avenues for educators to expand their scope of teaching inner-city youth, and one popular method that is on the rise is the flipped classroom model (F: flexible learning environment, L: learning culture, I: intentional content, P: professional educator). This model moves direct instruction from group learning to "the individual learning space, and the resulting group space is transformed into a dynamic, interactive learning environment where the educator guides students as they apply concepts and engage creatively in the subject matter" (The Flipped Learning Network, 2014). Instructors who adopt the Flipped Classroom Model assign instructional content as homework. Class time is then utilized to work through problems, develop concepts and engage in collaborative learning. Lecturing less creates available time to deepen ideas and increase student retention. Studies on flipped classrooms in inner-cities show strong results towards success, "the unprecedented amount of one-on-one time it provides students—could even be enough to close the achievement gap between low-income, minority students and their more affluent white peers. Clintondale (HS) has reduced the percentage of Fs given out from about 40 percent to around 10 percent" (Butrymowicz, 2012, p. 1).

The Flipped Classroom Model allows art teachers to focus on student work time, rather than solely on teacher demonstration. "When students can access demonstrations and teaching as they need it, then the instruction is relevant and students retain and apply the knowledge as it pertains to their artwork" (Weaver & Dollar, 2013, p.1). Other

benefits of a flipped classroom are the increased communication skills through student to student interaction, allotted time for real differentiation, stronger classroom management, and students who stay on task (Bergman & Sams, 2012). This model encourages art teachers to be physically present for students who need individual help. Bergman and Sams (2012) found that "the greatest achievement of the flipped classroom is student–teacher rapport and freeing up class time to conduct higher quality and more engaging activities. The students who struggle get the most help" (Bergman & Sams, 2012, p. 14). Within inner-city schools, where disengagement is common, this model acts as a safety net for teachers who can now assist struggling students when the need arises.

It is important to mention that the flipped model works best with technology, but for urban schools with limited resources, teachers can opt to print copies of information, or produce slideshows with step by step directions as alternative methods. Anchor charts are also popular in showing key stages of art techniques that can be broken down into a few stages (Purtee, 2016). When using the flipped model, instructors have the flexibility to flip an entire course, or choose to only flip one or more assignments. The four pillars of FLIP (Table 1) have been noted by researchers as effective teaching practices within education and serve as an evaluation guide for educators as they practice this model in their classrooms.

Table 1. The Four Pillars of F-L-I-P

https://flippedlearning.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/FLIP_handout_FNL_Web.pdf

F = Flexible Environment	
	Flipped Learning allows for a variety of learning modes; educators often physically rearrange their learning spaces to accommodate a lesson or unit, to support either group work or

F.1 ☐ I establish spaces and time frames that permit students to interact and reflect on their learning as needed. **F.2** ☐ I continually observe and monitor students to make adjustments as appropriate. **F.3** ☐ I provide students with different ways to learn content and demonstrate mastery.	independent study. They create flexible spaces in which students choose when and where they learn. Furthermore, educators who flip their classes are flexible in their expectations of student timelines for learning and in their assessments of student learning.
L = Learning Culture **L.1** ☐ I give students opportunities to engage in meaningful activities without the teacher being central. **L.2** ☐ I scaffold these activities and make them accessible to all students through differentiation and feedback.	In the traditional teacher-centered model, the teacher is the primary source of information. By contrast, the Flipped Learning model deliberately shifts instruction to a learner-centered approach, where in-class time is dedicated to exploring topics in greater depth and creating rich learning opportunities. As a result, students are actively involved in knowledge construction as they participate in and evaluate their learning in a manner that is personally meaningful.
I = Intentional Content **I.1** ☐ I prioritize concepts used in direct instruction for learners to access on their own. **I.2** ☐ I create and/or curate relevant content (typically videos) for my students. **I.3** ☐ I differentiate to make content accessible and relevant to all students.	Flipped Learning Educators continually think about how they can use the Flipped Learning model to help students develop conceptual understanding, as well as procedural fluency. They determine what they need to teach and what materials students should explore on their own. Educators use Intentional Content to maximize classroom time in order to adopt methods of student-centered, active learning strategies.
P = Professional Educator **P.1** ☐ I make myself available to all students for individual, small group, and class feedback in real time as needed. **P.2** ☐ I conduct ongoing formative assessments during class time through observation and by recording data to inform future instruction. **P.3** ☐ I collaborate and reflect with other educators and take responsibility for transforming my practice.	The role of a Professional Educator is even more important, and often more demanding, in a Flipped Classroom than in a traditional one. During class time, they continually observe their students, providing them with feedback relevant in the moment, and assessing their work. Professional Educators are reflective in their practice, connect with each other to improve their instruction, accept constructive criticism, and tolerate controlled chaos in their classrooms. While Professional Educators take on less visibly prominent roles in a flipped

	classroom, they remain the essential ingredient that enables Flipped Learning to occur.

Effective Art Mediums for Inner-City Students

Graffiti Art

Graffiti is common in urban communities, but is considered a substantial problem to state and national officials who view graffiti as vandalism and not art. Yet for many young people in urban neighborhoods, graffiti is one of the only ways for expression and identification. The overwhelming majority of graffiti artists are teenage males from middle-class families who tend to not do well in school, nor participate in sports. Graffiti is extremely attractive to inner-city students and gained its momentum under the hip hop culture as a form of expression and ability to speak through the colors that are formed out of a spray can. The high interest in graffiti stems from students being able to uniquely find their voice, think differently and embrace that there is no right or wrong way for creating graffiti. **"The effects that graffiti and street art have on its audience are perhaps the most significant contribution to cultural heritage"** (Bates, 2014, p. 54).

Richardson's (2000), study reminds educators that art has various methods and styles, and, whether we accept it or not, graffitists are operating as artists. In a historical sense, past art revolutionaries were, "all aggressively male and of a revolutionary (or, at least, revisionary) bend. They found their legitimate expression in creative art, and the scheme proposed here is no more than a generalization of that proven principle" (Richardson, 2005, p.5). Richardson's study found that art teachers who understand the different styles of art, are able to view graffiti as a form of expression through modern and popular culture. This narrative is important for art educators around the world because if we want

to understand our students, we must remember that art has many mediums, styles and forms. Educators who find ways to teach the difference between graffiti as an art form, compared to vandalism is valuable because students can then connect their personal world to the art taught in school. Moreover, teachers who are able to build this bridge lessen the divide of disengagement in the classroom. Research suggests that students desire engagement, and "prefer to be held to high expectations. They also desire quality, rigorous, and meaningful curriculum and high academic goals" (Willms, 2003, p. 23). The study of graffiti art validates the lives of students who, in turn can help improve their communities.

Educators in urban communities should utilize graffiti art because, for those who do not have access to art programs, graffiti art provides a creative outlet. Furthermore, it engages, motivates and advances students into becoming artists. Well-known Graffiti artist, Sentrock, was once a troubled youth who now teaches at-risk students the definition and history of graffiti art, and how it is different from vandalism. Sentrock's focal teaching point is that students can use graffiti art as a way to use their voice and find their identities. In Eldridge (2013), the study reaffirmed that students who identify lessons to their real life are more likely to stay engaged. "The classes were unusually quiet as they focused intently on creating their letters. Students who normally were disengaged during class were engaged in this unit due to the connection it made to what was important to them: street art" (Eldridge, 2013, p. 26).

The research pushes art teachers to embrace graffiti as academic because it combines imagery and writing. The graffiti structures that students create integrate imagery which demonstrates their understanding of allegory, metaphor and artistic

conventions; which is a direct correlation to line, shape and form. Color theory and gradation are also incorporated when applying various color combinations. Graffiti art consists of many styles, but more importantly there is no right or wrong way; instead it is an opportunity to improvise, think outside of the box, and create personalized art. Educators who are able to create relevant art lessons will challenge students to incorporate their beliefs, thoughts and ideas into their art. The goal for educators in urban communities is to find meaningful connections by using art as a vehicle to inspire, engage and increase student success.

Place-Based Art

Place Based Art promotes student involvement in their community through art. This specific medium assists learners in making connections that bring self and community into a dialogue with place, resulting in real-world learning that is experiential, memorable, and central to the themes of their lives (Schlemmer, 2017). For art educators, Place-Based Art lessons focus on matters that students see as problematic in their communities; which is particularly effective for educators who work with at-risk, low-income, and minority students. In the long run, Place Based Art can create learners who desire to be advocates in their community, who learn to stand up for their rights and the rights of others. According to Danker (2018), Place-Based Art is twofold: situated context and social transformation. A situated context is where learning takes place in the space where it is applied. Social transformation takes place when the attitudes and values of those creating or viewing the art changes.

The goal for teachers is to help students develop a connection that fosters behavioral and attitude changes towards community issues. In order to be effective, Place

Based Art should include a research component. Students who research the issues first will be more involved in the necessity of the project and gain a deeper understanding of the history behind the place which they are researching. "Place becomes not only where one is from, but shapes one's present and future identities; the concept of place acts as both a resource and a teacher" (Danker, 2018, p.49).

Art educators in urban areas can practice place-based art by creating lesson plans that are relatable and associated with real life situations. Place-based art must have context and is placed in specific locations that bring awareness to current issues. A direct connection to students will increase their involvement, engagement and awareness towards their own neighborhoods. Danker's (2018) research study focused on the work of artist Charity White who is a Chicago based artist that travels around the country researching various urban areas in public places to bring awareness to injustices that affect that community. She learned that people became immune to community issues, thus she began raising awareness to various social injustices through her own art. The study showcased White's *Prescriptive Space* series that focused on promoting social justice and art activism in Gainesville, Florida.

In Gainesville, the city wanted to block homelessness and as a result, built handrails that divided benches to prevent homeless people from sleeping on them. In her response, White created three ceramic figures and placed them on downtown city benches in Gainesville, Florida. "Her work provides art educators to explore connections between pedagogical strategies of place-based education, critical place-based education, and social justice art education" (Danker, p.46). Place-based is an art medium that promotes student engagement and critical thinking skills. When students are engaged and

in tune with their emotions, their art becomes more meaningful to them, and often emotes change in others. "Pedagogy should at its best be about what teachers do that not only help students to learn but actively strengthens their capacity to learn" (Hargreaves, 2004, p. 27). Place-based education helps students base their art off of their own lives and connect it with the world that surrounds them. It is an opportunity for students to link their learning directly to the community and raise meaningful questions as to why their environment is the way that it is, and what can be done to change it. "Through place-based learning opportunities, students have greater connections to the neighborhoods in which they live and create greater relevance and applicability of the curriculum to their daily lives' (Conkey & Green, 2018, p. 5) For educators who teach in inner-cities, place-based art is a resolute outlet for students who face unlikely circumstances. It is a way for students to take those challenges and express themselves through their art. On average, inner-city students deal with a variety of outside issues that ultimately affect their time in school. Students with built up frustration can take place-based art and voice their concerns artistically.

Ceramics

Ceramics highlights individual expression, along with collaborative learning through group designs; students explore the fundamentals and principles of art through clay. Ceramic classes offer rich engagement opportunities through hand-building projects including slab structures and basic pinch and coil pots. Students learn to create objects, creatures, and environments through their own imagination, along with being educated on space, balance, rhythm, color, texture, shape, pattern and lines. Pottery and ceramics are known to reduce stress, and for inner-city students in high-risk communities, ceramics

serves as a calming mechanism from the outside world. A study by Sandmire, et al (2012) examined the effects that mediums such as ceramics have on students who live in high-risk communities and found that, "30 minutes of art making significantly reduced participants anxiety as measured by the state-trait anxiety inventory" (Sandmire, Gorham, Rankin & Grimm, 2012, p. 71).

Hands-on art, such as ceramics, is a form of student self-care that helps students' express experiences that they find difficult to verbalize. Stuckey and Nobel (2010), studied the connection between art and mental health and found that, "molding clay can be a powerful way to help people express these feelings through tactile involvement at a somatic level, as well as to facilitate verbal communication and cathartic release and reveal unconscious materials and symbols that cannot be expressed through words" (Stuckey & Nobel, 2010, p. 257). Ceramics is a way for the teacher to tap into the student's unspoken truths and desires. Inner-city students who struggle with verbal expression tend to have behavioral problems, but data found by Herman (2008) shows that ceramics can reduce outbursts from angry and self-defeated children into "proud and self-directed learners who now have a positive outlet for expression" (Herman, 2008, p. 54).

The researcher's own class observations showed that students enjoyed having ceramics as part of their curriculum. In fall 2018, the researcher taught Ceramics I, and students who knowingly suffered with anxiety would comment that they wished ceramics lasted all day because it offered a calming solution to the problems they faced. Initially Ceramics II was not going to be offered for fall 2019, but because so many students requested it, the principal added the course to accommodate its high demand. Recent

graduates even contacted the researcher to ask if they could visit the Ceramics II class because they thoroughly enjoyed Ceramics I while they were students. Herman (2008) did a pilot pottery program study, and the resulting data showed that "68% of students reported that ceramics helped them temporarily forget personal problems they were having at the time, and 72% felt that the experience made them feel successful and that pottery helped them think positively" (p. 54). The same data reiterated that hostile and hurtful behaviors towards staff and peers significantly reduced during the study. Furthermore, research shows that inner-city students who heavily participate in art programs have the opportunity to find their inner gifts, and potentially pursue art as a career. In 1971, The New York City Board of Education did a study that connected students with various art opportunities post-graduation. It was found that students who were interested in the arts thought seriously about whether their abilities and inclinations could lead them to the field of ceramics (Industrial Ceramics, 1971, p. 113). As educators prepare students for the real world, it is important to have conversations regarding future goals and occupations. Art programs go beyond the classroom and can become the gateway into fruitful careers; thus, it is the educator's duty to help plant these ideas, so that they can grow into realities.

Art education provides a way for inner-city students to learn applicable life lessons. As a ceramics teacher, I found that students often incorrectly built their pottery bases; so, I stressed the importance of having a firm foundation because without one, the pottery will collapse. Scoring (attaching pieces of clay together) and slipping (adding clay dust to water and stirring to avoid thickening) is not an easy concept to grasp, so most students choose to skip this step in order to build their pottery faster. I have

witnessed students shape a 12-inch pot only to get to the end, and have it collapse because they skipped the scoring process. As a teacher, this can be frustrating to watch because you know what the end result will be; nonetheless, Cornell's (1996) research found that student mistakes are a part of the learning cycle; thus, educators must allow students to make mistakes without giving up on them during the process. When students make the mistake of not following instructions, educators must allow teachable moments because "productive failure deliberately puts students into problem solving situations that are over their heads" (Macdonald, 2013, p. 1). Coaching and asking students if they know where they went wrong is a good practice that will reassure the student that the mistake can be learned from. Cornell's study found that educators never stop learning; thus, we must expect the same for our students. Educators can positively reach, mentor and influence inner-city students when they are mindful and actively reflective in their own teaching practices. Remarkably, mistakes are the segue for growth opportunities and, just like parents with children, sometimes allowing students to fall is the best lesson to give in order to help them learn how to walk.

Photography

Photographic Art explores nature, landscape, architectural, portraiture, documentary, and still life photography. This medium exposes students to new technology, and encourages them to pursue their own vision and creativity. Photographic Art is a medium where students learn how to personalize images, rather than just take them. Also, the creation of stories, statements, and titles strengthen their written language skills. Bussert-Webb (2001) surveyed pregnant teens in a series called the "Photo Story Project" where students were to present their perceptions and visions

through photography. The study took place in an urban high school with over 2,000 students. Prior to the assignment, the researcher offered her own self-revealing photos to the class, which conveyed her emotions during a difficult time she had during her doctoral program. Her willingness to be vulnerable with students segued into students having great interest in the project itself. The project became a "conduit through which students could open up" (Bussert-Webb, 2001, p. 517).

Photographic Art blends well with other mediums, such as place-based art. Goessling (2018) conducted a study with inner-city high school students who used photography as a way to explore their lives and communities. The study consisted of Photovoice, which was a method that allowed participants to document their experiences and concerns through photos. The aim of photovoice was to, "catalyze participants toward critical consciousness and social action that promoted structural and/ or policy change" (Goessling, 2018, p. 657). The study showed that the photos produced by the students served as alternative ways of visualizing and making sense of questions that could not be obtained through traditional language-based techniques (p. 659). The study also found that students took control of their own learning by concentrating on topics and themes that were relevant to them.

The cameras enabled multiple exposures on one frame, which encouraged youth to play with juxtaposing images in order to communicate a specific idea or story. For example, one youth was concerned with the environment and the rapid deterioration of the rivers that run through the city. He photographed the river and a gutter to illustrate the detrimental impact of humans on nature. This illustrates the praxis that supported youths' appropriation of the camera and artistic process to make a social critique and build a

vision of what might or could be. Art-making, and photography in particular, are tools that facilitate learning as an embodied transformational process that heightens our awareness of our many selves as well as our thoughts, feelings, emotions, beliefs, and values about the world" (Goessling, 2018, p. 658).

Photographic Art nurtures student engagement because teachers create curriculum that draws from student concepts and experiences. Castro, Lalonde and Pariser (2016) conducted a six-week phased research project on 32 inner-city students who had either dropped out of high school or were at risk of dropping out. The purpose of the study was to have participants critically examine their environment through photographic images,

> Participants were asked to make images on specific themes and post them to the Instagram group. In phase one, the missions were scaffolded to invite participants to move from examinations of personal space to civic space culminating in a critical look at their neighborhoods. The first mission suggested themes such as, "Where is home?" and "Who makes you feel at home?" These prompts were then followed by others that suggested approaches to the students' neighborhood, such as "in my street, my school, my favorite park, my neighbors." In phase two, the missions focused more on mobility through civic spaces culminating in a peer-driven exchange of missions and independent inquiry. The phase two adaptations were based on our analysis of participation rates and participant feedback from phase one. (Castro, et. al, 2016, p. 243)

The study considered how mobile media photography engaged these at-risk students and found that choosing learning activities and moving through physical space was helpful for educational engagement. "The technology in use allowed participants to

make images on their own time and in their own spaces; yet, these same participants wanted to gather, not only to socialize but also to discuss each other's images and to watch each other make images. To our surprise we found that our participants desired social contact around the act of artmaking, both in virtual and physical space." (Castro, et. al, 2016, p. 249). Photographic Art is a unique form of art expression that can draw students closer to themselves, and also allow them to learn about different cultures while visiting new places. Equally, this medium integrates well with other subjects, and the Ewald (2012) study found just how Photographic Art connects with education: "certain formal elements of photography such as framing, point of view, timing, the use of symbols, and observation of details… have parallels in writing" (p. 2).

Using photography in the classroom is an opportunity for teachers to facilitate learning with students in a process that can shift the power dynamics in class. In this generation, students have technology at their fingertips and are obtaining skills that can be significant assets in the classroom. The good news for inner-city schools is that the tools needed for this medium have become cheaper and more accessible; making way for art educators to embrace photography for all that it's worth.

Literature Review Conclusion

The data from the literature review solidifies the importance of art education within inner-city schools. National surveys and polls confirm that the average American believes in art education but found that the children most in need come from inner-cities and are the least likely to have access to these programs. While many inner-city students are classified as at -risk, there is adequate research supporting the positive effects that art

education has on these students both in and outside of the classroom. The results of this literature review led to a recommendation that art educators learn the characteristics of inner-city students in order to generate meaningful lesson plans that directly connect to the student's world. Statistically, inner-city students face various socioeconomical challenges that affect their educational success, and a large quantity of data show low graduation rates, mental health issues, substance abuse, and dysfunctional family structures. Though the odds are stacked against this population, the study presents art educators with various solutions through classroom strategies, teaching models and art mediums that produce richer engagement, higher test scores, and goal-oriented students.

Harvard's Project Zero studied hundreds of academic improvement outcomes related to art education in the inner-city and confirmed that "motivation, better discipline, reduced truancy, improved math, reading and language skills, higher HS graduation rates, less interest in drugs, reduced criminal activity" were all direct results of art education's presence in urban community schools (Howard, 1971). The overall consensus of this literature review is that art education plays a critically active role in the success of students who need it the most. Simply put, art education can help prevent inner-city students from becoming statistics and provides a well-lit path towards creating valuable members of society whose contributions to the world make it a better place.

CHAPTER III: APPLICATION

Richardson's (2000) study found that art can be displayed in various forms, and instructors who recognize art diversity are able to encourage student expression through modern and popular art culture. Students have several ways of expressing themselves; so, the researcher wanted to expand and challenge student learning through Place Based Art, which emphasizes learning through resources, issues and values of one's local community. The researcher was inspired by artist Charity White who constructs life-sized ceramic figures in public spaces to help communities acknowledge social issues and injustices. The researcher created this unit to give students an opportunity to raise awareness on issues within their own community through art mediums of their choice. Various studies on inner-city students have found that classroom engagement increases when lesson plans directly connect to students' lives. The researcher's goal is to help North Minneapolis students raise community concerns through their art, which in turn can foster positive changes in their community. The outline below displays the details required to achieve this Placed Based Art Unit.

Unit Instructions

Placed Based Learning Project

This specific medium assists learners in making connections that bring self and community into a dialogue with place, resulting in real-world learning that is experiential, memorable, and central to the themes of their lives (Schlemmer, 2017).

Introduction and prep:

- In class, students will watch a part of the following video. The video serves as an introduction on what Placed Based Art is and how it is used in various places around the world: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s0-XRkplGV4

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- A brief powerpoint with examples (pictures) of PBA will be shown in class

    o Artist showcase: Charity White

- Students and teacher will discuss the ways in which PBA differs from Graffiti Art.

- Students will be given time to do research on Placed Based Art
    o Students are encouraged to find examples of PBA differs from Graffiti Art.

Field Trip

- Field trip location: Juxtaposition Arts is a local development in Minneapolis that works with students in the urban community. They help broaden their creativity by engaging them in hands on art mediums. Juxtaposition has local artists to help broaden their creativity as well as empowering them with different skill levels. Community focus is the way that Juxtaposition flows and wants to really dive in deep to our urban community/students.

Journal Assignment

- Write a **2-page paper** (6-8paragraphs minimum) that includes the following:

    o What is Placed Based Art Learning?

    o Where in Minneapolis can we find Placed Based Art? (consider expanding the location to other states for your own research)

    o Within your journal, answer each of the following:

        ▪ Describe your findings, and how it is considered Placed Based?

        ▪ What do the artist you found bring awareness to?

        ▪ What does the artist want the audience to know and learn?

        ▪ What medium did the artist use?

        ▪ Within the medium how did the artist make it stand out?

Picture Assignment

Students will take pictures for 5 days during their transit home.

- Take pictures of what you like/interest you

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- Take pictures of what you dislike or are tired of seeing
- Take pictures of what you want to change in your community
    - Take the pictures from different angles
        - You might have to sit on the ground or lay down to capture various angles
    - (also, can envision what you want your community to look like)

- Use your phone's camera
    - If you do not have a phone you will be checking out an iPad.
- If you have a fancy camera feel free to use that as well

Uploading pictures

- Upload your pictures at the end of the week to your google classroom account
- Decide what picture/ pictures you like the most
    - When deciding on the picture, think about how you want to bring awareness to the community about this picture(s)
- Let's talk about this example and what we see
  https://alumni.berkeley.edu/california-magazine/just-in/2016-11-14/sun-mad-ester-hern-ndez-one-bay-areas-las-mujeres-muralistas

Final Art Piece and Journal Assignment

Your Art Piece:

Choose your photograph: From this photograph you will be creating your own art piece.

- Decide what art medium you want to use for recreating your photograph/art piece. The options are:
    - Drawing
    - Clay/ Ceramics
    - Graffiti

Things to remember and ask yourself when creating your piece:

- You are telling your own story through your creation
- What awareness are you bringing through your piece?
- Are there things that you want to alter from the picture during the recreation process?
- How are you going to put your own twist on it/ embellish it?

Journal Assignment

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When your art piece is done, write a summary that includes the following:

Paragraph 1 (five to seven sentences)
- Explain what made you decide on your final picture
- Explain what art medium you chose
- Explain why you chose this art medium

Paragraph 2 (five to seven sentences)
- While creating your piece, did you experience any challenges? If so, how did you overcome them?
    - If you did not experience challenges, what did you like most about creating your art piece? What was your favorite part?

Paragraph 3 (five to seven sentences)

- Explain the process for taking your final picture. Did you lay down on the ground? Stand on an object?
    - Why did you choose to take the picture that way?
- Explain what artist from our Juxtaposition field trip inspired you
- How did the field trip help you with creating your art piece?

Paragraph 4 (five to seven sentences)
- Explain what you are bringing awareness to
- Explain why this awareness is important for your community to know and understand

Teacher: Paris Berry
Subject: Studio Art
Unit: Placed Based Project
Approximate Time: 2 months

Unit Summary:
- A better understanding of place-based art and how it affects their community as well as themselves.
- The effects of how art brings out awareness of what they actually see and go through.
- The effects of how art brings positivity to the community.
- To create what is actually going on in their time frame of life (popular Culture) instead of just focusing on the past histories of art.

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Lesson 1: **Research Paper**

Standards:
- 9.1.2.5.1
- 9.1.3.5.1
- 9.1.3.5.2

Materials: Computer, Articles

Activities: Research on the computer what placed based art is. Look at different states that have placed based art that stands out to you. Write a 2-page paper of the following...

Lesson 2: **Mobile Photography**

Standards:
- 9.1.2.5.1
- 9.1.1.5.2

Materials: Phone, iPad, computer

Activity: Students will take pictures on their way home or on their way to school. Take pictures of different objects that concern them in their community or that they would like to see changed. Save the pictures and upload 20 of them to google classroom.

Lesson 3: **Place Based Art**

Standards:
- 9.2.1.5.1
- 9.2.1.5.2

Choosing from one to two of their photos (from lesson 2), students will create an art piece inspired by their photo selection. Students will create an independent piece using the photo(s) as a guide to their finished product.

Students are free to choose their own art medium to complete this project.

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Materials: Clay, Ceramic tools, drawing paper, paint, paint brushes, spray paint, sketch book

Activity: Choose what medium that you want to use to recreate and bring awareness about from the pictures that you have taken from the mobile photography section. You can recreate it the way you took the picture or you can add more to it to represent your own twist to the artwork. Think about how you are going to bring awareness to your community by recreating this picture.

CHAPTER IV: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Summaries of the Literature

The researcher set out to examine the impacts that art education has on inner-city students and was drawn to this topic due to the nature of her profession in working with predominantly African American, inner-city students. The study focused on the impacts of the following art mediums: Graffiti, Placed Based Art, Ceramics and Photography Art. The overall research found that these four art mediums played a significant role in student engagement, classroom success, and applied knowledge through course content.

The literature review found that classroom engagement increased when lesson plans correlated to student life and student experiences. Moreover, a deeper understanding of course material took place when students were given hands-on opportunities to connect with art lessons. Historically, Graffiti has held negative connotations in society; yet, a large number of inner-city students view Graffiti as a way to express and affirm their identity within their community. The study found that educating students on Graffiti not only peaked interest, but understanding between the difference of vandalism and art. As a result, students desired to responsibly use this art form, along with educate their peers on what they had learned.

Placed Based Art (PBA) is an art medium that allows students to be mindful of community issues through their own art lenses. This art medium encourages students to find their voice and work through the problems and values they find important in their community. PBA promotes engagement and activism; prompting students to be involved with the world around them. The literature review explored the various challenges that inner-city students face outside of the classroom, and how art has the ability to serve as a

coping mechanism for stress. Data within the literature presented Ceramics as both calming and therapeutic for inner-city students who struggle with anxiety and depression. Working with clay helps reduce anxiety, and students are able to set aside their problems and experience relaxation while building sculptures. These findings are particularly noteworthy because inner-city students experience high levels of violence and unfortunate events; thus, positive outlets, such as art education are critical components to their educational success.

Additional data found that pairing technology with art education results in stronger student outcomes, and as technology advances, educators are encouraged to keep up with the technological norms in order to better serve students. Photography Art boosts student creativity and engagement by merging art and technology together. This medium has gained momentum and popularity because of the technological advances that students are exposed to on a daily basis. Photography art offers students the freedom to capture images that they find meaningful and relatable to their own life. Moreover, it assists in students learning how to articulate the meaning behind their art and what they want the audience to grasp.

The overall goal of the study was to provide an in depth look at the ways in which art education (through the mediums of Graffiti, Place Based Art, Ceramics and Photography Art) positively impact students within inner-city schools. The research confirmed that, as a whole, art education is imperative in the educational system. Additionally, national surveys show that the majority of Americans perceive art as a key educational component; however, the lack of resources and budget cuts limit art education for all.

Professional Application

The findings of this study motivated and sparked newfound practices within the author's educational approach. The Cornell (1996) study inclined the author to reminisce on the days of her youth and the challenges associated with being an adolescent in an urban community. The author believes that this is an important practice for all educators, as it is easy to forget what it was like to be a teenager. Placing one's self in the student's shoes will contribute in tearing down mental barriers had towards challenging students. The Cornell study exposed some of the bias ideas and stereotypes the author had formed towards teaching students in the inner-city parts of Minneapolis. Ironically, the author graduated from a school within the same district that she now teaches in; yet, she possessed many adverse feelings towards this community. The Cornell study found that teachers who return to teach in their childhood communities tend to have a greater impact on their students. This may serve as a disadvantage for educators coming from different experiences; however, when meaningful student relationships are made; students tend to perform better regardless of the educator's background.

Prior to the research study, the author often started the work day with anxiety and fear of what incidents would occur in class. Due to the nature of the teaching environment, she had the mindset that, even before classes started, problems were inevitable. Thankfully, this study softened the author's heart and opened her eyes to various ways in which she can positively serve students and guide them towards a successful future. The author hopes that this study would prompt inner-city educators to destroy their own negative ideologies and instead teach with an open heart; knowing that all student deserves the same amount of compassion and attentiveness.

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As more pedagogical instructions are developed, art educators have better opportunities to present engaging material in class. The Flipped Classroom Model allows students to be active learners through a series of hands on activities during class time. This model works particularly well in art classes, but also has proven successful in other content areas. Research shows that, as technology progresses, there is a decreased tolerance for lecture style distribution of course material. This model supports students in identifying their strengths by exploring their talents and capturing their attention through a variation of active learning methods. Instructors who adopt this model assign the instructional content as homework. Class time is then utilized to work through problems, develop concepts and engage in collaborative learning. Lecturing less creates available time to deepen ideas and increase student retention.

The study found that inner-city students respond best to educators that recognize their individual needs by creating activities that maximize individual achievement. Art education allows for differentiation, and based on the data, many students view art class as a place where they can let loose, breathe and not be boggled down by standardized test expectations. Whether it's behavioral issues, difficulties at home or disabilities, inner-city students need a place to relax and let their creative minds flow. According to the study, art stimulates the right brain activity which supports creative processes, fine motor skills and emotional balance. The first step of differentiation in the art classroom is remembering that art is about expression. It is important for art educators to remember that art is everywhere, and the connections between art and real life are infinite. Helping students see art outside of the classroom supports critical thinking skills and an increased desire to be more involved in class.

Limitations in the Research

The fight to keep art education in inner-city schools is an uphill battle. Due to the absence of sustainable funding, limited resources, and a shortage of teachers inclined to work in these communities; many inner-city school districts are struggling to maintain art education. While the research implies the importance of art education in inner-cities, there was not enough evidence to support that the findings were being practiced in all urban communities, resulting in the preservation of art education for all. The results of the study point to many positives, but the future of art education in inner-city schools is still uncertain as programs continue to be cut, and school administrators are forced to prioritize what stays and goes.

The study was also limited to the experiences of Caucasian instructors and how they are to successfully navigate in teaching inner-city students. Nonblack instructors often lack the cultural background and understanding of their students; which makes room for discriminating behavior and adverse teaching practices. The study confirmed positive implications for having teachers of color, but lacked the resources for those with no cultural bearings. The research pointed towards the importance of connecting to students, but the lack of methods for nonblack instructors limits the scope of this study.

Implications for Future Research

Given the findings, the author believes that post-graduate data on the successes of inner-city, art- educated students should be considered. It is important to reflect on student achievements and shortcomings so that future research can gain appropriate data to support the endeavor of keeping art education in school. We must be mindful of the

students' perspectives, as their voices are valuable to the study and the owning of their educational experiences.

Final Conclusion

The findings and research taken to compose this literature review have been both eye opening and rewarding. Art education is valuable to all students, even the ones in underperforming, inner-city schools. Those in favor of cutting inner-city art programs argue that students need to focus more on core classes, but the connection between art education and performance goes beyond test scores. Art education contributes to improved mental health, enhanced core skills, social development, behavioral adjustments and the overall well-being of students. Moreover, art education has the unique ability to inspire, increase confidence, reduce stress and minimize social isolation. Equally important is the need for driven, inner-city educators who are not afraid to build meaningful student relationships, and are determined to push students to their fullest potential. Simply put, art education is an outlet that holds transformative power on inner-city student lives.

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