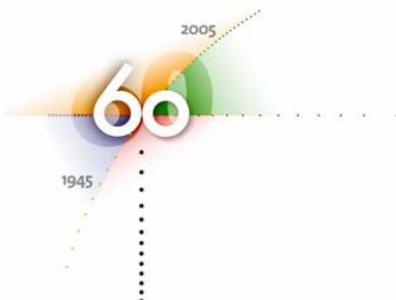


*IBE Working Papers on Curriculum Issues N° 1*

**INSTRUCTIONAL TIME AND THE PLACE OF  
AESTHETIC EDUCATION IN SCHOOL CURRICULA  
AT THE BEGINNING OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY**



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Geneva, Switzerland, March 2006

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*COVER*

Photograph by Dominique Roger. Caption: “Weaving at K.L. Winona School” (Malaysia).

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**Instructional Time and the Place of Aesthetic Education in School Curricula  
at the Beginning of the Twenty-First Century**

by

Massimo Amadio, Nhung Truong and Jana Tschurenev

Geneva, Switzerland, March 2006

UNESCO International Bureau of Education

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*It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy  
in creative expression and knowledge*  
Albert Einstein

## **Introduction**

Aesthetic education has become a core element of almost all official curricula worldwide, along with language, mathematics, natural sciences, social sciences and physical education (Benavot 2004). While national education systems continue to play a key role in the process of definition, selection and legitimisation of valuable educational knowledge that should be transmitted through school-based learning experiences, in recent decades cross-national comparative and trend analyses tended to highlight the growing standardization of curricular structures around the world due to the influence of global models and trans-national actors (Meyer, Kamens and Benavot 1992).

In addition, contemporary processes of curriculum change—in particular those related to the basic education level, typically covering the first nine years of schooling—tend to stress the concept of the competent individual and cosmopolitan citizen, and instead of being content-centred and narrowly focused on training, increasingly emphasise the autonomous learners, who should be prepared for lifelong learning and should be given the opportunity for developing self-confidence and for constructing their knowledge base and competencies in a self-directed way according to their individual interests and needs (Rosenmund 2006). Concerning aesthetic education, this is illustrated by the shift from a narrow focus on basic training for acquiring some instrumental skills, as in the case of the traditional drawing lessons introduced in public schools in the nineteenth century, towards a broader approach underlining the goals of fostering creativity, expression, and personal development through ‘arts education’.

Why is there such a widespread emphasis placed on aesthetic education across countries and regions? What global and regional patterns can be identified concerning the current position of aesthetic education within school curricula? How can these be understood in light of the issues and debates surrounding aesthetic education today? An exploration of the dataset on curricular time and subjects compiled by the UNESCO International Bureau of Education (IBE) and presented in the last section of this paper confirms that: (i) aesthetic education has become an integral part of the core school curriculum worldwide; (ii) aesthetic subjects are most emphasised in the primary years, and their relative importance decreases in higher grades; and (iii) the more advanced the socio-economic context, the more time is devoted to aesthetic education.

Starting with a brief historical overview of the institutionalization of aesthetic education, particularly in the Western countries, this paper will review some of the major ideologies and research findings related to the value of aesthetic education. It will attempt to highlight certain learning theories and approaches to arts education in school. Some main issues, debates and trends surrounding aesthetic education today and its relevance in the local and global contexts are also reviewed. Finally, the last section of this paper will explore some global and regional patterns concerning the prevalence of, and relative emphasis placed on, aesthetic education over the first nine years of schooling at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

## The institutionalization of aesthetic education

In the nineteenth century, basic instruction in music and drawing became institutionalized in European public elementary schools. Singing lessons, especially in protestant contexts, meant learning by heart songs from the church hymn books, and, to a lesser extent, practising songs for community gatherings (Oelkers and Larcher Klee 2006). In contrast, drawing lessons had the purpose of gaining technical skills for industrial employment. In the USA, arts education for industry became part of the public school curricula with the institutionalization of drawing as a required subject in the 1870s. Drawing lessons followed a rather rigid sequence of freehand, model, memory, geometric and perspective drawing, aimed to train the eye, hand, and memory as well as to cultivate taste.

The progressive education movements, as the *Arts and Crafts Movement* inspired by Ruskin and Morris or the German *Kunsterziehungsbewegung* of the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, emphasised the ‘aesthetical’ as a counterforce to the alienation of industrial labour, but also against tendencies of rationalization and intellectualization. The *Kunsterziehungsbewegung* aimed, on the one hand, at comprehensive human education [*allgemeine Menschenbildung*] that includes the formation of a personality shaped by and through aesthetic experience and the unfolding of the creative potential of children. The self-activity [*Selbsttätigkeit*] of artistic practice was regarded as an end in itself, but also as a means of learning self-control through the artistic process of shaping materials. On the other hand, art and music education were regarded as a means towards the reform of society at large (Gaitskell, Hurwitz and Day 1982; Oelkers and Larcher Klee 2006; Ehrenspeck 2001; Amburgy 1990; Efland 1990).

These movements laid the groundwork for the creativity rationale and the interest in personality development that dominated the field of aesthetic education well into the 1960s. The shift from basic skills towards the development of the learner opened the door for the psychological and cognitive research that came in the 1950s.

Moreover, the period after the Second World War and the decolonization wave witnessed further developments: aesthetic education—i.e. learning in the visual arts, music, dance, drama and performance as well as handicrafts—became universally institutionalized beyond the Western world (Kamens and Cha 1992).

During the 1950s, international agencies played an important role in the process of progressive institutionalization of aesthetic subjects in official school curricula. In particular, UNESCO was quite active in organizing some major international meetings and conferences: in Bristol (1951) on the teaching of plastic arts; in Paris (1951) and The Hague (1953) on theatre and youth; and in Brussels (1953) on the role and place of music in the education of youth and adults. Furthermore, two sessions of the International Conference on Public Education (today the International Conference on Education—ICE), organized jointly by UNESCO and the International Bureau of Education (IBE) and held in Geneva, were devoted to the themes of the teaching of handicrafts in secondary schools (thirteenth ICE session, 1950) and the teaching of visual arts in primary and secondary schools (eighteenth ICE session, 1955).

The recommendations resulting from these international conferences all emphasised the importance of aesthetic learning in terms of its emotional, cognitive,

physical, and social effects (UNESCO 1953; UNESCO and International Bureau of Education 1950; 1955). Recognizing the necessity of and right to arts education for the development of individuals and society, ministries of education and national authorities were encouraged to ensure and support the place of the arts in schools and communities worldwide.

As we will see in the last section of this paper, today aesthetic education has become an integral part of the curriculum and, in one form or the other, it can be considered as one of the core subjects of official school curricula across the globe.

### **The aims of aesthetic education**

In general, the main objective of aesthetic education can be stated as learning in, about, and through the arts; in other words, developing aesthetic literacy (Smith 2005). As Maxine Greene (1994a: 494) states it, aesthetic education aims at “enabling the young to express perceptions, feelings, and ideas through reflective shaping of media: paint, clay, musical sound, spoken or written words, bodies in movement”. Students are expected to learn how to transform human experience into artistic expression, how to make sense of their own creative expression and that of others (Burton 1994) but also, to appreciate and build an informed awareness of arts. Further to fostering aesthetic appreciation and sensitivity, arts education may also have the aim to develop certain personality traits, such as creativity, imagination and expressivity, as well as self-confidence, perseverance, and a critical spirit.

The idea of educating through aesthetic experience and activity is tied closely to the early hopes of modern educational philosophies to improve individuals and societies and thus enhance the progress of humankind. In the eighteenth century Friedrich von Schiller (1793-1794) and the German romanticists regarded not only education in general, but also the teaching of aesthetic appreciation and art in particular as means for social reconstruction and the collective improvement of humanity. Against the turbulent background of the French revolution, Schiller wrote of “the promises of the aesthetical” (Ehrenspeck 2001) for the individual as well as for society. These promises—which include social integration and cohesion, peace, justice, ethics, knowledge and truth—are still today considered major goals of the educational process (UNESCO 2001). Aesthetic education can contribute to the acquisition of social competencies such as tolerance, interaction, cooperation, conflict-resolution, and citizenship (Ruiz 2004). Further, it can play a role in the construction of cultural identity and of a common culture, as well as openness to diversity, to other cultures, and to inter-cultural dialogue. Aesthetic education could also be expected to have an impact on economic development.

Beyond personal development and human progress, the goals and aims of aesthetic education are embedded in wider educational, social and political agendas. While one line of argument focuses on the contribution of education—and especially education through the arts—to the international competitiveness of the workforce in a global knowledge economy, others return to the idea of social change through individual aesthetic development. A recent literature review from Scotland on the social and economic impacts of arts (Ruiz 2004) noted many positive effects of arts education in the areas of: social cohesion, community image/regeneration, health and well-being, and education and learning, that is, transferable skills to the workplace.

Modern public education systems have been shaped on the economic model of industrialism, which is now changing irrevocably. “We no longer live essentially in an industrial economy, and the work force we need now has a new pattern. We cannot fulfil our current economic objective by just doing better what we used to do; we have to educate differently” (Robinson 2000: 5). For this ‘different’ approach, education through the arts towards creativity, self-management and communication skills plays a crucial role. As Venturelli (2001: 12) argues, “Basic literacy skills and imitative learning adequate for following instructions on the assembly line, the workshop, or desktop terminal are simply inadequate to the demand of a creative and innovative society. It is not basic education, but advanced intellectual and creative skills that emphasise interdisciplinary and independent thinking that should be required at earlier stages of the educational process and extend from preschool to grad school.” Building on the research regarding the development of ‘transferable’ competencies in aesthetic education, the arts appear as providing “a money- and time-saving option for states looking to build skills, increase academic success, heighten standardized test scores, and lower the incidence of crime among general and at-risk populations” therefore offering “one alternative for states looking to build the workforce of tomorrow” (NGA Centre for Best Practices 2002: 1). Thus, arts education is linked to cultural policies that strengthen long-term international competitiveness in the new knowledge economy in which cultural capital, creative enterprises, and intellectual property are considered decisive factors (Feigenbaum 2002; Galligan 2002).

The goal of strengthening the future labour force through aesthetic education is, however, contended. In the current debates on the arts in education in Europe and the USA, the keywords ‘commodification’, ‘instrumentalism’ and ‘neo-liberalism’ are employed by those who seek to reform education in a learner-centred way or look for the emancipatory potential of education. A reaffirmation of the aesthetic learning experience, new operational definitions of creativity and the values of indeterminacy, pluralism, and dialogue are set against a strictly economic rationale. Focusing on processes rather than outcomes, and on the whole development of the learner, a ‘radical pedagogy’ has been proposed to counter the technocratic and rather deterministic approach towards education (Dineen and Collins 2005; Rumpf 2005; Aguirre 2004; Anderson 2003; Danvers 2003).

### **Aesthetic education and the learning process**

Advocates of arts education may use different strategies of legitimization. Research showing the positive benefits of the arts on learning and academic achievement might be drawn on to promote utilitarian or economic rationales of education and schooling, i.e. the acquisition of ‘marketable competence’. Such ‘instrumental’ arguments of arts education advocates may help to attract funders and influence policy makers. In turn, ‘philosophical’ arguments could also stress the intrinsic value of the aesthetic experience and show what immeasurable long-term outcomes the arts may have on individual development and also the well-being of society. The arts may be seen not as means, but ends in itself; not just as an alternative form of literacy, but as offering “experiences that are uniquely human and inherently worthwhile” (Condliffe Lagemann 1994: 439). The theory of multiple intelligences further emphasises the importance of fostering aesthetic competency in the whole development of each learner.

In addition, the assumption that people differ in their ability to solve problems in different areas of life and make contributions to cultures in different ways is strongly related to the problematic of schooling and the aims and contents of education.

Recognizing a child's potential to develop musical and other artistically related forms of intelligence is not only a question of equity of chances; it helps individuals to make significant contributions to the culture they participate in (Eisner 1994a).

### *Academic achievement*

Recent arts-based school reform initiatives appear to be guided by the assumption that arts education positively benefits other areas of learning, whereby entire schools adopt interdisciplinary curricula that integrate the arts with instruction in other academic subjects for such purposes as increasing student achievement and improving the school environment.

There is also a tendency in recent research on arts education to attempt to assess its value primarily to the extent that learning in the visual and performing arts, including music, 'transfers' to learning in other subjects and in its effects on cognitive and social development (Deasy 2002). This research has found some links between learning in the arts with the academic success of students, specifically in: the acquisition of specific artistic competences; the motivation to learn; and the acquisition of transversal competences applicable to other subject areas, in particular reading, language and mathematics. Furthermore, an analysis conducted on a sample of 25,000 students in the National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS)<sup>1</sup> database found that, in general, participation in the arts is linked to higher academic performance, better grades, and lower drop-out rates for students (Catterall and Waldorf 1999).

According to Teitelbaum and Fuerstner Gillis (2004) there is evidence that arts education transfers to learning in other subjects. Hanna (1992) shows that education in the arts, including dance, can be connected to higher scores in academic achievement tests. Other studies (Parks and Rose 1997; Podlozny 2000) have shown drama instruction to be positively correlated with improved reading comprehension, vocabulary use, and writing quality. Catterall, Chapleau and Iwanaga (1999) found that sustained involvement in drama among youth associates with gains in self-concept and motivation and higher levels of empathy and tolerance towards others. Ruiz (2004) also found that participation in music and visual arts is linked to being above average in reading, mathematics and behaviour.

Music instruction in particular has been shown to correlate strongly with enhanced spatial-reasoning skills, a finding that has implications for learning mathematics (Graziano, Peterson, and Shaw 1999; Hetland 2000; Iwai 2002). Notational skills in music are also positively correlated with test scores in mathematics and reading. Moreover, high levels of involvement in instrumental music over the middle and high school years correlate with high levels of mathematics proficiency by grade twelve (Catterall, Chapleau and Iwanaga 1999). Findings from a study of the Canadian Royal Conservatory of Music that looked at the effects of the program *Learning Through The Arts* on students, suggest that involvement in the arts contributes to engagement in learning—90 percent of all parents surveyed reported that the arts motivated their children to learn—and notes emotional, physical, cognitive and social benefits of learning in and through the arts (Upitis and Smithrim 2003).

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on NELS, see: <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/nels88/>

There seems to be increasing evidence that youth who are considered ‘at risk’ benefit the most from aesthetic education, with demonstrative correlations to cognitive development, to test scores in other subjects, and to the motivation to learn. Arts education could thus be seen as a contributing factor towards the reduction of inequalities of academic achievement between privileged and disadvantaged children. According to Teitelbaum and Fuerstner Gillis (2004), youth from high-risk environments and low socio-economic strata benefit greatly from arts education, with positive links to: cognitive development, overall school achievement, motivation to learn, self-perception, and resiliency. Some researchers also add to this list the opportunity to acquire cultural capital that at-risk youth might only gain in school (Teitelbaum and Fuerstner Gillis 2004; Darby and Catterall 1994; Brice Heath and McLaughlin 1993; Loyacono 1992; Webb 1982; Epstein and Salinas 1992; Hanna 1991).

*Enhancement of human capacity*

Along with some other critics, Winner and Hetland (2000a; 2000b) question claims of a causal relationship between arts education and ‘non-arts outcomes’ that enhance academic achievement. Their argument is that advocacy of arts learning using solely instrumental reasons could undermine support for aesthetic education when evidence for the learning of cross-disciplinary competencies is weak (Hetland and Winner 2002). They emphasize core justifications for arts learning—that is, developing an appreciation of the arts and learning to express oneself in art—that would build “a strong argument for the importance of arts education that does not treat the arts as handmaidens to reading, writing and arithmetic” (Winner and Hetland 2003: 15). By assuming visual and performing arts as symbol systems alternative to language and sciences and as ways of knowing things that people could not know and express otherwise, a case is made for an education that enhances different modes of understanding and focuses on human capacity instead of academic performance (Condliffe Lagemann 1994; see also McMillan 2005).

New research findings in the cognitive dimension of arts education seem to support this latter idea, bringing a theoretical come-back of the renaissance ideal of a human development that integrates aesthetic expression and scientific exploration, as embodied in the prominent figure of Leonardo da Vinci (Bailey 1998). Moreover, the assumption of arts-related intelligences leads to rejecting the traditional distinction between the dual coupling of arts with emotion and science with the intellect. Researchers assume that aesthetic experiences are essential to the cognitive and expressive development of students and inquire how artistic considerations and an aesthetic perspective could enrich the practice of science. Parker (2005) argues that creative intelligence is relevant to all aspects of the school curriculum, yet it is through art and design that pupils may come to experience the significance of creativity as a means of exploring innovative and original ideas which offer credence to the individual and affect approaches to learning. Thus, there is a tendency of “blurring the boundary between arts and sciences” (Slattery and Langerock 2002; see also Eisner and Powell 2002).

### *Multiple intelligences*

The examination of creative behaviour has been a key factor in the re-visiting of learning theories to the present day<sup>2</sup>. One effect of the new research has been a questioning of the validity of the I.Q. test (Gaitskell, Hurwitz and Day 1982). An important contribution to the exploration of artistic uses and forms of intelligence was made by the Harvard-based *Project Zero*<sup>3</sup>, especially with the concept of multiple intelligences (MI) as defined in *Frames of Mind* by Howard Gardner (1983). Against the notion of general intelligence that has been measured in tests for a century, Gardner differentiates between linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, spatial, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences, each one associated with specific neuropsychological systems, and each one appearing with some kind of symbol system within a specific social domain. Defined as “a biopsychological potential to process information in certain ways, in order to solve problems or fashion products that are valued in a culture or community”, intelligences are perceived as situated, contextualized and related to social recognition and cultural appreciation (Gardner 1984; 1993).

The theory of multiple intelligences has become a basis for school reform with the arts education project Arts Propel, the Key School Indianapolis, comprising of numerous training workshops and textbooks as well as the cooperation with the ATLAS (communities of Authentic Teaching, Learning, and Assessment for All Students) project.<sup>4</sup> A number of schools in the USA are now working with MI concepts, thus contributing important experiences for further research (Mills 2001).

### **Some school approaches to aesthetic education**

#### *Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE)*

In the USA, until the 1960s, visual arts education centred on one overriding goal: creative self-expression, a concern that became increasingly regarded as limited and was even blamed for pushing the arts away from the core curriculum. Art educators and theorists began to examine how art education might be enlarged beyond the emphasis on expressing creativity (Barkan 1962). In the early 1980s, the movement towards discipline-based art education (DBAE) culminated in the efforts of the Getty Centre for Education in the Arts, part of the J. Paul Getty Trust. DBAE meant a shift from personal practice of artistry, i.e. “learning in the art” towards “learning about the art” (Burton 1994), including knowledge about studio production of mature artists, art criticism according to formal criteria, art history, and aesthetic responsiveness. Art became understood as a distinct body of theoretical knowledge, and art education focused on how to think about, appreciate and consume art.

In clearly defining its subject matter, the institutionalization of DBAE has strengthened art as a subject in the curriculum (Greer 1997; Clarke, Day and Greer 1987; Eisner 1989). However, as critics put it, “what we have gained in academic respectability,

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<sup>2</sup> One effect of the new research has been a questioning of the validity of the I.Q. test, see: Gaitskell, Hurwitz and Day 1982.

<sup>3</sup> See: <http://www.pz.harvard.edu/>

<sup>4</sup> See two issues of the journal *Teachers College Record* with a special focus on Multiple Intelligences: Corno et al. 2004; Condliffe Lagemann 1994.

we may have lost in artistic authenticity.” DBAE brought about a shift from the focus on individual human growth and development, centered on the needs of the learners, towards the study of established conventions in a subject-centered approach. As Judith Burton (1994) summarizes, aesthetic education has to come to interweaving the acts of making and appraising art.

A similar discussion on whether school arts education should be oriented towards the fine arts or towards the manual arts can be observed in Spain as well (Belver, Ullán, and Acaso 2005). Should the focus be on the creativity, originality, self-efficacy and the value of accomplished work, or rather the increase of cultural capital and intercultural solidarity through knowledge about artistic traditions and conventions? Are there ways to integrate these two dimensions?

Another critique of DBAE points at a perceived shift in the world of visual arts itself. DBAE was inspired by a modernist conception of art as excellence in formal artistic competencies, based on knowledge in art history, criticism and philosophical aesthetics that is no longer shared by visual artists. Postmodern critics argue that this rather narrow conception should give way to the development of the students’ imagination and their ability to perceive how complex systems function and to explore personal and cultural memories. The traditional emphasis on self-expression has to be supplemented by the promotion of self-understanding, while an interdisciplinary approach might integrate visual expression into other symbolic forms of culture (Gilmour 1994).

### *Visual Culture Studies (VCS)*

Since the 1990s, postmodern concepts of arts education in the USA present themselves as a reaction to the current ‘condition’ of society. They stress the importance of imagination for building complex identities; perceive meaning as contested, knowledge as situated, and speak of multiple culture-specific perspectives instead of absolute (aesthetic) value judgements. Highly valued artistic works thus become visual images among others that have to be read from their historical context (Greene 1994a). Arts education is expected to offer a place for the encounter of the Western canon of ‘high culture’ with ‘other’ cultures as well as with popular artistic expressions, a place for reflecting one’s own cultural background and listening to different voices that have formerly been silenced.

Currently, the transformation of arts education into *visual culture studies* (VCS), accompanied by *material culture studies* and *performance studies* in some schools in the USA, as promoted by its postmodern advocates, is highly controversial (Duncum 2002; 2003; Stankiewicz 2004; Van Camp 2004). It is connected to the academic establishment of VCS that have emerged as a research field within cultural studies, and their introduction into school curricula. Due to a re-allocation of scarce resources, the re-organization of the content of teacher education and a strong emphasis on interdisciplinarity, or, ‘transdisciplinarity’ and curriculum integration, VCS are now perceived as challenging the very existence of arts education. With its strong political agenda of social criticism, the VCS movement raises some similar questions as those connected to the Frankfurt school inspired concept of ‘visual communication’ [*visuelle Kommunikation*] in the early 1970s (Ehmer 1971).

VCS advocates no longer seek to reform arts education and to open its content but try to substitute it with a critical visual literacy that enables students to decipher the

multiple image codes of visually saturated high-tech information societies. As stated by Paul Duncum, one of the most visible VCS advocates: “Studying an advertisement for Coke as a strategy of corporate capitalism is a long way from contemplating Monet as the insight of an individual sensibility” (Duncum 2003: 20).

Thus art educators are concerned that the role of arts education could be again reduced to a handmaiden’s job, in this case to the social studies, as Eisner (1994b) and Stinespring (2001) put it. There are at least two additional issues at stake. Firstly, the divergence of educational policies and theoretical debates: “What I have not heard is any discussion that addresses both the theoretical push toward visual culture education and the political shove that NCLB [*No Child Left Behind Act*, 2001] is exerting on American schools” (Stankiewicz 2004: 5). And secondly, visual culture education, as its more traditional counterpart, tends to neglect the practical aspect of arts education. Aguirre (2004) therefore emphasises the need to reconstruct the balance between understanding and production in arts education, in keeping with Dewey’s (1934) idea of art as experience.

### *Interdisciplinarity in the curriculum*

Over the last two decades, there has been a tendency in European and American schools to re-organize aesthetic subject matter in the curricula in order to promote integrality and integration of knowledge as well as inter- and trans-disciplinarity. This model is based on the idea that all the arts share more than other disciplines, and implies the inclusion of visual arts, music and performing arts into one subject, ideally taught in co-operation by different specialists.

As these integrated approaches abandon the confines of traditional subject matter, they can also lead to the establishment of completely new broad subjects under names as “Man, World and Culture” (Oelkers and Larcher Klee 2006). First experiences show that students have much to gain from this re-structuring of aesthetic and other educational contents. However, a danger is that arts may lose grounds and over time even disappear from integrated curricula (Burton 1994). This is one of the points of debate among advocates and adversaries of the trans-disciplinary ‘visual culture’ approach.

A recent international study looked at the progression of arts in the curriculum through surveying educational specialists in twenty-one of the most developed contexts in Western and Eastern Europe, North America, Asia and the Pacific and Africa (Taggart, Whitby and Sharp 2004). Just over half of the countries surveyed offer an integrated arts curriculum; the others teach the arts through separate subject disciplines. In the case where the arts are organized into a generic curriculum area, there is a tendency for the personal and social/cultural aims of the arts to receive greater recognition, especially for pupil progression. The study also found some evidence of a relationship between the countries which teach separate arts disciplines and those which have a clear and unequivocal aim of using the arts to promote knowledge of national cultural heritage. On the other hand, the value of cultural diversity is emphasised particularly in those contexts with an integrated arts curriculum where, in addition to the value of cultural heritage, diversity is often promoted explicitly.

## Current issues and debates

### *Marginalization in schools?*

Although aesthetic education has become part of the core curricula today, at the same time visual and performing arts are perceived as threatened and marginalized school subjects. Even with the extensive research focussing on the benefits of aesthetic education for the learner and for society as a whole, and its strong support by international agencies, education of, in, or through the arts is still contested.

Some studies show tendencies of curricular time and financial resources for aesthetic subjects being reduced. *Academic Atrophy*, a major review of the condition of the liberal arts in America's public schools (von Zastrow and Janc 2004) and based on findings from a survey of principals, reports decreases in the instructional time allocated to the arts—25 percent decreases against only 8 percent increases—, particularly in high-minority schools (36 percent decreases in instructional time in contrast to 11 percent increases), with even higher percentages of anticipated decreases in all cases. Other studies have also shown the limited relevance of arts and music instruction being expressed in terms of lower teachers' salaries (Oelkers and Larcher Klee 2006).

Moreover, although it has been found that “the arts also offer at-risk children a reason to go to school and become fully engaged in learning” (von Zastrow and Janc 2004: 27), a 2002 USA Department of Education study found that high-minority schools received on the whole less external funding and support for arts education than those with low concentrations of minority students (von Zastrow and Janc 2004: 18).

Therefore, art educators and their organisations, as well as researchers, feel the need to emphasise the importance of aesthetic education in order to legitimate allocating scarce resources in favour of the arts. Advocates try to raise awareness among potential donors of positive impacts of arts education by presenting works of notable researchers, such as “10 reasons for the necessity of teaching art in schools”<sup>5</sup> by Martin Zülch, or “10 lessons that the arts teach” by Elliot Eisner (2000)<sup>6</sup>. The latter might be summed as: learning to make subjective judgements, adapt to changing purposes and find meaning in images; developing awareness of divergent situations, multiple perspectives, subtleties and nuances; and acquiring a new and unique form of expression and emotional experience. Blaming policymakers for their neglect of aesthetic education, advocates of the subject stress the chances lost for aesthetically refined individuals and societies (Jackson 1994). More than ten years ago John Goodlad (1992: 194) called this the vast “utopian literature of the arts paradise unrealized.”

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<sup>5</sup> The German art teachers' organisation “BDK e.V. – Fachverband für Kunstpädagogik” [Professional Association for Arts Pedagogy] recommends the book *Die Welt der Bilder – ein konstitutiver Teil der Allgemeinbildung. 10 Begründungen zur Notwendigkeit des Schulfaches Kunst* [The World of Images – A Constitutive Element of General Education. 10 Reasons for the Necessity of the School Subject Art] by Martin Zülch as a ‘subject legitimisation’, especially apt for public relations activities.

See: <http://www.bunddeutscherkuenstlerzieher.de/xmentor/pub/article.php?artid=1>

<sup>6</sup> Eisner's ‘10 lessons’ have been reproduced at the website of the National Art Education Association (NAEA), see: <http://www.naea-reston.org/>

*Shifting interest groups and stakeholders*

Furthermore, there is an ongoing debate in the context of school reforms on what to teach, what for, and who should control the curriculum. In the context of school reforms, established forms of aesthetic education are perceived as being challenged by the re-organization of subject matter in the curricula, as well as shifting interest groups and stakeholders, international students' assessments, and the establishment of national standards.

The re-organisation of the curriculum content can sometimes be connected to a trend towards cooperation with artists, sponsors, communities, museums and other non-school actors and the shift of art and music education to out-of-school programmes. This is quite common in the Netherlands (Cultuurnetwerk Nederland 2004). In the USA, there has been rapid growth in the involvement of performing arts organizations in public schools, whose services include artists' visits, professional development for classroom teachers, special performances for students, and after-school programmes (Teitelbaum and Fuerstner Gillis 2004). Because of the unfixed position of aesthetic education in the curriculum, art educators seek external support, which also opens doors to other actors to enter the field of education. "Schools should no longer be the sole traders in education. There are thousands of organizations—businesses, cultural organizations of every sort—that want to be and should be partners in education" (Robinson 2000).

Some authors also raise the issue of whether it is appropriate or not to consider the school as the only place where arts education should be taught. For example, Oelkers and Larcher Klee (2006) observe that frequently students familiarize themselves with music everywhere but in school, because the music that the youth like is not part of the curriculum.

*Standards and international assessments*

The question of setting standards for competencies in aesthetic education is still much debated, in light of both national and international contexts.

In the USA, the *National Standards for Arts Education: What Every Young American Should Know and Be Able to Do in the Arts* were compiled in 1994. The published standards are discipline-specific to dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts (Walling 2001; Hope 1994; Greene 1994b). In 2001, the arts were included as a core academic subject in the *No Child Left Behind Act*. Thus, on the one hand: "In the last decade, national and state education policies have given the arts more legitimacy in public education" (Teitelbaum and Fuerstner Gillis 2004). On the other hand, assessing the arts under a narrow focus on technical competencies, professional preparation and national as well as international competitiveness of students and the future work-force has received much critique (Burton 1994).

Another influence on the debate on standards and aesthetic education are the recent international assessments of student achievement—such as the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), and the Civic Education Study (CIVED) by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), and the OECD Programme for the

International Student Assessment (PISA)<sup>7</sup>—, which have received increasing attention from educational stakeholders worldwide. The results of these evaluations have influenced educational approaches, policy and curricular structures in developed as well as in developing countries (Elley 2005; Naumann 2005).

In the German speaking countries (Austria, Germany, Switzerland), the OECD results from PISA have raised much controversy. While the low achievements in the tested core subjects (that did not include the arts) seemed to support the necessity to introduce national standards, art educators fear the exclusion of the arts will lead to further marginalization. Therefore assessment studies of the effectiveness of performance in aesthetic subjects are now being considered. However, as Oelkers and Larcher Klee (2006) state, the question remains on whether aesthetic performance can be effectively tested and its complex, indirect and long-term outcomes measured in the same way as claimed to be possible in the case of language and mathematic skills.

Moreover, German advocates promote the right to arts education as a corrective and supplement to the narrow focus of international assessments (Kettel et al. 2004). According to Elliot Eisner (2000: 8): “It is ironic that at a time when educational reform pushes more and more towards standardized assessment, uniformity of program and homogeneity of aims, a field that provides balance to such priorities should be regarded as marginal. From my perspective the greater the pressure on schools to standardize, the greater the need for the arts, those places where individuality and productive surprise are celebrated.”

Eisner (2005b) further distinguishes between two visions of education: a formalist vision which aims for specified learning outcomes, and a romantic vision, which focuses on the realization of distinctive human potentialities and makes the learning experience meaningful. He emphasises the fact that students do not have identical aptitudes or interests, and therefore schools should seek rather for the realization of differentiation and integration, which may not necessarily fit with the idea of set standards.

### **Whose art? Aesthetic education in national and global contexts**

The debate on visual culture studies, discussed earlier in this paper, raises questions that are of crucial importance for looking at the global institutionalization of aesthetic subjects. What counts as art? Who decides this? Whose art is taught in schools? What were the reasons that arts lessons became part of the official curricula worldwide? Should the traditional ‘Western arts canon’ be considered as the ‘universal’ model of aesthetic education?

In the Asia-Pacific region, arts were traditionally an integral part of daily life. Informal education in the arts often took the form of master-apprenticeship and involved in physical, sensory, emotional and cognitive development. It also had as goals the propagation of values, and understanding of nature and means of expression. Within the education systems, many countries in this region have taken on Western models. However there is concern that these approaches do not fully draw on nor safeguard the rich culture

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<sup>7</sup> For more information on these studies, see: <http://www.timss.org/> (TIMSS & PIRLS); <http://www.iea.nl/cived.html> (CIVED); <http://www.pisa.oecd.org> (PISA).

and arts of the region leaving them caught between a ‘modern’ model of arts education and indigenous knowledge and more integrated and holistic art traditions (UNESCO 2005).

Research on Japan—where aesthetic subjects were introduced into the school curricula as early as in the Meiji Period—suggests that arts education consisted predominantly of ideas imported from Western societies. This situation changed only in the 1960s, when the focus of aesthetic education started to shift towards Japanese traditions (Masuda 2003). However, current debates in this country follow similar lines as in the Western ones and raise questions of curriculum integration and postmodernity (Ishizaki and Wang 2003).

In Muslim countries, visual arts education has to take into account the traditional ‘unease’ about figurative representation in Islamic cultures, as Sogancı (2005) has demonstrated. The Maghreb countries, since gaining independence, have made artistic education a priority in primary and secondary schools, as well as in non-formal education. The fundamental objectives of aesthetic and artistic training of students in this region may be summarised as the: “development of students’ taste and expressive abilities in childhood (basic education); preparation for advanced studies in the arts or entry into a career that is increasingly dependent on the visual arts, the performing arts and music, such as culture, communications, printing and the like” (Chafchaoui 2002: 423).

There is noticeably very little internationally visible research on the purpose, content, organization and implementation of aesthetic education in developing countries. In the 1970s, a thread of research looked at how especially the performing arts as educational instruments could assist the social, cultural and economic development of the peripheries (Kidd 1982). Also it seems that now scholars are more and more placing artistic educational programmes in the context of development.

However, even if there are promising experiences (Morrison 2004; Herbst, Nzewi, and Agawu 2003), arts education especially in African contexts has to struggle with colonial histories, Western-centered definitions of what is and counts as art and its association with the leisure of elites. The effect is that even when aesthetic education is part of national curricula, local schools may simply lack funds and motivation to teach arts (Abraham 2002). This could also raise questions concerning the ‘universality’ of aesthetic education. Before asking how arts education could be effectively employed for developmental purposes—or any other objectives that are still to be defined for a variety of contexts—there must be frameworks of understanding how arts ‘function’ in different cultures, as Mans (2000) has demonstrated for South African cases.

#### *An international focus on arts education*

In 1999 UNESCO made an international appeal for the promotion of arts education and creativity at school as part of the construction of a culture of peace (UNESCO 2005). Several regional meetings<sup>8</sup> have since been organized on this theme, also in the framework

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<sup>8</sup> For the African region: Port Elizabeth, South Africa (June 2001). For the Arab States region: Amman, Jordan (May 2002). For the Asian and Pacific region: Nadi, Fiji (November 2002); Hong Kong, SAR China (January 2004); New Delhi, India (March 2005); Seoul, Korea (November 2005). For the European and North American region: Helsinki, Finland (August 2003); Vilnius, Lithuania (September 2005). For the Latin American and Caribbean region: Uberada, Brazil (October 2001); Trinidad and Tobago (June 2005); Bogota, Colombia (November 2005).

of preparations for the World Conference on Arts Education (March 2006)<sup>9</sup>. These meetings have brought together national leaders in education and curriculum specialists to debate on this issue in order to ensure that proper place is given to arts in education systems worldwide. Furthermore, these discussions have highlighted certain expected outcomes, aims, approaches, and challenges regarding aesthetic education, that have also been reviewed earlier in this paper.

For example, the positive role of arts education for disadvantaged populations and in the context of development has been emphasised. It has been described as a weapon in the fight against poverty and exclusion and the promotion of creative freedom and democracy (UNESCO 2003), as well as a motor of development (UNESCO 2001).

An association is also often made between arts education and the promotion of universal values and in fostering peace, cultural understanding, and skills of cooperation and learning to live together. The arts are expected to “engender understanding of the importance of cultural diversity and reinforce behaviour patterns underlying social tolerance” (UNESCO 2005: vii). Therefore, aesthetic education is seen to have great value for the building of cross-cultural understanding, thus contributing to a harmonious coexistence of different artistic and cultural backgrounds and knowledge, within local and global contexts.

There seems to be a consensus across the regions that arts education affects the child on both an academic and a personal level. Following research on the benefits of arts education and learning in general, the arts are advocated as having a unique role in developing specific skills necessary for advanced careers in scientific and technology: spatial thinking, lateral thinking, creative problem-solving, pattern-recognition, cognition, concentration, perception, communication, and teamwork (UNESCO 2005).

Arts education also aims to pass on cultural heritage to young people, to enable them to create their own language and to contribute to their overall personal and emotional development. In the Latin American region, art in primary education aims to teach children a creative, open view of the world; and in secondary education it has the purpose of teaching to understand life, and teaching creativity as a form of communication (UNESCO 2001). In Europe and North America, arts education is seen to foster identity-building, and skills of interpersonal communication. Creativity and artistic language has also played a role in psychological treatment in post-conflict situations in this region (UNESCO 2003). The Asian Vision for Art Education emphasises the important learning that occurs through the arts in terms of: (i) creative, perceptual and cognitive skills; (ii) aesthetic skills of harmony, balance, rhythm, proportionality and vitality, and a love for beauty; (iii) communication, teamwork and sharing skills; and (iv) an understanding of Asian cultures and value systems (UNESCO 2005: 9).

New research findings on learning theories and methodologies in arts education have brought different approaches in various regions. For example, the Asian region has highlighted the Arts-in-Education (AiE) approach (UNESCO 2005). Here, arts are used instrumentally, as educational tools for other subjects, therefore recognizing multiple intelligences, fostering cognitive development and creative and analytical thinking across disciplines. The approach also has strong links between art and culture, making room for

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<sup>9</sup> See: [http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=2916&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=2916&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

local cultural values and identity in education. In Europe and North America, a balance is being sought between two approaches: “Education *in* art”—building cultural capital and identity—and “Education *through* art” (UNESCO 2006)—art as a vehicle for general educational outcomes and skills (UNESCO 2003). A recent international analysis by Anne Bamford (2006), conducted for UNESCO in partnership with the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies and the Australia Council, studies the differences between “education *in* the arts” and “education *through* the arts” in over sixty countries.

Further, the Latin American region is trying to approach visual arts education by: fostering links between artistic forms in society and artistic practices taught in school; promoting interdisciplinarity between different artistic languages, the sciences and the new technologies; and promoting an arts education that is more reflexive and critical, and in line with sociocultural context (UNESCO 2001). Integrated arts practices promoting local culture and classical art forms have also been introduced in some Asian countries—India, Korea, Malaysia, Mongolia, Pakistan, and Singapore (UNESCO 2005).

The guarantee of the right to aesthetic education is associated with the international goals of quality education and equality of educational opportunities for all young people. This quality arts education must respond appropriately to the cultural differences, identities and traditions of each context. Therefore the common question among all regions is: How to teach art in culturally diverse contexts and appropriate to each current local and educational situation?

Many challenges are being faced with regards to this question. There are also great difficulties in finding space for arts in the already overloaded curriculum, particularly at the secondary level, and possibly due to the diminishment of the arts in education as a result of the growing emphasis on technology “squeezing the arts out of the school curriculum” (UNESCO 2005: 7). In the developing regions, many schools lack resources to offer arts education programs. There is also the concern of teacher training and the incorporation and use of new technologies in the arts and arts education. Furthermore, there are new requirements and demands, for example the emergence of “new aesthetic sensibilities that come from visual and audiovisual culture and from greater recognition of the human body” (UNESCO 2001: 16).

There seems to be a common shared perception regarding the marginalization of arts education in all regions. A concern was expressed at one of the Latin American regional meetings that the twentieth century pre-occupation with technological and economic progress has put art and culture in the background (UNESCO 2001). Furthermore, at the Europe and North American meeting in Helsinki it was reported that: “Despite the advantageous effects of arts education, over the last two years there has been a growing tendency by governments to marginalize this discipline in the national school curricula in Europe and North America. These subjects have instead been defined as extracurricular activities or allocated to out of school settings” (UNESCO 2003: 6). Finally, it was also noted that more emphasis is placed on arts education at the primary than the secondary level (UNESCO 2003), a trend that is also confirmed in the findings presented below.

## The current place of aesthetic education in official school curricula

This section explores some global and regional patterns on intended instructional time and the relative emphasis placed on aesthetic education over the first nine years of schooling at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The findings presented below draw upon the IBE database on instructional time and curricular subjects, which has been most recently revised and updated.<sup>10</sup>

The variable *intended instructional time* refers to the number of annual hours that should be devoted to the teaching and learning process taking place at school, in accordance with official policies and curricular guidelines. These guidelines are usually summarised in curricular or lesson timetables which list the subjects that are expected to be taught at each grade (or educational cycle) level, along with the prescribed amount of weekly ‘periods’ or instructional ‘hours’ that should be allocated to each subject or subject area (see Kamens, Meyer and Benavot 1996; Benavot 2002; 2004). It is important to recall that official intentions concerning instructional time do not necessarily coincide with the *actual amount of hours* of instruction received by students in the classroom. Many factors—such as time spent on administrative tasks, teacher absenteeism or strikes, school closures or time wastage—can determine reductions or erosion in available instructional time, as indicated by school surveys carried out in both advanced and less developed contexts (Abadzi 2004; Benavot and Gad 2004; Amadio 2004).

The intended number of yearly hours has been calculated taking into account: i) the duration of the school year, expressed as the number of working days or weeks that schools are expected to spend on classroom instruction; ii) the number of teaching ‘periods’ or instructional ‘hours’ allocated to the different subjects at each grade level, as indicated in official timetables or other curricular guidelines; and iii) the average duration of ‘periods’ or ‘hours’, expressed in minutes (see also Benavot 2002; 2004).

Subjects listed in curricular timetables were coded following a set of rules and re-organized into a basic classification scheme of ten general curriculum categories (for further details on methodological issues and data sources, see Benavot 2004). In this study we concentrate on the general category ‘aesthetic education’, that includes subject labels such as ‘arts’, ‘art or arts education’, ‘plastic/visual arts’, ‘music/singing’, ‘dance’, ‘theatre’, ‘drama’, ‘drawing’, and ‘handicrafts’. It must be emphasised that the present analysis focuses on the subject labels listed in curricular timetables and not on the *actual contents* of each subject.

Following Benavot (2004), we tried to estimate globally and by region:

- the proportion of countries that require instruction in aesthetic education, based on whether a subject is listed (or not) in the curricular timetables;
- the relative emphasis placed on aesthetic education, or in other words the percentage of total curricular time expected to be spent on aesthetic subjects;

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<sup>10</sup> The IBE started compiling data on annual hours of instruction allocated to curricular subjects in 1997 and since then the database has been updated several times. Updates made available at different time points were employed in some studies and trend analyses; see for example: Amadio 1998; 2000; Benavot 2002; 2004.

- the total number of annual hours of instruction that students should receive in aesthetic education.

### *Findings*

Figure 1 shows that a high proportion of countries worldwide require instruction in aesthetic education. The prevalence of aesthetic education is more pronounced in the first six years of schooling (ranging from about 92 percent of countries in grades 1–3 to about 96 percent in grades 4–6) and decreases in years 7–9, an educational level which in most contexts tends to coincide with lower secondary education or the upper cycle of basic education. Some regional patterns<sup>11</sup> are reported in Figures 2 to 7. In Central and Eastern Europe aesthetic education is universally required in grades 1 to 7 but its prevalence sharply decreases in grade 9 (about 63 percent of countries). In the Arab States, as well as in Asia and the Pacific, a large proportion of countries require instruction in aesthetic education in first six years of schooling, and in particular in grades 4–6, but the trend is toward a decrease in grades 7–9. In North America and Western Europe the prevalence of aesthetic education remains high and fairly stable across grades (above 95 percent of countries in grades 1 to 8) and slightly declines only in year 9 (about 90 percent of countries). Latin America and the Caribbean shows the lowest proportion of countries requiring instruction in aesthetic education (ranging from about 79 percent in grades 1–3 and grade 8, to about 86 percent in grades 4–7 and grade 9), but no noticeable decreases are evident across grades. Finally, the prevalence of aesthetic education in Sub-Saharan Africa is particularly marked in grades 1 to 6, but it sharply decreases in higher grades up to a minimum of 57 percent of countries in year 9.

The relative emphasis placed on aesthetic education in the official school curricula is reported in Table 1. Globally, countries allocate to aesthetic subjects about 10 percent of total curricular time in grades 1 to 4, and starting from grade 5 the percentage of time to be spent on aesthetic education shows a decreasing trend which is more evident in years 7–9. On the average, in year 9 only about 5 percent of the total curricular time is expected to be allocated to aesthetic subjects compared to more than 10 percent in the first four years of schooling.

Regionally, aesthetic education is more emphasised by countries in North America and Western Europe as well as in Central and Eastern Europe, but in the latter region the importance of aesthetic education sharply declines in grades 7–9. The trend toward a decrease in emphasis is evident in all the EFA regions with the exception of Latin America and the Caribbean, where countries allocate to aesthetic subjects a fairly stable percentage of curricular time across grades, ranging from a maximum of 8 percent of time in year 1 to a minimum of about 7 percent in year 9. In the ninth year of schooling aesthetic education is more emphasised in North America and Western Europe and in Latin America and the Caribbean (about 7 percent of total curricular time), while countries in Sub-Saharan Africa tend to allocate the lowest percentage of time (3.5 percent).

How many hours of instruction are to be spent on aesthetic subjects during the first nine years of schooling? Table 2 shows the median<sup>12</sup> instructional hours in each grade as well as the accumulated number of hours of instruction over years 1–9. Globally, countries

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<sup>11</sup> Countries were grouped by Education for All (EFA) region.

<sup>12</sup> The median represents the middle value of a set of data and it is not affected by extreme values as in the case of the mean. See also Benavot 2004.

require about 72 annual hours of instruction in aesthetic subjects in grades 1 to 4, an amount declining to slightly less than 70 hours in grades 5 and 6, and further decreasing after the transition to lower secondary education or the upper cycle of basic education—from nearly 60 hours per year in grade 7 to 50 annual hours in grade 9. Overall, students are expected to receive an accumulated total of some 570 hours of instruction in aesthetic education over the first nine years of schooling.

In terms of EFA regions, as illustrated in Figure 8, North America and Western Europe shows the highest total number of instructional hours over grades 1–9 (about 870 hours, or 50 percent more hours than the global figure), followed by Latin America and the Caribbean (about 610 hours) and Central and Eastern Europe (some 550 hours). In the other regions, the accumulated total is below 500 hours of instruction.

Data reported in Table 3 and organized according to other country groupings (by Millennium Development Goals regions, income level, Human Development Index and state of freedom) confirm that countries in the most advanced contexts tend to allocate to aesthetic education the highest number of hours over years 1–9: the total number of hours in developed regions (845 hours—see Figure 9) or high-income OECD countries (828 hours—see Figure 10) is almost twice the accumulated total in the least developed countries (432 hours).

Table 2 also reports the median instructional hours in each grade as well as the total number of hours over grades 1–9 concerning two of the most common subject labels listed in curricular timetables, namely ‘arts education’ and ‘music’ (see also Figures 11 to 14). A large majority of countries require instruction in arts education, which seems to be considered worldwide as the ‘typical’ aesthetic subject. Globally, arts education tends to be more emphasised at the primary education level, in particular in grades 4–6, and its relative importance progressively declines after grade 6. The same trend is also apparent in the case of music, although the decrease in emphasis is more pronounced in years 8 and 9. Finally, Table 2 shows that students are expected to spend a total of about 300 hours on arts education over grades 1–9, while the total instructional time allocated to music education is slightly more than 260 hours.

## **Conclusion**

There is a wide consensus today concerning the importance of ensuring that during the first nine years of schooling—a period increasingly considered as the basic education cycle—students are exposed to some form of aesthetic learning, be it through traditional curricular subjects such as music or drawing, or through more integrated, inter-disciplinary learning areas. Our exploration of official curricular intentions, as reflected in lesson timetables, confirms that aesthetic education is currently one of the core subjects taught at school worldwide.

As reported earlier in this paper, advocates of arts education tend to stress the positive impact of the arts not only on other areas of learning and pupils achievement, but also on the whole development of each learner. In recent years international organizations, ministries of education and curriculum developers across the world have increasingly emphasised the potential social benefits of aesthetic education and its expected contribution to socio-economic development and the fight against poverty, the promotion of universal values and cultural understanding, or the fostering of local cultural values and

identities. Some form of aesthetic learning is therefore expected to positively transfer to other learning areas and to be beneficial to the all-round development of individuals and also the well-being of society.

The exploratory findings reported above may help in highlighting some of the current challenges facing aesthetic education. Our concluding remarks will focus on three key aspects frequently overlooked in national and international debates revolving around this issue.

First, and taking into account that there is no evidence of a declining importance or a progressive marginalisation of aesthetic education in official school curricula between the 1980s and the most recent period<sup>13</sup>, it is clear that aesthetic subjects are mainly emphasised at the primary education level and their relative importance decreases in higher grades, in particular after the transition to lower secondary education. Thus there is the risk that the expected positive impact of the arts on other learning areas and on the overall development of the learner accumulated over the early grades will be progressively lost or diluted instead of being fully exploited in higher grades, where in addition aesthetic education has to compete with the emergence of new learning areas and tends to be less important than other core subjects for promotion and graduation.

Second, the high expectations toward aesthetic education in terms of its potential benefits for learners and society at large seem to be disproportionate when compared with the limited amount of time in the school year during which the students experience some form of aesthetic learning, ranging from a maximum of about 72 hours to a minimum of 50 annual hours at the global level and even below these amounts in some regions. Once again it should be stressed that these figures refer to the *intended* instructional time allocated to aesthetic subjects under the most favourable circumstances and it would be not surprising that, due to time wastage and erosion in the classroom, students *actually* receive less than the officially prescribed number of hours for aesthetic education.

Third, it is evident that aesthetic education is more emphasised in the most developed regions, where students may expect to be engaged in aesthetic learning almost twice the amount of time than their peers in the less developed countries, who frequently attend schools lacking sufficient human and material resources to offer quality arts education programs. Therefore, the expected benefits of aesthetic education and its potential positive impact on a range of social dimensions tend to be minimized precisely in the contexts where they are most needed.

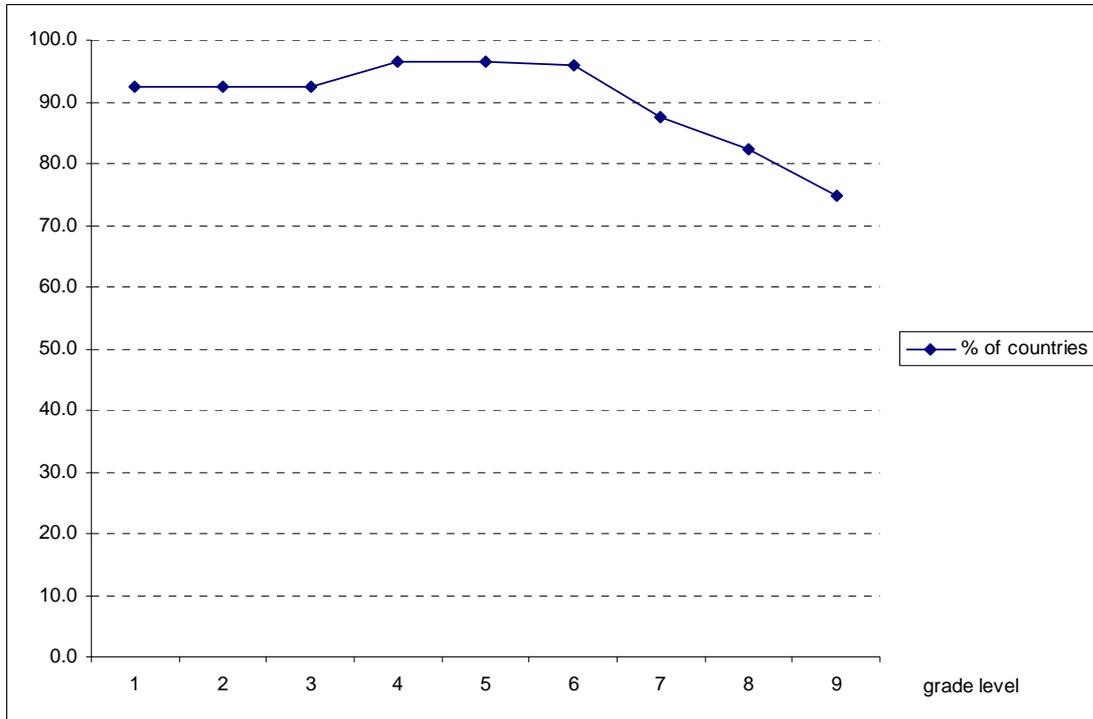
Apparently, for all those countries that are far from the ‘standards’ of the most advanced situations an intuitive solution might consist in a simple extension of official curricular time for aesthetic subjects. Nevertheless, before envisaging policy measures aimed at merely increasing the intended instructional time allocated to aesthetic education, it would be more appropriate to carefully examine other important aspects such as the *effective* use of available time, the overall structure and organization of the school curriculum as well as the potential and mutually reinforcing relation between aesthetic

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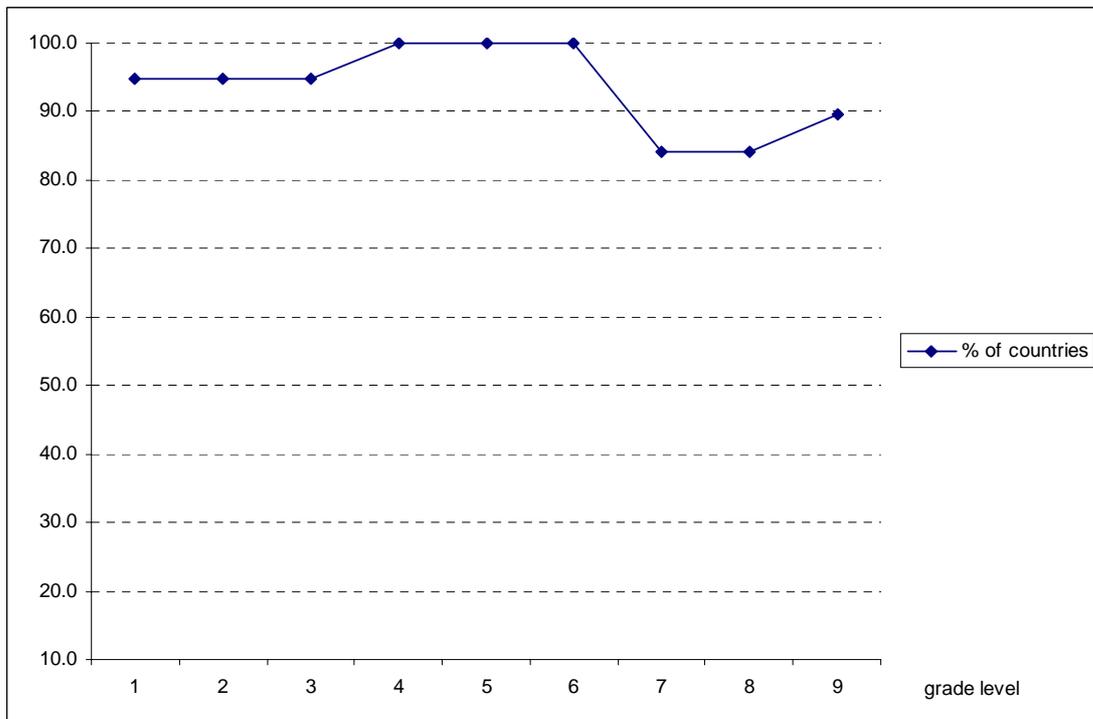
<sup>13</sup> For an exploration of longitudinal trends concerning intended instructional time and the overall organization of the school curriculum, see Benavot 2004. Apart from negligible variations, global percentages of total instructional time allocated to aesthetic education in the 1980s reported by Benavot are similar to the 2000s figures discussed in the present paper.

education and the other learning areas, the teaching-learning methods, and the assessment and evaluation policies.

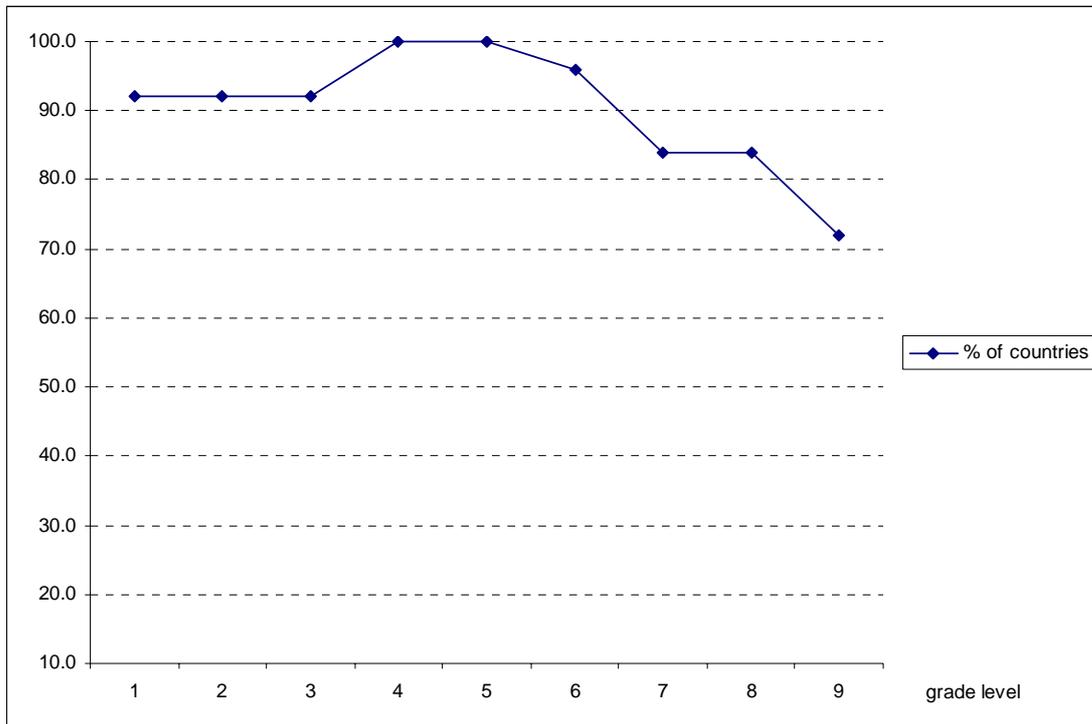
**Figure 1. Proportion of countries worldwide requiring instruction in aesthetic education in grades 1–9 (Number of cases =118)**



**Figure 2. Arab States: proportion of countries requiring instruction in aesthetic education in grades 1–9 (N=19)**

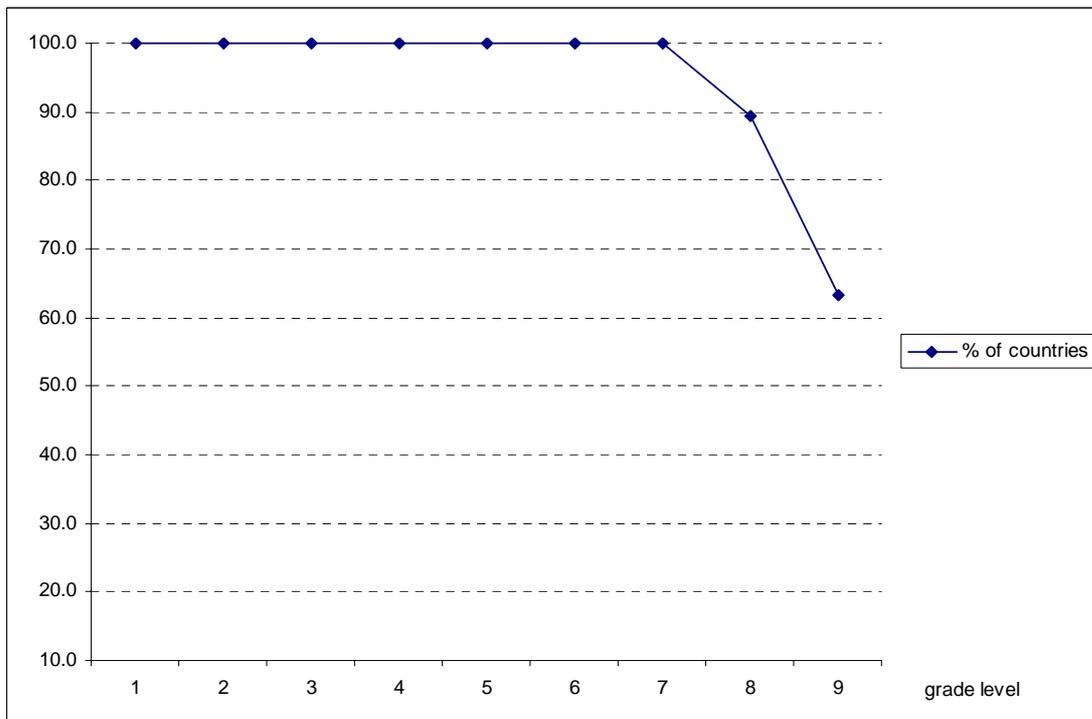


**Figure 3. Asia and the Pacific: proportion of countries requiring instruction in aesthetic education in grades 1–9 (N=25)**

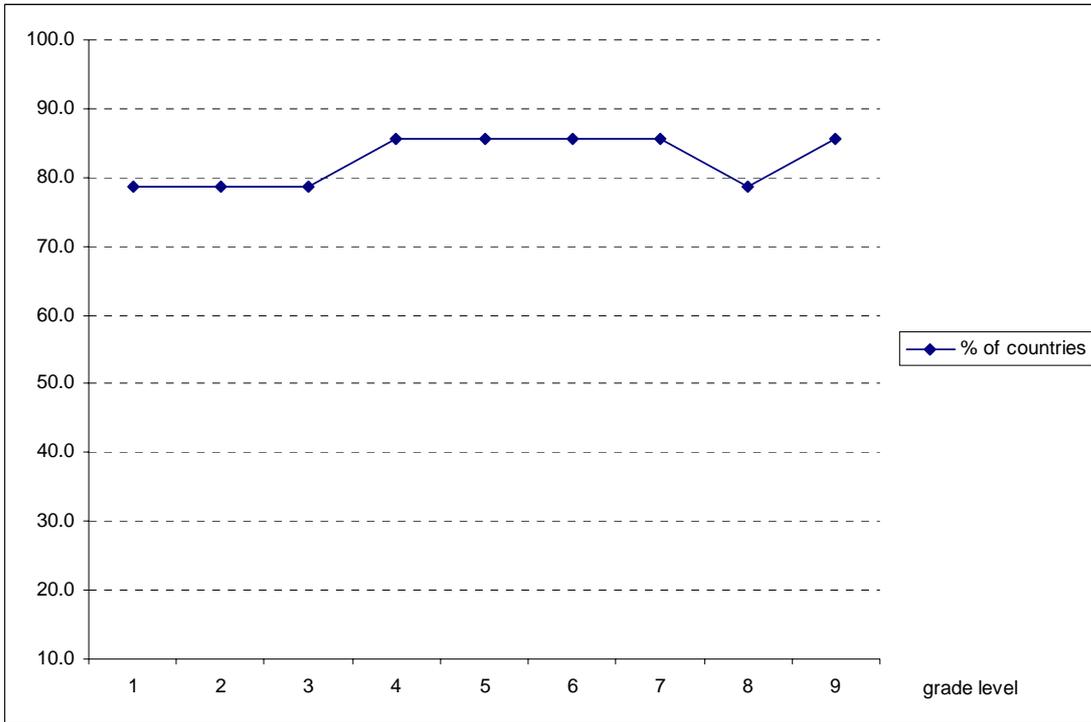


Note: Includes Central Asia, East Asia and the Pacific, and South and West Asia.

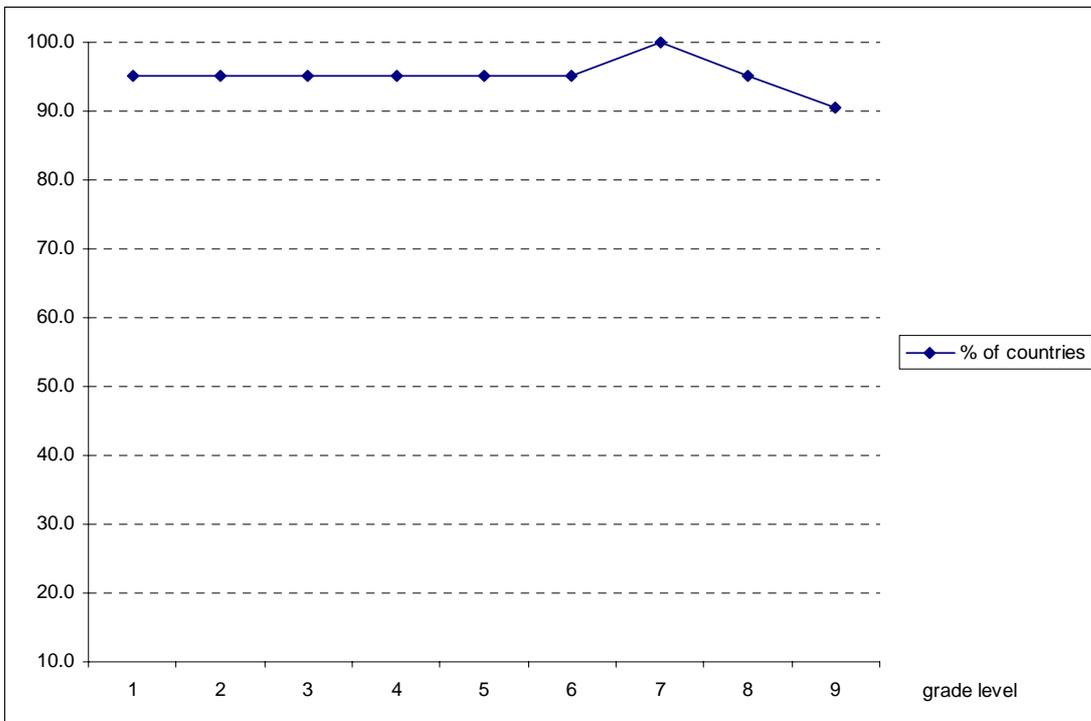
**Figure 4. Central & Eastern Europe: proportion of countries requiring instruction in aesthetic education in grades 1–9 (N=19)**



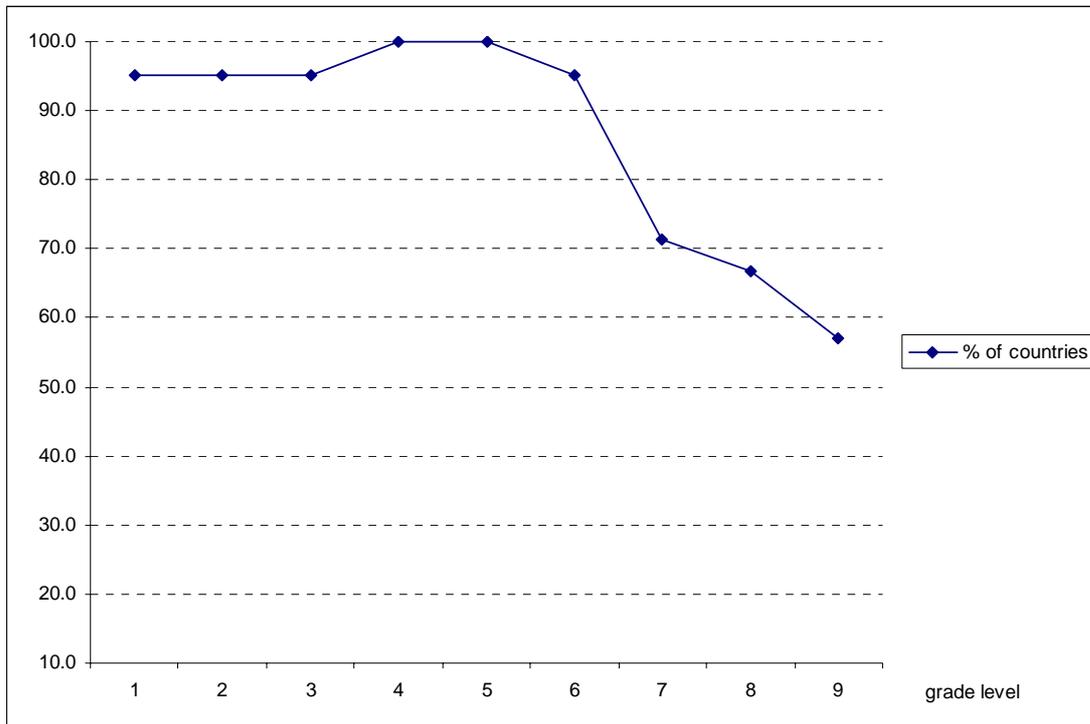
**Figure 5. Latin America and the Caribbean: proportion of countries requiring instruction in aesthetic education in grades 1–9 (N=14)**



**Figure 6. North America and Western Europe: proportion of countries requiring instruction in aesthetic education in grades 1–9 (N=21)**



**Figure 7. Sub-Saharan Africa: proportion of countries requiring instruction in aesthetic education in grades 1–9 (N=21)**



**Table 1. Relative emphasis placed on aesthetic education in grades 1 to 9, by EFA region (number of cases within parentheses)**

<b>EFA region</b>	<b>1st</b>	<b>2nd</b>	<b>3rd</b>	<b>4th</b>	<b>5th</b>	<b>6th</b>	<b>7th</b>	<b>8th</b>	<b>9th</b>
Arab States (N=19)	9.1	9.0	8.5	7.8	6.7	6.3	4.9	4.9	4.4
Asia & the Pacific (N=25)	10.0	10.3	9.6	9.8	9.0	7.9	6.2	5.4	4.2
<i>Central Asia (N=7)</i>	<i>12.6</i>	<i>13.2</i>	<i>12.4</i>	<i>11.3</i>	<i>8.7</i>	<i>7.2</i>	<i>8.1</i>	<i>6.6</i>	<i>5.1</i>
<i>East Asia &amp; the Pacific (N=14)</i>	<i>8.8</i>	<i>8.9</i>	<i>8.8</i>	<i>9.0</i>	<i>8.8</i>	<i>8.0</i>	<i>6.0</i>	<i>5.0</i>	<i>4.4</i>
<i>South and West Asia (N=4)</i>	<i>8.5</i>	<i>8.5</i>	<i>6.4</i>	<i>9.4</i>	<i>9.4</i>	<i>8.6</i>	<i>3.7</i>	<i>3.6</i>	<i>1.9</i>
Central & Eastern Europe (N=19)	14.0	13.5	13.4	12.1	10.6	9.3	7.4	6.1	4.5
Latin America & the Caribbean (N=13)	8.0	8.0	7.4	7.9	7.8	7.8	7.4	6.8	7.1
North America & Western Europe (N=21)	13.5	14.0	13.9	14.8	13.7	12.7	10.4	8.7	7.4
Sub-Saharan Africa (N=21)	8.1	8.2	8.4	8.2	8.5	8.4	5.4	4.4	3.5
<b>Global mean (N=118)</b>	<b>10.5</b>	<b>10.6</b>	<b>10.3</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>6.9</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>5.1</b>

**Table 1. Standard deviations**

<b>EFA region</b>	<b>1st</b>	<b>2nd</b>	<b>3rd</b>	<b>4th</b>	<b>5th</b>	<b>6th</b>	<b>7th</b>	<b>8th</b>	<b>9th</b>
Arab States	4.83	4.01	4.71	3.12	2.71	2.80	2.88	2.99	2.82
Asia & the Pacific	4.75	4.82	4.58	3.80	3.39	3.75	4.24	3.73	3.90
<i>Central Asia</i>	<i>4.27</i>	<i>4.42</i>	<i>4.25</i>	<i>4.50</i>	<i>3.58</i>	<i>4.12</i>	<i>5.34</i>	<i>5.33</i>	<i>5.66</i>
<i>East Asia &amp; the Pacific</i>	<i>5.21</i>	<i>5.24</i>	<i>4.27</i>	<i>3.73</i>	<i>3.33</i>	<i>3.40</i>	<i>3.80</i>	<i>3.20</i>	<i>3.08</i>
<i>South and West Asia</i>	<i>6.81</i>	<i>6.81</i>	<i>8.02</i>	<i>7.29</i>	<i>7.29</i>	<i>4.04</i>	<i>3.07</i>	<i>3.07</i>	<i>3.75</i>
Central & Eastern Europe	6.32	6.04	5.53	5.12	3.77	3.02	2.55	3.35	4.12
Latin America & the Caribbean	4.27	4.27	3.81	3.37	3.34	3.34	3.34	3.92	3.31
North America & Western Europe	6.71	7.04	6.51	7.52	7.04	6.53	4.61	4.43	4.47
Sub-Saharan Africa	3.78	3.73	3.93	3.31	4.18	4.49	4.05	3.79	3.57
<b>Global</b>	<b>5.76</b>	<b>5.72</b>	<b>5.59</b>	<b>5.39</b>	<b>4.94</b>	<b>4.62</b>	<b>4.12</b>	<b>3.96</b>	<b>4.00</b>

**Table 2. Median instructional time (in total number of yearly hours) allocated to aesthetic education in grades 1 to 9, by EFA region (number of cases within parentheses)**

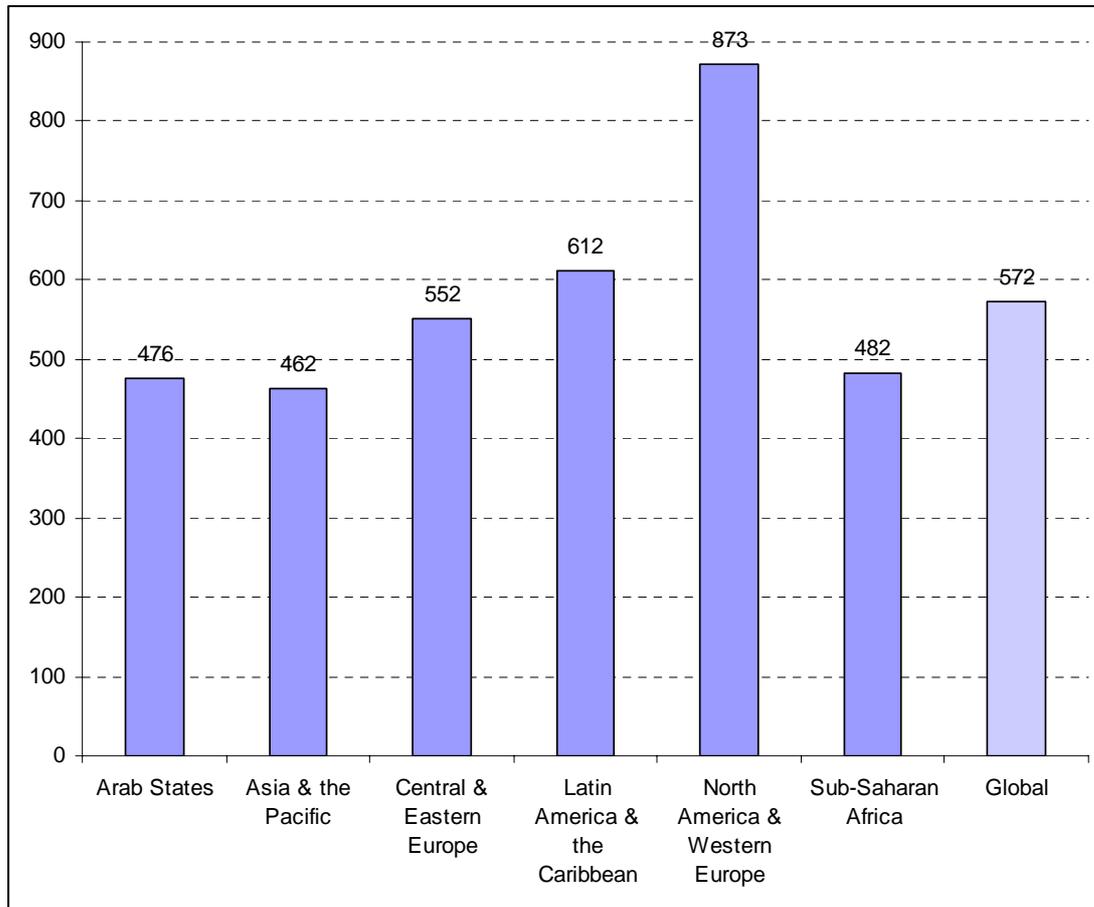
<b>EFA region</b>	<b>1st</b>	<b>2nd</b>	<b>3rd</b>	<b>4th</b>	<b>5th</b>	<b>6th</b>	<b>7th</b>	<b>8th</b>	<b>9th</b>	<b>1 to 9</b>
Arab States (N=18)	63	63	55	59	50	48	47	43	32	476
Asia & the Pacific (N=25)	54	66	66	69	63	54	54	51	29	462
<i>Central Asia (N=7)</i>	53	66	70	69	47	49	54	45	23	530
<i>East Asia &amp; the Pacific (N=14)</i>	56	63	63	68	68	58	57	54	46	481
<i>South and West Asia (N=4)</i>	59	59	33	81	81	74	30	30	0	425
Central & Eastern Europe (N=19)	70	72	87	86	72	71	64	60	35	552
Latin America & the Caribbean (N=13)	72	72	72	72	72	72	67	67	67	612
North America & Western Europe (N=21)	94	96	106	113	113	96	105	86	60	873
Sub-Saharan Africa (N=16)	59	59	68	61	65	65	50	47	37	482
<b>Median instructional time (N=112)</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>572</b>
<i>Median instructional time (global) for those countries that teach:</i>										
Arts education (N=102)	30	35	38	35	32	32	29	28	27	302
Music education (N=73)	29	29	30	30	30	28	26	25	20	263

*Note:* Figures have been rounded. Figures in the last column on the right refer to the median value of the total number of hours over grades 1–9, and do not necessarily correspond to the actual sum of median values in each grade.

**Table 2. Standard deviations**

<b>EFA region</b>	<b>1st</b>	<b>2nd</b>	<b>3rd</b>	<b>4th</b>	<b>5th</b>	<b>6th</b>	<b>7th</b>	<b>8th</b>	<b>9th</b>	<b>1 to 9</b>
Arab States	28.8	27.3	34.1	25.0	22.8	24.4	23.5	25.4	23.1	126.3
Asia & the Pacific	33.3	34.9	32.4	28.3	26.9	27.1	33.5	32.3	35.4	169.2
<i>Central Asia (CA)</i>	22.1	27.4	26.8	28.9	27.2	32.3	40.4	42.9	47.9	197.5
<i>East Asia &amp; the Pacific (EAPA)</i>	37.6	38.1	28.6	23.6	21.6	23.7	30.4	27.8	28.1	171.3
<i>South and West Asia (SWA)</i>	40.1	40.1	48.3	47.5	47.5	33.3	31.5	31.5	38.0	102.1
Central & Eastern Europe	24.9	45.1	46.4	41.6	34.0	25.6	23.4	33.4	37.9	256.0
Latin America & the Caribbean	32.5	32.5	29.4	25.3	25.3	25.3	27.0	32.2	26.9	192.8
North America & Western Europe	49.8	53.4	49.0	57.3	58.0	53.7	41.1	40.5	43.8	348.3
Sub-Saharan Africa	28.5	27.8	30.7	26.9	35.0	34.3	31.0	28.9	28.7	167.8
<b>Global</b>	36.1	41.8	42.6	41.7	40.8	37.9	35.4	34.9	36.4	264.8
<i>For those countries that teach:</i>										
Arts education	36.7	37.6	32.8	33.6	32.7	28.8	29.5	26.8	27.1	235.6
Music education	14.3	15.8	15.5	14.6	15.5	16.6	16.6	16.5	17.3	90.6

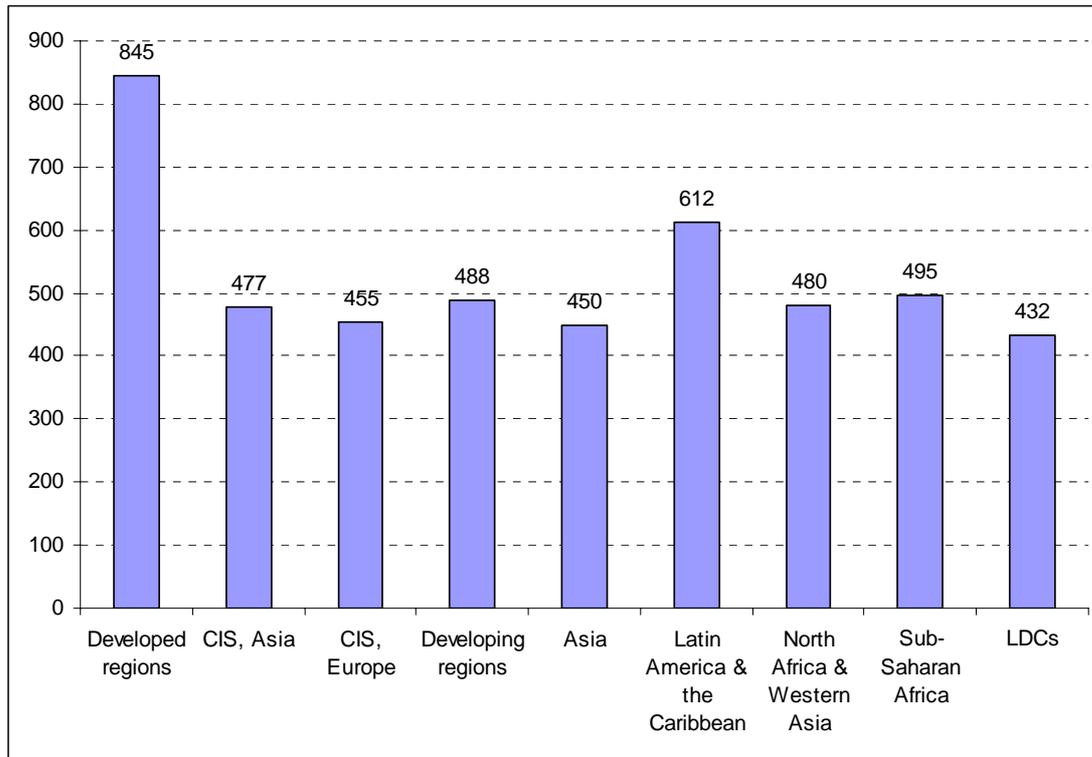
**Figure 8. Median instructional time (in accumulated number of hours) allocated to aesthetic education over the first nine years of schooling, by EFA region**



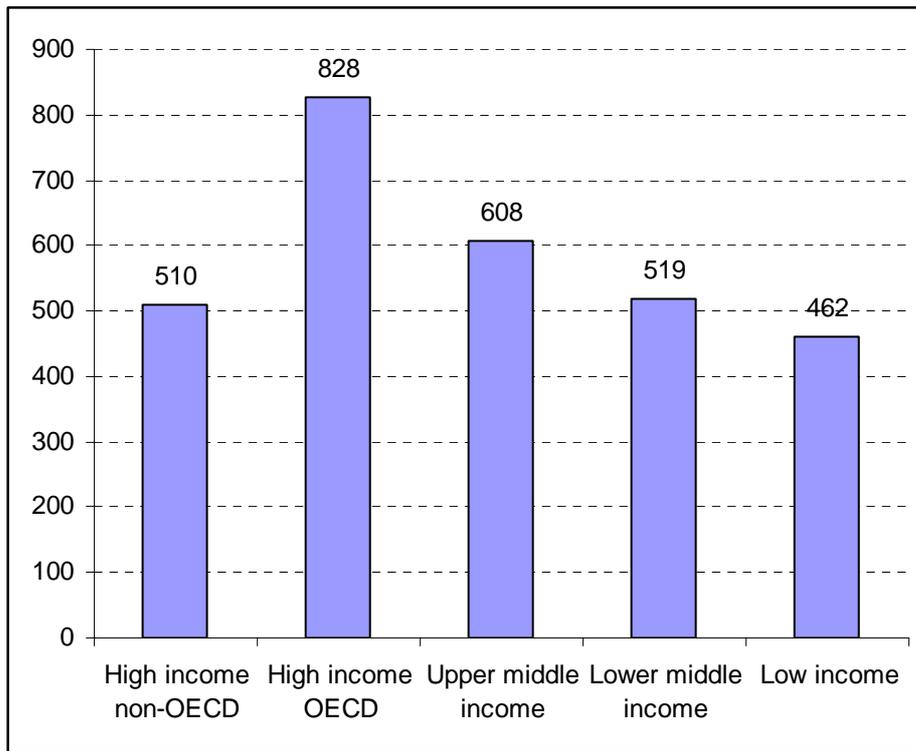
**Table 3. Median instructional time (in accumulated number of hours) allocated to aesthetic education over the first nine years of schooling, by other country groupings**

<b>Country groupings</b>	<b>Total number of hours</b>
<i>By Millennium Development Goals (MDG) region:</i>	
Developed regions, including transition countries of South-eastern Europe (N=36)	845
Commonwealth of Independent States, Asia (N=6)	477
Commonwealth of Independent States, Europe (N=4)	455
Developing regions (N=66)	488
Asia (Eastern, Southern, Southern-eastern) (N=17)	450
Latin America & the Caribbean (N=13)	612
North Africa & Western Asia (N=19)	480
Sub-Saharan Africa (N=17)	495
Least developed countries (N=19)	432
<i>By income level (World Bank, 2005):</i>	
High income non-OECD (N=11)	510
High income OECD (N=21)	828
Upper middle income (N=23)	608
Lower middle income (N=32)	519
Low income (N=23)	462
<i>By Human Development Index (UNDP, 2005):</i>	
High (N=45)	711
Medium (N=50)	498
Low (N=12)	430
<i>By State of Freedom (Freedom House, 2005):</i>	
Free (N=53)	711
Partly free (N=27)	491
Not free (N=30)	455

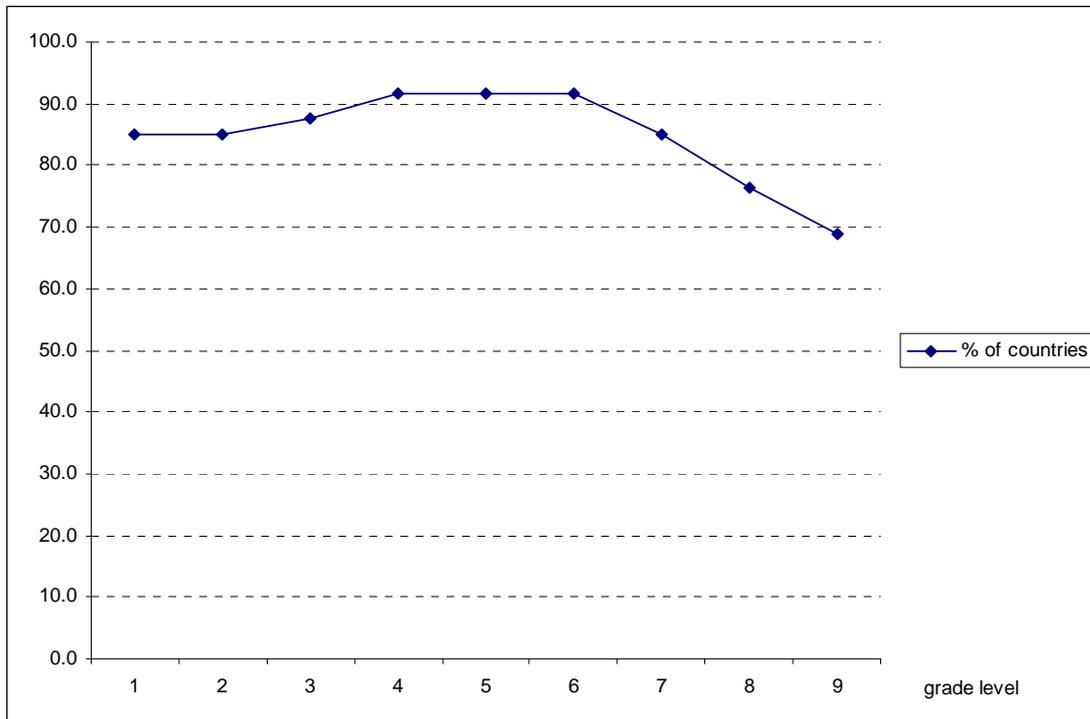
**Figure 9. Median instructional time (in accumulated number of hours) allocated to aesthetic education over the first nine years of schooling, by MDG region**



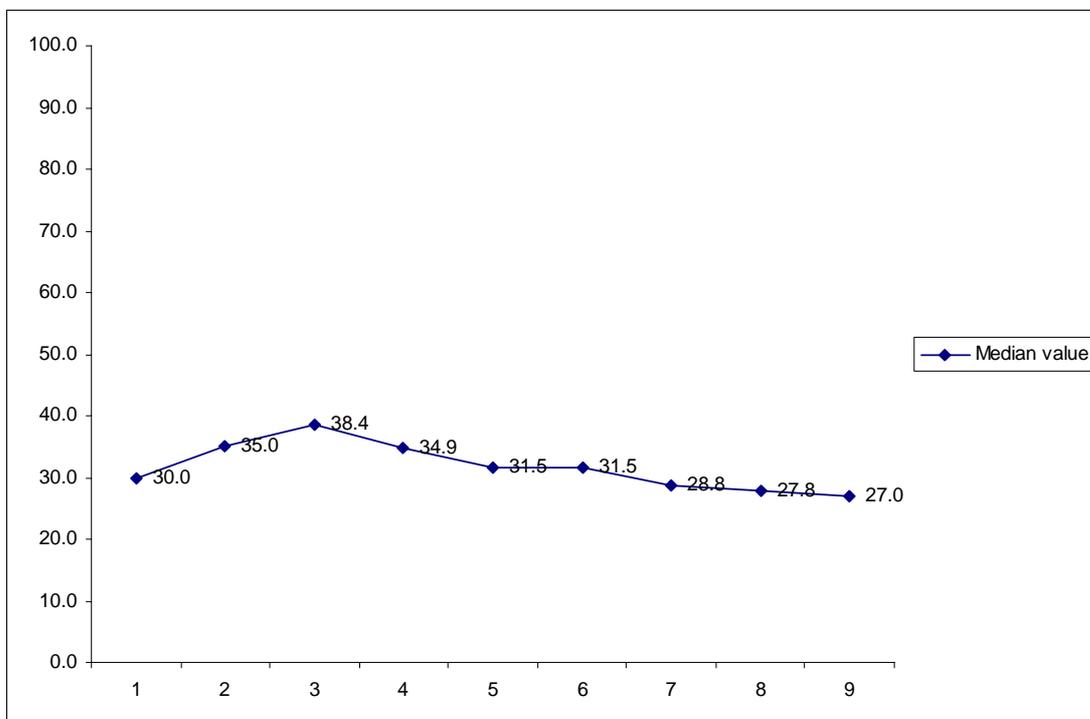
**Figure 10. Median instructional time (in accumulated number of hours) allocated to aesthetic education over the first nine years of schooling, by income level**



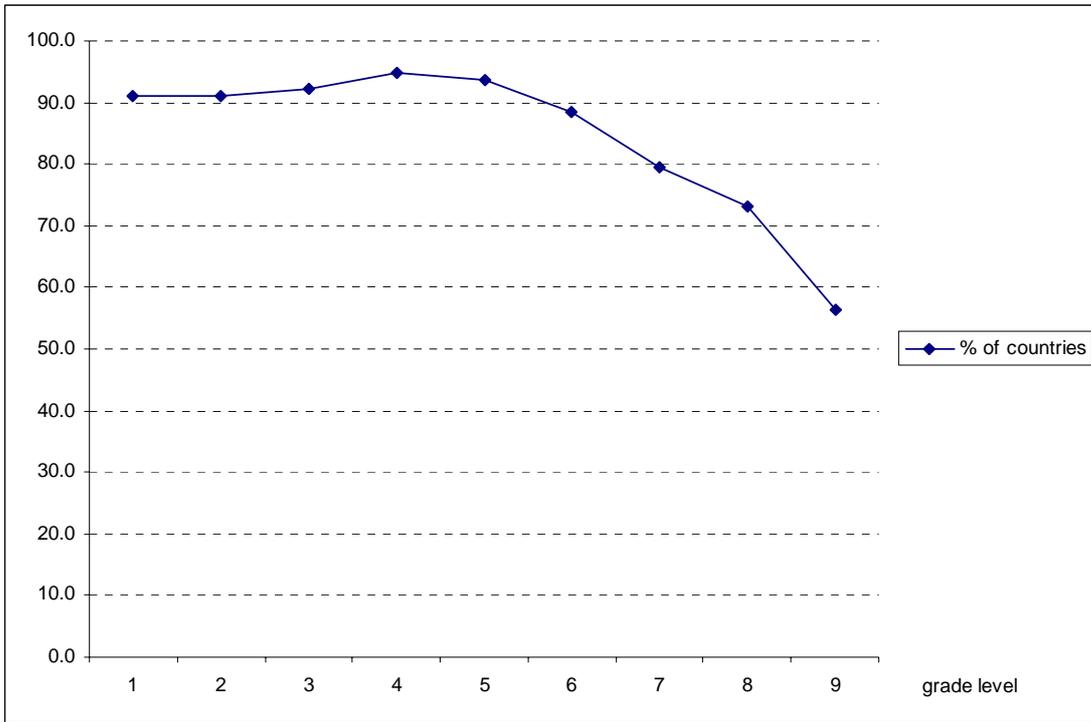
**Figure 11. Proportion of countries worldwide requiring instruction in ‘arts education’ in grades 1 to 9 (Number of cases = 106)**



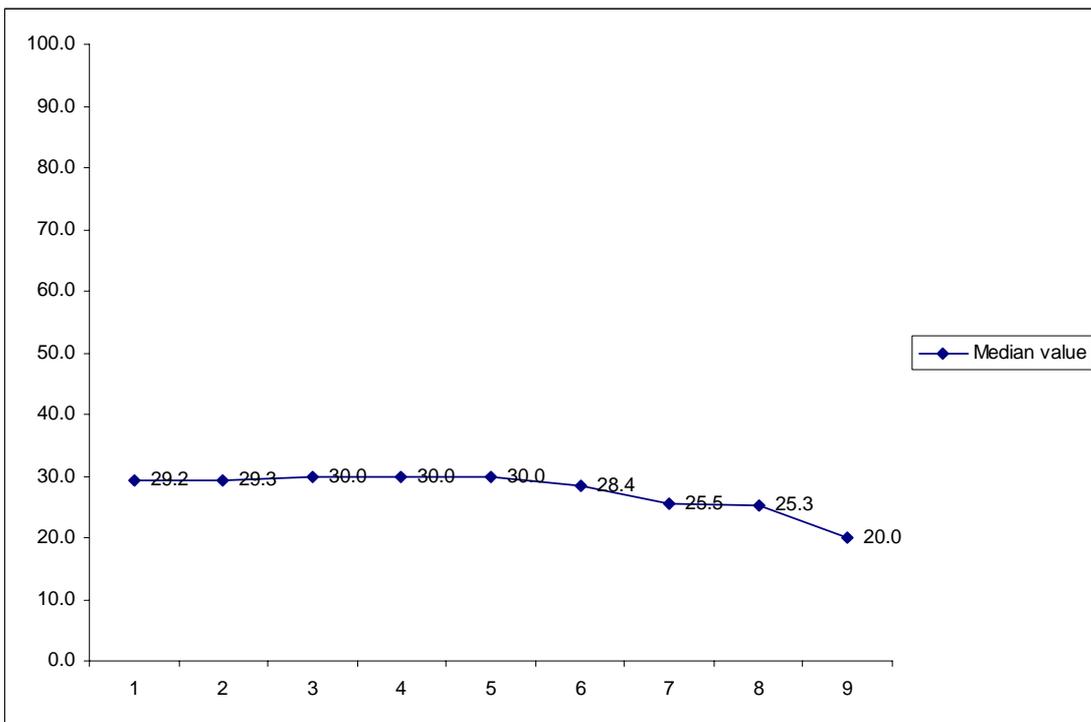
**Figure 12. Median instructional time (in total number of yearly hours) allocated to ‘arts education’ in grades 1 to 9 (N=102)**



**Figure 13. Proportion of countries worldwide requiring instruction in ‘music’ in grades 1 to 9 (Number of cases = 78)**



**Figure 14. Median instructional time (in total number of yearly hours) allocated to ‘music’ in each grade (N=73)**



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**Selected Links** (Last checked: 30 March 2006)

*Note:* Hyperlinks to other websites are provided for the reader's convenience. UNESCO:IBE does not control or guarantee the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, or completeness of outside information. The inclusion of hyperlinks to other websites is not intended to reflect their importance, nor is it intended to endorse any views expressed, or products or services offered on these sites.

**Associations and Organizations**

- [Arts Education Partnership](#)
- [Asia Pacific Performing Arts Network](#)
- [Culture School Net](#)  
(EU-wide network of civil servants, culture and education)
- [International Child Art Foundation](#)
- [International Council for Music](#)
- [International Drama/Theatre Education Association](#)
- [International Graphic Arts Education Association](#)
- [International Society for Education through Art](#)  
(Additional links to regional and national societies are also found in this site)
- [International Society for Music Education](#)
- [Union Internationale de la Marionette](#)
- [VSA Arts](#)  
(International non-profit organization promoting the arts for people with disabilities)
- [World Craft Council International](#)
- [World Craft Council Asia Pacific Region](#)

**Journals**

- [Art Education](#)
- [Arts Education Policy Review](#)

- [\*Australian Art Education\*](#)
- [\*Australian Journal of Music Education\*](#)
- [\*British Journal of Music Education\*](#)
- [\*Canadian Review of Art Education\*](#)
- [\*International Journal of Education & the Arts\*](#)
- [\*International Journal of Education through Art\*](#)
- [\*International Journal of Music Education\*](#)
- [\*Journal of Aesthetic Education\*](#)
- [\*Journal of Cultural Research in Art Education\*](#)
- [\*Journal of Social Theory in Art Education\*](#)
- [\*Music Education Research\*](#)
- [\*Research in Dance Education\*](#)
- [\*Research in Drama Education\*](#)
- [\*Studies in Art Education\*](#)
- [\*Research Studies in Music Education\*](#)
- [\*The International Journal of Art & Design Education\*](#)  
[See also [another website](#)]

### **UNESCO and Arts Education**

- [LEA International: Links to Education and Art, UNESCO Culture Sector](#)
- [UNESCO Bangkok, Culture Unit, Arts in Education](#)
- [World Heritage in Young Hands Project \(World Heritage Centre\)](#)
- [UNESCO International Fund for the Promotion of Culture](#)

## UNESCO Reports of Regional Conferences on Arts Education

- UNESCO. 2005. [\*Artistic Practices and Techniques from Europe and North America Favouring Social Cohesion and Peace\*](#). Report based on the discussions at the Europe-North America Regional Conference on Arts Education held in Helsinki, Finland (9-12 August 2003). Paris: UNESCO.
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- UNESCO. 2002. [\*Arab Regional Conference on Arts Education: Heritage and Creativity. Final Report\*](#). Report based on the conclusions of the Arab Regional Conference on Arts Education, held in Amman, Jordan (19-21 May 2002). Beirut: UNESCO.
- UNESCO. 2001. [\*Cultural Heritage, Creativity and Education for All in Africa\*](#). Report based on the conclusions of the Africa Regional Conference on Arts Education held in Port Elizabeth, South Africa (24-30 June 2001). Paris: UNESCO.

## Other Resources

- [Arts in Education Programme, Harvard Graduate School of Education](#)
- [Arts in Heritage Education Programme, Georgetown, Penang, Malaysia](#)
- [Canvas – Japan](#)
- [Culture and Learning: Creating Arts and Heritage Education Projects, Arts Council England](#)
- [Drawing Power](#)
- [Getty Artsednet](#)

- [Heritage Education and Communication Service, Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage](#)
- [International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement](#)
- [National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education](#)
- [Project Zero, Harvard Graduate School of Education](#)
- [Puppet Port](#)
- [Theatre in Education, Applied & Interactive Theatre Guide](#)
- [The International Directory of Resources for Education in the Arts](#)
- [Yamaha Music Foundation, the Music Research Laboratory](#)  
[See also [another website](#)]
- [You & Me Puppets](#)