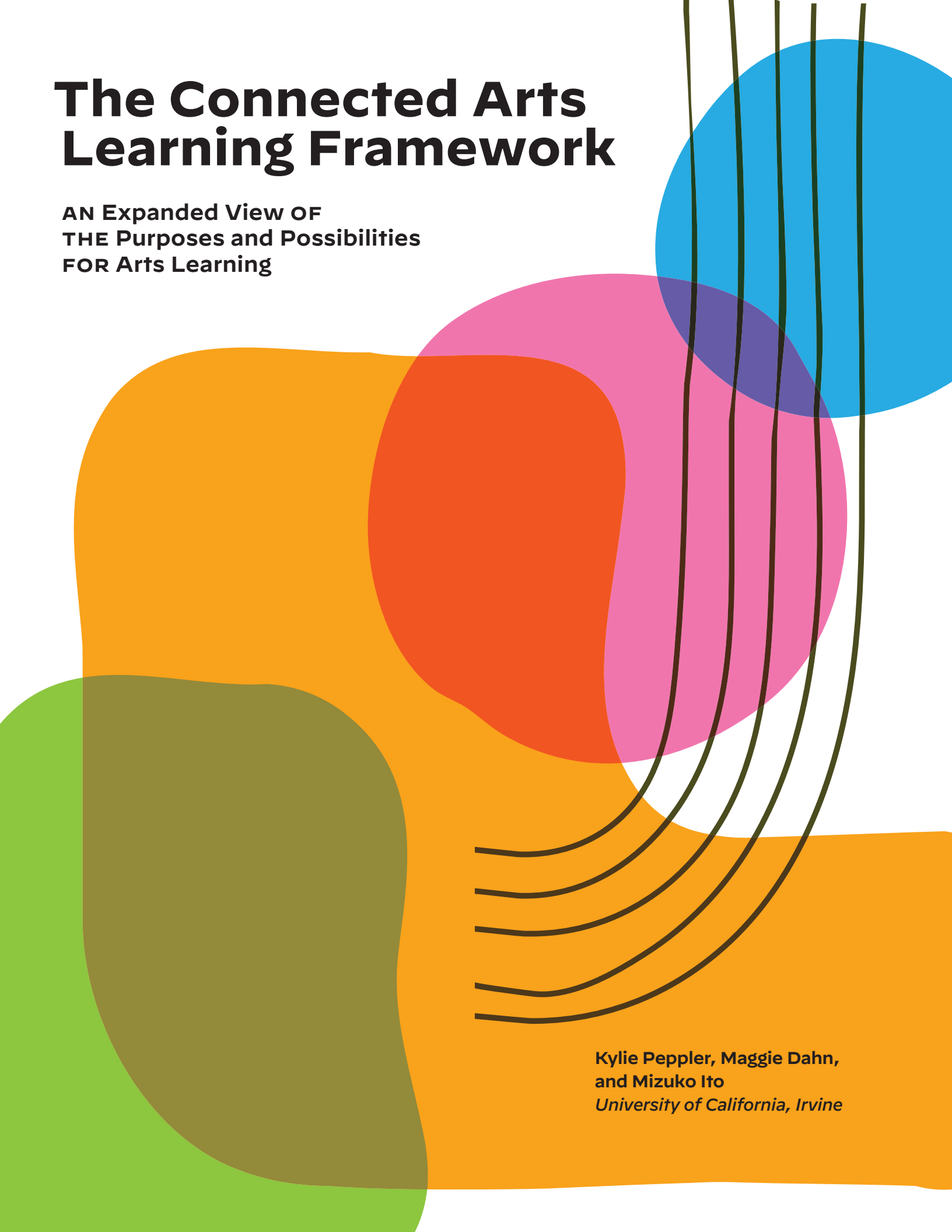


The Connected Arts Learning Framework

AN Expanded View OF
THE Purposes and Possibilities
FOR Arts Learning



Kylie Pepler, Maggie Dahn,
and Mizuko Ito
University of California, Irvine



This research was funded by The Wallace Foundation. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Foundation.

Peppler, K., Dahn, M., & Ito, M. (2023). *The Connected Arts Learning Framework: An expanded view of the purposes and possibilities for arts learning*. The Wallace Foundation.

<https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X221084322>





Table of Contents

- 1** **Executive Summary**

- 3** **Chapter 1: What is the Connected Arts Learning Framework?**
 - Viewing Arts Experiences Through a Connected Learning Lens
 - Developing the Connected Arts Learning Framework
 - What is Connected Arts Learning?
 - Community Cultural Wealth*
 - Youth Interest in Connected Arts Learning*
 - Relationships in Connected Arts Learning*
 - Opportunities in Connected Arts Learning*
 - Historical Viewpoint and the Connected Arts Learning Perspective

- 10** **Chapter 2: How Connected Arts Learning Expands the Purposes of Arts Learning**
 - Occupational Identity
 - Civic Participation
 - Social and Emotional Health and Wellness

- 12** **Chapter 3: Five Approaches to Connected Arts Learning**
 - Connected Arts Learning in Practice
 - Culturally Sustained Arts*
 - Doing Well by Doing Art*
 - Future Forward Arts*
 - Networked Arts*
 - Youth Voice Arts*

- 20** **Chapter 4: Using the Connected Arts Learning Framework to Design Programs, Evaluate Outcomes, and Build Networks**
 - Arts Program Design and Evaluation
 - Strategy #1: Rubric to Develop Connected Arts Learning Approaches in Program Design*
 - Strategy #2: Reflection Questions to Spark Connected Arts Learning*
 - Community Mapping with the Connected Arts Learning Framework
 - Building Awareness and Support for Connected Arts Learning
 - Broadening What Counts as Outcomes*
 - Developing Research-Practice Partnerships*
 - Understanding Arts Education Networks and Ecosystems*

- 25** **Appendices**
 - A: Literature Review Selection and Methods
 - B: Arts Organization Case Studies

- 27** **Acknowledgements**

- 28** **Citations**



Executive Summary

For some time now, the arts education community has designed for broader outcomes for youth. These programs intentionally foster not only youth achievements within the arts or academics, but also youth and community thriving—through outcomes such as youth civic engagement, occupational identities, and wellness.

In this report, we seek to build a shared language and framework based on this emergent work. We start with connected learning, a framework for thinking about how powerful learning happens, to propose a **connected arts learning framework** that focuses on how to achieve broader outcomes through the arts by building on youth interests and identities, investing in strong relationships with adults, peers, and families, and connecting youth to future opportunities. Rooted in a foundation of community cultural wealth, a connected arts learning framework looks at how these interconnected elements create meaningful culturally- and community-centered arts opportunities for young people. A connected arts learning view also shifts the common framing of the value of the arts, to recognize not only individual gains but also cultural and community benefits of arts learning.

The connected arts learning framework is relevant to education facilitators, program developers, funders, policymakers, researchers, evaluators, and others in the field as they seek to more intentionally design, reflect on, evaluate, and communicate the value of arts education. These audiences can use the connected arts learning framework to better see the systems, resources, and spaces that already exist within the communities they serve, then ask how arts education can further support youth voice, identity development, and civic participation. Taking an expanded approach to arts learning

outcomes can help further investment in arts education and enrich the larger conversation about the opportunities that arts education can unlock for young people.

Connected arts learning describes meaningful art education that connects young people's interests in the arts to present and future opportunities by building relationships and networks, both within the arts organization and extended to the broader community. To create this framework, we conducted interviews with arts educators, developed case studies of organizations, and engaged in a review of arts education literature. While arts education organizations often take up individual elements of connected arts learning—such as building community connections or fostering youth interests—the connected arts learning framework describes a holistic approach to arts education. In other words, this framework affirms and is heightened by earlier work, offering an integrated approach to creating meaningful arts learning opportunities. We hope this framework will support the recognition and spread of meaningful, equity-oriented, and culturally- and community-connected arts education that already exists in the field.

This report also describes five different approaches to foster connected arts learning and offers a case study for each, highlighting ways organizations are already implementing connected arts learning. These case studies illustrate how other arts educators might structure their work to advance the arts learning outcomes emphasized by the connected arts learning framework. The final section of this report also includes initial recommendations and guidance to design arts learning driven by the framework.

The framework can help the arts education community:

- Position young people as civic actors who can transform their communities
- Shift away from focusing only on individual outcomes, toward a model embedded in culture and community
- Include outcomes that are essential for young people to thrive in the 21st century such as youth career identities, civic participation, and well-being
- Use the arts to further community thriving

ORGANIZATION OF THIS REPORT

This report has four sections:

- The first chapter details the connected arts learning framework, which creates a cohesive model for how arts programs can engage with young peoples' interests, supported by relationships and community, in ways connected to civic, career, and academic opportunities.
- The second chapter describes how the connected arts learning perspective can enhance existing conversations about the purposes and goals of arts education.
- In the third chapter, the report considers how arts learning organizations are already implementing elements of the connected arts learning framework. This chapter names five ways youth programs are approaching connected arts learning—Culturally Sustaining Arts approach, Future Forward Arts approach, Networked Arts approach, Doing Well by Doing Art approach, and Youth Voice Arts approach—and offers a case study for each approach.
- The fourth chapter imagines future opportunities for research and program design, featuring several strategies to help arts educators implement a connected arts learning framework.



1. What is the Connected Arts Learning Framework?

Historically, arguments for the value of arts education have tended to fall into two camps. The first says that arts education is meaningful as a way to learn about art (what might be called an “Art for Art’s Sake” framing, e.g., Winner & Hetland, 2000). The second argues that arts education leads to gains in other subject areas (an “Arts for Academics’ Sake” framing, e.g., Guhn et al., 2020).

There is value in both viewpoints, which consider the role of arts education in youths’ lives and how out-of-school programs can open opportunities within schools. However, research shows the benefits of arts education are even wider reaching than those described in the Arts for Art’s Sake and Arts for Academics’ Sake framings, which focus on individual development or academic gains.

Arts education can have a more holistic impact on youth—it can shape their career outcomes, civic opportunities, and social and emotional well-being. Research shows that arts programs impact mental health and wellness (e.g., Kosma et al., 2020; Stuckey & Nobel, 2010), support interest-driven learning (e.g., Greenfield, 2004; Zimmerman & McClain, 2014).

The arts also have community-wide benefits that extend beyond individual learners. Community-centered art making around local issues can support civic engagement (Shields et al., 2020), cross-cultural understanding (Clover, 2006), and social change (e.g., Stevenson, 2011).

This report seeks to expand the discussion about the purpose of arts learning to incorporate this full range of learning outcomes, beyond the academic or disciplinary-specific, to include civic, occupational, cultural, and social outcomes, both for individuals and communities. To that end, we put forth a new framework, called **connected arts learning**, which knits together common elements of arts education—interest development, relationships, and opportunities—by applying understandings drawn from connected learning theory.

VIEWING ARTS EXPERIENCES THROUGH A CONNECTED LEARNING LENS

The field of connected learning investigates how young people build their interests and identities as they learn over time (Ito et al., 2013, 2020). Work done in this field can help the arts education community develop richer, more holistic understandings of how people learn. Connected learning describes how educators and researchers can create meaningful learning opportunities by building relationships, basing learning on youth interests, and providing opportunities linked to real-world issues and communities.

The connected learning framework was not originally created to describe how people engage with any particular discipline, but it can describe learning within specific disciplines. We find this framework a useful one to design arts learning programs and describe how people learn art.

DEVELOPING THE CONNECTED ARTS LEARNING FRAMEWORK

To build a framework that brings together connected learning and arts learning research, we engaged in three research activities:

- 1. Conducting review of the literature from both the arts education and connected learning fields to surface knowledge gaps in how we conceive of meaningful learning outcomes in the arts. This review focused on arts education research associated with the core concepts of connected learning—interests, relationships, and opportunities.¹ Methodology for this review is detailed in Appendix A and in an in-depth review related to this report (Peppler et al., 2022).²**
- 2. Interviewing 13 leaders in out-of-school education, many of whom are involved with organizations that emphasize elements of connected learning, such as building relationships or career opportunities. The collective expertise of these advisors covered a range of specialties, from arts administration to digital media production to makerspaces. Importantly, most of these advisors work at the intersection of research and practice, which helped ensure the framework was grounded in practical examples.**
- 3. Developing case studies of five target organizations that use connected learning approaches to engage youth interests, leverage relationships, and/or connect young people to future opportunities. (These cases are described in more detail in Chapter 3.)**

This research helped us build a framework to support future youth and community thriving through arts education, while remaining grounded in current, real-world examples.

WHAT IS CONNECTED ARTS LEARNING?

Connected arts learning puts arts education within the context of culture and community, offering an expansive and equity-oriented vision of the purpose of arts education—to support both individual learning and community thriving. It emphasizes how arts education can build connections among young people’s culture, identity, home lives, communities, and future aspirations.

The framework does this by focusing on the interplay **among interest, relationships, and opportunity, all on a foundation of community cultural wealth.** Connected arts learning describes meaningful art education that connects young people’s interests in the arts to present and future opportunities by building relationships and networks, both within the arts organization and extended to the broader community.

Arts education organizations already do work aligned to the connected arts learning framework when they engage student interest, develop meaningful relationships, and open new opportunities for young people. This framework is one way of surfacing, encouraging, appreciating, and making visible these dimensions of arts education. We hope that lifting both individual and community outcomes helps the field of arts education realize its full potential to support the whole child in lifelong learning, as opposed to focusing solely on skill acquisition.

The connected arts learning framework integrates existing community and culturally connected approaches in arts education. It is not intended as a new yardstick for assessing organizations or programs. Instead, we offer the framework as a lens to reflect on how and

¹ This review is limited in that the field of arts education has been less focused on the specific learning outcomes of arts learning this report details, such as occupational identity, civic engagement, and social and emotional health. As such, there is a call for further research on the impacts of arts learning on these outcomes.

² Peppler, K., Dahn, M., & Ito, M. (2022). Connected arts learning: Cultivating equity through connected and creative educational experiences. *Review of Research in Education*, 46(1), 264-287. DOI: 10.3102/0091732X221084322.

to what extent connected learning approaches are already taken up in diverse arts education programs. We hope this framework will support the recognition and spread of meaningful, equity-oriented, and culturally- and community-connected arts education that already exists in the field.

Community Cultural Wealth

Community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) is foundational to the connected arts learning framework. A community cultural wealth view focuses on the ways young people from historically minoritized groups can derive power from within their communities, rather than being pushed to assimilate into dominant cultural norms.

Each component in the connected arts learning framework is shaped by the community cultural wealth approach. In programs that take up this framework, educators draw on and build intergenerational relationships, including relationships with community members and families. Future opportunities for young people include community, economic, and civic participation, provided they are meaningful to youth and their families. Programs draw on existing youth interests and topics relevant to their lived experience. Youth use the arts to consider social issues and, conversely, consider the social issues connected to the arts. In this way, community cultural wealth is both a foundation of the connected arts learning framework and a product of it, as connected arts learning bolsters the community's cultural wealth by growing new local opportunities, relationships, and interests.

The Connected Arts Learning Framework

Building on a foundation of community cultural wealth, connected arts learning is grounded at the intersection of youth interests, supportive relationships, and opportunities



“At Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE), students, teachers, and artists all investigate a topic together using art. As they build these collaborative investigations, educators and students have the opportunity to rethink their relationships – and shed labels that students have acquired (like being “smart” or “bad” students). They have the opportunity to reimagine their relationships with one another and create these relationships anew.”

Scott Sikkema, Education Director at CAPE

Youth Interest in Connected Arts Learning

Young peoples' interests and identities are central to the meaning-making process and are inextricably tied to their sense of drive and purpose. However, arts educators still sometimes try to get kids interested in arts learning without first discovering what interests those kids already have. Taking up the connected arts learning framework directs focus away from how to get young people interested in art and toward how to draw on the interests of young people to build engaging long-term arts learning.

A community cultural wealth perspective on youth interest celebrates the many abilities and strengths participants bring to arts educational experiences, like their aspirations for the future, family heritage, and social connections. Organizations place historically minoritized youths' lived experiences, history, and culture at the center of their programs.



"In general, youth media organizations have really been born out of social justice movements within cities: standing as the pillars of youth voice; youth choice; youth empowerment; giving young people agency over their identities, who they are, and what they want to be; and then giving them a platform to speak their truth."

Kassandra VerBruggen, Executive Director at Spy Hop

"There's something fulfilling about thinking about how artistic practice can enter into the classroom or enter their lives or how students can see it in a different way. So it's not about making pretty pictures, but it's about engaging with issues that are important to them and how to connect those things that are part of their curriculum."

Mark Diaz, Associate Director of Education at CAPE



Relationships in Connected Arts Learning

The connected arts learning framework emphasizes relationships, especially inter-generational connections. This positions arts educators not only as instructors of content, but also as caring mentors that see participants as full people. In organizations with this approach, youth not only build relationships with their instructors, but interconnected relationships with a network of peers and adults. Connected arts learning highlights the importance of both connections within a program (e.g., facilitator relationships with participants, peer friendships) and connections with families, community, and professional networks (e.g., facilitator relationships with families, intergenerational relationships between youth and local artists). Arts learning with this lens helps young people connect with and unpack their heritage, brings in families with intergenerational programs, and builds connections between programs and home life.



"I think if you interviewed any of our students, the first thing that they'll say is that DancExcel is more than a dance studio. It's like a family... We have this kind of intergenerational program model that allows a 4-year-old and a 10-year-old to be in the same class together. We also include families in performances or showings, as audience or as participants. We try to make sure that the family is a part of the culture in the community of our program."



Dionne Champion, founder of DancExcel, a nonprofit dance center in Gary, Indiana



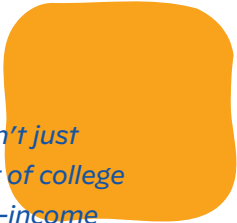
"This can be a place for you. This is a place for you to also learn about another kid, and you guys come together and by the virtue of art, that collaborative thing that you do together, you're going to change, you're going to be transformed. Some of our students, I mean they develop lifelong bonds and friendships, and they stay together. They are friends for years to come."

Kasandra VerBruggen, Executive Director of Spy Hop

Opportunities in Connected Arts Learning

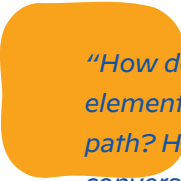
Arts education programs open up future opportunities for youth, including academic, career, and community pursuits (Peppler et al., 2022). The connected arts learning framework defines opportunities broadly—it is not only school or job prospects (though these are important), but also opportunities in community or other out-of-school settings, where youth learn about the arts practices of different communities. This definition of opportunities also includes jobs or apprenticeships, as the connected arts learning framework acknowledges that work and career are important for living a meaningful life as well as developing ways to make change in the community.

Apprenticeship models are encouraged in the connected arts learning framework. Young people build skills through teaching and leading within a program, performing in the community and beyond, and shadowing creative professionals.



“I have some issues with the notion that [our students] can’t just organically explore and come to what they want to.... A lot of college and career readiness is based on the presumption that low-income students have to get set on a path much earlier.... I’d also like to strive for something where they can have the time to explore, just like a student of any income level.”

Scott Sikkema, Education Director at CAPE



“How do [our teachers] translate the work that they do as artists in the elementary school classroom so the students can see a possible career path? How do we provide them even more exposure to those career-based conversations in the arts and also knowing the soft skills that are required in the arts translate to becoming attorneys, doctors, or astronauts? The other day my son told me, ‘Mom, Mae Jemison was a dancer,’ and I was like, ‘She sure is.’ She’s an astronaut and she’s a dancer—we don’t have to separate those things.”

Collette Alleyne, Chief Education Officer at Inner-City Arts

HISTORICAL VIEWPOINT AND THE CONNECTED ARTS LEARNING PERSPECTIVE

In our literature review, we often found descriptions of the roles of interest, relationships, and opportunities in arts education.³ The graphic below illustrates how the connected arts learning perspective builds on the historical view of these elements of arts learning.

Viewpoints for Arts Learning

Comparing historical perspectives and connected arts learning

HISTORICAL

Arts education often positions itself as growing *relationships* to become a member of an artistic community.

The arts tap into young people's *interests*, which can be cultivated through exposure to arts experiences.

The arts are often discussed in relation to academic achievement and other individual *opportunities* and benefits.

CONNECTED ARTS LEARNING

CONNECTED ARTS LEARNING foregrounds how arts education can be centered on community cultural wealth, as well as how relationships can broker meaningful opportunities for young people both within and beyond the arts.

THE CONNECTED ARTS LEARNING Framework shines new light on how culture, interest, and identity are intertwined.

CONNECTED ARTS LEARNING expands this work to a number of additional opportunities that support the development of youths' identities, civic engagement, and future career trajectories.

BUILDING LOCAL CONNECTED ARTS LEARNING NETWORKS

Networks of organizations offer young people opportunities and resources in their communities—key components of connected arts learning. Local organizational networks connect silos of spaces and people that influence a young person's life—schools, educators, families, future career or academic institutions, arts organizations—to foster meaningful arts learning opportunities. Young people can grow their personal networks through these organizational connections, which can impact both future opportunities and current well-being.

Importantly, the connected arts learning framework can offer the arts education community a way to reconsider how to support people and organizations within learners' families and communities and expand networks beyond those who hold power within traditional arts fields. This is at the heart of the community cultural wealth perspective described previously. In addition, building a community network of arts organizations, learners, and supporters expands the view of arts learning outcomes beyond the individual learner, to consider broader impacts for community thriving. (See Chapter 2 for more.)

Many organizations already emphasize the value of networking. For example, Inner-City Arts' Work of Art program pairs young people with creative professional mentors. To support that work, Inner-City Arts has built a network of more than 35 companies or artists. (See Chapter 3 for more on this program.) Though most arts education organizations already make some connections across settings, building a robust ecosystem of organizations across a community takes concerted effort. When they focus on community thriving, arts educators and funders encourage coordination rather than competition between community institutions.

³ Read more about how we reviewed the existing arts education literature and developed this comparison in Appendix A.

2.

How Connected Arts Learning Expands the Purposes of Arts Learning

Why should young people learn art?

“Every kid should have the opportunity to do something they are really interested in and get recognized for within a community of practice they feel a sense of belonging with. That is an essential learning experience. It doesn’t have to be justified in terms of STEM or in terms of how music connects to math skills. It should just be something from a social, emotional, and developmental perspective that we recognize as essential for kids—full stop.”

Mizuko Ito, Director of the Connected Learning Lab at UC Irvine

Through our research we came to see individual academic outcomes as one part of a larger set of benefits of arts learning. The connected arts learning framework includes less-discussed learning outcomes of arts education, such as youth career plans, civic participation, and well-being—all described in this chapter. These outcomes are made possible with the intersection of youth identity, community relationships, and opportunities.

A connected arts learning view also shifts the common framing of the value of the arts, to recognize not only individual gains but also cultural and community benefits of arts learning. The community cultural wealth perspective emphasizes that young people are producers in a participatory culture and civic actors who can use art to transform their communities.

An expanded view of the purposes of arts education may reverberate throughout

other problems of practice. The outcomes described below may shape the learning goals arts program developers write, the motivations funders have for a grant, or reasons participants enroll in a class.

OCCUPATIONAL IDENTITY

The connected arts learning framework highlights the impact arts learning can have on youths’ career paths, even if they do not become professional artists. This perspective sees work as not only having economic benefits, but also as part of what it means to live a fulfilling life and to do good in the world. The framework also acknowledges that the arts can lead to real-world economic opportunities.

Connected learning scholars have researched youth *occupational identity*, described as a “vision of their future selves in the workforce, what they like to do, what they believe they are skilled at, and where they feel they belong” (Callahan et al., 2019, p. 3). This notion of occupational identity pushes beyond the need to find a job for solely economic means, toward the goals of nurturing self-efficacy and a sense of belonging aligned with one’s work. Young people in art programs with this focus might begin seeing their own learning in the arts as part of their future work and contributions to a community.

More than ever, arts organizations are linking entrepreneurship to youth interests (sometimes called “artrepreneurship”) and connecting portfolios of work to future career opportunities. Arts programs may include relationships with industry professional mentors, who might review student work, provide studio tours, or offer internships.

In addition, the connected arts learning framework can help encourage the arts education community to create mentorship and near-peer opportunities for youth, which give them skills that can be applied to work in many fields. For example, working as an assistant dance teacher gives young people a chance to practice developing lesson plans, organizing schedules, and talking with caregivers.

Arts education rooted in community cultural wealth can also help young people prepare to navigate workplace systems and institutions that may not have been designed with them in mind. For example, OrigiNation Dance Center empowers young people through the arts to confidently talk about their ethnicity and combat racism across settings and contexts. (See more in Chapter 3.) OrigiNation Dance Center alumni include a flight attendant who worked with his employer to craft diversity and inclusion language for customers and for staff training. The alumnus said this work was rooted in his experiences talking about complex topics of race and identity at OrigiNation.

CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Civic participation through the arts can be personally and socially meaningful. Studies link participation in the arts to volunteerism (e.g., Catterall, 2009) and a greater connection to community (e.g., Stevenson & Deasy, 2005). Organizations that take up the connected arts learning framework create opportunities for civic participation through the arts that are rooted in the lives of youth and their community.

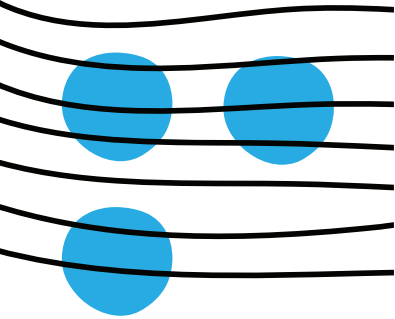
The arts can also help youth from historically minoritized communities find artistic expression around community social justice issues that interest them; this work also helps youth develop their voice and leadership skills

(e.g., Cohen et al., 2012; Gambone et al., 2006; Hipolito-Delgado & Zion, 2015; Shah et al., 2018; Watts et al., 2017). Arts learning can provide opportunities for young people to think critically about the institutions within which they operate, create change in their communities, and call attention to structures of power. (See the case studies in Chapter 4 for examples.) This work strengthens relationships among youth and other local activists through art.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

The arts are a powerful mechanism for healing, socioemotional wellness, and transformation (Kosma et al., 2020; Stuckey & Nobel, 2010). Though there is a longstanding tradition to leverage the arts in therapeutic ways, this work is often left separate from curricular approaches, pre-service teacher training, and public conversations around the value of the arts in education.

Through its focus on building on youth interest and community cultural wealth, the connected arts learning framework pushes the arts education community to see attending to young peoples’ social and emotional needs as a meaningful purpose for arts learning. Learning based on identity and community is essential for the social and emotional development of youth from communities that have been historically minoritized in traditional arts education. Young people often benefit from using visual arts as an approach to process current events or as a theater to use their voice. Giving youth these opportunities for art creation can also strengthen meaningful connections among participants in an art space; these types of relationships and friendships, formed within artistic communities, can themselves support youth wellness by being drivers for belonging.



3.

Five Approaches to Connected Arts Learning

All arts organizations enact elements of the connected arts learning framework, but they are not always implemented or viewed holistically. To better understand how to best support connected arts learning, we developed a series of case studies of out-of-school arts learning organizations that take holistic and intentional approaches to arts learning.

To find organizations for case studies, we started by tapping our networks, using connected learning (Ito et al., 2020) as a guiding framework to pull together a collection of organizations, programs, and people. We conducted interviews with leaders in these organizations and asked them for additional contacts and recommendations for arts organizations to include in this research and framework. (See Appendix B.)

Five approaches that exemplify connected arts learning emerged from these interviews and our literature review. This chapter describes each of these approaches, then illustrates how it is enacted by one of the case study organizations.

These five approaches provide models that seek to push arts education practice toward a broader set of outcomes that acknowledge the sociocultural, connected, and collaborative nature of learning in the 21st century.



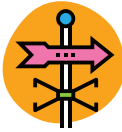
Culturally Sustaining Arts

Approach: Organizations center community cultural wealth within their mission, values, and art.

This approach helps them consider how arts learning can be based on the cultures and identities of learners and community.

This approach leverages: Cultural assets

Intended benefits: Sustained connection to one's culture, heritage, and community



Future Forward Arts

Approach: Programs prepare or involve youth in the workforce and/or civic participation, which are seen as important activities in a fulfilling life.

Organizations that take this approach help young people build relationships with working artists and activists.

This approach leverages: Young peoples' interests

Intended benefits: Connection to careers, relationships, and futures that are meaningful and linked to youth interests



Networked Arts

Approach: Arts learning is embedded in social networks that include youth, family, and arts educators. These networks support learning within and beyond the organization's programming.

This approach leverages: Existing connections among community, families, educators, and working artists

Intended benefits: Building and giving young people access to more expansive networks and communities beyond one arts program



Doing Well By Doing Art

Approach: Organizations focus on the holistic benefits of arts learning, such as supporting mental health and overall well-being.

Organizations that take this approach explicitly respond to youths' social and emotional needs.

This approach leverages: Ways the arts support healing, comfort, and health

Intended benefits: Young people feel that their social and emotional needs are met through their arts experiences



Youth Voice Arts

Approach: Arts learning acts as a platform for youth to develop their perspectives, leadership abilities, and voices in public spaces.

Organizations build on young peoples' interests in ways that combine activism and art.

This approach leverages: Youth perspective and voice

Intended benefits: Young peoples' voices are counted in ways that change their communities

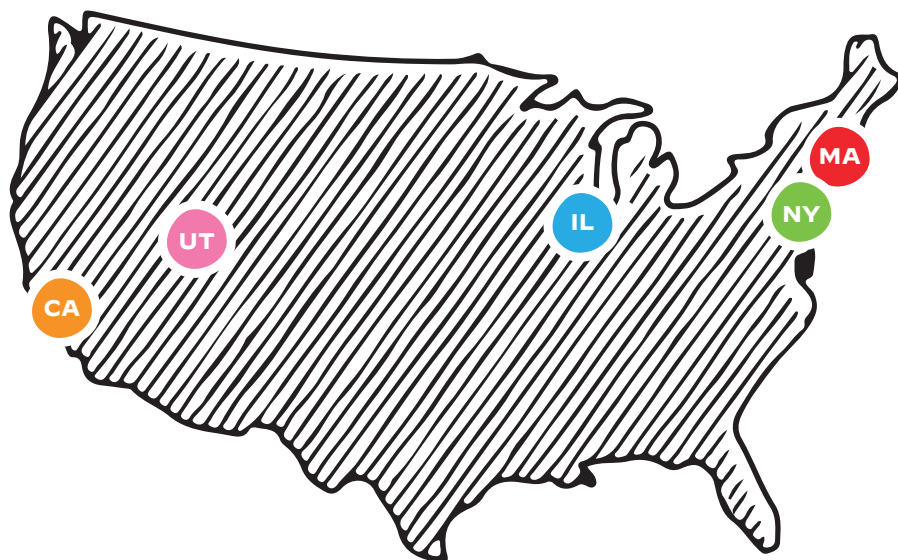
Organizations may take up several different approaches at once, which overlap, complement, and interact with one another. For example, a program might prepare young people for future careers (a Future Forward approach) and focus on creating public-facing opportunities for them to use their voices (a Youth Voice approach).

These five approaches represent what emerged from our initial research. Additional approaches to connected arts learning will likely emerge through future research.

CONNECTED ARTS LEARNING APPROACHES IN PRACTICE

The following section describes each connected arts learning approach in more detail, illustrating the approach in action by mapping it to one of the case study organizations. In practice, organizations often use several of these approaches to connected arts learning.

Connected Arts Learning Case Study Locations



Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education
Network Effect Arts
Chicago, IL

OriginNation
Doing Well by Doing Art
Jamaica Plain, MA

Ifetayo
Culturally Sustaining Arts
Brooklyn, NY

Inner-City Arts
Future Forward Arts
Los Angeles, CA

Spy Hop
Youth Voice Arts
Salt Lake City, UT



Culturally Sustaining Arts

In spaces that use the Culturally Sustaining Arts approach, young peoples' relationships to the arts grow through their cultural connections, rather than through a traditional Western perspective (which may not connect to their personal background). "Culturally sustaining" describes organizations that engage in work that is not only culturally relevant, but also explores and extends youths' identities as they connect to cultural practices and heritage (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris, 2012). Culturally Sustaining Arts organizations position intergenerational relationships as integral forces for learning and building close connections to families, community, and heritage.

Culturally sustaining arts programs also support young peoples' well-being and mental health by building youth pride in their identity and heritage. This connects the Culturally Sustaining Arts approach to the Doing Well by Doing Art Approach described below.

Culturally Sustaining Arts in Action: Ifetayo Cultural Arts Academy


Brooklyn-based Ifetayo Cultural Arts Academy inspires youth and families of African descent "to develop a strong African-centered cultural identity and realize their power to transform social inequity. Offerings include a heritage program designed to connect young people to the cultures of the African diaspora and year-long courses in African arts like dance, music, and theater.

As an organization that supports **Culturally Sustaining Arts**, Ifetayo reflects the community's African heritage in the classes it offers, like djembe, capoeira, and conga. The organization builds a network of interdependent, intergenerational relationships based on both culture and community. As Executive Director Naima Oyo says, the organization asks itself and its members, "Who is the community, and what roles and responsibilities do we have to each other?"

Ifetayo applies this historical, culturally sustaining approach throughout their work. Even when they teach young artists about financial literacy, Ifetayo educators start with a discussion of how their ancestors dealt with periods of scarcity and abundance.

Characteristics of the Culturally Sustaining Arts Approach

- Programs engage families and community networks in the arts to grow participants' pride in their heritage, culture, and history.
- Educators support young people as they use the arts to inquire into their own unique histories and culture.
- Arts programs are rooted in local culture and histories, often through collaboration with local community members.
- Youth aspirations and dreaming for the future are kept top-of-mind in programming, even in the face of persistent and historical injustice.
- Arts programs push back on the need for young people to be “practical” in their aspirations, which reinforces inequities, and instead encourage expansive thinking about future opportunities.



“We have three generations of families—where we have the parent whose parent brought them to Ifetayo, that now has a child that they have brought to Ifetayo. When you really look at that overlap between relationships, it’s that connectedness that creates opportunity.”

Naima Oyo, Ifetayo Cultural Arts Academy Executive Director



Doing Well By Doing Art

Organizations that use the Doing Well by Doing Art approach amplify the arts' connections to mental health and well-being. (Note: The name for this approach of “doing well” comes from our take on James Catterall’s groundbreaking study on the long-term effects of arts participation on achievement and social good, what he named *Doing Well and Doing Good by Doing Art* (Catterall, 2009).) Programs foster positive emotions through art-making, such as feelings of self-esteem and self-worth. They also create spaces for youth to process negative emotions and trauma through art, often in ways that rely on and build relationships.

Doing Well by Doing Art in Action: OrigiNation Cultural Arts Center

At OrigiNation Cultural Arts Center, dance and theater are vehicles to share wisdom, tradition, language, and history with youth. While their programs are open to all young people who meet age requirements, they primarily serve African American and Latinx youth aged two to 18 from low-income families in the Massachusetts neighborhoods of Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan. OrigiNation offers classes in ballet, tap, jazz, modern, hip hop, African dance, and martial arts.

As a **Doing Well by Doing Art** organization, OrigiNation centers the community cultural wealth of the youth and families that participate, finding strength in the holistic benefits of the arts. The arts support healing, comfort, and health through artistic processes,

including collaboration, reflection on practice, and identity development.

OrigiNation aims to use art to promote an array of positive outcomes, including self-esteem, mental health, and physical fitness among youth. One dance performance asked young people to brainstorm negative things that they had heard people say about them (which were incorporated into the music), then use choreography and the narrative of the dance to combat these statements and create a positive story for themselves.

OrigiNation educators described one goal for their work as the joy young people display when they learn a dance move or find a way to express themselves artistically (rather than only focusing on whether youth learn the dance move). “We invest in the whole child, not just a piece of the child,” said Founding Artistic Director Shaumba-Yandje Dibinga.

Program leadership helps kids develop their identities; connect to their culture and history; and carry lessons about dance, voice, and self-worth into their future lives. Past performance topics have been rooted in Black history, such as the civil rights and Black power movements and the story of Kwanzaa.

Staff aim to make being part of OrigiNation like being part of a family. The Ubuntu saying, “I am because we are” is a driving philosophy. The program builds relationships through a supportive network of adults and peers, social bonds that support youth mental health and well-being.

Characteristics of the Doing Well by Doing Art Approach

- Organizations recognize and cultivate community cultural wealth through a commitment to family and community well-being. Programs and participants consider, incorporate, and deepen family relationships, with a broad understanding of who counts as family.
- Educators draw on the arts to support healing, comfort, and health through artistic processes, including collaboration, reflection on practice, and identity development.
- Programs foster increased socioemotional wellness among youth by addressing stress and trauma.
- Communities work together to acknowledge stress and trauma and commit resources and arts programs to address these needs.

“[Participants will] talk about why they love being in OrigiNation: to be themselves. They get to learn about people that came before them, and what Black people created. They get to learn how to use their voice and don’t feel like they’re being stifled. So other than studying hip hop, African dance, jazz, tap, ballet, martial arts, theater and more, they also learn about the power of their voices and how important it is to use them. They learn the importance of following through and being accountable for their actions. They also know that I come from a place of passion, love, authenticity and experience.”

Shaumba-Yandje Dibinga, Founding Artistic Director of OrigiNation



Future Forward Arts

Organizations that take a Future Forward Arts approach connect youth to future opportunities, including performances, internships, jobs, college programs, careers, and civic engagement. Programs bring young people into contact with working artists who help young people scaffold their experiences with opportunities for reflection (e.g., regular meetings with mentors and peers to debrief the internship experience). Participants also receive direct mentorship from the arts education organization to prepare for important barriers, such as how to apply for college financial aid or compile a professional portfolio. Ideally, youth are paid for their professional work.

Future Forward Arts in Action: Work of Art at Inner-City Arts

Inner-City Arts engages Los Angeles youth in the creative process, envisioning a society that honors the human capacity for creativity and values its cultivation in the education of young people. The organization offers visual and performing arts opportunities as out-of-school time programs and in partnership with regional schools. The program's goal is that young people from all backgrounds see working as an artist as a viable career option.

As a program with a **Future Forward Arts** approach, the Work of Art program at Inner-City Arts is a college and career exploration program designed to give teens experiences to prepare them for life beyond high school. High school sophomores and juniors in the program have an interest in exploring a career in the arts and a desire for mentorship.

Work of Art fosters mentorship by artists and creative professionals through "shadow experiences," in which participants collaborate directly with businesses in the local arts industry. The program partners with more than 35 companies or artists to create these curated opportunities.

Engaging youth interest is key to Work of Art. Program leaders formally meet with teens at least twice per year to discuss their interests, in order to customize shadow experiences for the young people that align to these interests.

Inner-City Arts also provides college application counseling, resume and networking workshops, and paid internships. Throughout these programs, educators support young people as they not only build careers in the arts field, but also to learn to make this industry more equitable (e.g., discussing how to respond to microaggressions).

Characteristics of a Future Forward Arts Approach

- Youth use practices and ways of thinking learned through their arts programs in their future career-related or academic pursuits, whether or not those pursuits are arts-centered.
- Educators support skills and thinking necessary for young people to thrive in a 21st century economic landscape, in the creative industries and beyond.
- Arts education networks break down educational and workforce silos to better serve youth, showcasing the unique value that the arts can have in future work and upward economic mobility.
- Programs help young people learn how to use their agency and social networks to traverse institutions, systems, and structures, even those that were designed with the dominant culture in mind.

"We meet with our youth at least twice a year to specifically understand what their interests are. [We] then meet with individual people or companies to create curated, specific experiences for these young people. We're really looking at trying to support their sense of themselves and their wants, their needs, their powers, by following their lead."

Holli Hornlien, Associate Director of Work of Art



Networked Arts

A Networked Arts approach focuses on cultivating relationships that support youth belonging and connects them to new communities of practice. Organizations build a network, often using online spaces to share and develop ideas and grow relationships. Families are often invited into the community of learners, as they are in organizations with a Culturally Sustaining Arts approach. In organizations with a Networked Arts approach, members often shift between teacher and learner as they create a community of co-creators.

Networked Arts in Action: Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE)

Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE) leverages partnership among teachers, artists, young people, families, and community members to create student-centered, inquiry-based art curricula. At CAPE, art is a vehicle for kids to discover and talk about ideas; develop new ways of thinking; and better understand their beliefs, schools, communities, and expectations. CAPE supports young people to understand how they are connected to one another, both in artmaking and across their lives.

“We don’t exist without the nature of the relationship between teacher, artists, and students, and the way that that dynamic is expressed. Without that, poof, we just don’t exist. So relationships are 100% foundational to our work—the teacher-artists relationship, and then this shift in relations between adults and students in the classroom that’s just foundational.”

Joseph Spilberg, Former Associate Director of Education at CAPE

CAPE’s **Networked Arts** approach means relationships are foundational to the organization’s work and mission. The program intentionally develops long-term partnerships between classroom teachers and teaching artists, who are paired together for at least one year to create a co-taught arts-integrated curriculum for students from pre-K through high school.

By bringing together two co-teachers with different expertise, CAPE lets adults model collaboration, risk-taking, and vulnerability for youth. Networks grow through online forums, in-person classes, and professional development where teachers and artists share, celebrate, and seek support from one another. People often adjust their roles throughout these processes, shifting between being artists, teachers, and learners.

This interconnected network of collaborators uses the arts to develop new understandings. Investigations are done collaboratively, through shared questioning, dialogue, and revisions. For example, CAPE brings its teaching artists and teachers together for regular professional development sessions, in which they engage in shared art making activities (e.g., photography, movement, drawing) to deepen their inquiry and connections with one another. The artists and teachers then bring those conversations into their classrooms and share their own art and reflections with students. In this way, CAPE broadens its outcomes to not only include the artistic production, but also the relationships, dialogue, and network built into the process.

Characteristics of a Networked Arts Approach

- Programs foster a deep sense of connection between youth and their communities and families. Programs support network building and shared creative activity among young people, their families, teachers, teaching artists and other arts educators, adult mentors, and community members, all growing youths’ social capital.
- Wherever possible, young people are invited to return to community arts organizations to teach, lead, or advise the next generation.
- Programs engage caregivers and parents in co-organizing activities to support youths’ experiences in the arts.
- Educators purposefully invite and mentor new families into a program and help families access and develop resources they can use.
- Networking experiences connect local organizations (e.g., museums, community centers, libraries) to one another, creating new ways to showcase youth work or performances.



Youth Voice Arts

Organizations with a Youth Voice Arts focus make coordinated efforts to elevate youth contributions to arts institutions and fields. Young people contribute to public-facing community conversations through their arts, such as local community movements. Organizations put youth into leadership positions, like peer mentorships or youth councils. As in Future Forward Arts organizations, youth are often paid for their professional work.

Youth Voice Arts in Action: Spy Hop

Spy Hop offers programs for young people in Salt Lake City in digital media arts, helping them find their voice, tell their stories, and affect positive change. Youth use their interests in art and media to make sense of the world around them, unpacking tough, relevant social issues like suicide, addiction, and societal unrest.

As a **Youth Voice Arts** organization, Spy Hop envisions a world in which all young people can make their voices heard and valued. Youth voice can be cultivated through thoughtful mentorship practices that begin with youth interests. This mentorship can occur through relationships that are developed among youth and media arts instructors, professional artists, organizational staff, and peers.



“I think that young people, they’re most interested in being heard. I think they’re most interested in being taken seriously, and I think they’re most interested in having somebody who can support them in their pathway to learning—a mentor that can walk them through that process and explore their ideas, take them seriously.”

Matt Mateus, Spy Hop Former Education Director

Spy Hop collects feedback formally through a Youth Action Council and through work with an external evaluator (e.g., Faber & Watson, 2022), and informally through youth relationships with staff mentors, who often work with program directors to align programs with young peoples’ interests. For example, Spy Hop recently began a podcasting program due to youth interest in using this format to tell their stories. Program staff noted that this runs counter to a common adult assumption that youth are always interested in learning the newest technology (e.g., virtual reality) and illustrates the value of soliciting participant input.

Characteristics of a Youth Voice Arts Approach

- Young people are invited to engage social and political life through making art. They may take on activist roles, participate in youth organizing efforts, and/or challenge inequalities within or as a result of their work with an arts program.
- Youth are given opportunities to communicate about issues that are important to them and their lived experiences across a variety of spaces (e.g., social media, performance spaces).
- Organizations leverage outlets to share youth-produced work (e.g., creating calls for work to be produced with clear plans for dissemination).
- Youth are included in advisory committees to co-create programming with staff and arts educators.
- Young peoples’ language and communication skills are integrated into programs (e.g., speaking multiple languages, storytelling traditions).



4. Using the Connected Arts Learning Framework to Design Programs, Evaluate Outcomes, and Build Networks

The preceding chapters describe the connected arts learning framework, the ways it lifts up more expansive outcomes of arts education, and what work aligned to this framework looks like in practice. This final chapter introduces ideas and guidance for applying the framework to specific settings.

This section is organized by the following topics:

- Guidance to help arts educators understand what connected arts learning looks like within organizations and how to bolster it in program design
- The relationship between the connected arts learning framework and community mapping and networking
- Factors that shape the future of connected arts learning, including what learning outcomes are valued, research-practice partnerships, and areas of future research

ARTS PROGRAM DESIGN AND EVALUATION

The connected arts learning framework can be used to design, reflect on, evaluate the impacts of, and communicate the value of their programs. Below are two strategies we have designed to help arts programs designers and evaluators implement this framework in ways that make sense for the communities they serve.

The suggestions in this section might be used by people throughout the arts education ecosystem, including funders, professional associations, curriculum writers, school administrators, evaluators, educators, youth learners, families, and more.

Strategy #1: Rubric to Develop Connected Arts Learning Approaches in Program Design

Educators can use this rubric to assess their program’s alignment with the connected arts learning framework. Examples of low, developing, and highly aligned approaches are offered as benchmarks for reflection.

How to use this rubric: Consider the programs you and your organization already offer. Read the descriptions of low, developing, and high connected arts learning. Rate your programs/ organization in terms of how well they incorporate elements of connected arts learning (youth interests, relationships, and opportunities). Consider how you could move each program further to the right on the rubric, to include more elements of the connected arts learning framework within each category.

Rubric to Develop Connected Arts Learning Approaches in Program Design

	LOW CONNECTED ARTS	DEVELOPING CONNECTED ARTS	HIGH CONNECTED ARTS
Interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum is predetermined. Arts technique and content are emphasized. • Few opportunities for learner input in program or curriculum (e.g., standards-aligned curriculum, explicit instruction in Suzuki Method). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners offer input on how a project develops. Themes are set by the program and/or teacher. • Learners are exposed to many different art forms and practices, but exposure may or may not be driven by their interests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner interests and passions drive the curriculum • Educators link learner interests to opportunities through supportive relationships (e.g., connecting youth to an internship program and offering support throughout experience).
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners work on mainly individual projects and practice on their own. • Adults may be great instructors but do not often connect with youth beyond class time • Educators commit to short-term engagements with young people and communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some effort is made to develop long-term relationships with learners, but sustained engagement is often left to chance • Families may be brought in for special events or projects, but are not routinely part of core activities or the operations of the organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organization intentionally tries to build long-term relationships with youth and families • Families are consistently and intentionally included in arts learning. • Families and community members shape curricular, operational, and strategic decisions
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners rarely hear about opportunities outside of the arts organization. • Progress is assessed by performance within the program itself, rather than measures of success beyond the program’s walls. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities are presented by individual teaching artists or through classes. There is no systematic way to match learners with opportunities or offer them ongoing support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organization purposefully and strategically supports arts learning within and beyond a program’s walls. It builds new opportunities for learners across settings and over time.

Strategy #2: Reflection Questions to Spark Connected Arts Learning in Design

We developed an initial set of guiding questions for reflecting on program design through a connected arts learning lens.

How to use these guiding questions: These questions are starting points. They can help brainstorm ways to integrate and/or bolster connected arts learning considerations into program design. They allow educators to start from a place of inquiry, reflecting on where connected arts learning might be enhanced within their unique programs. These questions might be used by educators and program developers as they start a new program or to reflect on the design of current offerings.

Questions to Boost Connected Arts Learning

Interests	Relationships	Opportunities
<p>How do you incorporate youth interest and voice into programming?</p> <p>How do young people drive decision making?</p> <p>How do you include learners' identities and cultural backgrounds?</p> <p>How are the arts leveraged to engage learners?</p> <p>How are new interests supported in collaboration with professional artists?</p>	<p>How do you cultivate affinity-based networks of support?</p> <p>How do you support learners in working collaboratively with others?</p> <p>In what ways are relationships among young people, artists, and families accounted for in your programming?</p> <p>How are channels of communication kept open to support and sustain arts learning?</p> <p>In what ways are inter-generational relationships incorporated and leveraged to connect youth to arts opportunities?</p>	<p>What types of arts opportunities are communicated and offered to young people?</p> <p>How do the goals of the arts program connect young people to opportunities beyond the program itself?</p> <p>What are the values of the class or program and how are those values embedded in the arts experience?</p> <p>In what ways are young people matched with inspiring opportunities that align with their arts interests?</p> <p>How do you support networking that can connect youth to opportunities in and outside of the arts?</p>

COMMUNITY MAPPING WITH THE CONNECTED ARTS LEARNING FRAMEWORK

A connected arts learning lens illustrates how important it is to understand the local network supporting young peoples' arts education—including where it uplifts or restricts youth learning. Connected arts learning is best achieved by building connections across individuals, families, and organizations in a community.

Arts organizations often use community mapping to describe the community assets available to the youth they serve, as well as to identify unmet needs.⁴ Researchers and organizations can engage in community mapping to understand how cities and communities support arts organizations, and vice versa.

Funders, policymakers, and educators can look at the landscape of resources in a community and use the connected arts learning lens to better understand existing connections, where connections might be stronger, and gaps they can consider in their strategic approaches. Community mapping with a focus on connected arts learning could help create this landscape of opportunities, which could suggest a need for more arts organizations that support youth well-being in a region. This process might help funders and policymakers support more localized goals or help individual organizations better understand where they can meet community needs. It also allows organizations to better identify local opportunities, relationships, and interests, all of which can feed back into connected arts learning.

BUILDING AWARENESS AND SUPPORT FOR CONNECTED ARTS LEARNING

Organizations can use the guidance in this chapter to expand on existing work and investments in connected arts learning. However, individual organizations may need additional support for this work to achieve broader impacts. Below we describe ways policymakers, funders, and researchers can support the growth of the connected arts learning field and its impacts.

Broadening What Counts as an Outcome

The connected arts learning framework locates individual arts learning outcomes within a broader range of outcomes and contexts that support youth thriving in the 21st century, including civic engagement, critical consciousness, ethnic identity, and leadership. It recognizes how arts learning not only contributes to disciplinary skills and knowledge, but also to network-building, identity development, and collective outcomes.

To expand the footprint and impacts of connected arts learning, policy and research must recognize, study, and incentivize these broader range of outcomes. Research can investigate how specific programs and policies support these outcomes. For example, researchers might study how arts therapy can support classroom teaching, how new forms of “artrepreneurship” (i.e., art + entrepreneurship) are shaping youth participation, how the arts prepare youth for the future of work, and the role of the arts in developing youth voice.

Developing Research-Practice Partnerships

Organizations might evaluate aspects of connected arts learning in their programs, such as asking young people to self-report their interests or monitoring youth willingness to take up mentorship roles. However, policymakers and funders could further a community cultural wealth perspective in program evaluations by supporting co-designed research. Program evaluators and researchers can co-develop outcomes and measures with diverse stakeholders at arts organizations, including youth themselves. This structure better connects the organization's work to the community cultural wealth and needs of participants. A co-design research process might include youth members and families in the design and testing of surveys, indicators, and longitudinal tracking models.

Understanding Arts Education Networks and Ecosystems

A connected arts learning lens helps highlight how arts learning is deeply linked to context—including the organizations, people, history, and resources of an area. Therefore, the arts education field needs additional research to better understand how broader infrastructures in different areas organize, uplift, and restrict arts education. The arts education community can act as a connector of spaces and people that influence a young person's life—schools, arts educators, arts organizations, families, future careers, and academic institutions — to foster meaningful arts learning. Supporting smooth transitions and communication among spaces, systems, and people requires a better understanding of the relationships among these actors.

To better build connected arts learning design principles, we suggest support for programs that collaboratively build and study the application of connected arts learning to a network of organizations and/or over an extended period. This will help the field attend to the longitudinal and cross-setting effects of an arts education, rather than the immediate impacts of a single organization. Research could include deep ethnographic and qualitative work that traces how networks form, strengthen, and propel youth learning over time. Social network analyses could help researchers analyze and categorize different kinds of ties (e.g., strong and weak) and theorize how arts learning ecosystems might better support learning (e.g., Akiva et al., 2019).

Regional versions of community mapping could help communities build an understanding of organizations that are working in ways aligned with connected arts learning and help reveal challenges. Growing and expanding the impact of the powerful assets and strengths that already exist in the connected arts learning field will ultimately require this broader mapping, networking, and coalition building.

Appendices

Appendix A: Literature Review Selection and Methods

For a longer description and version of the literature review, please see: Pepler, K., Dahn, M., & Ito, M. (2022). Connected Arts Learning: Cultivating Equity Through Connected and Creative Educational Experiences. *Review of Research in Education*, 46(1), 264-287. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X221084322>.

We conducted a review of the arts education literature to uncover how youth interests have been leveraged to create meaningful and equitable learning experiences; how key relationships (e.g., peers, mentors, family) have been shown to build participants' networks; and how impactful out-of-school arts experiences have connected youth to future learning opportunities. The literature review highlights themes for which we found gaps in the arts literature when we queried it from a connected learning angle, and vice versa, so we could (1) explain how the connected arts learning framework unlocks possibilities for arts education and (2) describe how the arts uniquely contribute to the existing connected learning work, thus providing rationale for the connected arts learning framework.

Literature Selection and Methods: We searched two key portals for dialogue within the arts and connected learning fields:

(1) Arts Education Partnership's ArtsEd Search (<https://www.artsedsearch.org/>): We read abstracts and key findings summaries for all 302 references available as of April 2021.

(2) The Connected Learning Alliance website (<https://clalliance.org/publications>): We reviewed the collection of 37 publications as of April 2021.

The systematic review across these sources of community dialogue resulted in 56 articles from the ArtsEdSearch database and 12 articles from the Connected Learning Alliance website. We then queried these articles using a connected learning lens to review how creative arts experiences can democratize learning by cultivating interest-driven educational experiences, drawing on supportive relationships to build youth networks, and creating inroads to future opportunities. To do so, we categorized/coded each of the reviewed articles (Jesson et al., 2011; Philip & Gupta, 2020) according to the connected learning framework, breaking down each of the larger spheres (e.g., opportunities into academic, civic, and workforce opportunities) when the category reached 10 or more articles.

We organized the reviewed arts education literature through the three major focuses of connected learning—opportunities, interests, and relationships. Using these three themes as a starting point, we further broke down types of opportunities (e.g., academic, civic, workforce/career), sub-themes related to interests (e.g., interest-driven and self-organizing practices of youth, identity development), and specific relationships (e.g., with peers, mentors, family members).

Appendix B: Arts Organization Case Studies

We sought to illustrate the connected arts learning framework and its approaches in action through case studies of target organizations. To identify these organizations, we first looked at the key points in connected arts learning to identify organizations that were engaging youth interests, leveraging relationships, and connecting young people to opportunities. Our interests in career and workforce opportunities, family relationships, and attention to mental health and wellness—which were developed through the literature review—also helped refine this selection process.

To inform the design of the connected arts learning framework, we conducted 13 hour-long interviews with people that do work aligned with connected learning and operationalize connected learning in arts education to better understand their work and concerns. The interviews with these people shaped the design of the framework and pushed us to further refine selection criteria.

We considered institutions and affiliated individuals that built programming around youth interests; recognized the value of supportive relationships in sustaining those interests; and/or actively connected youth to academic, civic, and economic opportunities in the creative fields. Throughout the interview process, we took a networked approach to information gathering, asking interviewees for additional contacts and recommendations for arts organizations to include in thinking about framework development.

We sought to include organizations that considered the idea of creating infrastructures to support learning on a broader scale. We also aimed for diversity in terms of the organization's location (i.e., mix of city and rural, spread across the country) and types of art offerings (i.e., a mix of traditional arts classes with interdisciplinary and/or digital media experiences). Additionally, we thought about arts organizations in an expansive way, to consider including those organizations that teach both traditional arts disciplines as well as those that use new media and digital technologies for art making purposes.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank our editor, Abby Rhinehart, and graphic design team, Liz Abbate and Nina Wishnok. Thank you to Lora Cawelti and R. Mishael Sedas for their early research assistance. We would also like to thank our key arts and out-of-school time advisors for their time and insight: Dionne N. Champion, Barbara Drucker, Erica Halverson, Virginia Killian Lund, Sam Mejias, Allentza Michel, Bahia Ramos, Michael Rohd, Nichole Pinkard, Keith Sawyer, Kimberly Sheridan, and Folashadé Solomon. Thank you also to Alysia Lee and Nik Zaleski for their feedback on the near-final version of the report. Thank you to Amy Gedal Douglass, Lauren Sanders, Porché Hardy, and The Wallace Editorial Team for their support and guidance throughout the research and publication process, and Jenna Abrams for copy editing support. And finally, thank you to arts organizations for sharing their work with us: Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE), Ifetayo Cultural Arts Academy, Inner-City Arts, OrigiNation Cultural Arts Center, and Spy Hop.

Citations

- Akiva, T., Hecht, M., & Osai, E. (2019). *Creative learning in Pittsburgh*. The Heinz Endowments. <https://www.heinz.org/UserFiles/Library/Creative-Learning-Report-Sept2019.pdf>
- Barron, B. (2006). Interest and self-sustained learning as catalysts of development: A learning ecology perspective. *Human Development*, 49, 193–224.
- Barry, N. (2010). *Oklahoma A+ Schools: What the research tells us 2002-2007: Quantitative Measures*. Oklahoma A+ Schools® / University of Central Oklahoma.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1992). Ecological systems theory. In R. Vasta (Ed.), *Six theories of child development: Revised formulations and current issues* (pp. 187–249). Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Callahan, J., Ito, M., Campbell Rea, S., & Wortman, A. (2019). *Influences on occupational identity in adolescence: A review of research and programs*. Connected Learning Alliance. https://clalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Influences_on_Occupational_Identity_Adolescence.pdf
- Catterall, J. S. (2009). *Doing well and doing good by doing art: The effects of education in the visual and performing arts on the achievements and values of young adults*. Imagination Group/I-Group Books.
- Clover, D. E. (2006). Culture and antiracism in adult education: An exploration of the contributions of arts-based Learning. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 57(1), 46–61. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0741713606292476>
- Cohen, C., Kahne, J., Bowyer, B., Middaugh, E., & Rogowski, J. (2012). *Participatory politics: New media and youth political action*. Youth Participatory Politics Research Network. <https://ypp.dmlcentral.net/publications/107.html>
- Faber, M. & Watson, J. (2022). *Youth media still matters: Elevating the voices and identities of young people in disruptive times*. Convergence Design Lab,
- Gambone, M. A., Yu, H. C., Lewis-Charp, H., Sipe, C. L., & Lacoë, J. (2006). Youth organizing, identity-support, and youth development agencies as avenues for involvement. *Journal of Community Practice*, 14(1-2), 235-253. https://doi.org/10.1300/J125v14n01_14
- Greenfield, P. (2004). *Weaving generations together: Evolving creativity in the Maya of Chiapas*. School of American Research Press.
- Guhn, M., Emerson, S. D., & Gouzouasis, P. (2020). A population-level analysis of associations between school music participation and academic achievement. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 112(2), 308–328. <https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000376>
- Hipolito-Delgado, C. P., & Zion, S. (2017). Igniting the fire within marginalized youth: The role of critical civic inquiry in fostering ethnic identity and civic self-efficacy. *Urban Education*, 52(6), 699–717. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085915574524>
- Ito, M., Arum, R., Conley, D., Gutiérrez, K., Kirshner, B., Livingstone, S., Michalchik, V., Penuel, W., Peppler, K., Pinkard, N., Rhodes, J., Tekinbaş, K., Schor, J., Sefton-Green, J., Watkins, S. C. (2020). *The Connected Learning Research Network: Reflections on a decade of engaged scholarship*. Connected Learning Alliance.

- Ito, M., Baumer, S., Bittanti, M., boyd, d., Cody, R., Herr-Stephenson, B., Horst, H. A., Lange, P. G., Mahendran, D., Martinez, K., Pascoe, C.J., Perkel, D., Robinson, L., Sims, C. and L. Tripp. (2010). *Hanging out, messing around, geeking out: Kids living and learning with new media*. The MIT Press.
- Ito, M., Gutiérrez, K., Livingstone, S., Penuel, W., Rhodes, J., Salen, K., Schor, J., Sefton-Green, J., & Watkins, S. G. (2013). *Connected learning: An agenda for research and design*. Digital Media and Learning Research Hub. <https://dmlhub.net/publications/connected-learning-agenda-for-research-and-design/index.html>
- Jesson, J., Matheson, L., & Lacey, F. M. (2011). *Doing your literature review: Traditional and systematic techniques*. Sage.
- Kafai, Y. B., & Peppler, K. A. (2011). Youth, technology, and DIY: Developing participatory competencies in creative media production. *Review of Research in Education*, 35(1), 89-119.
- Kane, K. M. (2014). Transformative performing arts and mentorship pedagogy: Nurturing developmental relationships in a multidisciplinary dance theatre program for youth. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, 2(2). <https://doi.org/10.11114/jets.v2i2.316>
- Kosma, M., Erickson, N., Savoie, C. J., & Gibson, M. (2020). The effectiveness of performative aerial practice on mental health and the love of movement. *Research in Dance Education*, 22(2), 210-227. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14647893.2020.1784868>
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal*, 32(3), 465–491. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1163320>
- Paris, D. (2012). Culturally sustaining pedagogy: A needed change in stance, terminology, and practice. *Educational Researcher*, 41(3), 93–97. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X12441244>
- Peppler, K. & Dahn, M. (2022). Social media and creativity. In D. Lemish (Ed.), *Routledge international handbook of children, adolescents, and media* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Peppler, K., Dahn, M., & Ito, M. (2022). Connected arts learning: Cultivating equity through connected and creative educational experiences. *Review of Research in Education*, 46(1), 264-287. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X221084322>
- Philip, T. M., & Gupta, A. (2020). Emerging perspectives on the co-construction of power and learning in the learning sciences, mathematics education, and science education. *Review of Educational Research*, 44, 195–217. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X20903309>
- Rhodes, A. M. & Schechter, R. L. (2014). Fostering resilience among youth in inner city community arts centers. *Education and Urban Society*, 46, 826–848.
- Salen Tekinbaş, K. (2020). *Raising good gamers: Envisioning an agenda for diversity, inclusion, and fair play*. Connected Learning Alliance.
- Sandoval, W. (2014). Conjecture mapping: An approach to systematic educational design research. *The Journal of the Learning Sciences*, 23(1), 18–36. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10508406.2013.77820>
- Seifried, S. (2006). Exploring the outcomes of rock and popular music instruction in high school guitar class: A case study. *International Journal of Music Education*, 24(2), 168–177. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761406065478>

Shah, S., Buford, W., & Braxton, E. (2018). *Transforming young people and communities: New findings on the impacts of youth organizing*. Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing. https://fco.org/uploads/resources/transforming-young-people-andcommunities-new-findings-on-the-impacts-of-youthorganizing_resource_5a4d1955857485674a21f4d2.pdf

Shields, S. S., Fendler, R., & Henn, D. (2020). A vision of civically engaged art education: Teens as arts-based researchers. *Studies in Art Education*, 61(2), 123–141. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00393541.2020.1740146>

Spy Hop. (n.d.) The Spy Hop Way. <https://spyhop.org/spy-hop-impact>

Stevenson, L. M. (2011). *Creating destiny: Youth, arts, and social change*. [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Stanford University. <http://purl.stanford.edu/bf113xh2911>

Stevenson, L. M., & Deasy, R. (2005). *Third space: When learning matters*. Arts Education Partnership.

Stuckey, H. L., & Nobel, J. (2010). The connection between art, healing, and public health: A review of current literature. *American Journal of Public Health*, 100(2), 254–263. PubMed. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2008.156497>

Watkins, S. C., & Cho, A. (2018). *The digital edge: How Black and Latino youth navigate digital inequality* (Vol. 4). NYU Press.

Watts, R., Kirshner, B., Govan, R., Siham Fernández, J., (2018). *Powerful youth, powerful communities: An international study of youth organizing*. Powerful Youth, Powerful Communities. <http://www.research2action.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/2018-Powerful-Youth-Powerful-Communities-Final-Research-Report-4dist.pdf>

Winner, E., & Hetland, L. (2000). The arts in education: Evaluating the evidence for a causal link. *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 34(3/4), 3–10.

Yosso, T. J. (2005) Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth, *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 8(1), 69–91, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1361332052000341006>

Zimmerman, H. T., & McClain, L. R. (2014). Intergenerational learning at a nature center: Families using prior experiences and participation frameworks to understand raptors. *Environmental Education Research*, 20(2), 177–201. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13504622.2013.775219>