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## Aesthetic Knowing: Essential to the Development of Heart and Mind.

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# Aesthetic Knowing: Essential to the Development of Heart and Mind.

## **Abstract**

Children are biologically wired to experience their world through rich sensory, affective, aesthetic, and imaginal experiences. Children thirst for art, music and movement, and these modes are utilized widely to learn the varied languages of literacy: the alphabet, numbers, vocabulary, body-sense and more. Yet, in response to meeting higher and more prescribed standards at the elementary and secondary levels, there is a tendency to narrow the curriculum, to consider art and music expendable, to view social-emotional development as external to the schoolhouse. This narrowing is happening just as our global culture is moving again toward multiple kinds of communication: toward oral language, pictures, sounds, diagrams, videos – a world that increasingly requires creative and collaborative problem solving, imagination, and multicultural competence. To be successful –academically, emotionally and socially – in our rapidly changing world, children need opportunities to nurture their imaginations and connect emotionally through drama, athletics, art, music and dance. Integrating the arts throughout and within the curriculum at all levels supports the development of broad-based literacy.

## **Keywords**

knowing, learning, aesthetic education

## **Author Statement**

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## **Aesthetic Knowing: Essential To The Development of Heart and Mind**

**Laura Howzell-Young and Susan Daniels**

Rebecca Novick author of the seminal publication *Many Paths to Literacy: Language, Literature and learning in the Primary Classroom* links music and art – beautifully – when she states:

Each writer must lead us musically through the pages of words, like a conductor leading an orchestra. Poetry began as oral art; like picture books, it is meant to be read aloud. Poems began as chants that invoked magic or told the story of a people and were handed down from generation to generations. The rhythm of words and lines was a way to help people sing and dance and remember the poems. We are bound to rhythm by the beat of our hearts, the passing of our breath, the cycles of the days and the seasons.

We know this: Children are biologically wired to experience their world through rich sensory, affective, aesthetic, and imaginal experiences. Children thirst for art, music and movement, and these modes are utilized widely to learn the varied languages of literacy: the alphabet, numbers, vocabulary, body-sense and more. Yet, in response to meeting higher and more prescribed standards at the elementary and secondary levels, there is a tendency to narrow the curriculum, to consider art and music expendable, to view social-emotional development as external to the schoolhouse. This narrowing is happening just as our global culture is moving again toward multiple kinds of communication: toward oral language, pictures, sounds, diagrams, videos – a world that increasingly requires creative and collaborative problem solving, imagination, and multicultural competence. To be successful –academically, emotionally and socially – in our rapidly changing world, children need opportunities to nurture their imaginations and connect emotionally through drama, athletics, art, music and dance. Integrating the arts throughout and within the curriculum at all levels supports the development of broad-based literacy.

Why Should Teachers Integrate the Arts?

1. Art activates emotional intelligence and art motivates.
2. Art is a way of communicating through multiple modalities and symbol systems.
3. Art is a way of thinking through our senses.
4. Art develops aesthetic sensitivity and satisfies the basic need for beauty.
5. Art develops higher-order thinking, creativity, and creative problem-solving capacities.
6. Art strengthens self-understanding and perceptions of uniqueness as well as cultural identifications.
7. Art creates respect and sensitivity for diversity.
8. Art develops responsibility, focus, concentration, and self-discipline.

9. Art reflects life, so it naturally integrates all curricular areas.

10. Art is a way to get inside students heads, to understand and to assess.

Excerpted from: Cornett (1999). *The Arts as Meaning Makers*. Prentice Hall.