

SUMMER CAMP FOR THE ARTS

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The GEAR UP Summer Arts Camp at Maple Street Magnet School for the Arts in Kalamazoo, Michigan provided opportunities for Maple Street students to explore different art forms at little to no cost. Students selected two courses among a variety of offerings, including theatre, graphic novels, and mural making in a two-week day long experience that introduces students to or expands on their experience in these art forms. There was an emphasis in each course on career opportunities that utilize the skills of the art form.

Integrating the arts into curricula and instructional methods is critical for the academic success of our students. The arts are proven to be especially effective at engaging disadvantaged students in learning. More than 55% of the KPS student population qualify for free or reduced price lunch at school, a recognized indicator of economic need. Maple Street Magnet School has over 70% of their student population participating in the federal meal assistance program.

The effect of economic disadvantage on academic achievement is evidenced by a persistent achievement gap. The most severe gaps as measured by the MEAP are at the middle school level (a nearly 40 percentage point difference in reading, math, and science) and in the content areas of math and science.

Most of the students who participated in the GEAR UP Summer Arts Camp would not have had the opportunity to do so without the financial support provided by the grant. They would lack, therefore, exposure to and further experiences with these art forms and the academic skills addressed during the camp. In addition to positive academic, and artistic experiences, the

GEAR UP Summer Arts Camp also provided students with valuable supervision by interested adults who serve as mentors, and the opportunity to develop new friendships that improve their social and emotional life the following school year.

Critical links: Learning in the arts and student academic and social development, synthesizes the results of over 70 studies on the impact of arts learning on students (Deasy, 2002). Student participation in the arts has been proven to positively affect student learning. Studies have found increases in attendance rates, motivation to learn, and social and emotional wellbeing for students involved in arts activities in school. The positive effects of arts learning are especially significant for students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and students who otherwise experience learning difficulty (Deasy, 2002).

Third space: When learning matters, described a comprehensive study of high poverty schools that identified the arts as the primary reason for the success of their whole school reform efforts (Stevenson & Deasy, 2005), “the arts put students in active and meaningful roles in their classrooms and connected schools to student’s lives and cultures ...” (Stevenson & Deasy, 2005, p.17). Learning through the arts provides multiple avenues for learning and assessing knowledge, which in turn motivates and enables young people to attain higher levels of achievement. Educational Psychologist, Howard Gardner asserts that there are many ways our children are smart: “...students possess different kinds of minds and therefore learn, remember, perform, and understand in different ways” (Gardner, 1991). The arts are especially successful at addressing the different learning styles, or “Multiple Intelligences,” as Gardner refers to them.

Maple Street is committed to closing the achievement gap through a variety of cutting edge strategies and interventions, including arts integration. Arts integration is a

pedagogical approach that combines the content and skills of the arts and other academic subjects in a synergistic way that enhances student learning in both areas. Several of the Summer Camp course offerings, including mural painting and sculpture incorporated math and science content and skills from the Michigan Standards and Benchmarks. There is a high correlation between sustained involvement in music and theater and success in mathematics and reading. Music and Theatre courses were among the course offerings for the Summer Camp, as well.

Implementation Process

The Maple Street GEAR UP Summer Arts Camp ran from July 9 through July 20, 2007; and from July 7 through July 18, 2008 at Maple Street Magnet School for the Arts. The camp began at 8:30 a.m. and ended at 3:30 p.m. with extended day/overnight events included during the 2 week session. The beneficiaries of summer arts camp were Maple Street students who choose to participate. In addition to the 70 Maple Street students during the 2007 camp, there were another 10 from outside Maple Street who paid 100 dollars to attend.

Maple Street Summer Arts Camp sign up sheets (informational flyers) were mailed home to all families, including incoming seventh graders. To ignite student interest in the camp, display cases with past work and information were displayed in the hallways. A power point presentation of student work from the previous Summer Arts Camp was played on the plasma screen television in the building beginning in March. In addition, sign up sheets were available in the office. Students filled out the sign up sheet to enroll in the camp; families were called to confirm; and an informational letter was sent home the last week of June in preparation for the first day.

The camp faculty was comprised of Maple Street arts and core content teachers, teachers from Kalamazoo and outside Kalamazoo, and practicing artists from the area. Maple

Street students and teachers voluntarily elected to participate in the summer camp. There were twenty adults that made up the faculty of the summer arts camp, which ran from July 9 through July 20, 2007 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The faculty had the overall goal of involving middle school students in the arts through the summer enrichment program described above. There were four objectives for the students who participated in the camp:

- i. Develop learning skills in a number of real life situations
- ii. Be exposed to the arts
- iii. Have positive experience with the arts
- iv. Make connections with future & present opportunities (college/
future)

Program Assessment

To assess whether these goals and objectives were met, a survey was administered to the students on the first day of the Summer Arts Camp (See Appendix A: Pre Survey Questions). A second survey was conducted on the last day of the camp (See appendix B: Post Survey Questions). Although these surveys had different questions, they elicited both qualitative and quantitative responses. For example, given that the purpose of the GEAR UP program is to help get students ready for life after high school and for college, it was encouraging that 86 percent of the respondents in the end of camp survey indicated that this program would be helpful in achieving these purposes. Additionally in the post survey, 100 percent of the respondents indicated they would take the Summer Arts Camp again. Students responded that the Summer

Arts Camp experience would be helpful to their future careers in “becoming a director; career in video production, opening own business, becoming a writer, drawing comics, making clothes, game designing, painting my house, and getting scholarships for college”. For a complete list of the pre and post survey results, see Appendix C: Pre Survey Results and Appendix D: Post Survey Results.

Appendix A: Pre Survey Questions

1. Why did you choose the class?
2. What do you hope to learn and do in _____ camp?
3. Have you ever been involved in _____ before? Yes__or No__ Where?
4. The purpose of GEAR UP program is to help get you ready for life after high school and hopefully, college. Do you think this summer program can help you in this way? Yes__or No__. If yes, why and how? If no, why and how?
5. How do you think you might use _____ skills in your future... career, high school, college, etc.

Appendix B: Post Survey Questions

1. Would you like to do the Summer Arts Camp if it was offered again?
Yes__ or No_?
2. Would you take _____ again or something different?
3. Would you like to be involved in more _____ activities?
 - a. If Yes, what would you like to do?
 - b. If not, why not?
4. The purpose of the GEAR UP program is to help get you ready for life after high school and hopefully, college. Do you think _____ can help you in this way?
5. How do you think you might use _____ skills or experiences in your future
Careers, high school, college..?
 - a. Please note that the blanks above were customized to include the appropriate course title.

Appendix C: Pre Survey Results.

6. Why did you choose the class?

“Because it's awesome; Because I enjoy doing new things; My mom told me that there were big Mac computers with I serve, so I decided that it could be fun to learn how work with the program; Cause I like to act a lot, read scripts and drama; Because I love acting; It sounds fun; Because dance is probably one of my favorite expression; I like to read and draw comic books; Because I wanted to learn about more hip hop; Because I'm (trying to be) rap artist; I like art and I wanted to be with my friend; I took visual Arts because I wanted to stay busy, meet friends, and help friends, end help my mom paint the mural. I chose the subjects I am strong at; I haven't had much experience in this, it is very much an interest; I chose to take it because I' m not very artistic, so I thought maybe this would be a good experience.”

Most answers fall into these categories:

1. It is fun
2. Gives me something to do
3. I like doing this art form
4. It will be a good experience
5. It is something new
6. Meet new people/ Friends are doing it
7. Mom made me do it

2. What do you hope to learn and do in _____ camp?

How to make an awesome video; To edit and to make films; I hope to learn about different styles of acting and conquering stage fright; To learn how to get more confident; I hope I learn to teach better; How to make the comics better; I hope to enjoy and grow in painting and sculpting; How to interpret art and learn how to do more visual arts stuff; I hope to learn more about painting on a large area; How to build a sculpture;

Most answers fall into these categories:

1. Learn more about the art form – specific skills
2. Have fun
3. To create something (all but one identified a learning goal)
- 4.

3. Have you ever been involved in _____ before?

- i. Yes=56 (60%)
- ii. No=37 (40%)
- iii. n=93

4. The purpose of GEAR UP program is to help get you ready for life after high school and hopefully, college. Do you think this summer program can help you in this way? Yes__or No__. If yes, why and how? If no, why and how?

- i. YES=78 (85%)
- ii. NO=14 (15%)
- iii. n=92

5. How do you think you might use ____ skills in your future... career, high school, college, etc.

“make movie; graphic designing; to have a career in video; I could be an actor; It can get you in to different classes; For everything I do; Learning different ways for more getting creative; Helps me move better ; Drawing career ...”

Categories include:

1. Specific careers
2. help in high school
3. improving skills
4. do not know

Appendix B: Post Survey Results:

1. Would you like to do the Summer Arts Camp if it was offered again?

Yes__or No_?

n=81

100% of those who answered the question said YES.

“Because it's awesome; Yes, because you helped me a lot; Because it really taught me how to do stuff and I want to experience the other classes; Because it was fun to hang out with people who have the same interest as me.”

Categories include:

Because it was fun, awesome...

Because I learned a lot

Because I had fun socially

Because it could help me in the future...

2. Would you take _____ again or something different?

n=84

YES=73 (=87%)

“I would take video production again because it was very easy to understand and there is still much more to learn on that subject; I think I would do theater again because its something I really enjoy; I say yes because it's fun and exciting

NO = 11

Reasons included: “trying something new” & “I don’t know.”

3. Would you like to be involved in more _____ activities?

n=82

YES=67 (83%)

Reasons include: “now I can edit the videos my friends and I make; Yes, because I had fun ; I would like to do more plays and improve; Because I learned a lot

NO=15= (17%)

Reasons include: “I would like to try another class; I don’t know; because I have a tight schedule; because it’s boring/ not interesting”

*****IN BASELINE ONLY 60% HAD PRIOR EXPERIENCE WITH THE ACTITIVIES BEFORE CAMP, THIS GREW TO 83% INTERESTED IN CONTINUING INVOLVEMENT POST-CAMP**

4. The purpose of the GEAR UP program is to help get you ready for life after high school and hopefully, college. Do you think _____ can help you in this way?

n= 80

YES= 70 (86%) – THIS IS ONLY UP 1%,

Answers fall into these categories:

- a. Specific applications for high school or college, i.e. making presentations, performing...
- Life skills – getting a job...
- Careers in the arts
- Personal development, i.e. more confident...

NO = 10

Answers fall into these categories:

- Not sure
- It depends on what I do/take
- a. Don’t see the connection

5. How do you think you might use _____ skills or experiences in your future Careers, high school, college..?

**Please note that the blanks above were customized to include the appropriate course title.

Answers fall into these categories

Careers: “become a director; career in video production; actor; open my own business; become a writer; job drawing comics; teaching; get a scholarship; open up careers for me”

Don’t know

For own enjoyment/ life skills: “Make DVD’s; make movies; making things for others; making clothes; in my game designing; I can paint my house”

Continue building skills: “continue in the performing arts; fix problems; design things; to get more skills about theater”

For High School: “To help me with class”

References

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