Why Take Away the Paint?

Children walking down big colorful hallways with sounds of clanging and clanging coming from large boxes full of crayons, markers, and pencils with construction paper in hand. This is the picture that I get when I think about my favorite part of elementary school. Every child can relate to art no matter how skinny, tall, smart, athletic, or gifted, every child has feelings and emotions that influence art. Students and parents might no think that art is important as math or science, but art education has a large impact on the different ways that students think and perceive the “important” subjects. Art making isn’t just finger paints or construction cut outs, it is the building block for all other subjects.

The Indiana Professional Standards board has a list of licensing rules for teachers that doesn’t just include coloring in the lines, Visual Art educators must have a well rounded education not only in the arts but also general subjects. They also have a long list of standards that they must plan for and meet in the classroom. In the Goals 2000 Educate America Act, art was identified a core subject. As a result the national Visual Arts standards were made which include the ability to communicate through the arts, caspacity to reflect and assess art, knowledge of art within a variety of cultures and periods, and understanding of arts relevance to other subjects and life in general(Bates). Art education also balanced with the study of making art and art culture. It has four domains which include art production, art criticism, aesthetics, and art history (Bates).

Art has changed throughout the years to progress with students and become more important to the curriculum. Art has been introduced to regular classrooms to help in other
subjects like experimental learning, problem solving opportunities, and freedom for self-expression. This is known as correlated art (Becoming An Art Teacher). With this new way of integrating art with other subjects, students are able to use self-expression which helps to stimulate individualized answers in the classroom.

Art has also shown importance through Gardners Multiple Intelligences. In Gardners theory, he states that the classroom should integrate multiple intelligences into a lesson or daily activity. (Ed Psych book) There are eight intelligences and within that list is Spatinal Intelligence which is related with art. Students who are gifted in art, or right brained, use different methods and thinking strategies to understand a concept. In a classroom there are a variety of intelligences, so there are a variety of different ways that students learn and not all will be the same.

Just as students go through different stages in other subjects, Art students go through their own list of stages in their creative development. When students learn how to read, they progress in vocabulary and books, Art does about the same thing. Art education guides students through their stages. Students start at the scribbling stage at the age of two years old, then go through four other stages before they get to their last stage at the age of fourteen. They are in the last stage from fourteen through seventeen. The last stage in the Period of Decision were students express feelings and personal opinions such as school food. (Drawing illustrating stages of artistic de vel.). Different students develop at different rates and speeds and some students don’t always get all the way through the stages such as some students never learn how to read or
write. It is the job of the art teacher to guide these students through the stages while challenging them to go toward the next level of their art making.

Art education also creates Knowledge In Action which is the current state of mental constructions for shaping coherence, in other words creativity (Bamerger). Knowledge in action is a great tool for students not only in school now but in the job field. Right now employers are looking for people who can brainstorm solutions and have productive group projects. The biggest people in NASA today have to be able to put objects together very quickly with only bare necessities in emergencies to save lives. Knowledge in Action can be enhanced by projects in the classroom that make students think beyond the box. Projects that give students objects that they have never seen before and make order to it or an object.

Art gives students at least three approaches to assignments to enhance both a structured and expressive environment. There are opened, closed, and Laissez-faire approaches (Bates). Close ended instruction gives students a very detailed and structured approach, an example is students copying a drawing of a fish off of the board. And open ended approach which is advocated the National Art Education Association, gives some direction but students can use self-expression to come up with different ideas. The Laissez-faire approach has no direction. Students are given the opportunity to use whatever resources they want. The reason open ended instruction is so popular is because it help problem solving in the classroom.

Events in world history are also taught in the arts. Many of the event that students learn about in their history classes can be directly related to art. In the high school standard H1.1 students are asked to identify connections between major world events and issues and the way artists have responded through their work (DOE Standards). Students have to learn about event
in history that are portrayed in art such as Picasso’s cry for help when the Spanish Civil war started in his painting *Guernica*. Students must learn about the event in history first, to grasp the concept of what the artist is trying to tell the audience.

Art education is a lot more than drawing and painting. Students don’t get the experience of an art class are missing out on a well rounded education. Art is apart of our future and our past. Art is a form of communication not only to others but to ourselves too. Art is the building block for other subjects and without an art education students will be missing basic cognitive skills and individual concepts. Art is a way for our future leaders to express their inner being and foster thoughts.