

University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

UTC Scholar

---

Honors Theses

Student Research, Creative Works, and  
Publications

---

5-2024

## The benefits of increasing access to theatre education in K-12 schools

Jaden Partain

University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, [pjn133@mocs.utc.edu](mailto:pjn133@mocs.utc.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.utc.edu/honors-theses>



Part of the [Theatre and Performance Studies Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Partain, Jaden, "The benefits of increasing access to theatre education in K-12 schools" (2024). *Honors Theses*.

This Theses is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Research, Creative Works, and Publications at UTC Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of UTC Scholar. For more information, please contact [scholar@utc.edu](mailto:scholar@utc.edu).

The Benefits of Increasing Access to Theatre Education in K-12 Schools

Jaden Partain

Departmental Honors Thesis

The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

Department of Theatre

Examination Date: January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Anne Swedberg, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of Theatre  
Thesis Director

Laurie Allen, M.F.A.  
Lyndhurst Chair of Excellence in Arts Education  
Professor of Practice  
Department Examiner

Emma Hoffbauer, M.F.A.  
Visiting Professor of Scenic Design  
Department Examiner

## **Abstract**

Theatre has been a part of education in the United States since the nineteenth century, when Horace Mann launched the public-school movement, and educators introduced the children of immigrants to American language and culture. The use of theatre in education has gradually evolved along with K-12 curriculums in the United States. However, during this time, theatre has not been used as well or much as it could be, even though participation in theatre can improve students' educational achievements while simultaneously teaching important life skills. In my research, I look at how theatre can be a vital part of education in secondary schools in the United States and how theatre can help school systems reach their educational goals. After reading a range of studies about the benefits of theatre, I analyzed the Hamilton County, Tennessee, Board of Education's strategic plan, Opportunity 2030, to see how theatre aligns with its goals. Even though Opportunity 2030 does not mention the inclusion of theatre to achieve its goals, my research demonstrates that theatre provides undeniable benefits for students, advancing the educational goals set forth in school districts' strategic plans.

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
The Presence of Theatre in School District Strategic Plans.....	5
A Brief History of Theatre in Education.....	14
Theatre as Experiential Learning.....	23
Theatre as Arts Integration.....	33
Moving Forward Strategically in Theatre Education.....	39
Appendix A.....	43
Appendix B.....	49
Appendix C.....	52
Works Cited.....	55

## **Introduction:**

Elementary and secondary schools across the United States demonstrate both a lack of understanding of the benefits of theatre and misconceptions of theatre by under-using theatre in their curriculums. The purpose of my study is to connect research on the benefits of theatre in K-12 education with the goals school districts utilize to justify their allocation of resources. In my thesis you will find the following sections: (1) the lack of presence of theatre in school district strategic plans, (2) a brief history of theatre in education, (3) theatre as experiential learning, (4) theatre as arts integration, and (5) moving forward strategically in theatre education. All of these sections provide advocacy support for the benefits of theatre in K-12 education based on research and experience.

In 2019, seventeen states participated in a study sponsored by the Arts Education Data Project to produce the National Arts Education Status Report, focused on the use of the arts in K-12 schools (music, visual arts, theatre, dance, and others). The report determined that approximately 35.2 percent of K-12 public schools in the USA have access to theatre (National Arts Education Status Report, Access tab). Elementary schools usually prioritize music and art education over theatre. Access to theatre education goes up slightly in middle school and peaks in high school. Most of this access comes from schools in the city with only 26.4 percent of students in rural schools having access to theatre (National Arts Education Status Report, Access tab).

Research shows that by using arts integration and experiential learning to bring theatre into their curriculum, schools can help students develop a range of skills that can be useful in their education as well as in their daily lives. I found the following list of “25 Life Skills Learned

in Theatre” on the website for Appalachian State University’s Department of Theatre and Dance, credited to the late Dr. Louis E. Catron:

- (1) oral communication skills;
- (2) creative problem solving abilities;
- (3) more than “get it done”;
- (4) motivation and commitment;
- (5) willingness to work cooperatively;
- (6) the ability to work independently;
- (7) time-budgeting skills;
- (8) initiative;
- (9) promptness and respect for deadlines;
- (10) acceptance of rules;
- (11) the ability to learn quickly and correctly;
- (12) respect for colleagues;
- (13) respect for authority;
- (14) adaptability and flexibility;
- (15) ability to work under pressure;
- (16) a healthy self-image;
- (17) acceptance of disappointment and the ability to bounce back;
- (18) self-discipline;
- (19) a goal-oriented approach to work;
- (20) concentration;
- (21) dedication;
- (22) a willingness to accept responsibility;
- (23) leadership skills;
- (24) self-confidence; and
- (25) enjoyment (Catron).

This is just a summary of Dr. Catron’s list (see Appendix A for further details) and not all theatre students acquire all of these skills. However, Dr. Catron’s list is representative of the range of learning that students can take away from their experiences in theatre. Since some of these skills (such as working under pressure, flexibility, and respect) can be hard to assess through the use of standardized testing, they may not be visible to administrators who make curricular decisions. The pressure on schools to test students for achievements in math and reading can obscure the achievement of life skills like self-confidence, healthy self-image, and time-budgeting.

As shown in Dr. Catron’s list, the benefits of participating in theatre go beyond the education of students. The American Alliance for Theatre and Education states that “in addition to building social and communication skills overall, involvement in drama courses and performance has been shown to improve students’ self-esteem as well as their confidence in their

academic abilities” (American Alliance for Theatre and Education). Improved self-esteem as well as students’ confidence in their academic abilities directly impacts their performance in school and in life. Joshua Abrams, who was president of the Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE) during the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020, published his thoughts about how theatre serves students in *Theatre Topics*. In his article, “State of the Organization: Thoughts on the Importance of Theatre Education in 2020,” Abrams noted some of the practical applications of theatre skills for theatre students who soon would be graduating:

Our students will graduate to an expanded industry, building props and sets for shop windows, acting or movement-designing video games, or using virtual reality to improve well-being for dementia sufferers and hospital acute-care patients. Expanding our pedagogy to incorporate new forms, modes, and globally distant collaborations will continue to expand where, how, and what theatre is. We are seeing more of those tools in this moment, and we must also continue to work directly with the makers of those tools in order to help imagine possibilities that are not yet actualized (Abrams 2).

Participation in theatre gives students skills they can use even in the middle of a pandemic. Abrams remarks that theatre students learn to work within their “given circumstances,” which are the unchangeable facts that a script offers the director, designer, or actor – the who, what, where, and when of the play. “Theatre is the art of dealing with given circumstances. What we teach in theatre is engagement with the situation of the moment. For an actor or director, that is the art of listening, looking, and reacting; for a designer or maker, it is the reality of materials, technologies, and budgets” (Abrams 2). In other words, Abrams is saying that theatre students learn to be flexible and adaptive as they deal with the reality of their situation, which might include adjusting to a global pandemic.

As a future theatre educator, I have had the opportunity first-hand to hear and see high school students discuss what they believe to be the benefits of participating in theatre. Students talk about how they enjoy theatre and continue to take it solely because it gives them a space for expression, unlike their experiences in other classes. Students also explain that they feel less stress in theatre than in their other classes. Unfortunately, stress can make students lose engagement and hurt student learning. Dr. Lara Boyd, a neuroscientist and physical therapist at the University of British Columbia who studies the effects of stress on brain health, touches on this in her 2022 TEDx Talk, “How Can Stress Affect Learning?” noting that, “high levels of stress for long periods of time can interfere with our ability to learn” (Boyd TEDx, 1:25). She points out that cortisol, a hormone released in response to stress, can interfere with the brain’s ability to create the long-term memories needed for learning, especially when stress remains continuous and a person’s cortisol levels never have a chance to lower by the end of the day. Boyd states, “all of this stress is making us worse learners” (Boyd TEDx 3:09). After I watched Dr. Boyd’s TEDx talk, I realized that when the students in my classroom experience less stress as a result of participating in theatre, they actually become better learners overall.

A multitude of studies exhibit the benefits of theatre, inside or outside of the classroom. In my research, I have looked at studies by The American Alliance for Theatre and Education, The Kennedy Center, Americans for the Arts, and various universities. The Arthur Miller Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to increasing the number of trained theatre educators in the public school system, writes on its webpage, “Why Theatre Education?” that it has chosen to focus on theatre education because “theater teaches essential soft skills that foster empathy and effective interactions with others, aiding in human development regardless of the career path one chooses to pursue” (Why Theatre Education?). Having started exploring theatre



in high school and continuing to pursue it throughout college, I recognize the truth of this statement. I have watched my classmates develop what the Arthur Miller Foundation calls their “soft skills” over my past eight years in high school and college theatre programs. My participation in theatre classrooms has inspired me to become a high school theatre teacher so that I can help others experience the same kind of growth and skill-building that I have enjoyed throughout my education.

### **The Presence of Theatre in School District Strategic Plans:**

While I am delighted to find the benefits I experienced in theatre education present in research, many schools still struggle with providing access and opportunity to study theatre to their students. School leaders may not fully understand the benefits of theatre education without direct experience, which may make aligning theatre programs with strategic goals difficult. If advocates for the arts in schools can link these benefits to strategic plans, then schools may provide resources to help reach these goals. Theatre helps students learn multiple skills, gives a place for many students to belong when they feel left out elsewhere, and creates a community in the school while also connecting to the community outside of the school. These aspects of theatre align directly with the goals that school systems in the United States outline in their strategic plans.

School districts use strategic plans to publicize their schools’ goals for four to ten years in the future. The plans also indicate how school districts want to achieve their goals, using different statistics and references to figure out these goals and their plans to reach them. The most recent strategic plan for Hamilton County, Tennessee, where I am earning my bachelor’s degree in theatre, is called Opportunity 2030. The Hamilton County Department of

Education developed this plan by meeting with school administrators as well as parents and the community. The Hamilton County Board of Education describes this process on its website:

To develop the 2024-2030 Strategic Plan, *Opportunity 2030*, we used the recommendations developed by our Superintendent's 100-Day Transitions Committees in the Spring of 2022 as a foundation and then leveraged our HCS Family & Community Engagement Department to engage stakeholders during nine Community Input Sessions across the district. We met in person and virtually with families, staff, community partners, and the district advisory councils. Additionally, a Community Input Survey was administered to gather ideas from our wide-ranging stakeholders about the ways we can align our strategies to directly respond to the needs of our students, staff, and community (Opportunity 2030)

The strategic plan is broken down into five different sections: 1) Every student learns, 2) Every student belongs, 3) Every school equipped, 4) Every employee valued, and 5) Every community served. “Every student learns” is a part of the plan to ensure that students develop as good readers, writers, and thinkers. “Every student belongs” is a part of the plan to ensure students are connected to their school and community, and that their well-being improves from this. “Every school equipped” ensures that schools provide safe environments to support student learning and resources to remove any barriers. “Every employee valued” is a part of the plan to ensure that every employee in the school system is valued, supported, and connected to their work. Lastly, “every community served” is in the plan to ensure that everyone involved in students’ learning is connected to help create a thriving future (Opportunity 2030). Each of these sections start off with the word “every,” indicating a goal that is collective and inclusive of a range of identities, abilities, and interests. In my opinion, “every” is also a word that is part of

the practice of theatre in K-12 education, because there is a place for every student who wants to participate. Theatre is a collaborative art form that calls upon a range of skills and abilities on the part of many different people, all of whom must cooperate and work together in designing, building, rehearsing, and producing a play.

Under the section “Every student belongs,” the Hamilton County Opportunity 2030 plan lists, “Creating a welcoming space for all: Equipping and sustaining all educators, including our teachers, staff members, and administrators, to design supports that include and encourage every learner” (Hamilton County Department of Education). Generally, K-12 theatre is a welcoming place for everyone who expresses a desire to participate in a class or a production, with support for students with special needs continuing to grow through organizations such as People Like Us or the work of educators such as Lory Stewart, a Texas high school teacher who offers an adaptive musical theatre class at Hays High School in Buda, Texas, recently discussed in an article by Natalie Clare for the Educational Theatre Association (Clare). Student participation in theatre programs has the potential to help the Hamilton County Board of Education reach the goal of “Every student belongs” in Opportunity 2030. Participating in rehearsing and building a performance, whether backstage or onstage, can foster a sense of community among students who share a project and a purpose. I saw this happen in my high school, where many students in my theatre class believed that the theatre classroom was their home and was the place where they found most of their friends. In college, I have become life-long friends with many of my classmates and have experienced them talking about how theatre is their “safe space.” The addition of theatre programs in K-12 school curriculums could help learners find encouragement within themselves and in their studies. Theatre has provided these skills for many and will continue to do this because of the supportive community theatre has the capacity to provide.

The relationship that students can build with their theatre teachers points to another benefit of bringing theatre studies into the K-12 curriculum, connecting with “Every student belongs” and “Every student learns” in the Opportunity 2030 strategic plan. “Every student learns” lists among its strategies, “Creating a welcoming space for all: Equipping and sustaining our teachers, staff members, and administrators, to design supports that include and encourage every learner.” One such support is the type of mentoring relationships that spring up in theatre classrooms as theatre teachers closely supervise the work of students in everything from set construction to onstage performance. In Sara Rimm-Kaufman and Lia Sandilos’ article, “Improving Students' Relationships with Teachers to Provide Essential Supports for Learning” posted on the American Psychological Association’s webpage, the authors note the benefits of students who are able to form close relationships with their teachers:

Improving students' relationships with teachers has important, positive and long-lasting implications for both students' academic and social development. Solely improving students' relationships with their teachers will not produce gains in achievement. However, those students who have close, positive and supportive relationships with their teachers will attain higher levels of achievement than those students with more conflict in their relationships. Picture a student who feels a strong personal connection to her teacher, talks with her teacher frequently, and receives more constructive guidance and praise rather than just criticism from her teacher. The student is likely to trust her teacher more, show more engagement in learning, behave better in class and achieve at higher levels academically. Positive teacher-student relationships draw students into the process of learning and promote their desire to learn (assuming that the content material of the class is

engaging, age-appropriate and well matched to the student's skills) (Improving Students' Relationships).

The benefits to academic and social development that come from strong teacher-student relationships frequently show up in the Opportunity 2030 strategic plan and is another aspect of an environment that supports student learning.

Another section in the Hamilton County Board of Education's Strategic Plan, Opportunity 2030, is "Every student learns." This section mentions the strategy of "embracing strategies for building self-efficacy: Infusing growth opportunities for students and educators around students' belief in themselves and their own capacity to achieve" (Hamilton County Schools). Stanford University professor and psychologist Albert Bandura notes that positive self-efficacy, the belief that one can ultimately succeed in a task, impacts human achievement:

People must have a robust sense of personal efficacy to sustain the perseverant effort needed to succeed. Self-doubts can set in fast after some failures or reverses. The important matter is not that difficulties arouse self-doubt, which is a natural immediate reaction, but the speed of recovery of perceived self-efficacy from difficulties. Some people quickly recover their self-assurance; others lose faith in their capabilities. Because the acquisition of knowledge and competencies usually requires sustained effort in the face of difficulties and set-backs, it is the resiliency of self-belief that counts" (Bandura, 411-412)

Theatre and arts integration provide extensive resources to develop the kind of positive self-efficacy Banduras discusses in his work.

Transforming Education, a not-for-profit "committed to sharing what we're learning, to provide educators and other practitioners with actionable, evidence-based strategies, information,

and promising practices for embedding whole child approaches within the education system,” offers a Self-Efficacy Toolkit on its website. Transforming Education notes that self-efficacy

... shapes the behaviors and strategies that help one pursue their goal. High self-efficacy reflects confidence in the ability to exert control over one’s own motivation, behavior, and environment, and allows students to become advocates for their own needs and support. Research suggests that self-efficacy can boost student achievement, foster emotional health and well-being, and serve as a valid predictor of motivation and learning. Studies also have shown that students with high levels of self-efficacy participate more in class, work harder, persist longer, and have fewer adverse emotional reactions when encountering difficulties than students with lower self-efficacy (Self-Efficacy Toolkit).

The Self-Efficacy Toolkit offers five research-based strategies to support student development in self-efficacy: (1) performance experience, (2) vicarious experience, (3) social persuasion, (4) imaginal experience, and (5) physical and emotional states (Self-Efficacy Toolkit). Arts-integration in connection with theatre (which I will explain later in my thesis) provides all of these tools as many of the arts involve performance, observation, coaching and feedback, imagination, and the use of physical and emotional sensations. All of these tools can be connected to helping students achieve a sense of self-efficacy, the belief that they have the capacity to achieve the goals they set for themselves. Therefore, bringing theatre skills into the K-12 classroom by using arts integration would help Hamilton County reach this goal from Opportunity 2030.

The fifth section of the Hamilton County Opportunity 2030 strategic plan, “Every community served” offers strategies to accomplish its over-arching goal that “Every family,

partner, mentor and advocate will be connected and empowered in their critical role in supporting our students to become life-ready.” One of these strategies is “Expanding career exploration and exposure opportunities including Future Ready Institutes, Pre-Apprenticeships and Work Based Learning: Stimulating career-oriented ambitions through authentic post-secondary and work-based experiences via robust community and business partnerships.” (Hamilton County Department of Education). In college, I had the opportunity to experience this kind of career exploration when I performed as a simulated patient in connection with my school’s College of Nursing. I helped future nurse practitioners train for real-life situations by performing a carefully scripted and planned role as a patient with asthma. This kind of experience for students can help prepare them for the workforce and therefore help reach the goal of “Every community served” in Opportunity 2030.

In an article written for the online UTC News, reporter Chuck Wasserstrom quotes Dr. Amber Roaché, the nurse practitioner program coordinator for the College of Nursing, saying:

One of the biggest changes we’ve made to our graduate program is having the simulated patient actors come in and portray real patients for our students ... They are able to get the hands-on training and do everything they need to do with a patient in a safe, controlled environment, and we can provide feedback immediately so they know what they’re doing well or where they may need some improvement. It has been such an amazing partnership that we have developed with the Theatre Program and the Arts-Based Collaborative” (Wasserstrom)

In Wasserstrom’s article, Laurie Allen, the executive director for the Arts-Based Collaborative at UTC who facilitated the collaboration between theatre students and the nurse practitioner program, explains:

Roleplay is something that helps a lot of professions helping to contextualize experience and prepare ... Along with that, there is the opportunity for students in theatre to understand career pathways that may not be visible to them yet. Seeing how their craft can be utilized in different ways beyond just performing a role in a play is huge. For the performer, they're utilizing so many of their skills: Improvisation, thinking on their feet, responding in the moment, being true to character (Wasserstrom)

Allen and Roaché's observations indicate the learning benefits that can come from a partnership between theatre and the health professions. Nurse-practitioner students learn to interact with an actual human being, rather than a plastic mannequin, and acting students have a chance to learn about specific illnesses that they portray realistically by utilizing their acting skills to create a believable patient-practitioner relationship.

As I looked at the Hamilton County's strategic plan for "Every Community Served," with its emphasis on preparing students for post-secondary education as well as job-related skills, I visited the list of Future Ready Institutes, described on the Hamilton County Schools' webpage as:

...small learning communities within schools that offer programs of study in a variety of career clusters such as Advanced Manufacturing; Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources; Architecture & Construction; Arts, Audio/Visual Technology & Communications; Business Management & Administration; Education & Training; Health Science; Hospitality & Tourism; Information Technology; JROTC; Law, Public Safety, Correction, & Security; Marketing, Distribution & Logistics; STEM; and Transportation" (Future Ready Institutes).



Looking over the list of the Future Ready Institutes' "Program of Study Options" (See Appendix C), I see a list of institutes that include many of the skills theatre students can explore as they learn to design and build sets, create lighting plots, build sound cues, or even serve as simulated patients. Welding, for example, is offered at the Howard School and the Harrison Bay Future Ready Center. Welding also is a skill that can be extremely helpful in building props and sets involving metal work. The Kevin Dukes Career and Innovation Academy in Jackson County, Alabama, lists a description of the use in welding in the entertainment industry on its webpage entitled "Eight Awesome Careers in Welding You Probably Didn't Know About":

Behind the scenes of a movie or TV show is a large crew with many different roles, including welding. Welders are called on to build sets, modify cars, make metal props, and whatever else that's needed. As a welder in the entertainment industry, every day is different, the pace is very fast, you get to be creative and if you're lucky, you may meet some celebrities. For this type of work, you'll need to learn how to weld with aluminum. Most film sets are made of aluminum since it's cheap and can be made to look like many other metals (Eight Awesome Careers in Welding You Probably Didn't Know About)

Also listed on the Hamilton County Future Ready Institute are skills such as building construction, architecture, and engineering design, all of which are also skills to be learned in the design and construction of sets (Program of Study Options). These Future Ready opportunities align with the kind of experiential learning (discussed later in this thesis) provided in theatre classes.

Overall, many of the goals that are in the 2030 strategic plan can be linked to practices that students learn by participating in theatre or theatre-related activities. Theatre helps students learn multiple skills, gives a place for many students to belong, and creates a

community in the school while also connecting to the community outside of the school. However, the arts still are not mentioned in any of the sections of Opportunity 2030 as a way to help with reaching Hamilton County's goals. Schools use strategic plans to make decisions regarding resources and funding that will help reach their goals. Connecting the skills achieved through participation in theatre with strategic plans is an important step to ensuring that theatre receives resources and schools provide a better education to students.

### **A Brief History of Theatre in Education:**

The arts have been a part of the American education system at least since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, usually in connection with preparing workers with the kinds of skills needed for entering the work force. Writing about the use of art in the classroom in his blog article, "The Arts in the Public Schools: An Intellectual History," Jesse Raber notes that, "when Horace Mann launched the public-school movement in the 1830s and 1840s, he argued that public education would make the people better workers, and that drawing, which he wanted to include in the curriculum, had commercial applications" (Raber). Raber shows here that drawing, a form of art, was used in early classrooms partly to enhance students' employment prospects. Drawing is also a major part of theatre as it is used for set designs, costuming, and directing.

While art was being taught in American classrooms since the early to mid-1800s, theatre was not officially introduced until the late 1800s and early 1900s, often in connection with settlement houses in cities with high rates of immigration. One example is Chicago's Hull House, founded by Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr in 1889. In her 2015 master's thesis for Loyola University entitled *The Settlement Stage: How Hull House Bridged Leisure, Creativity, and Play*, Ann Goodson notes the use of theatre at Hull House, beginning with the study of Shakespeare's plays in 1890. Shakespeare's plays appeared to be a popular tool for helping

immigrants engage in U.S. language and culture around the country. A Folger Shakespeare Library *Shakespeare Unlimited* podcast, Episode 130, focusing on the topic of “Shakespeare in Immigrant New York,” pointed out that, “In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a new influx of immigrants from Eastern Europe and Italy arrived in the United States. Many of them settled in Lower Manhattan. Reformers wondered how these new arrivals could be assimilated into American culture. Their solution? Give ‘em Shakespeare” (Folger). The study and production of Shakespeare’s plays turns up in many accounts about the education of immigrant children in urban areas in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Also in New York City, social worker Alice Minnie Herts founded the Children’s Educational Theatre in 1903 at a settlement house called the Educational Alliance. Unsurprisingly, the Children’s Educational Theatre’s first production was Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*. As quoted in an article in *The New York Times* published on November 12, 1911, “To Make Good Citizens – the Theatre for Children,” Hertz launched the Children’s Educational Theatre, “to make our thousands of immigrant children better citizens; to educate them; to develop their sympathies and their characters; to give them the best possible sort of a good time, and to counteract the evil and sordid influences of tenement and factory” (65). At the time, theatre participation was seen as a tool for assimilation into U.S. culture as well as education and entertainment.

In her thesis about the connections between Hull House and the development of theatre in Chicago, Ann Goodson adds that, “As the popularity and number of clubs at Hull House grew, dramatics and the study of plays was one of many activities including dance, lectures, social events and various classes offered at the settlement” (8). Goodson specifically examines the work of teacher and social worker Viola Spolin, whose invention of theatre games for the

children she worked with at Hull House later influenced improvisation techniques adopted by Chicago's Second City comedy club. By bringing theatre into the curriculum offered through the settlement houses, educators in the late 1800s and early 1900s opened the doors for the addition of theatre into elementary and secondary schools around the country because they believed that theatre would be beneficial in the school system.

At the college level, the early study of theatre as an applied discipline (instead of literature read in an English class) began with George Pierce Baker at Harvard University. Baker, an English teacher who graduated from Harvard, started teaching a class in playwriting in 1905, called "English 47" (Hinkle 5). Baker founded Workshop 47 at Harvard in 1912 so he could produce the plays written in his English 47 class (Hinkle 1).

As Cecil Ellsworth Hinkle wrote in the introduction to his 1959 dissertation for Ohio State University entitled *An Analysis and Evaluation of the 47 Workshop of George Pierce Baker*,

Little more than a half a century ago no institution of higher learning in the United States offered academic instruction in the field of theatre. At that time theatrical production on the campuses throughout the country was sporadic, resulting, for the most part from the enthusiastic impulses of untrained undergraduates. Today, when practically every such institution engages in some form of theatrical production, when most of them offer accredited courses of instruction in the various facets of theatre, and when a vast number stage an annual series of exciting productions under the guidance of highly skilled and well-trained personnel, educational theatre is taken pretty much for granted (1).

Baker never persuaded Harvard's administration to establish a degree in playwriting and finally moved his Workshop 47 to Yale in 1925, where he participated in founding the Yale School of Drama, now an internationally renowned theatre training program.

The arts and theatre have continued to be added into school curriculums throughout the United States in the 1900s and 2000s. According to the National Governor's Schools Conference website, Governor's Schools for the Arts emerged beginning in 1963, serving high school students in an intensive summer residency program (the National Conference of Governor's Schools). In my home state of Tennessee, the Governor's School dates to its founding in 1984, as explained on The Tennessee Governor's School for the Arts webpage:

The Tennessee Governor's School for the Arts is a residency summer intensive program for high school students gifted in music, visual art, theatre, dance, and filmmaking, Governor Lamar Alexander founded the School for the Arts in 1984, assembling a team of professionals to develop a program for Tennessee that would rival the best summer arts schools in the nation.

In the summer of 1985, Middle Tennessee State University hosted the first Governor's School for the Arts with 90 orchestral students. The following year, the program was expanded to include wind ensemble, vocal music, theatre, and visual arts. By 1986 the School for the Arts auditioned over 1200 students from across the state for one of the coveted 300+ scholarships to the program. In 1987, dance was added to the curriculum and in 2009 filmmaking became the program's latest area of study. In 2005, Governor Phil Bredesen mandated that all Governor's Schools award college credit to participating students (Tennessee Governor's School for the Arts).

In 2016, the arts were required to be adopted in elementary schools through Tennessee law T.C.A. §49-6-1025 which states, “the course of instruction in all public schools for kindergarten through grade eight (K-8) shall include art and music education to help each student foster creative thinking, spatial learning, discipline, craftsmanship and the intrinsic rewards of hard work” (TN Department of Education). This policy was passed in 2015 and did not take effect until 2016, so this is a very recent addition to education in Tennessee.

Currently, in my home state of Tennessee, art and music are the two art forms most likely to be found in the first nine years of school (grades K-8), with theatre and dance available in the 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. According to the Tennessee Department of Education’s website page entitled “Arts Education at a Glance,” “the course of instruction in all public schools for kindergarten through grade eight (K-8) shall include art and music education to help each student foster creative thinking, spatial learning, discipline, craftsmanship and the intrinsic rewards of hard work” (Arts Education at a Glance). This state-level policy is the result of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), signed by President Barack Obama in December of 2015. The previous version of the law, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, was passed in 2002. The Tennessee Department of Education website, under the heading “Fine Arts: Dance, Music, Theatre, Visual Arts” recognizes that dance, theatre, and media instruction also are available in schools, in addition to art and music for grades K-8:

The federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) lists the arts and music as part of a “well-rounded” education, and Tennessee schools offer a rich history of supporting arts education. Tennessee is recognized nationally for significant contributions in arts and culture, and the state academic standards for arts education contribute to increased student access to quality arts education that impacts college, career, and life readiness for

Tennessee students. While state law (T.C.A. §49-6-1025) speaks to visual art and music instruction for grades K-8, schools also offer courses in dance, theatre, and media arts instruction.

The US Department of Education website notes that the Every Student Succeeds Act addresses the “prescriptive requirements” of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act, which had become difficult to implement in public schools.

In the early 2000s, school funding for the arts in education began to decline shown in a 2017 article for the *Journal of Women in Education Leadership*, “Arts Education Funding.” In this article, Annette M. Vargas mentions two developments that affected K-12 schools’ budgets for the arts in the United States over the past 15 years: the global recession of 2008, which forced many schools to implement severe budget cuts, and provisions found in the 2002 No Child Left Behind act. The 2008 recession, Vargas writes, especially impacted theatre and dance programs in schools where budgets had to be slashed:

It is estimated that since 2008, more than 80% of schools nationwide experienced cuts to their budgets. As a short-term solution in some instances, art programs were partially or completely eliminated from the affected school districts. Dance and theatre classes, in particular, were cut. During the 1999- 2000 school year, 20% of schools offered dance and theatre classes. In the 2009-10 school year, only 3% of schools allocated funds for dance classes, and only 4% of schools taught theatre classes (3).

According to Vargas, the provisions of the 2002 No Child Left Behind legislation that emphasized standardized testing in core subjects, combined with the budget cuts from the recession, forced schools to prioritize math and reading over the arts. Vargas explains that

earning good scores on standardized testing was more important than access to music, art, theatre, and dance:

Another consequence of less money being spent due to the recession, is that various government policies, including the No Child Left Behind Act, placed greater emphasis on core subjects, such as math and reading. In doing so, they put arts education on the back burner. In light of these policies, school districts began re-directing funds toward subjects that require standardized testing in order to increase the test scores of the students (3).

The passage of the 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) replaced NCLB and created a federal law that finally included the arts along with reading, math, and science. ESSA's passage also meant that federal funds could now be put towards arts education in the schools.

Even before the budget cuts of 2008 and the passage of ESSA in 2015, the American Association for Theatre in Education found that public opinion supported participation in the arts. AATE posted the following information on its webpage, based on a 2002 survey:

In 2002, the Performing Arts Research Coalition (PARC) conducted surveys in 10 major metropolitan areas regarding the role of Performing Arts in their lives and communities. They discovered that at least 90 percent of respondents from each metropolitan area agreed or strongly agreed that the performing arts contribute to the education and development of children. More than 60 percent of respondents in each location who had children aged 13 and older strongly agreed that the performing arts contribute to the education and development of children. On average, just over half of respondents had attended a live theatre performance in the past year. According to surveys in all 10 cities,



live theatre is the most commonly attended type of performance. According to a May 2005 Harris Poll:

- 93 percent of Americans believe that the arts are essential to a complete education
- 79 percent feel that the arts should be a priority in education reform
- 79 percent consider the issues facing arts education to be significant enough to merit their personally taking action. (Benefits of Theatre Ed)

Despite public support for arts education in schools, data suggests that access to the arts in education remains limited. In 2019, the Arts Education Data project published its *National Arts Education Status Report* based on the participation of 30,633 K-12 schools across 17 states (Arizona, Arkansas, California, Delaware, Georgia, Iowa, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Tennessee, and Wisconsin). The report states,

Among the 17 states included in this report, more than 694,000 students attend 2,739 schools without access to arts instruction as part of their school day. When projected for all states, the number of students without access is 2,095,538\*. These students are concentrated in schools where a high percentage of students are eligible for free/reduced-price meals, live in cities and very rural areas, and/or attend charter schools. (National Arts Education Status Report)

While some students have access to theatre, many do not participate in it. The Arts Education Data project's *Arts Education Status Report* that I mentioned above found that only 4.6 percent of students participate in theatre and 33.5 percent of students do not participate in any arts throughout all of their schooling before college (National Arts Education Status Report).

Furthermore, only 2.7 percent of students in rural schools participated while only 8.5 percent of students in city schools participated in it. These percentages show that many students do not experience theatre as the participation rate is very low in secondary schools. This lack of participation could be linked to the lack of access and exposure as I mentioned before, or because of misconceptions some people might have about theatre.

Misconceptions around theatre were prominent in my high school community in rural Southeast Tennessee. My theatre program lacked advertising and had little community support because the community did not know the type of work we were doing unless they had a student in the department. For example, my friends and family assumed that we only learned about acting in my theatre class, often asking me about what kinds of activities we did in the class. They did not realize we were learning to use tools or run lights and sound for our productions. My theatre program hosted a Renaissance Faire every year but had very small attendance. A Renaissance Faire takes place outdoors, usually in warm weather, and involves actors dressed in historical costumes offering games and other entertainments linked to the Renaissance era. Some of the people I invited to attend decided not to come because they didn't know what a Renaissance Faire was, or even why my theatre program created one. These are just two examples of the misunderstandings that I experienced as a student in my high school theatre program.

Despite my experiences in high school, I shared the misconception that the study of theatre was all about acting until I really dived deeply into theatre in college. While we learned how to use the sound and light board at my high school, the class's focus was acting. As a result, my high school peers and I were unable to learn about the many design elements that go into producing a show. Therefore, I didn't recognize the amount of work that went into creating a full

theatre production, such as the math skills needed to measure and build a set or make patterns for costumes, or the reading skills needed to analyze a script for details about mood and time of day when building a lighting plot, or the understanding of color that goes into set painting. It does not surprise me that that researchers for Americans for the Arts found that “sustained learning in music and theatre correlates to greater success in math and reading, and that students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds see the greatest benefits” (Arts Education). This quote shows that a student’s participation in theatre helps them in other core subjects.

Administrators charged with achieving the goals in Opportunity 2030 could be helped by including theatre studies in the K-12 curriculum. If advocates for the arts in schools can link these benefits to strategic plans, then schools may provide resources to help reach these goals. Theatre aligns well with these goals, and I have found a lot of research that supports this idea. Furthermore, theatre can be used to help bring experiential learning and arts integration into schools, both of which advance the goals stated in schools’ strategic plans.

### **Theatre as Experiential Learning:**

Experiential learning is an “engaged learning process whereby students ‘learn by doing’ and by reflecting on the experience” (Experiential Learning). This definition talks about how experiential learning engages students, which is one of the most important things to do when teaching. Also, it mentions students reflecting on their experience, which has proven to be helpful for students.

In her discussion paper, *Experiential Education: An Overview*, Emma Bartle offers a useful summary of experiential education, noting that experiential learning enables students to direct their own learning, with teachers as facilitators:

Experiential learning shifts the learning design from being teacher-centred [sic], where the teaching is largely transmissive and the students may remain unmotivated and disengaged, to an approach that is semi-structured and requires students to cooperate and learn from one another through direct experiences tied to real world problems. The role of the teacher in this process is to facilitate rather than direct the student's progress (Kolb & Kolb, 2009 qtd in Bartle 2).

On its webpage, "What is Experiential Education?" the Association for Experiential Education offers the following "Principles of Practice" to illustrate some essential aspects of experiential learning:

- Experiential learning occurs when carefully chosen experiences are supported by reflection, critical analysis and synthesis.
- Experiences are structured to require the learner to take initiative, make decisions and be accountable for results.
- Throughout the experiential learning process, the learner is actively engaged in posing questions, investigating, experimenting, being curious, solving problems, assuming responsibility, being creative, and constructing meaning.
- Learners are engaged intellectually, emotionally, socially, soulfully and/or physically. This involvement produces a perception that the learning task is authentic.
- The results of the learning are personal and form the basis for future experience and learning.

- Relationships are developed and nurtured: learner to self, learner to others and learner to the world at large.
- The educator and learner may experience success, failure, adventure, risk-taking and uncertainty, because the outcomes of experience cannot totally be predicted.
- Opportunities are nurtured for learners and educators to explore and examine their own values.
- The educator's primary roles include setting suitable experiences, posing problems, setting boundaries, supporting learners, insuring physical and emotional safety, and facilitating the learning process.
- The educator recognizes and encourages spontaneous opportunities for learning.
- Educators strive to be aware of their biases, judgments and pre-conceptions, and how these influence the learner.
- The design of the learning experience includes the possibility to learn from natural consequences, mistakes and successes. (What is Experiential Education?)

In his book *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*,

David Kolb notes some of the other benefits of experiential learning:

People do learn from their experience, and the results of that learning can be reliably assessed and certified for college credit. At the same time, programs of sponsored experiential learning are on the increase in higher education. Internships, field placements, work/study assignments, structured exercises and role plays, gaming simulations, and other forms of experience-based education are playing a larger role in

the curricula of undergraduate and professional programs. For many so-called nontraditional students—minorities, the poor, and mature adults—experiential learning has become the method of choice for learning and personal development. Experience-based education has become widely accepted as a method of instruction in colleges and universities across the nation (Kolb).

In a blog post entitled, “What is Experiential Learning and How Does It Benefit Students?” the One World International School in Singapore explains, that “not only is experiential learning advantageous for academic growth and progress, but it also helps students develop the important 21st-century skills that they will need to succeed in a global economy” (OWIS). This quote offers some insight on how experiential learning is important as it explains how the skills gained through experiential learning go beyond the classroom and into the rest of students’ lives.

In 2020, the Institute for the Future (IFTF) published a report, *Future Work Skills 2020*, listing ten key skills that students will need to develop in preparation for an unpredictable future driven by rapidly shifting technologies and change. These skills include (to mention only a few) novel and adaptive thinking, social intelligence, cross-cultural competency, new media literacy, transdisciplinarity, and virtual collaboration. As the report states, educational institutions will need to adapt their older educational models in order to better prepare students:

Educational institutions at the primary, secondary, and post-secondary levels are largely the products of technology infrastructure and social circumstances of the past. The landscape has changed, and educational institutions should consider how to adapt quickly in response. Some directions of change might include:

- Placing additional emphasis on developing skills such as critical thinking, insight, and analysis capabilities
- Integrating new-media literacy into education programs
- Including experiential learning that gives prominence to soft skills—such as the ability to collaborate, work in groups, read social cues, and respond adaptively
- Broadening the learning constituency beyond teens and young adults through to adulthood
- Integrating interdisciplinary training that allows students to develop skills and knowledge in a range of subjects (Institute for the Future)

All of the skills listed by IFTF can be linked to the skills that participation in theatre offers to students of all ages.

At the elementary and secondary school level, experiential learning can be incorporated into many different subjects and lessons. Mounds Park Academy in St Paul, Minnesota includes experiential learning across its curriculum. In a blog post from January 19, 2012, the school shared examples of experiential learning in English classes in its Upper School:

When our students inhabit the psychological dilemmas of Hawthorne’s characters in *The Scarlet Letter*, they learn experientially, recognizing the psychosomatic sickness of body and mind caused by unresolved anger and guilt and the crisis of low self-esteem caused by social ostracism or bullying. By applying the critical lens of psychological criticism, students grasp the ways that literature provides tools for deeper self-understanding.

When our students create a living storyboard of the opening scenes in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, they learn experientially by physically inhabiting a silent improvisation.

They transform themselves into the necessary objects and characters, turning our

classroom into a progression of storyboard” frames created from how they have learned to imagine film production.

When our students circle up and lead their own full class discussion of *The Great Gatsby*, they learn experientially from each other, without teacher intervention, by proposing intellectually rich questions, tossing their ideas into the arena, by agreeing, disagreeing, expanding, by finding “proof” in the text. Ultimately, they build an inclusive and respectful conversation, helping each other contribute in a lively process of give and take (Experiential Learning in the English Classroom).

This quote from the Mounds Park Academy blog illustrates how experiential learning helped Upper School students explore a range of content and context of novels such as Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter*, Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, and F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*. Experiential learning adds activity into the classroom, is fun for the students, and can help students link what they are learning to real life. Most importantly, experiential learning aids students in understanding and retaining key concepts.

The Western Governor’s University webpage on Experiential Learning Theory explains that experiential learning theory, or ELT, “works in four stages—concrete learning, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. The first two stages of the cycle involve grasping an experience, the second two focus on transforming an experience. Kolb argues that effective learning is seen as the learner goes through the cycle, and that they can enter into the cycle at any time” (Experiential Learning Theory).

The Western Governor’s University provides a list of experiential learning benefits to students that include:



- Opportunity to immediately apply knowledge. Experiential learning can allow students to immediately apply things they are learning to real-world experiences. This helps them retain the information better.
- Promotion of teamwork. Experiential learning often involves working in a team, so learning in this setting allows students to practice teamwork.
- Improved motivation. Students are more motivated and excited about learning in experiential settings. Experiments are exciting and fun for students, and they will be passionate about learning.
- Opportunity for reflection. Students using the experiential model are able to spend time reflecting about what they are experiencing and learning. This is valuable as they are able to better retain information when they can think about what's happening to them.
- Real world practice. Students can greatly benefit from learning that helps them prepare for the real world. Experiential learning is focused on using real situations to help students learn, so they are then better prepared for their future (Experiential Learning Theory).

Something that stands out to me from this list is the fact that experiential learning motivates students. When a student participates in hands-on “doing,” they move beyond just sitting at a desk and writing notes. Their whole body becomes engaged in learning, as well as their mind and imagination.

The benefits of experiential learning go far beyond acquisition of curricular content. Experiential learning can have great effects on students' preparation for their careers and for life. Northern Illinois University's Center for Innovative Learning and Teaching has a webpage

dedicated to experiential learning. Much of the information is drawn from the website of the Association for Experiential Education ([aee.org](http://aee.org)), but the Center for Innovative Learning and Teaching offers a concise summary of why this approach is important to the institution:

Experiential learning experiences help to complete students' preparation for their chosen careers which reinforce course content and theory. Students learn through student- rather than instructor-centered experiences by doing, discovering, reflecting and applying. Through these experiences students develop communication skills and self-confidence and gain and strengthen decision-making skills by responding to and solving real world problems and processes. (Experiential Learning: Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning).

Northern Illinois University's statement supports my findings that experiential learning provides students with important skills that will be used throughout their lives.

I noticed that the experiences I received while participating in high school and college theatre provided me with "life skills" that I did not anticipate. I learned sewing and carpentry skills, how to hang and focus lights, how to work as a house manager ensuring that patrons are properly ticketed and seated on time, how to assist a director with running organized rehearsals and – once the performance is in production – organizing and running the backstage crews. I gained these skills by participating in the technical side of theatre, but also through the process of rehearsing and performing as a character on stage. One of the aspects of acting that I enjoy is figuring out why my character behaves in certain ways and what their life is like within the context of the play. Being able to see the world from a different perspective is another useful and sometimes unanticipated "life skill" that theatre can offer.

Participating in theatre built my self-confidence and improved my public speaking. Furthermore, I received on-the-job training by working in the different backstage “shops” such as the scene shop, costume shop, lighting/electrics, and sound. I learned to do a lot of things with my hands by running a sewing machine, building walls, and scenic painting. I also now know the difference in multiple types of cables, tools, and other equipment used both in theatre and the building trades. I would not have acquired these “life-ready” skills without my involvement in theatre and recognize that I have received exactly the sort of training that Hamilton County Department of Education outlined in its strategic plan for “Every community served.” My teachers and my peers have mentored me through the process of skills acquisition, step-by-step, building my self-confidence. If I need to design and build a set with my future high school students, I will know how to do it. I can hang and focus the lights that illuminate the set and figure out how to employ microphones if the actors require amplification. I can also design sound cues and run them through a sound system. My education in theatre has prepared me well for my next steps in life.

My experience in a high school theatre classroom throughout my student teaching process has amplified my understanding of the benefits of experiential learning. Students have conveyed how much they enjoy the hands-on activities we pursue in my theatre class, beginning with being on stage and learning how to move and stand in ways that enable them to be seen and heard by the audience. Students also appreciate the teamwork and technical knowledge they gain behind the scenes as stage managers, sound and light board operators, and members of the backstage crews. As they move from rehearsal into production and performance of a play, students engage in hands-on learning in math, English, history, and other core subjects. In the process, they also form strong relationships with their peers in the class.

Experiential learning in theatre brings “play” into the classroom. Play is a time where someone can explore without boundaries, using investigation and imagination to learn. When students act in scenes or perform the technical elements of theatre, they are on their feet and using their whole body, which is similar to play-based learning in younger grades. By the time students reach middle/high school ages, however, experiences like “play” and other forms of embodied learning frequently vanish from the curriculum. Experiential learning brings “play” back into secondary schools as it allows students to explore and even risk moments of manageable failure by engaging in active, hands-on learning. “Play” adds exciting dimensions to learning, motivating and engaging students with a range of interests and needs.

In a blog post entitled “What Happened to Recess in Middle School, and Why Should We Care?” on the website of the Grayson School, Director of Research Jill Wurman writes that, “focused as we are on competitiveness, international test scores, and proficiency, it seems that we have managed to squeeze the play out of school altogether” (Wurman). Jean Piaget, a psychologist whose work centered on the cognitive development of children “emphasized the role of active exploration and interaction with the environment in shaping cognitive development” (Mcleod). In one of my Honors College classes in college, we asked the question, “why should that development stop once kids get older?” We explored how play is used to engage the mind through different activities such as building with Legos, sketching in our notebooks, and re-decorating a whole hallway as our final project. All of these projects showed us how taking risks and “playing” helped us be more creative in our work versus if we took no risks.

While elementary schools acknowledge the importance of play during the early years of education, middle and secondary schools tend to remove play from academic instruction. In her

article for *The Hechinger Report*, “Want Resilient and Well-Adjusted Kids? Let Them Play,” Jackie Mader writes that “research shows that when mammals play, their brains are activated in a way that can change neuron connections in the prefrontal cortex, which impact emotional regulation and problem-solving” (Mader). Emotional regulation and problem-solving skills are difficult to teach and rarely come out of the experience of reading a book or taking a test. Engaging in play has benefits that can continue long after students leave elementary school and continue their education in middle and high school classrooms.

### **Theatre as Arts Integration:**

A great way to add play and experiential learning into a classroom is by using arts integration. One of the leading educators in arts integration is the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C.. As explained in one of the Kennedy Center’s publications, “What is Arts Integration?” the Kennedy center has a long history of training teachers to implement arts integration in their classrooms:

Since 1999, the Kennedy Center has been working in an intensive and ongoing way with a network of partnership schools in the Washington DC metropolitan area to provide professional learning experiences for teachers to learn about and implement arts integration. The program, known as Changing Education Through the Arts (CETA) uses a comprehensive definition of arts integration as its foundation. This definition helps over 400 teachers in the program know exactly what arts integration is and how it differs from teaching the arts or just using the arts in the classroom (Silverstein and Layne 1).

Lynne B. Silverstein, who is the Senior Program Consultant for the Kennedy Center's Education Department, and Sean Layne, who is a National Teaching Artist for the Kennedy Center as well as an arts coach for their Changing Education Through the Arts (CETA) program, developed the

following definition of arts integration: “Arts Integration is an approach to teaching in which students construct and demonstrate understanding through an art form. Students engage in a creative process which connects an art form and another subject area and meets evolving objectives in both” (Silverstein and Layne 1). Silverstein and Layne’s definition demonstrates that art and creativity can enhance knowledge acquisition in a subject area.

Silverstein and Layne offer an example of what arts integration might look like in a school’s social studies unit. From their description, I recognize that this art-integrated social studies unit is utilizing experiential learning:

For example, students are challenged to create a tableau (motionless stage picture) that depicts a defining moment of the Trail of Tears. They must examine the social studies content, find out what led to the United States government forcibly relocating the Native Americans west of the Mississippi River, and determine the impact the dislocation had on the Native Americans. They must then distill their understandings into a tableau, which requires them to consider stage composition, characters, actions, relationships, and expression. Because a tableau is so concise, students must return to the social studies curriculum to determine the most significant information. Once the tableau is created, students are challenged to compose short statements that they will speak within the tableau. Again, they must return to the social studies content, synthesize it, and make inferences. With each rotation through the cycle, student learning in both theatre and social studies is reinforced and deepened. The more they learn about the Trail of Tears, the more their tableaus develop; the more their tableaus develop, the more they build their understanding of history (Silverstein and Layne 7).

The arts can also be integrated into science and math curriculums as well as English or social studies. For example, the Armory Center for the Arts in Pasadena, California, collaborated with the Pasadena Unified School District in 2012-2014 to create a series of lesson plans and videos to guide second and third grade teachers into integrating math with art. As the Armory's website explains:

Art makes abstract math concepts concrete, understandable, and approachable. *Artful Connections with Math* harnesses the power of art to advance learning and achievement in math among struggling student populations. This hands-on curriculum engages and motivates all styles of learners, particularly visual and kinesthetic.

These lesson plans and training videos for 2nd and 3rd grade teachers are brought to you as a free public service, courtesy of a three year collaboration between the Armory and Pasadena Unified School District. Follow the links below to access these engaging training videos and download PDFs for each lesson plan. We encourage you to use these lessons in your classroom and share this resource with your colleagues (Math & Art Integration).

The Armory's website offers the following "Place Value Sculpture" lesson for second graders:

How can we use sculpture to depict a number? This lesson's goal is for students to group objects in ones, tens and hundreds in order to count to a 3-digit number. They'll use color and length to visually differentiate between place values and create an abstract wire sculpture that depicts their 3-digit number. (Math & Art Integration).

This one was one of my favorite lessons, as it invites students to apply multiple art skills such as color use and sculpting to understand a math concept. The arts can be integrated into many subjects, even if it seems difficult to use art to teach the material.

Like experiential learning, arts integration can make learning pleasurable and bring happiness into the classroom. Andrew Bauld's 2021 article, "Happy Students are Motivated Students" for the Harvard University Graduate School of Education's magazine cited the research of a former graduate student, Christina Hinton, Ed.M.'06, Ed.D.'12. Bauld wrote that Hinton "knows all too well the importance of happy students and teachers after nearly a decade partnering with schools around the world to conduct collaborative research in classrooms as founder and CEO of Research Schools International. Bauld goes on to say:

When she was a doctoral student at the Ed School, Hinton found in her study on happiness that for students from elementary school to high school, happiness is positively correlated with motivation and academic achievement. She also found that creating strong relationships with teachers and peers plays an important role in student happiness (Bauld).

Arts integration's ability to instill happiness in learning is demonstrated in some of the viewpoints shared on the Kennedy Center's webpage entitled "Why Arts Integration? Perspectives," featuring quotes from teachers who have participated in the Kennedy Center's professional development programs. Jennifer Lane, a teacher at Kensington Parkwood Elementary School in Montgomery County, Maryland, specifically mentions joy in her observation of the impact of arts integration in her school:



Watching approximately 250 families visit our school to attend our recent Arts Integration Open House, and seeing parents interacting with students in numerous arts integration classrooms, fully engaged in meaningful learning activities that activated “both sides” of the brain, I couldn’t help notice the joy and love of learning that was evident in these classrooms. (The Kennedy Center)

Arts integration can assist students to have fun in their lessons and find joy in learning – therefore, according to Hinton’s research, remaining motivated in their studies.

As the Kennedy Center’s Arts Integration webpage notes, arts-integrated units and teaching deeply engages students in learning. Research that supports this finding includes Alison E. LaGarry’s 2012-2015 documentation and evaluation of the Perpich Arts Integration Project, a state-funded program centered in three rural regions of Minnesota. Her article co-authored with Byron Richard, “Arts Integration in rural Minnesota: A collaborative arts integration framework,” states that, “observations of arts-integrated lessons also revealed that students were more engaged during arts-integrated lessons, as compared to non-arts or non-integrated lessons” (LaGarry and Richard 154). LaGarry and Richard’s article provides further evidence of the important role that arts integration can play in student engagement.

This same article noted that most students enjoyed the lessons. The researchers from this study collected students’ opinions and found that, “as reported in Table 3, the majority of students surveyed in each year of the evaluation responded affirmatively, stating that they would indeed like to do a similar unit” (LaGarry and Richard 154). The students who responded positively offered multiple reasons for wanting to continue to participate in arts-integrated learning, mostly centered around enjoyment: “Many students simply stated, ‘It was fun!’ Others stated that it let them try out activities they never would have tried on their own (i.e.

woodcarving, metal sculpture). Some students noted that it let them be themselves: 'It is enjoyable and more personal and unique.' (LaGarry and Richard, 154).

Because theatre draws on different content areas in the school curriculum, it offers many opportunities for arts integration, for example in subjects like English and history. In an article titled "Teaching history through theatre positively impacts student learning outcomes" posted on Texas A&M University's School of Education and Human Development's webpage, the author looks at the benefits of schools partnering with arts and cultural organizations to extend the benefits of school field trips. The article describes a program called "Digging up Arkansas," designed to teach Arkansas history content standards for grade three to five:

The Trike Theatre and Walton Arts Center's "Digging Up Arkansas" interactive live theater performance teaches upper-elementary school students about the history of their state through tableau, where actors ask students to use their bodies to pose, gesture and represent to convey historical ideas and concepts (Teaching history)

As reported in the article, the educational researchers who assessed the program "found that students demonstrated increases in historical content knowledge, enthusiasm for learning about history, historical empathy and interest in the performing arts as a result of this program" (Teaching History). The researchers, Drs. Brian Kisida, Laura Goodwin, and Daniel Bowen found that not only did the students learn the content better, but they also enjoyed it more and gained interest in other subjects. Theatre could make this kind of impact on many core subjects as it could make the lessons more engaging and fun for students.

Theatre also combines several art forms in one. Students with an interest in art, music, or dance can find a place for themselves in theatre as well. In an August 14, 2021, blog post titled

“What separates theatre from the other arts,” New York’s Forestburgh Playhouse explains, “you can go to the theatre and see individuals using speech (that may have been taken from a piece of literature) and emotion while acting on stage. They may be singing to one another. There may be musical sounds or dance included. Even an opera or a musical, though, is more than just music. Yet, these things are all part of the theatre” (What Separates Theatre). The Forestburgh Playhouse points out that theatre incorporates access to many different arts forms, offering students an opportunity to find a place for themselves in one or more artistic discipline such as dance or music.

### **Moving Forward Strategically in Theatre Education:**

When students are participating in hands-on “doing,” they are moving beyond just sitting at a desk and writing notes. Their whole body can be engaged in learning, as well as their minds and imaginations. Theatre offers students free will to be creative and helps students learn without being afraid of failure. In his 2006 TED Talk, *Do Schools Kill Creativity?* the late Sir Ken Robinson stated that, “we are educating people out of their creative capacities” (Robinson, 5:55). Robinson made the point that fostering creativity is essential in a rapidly changing world in which “education is meant to take us into this future that we can’t grasp” (Robinson, 1:49).

Theatre brings a different aspect of learning into students’ lives that they do not have in other classes. The environment that comes with a theatre class can help students learn and succeed better in the classroom and outside of the classroom. These benefits align directly with school strategic plans and therefore should be treated as important as any other class to try to help school districts reach their goals. Often, theatre becomes a major part of a student’s life. This is what happened to me when I started to do theatre in my freshman year of high school. I had never participated in theatre before and did not know much about it. I am from a rural town

located in the southeastern United States with a population of 14,596 in 2023 (census.gov). Not much theatre happens in the community and consequently, most people don't know what kinds of skills are required to produce live theatre.

My friends and family members, who had never attended live theatre, struggled to understand what kinds of skills I was gaining as a result of my involvement in theatre classes and productions. My former high school enrolls about 1,500 students total and provides two classes that potentially count towards the one state-level Fine Arts requirement for graduation, although neither of these classes were required:

Theatre Arts I Grades: 10-12 Credit: 1 The theatre component will have the students study, write, research, critique, create, design, perform, and participate in a variety of theatre-based learning experiences. Appropriate theatre technology and media will also be studied.

Theatre Arts II Grades: 10-12 Credit: 1 This course is designed for the upper-level students who have a passion for the theatrical arts. Students in this course should be prepared to interact in all aspects pertaining to theatre. This includes but is not limited to the study of the history of the theatre, acting, stagecraft, solo and group work. Students will be required to work on the production of a play each semester. Students can earn more than one credit in this course. (McMinn County School District)

Looking back, I realize that being part of an under-resourced program in a rural environment led to benefits and advantages I could not see at the time. For example, I remember that when the ancient black curtains that masked the wing space and backstage crossover for my school's stage deteriorated, we hung black tarps in their place. We had no money to replace the curtains and the tarps were affordable and effective, even if it was not standard practice. In other words, my

theatre program had to be resource-centric, prompting us to make use of existing resources (such as tarps) for multiple different purposes. We reused and recycled everything we could to create what we needed for scenes, developing useful skills for life and for theatre along the way.

Another example of my high school theatre program's creative exploration of resources and opportunities included productions of student written and directed plays. Using original works of theatre enabled the program to avoid the cost of paying for the rights to produce a published play or musical. However, this practice also allowed students with an interest in playwriting and directing to expand their opportunities beyond the limits of the two classes offered at my school. In fact, I wrote and directed a play myself during my senior year. Later, I realized that most other students at my college had not been given this opportunity in high school. I appreciated this freedom and flexibility and found that it enhanced my appreciation for theatre.

I also became very close with the people involved in my theatre department, as well as my theatre teacher. I could see how we all supported each other and how much we each cared about each other. I thought this was amazing because I had never seen or heard about this kind of community happening in other classes. I also saw how people who did not fit in or were having trouble in life were welcomed into my theatre department. My theatre teacher helped these students as much as he could and the class was clearly the best part of many people's days, including mine.

All in all, while theatre is rarely specifically mentioned in school strategic plans like Opportunity 2030, the practice of theatre in K-12 schools can help reach the goals mentioned in the plans. As I have demonstrated in my research, theatre offers experiential learning that carries benefits across the K-12 curriculum and can be brought into a range of classrooms and

curriculums through arts integration as well as standard theatre productions. If school districts and administrators recognize the depth and richness of learning available through theatre practices, Hamilton County and other school districts can achieve their goals of enhancing student learning, making all students feel welcome, and providing many pathways to learning for all students. Theatre offers undeniable skills that will take students from the classroom to life.

## Appendix A

### 25 Special Advantages the Theatre Major Has - (and may not even know!)

---

By Dr. Louis E. Catron

Here's a list of twenty-five skills, traits, and qualities of personality that are usually well-developed in individuals who complete four years of undergraduate theatre study.

Take special note of them. They are more extensive and important than perhaps you recognize. As you think about them, consider how many of these advantages are unique to theatre majors--and that you have far more advantages than majors in most other disciplines.

#### 1. **Oral Communication Skills**

Many students find that theatre helps them develop the confidence that's essential to speaking clearly, lucidly, and thoughtfully.

Acting onstage teaches you how to be comfortable speaking in front of large audiences, and some of your theatre classes will give you additional experience talking to groups. Furthermore, your work on crews has taught you that clear, precise, and well-organized oral communications are best. Oral communication skills are so important to some employers that they often send management trainees to special workshops. You already have an advantage.

#### 2. **Creative Problem Solving Abilities**

Most people expect theatre students to exhibit creativity in such areas as acting, design, playwrighting or directing, and many companies do recruit creative thinkers. But employers are not always aware that theatre experience also helps you learn creative problem-solving techniques that are applicable to many jobs. Tell them!

For one example, tech theatre work--building scenery, hanging lights, making props, running the show, and so on--is a particularly good way to learn how to think on your feet, to identify problems, evaluate a range of possible solutions, and figure out what to do.

The same is true of almost every aspect of theatre. Directing. Design. Acting. Playwriting. Management. And more.

The point here is that your creative ability, what you've learned about using creative processes to solve problems, can be directly applicable to virtually any job you may have.

Most major companies believe that a creative problem-solver will become a good employee. That's you.

#### 3. **More than "get it done"**

But theatre students learn that just "getting it done" isn't enough. Not at all. It goes beyond that. You learn to do it correctly. In theatre we learn that merely "getting the

show on the boards" is pure bush league and totally unacceptable. Whatever your theatrical job--tech, performing, research, management--it has to be done right . You learn to take pride in doing things at your very best level. Of course an employer will value that trait.

#### 4. **Motivation and Commitment**

Being involved in theatre productions and classes demands commitment and motivation. These are qualities that college theatre faculty members and, in some measure, you and your fellow students, probably already possess. By example, we teach each other that success comes to those who are committed to the task at hand. Few other disciplines you study will so strongly help you develop motivation and commitment.

Many theatre students learn to transfer that attribute from theatre to other activities such as classes and jobs. For employers, that positive attitude is essential.

#### 5. **Willingness to Work Cooperatively**

Your work in theatre companies teaches you how to work effectively with different types of people--often very different types!

Theatre demands that participants work together cooperatively for the production to success; there is no room for "we" versus "they" behavior; the "star" diva is a thing of the past. Your colleagues will usually let you know when you violate the team spirit of a production.

In theatre, it's important that each individual supports the others involved. Employers will be pleased to know that you understand how to be a team player.

#### 6. **The Ability to Work Independently**

In theatre, you're often assigned tasks that you must complete without supervision. Crew chiefs. Directing. Putting together this flat, finding that prop, working out characterization outside of rehearsals. It's left up to you to figure out how best to achieve the goal. The ability to work independently is a trait employers look for in their workers.

#### 7. **Time-budgeting Skills**

When you're a student, being involved in theatre forces you to learn how to budget your time. You need to schedule your days very carefully if you want to keep up your grades while you're busy with rehearsals, work calls, and the other demands that theatre makes on your time. Good time management skills are enormously important to employers.

#### 8. **Initiative**

Personnel managers call people who approach work with initiative and enterprise "self-starters," people who do what needs to be done without waiting to be asked, without needing to be told.

The complexities of a theatrical production demand individuals who are willing to voluntarily undertake any task that needs to be done in order for the production to



succeed. In theatre, we're all self-starters. We learn how to take initiative, to move a project from initial concept to finality--and to do it well.

#### 9. **Promptness and Respect for Deadlines**

Tardiness is never acceptable in theatre because it shows a lack of self-discipline, and more importantly, a lack of consideration for others. Being late for a rehearsal or a work call or failing to finish an assigned task on time damages a production and adversely affects the work of many other people. Theatre demands that you learn to arrive on time and meet scheduled deadlines.

That's a job-skill. Employers appreciate workers who are on time and do their work as scheduled.

#### 10. **Acceptance of Rules**

In theatre you work within the structure of a set of procedures and rules that deal with everything from shop safety to behavior at auditions, rehearsals and work calls. You learn that you must be a "good follower." Theatre teaches you the importance of rules, a concept that's valued in any organization.

#### 11. **The Ability to Learn Quickly--AND Correctly**

Theatre students, whether they're memorizing lines or learning the technical aspects of a production, must have the ability to absorb a vast quantity of material quickly--and accurately. Your work in college theatre will show that you have the ability to grasp complex matters in a short period of time, a highly-valued trait to employers.

Note that part of this ability is another significant trait: knowing how to listen. If you don't listen, you're likely to make some major error that will damage the production. Listening is a skill for any job and an employer will respect your ability to listen and comprehend.

#### 12. **Respect for Colleagues**

In theatre you discover that a successful production requires contributions from everybody who's involved. Mutual respect is essential. Working on a production teaches us to respect and trust the abilities and talents of our colleagues. A prospective employer will appreciate the fact that you have learned the importance of respecting your co-workers.

#### 13. **Respect for Authority**

Only one person can be in charge of any given portion of a production. The director. The shop foreman. The tech director. The designer. Theatre teaches you to willingly accept and respect authority. That's a trait employers look for in their workers.

#### 14. **Adaptability and Flexibility**

Theatre students must be adaptable and flexible. You need to be willing to try new ideas, accept new challenges, and have the ability to adapt to constantly changing situations and conditions. In one production you may be a member of the prop crew; in the next perhaps you're in charge of makeup, publicity or the box office; in a third production you might

have a leading role.

A worker who is versatile and flexible is highly valued to most employers; both traits prove that you are able and willing to learn new things.

#### 15. **The Ability to Work Under Pressure**

Theatre work often demands long hours. There's pressure--often, as you know well, a lot of pressure. It's important that everyone involved with a production be able to maintain a cooperative and enthusiastic attitude under pressure. The ability to remain poised under such tensions is an asset that will help you cope with stress in other parts of your life, including your job.

#### 16. **A Healthy Self-Image**

To work in theatre, you must know who you are and how to project your individuality. But at the same time, it's important to recognize the need to make yourself secondary to the importance of a production. This is a tricky balance that, although difficult to accomplish, is a valuable trait that employers treasure.

#### 17. **Acceptance of Disappointment--And Ability to Bounce Back**

Theatre people learn to deal with dashed hopes and rejection on a regular basis. Who hasn't failed to get a role he or she really wanted or a coveted spot on a tech crew? You learn to accept that kind of disappointment and move on. You try again. Employers need workers who are resilient enough to bounce back from this kind of frustration.

#### 18. **Self-Discipline**

Theatre demands that you learn how to control your life. More than other students, you are forced to make choices between keeping up with responsibilities and doing things you'd rather do. You learn to govern yourself. An employer will respect that ability.

#### 19. **A Goal-Oriented Approach to Work**

Many aspects of theatre involve setting and achieving specific goals. In employer's terms, you've learned to be task-oriented and capable of finding practical ways to achieve goals.

#### 20. **Concentration**

Busy theatre students, involved in a production or other theatre projects while also taking a heavy academic load, must learn to concentrate if they are to succeed. Acting classes in particular stress concentration, and once you have learned that skill as an actor, it can be transferred to other activities.

#### 21. **Dedication**

As you work in theatre you learn to dedicate your very being--to doing your best to create a successful production. There is dedication to that show...to your home theatre...to theatre as an art.

Many theatre students discover that committing oneself to a given task is deeply

rewarding. Employers respect workers who have learned the value of dedication.

## 22. **A Willingness to Accept Responsibility**

Theatre students sometimes have an opportunity that is seldom given to students in other disciplines--the chance to take on sole responsibility for a special project. Being a production stage manager...a designer...a crew chief...a director. Students with other majors seldom have anything even close to these lessons. You can expect employers to value this unusual ability.

## 23. **Leadership Skills**

As a theatre student, you have many opportunities to assume leadership roles. You may, for example, assist a director or designer and lead other volunteers, serve as a crew chief, or even design or direct a production yourself. In the nurturing environment of theatre, faculty help you learn from mistakes so you become a better leader. Leadership training like this can open the possibility for comparable opportunities in a company that hires you. Can you think of any other major that offers this opportunity?

## 24. **Self-Confidence**

Theatre training teaches you confidence in yourself. Your accomplishments in theatre show you that you can handle a variety of jobs, pressures, difficulties and responsibilities. You develop a "Yes, I can!" attitude. Of course an employer will treasure that.

## 25. **Enjoyment -- "This is Fun!"**

You've discovered already that theatre people mystify civilians when we say we're having fun. Non-theatre folk shake their heads when we tell them that, and they ask how it is possible to have "fun" in a job that keeps us working night after night, sometimes until after midnight, doing something that calls for a grinding rehearsal or work schedule day after day after day, that makes us miss going to a movie or a concert. "That's fun?"

Yes. It is. We've learned how to find enjoyment in what we do. That's a valuable attribute.

We can adapt that to other jobs, find ways to enjoy other activities. That positive attitude will mean a great deal to any employer.

AND MORE. MUCH, MUCH MORE.

You get the idea. That list of 25 advantages is a start. No doubt you can add to it.

It seems almost incidental at this point to mention that theatre majors also learn about theatre. Most students who choose a theatre major do so because their training will prepare them for a career in the theatre, and it will. Theatre students learn to use their voices and bodies and minds and hearts to make magic on stage.

Clearly, though, they learn much, much more. Few people choose to set out on a difficult, demanding four-year course of theatre study because it will make them good candidates for employment in other fields.

But it will.

Far more than any other major, theatre is excellent training for virtually any job.

The trick is for you to recognize the advantages you have.  
And to be sure you educate any prospective employer!

---

Printed with permission from theatre practitioner and author Dr. Louis E. Catron.

<https://theatreanddance.appstate.edu/students/prospective-students/25-life-skills-learned-theatre>

## Appendix B

From the American Alliance for Theatre's webpage entitled, "The Effects of Theatre Education"

### **DID YOU KNOW ...**

- Students involved in drama performance coursework or experience outscored non-arts students on the 2005 SAT by an average of 65 points in the verbal component and 34 points in the math component(1)?
- Drama activities improve reading comprehension, and both verbal and non-verbal communication skills?
- Drama helps to improve school attendance and reduce high school dropout rates(2)?
- A 2005 Harris Poll revealed that 93% of the public believes that arts, including theatre, are vital to a well-rounded education (3)?
- Drama can improve skills and academic performance in children and youth with learning disabilities?

### **DRAMA IMPROVES ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

Numerous studies have demonstrated a correlation between drama involvement and academic achievement. In addition to having higher standardized test scores than their peers who do not experience the arts, student who participate in drama often experience improved reading comprehension, maintain better attendance records, and stay generally more engaged in school than their non-arts counterparts. Schools with arts-integrated programs, even in low-income areas, report high academic achievement.

### **DRAMA STUDENTS OUTPERFORM NON-ARTS PEERS ON SAT TESTS**

The College Entrance Examination Board reported student scores from 2001, 2002, 2004, and 2005 using data from the Student Description Questionnaire indicating student involvement in various activities, including the arts. As compared to their peers with no arts coursework or involvement:

- Students involved in drama performance scored an average of 65.5 points higher on the verbal component and 35.5 points higher in the math component of the SAT
- Students who took courses in drama study or appreciation scored, on average, 55 points higher on verbal and 26 points higher on math than their non-arts classmates.
- In 2005, students involved in drama performance outscored the national average SAT score by 35 points on the verbal portion and 24 points on the math section.

### **ATTENDANCE**

Research indicates that involvement in the arts increases student engagement and encourages consistent attendance, and that drop-out rates correlate with student levels of involvement in the arts.

- - Students considered to be at high risk for dropping out of high school cite drama and other arts classes as their motivations for staying in school.
- - Students who participate in the arts are 3 times more likely to win an award for school attendance than those who do not.

### **READING COMPREHENSION**

From learning to read to the in-depth study of Shakespearean literature, drama can play a

significant role in the continual development of students' reading comprehension skills. Studies indicate that not only do the performance of a story and a number of other drama activities in the classroom contribute to a student's understanding of the work performed, but these experiences also help them to develop a better understanding of other works and of language and expression in general. The results below were gleaned from studies where educators and students alike noticed a difference when drama played a part in their classrooms,

- A series of studies on the arts and education revealed a consistent causal link between performing texts in the classroom and the improvement of a variety of verbal skills, including especially significant increases in story recall and understanding of written material.
- Performance of Shakespeare texts helps to improve students' understanding of other complex texts including science and math material.
- Drama can improve reading skills and comprehension better than other activities, including discussion.

### **BUILDING SELF-ESTEEM THROUGH DRAMA**

In addition to building social and communication skills overall, involvement in drama courses and performance has been shown to improve students' self-esteem as well as their confidence in their academic abilities.

- High school students who are highly involved in drama demonstrate an elevated self-concept over those who are not involved .
- Playwriting original works and dramatic presentation of existing works can help to build the self-esteem and communication skills of high school students.
- The act of performing can help students and youth recognize their potential for success and improve their confidence .

### **BRIDGING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP**

Since the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act, there has been a national focus on closing the "achievement gap" between students of varying abilities, socioeconomic status, and geographies among other factors that may directly or indirectly affect a student's academic success. The arts, including drama, address this issue by catering to different styles of learning, and engaging students who might not otherwise take significant interest in academics.

Additionally, research indicates that drama courses and performance have a particularly positive effect on at-risk youth and students with learning disabilities.

- A study published in *Champions of Change* (1999) cites theatre arts, including performance, classes, and participation in a drama club, as a source for "gains in reading proficiency, gains in self-concept and motivation, and higher levels of empathy and tolerance towards others" among youth of low socio-economic status .
- Drama activities can improve and help to maintain social and language skills of students with learning disabilities and remedial readers .
- Improvisational drama contributes to improved reading achievement and attitude in disadvantaged students .

### **PUBLIC OPINION ON THE IMPORTANCE OF DRAMA**

What does the average American think of drama? The statistics from the studies below show that most of the public feels the performing arts play a significant role in our culture and communities and are important to America's youth.

In 2002, the Performing Arts Research Coalition (PARC) conducted surveys in 10 major

metropolitan areas regarding the role of Performing Arts in their lives and communities . They discovered that at least 90 percent of respondents from each metropolitan area agreed or strongly agreed that the performing arts contribute to the education and development of children. More than 60 percent of respondents in each location who had children aged 13 and older strongly agreed that the performing arts contribute to the education and development of children. On average, just over half of respondents had attended a live theatre performance in the past year. According to surveys in all 10 cities, live theatre is the most commonly attended type of performance. According to a May 2005 Harris Poll :

- 93 percent of Americans believe that the arts are essential to a complete education
- 79 percent feel that the arts should be a priority in education reform
- 79 percent consider the issues facing arts education to be significant enough to merit their personally taking action.

<https://www.aate.com/benefits-of-theatre-ed> (accessed 12/27/2023)

## Appendix C



Program of Study Options

Career Cluster	Program of Study	Location	Institute
Advanced Manufacturing	Welding	Harrison Bay Future Ready Center	Institute of Advanced Manufacturing and Construction
		The Howard School	Institute of Robotics and Welding
Agriculture, Food, & Natural Resources	Horticulture Science	Hixson HS	Institute of Integrative Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources
	Veterinary and Animal Science	Hixson HS	Institute of Integrative Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources
Architecture & Construction	Architectural & Engineering Design	Harrison Bay Future Ready Center	Institute of Architecture and Engineering Design
		East Ridge HS	Institute of Engineering and Design
	Interior Design	East Ridge HS	Institute of Engineering and Design
	Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing Systems	East Ridge HS	Institute of Building Construction
	Structural Systems	Harrison Bay Future Ready Center	Institute of Advanced Manufacturing and Construction
		East Ridge HS	Institute of Building Construction
		The Howard School	Institute of Architecture and Construction
Sale Creek HS	Institute of Construction, Engineering, and Design		
Arts, Audio/Visual Technology, & Communications	Digital Arts and Design	East Ridge HS	Institute of Engineering and Design
	Audio/Visual Production	East Ridge HS	Institute of Engineering and Design
		Soddy Daisy HS	Institute of Media and Entrepreneurship
Business Management & Administration	Business Management	Hixson HS	Coca-Cola Business Institute



Education & Training	Teaching as a Profession	Tyner Academy	UTC Institute of Teaching and Learning
Health Science	Diagnostic Services	The Howard School	Erlanger Institute of Healthcare and Innovation
	Emergency Services	East Ridge HS	CEMPA Institute of Leadership and Public Health

		Brainerd HS	Institute of Law, First Responders, and Forensic Science
	Nursing Services	Hixson HS	CHI Memorial Institute of Healthcare and Medical Careers
	Sport and Human Performance	Hixson HS	CHI Memorial Institute of Healthcare and Medical Careers
		Tyner Academy	Institute of Health Sciences
	Therapeutic Services	The Howard School	Erlanger Institute of Healthcare and Innovation
		Hixson HS	CHI Memorial Institute of Healthcare and Medical Careers
		Tyner Academy	Institute of Health Sciences
Hospitality & Tourism	Culinary Arts	The Howard School	See Rock City Inc. Institute of Hospitality and Tourism
	Hospitality and Tourism Management	The Howard School	See Rock City Inc. Institute of Hospitality and Tourism
Information Technology	Coding	Red Bank HS	BlueCross Technology Academy
		Soddy Daisy HS	BlueCross Technology Academy
		Tyner Academy	EPB Institute of Technology and Networking
	Cybersecurity	East Ridge HS	CEMPA Institute of Leadership and Public Health
	Networking	Tyner Academy	EPB Institute of Technology and Networking
	Web Design	Soddy Daisy HS	BlueCross Technology Academy
JROTC	JROTC	East Ridge HS	CEMPA Institute of Leadership and Public Health
Law, Public Safety, Corrections, & Security	Criminal Justice	Brainerd HS	Institute of Law, First Responders, and Forensic Science
Marketing, Distribution & Logistics	Entrepreneurship	Brainerd HS	Institute of Entrepreneurship
		East Hamilton HS	Institute of Leadership, Business, and Marketing
		Soddy Daisy HS	Institute of Media and Entrepreneurship
	Supply Chain Management	Ooltewah HS	US Xpress Institute of Supply Chain and Logistics Management
		Central HS	US Xpress Institute of Supply Chain and Logistics Management

	Marketing Management	Red Bank HS	Institute of Social Media Marketing and Sports Management
STEM	Advanced STEM Applications	East Hamilton HS	Institute of Innovative Engineering
		Lookout Valley MHS	Institute of Technology and Engineering
		Sale Creek HS	Institute of Construction, Engineering, and Design
		The Howard School	The Institute of Architecture and Construction
Transportation	Automotive Maintenance Light Repair	East Ridge HS	Institute of Building Construction
		Lookout Valley MHS	Novonix Institute of Advanced Battery Technology
	Aviation Flight	Brainerd HS	Institute of Aviation

## Works Cited

- Abrams, Joshua. "State of the organization: Thoughts on the importance of theatre education in 2020." *Theatre Topics*, vol. 31, no. 1, 2021, pp. 1–4, <https://doi.org/10.1353/tt.2021.0003>. Accessed 19 Dec. 2023.
- Arthur Miller Foundation. "Why Theater Education?" *Arthur Miller Foundation*, [arthurmillerfoundation.org/advocacy/why-theater-education/](http://arthurmillerfoundation.org/advocacy/why-theater-education/). Accessed 19 Dec. 2023.
- "Arts Education." *Americans for the Arts*, 2018, [www.americansforthearts.org/by-topic/arts-education](http://www.americansforthearts.org/by-topic/arts-education). Accessed 19 Dec. 2023.
- Bartle, Emma. "Experiential Learning: An Overview: A Discussion Paper Prepared for Professor Joanne Wright. Deputy Vice- Chancellor (Academic) for the Vice-Chancellor's Retreat, March 23 & 24, 2015." The University of Queensland, Australia. Accessed 19 Dec. 2023.
- Bauld, Andrew. "Happy Students Are Motivated Students | Harvard Graduate School of Education." *Www.gse.harvard.edu*, 11 May 2021, [www.gse.harvard.edu/ideas/ed-magazine/21/05/happy-students-are-motivated-students](http://www.gse.harvard.edu/ideas/ed-magazine/21/05/happy-students-are-motivated-students). Accessed 19 Dec. 2023.
- Boston University. "Experiential Learning." *Www.bu.edu*, 2023, [www.bu.edu/ctl/guides/experiential-learning/](http://www.bu.edu/ctl/guides/experiential-learning/). Accessed 25 Dec. 2023.
- "Benefits of Theatre Ed." American Alliance for Theatre and Education. *Aate.com*, 2019, [www.aate.com/benefits-of-theatre-ed](http://www.aate.com/benefits-of-theatre-ed). Accessed 19 Dec. 2023.
- Boyd, Lara. "How Can Stress Affect Learning? TEDxSurrey." *Www.youtube.com*, 2022, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=empLoDjYdrE&ab\\_channel=TEDxTalks](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=empLoDjYdrE&ab_channel=TEDxTalks). Accessed 12 Jan. 2024.
- Bandura, Albert. "Perceived Self-Efficacy in the Exercise Of Personal Agency." *Revista Española de Pedagogía*, vol. 48, no. 187, 1990, pp. 397–427. JSTOR,

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/23764608>. Accessed 17 Jan. 2024.

Carey, Michael, and Andrew Forsyth. "Self-Efficacy." *American Psychological Association*, 2009, [www.apa.org/pi/aids/resources/education/self-efficacy#:~:text=Self%2Defficacy%20refers%20to%20an](http://www.apa.org/pi/aids/resources/education/self-efficacy#:~:text=Self%2Defficacy%20refers%20to%20an). Accessed 19 Dec. 2023.

Catron, Louis E. "25 Life Skills Learned in Theatre."

<https://theatreanddance.appstate.edu/students/prospective-students/25-life-skills-learned-theatre>. Accessed 25 Dec. 2023.

Clare, Natalie. "Teaching Adaptive Musical Theatre." *Educational theatre Association*, May 31, 2023. <https://schooltheatre.org/teaching-adaptive-musical-theatre/>. Accessed 17 Jan. 2024.

"Eight Awesome Careers in Welding You Probably Didn't Know About." Kevin Dukes Career and Innovation Academy. <https://www.jacksonk12.org/Page/5500>. Accessed 8 March 2024.

"Experiential Learning | Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning." *Northern Illinois University*, [www.niu.edu/citl/resources/guides/instructional-guide/experiential-learning.shtml#:~:text=Students%20learn%20through%20student%2D%20rather](http://www.niu.edu/citl/resources/guides/instructional-guide/experiential-learning.shtml#:~:text=Students%20learn%20through%20student%2D%20rather). Accessed 19 Dec. 2023.

"Experiential Learning in the English Classroom" Mounds Park Academy. | Mounds Park Academy News." *Mounds Park Academy News*, 19 Jan. 2012. [www.moundsparkacademy.org/news/2012/01/19/experiential\\_learning\\_in\\_the\\_e/](http://www.moundsparkacademy.org/news/2012/01/19/experiential_learning_in_the_e/). Accessed 19 Dec. 2023.

"Experiential Learning Theory." Western Governors University. *Western Governors University*, 8 June 2020, [www.wgu.edu/blog/experiential-learning-theory2006.html#close](http://www.wgu.edu/blog/experiential-learning-theory2006.html#close). Accessed

19 Dec. 2023.

Folger Shakespeare Library. "Shakespeare in Immigrant New York | Folger Shakespeare Library." *Www.folger.edu*, 16 Oct. 2019, [www.folger.edu/podcasts/shakespeare-unlimited/immigrant-new-york/](http://www.folger.edu/podcasts/shakespeare-unlimited/immigrant-new-york/). Accessed 19 Dec. 2023.

"Future Ready Institutes of Hamilton County." *Hamilton County Department of Education*, [https://www.hcde.org/students\\_families/academics/the\\_future\\_ready\\_institutes](https://www.hcde.org/students_families/academics/the_future_ready_institutes). Accessed 17 Jan. 2024.

Goodson, Ann. *The Settlement Stage: How Hull House Bridged Leisure, Creativity, and Play*. 2015, [ecommons.luc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3890&context=luc\\_theses](http://ecommons.luc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3890&context=luc_theses). Accessed 19 Dec. 2023.

Hamilton County Department of Education. "Opportunity 2030." [https://www.hcde.org/district/strategic\\_planning/opportunity\\_2030](https://www.hcde.org/district/strategic_planning/opportunity_2030). Accessed 19 Dec. 2023.

Herts, Alice. "To Make Good Citizens-the Theatre for Children." *The New York Times*, 12 Nov. 1911, p. 65, [www.newspapers.com/article/the-new-york-times-alice-minnie-herts-pr/5492770/](http://www.newspapers.com/article/the-new-york-times-alice-minnie-herts-pr/5492770/). Accessed 19 Dec. 2023.

Hinkel, Cecil Ellsworth. *An Analysis and Evaluation of the 47 Workshop of George Pierce Baker*. 1959, [etd.ohiolink.edu/acprod/odb\\_etd/ws/send\\_file/send?accession=osu1486731881017397&disposition=inline](http://etd.ohiolink.edu/acprod/odb_etd/ws/send_file/send?accession=osu1486731881017397&disposition=inline). Accessed 19 Dec. 2023.

Institute for the Future. (2011). Future work skills 2020. [http://www.iff.org/uploads/media/SR1382A\\_UPRI\\_future\\_work\\_skills\\_sm.pdf](http://www.iff.org/uploads/media/SR1382A_UPRI_future_work_skills_sm.pdf). Accessed 31 Dec. 2023.

- The Kennedy Center. "Why Arts Integration? Perspectives." *www.kennedy-center.org*, 1990, [www.kennedy-center.org/education/resources-for-educators/classroom-resources/articles-and-how-tos/articles/collections/arts-integration-resources/why-arts-integration/](http://www.kennedy-center.org/education/resources-for-educators/classroom-resources/articles-and-how-tos/articles/collections/arts-integration-resources/why-arts-integration/). Accessed 19 Dec. 2023.
- Kisida, B., Goodwin, L., & Bowen, D. H. (2020). Teaching History Through Theater: The Effects of Arts Integration on Students' Knowledge and Attitudes. *AERA Open*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2332858420902712>. Accessed 25 Dec. 2023.
- Kolb, Alice Y. and David A. "The learning way: Meta-cognitive aspects of experiential learning." *Simulation Gaming*. 40(3), 297-327. Sage Publications, 2009. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1046878108325713>. Accessed 31 Dec. 2023.
- Kolb, David A. *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. Second Edition. Pearson Education, 2015. Accessed 31 Dec. 2023.
- LaGarry, Alison E., and Byron Richard. "Arts Integration in Rural Minnesota: A Collaborative Arts Integration Framework." *Arts Education Policy Review*, vol. 119, no. 3, Nov. 2016, pp. 146–57, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10632913.2016.1236306>. Accessed 28 Apr. 2019.
- Mader, Jackie. "Want Resilient and Well-Adjusted Kids? Let Them Play." *The Hechinger Report*, 14 Nov. 2022, [hechingerreport.org/want-resilient-and-well-adjusted-kids-let-them-play/](http://hechingerreport.org/want-resilient-and-well-adjusted-kids-let-them-play/). Accessed 19 Dec. 2023.
- "Math & Art Integration Videos & Lesson Plans» Armory Center for the Arts." *Www.armoryarts.org*, 2012, [www.armoryarts.org/education/for-schools/lessons/](http://www.armoryarts.org/education/for-schools/lessons/). Accessed 18 Dec. 2023.
- McLeod, Saul. "Jean Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development." *Simply Psychology*, 2023, [www.simplypsychology.org/piaget.html](http://www.simplypsychology.org/piaget.html). Accessed 17 Jan. 2024.

McMinn County School District. "McMinn County High School." *Www.mcminnhighschool.com*,  
[www.mcminnhighschool.com/o/mchs/page/drama](http://www.mcminnhighschool.com/o/mchs/page/drama). Accessed 18 Dec. 2023.

"National Arts Education Status Report 2019." *Arts Education Data Project*, 2023,  
[artseddata.org/national\\_report\\_2019/](http://artseddata.org/national_report_2019/). Accessed 19 Dec. 2023.

One World International School. "What Is Experiential Learning and How Does It Benefit Students? - OWIS Singapore." *One World International School - Singapore*, 24 Nov. 2020, [owis.org/sg/blog/what-is-experiential-learning-and-how-does-it-benefit-students/](http://owis.org/sg/blog/what-is-experiential-learning-and-how-does-it-benefit-students/). Accessed 30 Dec. 2023.

"Program of Study Options." Future Ready Institutes of Hamilton County. *Hamilton County Department of Education*,  
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/11jdKxwNnISu9IMbNi53zHxmBvswRPs4dZuISjUPQV9A/edit>. Accessed 17 Jan. 2024.

"Opportunity 2030." *Www.hcde.org*,  
[www.hcde.org/cms/One.aspx?portalId=350278&pageId=71699363](http://www.hcde.org/cms/One.aspx?portalId=350278&pageId=71699363). Accessed 14 Dec. 2023.

Raber, Jesse. "The Arts in the Public Schools: An Intellectual History." *Process: A Blog for American History*, 28 Mar. 2017, [www.processhistory.org/raber-arts-public-schools/](http://www.processhistory.org/raber-arts-public-schools/). Accessed 19 Dec. 2023.

Rimm-Kaufman, Sara, and Lia Sandilos. "Improving Students' Relationships with Teachers to Provide Essential Supports for Learning: Applications of Psychological Science to Teaching and Learning modules" <https://www.apa.org/education-career/k12/relationships>. Accessed 1 Jan. 2023.

Robinson, Ken. "Do Schools Kill Creativity?" *Ted.com*, TED Talks, Feb. 2006,

[www.ted.com/talks/sir\\_ken\\_robinson\\_do\\_schools\\_kill\\_creativity?language=en](http://www.ted.com/talks/sir_ken_robinson_do_schools_kill_creativity?language=en). Accessed 31 Dec. 2023.

“Self-Efficacy Toolkit.” *Transforming Education*, [transformingeducation.org/resources/self-efficacy-toolkit/](http://transformingeducation.org/resources/self-efficacy-toolkit/). Accessed 19 Dec. 2023.

Silverstein, Lynne, and Sean Layne. “*Defining Arts Integration*” *Defining Arts Integration*. 2010, [www.kennedy-center.org/globalassets/education/resources-for-educators/classroom-resources/artsedge/article/arts-integration-resources/what-is-arts-integration/definingartsintegration.pdf](http://www.kennedy-center.org/globalassets/education/resources-for-educators/classroom-resources/artsedge/article/arts-integration-resources/what-is-arts-integration/definingartsintegration.pdf). Accessed 19 Dec. 2023.

“Teaching history through theatre positively impacts student learning outcomes.” School of Education and Human Development Communication, *Texas A&M University*, 14 Apr. 2021, [education.tamu.edu/teaching-history-through-theater-positively-impacts-student-learning-outcomes/](http://education.tamu.edu/teaching-history-through-theater-positively-impacts-student-learning-outcomes/). Accessed 1 Dec. 2023.

“Teaching Theatre to Students of Varied Abilities.” People Like Us. <https://peoplelikeusdoc.com/theater/>. Accessed 16 Jan. 2024.

Tennessee Department of Education. “Arts Education at a Glance.” *Www.tn.gov*, [www.tn.gov/education/districts/state-of-the-arts--sota-/arts-education-at-a-glance.html](http://www.tn.gov/education/districts/state-of-the-arts--sota-/arts-education-at-a-glance.html). Accessed 19 Dec. 2024.

US Census Bureau. “Census.gov.” Census.gov, 2021, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov). Accessed 16 Jan. 2024.

Wasserstrom, Chuck. “Theatre students act as patients for nursing students’ training.” *UTC News*, May 14, 2021. <https://blog.utc.edu/news/2021/05/theater-students-act-as-patients-for-nursing-students-training/>. Accessed 17 Jan. 2024.

“What Separates Theatre from the Other Arts | FB Playhouse.” *The Forestburgh Playhouse | Theater in Sullivan Catskills, NY*, [www.fbplayhouse.org/blog/2021/8/14/what-separates-](http://www.fbplayhouse.org/blog/2021/8/14/what-separates-)



theatre-from-the-other-arts. Accessed 17 Jan. 2024.

“What is Experiential Education?” Association for Experiential Education.

(n.d.). <https://www.aee.org/what-is-experiential-education>. Accessed 31 Dec. 2023.

Wurman, Jill. “What Happened to Recess in Middle School, and Why Should We Care? | TGS.”

*The Grayson School*, 28 Feb. 2020, [thegraysonschool.org/middle-school-recess/](http://thegraysonschool.org/middle-school-recess/).

Accessed 31 Dec. 2023.