



Research Findings

Americans Believe the Arts Are an Important Part of Society and Education

84% of Americans Believe Arts and STEM Subjects Complement Each Other Well

Washington, DC, April 9, 2019 — A recent survey conducted by Ipsos on behalf of LifeWTR shows that many Americans believe the arts are an important part of the education system, whether in elementary school (90%), middle school (93%), or high school (92%) – and eight in ten say it is important for adults to continue to have access to arts education outside of school (80%). Among an oversample of adults who are defined as being ‘culturally curious’, even more emphasis is placed on the importance of the arts in the education system.

- Americans point to creative writing (71%) and music (70%) as most important to offer to students in school, while more than half believe that drawing/painting (58%), media arts (56%), performance arts (54%), and graphic arts (53%) are important to offer students. Subjects like printmaking (21%) and ceramics (24%) are least commonly reported as important to offer to students.

Americans believe an arts education is equally important to society today (79%) as it was ten to fifteen years ago (78%) and that it will remain an important part of society ten to fifteen years in the future (77%). Support for the continued value of an arts education is backed up by 91% of Americans who believe the arts are a vital part of a well-rounded education for K-12 students. Furthermore, 84% of Americans believe that arts and STEM subjects complement each other well.

Despite this support, the outlook for an arts education is not entirely positive. Eighty percent of Americans agree that arts education is not as valued as it used to be and 71% percent of parents report that their children have less access to arts in school due to budget cuts. Even though 93% of Americans believe finding a creative outlet is important for all ages, most adults still report that today’s fast paced world sometimes makes it difficult to take a moment to themselves (86%) and that as they get older they find themselves prioritizing taking time to be creative less often (70%).

- Compared to men, women are significantly more likely to believe that the arts are a vital part of a well-rounded education for K-12 students (93% vs. 88% of men). However, they are also particularly more likely to feel as though arts education is not as valued as it used to be (82% vs. 78%).

Culturally curious parents appear more likely to enroll their child in schools that provide a stronger artistic education. Sixty-nine percent of American parents report that their students often or sometimes have the opportunity to explore creative exercises in school compared to 80% of culturally curious parents. Likewise, 67% of parents report that their children often or sometimes bring art projects home compared to 77% of culturally curious parents. Lastly, just 44% of all parents report that their children often or sometimes have fieldtrips to visit art museums through their schools while 64% of culturally curious parents report the same opportunities for their children.

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Among the core curriculum subjects taught in schools, reading (98%), math (97%), technology (96%) and science/engineering (96%) are seen as being the most important. At least nine in ten also believe it is important for schools to incorporate trade skills (93%) and social studies/history (90%) into school curriculums. The arts (81%) and languages (89%) fall slightly in importance among the general population, although culturally curious Americans are more likely to report these subjects as important with 95% among this group saying teaching languages is important and 89% reporting the arts as important. Women (86% vs. 76% of men) and those with a college degree (84% vs. 79% of those with no degree) are also more likely to stress the importance of the arts as an academic subject.

- Nearly nine in ten (89%) believe that creative courses are just as important for a student's growth as other courses and that arts education is important to teach children to think outside the box (88%). Another 80% agree that schools should be offering more arts centered courses for students.
- However, seven in ten also think that while arts education is important, there are more important subjects that need our funding and attention (71%).

Despite the arts being reported as a slightly less important school subject, Americans identify it as an important subject for developing skills such as creativity (95%), communication (82%), collaboration (81%), and social skills (80%). More quantitative skills such as critical thinking (78%) or problem solving (73%) are also seen as being developed through the arts, but not as easily as some others. Culturally curious Americans are more likely to believe that the arts are impactful in developing these quantitative skills, including 84% who feel the arts help to develop critical thinking and 82% who say the same for problem solving. A similar trend is seen among Millennials, where greater proportions see the arts as helping to develop skills such as collaboration (85% vs. 78% of Baby Boomers), social skills (82% vs. 77%), and problem solving (76% vs. 69%).

- When asked to rate the two most important skills taught through the education system, the most common answers among all Americans and the culturally curious are problem solving (56% and 48%, respectively) and critical thinking (47% and 51%). Communication rounds out the top three at 41% and 39%, followed by social skills (30% and 28%), creativity (17% and 24%), and collaboration (9% and 11%).

Two thirds of Americans believe that without arts education, students will not be as prepared for the jobs of the future (64%) – and this jumps to 75% among the culturally curious. Among those who are employed, skills such as communication (97%), problem solving (96%), critical thinking (95%), social skills (94%), collaboration (93%), and creativity (83%) – all of which are rated as being positively impacted by arts education – are considered important to being successful in their career.

Personal Sentiments Towards/Interaction with the Arts

For 93%, creativity isn't only about art, it's about thinking differently. Most Americans also believe that being exposed to different arts helps broaden one's mind (93%) and that participation in the arts is a great way to reduce stress (90%). Another nine in ten recognize that art and creativity drive multiple industries including fashion and technology (93%) and that without creativity, we wouldn't have the things we love, like fashion, design and social media (92%).

Just under nine in ten believe that everyone has the potential to be creative (89%), with 71% saying they would describe themselves as a creative person. Art is also seen to have an impact beyond the individual, with 83% in agreement that art is essential to building communities and identities and a similar proportion saying art helps to preserve and expand their culture (84%).

Social media platforms act as an outlet to express creativity for six in ten (59%) – though this jumps to 79% among the culturally curious. In fact, one in four say that they use social media for inspiration, especially with creating and curating their life (24%) and/or



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to follow trends such as fashion, culture and celebrities (23%). One in ten try to create a unique image on their social media platforms (12%).

- Culturally curious adults are much more likely to use social media platforms as creative outlets, including 58% who use social media to follow trends, 53% who turn to social media for inspiration in their own lives, and 33% who try to create unique images of themselves online.

Nearly all Americans report that they often or sometimes enjoy artistic activities. By far the most common activity Americans enjoy is listening to music (91%). Interestingly, creating music is reported as the least commonly enjoyed activity – just 17% of Americans report creating music often or sometimes, though this number jumps to 33% for culturally curious Americans. Other common answers include going to the movies (58% of Americans and 79% of the culturally curious), photography (48% and 65%), and going to the theater (45% and 68%).

However, just over a third admit that there are times in their lives where they feel they are prevented from being creative (35% vs. 49% who say no and 15% who say that they are not sure). When asked why they sometimes struggle to be creative, a majority of those who say they have been prevented from being creative in the past report a lack of time (58%) and finances (50%) as the top reasons.

About the Study

These are the findings from an Ipsos poll conducted January 3 - 7, 2019 on behalf of LifeWTR. For the survey, a sample of 2,011 adults ages 18 and over from the continental U.S., Alaska and Hawaii was interviewed online, in English. An oversample of 507 'culturally curious' adults was also interviewed. To qualify for the survey, the culturally curious adults had to be between the ages of 25-44, have a household income of at least \$50,000, a college degree, live in an urban area, and report using social media often. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll has a credibility interval of ± 2.5 percentage points for all respondents and ± 5.0 percentage points for the oversample.

The sample for this study was randomly drawn from Ipsos's online panel (see link below for more info on "Access Panels and Recruitment"), partner online panel sources, and "river" sampling (see link below for more info on the Ipsos "Ampario Overview" sample method) and does not rely on a population frame in the traditional sense. Ipsos uses fixed sample targets, unique to each study, in drawing sample. After a sample has been obtained from the Ipsos panel, Ipsos calibrates respondent characteristics to be representative of the U.S. Population using standard procedures such as raking-ratio adjustments. The source of these population targets is U.S. Census 2016 American Community Survey data. The sample drawn for this study reflects fixed sample targets on demographics. Post-hoc weights were made to the population characteristics on gender, age, and region.

Statistical margins of error are not applicable to online nonprobability sampling polls. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error and measurement error. Where figures do not sum to 100, this is due to the effects of rounding. Ipsos calculates a design effect (DEFF) for each study based on the variation of the weights, following the formula of Kish (1965). This study had a credibility interval adjusted for design effect of the following ($n=2,011$, $DEFF=1.5$, adjusted Confidence Interval=4.0).

For more information about conducting research intended for public release or Ipsos' online polling methodology, please visit our [Public Opinion Polling and Communication](#) page where you can download our brochure, see our public release protocol, or contact us.

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