

The benefits of an arts rich education

Pat Thomson made these postcards for International Arts Education Week 2021.

They are based on the Tracking Arts Learning and Engagement research project:
researchtale.net



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#1. An arts education builds self-belief

I know it's a cliché but I didn't think I'd be able to do it (Y12).

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#2. An arts education carefully supports students to become independent learners

They give you guidelines about what you have to have completed by a certain point and they let you get on with it, instead of telling you every single step (Y11).

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#3. An arts education supports students to develop their sense of “self”

*Keep creative arts in schools!
Do not take them out. We need them. I think it is important for development. The arts give people a chance to explore, find who they are. (Y10.)*

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#4. The arts are not just a subject. They are for life.

A lot of what I do outside of school is related to the arts and that then links back to school (Y13)

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#5. The arts create strong social bonds

The arts bring people together, engages them with other people's stuff. One of my favourite things is when I hear something that my friend has done and I really like it. It makes you go "That's great". It makes you more communal (Y13).

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#6. An arts education is an encounter
with new ideas and new worlds

*Nothing can move people like
the arts. When you go to a
theatre you can get lost in this
incredible world that has been
created around you, and you
get fully immersed in it (Y12)*

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#7. An arts education develops
creative expression and
communication

*You have the freedom to
express yourself in a positive
manner and no other subject
lets you do that. And if it's not
important for people to express
themselves then you're
effectively creating a
dictatorship (Y12).*

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8 An arts education develops reflection and self evaluation

Art is a journey. In Physics, it's a bit like coming into a film half way through, other people have made a lot of discoveries and you are working with some givens... you are being asked to work something out based on an assumption, and that one thing links to another. But in Art I am trying to understand my creative process, my entire way of doing things (Y13).

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#9. An arts education helps us understand who we are, where we've been and where we might go in the future

We've always had the arts. It's not something new. We've had them for hundreds and thousands of years. (Y11).

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*It helps me to deal with
tricky emotions*

*It's helped me grow as a
person*

*You can literally get it all
out*

*Being able to voice your
emotions is so important
(Y11s)*

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#10 An arts education supports
emotional development



#11 The arts are inclusive

A lot of children in the younger years are very reliant on the arts as a form of avoiding getting into the wrong crowd. It's a good form of guidance and after-school thing that stops them from going down a bad route. Keeps their concentration, focus ... really it helps so many people (Y13)

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#12 An arts education builds ambition

We say, 'look, we've done it before, we can do it again,' rather than 'oh we are never going to do this' (Y12).

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#13 An arts education demands persistence,
patience and regular practice

*Manage time well. Art
takes so long. Planning.
Trial and error (Y11)*

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14 An arts education develops
divergent and creative thinking
practices

*Creativity is so important.
Especially in this world where
everything is so rigid and you
have to be in a box, whether it
is your gender, your race, your
height, you have to be in a box.
Creativity allows you to go
above and beyond. (Y12)*

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When you act something out, you can put your own interpretation and you can see what kind of feelings that character is feeling. ... it opens up your eyes to - ah, Shakespeare in this scene is trying to depict let's say, Iago as malicious. But when you're not really acting it out it is hard to picture where that character is coming from (Y12))

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#15 An arts education supports learning in other subjects



#16 An arts education supports students to develop and justify their own interpretations

I didn't like coming to school and being told what was right and wrong. I know it's only Shakespeare but we came in the room and they said you can read this text and have your own opinions – it was really good (Y12).

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17 An arts education supports students to meet the demands of everyday life

I'm really into my photography and graphics and cause I'm dyslexic I was getting really upset. I had to resit my English GCSE and if I am sitting at home and not getting it, I'll just pick up my camera and get out and take pictures and relax and then I'd be able to come back to it (Y12)

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18 An arts education helps students to become more self assured

When you first walk on to the stage you get that fiery feeling in your belly and it stops you from speaking. You are kind of star struck there and you can't really do much. As you do more, Drama helps that feeling go away. You realise this is an environment that you can really express yourself in all sorts of ways,. This is somewhere you can show all aspects of yourself without that fiery feeling or being afraid (Y11).

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#19 An arts education supports students to build their future

My art is about representation, like painting Muslim women who aren't depicted in art at all. And I'd like to stamp their place in history, to be honest. But you need more artists who can portray the life that we live so that there is representation out there, so people can relate and if this more representative art isn't supported then that's just not going to happen (Y13)

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#20 Arts education encourages questioning, exploring , problem-solving and taking risks

In Art they say ,‘you could be doing’, whereas in other subjects they say ‘you should be doing’ (Y10).

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