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Art as Experience:

A Case for Art Museum Field Trips in New Mexico's Public School Art Education

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ART AS EXPERIENCE

**Art as Experience:
A Case for Art Museum Field Trips in New Mexico's
Public School Art Education**

by

Zoila A. Caamaño-Pumarol

**B.A. Psychology 2007
Post-Baccalaureate in Fine Arts 2013
Master of Fine Arts 2015**

THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Art Education

The University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico

July 2022

DEDICATION

Dear child, I carried out this research study with the hope that one day going on an art teacher-lead field trip to the museum would be part of your educational experience without question. Looking forward to meeting you at the art spaces of the world.

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Throughout this sometimes tenacious process of bringing together this master's research project, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my chair and advisor Geralyn Yu, Ph.D., and my thesis committee members Justin Makemson, Ph.D., from the UNM Art Education Program, and Frances Vitali, Ph.D., from the UNM College of Education and Human Science. Each of these scholars provided valuable advice, experience, patience, and continuous reassurance of my work and abilities for the duration of this project.

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ABSTRACT

Since 2011, multiple studies have found that school field trips to art museums and other cultural institutions produce measurable improvements in standardized test scores, academic engagement, and substantial improvements across a range of factors including empathy, critical thinking skills, and creativity. These findings are especially prominent with children in rural areas, from low-income families, and non-Native English speakers. Nevertheless, the priorities in U.S. public education have shifted away from field trips and art education since the 1980s.

In this case study licensed art teachers in the New Mexico K to 12 public schools shared their experiences, discussed the obstacles they encounter, and explained how they have found alternative sources of funding outside of normal structures to help cover the costs of trips to art museums.

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OPENING VIGNETTE

I must have been 5 years old when my *mamá* (that's what I called my grandmother), started to buy me *libros de mariquitas recortables* (cut-out paper pocket dolls) as a reward every time I accompanied her to walk to the *bodega* around the corner. However, one day she presented me with a solid composition notebook with university lines and said, "*Tienes que aprender a leer y a escribir porque ya vas para la escuela*" ("You have to learn to read and write because you are about to start school"). I do not have a recollection of the time of day when she insisted on sitting me down to teach me las vocales, "esta es la 'a,' la 'e', la 'i,' la 'o,' y la 'u.' *Ahora practica escribiéndolas varias veces.*" I then formed the letters with broken lines like imitating the exercises from *Nuestra Cartilla Fonética* (Puerto Rico) or *El Libro Inicial de Lectura: Nacho* (The Dominican Republic). I valued her for sharing her time with me since my mom would leave the apartment very early in the morning to go to work in a *factoría*. Although I enjoyed it, I did not fully understand her determination of having me learn the vowels so impromptu, and quickly concluded that those walks with her to the *bodega* would not be as fun as they were before.

Often, my *mamá* dropped me off at my preschool, P.S. 145 Bloomindale School in the morning, which was less than a 10-minute walk from our tiny apartment located on Amsterdam Avenue in New York. Little did she know that I carried the composition notebook in my backpack. I became serious about my schoolwork, more so than playing with the other children. My notebook was an opportunity to continue practicing the reading and writing emphasized by my grandmother. Learning vowels and practicing writing on university lined paper, was not something taught at my preschool; young children were encouraged to play. However, my grandmother communicated at home that these skills were needed to succeed in school.

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That first year as a brand-new immigrant to the United States remains embedded within me. This reflection is a personal example of how I myself was a child whose educational prospects were unsure—a non-native speaker of English, and a child of a single parent who was economically insecure.

After that year at the P.S. 145 in Manhattan, we moved to Puerto Rico, and my mom remarried. I spent the rest of my school years in private schools. Here, field trips were regular, and the school and the teachers would plan for us to see traveling exhibits, plays, a walk through the Old San Juan to learn about our history, and enjoy *piraguas de frambuesa y tamarindo*, and *mantecado de coco*, *parcha o piña*. In a high school field trip, I also visited for the first time, la Reserva Natural Cabezas de San Juan. As part of a class, I was often taken away from routine classroom constraints to be part of cultural events. It is inconceivable for me that now it takes so much effort, planning, and collaboration for students to go on these events.

At home we did not talk about art as a career option nor was it promoted in any way, but my parents would encourage all these range of experiences and activities through the school. Nevertheless, earning a master's in fine arts and deciding on becoming an artist was never something I planned on, and even though, I still have mixed feelings over the word *artist* and what it really means to be one, certainly having a MFA have help me to understand myself withing the artistic practice in a different way. I will stretch the boundaries and experiment with its extend of anything I do not understand well.

Right after graduating from the San Francisco Art Institute (SFAI), I had the opportunity to be part of the team that helped re-open the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) after its renovation. I had the opportunity to welcome millions of visitors and thousands of schoolchildren. This experience expanded my

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knowledge and understanding in contemporary art from a curatorial and educational perspective.

As the first woman (and only one to date) of my immediate family to earn a bachelor's degree and two master's degrees, to become a citizen of the United States of America, and consequently, to vote, I now remember field trips with joy and as meaningful to my education, something that was easy to do. In this day and age, I also started to realize that maybe mamá was giving me a prelude of what the world could be by giving me access to daily life experiences to learn from it. Those short walks to the minimarket were packed with math, time management, close observation, social engagement, and comity. These were skills that can only be learned when one steps out of a four-walled room to face humanity.

At the present time, as the mother of an only daughter, on the first day of every school year, the very first thing I ask her is if there is a field trip scheduled in any of her classes. Her answer has always been a disappointing, "No."

In conducting the following research, I found that academic scholarship indicated that being able to experience art encourages further learning and makes school a place to explore knowledge. Regretfully, educational policies at a macro level, since the 1980s have contracted the curriculum by eroding the role of art education and reducing the number of field trips to museums especially for economically disadvantaged students. With this thesis, I attempt to make visible the challenges art teachers in New Mexico face when organizing field trips to art museums for K-12 public school students.

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Education, when viewed from a broad vantage, is a “cumulative, long-term process . . . of making meaning and finding connections” (Falk & Dierking, 2000, p. 12). Art education is an area that helps students make connections between areas of learning to promote not only their own voice but appreciate the expression of others (Dewey, 1919; Kisida 2018; Masley, 1949). For several years, field trips to art museums played an integral part of art education (Dewey, 1919). Nevertheless, the priorities of public education in the United States shifted away from field trips and art education since the 1980s to an increased emphasis on standardized testing. Art education’s benefits have often eluded measure on such measures as the strict metrics of standardized tests.

Beyond the world of the standardized test, however, art education served as an integral component of teaching empathy, creativity, critical thinking, and self-expression and played a prominent role in American education. Indeed, scholars repeatedly emphasized that arts education strengthens cognitive abilities and critical thinking skills (Eisner, 2002; Erickson, 2022). Further, there has long been evidence that art education produces *transfer* effects where students who receive art education tend also to show improvements in other academic areas (Baker, 2012). However, defenders of art education did not have until recently research designs that compared the performance of students who participated in some degree of concentrated arts education.

Since 2011, multiple studies indicated using randomized samples of similarly situated students, that field trips to culturally enriching institutions tangibly result in improved performance on standardized tests, especially for economically

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disadvantaged students (Bowen & Kisida, 2018; Ericson, 2022; Greene, 2013;).

While the gains on standardized tests are modest, they are measurable (Whitesell, 2015). The gains in other metrics, however, such as empathy, student engagement, critical thinking skills and similar skills are exceptional (Erickson, 2022; Greene, 2013).

This case study echoes the more comprehensive studies of the past decade regarding the benefits of sending children to art museums and in making a case in favor of increased art education in the form of field trips to discuss how the inclusion of art teachers into a curriculum that features regular trips to cultural institutions could present an opportunity for academic gains for students across a range of measures. By surveying and interviewing licensed art teachers currently teaching in New Mexico public schools, I present their experiences to discuss the obstacles that limit or prevent field trips to culturally enriching institutions and identify how the increased emphasis on standardized testing, state legislation, and now the effects of COVID-19, influenced field trip attendance to art museums. These art teachers also explained how, despite the general absence of state and district school programs, sending children on field trips to art museums have found alternative sources of funding outside of normal structures to help cover the costs of trips to art museums, and shared what their students told them about how trips to art museums energized their students' interests in the arts.

Rationale for Inquiry

Despite the success of having students attend field trips to art museums, the legal structures of the accountability era from the 1980s to the present has created an educational culture that is resistant to acknowledging the full benefits of field trips—and of art education in general (Vasquez, 2013). At a macro level, policies that

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excluded the arts from standardized measurements resulted in the diminishment of contributions that art teachers could make. Indeed, according to Hanawalt (2019) the “forces of accountability and compliance” have “shaped school culture”. This cultural change has not only lowered the stature of art educators but has resulted in art educators shaping their individual curricula to be in accord with “data, standardization, and accountability” (p. 92).

As a researcher, I acknowledge that this investigation it is just taking the pulse of our profession, and it is anticipated that it will raise more questions and instigate further investigations that will help support and contribute to discussions about funding and programming of art education in the public K-12 schools in this era of accountability in New Mexico while, at the same time, it inspires my classmates and future colleagues to produce more research in our field. Without additional research demonstrating the educational benefits of the arts practitioners, school administrators, and policymakers are unable to make informed decisions about the allocation of educational resources.

Research Questions

This case study is guided by the following research questions:

Q1: How are K-12 public school students being engaged with New Mexico art museums?

Q2: How do K-12 public school art teachers of New Mexico perceive the pedagogical value of including field trips to art museums and museum resources for art curricular development?

Q3: What obstacles do K-12 public school art teachers of New Mexico encounter when it comes to accessing art museums field trips and resources?

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Positionality

According to Savin-Baden and Major (2013) positionality “reflects the position that the researcher has chosen to adopt within a given research study” (p. 71) [influencing how] “research is conducted, its outcomes, and results” (Holmes, 2020, p. 2). The opening vignette is an extension of my positionality and a reflection of what I think it is a good practice in art education.

I have chosen to conduct this research, first as the non-native English speaker child whose educational prospects were unsure; second, as a mother; and third, as a researcher and bilingual art educator who believes that everyone should be able to visit art museums and that art teachers’ expertise is critical to be taken in consideration and integrated into the school curriculum to create meaningful connections between the arts and students—of all ages and all backgrounds, through field trips to art museums.

Theoretical Framework

This case study is grounded on the theory and practice of the Pragmatism movement and on John Dewey’s (1907) philosophy of progressive education. Pragmatism includes “those who claim that an ideology or a proposition is true if it works satisfactorily, that the meaning of a proposition is to be found in the practical consequences of accepting it, and that unpractical ideas are to be rejected” (McDermind, n.d.). According to James (1907), pragmatism, as a philosophical school, asserts that interaction by humans between themselves and with nature requires “reliance on a deep bed of shared human practices and knowledge that can never be made fully explicit” (p. 9). Therefore, a concise, and explicit definition of pragmatism is elusive. Nevertheless, pragmatism urges a teleological approach that emphasizes *an end* or a goal. In the context of education, each student is encouraged

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to see in themselves an individual who is an *end* who can think and interact freely with the world (James, 1907). This outlook can bring different opinions and different disagreements at different moments of a situation.

Unlike the accountability system that has dominated U.S. education since the 1980s, pragmatism in education is both more holistic, this concept incorporates knowledge from a range of disciplines, and considers longer time frames—the entire school career of a student. In contrast, accountability structures by statute and policy give primacy to annual performance metrics or at most year-to-year comparisons so the period considered under accountability regimes is necessarily narrow.¹

While accountability structures value *data* over other measures, accountability systems' focus on math and English language abilities are perhaps as notable for the data they wish to exclude as the data that they consider (Vasquez, 2010).

Accountability structures limit the evaluation primarily to numeracy and literacy and for a limited duration of time—an academic year or a 2 year window. This limited period scrutinizes just a fragment of a students' 12 year career—or rather scrutinizes the student's 12 year in a series of disconnected annual intervals. This limited focus of accountability should invite a broader review of accountability's stature (Hanawalt, 2018). For Dewey (1907), a democratic society must be mobile and dynamic. Therefore, teachers must use techniques that work. Dewey also believed that giving students *experiences* is something that works. Dewey's vision is that it is the responsibility of educators to create cultural exchanges within the classroom, and, that by fostering positive learning communities in classrooms, academic achievement should increase.

¹ For example, the annual report card requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act narrows the time period of evaluation to just the prior year or at most the prior two years of a school's performance.

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When looking at the history of museum education, it was John Dewey (1900) who referred to the museum as both the physical and metaphorical heart of the ideal school. He saw museums as that place where the experiences of the child came into contact with an expanded world (Dewey, 1900).

Methodology of the Study

This research employs the case study methodology. According to Stake (1995), a case study is a way to study an occurrence and its relationship to the people by listening to their stories, and programs by seeking to understand them by entering “the scene with a sincere interest in learning how they function in their ordinary pursuits and milieus and with a willingness to put aside many presumptions while we learn” (p. 1). The case study model provided the ability to understand K-12 art teachers, to find commonality and differences within emergent themes and include my own personal perspective and interpretation.

Limitations of the Study

This research study is limited by the number of participants surveyed and interviewed. As a consequence, the sampling may not represent the opinion of all K-12 art educators in New Mexico which in turn limits the ability to make broad inferences and conclusions from the results. Unknown conditions or factors at the facilities where participants reside, work, or study are other limitations that could potentially bias the participant’s responses.

As in any research study, the researcher’s perspective, experience, and possible bias may also color the research process and the telling of this narrative. However, all attempts were made to maintain the integrity of the research throughout so that the study could present information fairly and accurately.

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Assumptions of the Study

In this case study, assumptions included that the surveyed participants would answer questions in an honest and candid manner. This assumption seemed warranted because it is my experience that public school K-12 art teachers have a sincere interest in the study and the response rate was satisfactory. It is also assumed that the respondents are familiar with the areas covered by the study because they are professionals in the field of art education. The survey questions were narrowly tailored to ascertain the viewpoints of K-12 art teachers working in the public education system in the state of New Mexico.

Bias and Validity

To avoid making biased generalizations about the challenges faced by art educators in New Mexico public schools, the data were collected by surveying and interviewing licensed K-12 art teachers within the New Mexico public schools and tabulated to give a numerical value as a measure to reinforce and validate the case study methodology. The tabulations were not performed to objectify the topic, but to rank and calibrate the phenomenon of educational field trips to art institutions by collecting the opinion of these art educators.

The narrative analysis of the data was cleaned, organized, explored, coded, and combined into themes to be analyzed, and to recognize if they were consistent with the research questions in relation to the theoretical framework, the methodology, and my positionality within this research study.

Summary

The following chapters will provide more in-depth discussion of this research study and its purpose. In Chapter II, the literature review will follow how museums expanded their educational resources over the past twenty years and discuss how field

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trips to museums produce prominent and measurable benefits for students, but it will also include discussion of how accountability policies and laws, reduced opportunities to engage in field trips to museums. Chapter III will include the research and methodologies of the project and include discussion of the range of participants in the project. Chapter IV will include discussion of the findings and analysis of the data collected in the project. Chapter V, Implications and Assessments, will provide answers to the research questions posed at the outset of this project. Finally, Chapter VI, Reflections, will include identification of the opportunities resulting from this research to promote both student success and a well-rounded education through expanded art education and field trips.

CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

Parallel Paths – Museums and Schools

The leading scholarly work that includes discussion of museums as centers of learning is by John H. Falk and Lynn D. Dierking in 2000 who wrote numerous books on how the museum experience can be used to increase learning. Falk and Dierking (2000) both contend that museums should be viewed as “public institutions for personal learning, places people seek out to satisfy their learning needs” (p. xii). In addition to being spaces people seek out, museums, according to Falk and Dierking, represent “the shared experiences, beliefs, customs, and values of groups that inhabit [the museum] with us” (p. 39). These two ideas, that museums are places of public learning and that they hold the shared beliefs of the groups who inhabit the museum, identify the unique places that museums are.

Being the repository of *shared beliefs* and at the same time being a *place for public learning* has however given way to a certain temptation to see museums as places that can promote harmony through homogeneity. In 1901, Lord Roseberry, a member of the Arts Council in the House of Lords in Britain said that “If you offer this civilizing agency [museums], these rooms, this gallery, as a place where a rough fellow who has nothing else to do can spend his time . . . it cannot fail to have favourable results” (Hickman, 2004, p. 8). These *favourable results* would likely be gained by adherence to cultural homogeneity. However, museums have progressed since Lord Roseberry saw them as a place where a *rough fellow* can find favorable results. Museums are places of diverse learning and cultural exploration, having moved “away from their original role as places of artefact preservation and reverence for social elites, evolving instead into sites of learning and education for all”

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(Cameron, 2004, p. 67). Indeed, “[m]useums as learning environments support scholarship, deepen knowledge, increase people’s understanding of history, society, culture, and science, and promote social equity” (Badger, 2016, p. 357). Given this context, it is important to investigate how people learn at museums.

Falk and Dierking (2000) have been at the forefront of studying how people learn at museums. Unimpeachably, Falk and Dierking assert that “all learning is a cumulative, long-term process, a process of making meaning and finding connections” (p. 12). With respect to the learning process itself, Falk and Dierking posit that the best learning strategy for museums to employ is the contextual model. Falk and Dierking defined the contextual model as

[A]ll learning that is situated within a series of contexts . . . in other words learning is an organic, integrated experience that happens in the real world. The contextual model involves overlapping contexts: the personal, the sociocultural and the physical. (p. 7)

Much of Falk’s and Dierking’s (2000) work focuses not just on this *contextual* model but in the personal element that is a part of this model. According to Falk and Dierking, the “personal interest develops slowly over time and tends to have long-lasting effects on a person’s knowledge and values” (p. 24). Indeed, the personal element is the primary emotional basis that motivates learning (Dewey, 1907). This personal element creates the emotional foundation that reaches the other elements in the contextual educational model. To encourage the personal connection or personal context, the two, Falk and Dierking, believe that a museum educational experience should encourage *free choice* whereby the visitor should be allowed to wander the museum to discover areas of interest. Indeed, according to Falk and Dierking

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museums should “allow individuals to construct personal meaning about the world that persists over long periods of time” (p. 24).

Badger (2016) has as well elaborated on this model and how it can be used more broadly as a part of educational curricula:

The museum experience is founded on a . . . view of learning which connects an individual’s prior knowledge from home and school with understandings gained in-gallery. Prior knowledge is restructured and changed through the experiences encountered on a field trip, which themselves are mediated by artefacts and dialogue. [This type of] learning emphasises the individual’s active involvement in building their own knowledge. (p. 358)

From the year 2000 to the date of this writing, museums in the United States have substantially increased their investment in educational activities. In 2013 alone, museums collectively spent more than \$2 billion in education outreach (Badger, 2016). Regretfully, this increased investment by museums coincided with a period of increased focus on standardized testing where schools in general have substantially reduced their visits to museums (Badger 2016; Greene, 2013). Nevertheless, the benefits of having students undertake field trips to museums is becoming manifest.

The Benefits of Field Trips to Art Museums

Dewey (1907) articulated several intellectual skills and habits that could be developed by having students leave the classroom and visit places like museums. These intellectual skills include empathy, tolerance, critical thinking, student engagement and other “habits of the mind” (Bowen, 2016, p. 173). Accordingly, included for discussion will be several large-scale studies designed to measure these effects, discuss their methodology, and the way these studies sought to measure the

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transfer effects of field trips to museums—i.e., the correlation between field trips to museums and improved performance on standardized tests and academic subjects unrelated to art education.

Comprehensive Studies of the Benefits to Cultural Institutions

Since 2013, there have been three large scale studies that sought to measure the development of intellectual skills not commonly associated with standardized testing (Bowen & Kisida, 2018; Erickson, 2022; Greene, 2014). These studies occurred at the Crystal Bridges Museum in Arkansas and involved comparing a group of approximately 3,000 students who went on a single visit to an art museum to their peers who did not go; a second study involving nearly 10,000 students in Houston, Texas who visited museums and other cultural institutions in the Houston area; and finally, a study conducted in Atlanta over the course of two years where, approximately 3,000 participating students visited three cultural institutions each year: an art museum, a theatrical performance and a musical performance. The empirical strategies of each of these studies and their respective findings are discussed below.

Crystal Bridges Study–2012 and 2013

In 2012 and 2013, Jay Greene (2014), then the Dean of the Department of Education Reform at the University of Arkansas, worked with a newly opened museum in Arkansas, The Crystal Bridges Museum, to study a school tour program. The museum, as part of its endowment, offered to pay the costs for school groups to come and tour the museum. Because the museum was new and located in an area without a significant museum presence, the school interest in participating in the free tours exceeded the museum's capacity. According to Greene, some 525 schools representing 38,347 students wanted to participate in the free tours. In response to this

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demand, Greene, working with the museum, devised a lottery to select students to participate in the free school tours. For the students who won the lottery and could participate in the tour, he paired them with students who did not win the lottery who were of a similar demographic profile. Greene merged the students based on socio-economic status (for example, participation in the federal free or subsidized student lunch program), ethnicity, gender, neighborhood (urban or rural) and attendance at a school that was also of a similar profile (based on things like income levels, percentage of at-risk students, etc.). In total, Greene was able to administer surveys to 10,912 students from 123 different schools who participated in the free museum tours in grade levels from kindergarten through 12th grade (Greene, 2014).

The museum tours consisted of 1 hour where students could discuss, on average, five paintings. The students and teachers who did not participate in the free museum tours were sent a packet of instructional materials and a course lesson designed to last from 1 hour to half a day and included five paintings. With respect to the museum tours, the discussions on each painting were *student-directed* with museum educators serving as facilitators (Greene, 2014).

Approximately 3 to 8 weeks after the conclusion of the tour or the lesson plan for students who were unable to attend the tour, students were given surveys to test their recall of tour/lesson plan details, critical thinking skills, historical empathy, and interest in attending art museums. The surveys were stripped of all identifying information and given to graders unaffiliated with the study (Greene, 2014).

With respect to recalling facts, students who were in the control group who did not participate in the free tours did not outperform chance in identifying details about the paintings that were the subject of the lesson plan (Greene, 2014). The students who participated in the free tours, however, demonstrated striking recall

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about the paintings. For example, 88% of the students surveyed recalled that the painting *At the Camp-Spinning Yarns* depicted abolitionists making maple syrup to undermine the sugar industry that relied on slave labor. These high rates of students able to recall details about the five paintings viewed was reflected for each painting. Further, the students demonstrated an ability to assess each painting within historical and social contexts far better than their peers who did not participate in the tours (Greene, 2014).

For the critical thinking assessment, students were shown a painting that they had not previously seen and asked two questions: *What do you think is going on in the painting?* and, *What do you see that makes you think that?* Again, the responses were graded by educators not affiliated with the study and all identifying information for each response was stripped away. The essay responses were evaluated based on observing, interpreting, evaluating, associating, problem finding, and comparing. Using these metrics, the study found that students who participated in the free tours substantially outperformed their peers who did not participate in the free tours. Of most salience, however, was that students from high-poverty schools evinced the most improvement performing nearly 0.33 of a standard deviation better than their peers who did not participate in the tours (Greene, 2014).

Greene (2014) found similar results in testing for historical empathy and tolerance. Greene defined historical empathy as the “ability to understand and appreciate what life was like for people in a different time and place” (p. 83). Greene tested for tolerance by asking students their level of agreement regarding the following statements: 1. (a) People who disagree with my point of view bother me; (b) Artists whose work is critical of America should not have their work shown in museums; (c). I appreciate hearing views different from my own; and (d). I think

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people can have different opinions about the same thing. Again, Greene found that students who participated in the free museum tours substantially outperformed their peers in both historical empathy and tolerance with the most manifest differences being evident in students from high-poverty and rural schools (Greene, 2014).

Finally, Greene (2014) measured the extent to which the free tour at the art museum encouraged students' interest in attending the art museum with their families. All the students who participated in the study, both in the control group and in the group who attended the free tours, were given coupons for themselves and their families to enter the museum free of charge. The coupons included specific coding so that students who visited the museum with their families could be sorted into the control group or the group who participated in the free tours. Greene found that the students who participated in the free tour were 18% more likely to visit the museum than the families of students who did not participate in the free tour (Greene, 2014).

The Greene study therefore found substantial benefits to bringing students to a museum particularly for students who were from high-poverty schools or were at-risk themselves.

Houston Study–2015-2017

From 2015-2017, Professor David Bowen of Texas A&M University and Professor Brian Kisida of the University of Missouri, conducted a study where students in the Houston Independent Public School District participated in field trips to institutions in the Houston arts community. More than 10,000 students participated in the program from the third grade to the eighth grade, from 42 public schools in Houston participated in the study (Bowen & Kisida, 2019). The students from the 42 schools shared a similar socio-economic background with more than 86% of the students identifying as either African American or Latinx (Bowen & Kisida, 2019).

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Participating students were divided into two groups—one group who visited art museums and other cultural institutions in Houston and one group that pursued a routine course of study on a school campus (Bowen & Kisida, 2019).

In the study, Bowen and Kisida (2019) sought to answer the following questions:

- Does a substantial increase in arts education experiences improve student-school engagement?
- Do these experiences increase students' desires to engage and participate in the arts?
- Do these experiences increase academic achievement as reflected in standardized test score growth?
- Does [arts engagement] affect students' attitudes and values, specifically in the forms of tolerance, empathy, and compassion for others?
- Are there heterogeneous effects in outcomes across student subgroups?

(p. 10)

Bowen and Kisida (2019) answered these questions by examining student performance on state standardized tests, reviewing student attendance and discipline records compared to the control group, conducting surveys of students, and reviewing grades. Bowen and Kisida found that students who participated in the program exhibited substantial improvements in student engagement as measured by increases in student attendance and a substantially lower incidence of student discipline. With respect to standardized test performance, the study found increases in both reading and math comprehension (Bowen & Kisida, 2019). While the increases in math performance were modest, they were statistically significant. In reading, however, the increases in performance on standardized was quite substantial.

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With respect to evaluating possible increases in student empathy, the study asked the following of both students who participated in the arts experience and students in the control group: (a.) Works of art, like paintings, music, dance performances, and plays, help me understand what life was like in another time or place; (b.) I can learn about my classmates by listening to them talk about works of art; and (c.) Works of art help me imagine what life is like for someone else (Bowen & Kisida, 2019, p. 20).

Based on the survey responses, Bowen and Kisida (2019) found substantial increases in student empathy brought about by exposure to art museums and other cultural institutions. The survey results supporting improvements in empathy were particularly strong for lower income and minority students (Bowen & Kisida, 2019)

Poignantly, students also stated through the surveys that exposure to the arts helped them better understand their classes and other students (Bowen & Kisida, 2019). Those students who participated in the arts experience responded to the following questions in the affirmative at a far higher rate than students who did not participate in the arts experience program: (a.) The arts can help me be a better student; (b.) Things I have learned in school can help me understand the arts; and (c.) Learning about the arts can help me understand things I learn in school (Bowen & Kisida, 2019, p. 20). Through a combination of survey results and objective measures such as school attendance and standardized test performance, the Houston study showed that positive results for participating in field trips to art museums could be repeated at scale.

Atlanta Study–2018 – 2020

In 2018 and 2019, researchers and educators from the University of Arkansas, Johns Hopkins University, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Atlanta Public

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School District, and the Woodruff Arts Center all collaborated on a structured two-year study involving fourth and fifth grade students enrolled in the Atlanta Public School District (Erickson, 2022). Similar to the Crystal Bridges and Houston studies, the Atlanta study involved comparing students in two separate groups—a group able to experience field trips to art institutions and a control group who experienced a standard curriculum. The study drew students from 12 different schools in Atlanta with students in the test group and students in the control group sharing substantially similar socio-economic backgrounds. Unlike the Crystal Bridges and Houston studies, the Atlanta study was designed to last 2 years and included three field trips each year—(a) one trip to an art museum, (b) one trip to a live theatre performance, and (c) one trip to a symphony performance. Further, the curriculum for each field trip was designed by art teachers in the Atlanta Public School District (Erickson, 2022). Additionally, the Atlanta study *followed* the students who participated in the study for a third year to identify whether any of the positive effects of the field trips to art institutions were durable.

The Atlanta study, similar to the Crystal Bridges and Houston studies, found that students who participated in the field trips “performed significantly better on their end-of-grade standardized tests and received higher course grades than control group students” (p. 6). In addition to increases in academic performance, the Atlanta study found increased levels of empathy where participating students were better able “to understand that people have differing levels of emotions and beliefs” than students in the control group” (Erickson, 2022, p. 8).

One of the more striking findings from the Atlanta study is that the positive effects that students receive from participating in the field trips increased over time, while some positive effects some only manifested themselves over a period of 1 to 2

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years *after* participating in the field trip program. Some of the effects include that *treatment students*, students who participated in the field trips, had substantially better disciplinary records than control group students as they advanced through middle school (Erickson, 2022). Erickson (2022) posited that the reason for this could be that transitions from elementary school to middle school involve the students having to cope with significant changes and that the students who participated in the field trips “may have been exposed to a broader world that helped them adjust to experiences that were unfamiliar to them” (p. 24).

Cumulatively, not only do these three studies show a variety of benefits that inure to students who participate in field trips to museums, the findings also show that these benefits are of a long-lasting nature (Erickson, 2022). Further, the Atlanta study showed that some benefits from taking field trips to museums and other cultural institutions do not manifest themselves until a few years after the field trips have taken place (Erickson, 2022).

While these three studies sought specifically to identify the extent to which the benefits of a field trip to cultural institutions could be measured, whether there were *transfer* effects to areas like standardized testing and the extent to which these benefits were durable. Other studies, such as Badger (2016), examined whether the benefits of field trips to cultural institutions appeared in multiple populations over a period of time and even examined the extent to which field trips to museums changed teacher perception of students.

Field Trips to Museums in Broader Context

In 2016, James Badger of the University of North Georgia and Richard Harker of Kennesaw State University examined the impact of a traveling exhibition created by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (Badger, 2016). Badger and

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Harker (2016) wanted to focus on how well rural, low-income and minority students outperformed their teachers' expectations in learning a lesson in the context of a museum environment. Focusing on students in a rural and comparatively impoverished region of Georgia, Badger and Harker had more than 1,100 students participate in the traveling exhibition. Of the students participating in the survey, more than 50% identified as being of Hispanic origin where English was either not their first language or was not the primary language spoken at home and more than 60% participated in the federal free student lunch program (Badger, 2016). Prior to participating in the tour, Badger and Harker surveyed the students' teachers about the expectations they had that the students would be able to understand, apply and remember the themes of lesson—namely, prejudice, discrimination, and social justice. The teacher survey responses expressed skepticism that the students would be able to retain the lessons discussed in the exhibition based on the teachers' experience teaching the students and teaching similar groups of students for a significant period of time.

The exhibition divided into three stages. The first stage students were guided through the traveling exhibition by undergraduate history students. The second stage involved a *writing wall* where students were asked to write down their responses to the exhibit. The third stage involved a classroom discussion moderated by history professors. In total, more than 1,100 students participated in the study (Badger, 2016).

After touring the exhibit, the students were asked to apply themes apparent in 1933 regarding prejudice and discrimination to contemporary debates. The students were then tested on comprehension and recollection of the facts presented in the exhibit. After receiving the student responses, Badger and Harker (2016) erased

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identifying information from the student responses and had the responses graded by the students' teachers. Badger and Harker summarized the results as follows:

A culturally enriching field trip such as the one investigated here [has] a positive impact on teachers' expectations of students' learning and may help teachers instruct and interact with their students in a more culturally responsive way. We are now also in a position to answer the second research question posed at the outset of this study: "What is the educational impact of the USHMM travelling exhibition on middle school students?" Students' responses to the [exhibit] demonstrated substantial comprehension of the exhibition's content. They revealed a capacity for critical thinking on both historical and contemporary questions of censorship, freedom of expression and the values which inform a democratic society. The students' written reflections frequently drew on modern themes of censorship and heightened awareness of democratic values. *Survey results showed that, after the field trip, students possessed a better understanding of the world and were better able to connect real-world issues to content learned in school.* (p. 370)

A Single Trip to a Museum Correlates to Improved Performance on Standardized Tests

In 2015, Emily Whitesell of New York University and the Mathematica Policy Research, sought to assess the impact a day trip to a museum had on middle school students (Whitesell, 2015). Whereas Greene (2014) and Badger and Harker (2016) found substantial benefits regarding student trips to museums across a range of measures, Whitesell examined the long-term effects of a single visit to a museum by analyzing whether student performance on standardized tests improved. Unlike the

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Greene and Badger studies where the studies themselves designed a test to evaluate student performance, Whitesell relied on standardized test data.

In New York City, several schools participated in the Urban Advantage program where a component of the program pays for students to visit a museum for a day. Further, all eighth graders in New York City take a standardized test on various academic subjects including the natural sciences (n.b. the standardized test given to eighth grade students does not test historical or artistic knowledge). Whitesell (2015) took 6 years of data compiled by New York City regarding students who attended schools that participated in the one-day museum visits compared to schools that did not participate in the program. Whitesell found small but statistically significant improvements in standardized test scores over the 6 year term for students who participated in the 1 day museum visits. Whitesell's study did not control for how well teachers may have integrated the museum visit into lesson plans but believes that such activities would likely magnify the impact. Further, Whitesell's study did not chart improvements that students obtained from the visits not subject to standardized testing such as increased confidence or increased contributions in class.

Nevertheless, Whitesell (2015) found the most statistically significant improvement correlating to the museum visits concerned low-income and self-identified Hispanic students. Whitesell asserted that based on study findings that increased visits to museums may be a way to significantly reduce the achievement gap between low-income students and their more economically-advantaged peers. Additionally, Whitesell noted that the enrichment experience for the students and their families brought about by visits to museums may well reflect in heightened performance in other academic areas not subject to standardized testing.

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The success of museum visits and culturally enriching programs does not always correlate to higher standardized test scores, however. In 2020, Johanna Lacoë, Gary Painter, and Danielle Williams of the University of Southern California, studied the effects of a museum-based educational program in San Diego (Lacoë et al., 2020). The Lacoë et al. (2020) study targeted the conundrum facing many schools today—how best to shape a curriculum that promotes performance on standardized tests while maintaining a broad array of educational goals (Lacoë et al., 2020; Rabkin, 2008). The Lacoë et al. study noted that:

Concerns about “teaching to the test,” student stress, and a narrow focus on the tested material at the expense of other subjects, such as art or music, raise the question – does the quest to quantify achievement take away from a more holistic educational experience for students? (Lacoë et al., 2020, p. 1)

The Lacoë et al. (2020) study included analysis of the results of data from students participating in a museum-based model for low-income students from 1996 to 2014 but did not analyze how trips to institutions like museums affect performance. Instead, the Lacoë et al. study focused on how well the museum-model school performs compared to similarly situated students participating in traditional school programs. While the Lacoë et al. study did not identify improvement on standardized tests, findings indicated that improvement in academic areas such as improved graduation rates, increased entrance into college programs, and similar were not a part of the study.

Furthermore, unlike the Crystal Bridges, Atlanta, and Houston studies discussed above, the Lacoë et al. (2020) study did not take a holistic approach and instead focused exclusively on *transfer* effects in standardized testing. One other note

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is that the period of time that the Lacoé et al. studied reviewed, 1996–2014, involved several manifestations of testing requirements and testing regimes. The Lacoé et al. study did not include discussion of how well the study controlled for each change in testing criteria which may give rise to an inference that the results of the study may not be as reliable as the Whitesell (2015), Greene (2014), Erickson (2022), and Bowen and Kisida (2018) studies.

At this juncture, the preponderance of academic literature shows that incorporating field trips to museums into the school curriculum produces substantial benefits in terms of critical thinking skills, empathy, historical understanding, and student participation even if subjects not considered in standardized testing are excluded (e.g., Erickson, 2022). Additionally, outside of the United States, scholars found that trips to museums increase student retention, student understanding, and critical thinking skills. For example, in 2017, Garcia Fernández-Ferrer and Francisco González Garcia of the University of Grenada found that a trip to a natural science museum substantially increased student comprehension across a variety of metrics (Fernández-Ferrer & González Garcia, 2017). In Taiwan, a country likely even more concerned about performance on standardized tests than educators are in the United States, found that bringing in museum-style exhibitions into the classroom improved student performance on standardized tests (Sun, 2017).

Accountability Structures and the Changing of School Culture

In reviewing the academic literature on the benefits of field trips to art museums, one of the most persistent themes involves the diminishment of field trips to museums and the diminishment of arts education in general (Bowen, 2019; Erickson, 2022; Greene, 2013; Hanawalt, 2018; Stokes-Casey, 2018;). This diminishment directly corresponds to the increased stature of accountability

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structures—a combination of legal and policy mandates that compel evaluation, often through standardized testing in math and English language skills, to assess the educational success or failure of a school or district. Because of accountability pressures, “schools, at times, narrow the curriculum [and] direct resources away from non-tested subjects” (Erickson, 2022, p. 3) like the arts. Not surprisingly, the “increased emphasis on accountability testing in core subjects has coincided with a notable decline in school-based arts exposure” (Bowen et al., 2016, p. 172). To grasp why field trips to museums and art education in general have diminished in recent years, it is important to comprehend the prominence of accountability structures in public education in 2022.

The desire to have a strong standardized testing regime undergird and inform national legislation on education can likely be traced back to a single report—*A Nation at Risk* published in 1983 (Gara, 2020; Portz, 2020). While the Report infamously castigates a generation of students as representing a “rising tide of mediocrity,” the Report itself is one of the most influential policy papers to be published as evidenced in part by a series run by the New York Times in 2018—35 years after the Report was published—discussing what was right and wrong about the Report (Kamentz, 2018). Few government reports generate features in publications like The New York Times 35 years after their publication. The Report itself divided the education curriculum, pointedly, into subjects that were necessary and subjects that were frivolous. Specifically, the Report wrote that “We have a cafeteria style curriculum in which appetizers and desserts are mistaken for main courses” (“A Nation at Risk,” 1983). The Report made clear which courses were the *main course* and which subjects were the *desserts*. Here the *main courses* were: *English and mathematics* and other courses that promoted *commerce and industry*. The Report

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does not mention the arts or art education and urged that reform could only be had by implementing *strict standards* and *measurements* for English and mathematics. These recommendations began to mark the development towards a federal testing policy.

Indeed, since *A Nation at Risk*:

standards-based accountability has been the most widespread form of K-12 education reform. This involves the use of administrative data-based mechanisms—particularly standardized testing of students—to *provide incentives or sanctions to motivate students, teachers, schools, and districts.* (Gara, 2020, p. 2)

By 1994, the Improving America’s Schools Act was passed and the purpose of the Act, by its own terms, was to “help disadvantaged children meet high standards.” These *high standards* would be scores on standardized tests. The 1994 Improving America’s Schools Act formally urged the contraction of *non-core* curricula and instead required “schools to maximize the time spent teaching and learning the core academic subjects.” The core academic subjects required to be taught did include art, along with mathematics, science, and English, but, and saliently, the subjects to be emphasized by statute, had to teach students “to reason, solve problems, apply knowledge and write and communicate effectively” (Goals 2000: Educate America Act”, 1994) as measured on standardized tests.²

The financial incentives in the Act only would be provided for courses that *aligned with high quality programs* that were the subject of standardized testing. The Act provided *proficiency targets* for math and English and these targets were fully defined by scores on standardized tests (Improving America’s Schools Act, 1994, Part

² The “Improving America’s Schools Act” referenced “core” academic subjects by referring to a different Act, the “Goals 2000: Educate America Act.” The two Acts were designed to be read in tandem and together both acts increased the pressure for states to use standardized testing and formally started to define a federal curriculum.

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A). The Act did not provide any financial resources for the arts or other subjects that were not the *high quality programs* that were the target of standardized testing.

Indeed, the identification of mathematics, reading and English as high quality programs while other subjects are left unidentified continued the separation of art education from the *important curriculum* or as *A Nation at Risk* indicated, the “main course” from the “dessert.”

By 2001, the *carrot* only approach to standardized testing under the Improving America’s Schools Act failed to provide improved results. Subsequently, a *stick* would be introduced. Under No Child Left Behind, schools’ financial well-being would be directly tied to performance on standardized tests. According to Klein (2015), the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2001 substantially increased the stakes regarding the evaluative standards of public schools. After NCLB became law, schools were required to administer testing in reading and math from the third to the eighth grade. A school’s failure to make what the act termed *adequate progress* as measured in student performance on the tests jeopardized the school’s ability to receive federal funds (Klein, 2015). The follow-on effects of this law led schools to focus intensely on testing and on the subjects tested.

Reviewing this period of increased standardized testing, from *A Nation at Risk* through to No Child Left Behind, Reese wrote that:

The imperatives of efficiency and standards overshadowed everything. Standardized testing easily trumped the romantic notion that schools could enhance children’s growth, development, cooperative instincts or other intangible, hard-to-measure qualities. [NCLB] which promised universal success [and] reinforced the traditional view that testing and measurement was the *sine qua non* of education (Reese, 2011, p. 9).

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Under NCLB, if testing was the *sine qua non* of education, NCLB failed on its own terms. In an essay that is revealing in its self-criticism, one of the architects of the No Child Left Behind act, West (2017) wrote of NCLB that

by any reasonable definition this effort [the reform effort of NCLB] failed. It failed on its own terms with any gains in student achievement generated by the law falling far short of its utopian promises. It also failed politically, with Congressional sponsors admitting that NCLB had become a ‘tainted brand.’ (West, 2017, p. 47)

In analyzing the scope of the failure, West (2017) realized that the law was not just a political failure in overpromising and underdelivering but that it caused measurable harm. West wrote that:

[T]he law’s exclusive reliance on math and reading test scores to gauge school quality contributed to a narrowing of the curriculum in American elementary and middle schools, with teachers devoting considerably more instructional time to math and especially to reading at the expense of science and social studies. While arguably desirable as a strategy to enhance literacy and numeracy, the law’s muted effects on math and reading achievement suggests that this massive reallocation of educators was counterproductive. (p. 50)

The incentives and penalties in NCLB resulted in diminished funding and/or time spent on visual arts education generally, but with substantial declines for schools that had high percentage of low-income students and minority students who often encountered difficulties to perform well on standardized tests (General Accounting Office [GAO], 2009; Gara, 2020). Schools that had high percentages of low-income students reported a decrease in the amount of time that students attended art classes by an average of 49 minutes per week per student (GAO, 2009). In response to this

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GAO report, the Secretary of Education at the time, Arne Duncan, reviewed the data and stated that “even in the poorest districts, [prior to NCLB], everyone had access to the arts. Today, sadly, this is no longer the case” (Rabkin, 2011, Preamble).

One of the most salient effects of NCLB was to erode or diminish funding and time spent on arts education. For schools that served significant numbers of low-income students, this effect was even more pronounced. Vasquez (2010) assessed NCLB’s impact on arts education as follows:

In lower performing schools, which are usually populated by low-income students and students of color, an even greater amount of time is devoted to test-taking strategies . . . [Causing] teachers to drill students daily in reading, writing and mathematics, essentially teaching only to the tests. (p. 136)

In Texas, schools that failed to make the adequate yearly progress standards required in NCLB and its state law equivalent, eliminated arts education and devoted the time that would have been spent on arts education to *remediation* efforts for better performance on math and English standardized test scores. The direct effect of this policy then was, at least in several districts in Texas, to eliminate low-income students’ ability to receive any art education. One scholar called this system “educational apartheid” (Vasquez, 2010, p. 136).

As noted above, NCLB limited access to arts education on a national scale. Indeed, the National Endowment for the Arts noted that school leaders “in recent decades have been increasingly focused on increasing performance on standardized tests” (Rabkin, 2011, p. 21). The testing regime of NCLB and its underlying theory reveal that

the arts are widely assumed to be expressive and affective, not cognitive or academic, despite growing awareness among some educators and cognitive

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scientists that many of the fundamental processes of art-making are profoundly cognitive—*reinforcing the building blocks of all thought*. (Rabkin, 2011 p. 42)

While one of the primary foci of this thesis is to show how arts do *reinforce the building blocks of all thought* and discuss how field trips to art museums help inspire success across a wide spectrum of measures, another aspect of this thesis is to highlight the cost suffered by students because of policies that diminish the importance of the arts. These costs include both a reduced stature of arts teachers and the cessation or near cessation of field trips to cultural institutions like art museums. Concurrent with the passage of NCLB was a fall in the number of trips that schools took to museums and to culturally enriching institutions in general (Greene, 2014).

Locally, in Albuquerque, the residual effects of NCLB are readily identifiable. For example, in the Albuquerque School District Strategic Plan, prior to the adoption of NCLB trips to museums were a regular feature of near-annual updates up to 2001. Since 2001, the year NCLB became law, the Albuquerque School District has not updated its targets to have students visit museums.

While NCLB was superseded in 2015 with the Every Child Succeeds Act, multiple obstacles remain in having schools integrate museum visits into the curriculum (Bowen & Kisida, 2018; Ludwig, 2017). These obstacles range from a concern that time away from the classroom may limit time devoted to preparing for standardized tests to logistical concerns to cultural sensitivities (Gara, 2020; Hanawalt, 2018; Ludwig, 2017). While the benefits of conducting activities such as field trips to art museums yield statistically significant results (Bowen & Kisida, 2018; Ericson, 2022; Ludwig, 2017), the structure of ESSA made embarking on these activities somewhat perilous given the legal and cultural backgrounds of the

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accountability regime that has dominated education since *A Nation at Risk* (Gara, 2020).

When considering ESSA as compared to NCLB, it is important to remember that ESSA “is not a blank slate” (Portz, 2020, p. 4). ESSA is a product of the same accountability structures deeply embedded in our educational system since the 1980s (Gara, 2020; Portz, 2021). While the mandate to maintain *adequate yearly progress* under NCLB is no longer in effect, an analysis of the reporting structure of ESSA shows the continued prominence of standardized testing and performance on standardized testing as the principal metric to assess school success or failure.

Under ESSA, school districts (or the relevant local or state educational entity) must use the following metrics to assess their performance and progress. These are the ESSA accountability factors:

1. Academic achievement as measured by performance on annual assessments (standardized tests).
2. Student growth on annual assessments (essentially the percentage of change from 1 year to the next).
3. High school graduation rate (self-evident only germane to high school performance not elementary).
4. English language proficiency (a category to assess the progress of non-Native English speakers)
5. Student quality or student success as measured by state-chosen indicator (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2014; Portz, 2020).

These five measurements are not equal, however. The first measure, academic achievement, or student performance on standardized tests, is not waivable by the states and *must* carry substantial weight in the assessment of school district

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performance.³ Overall, the first four measurement areas must be granted substantial weight and must be granted much greater weight than the student quality measure (Portz, 2020). Consequently, for elementary schools, performance on standardized testing and any improvement on year-to-year performance on standardized testing are by far the most important metrics. For secondary education, high school graduation rates may provide an important measure but again this measure is subordinate to standardized test performance. Specifically with respect to New Mexico’s public schools, per its submission to the Department of Education, New Mexico will assess school district performance using letter grades, A–F, and will weigh the above factors in the following manner (the percentage of weight in the letter grade is the number next to the measure):

Elementary Schools: Achievement Tests	30%
Growth on Achievement	40%
English Language Learning	10%
Student Quality	20%

(Portz, 2020, Table 1)

While the Student Quality index was supposed to represent 20% of the grade that school districts receive, in New Mexico, as in other states, the reporting provided by the districts has varied somewhat from the initial targets set by the state. In the actual reporting issued pursuant to ESSA by districts and schools in New Mexico, the districts have in fact weighted each measure slightly differently from the initial state targets (Portz, 2020). The actual weighting of these measures in calculating the letter grades that each district or school receives is below.

³ While ESSA does not use the term “school district” but rather defines local and state educational agencies or entities, for the purposes of this thesis and common usage, school districts are the most recognizable entities that carry this reporting burden.

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Elementary Schools: Achievement Tests	38%
Growth on Achievement	42%
English Language Learning	10%
Student Quality	10%

(Portz, 2020, Table 1)

Accordingly, while the State of New Mexico initially anticipated that 70% of the letter grades would be based on standardized test performance, in fact 80% of the letter grades issued to districts and schools is based on standardized test performance (Portz, 2020). Consequently, in setting curricula and providing resources to support possible field trips to art museums, school administrators in New Mexico must be aware that 80% of their schools' grade comes from standardized testing performance. Even with respect to the Student Quality metric, a metric that comprises 10% of the schools' and districts' letter grade, this metric is not broadly flexible but is constrained to items that must be quantified such as student attendance.

In application, the constraints of ESSA and of the accountability regimes that dominated education over the past several decades, become clearer. For example, under ESSA, as noted above, every public school and district must publish report cards. ESSA requires states to publish report cards that present information in a *concise* and *uniform* manner (ESSA § 1111(h)(1) and (h)(2)). Further, the report cards must report student achievement data in math, reading/language arts, and science (ESSA § 1111(b)(2) and 1111(d)). Additionally, states must report student performance data from the NAEP in reading and math (ESSA § 1111(i)). While ESSA grants states the *flexibility* to include any other information it deems beneficial for parents to assess school performance, including any performance on areas not measured by standardized tests, the legal mandate to present information that is

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concise necessarily creates a disincentive to provide more information than student performance on standardized tests.

Further, while ESSA grants flexibility to school administrators to implement programs that are outside of the core tested areas to provide a “well rounded” and “equitable” education to all students, these programs must meet “evidence-based” tests under defined criteria. For example, if a school administrator wished to include an *arts integration* event like a field trip to an art museum and use ESSA-approved funds for the event, the administrator would have to show that the field trip would provide “a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes” (ESSA, § 8101(21)(A)). While there are published studies designed specifically to provide school administrators with *evidence-based* results that show arts education and arts education activities *improve student outcomes* to meet the demands of ESSA, for school administrators to implement these programs requires an educational culture that values art education on a par with other curriculum elements (Ludwig, 2017). On the contrary, ESSA’s plain language preference for standardized test performance reveals its grounding in the accountability structures that have dominated educational reform and thinking since *A Nation at Risk*.

While the benefits of having economically disadvantaged students visit museums is palpable, the legal structures of the accountability era from the 1980s to the present have created an educational culture resistant to acknowledging the full benefits of these trips.

Factual Context of Education in New Mexico—Economic Challenges and Federal Pressure under the Accountability System

Few things in education tend to correlate more strongly than economic insecurity and academic challenges.⁴ A bellwether statistic showing economic insecurity is the percentage of students eligible for a free or reduced-price federal lunch. In New Mexico, the number of students who participate in the free or reduced-price federal lunch program is 77% (Digest of Education Statistics, 2018, Table 236.25). Only two jurisdictions in the United States exceed this figure: Mississippi and the District of Columbia. Further, 23.3% of students in New Mexico live in families at or below the poverty line (Digest of Education Statistics, 2018, Table 236.25). Nearly 2/3 of New Mexico Students are from either a single parent home, a home where one or both parents did not graduate from high school or has a language other than English as his or her native language (Digest of Education Statistics, 2018, Table 236.25).

The direct physical effects of poverty present manifest challenges for low-income children, including food insecurity and physical insecurity. Children living in poverty generally experience less cognitive stimulation and enrichment in comparison to more economically advantaged children (Hanson et al., 2013). Because of the economic problems pervasive among students in New Mexico, the state depends on funding from the U.S. federal government.

In 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act tied federal education funding to standardized testing (Hite-Pope, 2017). For states to continue to receive U.S. federal dollars for educational programs, states had to implement a standardized testing regime in reading and math (Hite-Pope, 2017). Since 2001, New Mexico has

⁴ The correlation between low socioeconomic status and difficulties in academic achievement is of long-standing and has been replicated across a wide variety of studies. See e.g., Sirin, Selcuk (2005). *Socioeconomic Status and Academic Achievement: A Meta-Analytic Review of Research*, <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543075003417>

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undergone several standardized testing programs. No matter the standardized testing program, however, students whose native language is not English continue to struggle on the tests compared to their peers who are native English speakers (Hite-Pope, 2017). Similarly, students who are from low-income backgrounds also tend to struggle on the test compared to their more economically privileged peers (Hite-Pope, 2017).

In a state like New Mexico with a high proportion of districts having high percentages of economically disadvantaged students, the effects of NCLB have been particularly severe. In sworn testimony before the U.S. Senate, in 2009, then Secretary of Education for New Mexico, Verónica C. García, testified that in New Mexico NCLB was substantially under-funded and that the high degree of poverty in New Mexico created a greater need for greater funding (“No Child Left Behind”, n.d.). “Public education in New Mexico since the sixteenth century has been influenced by poverty, isolation, language, religion, politics, leadership, privilege, and philosophy, and governance” (Mondragón, & Stapleton, 2005, p. 23). Such is the economic distress in many New Mexico school districts, that Secretary Garcia’s request for extra funding, even if granted, would likely not have resulted in more resources for visual arts or activities like field trips to art museums, but likely would have been devoted to urgent programs such as student meal programs, after-school programs and the recruitment of highly qualified teachers to serve in hard to recruit areas to help the state ameliorate the impact of poverty.

One of the consequences of poor performance under NCLB was a diminishment of funding, or, in instances of continued poor performance, school closure. This pressure to perform also existed in a context where many teachers believe that the tests do not adequately cover school curriculum (Hite-Pope, 2017). In response, New

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Mexico State officials contended that students are not being taught test taking skills and argued that teachers teach “the wrong information” (Hite-Pope, 2017, p. 13) in the classroom—in other words teachers are mistakenly emphasizing subjects other than reading and math skills. Regardless of whether teachers emphasize the *wrong* or the *right* information, the pressure to perform remains as ESSA still enforces the primacy of standardized testing performance as the primary metric for assessing school quality.

Amplifying this pressure, is that New Mexico depends more on federal funding on a per student basis than any other state.⁵ While NCLB is no longer the governing law, its successor law, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), follows the same accountability structures as NCLB, albeit with the provisions denying funding for failure to perform being substantially eliminated. Nevertheless, as discussed in this thesis, the effects of a nearly 40-year history of accountability structures resulted in the continued primacy of standardized tests as the leading measure on student performance. Further, states like New Mexico particularly dependent on federal funding have been loath to experiment on non-standardized measurements to evaluate student performance (Portz, 2021).

Decreases in arts education funding has led to decreased esteem and value of the arts

The effects of NCLB and increased pressure on standardized tests were not limited to decreases in time devoted to arts instruction and field trips. Policies that diminished arts education likely had a corresponding effect on the status of arts educators (Stokes-Casey, 2019). In recent surveys, arts educators reported feeling

⁵ National Center for Education Statistics. *Digest of Educational Statistics Table 236.25* available at nces.ed.gov/programs/digest.

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increasingly “less than” [their peers and have felt] “marginalized” (Stokes-Casey, 2019, p. 31). Stokes-Casey (2019) quoted a survey respondent who was an art teacher as stating that that school administrators tend to view art teachers as “disposable” (p. 31).

At a macro level, policies that excluded the arts from standard measurements necessarily downplayed the contributions that art teachers could make. The “forces of accountability and compliance” [pervasive under NCLB and related legislation] “shaped school culture” (Hanawalt, 2019, p. 90). This cultural change has not only lowered the stature of art educators but has resulted in art educators shaping their individual curricula to be in accord with “data, standardization, and accountability” (p. 93). The data sought by accountability regimes has, however, not taken into consideration key measures of learning such as critical thinking, empathy, behavior, and other metrics that better indicate how students learn and apply their knowledge to their environment (Greene, 2014; Hanawalt, 2019). Accordingly, the accountability regime has both unduly narrowed the curriculum and made dire the failure to meet the goals of the narrowed curriculum. Given this foundational premise of *accountability* policies, the diminishment of an arts education curriculum was foreseeable. Worse, since the target of accountability programs were *poor performing* schools, schools that generally serve low income and at-risk students, the loss of an arts curriculum would disproportionately fall on low-income students. With the diminished role of arts education came the loss of trips to art museums and a key learning opportunity for low-income students in particular. Studies such as the Crystal Bridges (Greene, 2014), Houston (Bowen and Kisida, 2018) and Atlanta (Erickson, 2022), discussed above, show the gains to be had by school programs that bring low-income students

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to art museums. The decline in field trips to art museums therefore reduce the influence of a key institution that could aid student performance.

Obstacles to Greater Implementation of Field Trip Programs

To date, field trips to museums have been found to promote student engagement, as measured by increased attendance and lower student discipline rates, increased empathy and increased cultural and historical understanding (Bowen & Kisida, 2018; Erickson, 2022). Further, students who can participate in field trips to art museums tend to demonstrate to improved performance on standardized tests. The cost of embarking on these programs tends to be modest, with per student per trip cost in urban areas ranging from \$1-\$3 per student (Bowen & Kisida, 2018). Given this record of success, it is surprising that participation in or resumption of programs that take students on field trips to art museums is not more pervasive or robust.

The cost of taking students to art museums has two principal components: the tangible cost of taking students to the museum (e.g., transportation costs, admission, etc.) and the opportunity cost involved (e.g., a day spent at the museum is a day not spent preparing for a standardized test). As noted above, the scale and duration of the policies of the accountability era both directly reduced or eliminated arts education programs and caused arts education teachers to see themselves as *less than* their peers. It is then reasonable to infer that these same administrators would see the expense of field trips as being an investment in something that will provide no benefit in the efforts to increase performance on standardized tests. Therefore, any expense, no matter how modest, incurred to send students to an art museum would be resources lost without providing any return.

Yet, the expense of sending students to art museums is modest and the benefits both substantial and tangible. Nevertheless, transportation costs widely

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fluctuate between districts. Transportation or busing costs in rural districts have tended to increase (Killeen, 2000). Further, the sources of funding to pay for field trips can be unclear or daunting (Bowen & Kisida, 2018). Yet, over the accountability period, museums have developed additional resources for museum visits by students—a resource generally underutilized or not even pursued. When sought out, museums and other contributors in a community can take on as much as 70% of the costs of a field trip to an art museum (Bowen & Kisida, 2018). Accordingly, the benefits of taking students to a field trip would substantially outweigh the cost involved. The next obstacle of course is trying to make administrators aware of both the opportunity and the benefit of taking students on field trips to art museums.

While [m]useums often struggle to understand the needs of schools, teachers and students similarly struggle to understand the role they play accessing, interacting with, and learning from museums. In some ways, the expectations for learning that teachers bring to the museum may not match the possibilities available for learning at these non-school sites. (Córdoba, Murawski, 2009, p. 10)

“The development of creative processes—the ability to find multiple problems and posit multiple solutions—is considered as one rationale for art-based curricula” (Smilan & Miraglia, 2009, p. 39). Nevertheless, this important aspect of art education may be difficult for some art teachers to realize as field trips to art museums may exceed available resources especially in the context of a mandated curriculum, time and budgetary constraints, and an emphasis on teaching national core standards.

Legal Structures Specific to New Mexico

The Yazzie/Martinez Case

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The New Mexico Trial Court cases of *Yazzie et al. v. New Mexico* and *Martinez et al. v. New Mexico* have received considerable attention in the press. This case began as two separate lawsuits in 2014 and was eventually consolidated into a single lawsuit in 2018 (Melhado, 2022). The principal allegations made by the plaintiffs were that the State of New Mexico was not meeting its obligations to at-risk students under the Constitution of New Mexico. The suit defined at-risk students as students who faced *socio-economic* challenges including Native American students, English language learner students, and students with disabilities (Yazzie and Martinez v. State of New Mexico: July 20, 2018 Decision and Order, 2018). The leading provisions of the New Mexico Constitution cited by the plaintiffs were the equal protection clause, the due process clause, and the uniform education clause (Id.).

After a seven week trial in 2018, the trial judge in the case found that the plaintiffs prevailed and requested that the plaintiffs themselves draft an order representing the final order of the court (Order of the First District Court of Santa Fe, December 20, 2018). The State of New Mexico was given a period of 30 days to comment on this draft of an order (Id.). In January 2019, however, a new governor, Governor Lujan-Grisham, was sworn in as governor of New Mexico and she ordered the New Mexico Public Education Department not to contest the proposed findings and draft order of the trial court judge (Melhado, 2022).

In response to the Governor's decision not to contest the proposed findings, the trial court hearing the case issued what it termed its Final Judgment and Order (Order of February 14, 2019). This *Final Order* of February 14, 2019, did several things. It entered into judgment the proposed findings of law and fact drafted by the plaintiffs back in December 2018. These proposed findings of facts and law comprise 608 pages. Therefore, the *Final Order of February 14, 2019* incorporates a prior

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document of 608 pages in length.⁶ The Court in this Order also required the State of New Mexico

to take immediate steps, by no later than April 15, 2019, to ensure that New Mexico schools have the resources necessary to give at-risk students the opportunity to obtain a uniform and sufficient education that prepares them for college and career.

The court did not define what specifically could be undertaken to prepare at-risk students for *college and career*.

After the trial court's February 2019 Order, the State of New Mexico undertook various steps to increase per student funding and other measures (*Yazzie and Martinez v. New Mexico*, 2019). Considering these actions, the State of New Mexico in March 2020, moved to dismiss the injunction by arguing it had complied with the trial court's order (Melhado, 2022). The trial court denied the motion to dismiss, kept in place its injunction, and granted discovery to the plaintiffs in the case to assess compliance with the injunction (Melhado, 2022). The case is still in the discovery phase with respect to the State's compliance with the injunction.

Given the procedural position of the case, the case is in the discovery phase, there has been no final determination by the court of what it meant by its order that the State of New Mexico had to ensure that students were *college and career ready* and whether the steps that the State has undertaken do or do not meet this standard. Further, there has been no appellate review of this case. Therefore, it is difficult to infer a broad legal result based on a trial court injunction. Further, the decision to appeal or not to appeal the trial court's proposed findings, findings drafted by the

⁶ I note the length of these proposed findings because as a legal document it is extraordinarily difficult for a court decision to cohere and be applied in a meaningful way when it is of such a voluminous length.

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plaintiffs in the case, was a political decision. Politics may change of course, and either the current governor or next governor could very well choose to appeal what is very likely an ambiguous injunctive order.⁷

In any event, there is considerable dispute over what remedies would satisfy the trial court's injunction. Until the court rules on whether the steps taken by the State of New Mexico either meet or fail to meet the terms of its injunction, and explains why it made this determination, it is difficult to assess how this case affects art education. In a letter to the New Mexico legislature, a group representing the *Yazzie* plaintiffs, asserted that their understanding of the court's injunction would require increases in funding on a per student basis for English language learners, increases in teacher salaries, decreases in class size, increases in pre-kindergarten programs, and increases in health and social funding (*Yazzie and Martinez v. New Mexico*, 2019). Even if the court were to embrace all these demands set forth by the plaintiffs, there is no basis to infer that these demands would increase opportunities for art education or for field trips to art museums for any student in New Mexico. Again, until there is a final decision on the terms of the injunction issued by the Court, any speculation on how this would affect art education seems just that—purely speculative.

The New Mexico Fine Arts Education Act

The New Mexico Fine Arts Education Act (New Mexico Statute Section 22-15D-2) has the express purpose to *encourage* school districts and public charter schools to *offer opportunities* for students to participate in the fine arts—whether visual, music, theatre, or dance. This ability to *encourage* presents itself as a possible

⁷ Please note while the Governor did not appeal the findings of the Court of First Instance regarding the alleged constitutional defects, the injunction of the Court of First Instance is not a final order and is subject to appeal.

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funding source for fine arts activities for those school districts that elect to avail themselves of this funding by submitting an application describing the proposed activity, establishing how the activity fits within the school district's art program, and ensuring other conditions are met such as having the activity led by a certified teacher (Section 22-15D-6).

According to the New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee Budget Overview, while the New Mexico Fine Arts Act provides a source of potential funding for arts activities, information on the amount of funding available for arts activities is not separately allocated in the New Mexico budget. Therefore, the extent of resources available for this program is unclear and consequently the provisions of this act are not mandatory. School districts "may prepare and submit to the department a fine arts education program plan in accordance with guidelines" (Section 22-15D-5). The law does not require any district to implement a fine arts program.

In assessing the Fine Arts Act, it is important to see this Act in the context of the public education more generally in New Mexico. As noted throughout this research study, New Mexico receives a greater share of its public education budget from the U.S. federal government than any other state and the accountability protocols in federal acts like ESSA have greater weight in New Mexico than in other states. As noted throughout this thesis, the accountability structures of federal legislation have, in general, changed educational cultures at the district level. Where the provisions of the New Mexico Fine Arts Act are optional and districts may choose to opt in or sit out, the provisions of ESSA are mandatory.

Further, while the Fine Arts Act creates a source of funding outside of ESSA constraints, per my interviews with New Mexico Art Teachers, the most frequently

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cited obstacle to attending field trips was not financial but administrative—school administrators would need to rearrange the schedule of classes in a manner to excuse the art teacher for a day. The art teachers who responded expressed concern not only about receiving administrative support for field trips but also expressed concern that they may incur conflict with their colleagues about such arrangements.

Nevertheless, the funding provisions of the Fine Arts Act could answer some of the funding concerns encountered by art teachers. My assessment of the Fine Arts Act considering this research study is one of scale and integration. Nearly a decade of scholarship demonstrates that field trips to art museums and cultural institutions generally produce a wide range of positive results including increased student engagement (as measured by increased attendance), increased academic performance and an enthusiasm for the arts as measured by increased interest in returning to museums (Erickson, 2022). My argument is that field trips to art museums should be an integral component of the curriculum and not a marginal one. While the New Mexico Fine Arts Education Act provides some indeterminate funding for fine arts activities, and presumably field trips to art museums could meet its standard, it likely does not offset the extreme fiscal pressures from federal accountability standards to make school districts more willing to incorporate field trips as a part of the curriculum. The New Mexico Fine Arts Education Act by presenting a source of funding for the arts assists in potentially being a financial resource to fund field trips to cultural institutions, but to be truly effective, the Act needs to provide both funding and mandates to offset the mandates of the accountability regimes.

CHAPTER III
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

All the participants in the survey and interviews are current art education teachers in New Mexico. The art teachers as a group come from both rural and urban districts and collectively teach all grades from elementary up through high school with 2 or less years of experience while others have more than 15 years of teaching experience.

Multiple survey participants teach at two or more separate schools in their district whereas some other respondents teach solely at one school. The average of number of students teachers see every week varies between 185 to 350. Not all districts and/or schools adhere to a universal scheduling system and therefore, the art educators, to ensure understanding of the scope and duration of their class time with students, provided the duration of their individual classes as well as the length of each semester. Elementary school art teachers reported that they see their students every day between 45 minutes and 90 minutes depending on the school district.

Intriguingly, this research study did not receive many responses from middle school educators, with just two middle school teacher participants. The few middle school art teachers who answered the survey confirmed that they teach art every day. The comparatively low number of responses from middle school art teachers suggest that these grade levels might need to become of more interest for future research.

High school art teachers stated that they see their students every day as well, between 52 minutes to 90 minutes. The duration of an art class at a high school (and some elementary schools) level, will vary according to the type of the elective schedule: trimester or block schedule. The varying types of schedule results in some teachers having a concentrated exposure to students but for a limited portion of the

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year whereas other art educators meet their students on a more regular basis throughout the year but in a less concentrated manner.

The art teachers who by choice participated in this project provided a voice for this research study that is necessary to be heard. These art teachers shared how sometimes their efforts are taken for granted: Art Teacher #4 shared,

Some teachers would choose not to bring their kids on certain days. For example, in [x] grade kids don't always show up. So, I still set everything up. Paints now are in pumps so I can pump out the paint.

This reveals how thoroughly art teachers prepare for their classes but yet they are still subject to having their peers dismiss them.

Most art teachers shared concerns about how the short time of the change between classes shortens their art lesson plans to the point to ever consider scheduling a field trip to any art museum, independently how close an art museum can be. Overall, their biggest concern relies on the support of the school administration in supporting them on leading field trips to art museums as a part of their curriculum. Yet, many of the art educators have worked to make use of resources they find within their school district to ensure that their students become involved in the arts to the best of their ability. Despite these challenges, what is apparent in the answers provided by the art teachers is the excitement students experience in seeing art.

The data for this case study were collected by surveying and interviewing licensed art teachers currently teaching in New Mexico public schools. The survey was offered to certified New Mexico art teachers through the New Mexico Art Education Association. Those who responded to the survey teach at districts across the state and were from both rural and urban districts. There was a total of 24 survey responses and 12 art educators participated in the follow-up interview.

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I divided the state of New Mexico into seven geographic regions: Northeast, North Central, Northwest, Central, Southeast, South Central, and Southwest.

Participants represented four of these seven areas, excluding the Northeast, Southeast, and Southwest.

The survey itself included 11 questions and the interviews consisted of a series of standard questions as well as follow up questions based on the responses of the participant. The purpose of the survey and interviews was to provide a basis to better inform the extent to which art educators in New Mexico conduct field trips to art museums, the obstacles they encounter that would inhibit or limit such trips, the degree to which art educators value field trips to art museums, and the extent to which educators use museum resources whether in person or through some other means.

Project Location

The research was conducted online with all requests for participation being transmitted via email. All survey responses were sent electronically in the State of New Mexico. All interviews were via telephone or teleconferencing via Zoom.

Participant Enrollment

The enrollment consisted solely of administering surveys, via email, to art teachers at New Mexico public schools. All were 18 years of age or older. Participants were asked to volunteer to participate in the survey and to volunteer to provide their contact information on the survey if they wished to be considered for a follow-up interview.

Recruitment and Screening Procedures

The art teachers received an email with an invitation to participate in the survey. The Google survey consisted of 11 questions concerning their experiences with art museums and constructing their art curriculum. In addition, participants were

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asked to volunteer for a follow-up interview by providing their contact information on the survey. The number of people interviewed rested on the number of participants who provided affirmative consent to volunteer to participate in the follow up interview. The participants had the option to choose to complete the survey anonymously if they did not wish to be identified and interviewed.

Informed Consent Process

This research meets the definition of minimal risk. Consent was obtained through the survey participation. The survey contains a section explaining the study and its intended purposes. Participants were given a chance to provide their consent to the survey through an introductory question asking for consent. No signature was required for consent and instead the participant's survey responses were used as evidence of consent. None of the participants received any type of compensation.

Participants who completed the survey and consented to be interviewed were informed of the follow-up interview to be scheduled. The participants had the option to choose to complete the survey anonymously if they did not wish to be identified and interviewed.

Survey

The survey consisted of a form of 11 questions, requiring no more than 15 minutes to complete (see Appendix A). To ensure the participant's confidentiality, the results were de-identified, meaning that their name, email address, and other identifying information were removed before the data was downloaded from Google survey and the results were shared. Individual survey responses were not submitted as part of the project, responses were coded separately, and results are being presented collectively.

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By clicking to begin the online survey, participants gave their consent to take part in this study and agreed that the purpose of this study had been satisfactorily explained to them. Participants were free to discontinue their participation at any time if they chose and the contact information of the principal investigator was available if questions or concerns raised. Refusing or withdrawing from this study did not consist in a penalty or loss of benefits for the participants.

The survey was distributed in English since all participants are currently serving as professional educators in the United States and all have professional competency in English. No survey document was translated into another language.

Follow-up Interviews

Only the participants who agreed to provide their contact information for a follow-up interview were contacted. Survey participants who consented to an interview, received an invitation for an interview.

The interview consisted of four questions with the intention to expand and gain clarification of the participant's survey responses (see Appendix B). The interviews generally were conducted in 30 minutes or less. The number of people interviewed rested on the number of participants who provided consent to participate in the follow-up interview.

Privacy of Participants

All measures were taken to protect the privacy of the participants. All survey responses and interview transcription were downloaded and saved electronically in a password-protected file in OneDrive on the graduate student's computer. The OneDrive it is only be accessible to the principal investigator and the graduate student. The data of all interview transcriptions were categorized and do not have any identifying information from the participants. Individual survey responses were not

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submitted as part of the project and results were presented collectively. To ensure the participant's confidentiality, the results were de-identified, meaning that their name, email address and other identifying information were removed before the data was downloaded from Google survey and the results shared.

CHAPER IV

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY AND ANALYSIS OF THEMES

Findings of the Study

Of all the survey and interview participants, 83% stated that neither they nor do their students attend field trips to art museums on an annual basis. For those teachers not able to bring their students to art museums, their responses revealed how uncommon such field trips are. Those art educators who consented to interviews were all asked if they take their students on field trips to art museums. The following are many of their responses.

Research question: Do students attend field trips to art museums yearly?

Art Teacher #5: "I have only been able to take students once on a field trip in my seven years of teaching."

Art Teacher #6: "In my 12 years of teaching, we have never had a field trip to an art museum. No field trip anywhere. Not to a museum. Not anywhere."

Art Teacher #10: "I don't think so. I have no idea."

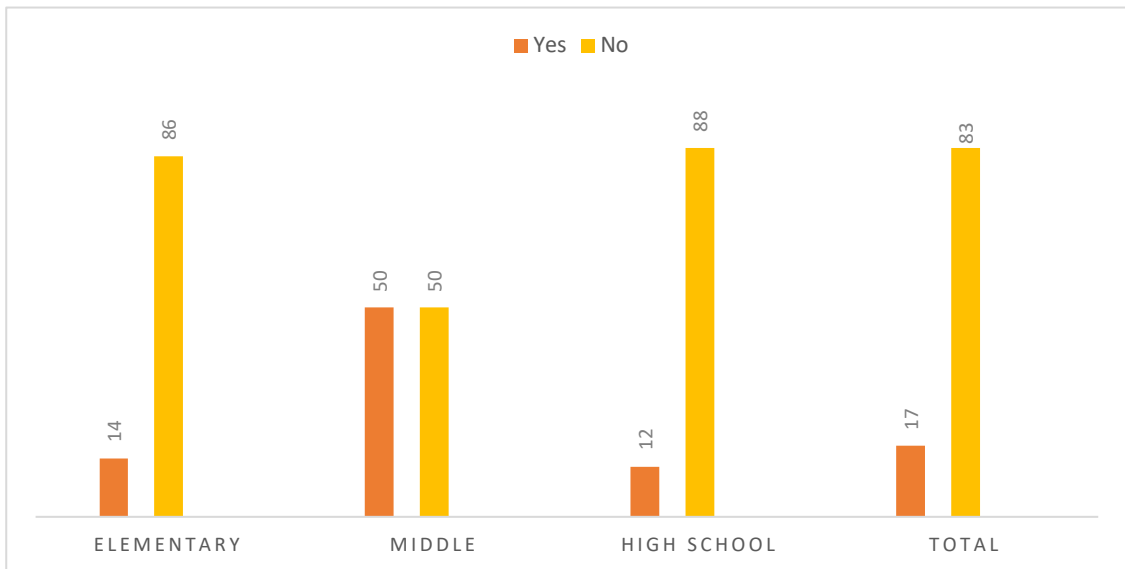
Art Teacher #11: "No. No. Not any teacher."

While 83% reported that they and their schools did not have a program where they took students on field trips to art museums, 17% of participants did report that they took students on field trips to art museums (see Figure 1).

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Figure 1

Percentage of Students Who Participate in Field Trips to Art Museums



Of those teachers able to take their students on field trips to art museums or art centers, approximately 46% reported that they were able to take the students by themselves as an art teacher while the remaining 54% reported to be either accompanied or supported by the classroom teacher or another staff member (see Table 1).

Table 1

School Staff Involved Other Than the Art Teacher

Staff	Elementary School	Middle School	High School	Total
Art Teacher	17%	100%	67%	46%
Classroom Teacher	33%	-	-	15%
Both	50%	-	-	23%
Other	-	-	33%	15%

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The most frequently cited reason for art teachers to need the assistance of non-art teachers to go on field trips is because of some of the logistical and scheduling hurdles that embarking on a field trip require, especially for elementary art teachers. For those students able to go on field trips to art museums, the grade levels participating in the field trips did not experience field trips on a proportional basis. As reported by the art teachers, students in high school were far more likely to go on field trips to art museums when compared to elementary students. There is one qualification to this data point, however, as art in high schools is generally an elective and the survey did not collect information regarding what percentage of high school students take art as an elective. Furthermore, during the interviews with the art teachers, the art teachers could not identify the percentage of high school students who took art as an elective. Accordingly, while art teachers at high school students were far more likely to take their students on field trips to art museums than elementary teachers, the percentage of high school students who have been able to go on field trips is unknown (see Table 2).

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Table 2

Grade Levels That Attend Art Museum Field Trips—Number Based on Teacher

Responses

Grade	Total
Pre-K	0
K	2
First Grade	1
Second Grade	2
Third Grade	3
Fourth Grade	5
Fifth Grade	3
Sixth Grade	3
Seventh Grade	1
Eighth Grade	2
Ninth Grade	3
Tenth Grade	5
Eleventh Grade	5
Twelfth Grade	5

Despite different opportunities for each group, both groups reported similar obstacles in being able to take students on trips to art museums. Overall themes that emerged were challenges to going on field trips because of extenuating circumstances such as transportation, lack of budget, logistical issues, interruptions due to COVID-19, using online museum resources, and finding alternatives for funding field trips (see Table 3).

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Table 3

Common Obstacles Encountered by Art Teachers in New Mexico When Planning a Field Trip or Accessing Resources from Art Museums

Obstacle	Percentage of Respondents who Cited Particular Obstacle
Planning & Logistics	18%
Substitute Teacher	45%
Financing/Scheduling a School Bus/ Transportation	72%
COVID-19	45%
Time Constraints	27%
Safety Concerns	9%
Administrative Permission	72%
Travel Time and Distance	18%
Thematic of Focus of the Museum's Collection	27%
I Don't Feel Like Taking Prep-Time from Other Teachers	91%
Funding/Financial Support	81%
My District/School Discourages Field Trips	63%
My Budget Does Not Includes Money to Take the Students on Field Trips	9%
Priority on the Core Content Subjects	9%
Standardized Testing	9%
Chaperones/ Parent Volunteers	18%
Museum's Hours	9%

On an average day, an elementary art teacher may teach art class for five separate grade levels. Therefore, if an elementary art teacher would like to take a specific grade level on a field trip to an art museum, the elementary art teacher will be unavailable to teach the grade levels not going on the field trip. If the art teacher is unavailable to teach a section or grade level over the course of the day, it is likely that the classroom teacher will have to teach the period missed by the art teacher. This scenario results in the classroom teacher's allocated period to prepare for classes being used to cover for the art teacher. By taking just the one class on a field trip, the

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art teacher would require either the classroom teacher or a substitute teacher to cover the classes the art teacher would miss due to being on the field trip.

This *coverage* might also require the school administration to enlist the support of the rest of the staff to teach the classes the art teacher would miss or to help instruct or monitor the grade levels unable to go on the field trip. Even if the school administration took such steps, the most frequently cited concern by art teachers who participated in the interview was that they believed such steps would take away the *prep time* from their colleagues and create discord among the staff.

In consequence, before any of the concerns about the cost of a field trip reveal themselves, the most frequently cited obstacles show how a field trip to an art museum requires the entire school to participate—i.e., classroom teachers, school administrators, and parents. For this institutional investment to happen, there needs to be an understanding of the benefits gained by taking students to art museums and a valuing of those benefits by the entire school. As noted above, the accountability structures encoded in statutes make the institutional investment in field trips difficult. Art Teacher #4 expressed the following about the need for a full school investment to make field trips practicable when asked.

Research Question #1: Do your students attend field trips to art museum yearly?

So, pre-pandemic . . . for an art teacher, let's say I'd try to get a grade level on board. It's hard because if I leave for a day . . . let's say third grade goes to the Folk Art Museum downtown and it'd be wonderful to do that! Then first grade would look at my schedule and miss. The fourth grade would miss. And the other teachers would look at my schedule and miss their preps. So, you have to get the teacher of the grade level [going to the museum] to agree and you have to get the teachers of the classes you'd miss to go along as well. I did arrange that a few times pre-pandemic. Georgia

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O’Keeffe [museum] – and they paid for the bus. The bus is expensive and costs a lot of money. The bus schedules are hard . . . a lot of our ability to take field trips is limited by the bus. But I don’t think it’s difficult. *Once you make arrangements you certainly can [go on a field trip] but it takes the whole school. You have to get all of the teachers involved. You have to get the principal involved.* The principal essentially has to approve the classes you miss that day. Part of the bargaining agreement is that you get only so much prep time per week so the other teachers may be upset at you.

Aside from the staff coordination difficulties, participants reported that funding for field trips was also an obstacle. The chief financial concerns expressed were the costs for transportation, admission costs to a museum, and costs for student lunches. New Mexico is a state that is fairly large geographically and any trip to an art museum would likely be an all-day event and student lunches would be a necessity. Art Teacher #3 reported the following when asked the subsequent questions.

Research Question #4: What obstacles do you encounter when it comes to accessing art museums resources?

“Yes, there are obstacles. Because of the number of students I see, it would be hard because I would have to pick maybe a class or two to take.

Follow up question: Are there any other obstacles?

“Funding that’s always something. It’s hard to get the funds.”

Follow up question: Could you explain funding? Do you have extra funding for field trips or just for your classroom?

“Exactly. We have a budget for classroom supplies and materials – and for teacher professional development opportunities but *we don’t get money for field trips or even bringing in performers into the school to give them an art experience.*”

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Art Teacher #6 stated, “It’s almost impossible to go on a field trip. I’d have to schedule a bus. Find fundraising for the bus or pay it for myself.” Art Teacher #8 as well shared that, “[. . .] for our school we don’t have transportation unless we’re taking them more than 60 miles. So, with the trips that we’ve done, the students drive themselves. So, we’ve gone with upper classman so the students can drive themselves. So, we’ve been a little bit selective transportation wise.” Similarly, Art Teacher #11 summarized the obstacles about going on field trips: “The finances to pay for a bus . . . having volunteers to go with . . . the money for a sub. So, it’s all of the logistical things.”

Other jurisdictions that participated in robust field trip programs have of course encountered similar obstacles in transportation, admission costs, and lunch costs. For example, in the multi-year program to have students in the Houston schools participate in field trips to art museums, the community was able to share the costs involved to ensure that the per pupil costs were between \$1 and \$3 (Bowen & Kisida, 2018). This cost-sharing was achieved in the Houston program by having museums in the area offering free admission to students; private donations were solicited to pay for transportation (Bowen & Kisida, 2018).

In New Mexico, similar structures exist. As discussed in more detail below, the art teachers who have been able to take their students on field trips to art museums have found that New Mexico museums have generally waived admission fees for students. Additionally, while teachers have reported that transportation costs on a per student basis can be quite modest, these teachers also report that fundraising activities to cover even modest transportation costs require considerable effort beyond regular teaching duties.

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Unlike the other the art teachers surveyed, Art Teacher #9 started teaching during the first year of the COVID pandemic. Art Teacher #9 said:

I don't know if this has anything to do with what you're asking, but I feel like special ed kids get left behind in the art world. That's my . . . I'm passionate about the part of adaptation for these kids. I feel it's something that's lacking.

In relation to the pandemic, COVID-19 did have a major impact on art teachers, and teachers in general, and their ability to go on field trips. Not surprisingly, there was an increase accessing virtual tours and museums. In turn, museums worked diligently in providing virtual and online programming and resources accessible for students and teachers (Córdoba, Murawski, 2009; Deakin, 2021; Dobos & Dove, 2021). Art Teacher #4 expressed during the follow-up interview,

COVID has been a big damper on socialization. I am finding out now especially with the younger kids that they have missed a year of socialization and we have to get them used to being back in school – learning, listening.

It's been a relatively major challenge getting them to develop listening skills.”

Art Teacher #8 shared, “Well we haven't done anything because of COVID.

We've done virtual visits but nothing due to COVID.

In looking forward after COVID-19, Art Teacher #10 expressed concerned whether there is a possibility to take students on a field trip to an art museum since an awareness to do so have not being promoted by the school administration,

I know field trips have lots of benefits, but I am not sure whether I can do it or not. I don't know how much support I can get. If need financial support. If need people who can go with me with the students. So, I am wondering, are

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there elementary schools in New Mexico that are going on a field trip to art museums?

Aside the mayor challenges for embarking on a field trip, what becomes clear in these reported obstacles by art teachers is that they can only be overcome with considerable school effort—with support from senior school administrations, classroom teachers, and parents. For example, elementary art teachers often teach “all of the students” for an elementary school albeit for 1 to 2 hours per class meeting. The length per class and number of days in a week that an elementary art teacher spends with the students varies by school district.

Analysis of the Themes

How the 17% of teachers were able to overcome challenges and bring their students on field trips to art museums

During the interviews, several of the art teachers able to take their students to art museums stated that they have been able to arrange art museum field trips using the opportunity of the waived admission fee and the paid bus ride. For example, with Art Teacher #2, I had the following exchange:

Follow-up question: Do you have any other obstacles when you decide to go on a field trip?

No. The admission is free. The kids are always excited about going and it's been really interesting when I take them to Casa San Ysidro. The kids I teach are from the [place location] and they've never been out of the South Valley, and they've been really amazed at what's out there in the world [. . .] I would select one 4th grade class because they study New Mexico History. The museum would provide the bus and I would go with the kids.

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In contrast, Art Teacher #7 discussed how she used the ability of an art museum to visit the school as an alternative resource to provide an experience similar to a field trip:

For me, I don't schedule any field trips to art museums because I feel like I can't cancel the rest of my classes to take them, and I depend on the classroom teachers to take them. It used to be that the Folk Art Museum would send to the school 'folk art to go' and they would have projects at different grade levels and would offer standards and objectives for each grade level.

In the case of Art Teacher #6 who could not find funding to pay for field trips to art museums but was able to arrange for his students' work to be featured at a local art gallery. While this teacher could not fund field trips, students were still able to visit art galleries through his efforts. In describing the excitement, the students feel at seeing their work being showcased at an art gallery the Art Teacher #6 said,

“When you have an open house at a school, the parents may not come. When you have a student exhibition at an art gallery, however, the parents come because it's an honor.

While only a small minority of art teachers were able to take their students on field trips to art museums, these art teachers who did take their students on field trips have devised ways of overcoming serious funding and logistical obstacles for their students to experience art with their own eyes in an informal setting. Even for those art teachers unable to bring their students to an art museum, many shared how they used online resources from these institutions to support their curriculum and lesson plans in the classroom.

Interestingly, the COVID-19 pandemic did not change or alter plans to go on a field trip to a museum because many of the art teachers reported that neither they nor

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their schools had plans to go on field trips prior to the pandemic starting. For example, Art Teacher #5 expressed,

I have only been able to take students once on a field trip in my seven years of teaching. I don't think field trips are a thing in our district. My administration doesn't like doing anything where the kids are out of the classroom unless it's a competition.

Despite the significant obstacles that teachers encounter taking students on field trips to art museums, through creative arrangements many art teachers help their students benefit from the gains of field trips to art museums without using any or only minimal funding from the school. For instance, Art Teacher #6 explained:

For my program, there is basically no funding. Any materials used by the kids have to be provided by the kids. Paints, drawing materials, etc. There is no funding for any of that at my school. So, at various times during the year, I have permission to do student exhibitions at the museums. So, the students have permission to see exhibitions and their work at those museums. So, it's not a field trip but they do get to the museums, and they get to see their art at the museums which is great for them. I have found that this is a great working solution than doing the field trips. I definitely understand the importance and relevance of getting kids out to the art museum and exposure to the arts, but I have to do it in a completely different way. I have to do it separate from the school. They are students at the school, and they are doing the work in the class, but this goes beyond in terms of exhibiting their own work in a museum and they're getting this opportunity as a high school student. I can tell them about gallery expectations. Tell them how to build portfolios. Tell them how to exhibit. What an artist's statements is. So, they get all of this and would not

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necessarily get this in another structure or a program that is structured differently.

Art Teacher #12 also shared,

We haven't [gone on field trips] since COVID. And generally, when I take kids on art trips it's through the art club. Because we had to raise the money to take them. So that's how we did it. I didn't take all my students.

The survey and interview responses show that art teachers still encounter serious obstacles to taking their students on field trips to art museums even though current legislative structures encourage art education as part of a well-rounded curriculum. Yet, despite these challenges, some of the art educators worked to make use of a variety of resources they find within their school district to ensure that their students become involved in the arts and discover new ways of how to use art as a career path. Despite these challenges and the work to overcome them, what also pervades the answers provided by the teachers is the excitement students and art teachers experience in taking part in these cultural experiences.

CHAPTER V

IMPLICATIONS AND ASSERTIONS

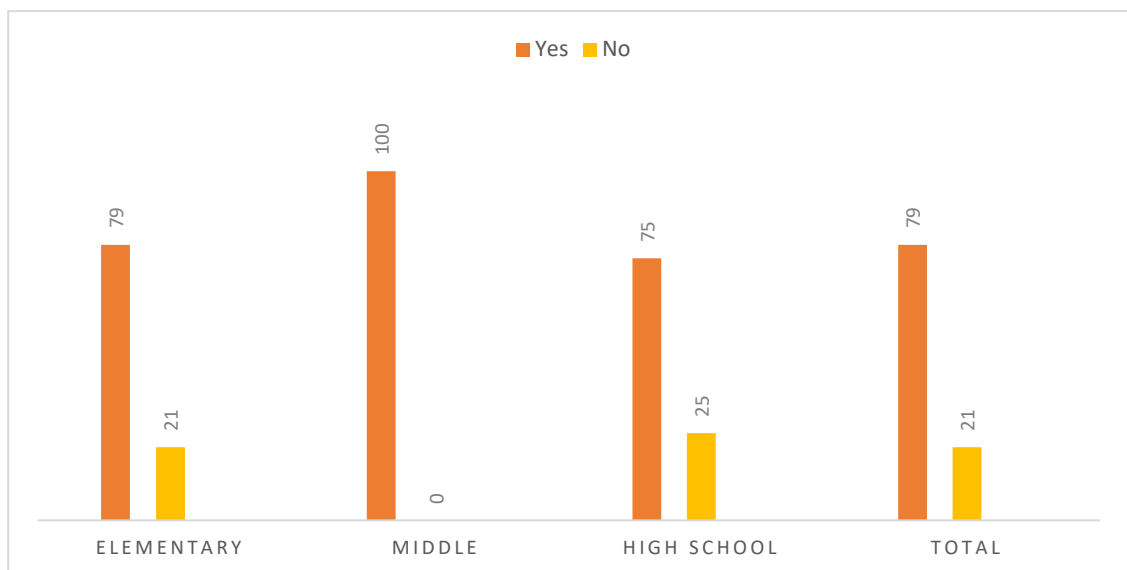
This study sought to answer three principal questions. Each question is discussed below, and each question is analyzed in the context of the survey and interview results.

How are K-12 public school students being engaged with New Mexico art museums?

Seventy-five percent of respondents reported that they use the resources of art museums in their classrooms as part of their teaching practices (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Percentage of Teachers Who Utilize Resources from Art Museums



While the degree of engagement varies substantially by school district and grade level, the high percentage of teachers who use at least some of the resources available to them from art museums reveals the benefits that can be produced by such activity. In interviews with the participants, several of the art teachers mentioned the Museum of International Folk Art Museum in Santa Fe, New Mexico, as a museum that “always has resources that go along with what we’re doing.” This museum is also

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highly regarded due to its “grade level-oriented learning activities [with] clear core standards, teaching objectives and exhibit specific activities.” The Museum of International Folk Art appears to be a favorite with art teachers because “they make it really easy!” Another example of a museum that is art classroom and art curriculum friendly is the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, especially when “trying to make connections with the students of different cultures and to teach New Mexico history.”

While more than half of the interview participants use resources from local New Mexico museums, nearly 40% of the art teachers referenced using online resources of major museums such as the Tate in London or the Metropolitan Museum of Art (see Table 4). One teacher mentioned specifically the Crystal Bridges Art Museum in Arkansas as being particularly helpful. Art Teacher #8 shared,

We made an appointment with the Crystal Bridges Museum. It was really cool. It was great because they were willing to work with us. I actually had a real person to talk to which was great.

The Crystal Bridges was the only museum cited by the art teachers as one that augmented its online experience by offering live and interactive museum tours in real time.

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Table 4

Art Museums from Where Art Teachers in New Mexico Often Use Resources

Art Institution	City/Country	Number of Time it was Mentioned
Albuquerque Museum	Albuquerque, NM	1
Casa San Ysidro	Corrales, NM	1
Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art	Bentonville, AR	1
Georgia O'Keefe	Santa Fe, NM	2
Indian Pueblo Cultural Center	Albuquerque, NM	1
Museum of International Folk Art	Santa Fe, NM	4
Museum of Modern Art (MoMA)	New York, NY	3
National Gallery of Art	Washington, DC	1
National Hispanic Cultural Center	Albuquerque, NM	1
Spanish Colonial Arts Society	Santa Fe, NM	1
TATE Museum (TATE Kids)	London, UK	2
The British Museum	Santa Fe, NM	1
The Getty Center	Los Angeles, CA	1
The Metropolitan Museum of Art	Santa Fe, NM	1
Depends on What is Being Taught	----	1

By using a combination of field trips, when practicable, community-based, and online resources, art teachers were able to bring the museum into their art classrooms for the students. The teachers consistently reported how using these resources increased engagement and participation in their students. By being able to use online resources, art museums have made it easier for art teachers to share new and past exhibits, permanent collections, and artist interviews with their students. By using these resources, art teachers were able to enhance their art curriculum and provide the hands-on experiences so supported by John Dewey (1907).

Art Teacher #12 resolved to share, “you just do what you have to make things happen”—and being able to use museum resources without having to rely on the financial resources of the school can also help make things happen. The survey responses reveal art teachers’ persistent effort to engage their classrooms with arts locally, nationally, and internationally, both in person and online. The art teachers can

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use these resources to study a diverse range of topics—not just art and history from New Mexico but expanding the students’ vision to create an awareness and understanding of other people, cultures, and societies.

How do K-12 public school art teachers of New Mexico perceive the pedagogical value of including field trips to art museums and museum resources for art curricular development?

The fact that 75% of surveyed art teachers use museum resources reveals and emphasizes the value in which art teachers hold these institutions and the extent to which they want museum resources to be part of the school and the community. At an initial level, visits to art museums tend to increase student engagement across a range of factors, as discussed in various articles cited above. Several of the art teachers interviewed discussed how once a student visited an art museum, the student took on extra steps outside of the classroom to embrace learning. As Art Teacher #12 said,

field trips [to an art museum] are more of an opportunity . . . I have had students say to me ‘Oh I took my parents to a museum’ to show them so it has led to this expansion . . . to kids saying, ‘this is a really cool place and I’d like my parents to see it.’

The words used by this teacher are particularly insightful. She said that taking students on a field trip to an art museum “led to an expansion”—that the trip *expanded* what the world was to the student and what could be learned from it. Further, the students’ trip to a museum led to an excitement that students wanted to share with their parents—these students were so excited about this experience that they urged their parents to use scarce economic resources to enter an expanded world of learning with them.

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Even if teachers could not directly bring their students to art museums because of various challenges, many art teachers were extraordinarily clever in devising ways to introduce their students to museums and art galleries. One teacher arranged for his students' work to be displayed at a local art gallery. While the teacher could not obtain the resources to bring the students to the art gallery as part of a field trip, the teacher arranged for the art gallery to host an opening night featuring the student works displayed in the gallery. The teacher talked about how this arrangement produced much higher levels of student engagement and excitement than traditional activities. Art Teacher #6 stated,

when you have an open house at a school, the parents may not come. When you have a student exhibition at a gallery, however, the parents come because it's an honor.

Again, this statement is revealing in its language. Museums and art galleries represent, among other things, cultural heritage, cultural status, and cultural memory. These institutions also recognize human achievement. By having a student exhibition at an art gallery, the families see it as an *honor*—the families become more involved in the students' work and the students themselves become more aware of the possibilities of their own creativity, and even, consider a career in the arts.

During the interview, Art Teacher #1, explained to me how she overcame obstacles to taking her students on field trips during COVID-19 by promoting online visits to museums as a class:

So, for this year, I tried to do what I call 'showing them artwork' and I try to do some historical and some contemporary. I think the kids have seen 'Starry Night' and the 'Mona Lisa' but there is more contemporary art. Here's this artist that does incredible installations that are very emotive and creative. These

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works are immersive, and you're allowed to walk through them and interact with them in a different way. So that has helped me as a teacher and an artist.

So, I think that seeing an artwork elevated on a wall is very important.

A trip to an art museum can result in a very captivating experience. "Museums were important to Dewey for his own enjoyment and education, and he visited them throughout his life" (Hein, 2012, p. 40). According to Greene (2013), just one visit to an art museum has been shown to increase student engagement. Several art teachers shared how the works displayed helped them to better teach art history and expand in more complicated ideas.

The art teachers who participated in this study clearly conveyed the pedagogical value of art museums. They also indicated that they are well informed about the benefits of field trip experiences. The concern about the lack of opportunities for many students in New Mexico to be able to participate in field trips to art museums was also palpable in the way that they discussed and shared the obstacles for visiting art museums.

What obstacles do K-12 public school art teachers of New Mexico encounter when it comes to accessing art museums field trips and resources?

The obstacles that teachers face, and the consequent discouragement was very clear during the interviews with the art teachers. Several teachers agreed with the statement made by Art Teacher #6 that,

it's almost impossible to go on a field trip" followed by the statement: "in my 12 years of teaching we have never had a field trip to an art museum. No field trip anywhere—not to a museum. Not anywhere."

The obstacles are not limited to funding but are often structural. Art teachers, especially elementary school art teachers, teach multiple sections and grade levels,

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mostly, every day of the week. If the art teachers embarked on a field trip to an art museum, the art teacher would require the support of the school administration to coordinate with classroom teachers and other staff to make art teacher-led field trips possible. To overcome this hurdle, the art teacher would need the full support of the school's administration, its staff, and the student's parents to volunteer as chaperone. Nearly 63% of the teachers interviewed expressed concerns about having to ask other school staff to take on some extra duties to support them on taking a grade level on a field trip. Many stated that they thought by asking for such support they would provoke some disharmony among their colleagues. The remedy to this potential disharmony would, of course, be the full support and intervention of the senior school administration.

Getting the support from the school and district administration only complicates the obstacles discussed throughout this research study. For example, many teachers would likely agree with this statement from Art Teacher #12 who stated,

The principals have always said 'yeah, we want the kids to be able to go out and experience [art museums]. The principals have always supported me...but not financially! [laughs].

This is the conundrum many art teachers face. To get the resources to go on a field trip, they need the school administration to coordinate staff resources to support the field trip. The coordination of staff resources does not incur added costs to the school but is necessary for the field trip to take place. When art teachers present proposals to go on field trips to art museums the school administration tends to focus first on any extra costs—transportation costs or admission costs—and deem the trip financially impracticable and do not engage with the art teacher beyond general statements of support to make it happen.

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The problem here seems to be that the school administrators are likely overestimating the financial costs of a trip, for example: to schedule a bus for the trip to an art museum may cost about \$200 - \$250 in total to transport 40 students and museums often waive admission fees for student and groups, making the additional cost on a per student basis around \$5—a modest figure that can often be met through extracurricular fundraising efforts.⁸ Yet, field trips are often denied on their face for financial reasons when very likely the largest impediment may be the coordination of the necessary staff—something that administrators might be able to do without incurring in additional costs.

⁸ The estimated cost for school bus transportation for one day is based on survey polling of teachers and is consistent with the published costs of school busses in other publications.

CHAPTER VI

REFLECTION

Without a doubt, art education has had a long and complicated past in the United States (Vasquez, 2010). Dating back to the early twentieth century, Manuel Barkan (1990) wrote “art education has become a victim of the ambivalence of our culture toward the arts” (p. 59). Regretfully,

[t]his ambivalence has remained in force even today, as arts educators must continually strive to convince their colleagues, the parents of their students, and the general public that what they are teaching should be treated as a core element of a child’s education (Winner, 2022, p. 33).

I agree with Withford (1923) when he wrote that: “[a]ll of the recent tendencies in art education require considerable reorganization of art courses and methods of presentation. Specially trained teachers and supervisors with a broad educational outlook are needed for this work” (p. 115). What Withford stated goes in hand with what Smilan and Marzilli (2009) explained regarding art teacher training asserting that “art educators are professionals who have a hybrid education, schooled in studio-based arts as well as art education pedagogy” (p. 40) and that “[p]owerful learning partnerships require collaboration moving beyond territorial concerns toward true sharing expertise [to] honor the work of art specialists and classroom teachers” (Smilan, 2004, p. 121). Smilan (2004) attests that “[a]rt integration is not a path toward the dissolution of arts programs, but an avenue toward education reform by which arts programs and student learning can be improved in our schools” (p. 121).

According to Winner (2022), “[e]ducators should make connections across the school curriculum, and this includes the arts” (p. 48). The accountability structures have represented a narrowing of evaluative criteria, a narrowing of the curriculum,

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and by inference a narrowing of what an education can represent. Winner also points that in Dewey's (1916) view the aims of progressive education is to correct "unfair privilege and unfair deprivation, not to perpetuate them" (pp. 119-120).

The art teachers who participated in the interviews discussed how a field trip to an art museum *expands* the student's world and inspires within the students a desire to share their expanded view of their world with the people close to them—people like their parents. Falk and Dierking (2000) explain the following:

All of this seems very positive, for society and for museums. But there is also a downside. Yes, the world is dramatically changing, and the United States is being transformed into a Learning Society, but not all the citizens are being equally 'transformed'. (p. 214)

Field trips to art museums should be an integral component of the curriculum and not a marginal one. The academic research presented here strongly supports that "museums can be seen as part of the educational infrastructure of the nation" (Falk & Dierking, 2000, p. 129) and the benefits of taking students on a field trip would in fact substantially outweigh the cost involved (Bowen & Kisida, 2018). The survey responses obtained from the art educators, show that field trips to art museums are, in general, not a regular component of the curriculum in New Mexico K-12 public schools but that art teachers regularly draw on museum resources to assist them in their classroom. Further, the survey responses show that students themselves, as reported by teachers, generally hold museums in high esteem when given the opportunity to visit.

Given this situation of multiple studies pointing to the benefits of field trips to museums and the general interest in participating in field trips to art museums, the situation in New Mexico should be ripe for either expanded study of the effects of

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field trips to museums or in the alternative more robust and regular programs providing field trips to museums. Falk and Dierking (2000) assert that:

The crisis in public education presents museums with an opportunity to take a leadership role in affecting quality learning practices [. . .] museums can and should now demand to be equal partners with schools in the equation enterprise. (p. 226)

No matter how well-intentioned, accountability structures have, especially for economically disadvantaged students, tended to pressure schools to reduce offerings in the arts and have consequently often excluded students from courses that tend to expand a student's engagement with the wider world (Vasquez, 2010). Students with socio-economic backgrounds such as mine, a non-native speaker of English, a child of a single parent, and a recent immigrant, tend to perform less well than more advantaged students on standardized tests (Vasquez, 2010). Schools that have significant numbers of students with backgrounds such as this often choose to forgo curricula that can expand a student's engagement with the world and instead have a greater emphasis on rote numeracy and literacy efforts (Hanawalt, 2017; Stokes-Casey, 2019; Vasquez, 2010). I likely had the attributes that would foretell that I would not succeed or would likely fail because of my socio-economic status. If we take a good look at my case, I was not supposed to be in front of a committee of university professors defending this thesis, as a researcher, as an artist, as a narrator of my own life story, and now, as an educator.

The academic research cited in this thesis shows that field trips to art museums present a promising opportunity to break this cycle of low expectations and the survey responses discussed in this thesis show that here in New Mexico museums are underutilized as an educational resource. A reasonable extrapolation from this

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research is that the efforts toward the expansion of art museum field trips would contribute to students' educational outcomes—particularly for economically disadvantaged students.

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APPENDIX A

Survey Questions

Art as Experience:

A Case for Art Museum Field Trips in New Mexico's Public School Art Education

Dear Art Teacher,

You are being asked to participate in a research project that is being done by Zoila A. Caamaño-Pumarol, UNM art education graduate student and Geralyn Schroeder Yu, Ph.D., UNM Professor in Art Education. The purpose of this research is to measure the effects of the increased significance of standardized testing and economic pressures on field trips to cultural institutions by presenting the opinion and experience of art teachers in New Mexico Public Schools.

You are being asked to join because you are an educational professional in this area.

As a participant in this survey, you may skip any question that makes you uncomfortable or stop the survey at any time.

1. Do you agree to participate in this survey?

- Yes No

2. Do you agree to participate in the follow up of interview?

- Yes No

3. If yes, please leave your email address and/or phone number:

4. In which New Mexico Public School District are you teaching?

5. How much time do you spend with students teaching art weekly?

- Every day Once a week Twice a week Less than once a week

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6. Do students attend field trips to art museums yearly?

- Yes No

7. If yes, which staff member(s) takes them?

- Art teacher Classroom teacher

Other _____

8. What grades level(s) attend art museum field trips from your school? (Check all that apply.)

- PreK K First grade Second grade Third grade
 Fourth grade Fifth grade Sixth grade Seventh grade
 Eighth grade Ninth grade Tenth grade Eleventh grade
 Twelfth grade

9. Regardless of if students attend field trips to art museums, do you use resources provided by art museums?

- Yes No

10. If yes, what kind of resources do you use?

- Lesson plans Graphic organizers Worksheets
 Artist interviews Educator training Museum's online art collections
 Other _____

11. What obstacles do you encounter when it comes to accessing art museums resources?

APPENDIX B

Art Teacher's Interview Follow-up Questions

Art as Experience:

A Case for Art Museum Field Trips in New Mexico's Public School Art Education

1. Do students attend field trips to art museums yearly? If yes, to which museum?
If no, why?
2. Which staff member(s) takes the students to field trips to art museums? Why?
3. Regardless of if students attend field trips to art museums, do you use resources provided by art museums? If yes, from which museum? What kind of resources do you use? Why?
4. What obstacles do you encounter when it comes to accessing art museums resources?