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## The Effect of Visual Arts on At-Risk Students

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The Effect of Visual Arts Involvement on At-Risk Students

A Qualitative Research Methods Proposal  
A Project Presented to The Graduate Faculty of  
Minnesota State University – Moorhead  
By  
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Abstract

Creation through visual art is demonstrated by a variety of all ages. Visual art-based learning is known to build focus, reduce stress, provide a sense of accomplishment, and spark an increase in well-being. Many people have been known to benefit from the creation of art. With the COVID-19 pandemic back in 2020, educators across the country have noticed an increase of students who are considered at-risk. Many school districts have made it a priority to look at ways of improving these students' behavior, participation, view on school, or overall well-being. This research study takes place at a rural Wisconsin high school and focuses on viewing the effect that visual arts have on students who are considered at-risk. Many different instruments such as student reflections, behavior tracking programs, attendance tracking programs, observations, and interviews were used through the data collection process. Perceived through the data collected and findings, it has been shown that visual arts can have an effect on students who are at-risk.

*Keywords:* visual arts, benefits, at-risk students, positive effects.

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## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

### Introduction

With the breakout of the COVID-19 pandemic back in 2020, it has been noticed amongst educators that the number of students who are at-risk, or becoming at-risk, is on the rise. This issue has been seen throughout school districts across the country which makes this an alarming problem to many educators. Due to the increase of at-risk students, an abundance of schools have made it a priority to look at ways of improving these students' behavior, participation, view on school, or overall well-being.

Visual arts can be explained as a form of art which includes a variety of art making skills such as drawing, painting, printmaking, ceramics, sculpture, and photography. Additionally, it has been found that the creation process is an opportunity for an artist to represent self-expression, self-exploration, and activate critical thinking skills. It is also common for the creation of art to build focus, reduce stress, provide a sense of accomplishment, and spark an increase in well-being.

This research was conducted in order to determine if the visual arts can positively affect an at-risk students' time throughout their K-12 education. Without a different pathway or change for these students, they become more at risk of isolation, a disconnection from their education, worsening behaviors, or increased mental issues. The goal was to have these students become involved in the art making environment and observe if there were any positive changes towards their behavior, participation, view on school, or well-being. Throughout this study, the observation of at-risk student behavior was explored during an art class to see if this environment had a positive impact on these students.

### **Brief Literature Review**

Research has shown visual arts can have a positive effect on student behavior and/or well-being for at-risk students. (Brown & Jeanneret, 2015; Li, Kenzy, Underwood, & Severson, 2015; Snyder & Cooper, 2015). These classes allow students who are at-risk, to learn in different ways through the creation of art. Furthermore, according to Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, visual arts can provide the opportunity for students to be self-expressive, creative, vulnerable, and think critically; but all of which are not always expressed throughout their core curriculum. In two separate studies, one conducted by Brown and Jeanneret (2015), and another by Li, Kenzy, Underwood, and Severson (2015), both explained that art-based learning can build students' confidence, promote positive connections, develop positive habits, and cushion their motivation and focused attention. Brown and Jeanneret's research looked at how a visual arts program for at-risk students could be a benefit towards their time throughout their education. Li, Kenzy, Underwood, and Severson's (2015) research focused on the effect of incorporating visual arts-based learning into core curriculum classes. Using this information, the goal was to use the collected data to indicate if there is a positive effect that visual arts can have on at-risk students.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The identified research problem was to measure the impact that visual arts classes have on students who are considered at-risk. In this study, at-risk students are defined as students who come from split-family homes, receive two or more behavioral referrals in the last month, have an individualized education plan (IEP), have more than one absence each week, or have low standardized test scores. Due to the pandemic, the number of at-risk students has risen, leading schools and educators to come up with a solution to help guide the at-risk youth (Blackwell, C. K., et. al, 2022). According to multiple research studies, students are feeling overwhelmed with



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mental health issues, difficult relationships with family, and have no desire to be in school after going through the pandemic. Throughout this research, the intention was to discover how a visual arts class can affect the behavior, participation, view on school, or overall well-being of students who are considered at-risk.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Within the past couple years, many school districts have noticed an increase of challenging behaviors, fluctuating attendance, and mental issues in students, which classify them as being at-risk. A large amount of this behavior has been seen over the past few years due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Blackwell, C. K., et. al, 2022). It challenged students in new ways that they were expected to adapt and overcome in a short amount of time. Given the increase of these issues in students, many districts have discussed what it looks like to make changes to provide the resources that these students need to succeed. Since this is a large issue, this research is focused on studying the effect that visual arts have on students who are at-risk. Throughout the research, the comparison of visual art classes and data collected helped determine the effect that art classes can have on students who are at-risk.

### **Research Questions**

1. How can visual arts affect an at-risk students' experience in K-12 education?

### **Definition of Variables**

In a study that is focused on the observation aspect, there are two separate variables. The explanatory variable is the variable that can be manipulated or observed. The response variable is what changes as a result.

Variable A: An at-risk student (variable A) in a visual arts class is the explanatory variable. In this study, an at-risk student will be defined as students who come from split-family

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homes, receive two or more behavioral referrals within the previous month, have an individualized education plan (IEP), have more than one absence each week, or have low standardized test scores.

Variable B: Improvements (variable B) the at-risk students make will be the response variable. In this study, the improvements made by the at-risk students can be defined as changed behavior, participation, view on school, or overall well-being.

### **Significance of Study**

When looking back and analyzing data such as standardized test scores, behavior referrals, and attendance rates in our district, it is clear that there is an issue that needs to be addressed. Given the significantly high numbers of students who are considered at-risk, it is important for us as educators to focus on providing students with the resources they need for success.

The participation in a visual arts class can provide a student the opportunity to learn in a way that is different than their core curriculum classes (Gardner, 1983). This also allows students to use different skills such as critical thinking and self-exploration.

There are plenty positive aspects that come from students taking visual arts classes. This study will provide an opportunity to see those aspects in at-risk students. Students who are considered at-risk, along with students who are not considered at-risk, should feel a positive effect on their overall behavior, well-being and attendance.

### **Research Ethics**

**Permission and IRB Approval.** In order to conduct this study, the researcher will seek MSUM's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to ensure the ethical conduct of research involving human subjects (Mills & Gay, 2019). Likewise, authorization to conduct this study

will be sought from the school district where the research project will be taking place (See Appendix A and B).

### **Informed Consent**

Protection of human subjects participating in research will be assured. Participant minors will be informed of the purpose of the study via the Method of Assent (See Appendix C) that the researcher will read to participants before the beginning of the study. Participants will be aware that this study is conducted as part of the researcher's master's degree program and that it will benefit his/her teaching practice. Informed consent means that the parents of participants have been fully informed of the purpose and procedures of the study for which consent is sought and that parents understand and agree, in writing, to their child participating in the study (Rothstein & Johnson, 2014). Confidentiality will be protected through the use of pseudonyms (e.g., Student 1) without the utilization of any identifying information. The choice to participate or withdraw at any time will be outlined both, verbally and in writing.

### **Limitations**

There are some potential limitations that could affect the results of this study. With this being an observational study with only one researcher, there is the chance of missing a behavior, incident, or attitude at some point. For example, if there needs to be a substitute for a day, the regular daily data collection will not be able to be completed. Furthermore, on a day the researcher is absent, the students are sent to the commons area of the high school. They are not given a substitute in their regular art classroom. This has the possibility of altering the results of the study.

Second, if there are at-risk students who continuously miss or skip the art class, this can result in a change of the effect intended towards their improvement. Without attending the art class on a regular basis, it can be difficult for a student to show any improvement. Especially

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since they are not getting the visual art experience proposed and are still considered a part of the study.

Another potential limitation that can be found in this study is the number of at-risk students who are placed in the art class. Since every student in the art class was being observed, only the at-risk student data is analyzed and effects this study. That being said, the number of at-risk students involved in this study could change the results of the data collected.

The fourth limitation refers to the possibility of a student dropping the visual arts class early in the semester or even moving to a new school district.

The last potential limitation is the consent that a parent gives to have their child participate in the study. If an at-risk students' parent does not give them consent to be involved in the study, it is difficult to formulate the data needed to see improvement across these students.

### **Conclusions**

This chapter discussed why this research is important, and why the study was conducted. Due to the issue that has been noticed within school districts across the country, this research will not only benefit many educators, but also the at-risk students. Through this study, the goal has been to see improvements throughout at-risk students because of their involvement in a visual arts class. In the next chapter, there are multiple literatures discussed that relate to visual arts classes and the effects it has on students who are considered at-risk.

## CHAPTER 2. LITURATURE REVIEW

### Introduction

The goal of this research was to observe the effect of visual arts in the lives of at-risk students, to show how it can positively affect their time throughout K-12 education. With the number of at-risk students increasing over the years, this research provides a look on how the visual arts for these students are important. Additionally, the goal was to determine if the implementation of visual arts in an at-risk students' life has changed their behavior, participation, view on school, or overall well-being.

Over the course of the research process, research and sources were found by using key words such as “at-risk students”, “visual arts”, “art-based learning”, and “challenges”. This drove the findings and resulted in a variety of scholarly journal articles that were used within this literature review. A challenge that was encountered was the number of articles on this topic. However, the articles that were found and used in this review were filled with an abundance of interesting and supporting research and data.

### Body of the Review

#### Context

The articles used throughout this research portray the different ways that visual arts can positively impact a student who is considered at-risk.

#### Concerns Regarding At-Risk Students

An increase of at-risk students in K-12 schools has been a topic of discussion amongst many researchers, teachers, and school districts across the country. Researchers Brown and Jeanneret (2015) presented the issue that one in every four secondary school students drop out before year 12. The researchers stated that, “Children can be challenged by a variety of issues such as family, learning disabilities, and mental health problems. Without a clear pathway, these

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children become at risk of isolation, marginalization, and disconnection from their future education” (Brown & Jeanneret, 2015, p. 2). This resulted in the City of Melbourne creating a program called The Evolution Program for diverse groups of children, youth, artists, and organizations. The city had been concerned with the number of at-risk students who do not have the drive to finish their K-12 education or lack the desire to start a career after school.

The goal of The Evolution Program was to provide four art projects to the selected group of at-risk youth in hopes to enhance their mindsets and overall well-being. The research indicated that these projects given in The Evolution Program, built the students confidence, promoted positive connections, developed positive habits, and cushioned their motivation and focused attention (Brown & Jeanneret, 2015, pp. 3-4). With the number of at-risk students on the rise, providing the given resources and a program to these students is the ideal first step to making an effective change in their lives (Blackwell, C. K., et. al., 2022). According to Brown and Jeanneret (2015), in order to achieve the intended outcomes, the program had to provide a safe environment, require responsibility and respect of others, provide skill and flexibility, and focus on the capacity to create art while counteracting personal challenges (Brown & Jeanneret, 2015, p. 4). The results of the study suggested that there were high attendance rates for the program, and it provided a safe environment for students to connect with others, focus on artistic and personal strengths, and sparked self-belief for the at-risk students who were involved (Brown & Jeanneret, 2015).

In an article written by Iamarino (2018), she explained that at-risk youth are being pushed away from core and extracurricular activities due to their challenging behaviors. This study is directed toward a fourth-grade boy who loves participating in theater. However, he had been restricted from multiple roles because of his high energy and difficult behavior. Iamarino (2018)

suggested, “the first step toward equality and inclusiveness in education is to let go of perfection” (p. 82). For at-risk students, it can be difficult for them to succeed when treated like everyone else. Many researchers and school districts have found that, due to traumatic events or experiences that led students to become at-risk, teachers may need to provide extra support or resources (Iamarino, 2018; Brown & Jeanneret, 2015; Castro, 2016; Kay & Wolf, 2017; Van Katwyk & Seko, 2019). Iamarino (2018) took in the challenging boy and found a way to include him in a play by giving him extra resources so he was able to participate like the rest of the children. The overall purpose of this study was to explain that at-risk students may need a different approach of support and resources to give them the ability to participate and succeed (Iamarino, 2018). The findings showed that all students have the opportunity to partake in an activity of their choosing if given the extra care they need (Iamarino, 2018).

Authors Li, Kenzy, Underwood, and Severson (2015) discuss the amount of pressure revolving around student achievement that is measured by different standardized tests and test scores. Throughout their research, they explored how arts-based learning impacted at-risk students in three urban public schools in southern California. In this study, the students involved were identified as “at-risk” because of their scores for state and district wide testing. Over the course of this study, arts-based learning included art, music, drama, or dance activities into core education subjects. The collection of various observations, interviews, surveys, and assessments were used as a form of analysis (Li, Kenzy, Underwood, & Severson, 2015). The data collected showed the dramatic impact of arts-based learning on the at-risk students’ behavior, motivation, and academic achievement (Li, Kenzy, Underwood, & Severson, 2015). Furthermore, another researcher also believed in the visual arts increasing the motivation within students (Wahed,

2019). Within the findings, data indicated that arts-based learning can have a positive effect on at-risk students when incorporated into their core education classes.

Castro (2016) discussed how at-risk youth do not have the option of using mobile media as a way to take their curriculum with them outside of school. This led Castro (2016) to conduct the study of introducing a mobile media art curriculum for at-risk students and find the effects it has on their involvement. The study centered around youth who dropped out of school and returned to an adult education center in Quebec. This research was conducted because only 68.3% of students finished their high school degree within 5 years (Castro, 2016). Like researchers Brown and Jeanneret, Castro found that this resulted in a significant number of young adults who struggled in the real world.

Castro (2016) stated that there is a large number of students who own and use smartphones regularly. This encouraged Castro (2016) to develop an art curriculum for at-risk students which included the use of a mobile device for students to access projects and resources outside of school. The curriculum primarily included the use of digital photography which was shared to social media network through a mobile device (Castro, 2016). The purpose of the study was to see if this alternative way of learning had a positive effect on at-risk student involvement in education. Over the course of research, it was found that, “The mobile media visual art curriculum heightened the students’ sense of agency and opened them up to the possibility that learning might can be a positive experience. Furthermore, this could develop the want to be at school” (Castro, 2016, p. 238).

It is presented by researchers Kay and Wolf (2017) that art educators need additional training to understand, support, and engage with students who are at-risk. Stated in the article, administrators and counselors recognize the benefits of art education for at-risk students, which



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causes them to all be placed in an art course (Kay & Wolf, 2017). The purpose of this study was to actively be able to give at-risk students the support they need in order to succeed. It was proposed that collaboration between an art teacher and art therapist could provide unique insights into what it means to work with challenging students (Kay & Wolf, 2017). In Kay and Wolf's (2017) study, they created a program at an alternative school that involved the collaboration between an art teacher and art therapist. The goal of this study was to support the development of the at-risk students' strengths. Ultimately, the researchers found that a collaborative approach to art education could provide at-risk students with the opportunity to strengthen their abilities and improve their well-being through artmaking (Kay & Wolf, 2017). This study is relatable to a study done by Higa (2011) where students at an alternative school were given multiple art classes in hopes of increasing their academic motivation.

In the 2020 article by Ricks, Babel, and Kitchens, it was explained that students with a newly acquired disability may struggle with adjusting. Thus, leading to the proposal that those students get involved in the narrative therapy of music, art, and drama techniques (Ricks, Babel, & Kitchens, 2020). The research goal was to integrate these therapeutic activities to approach transition issues associated with adolescent students who struggle with newly acquired disabilities (Ricks, Babel, & Kitchens, 2020). Throughout the research, it was found that with the inclusion of narrative storytelling and painting, adolescents were able to use self-expression and exploration as a form of communication (Ricks, Babel, & Kitchens, 2020).

### **Visual Art-Based Learning**

Given the increase of school dropouts, researchers Snyder and Cooper (2015) created a non-school based program revolving around the arts for at-risk youth. The six-week program consisted of a group of at-risk students who participated in a storytelling and painting class. The results of the research demonstrated the possibility for integrating artistic processes into the

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current school structure (Snyder & Cooper, 2015). An abundance of researchers discovered the positive affect that art can have on an at-risk students' life. Many believe that the visual arts create a safe environment and increase well-being for a variety of students including at-risk (Brown & Jeanneret, 2015; Li, Kenzy, Underwood, & Severson, 2015; Snyder & Cooper, 2015).

Recent research done by Field (2016) stated that there is an increase in disruptive and aggressive behavior in classrooms, created by students. With the increase of students who undergo trauma in their life, Field (2016) conducted research that focused on implementing expressive art therapy. The goal was to use the expressive arts to require students to observe, understand, reflect, and discuss the events that unfold around them while utilizing methods of responding (Field, 2016). In this study, students who encountered trauma used artmaking as a way to deal with grief, fear, trauma, and the variety of emotions caused by a tragic event (Field, 2016). Just like Ricks, Babel, and Kitchens (2020) discovered, Field (2016) found that with the use of expressive art therapies, students felt more empowered to heal and understand their trauma.

Hannigan, Grima-Farrell, and Wardman (2019) have presented an aim to connect students and teachers through art experiences in a way that is meaningful and effective while addressing the strengths and needs of students. With multiple mental health issues causing concerns for many individuals, family members, society, and economics, researchers have suggested that art therapy may offer some solutions (Hannigan, Grima-Farrell, & Wardman, 2019; Martin, B. H., 2022). This research provided art therapy to students in order to see how it supports their mental health. Art therapy can be implemented as a way for students to express their feelings and make sense of illness, trauma, identity issues, bullying, anxiety, family breakdown, depression, stress, and more (Hannigan, Grima-Farrell, & Wardman, 2019; Ricks,

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Babel, and Kitchens, 2020; Field, 2016). Ultimately, it was found that through the use of art therapy, students were able to be self-expressive and create art based on their feelings in order to empower the sense of healing.

Kuhn, Pepanyan, and Tallakson (2020) conducted research related to the executive function (EF) skills of at-risk third-grade students before and after an art integration program. The executive function (EF) skills of students were measured using the Minnesota Executive Function Scale (Kuhn, Pepanyan, & Tallakson, 2020). Over the course of the study, researchers partnered with a group of third-grade students who are considered at risk. They integrated multiple art projects into their daily core curriculum to analyze the affect it has on their EF skills. The results of the analyzed data indicated that, “there was a statistically significant increase in EF skills” due to the integration of art (Kuhn, Pepanyan, & Tallakson, 2020, p. 3).

Willcox (2017) explained in her research that students in the art classroom view art making and creativity as abilities rather than something they can learn. Often, students can view risks in the art room as a feeling that they don't belong. This could be a difficult environment for at-risk students because they may feel unsafe (Willcox, 2017). It is the moments of vulnerability where Willcox (2017) developed the research to take that uncertainty and develop a safe environment where all students can be creative. Willcox (2017) used visual journals in her art room as a way for students to experience creative risk taking in a safe space where they are not judged by others. With the implement of visual journals, students felt more comfortable with taking risks because their journal was private which provided them with a safe space to feel comfortable in the art room (Willcox, 2017).

In a study conducted by Chambers (2018), it is discussed that with the increase of technology, it has led to a decrease in the amount of time children spend exploring outside. The

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research aimed to provide the opportunity for students to explore and learn about their natural surroundings through the use of nature photography. Twice per week Chambers (2018) took a group of students outside to explore and take creative pictures. The goal of this was to encourage students to appreciate their natural surroundings along with supporting their academic skill development (Chambers, 2018). The research was conducted at a rural school in Georgia that consisted mainly of African American students. There were 90% of students who qualified for free or reduced lunch (Chambers, 2018). Knowing this, it was found that many of the students that were involved in this study were considered at-risk (Chambers, 2018). The only data that was collected throughout the research were writing samples from students involved in the project. Researchers collected their data through observations and written reflections from students. The outcomes of the research included students demonstrating curiosity with nature photography over time, and a beneficial context for supporting students' learning in art and technology (Chambers, 2018).

Researchers Jin, Martin, Stephens, and Carrier (2020) conducted a study with the intent of bringing visual arts into the surrounding schools and community through a Maker Bus. Researchers fully renovated a bus that was filled with a variety of art making supplies in order for children to have the opportunity to create. The goal of the study was to result in the idea that children use their imagination and intelligence to design or create something (Jin, Martin, Stephens, & Carrier, 2020). In order for children who lack the opportunity to gain materials to create, the Maker Bus was created as a way for children to be provided with the tools they need. This provided many students in the community with the supplies they require to create a piece of art. In spite of visual arts and maker education being important in a child's education, the Maker Bus was created to provide an active learning opportunity for students (Jin, Martin, Stephens, &

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Carrier, 2020). The result of the study indicated that the Maker Bus provided many children in the community with the advantage of using many skills to learn and create through visual arts with given materials.

A recent study conducted by Schroth and Helfer (2020) presented that all students from gifted and talented, to at-risk, should have the opportunity to be involved in an arts-based program, regardless of their talents. It was shared that, “the arts involve conveying meaning through the development, refinement, and presentation of a work of art, of course, which represent the important acts of creating, performing, presenting and producing” (Schroth & Helfer, 2020, p. 57). The study conducted introduced visual arts learning to all students, so they were given the chance to experience the same opportunity of creation. Data was collected through the form of analyzing artwork, and interviews with teachers in order to see how each student used their time during the art-based learning. Results demonstrated that artistic abilities were shown in all students but at different levels. All of which show that students created art and were able to show academic achievement through art making (Schroth & Helfer, 2020).

In Joseph’s (2019) research, it was presented that the arts promote academic achievement. Joseph (2019) examined to what extent the use of the arts increases the vocabulary achievement of fourth-grade students in a language art classroom. “In the state of Washington, visual arts are considered part of the basic education for all students” (Joseph, 2019, p. 166). Through the use of interdisciplinary learning in this study, students were able to find connections between creation and vocabulary.

### **Theoretical Framework**

In Gardner’s (1983) theory of multiple intelligences, a framework is explained for the multiple different learning styles a child encounters over the course of development (Gardner,

1983). Therefore, the importance of intelligences such as spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, and visual are given attention (Li, Kenzy, Underwood, & Severson, 2015). It is explained that children learn in different ways and at different paces.

The goal of this research was to see the effect that the visual arts have on at-risk students. Like Gardner's (1983) theory, students learn in multiple ways and at different times throughout childhood. That is why the implementation of visual arts in a child's life is important. It gives them the opportunity to be self-expressive, creative, vulnerable, and think critically. All of which are not always expressed through their core curriculum. Throughout this study, at-risk students were defined as students who come from split-family homes, receive two or more behavioral referrals within the previous month, have an individualized education plan (IEP), have more than one absence each week, or have low standardized test scores. The collection of data included, student reflections, online district student database, observations, and interviews with students that were analyzed. The visual arts portion of the study focus around the art projects that are made by students through creating ceramic pieces and the time spent during an art class. The collection of responses through reflections, databases, observations, and interviews helped give support throughout the duration of this research.

### **Research Question**

1. How can visual arts affect an at-risk students' experience in K-12 education?

### **Conclusion**

With the number of at-risk students on the rise, it is important for us as educators to acknowledge the challenges they are going through and provide what we can to help them succeed. This chapter reviewed a variety of literature which supported the study in determining the effect that visual arts have on at-risk students. With the data collected, it is with hope that the

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proposed research determines if the implementation of visual arts in an at-risk students' life has changed their behavior, participation, view on school, or overall well-being. The next chapter explains the overall structure of the research and includes the socioeconomic background information of the school where the research was conducted.

## CHAPTER 3. METHODS

### Introduction

The focus of this study was to observe the impact that visual arts have on students who are at-risk. Over the duration of the study, the following five categories are what defines a student as at-risk: students who come from split-family homes, receive two or more behavioral referrals within the previous month, have an individualized education plan (IEP), have more than one absence each week, or have low standardized test scores. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been noticed amongst educators across the country that the number of students who are considered at-risk is on the rise.

Many school districts have prioritized improving students' behaviors, participation, view on school, and overall well-being. Furthermore, research shows that visual arts classes induce students to build focus, reduce stress, provide a sense of accomplishment, and spark an increase in well-being. Therefore, the researcher decided to conduct a study in order to determine if the visual arts can positively affect an at-risk students' experience or perception of school throughout their K-12 education.

This chapter will describe how the research was conducted over the course of this study. This will allow the opportunity to analyze the data of at-risk students in visual arts classes and apply that knowledge in the future in order to provide those students the resources they need to succeed throughout their time in K-12 education.

### Research Questions

1. How can visual arts affect an at-risk students' experience in K-12 education?



## **Research Design**

Over the course of this study, the qualitative research method with a case study approach was utilized. The intention was to observe the explanatory variable (i.e., an at-risk student) in a visual art class and the effect that was shown through the response variable (i.e., improvements). In a study that is focused on the observation aspect, there are two separate variables. The explanatory variable is the variable that can be manipulated or observed. The response variable is what changes as a result. Throughout this study, at-risk students were defined as students who come from split-family homes, received two or more behavioral referrals within the previous month, have an individualized education plan (IEP), have more than one absence each week, or have low standardized test scores. Within this study, improvements can be explained as changed behavior, participation, view on school, or overall well-being. With this being observational research, the relationship between the two variables without any manipulation will be examined throughout this study. Thus, the correlational research design would be the most beneficial for this observational research study.

## **Setting**

This study took place in one of the art rooms of a rural high school that is in the western portion of Wisconsin. This public-school district is composed of five elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. There are about 16,500 people who reside within this rural town. Also located in the area is a Wisconsin state college. This results in a mixture of many different college students and the families who reside in the area. The community is known greatly for its rich historical architecture, many art-based involvement or activities, large selection of locally owned shops, cafes, and breweries.

## Visual Arts for At-Risk Students

The school in which the study was conducted is composed of about 1,050 students ranging from 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The percentages of student ethnicities are as follows: White (83.5%), Asian (8%), Two or more races (3.8%), Hispanic (2.9%), African American (1%), Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (0.5%), and American Indian (0.2%). About 52% of students are male and 48% of students are female. There are about 11% of students who have an individualized education plan (IEP). Within this high school, there are about 4% of students who are English learners. When examining the number of students who receive free or reduced lunches at this school, 6% receive reduced lunch prices, while 34% receive free lunch. Additionally, 32% of students come from low-income families. Overall, this school has positive parent involvement and a large number of students involved in extracurricular activities.

### **Participants**

The overall population of students consisted of 22 students who took a beginning ceramics art class during the first semester of the 2022-2023 school year. There were three sections of this class each semester of the school year but only one of those classes has been included in this study. All of the students range between fourteen to eighteen years old in any grade between 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>. The population is made up of 7 male students (32%) and 15 female students (68%). The ethnical breakdown of these students was: white (95%), African American (0%), Hispanic (5%), and Asian (0%). There are 3 students who have a 504 plan (14%), while 2 students who have an individualized education plan (9%), 1 student who is considered English language proficient (5%), and 12 students (54%) were considered at-risk according to the definition given in this study. Of the population, 6 students receive free or reduced lunch (27%).

**Sampling.** Purposive sampling is a technique used by researchers which selects members of a study based on their own judgment. In this study, purposive sampling was used by the

## Visual Arts for At-Risk Students

researcher in order to collect data with the highest accuracy. The study sample consisted of all 22 students who took the beginning ceramics art class first hour during the school year of 2022-2023. Data was collected from all students but only the students who fall under the category of “at-risk” were analyzed. Within this study, at-risk students were defined as, students who come from split-family homes, receive two or more behavioral referrals within the previous month, have an individualized education plan (IEP), have more than one absence each week, or have low standardized test scores. By using the previously defined students at-risk, members of the study will be chosen if they meet one or more of the given criteria.

### **Instrumentation**

Throughout the duration of this study, at-risk students were defined as students who come from split-family homes, receive two or more behavioral referrals within the previous month, have an individualized education plan (IEP), have more than one absence each week, or have low standardized test scores. When looking at the effect that visual arts have on these students’ behavior, participation, view on school, or overall well-being, multiple instruments were used in this study. In order to achieve the highest level of accuracy possible, the use of multiple instruments was crucial. The districts behavioral tracking program (Edu-Climber) was examined to monitor students’ behavior referrals at the start of the semester to the end of the semester (see appendix D). To track students’ participation/attendance, the district Skyward program was utilized, and data was reported in the researcher’s spreadsheet (see appendix E). The Skyward program is a district wide database used to post grades, attendance, collection of contact information, and sometimes communicate with parents. In order to assess a students’ view on school and overall well-being, a written reflection was required to be completed by all students at the beginning of the semester and the end of the semester. The reflection was short answer

## Visual Arts for At-Risk Students

format and was made up of questions regarding school, mental health, and the art class itself (see appendix G). Lastly, interviews were also utilized as a way to gather thoughts from students (see appendix H). All of these instruments align with the provided research questions because each one retrieves information relating to how the visual art class can positively affect the student at-risk.

Since the research is strictly on observation and recording information, the researcher felt these instruments were the best to use in the practice to ensure the most precise data. An excel spread sheet was kept in order to track each at-risk students' information regarding observations, behavior referrals, attendance, reflection results, and interviews (see appendix F).

**Data Collection.** Throughout the study, data was collected in multiple ways. The researcher observed the at-risk students every day and took notes in an excel spreadsheet regarding their behaviors, attitudes, and participation in the class. Appendix F is an example of how the spreadsheet was composed. Within the spreadsheet, there were different sections regarding what the researcher was observing. Sections were in place to make specific notes on participation, behavior, and observations. Along with observation, a series of short answer reflections were collected throughout the study. Each student completed the reflections at the beginning and the end of the semester. For an example of the reflection, see appendix G. Following the reflections, some interviews took place throughout the semester in order to get a verbal response about the students' feeling, mental health, and thoughts on the art class. A list of questions asked in the interviews is provided below in appendix H. All of the collected data was be placed in an excel spreadsheet. The data collected was analyzed and used to determine if a visual arts class has a positive effect on an at-risk student.

**Data Analysis.** While having used multiple instruments, data was collected and analyzed to see the improvements of at-risk students. Regarding behavior, notes from observations were kept in an excel spreadsheet and used to determine if there were improvements over the semester. Furthermore, the district behavior tracking program provided information about behavior referrals of students. Analysis of this data was to look at the number of behavioral referrals each student had over the course of the semester and if the result was lower compared to previous semesters. Notes taken in the spreadsheet regarding participation in the art class was used to see if there were improvements observed within the students. Along with the observations, the district Skyward program allowed the researcher to analyze attendance of the students. This was to see if there were changes in the students' attendance over the course of the semester. The written reflections and interviews over the course of the semester were also analyzed in a way of seeing the differences in responses from the beginning to the end of the semester.

**Research Question and System Alignment.** The table below (i.e., Table 3.1.) provides a description of the alignment between the research question and the methods used in this study to ensure that all variables of the study have been accounted for adequately.

**Table 3.1**

Research Question(s) Alignment

Research Question	Variables	Design	Instrument	Validity & Reliability	Technique (e.g., interview)	Source
RQ1 What is the effect of visual arts in an at-risk	EV: At-risk student  RV: Improvements	Correlational	-District Behavioral Tracking Program	Structure of the art class was kept consistent.  Observational notes on each	Observational notes taken daily  Written reflection and interview	9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> grade students who took the beginning ceramics

## Visual Arts for At-Risk Students

students' life?	(behavioral, attendance, view on school, well-being)		-District Skyward Program  -Written Reflections	student was recorded daily throughout the semester to ensure the collection of accurate data.  The structure of reflections and interviews were kept the same from the beginning through the end of the semester.	questions kept the same and given consistently throughout the semester.	art class first hour and are considered at-risk.  Sample size: approximately 22 students
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### Procedures

The first hour beginning ceramics art class in which the study was conducted, was a semester long, or about 17 weeks. Prior to the start of the semester, the researcher put together an excel spread sheet of the class list. Each student had their own tab on the spreadsheet where notes were taken daily regarding the following categories: behavior records, attendance, participation, and observation. For an example, in the behavior section the researcher took notes on what the student's behavior was like every day. The other categories such as attendance, participation, and observation follow the same structure on the spreadsheet.

Once the semester began, the researcher provided all students with a reflection worksheet on the first day of school. After going over the class syllabus (see appendix I) and interest form (see appendix J), students had the rest of the class time to complete the reflection. On that reflection, students were asked a variety of questions regarding school, mental health, and the art class itself. This allowed for the start of the data collection and to make sure the self-reflection

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was valid. The same self-reflection was given out two weeks after the first day of school in order to begin the collection of data. By analyzing this data, the researcher could get an idea of where the at-risk students were starting at the beginning of the semester.

Following the reflection, every student who was considered at-risk was interviewed by the researcher halfway through the semester. These interviews took place during the class and were done in a secure location away from other students. Questions related to their lives, thoughts, and school were included. The researcher continued to observe the at-risk students and keep notes on the spread sheet of their behavior, attendance, and participation. There was another interview session including the same questions with each at-risk at the end of the semester.

At the end of the semester, the researcher provided all the students with the same self-reflection that was given at the start of the semester. Following the reflection, the at-risk students also completed the last interview session with the researcher. All of the data collected during the time frame was analyzed and assisted in the result of the effect that visual arts have on students who are considered at-risk.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The wellbeing of the participants was protected during the entire study period. Although all students decided to participate in the study, no consequences would have been given to students who chose not to participate in the study. To ensure that all students got the guidance they needed during a difficult day mentally due to trauma or other reasons, guidance counselor professionals were available for these students at all times. All responses and observational notes were kept anonymous and confidential throughout the study.

## **Conclusions**

Throughout this chapter, the researcher discussed how data was collected, interpreted, and analyzed over the course of this study. There were multiple instruments used in the data collection process to ensure the highest level of accuracy possible. The next chapter will discuss the results of the study and will further explain the outcomes of the data collected.



## CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

### Introduction

With the increase of students becoming at-risk after COVID-19, many educators around the country have been looking at ways to improve these students' behaviors, view on school, or overall well-being. Without a different pathway or change for these students, they become more at risk of isolation, disconnection from their education, worsening behaviors, or increased mental issues. The purpose of this study was to conduct research in order to determine if the visual arts can positively affect students who are considered at-risk, throughout their time in K-12 education. Given the positive effects that the visual arts can provide to most students, this research was conducted in a beginning ceramics class during the first semester of the 2022-2023 school year. Throughout this study, the observation of at-risk student behavior was explored during the beginning ceramics art class to see if this environment had a positive impact on these student's behavior, view on school, or overall well-being.

### Data Collection

Over the course of this study, data was collected in a variety of ways. The largest focus was on the observation aspect in order to gather information about student's behavior, participation, and overall well-being every day. Notes were taken daily and remained in a confidential excel spreadsheet throughout the study. Within the spreadsheet, there were different sections regarding what the researcher was observing, specific notes relating to participation, behavior, and any additional notes based off of conversations or interactions had with the students that day. Since the class being studied was in the first hour of the school day, the researcher documented data every day during prep which was directly after first hour.

## Visual Arts for At-Risk Students

Along with observation, a series of short answer self-reflections were collected throughout the study. Each student completed a self-reflection on the first day of school in the format of a google form to determine if the reflection was valid. Following the validity test of the self-reflection, the first set of reflections (survey 1) used in this study were then given to students two weeks after the first day of school. Every student who participated in the study completed the self-reflection regarding art, school, and mental health in the beginning and end of the semester.

Following the self-reflection, every student who was considered at-risk was interviewed by the researcher halfway through the semester which took place in November of 2022. These interviews took place during the regularly scheduled class but was done in a secure location away from other students. All of the questions related to the student's life, perspective, and school (see appendix F). The final interview session including the same questions with each at-risk student was completed towards the end of the semester.

All of the data collected during the study was analyzed and assisted in the result of the effect that visual arts have on students who are considered at-risk.

### **Research Questions**

1. How can visual arts affect an at-risk students' experience in K-12 education?

### **Results**

#### **Preparing Data**

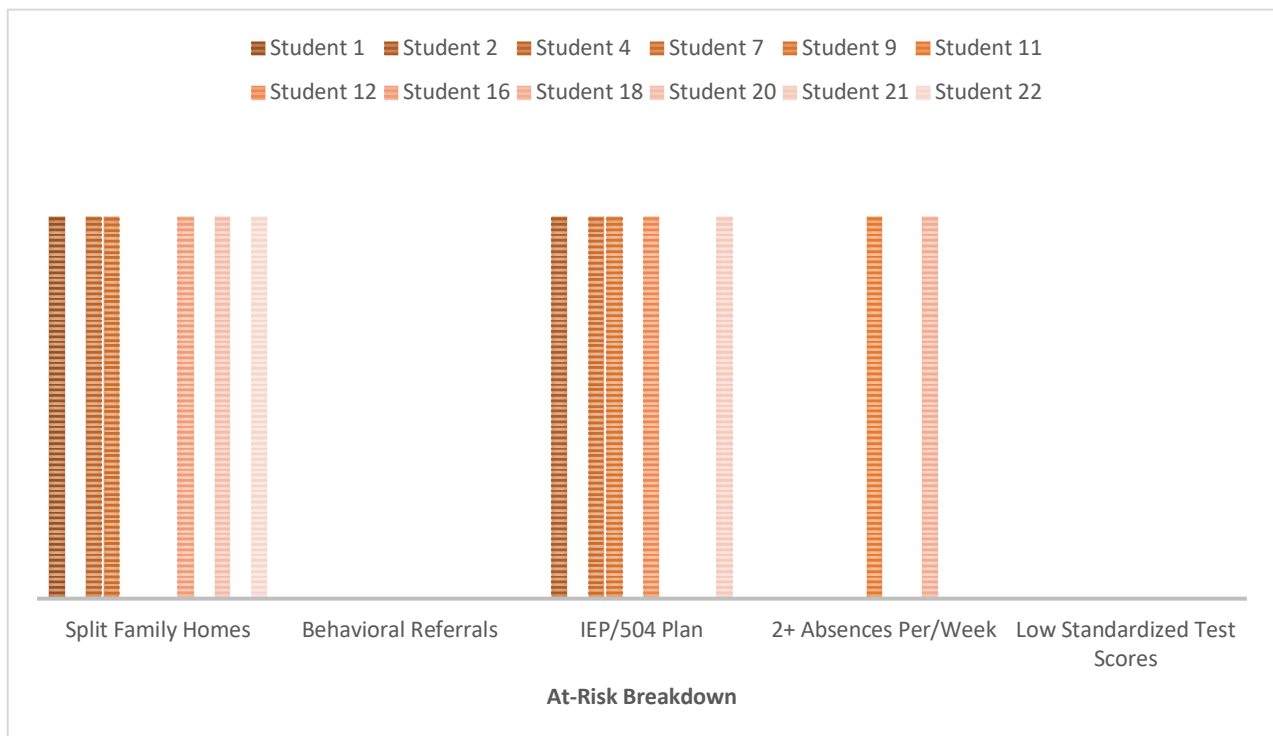
Prior to the start of the first semester of the 2022-2023 school year, the researcher utilized the Skyward System to determine the number of students in the semester one first hour beginning ceramics class. The researcher then created a confidential spreadsheet that listed all 22 students and created sections that would allow for the students' identification number, behavior

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notes, participation/attendance, well-being/observational notes. The researcher then utilized the school districts Behavior Tracking System and Skyward System to identify which of the 22 students were considered at-risk. In this study, an at-risk student can be defined as students who come from split-family homes, receive two or more behavioral referrals within the previous month, have an individualized education plan (IEP), have more than one absence each week, or have low standardized test scores. Out of all 22 students who decided to participate in this study, 10 students were identified as at-risk in the beginning of the semester. Over the course of the semester, two more students were identified as at-risk.

**Figure 4.1**

### *At-Risk Student Breakdown*



A self-reflection survey was made in order to record the student's responses to their view on visual arts, school, and mental health (see appendix G). In order to individualize and collect

more data from the at-risk students, interview questions were created in order to retrieve more data (see appendix H).

### **Baseline Data**

Once the semester began, the researcher updated the spreadsheet to reflect the students who chose to participate in the study. All 22 students chose to participate in the study. Following the reading of the syllabus on the first day of school, students completed the self-reflection. These results were then omitted from the study in order to test the validity of the survey. Two weeks after the first day of school, all first hour beginning ceramics students completed the self-reflection (survey 1). Students were given as much time as needed in order to complete the reflection. All students finished within the first 30 minutes of the 48-minute period. A series of questions from the self-reflections have significant changes in response from survey 1 in the beginning of the semester to survey 2 at the end of the semester (refer to Table 4.2).

**Table 4.2**

*Self-Reflection Questions with Significant Changes from Survey 1 to Survey 2.*

<b>Question Type</b>	<b>Question</b>
Art: Question 2	What goal do you think should be accomplished in art every day?
Art: Question 4	What is your opinion of art classes? How do they help you? Why do you take them?
School: Question 6	What is your favorite part of the school day? Why?
School: Question 10	What is your opinion of school? Do you find it useful? Do you like the structure? What are some things you like? What are some things you think could be improved? Please go into detail.
Health: Question 11	Please rate your overall happiness on a scale from 1 to 10.
Health: Question 13	What is something that helps you mentally? Is there an activity or something you like to do? Explain.

Halfway through the first semester, or November of 2022, the researcher proceeded to interview all students who were considered at-risk. All interviews took place during the class period in a secure and private location away from other students. Each interview was conducted

## Visual Arts for At-Risk Students

within 10 minutes or less. Answers to questions were recorded on paper by the researcher. The study's research question was listed in the mix of interview questions for students to answer (refer to Table 4.3).

**Table 4.3**

*Interview Responses (Interview 1)*

Question 6: Do you think this art class has the possibility of increasing your overall behavior, participation, view on school, or overall well-being? Why?	
Student Number	Response
Student 1	"This class seems pretty fun; I am not sure if it effects my view of school though".
Student 2	"I don't think art effects my day".
Student 4	"Yes, this is my favorite class and I look forward to it every day".
Student 7	"This class is nice, but I don't know if it effects my time at school or not".
Student 9	"I think this class is fun. I really enjoy how chill it is".
Student 12	"This is not my usual class, but I kind of like it. I think this class helps me be less stressed".
Student 16	"I struggle with anxiety, but this class is really calming".
Student 20	"This class is alright. Different than what I am used to".
Student 21	"Art is not my thing, but I look forward to talking with you every day".
Student 22	"I was not meant to be in art. I think this class is a nice change from my other classes though".

By this time throughout the study, observational notes have been taken for every student daily in case the event that a student would become at-risk at some point during the study.

Briefly after the halfway point in the semester, two additional students fell under the description of being at-risk due to their lack of participation/attendance in all of their classes which includes beginning ceramics. This brings the total number of at-risk students to 12 students. Observational

## Visual Arts for At-Risk Students

notes were taken leading up to the addition of the two new at-risk students, however, the first interviews were not conducted for those participants.

The continuation of observations and conversations were conducted daily over the course of the entire semester. The notes indicate if a student was absent, had a lack of participation, or had noticeable factors relating to well-being. This could be attitude, appearance, or change in social, emotional, or mental state based on observation and conversation. There were four days where data could not be collected due to snow days and an absence of the researcher.

Prior to reaching the end of the semester, students were given the same self-reflection survey to complete for the second and final time. The second reflection was completed two weeks before the end of the semester. Students were given as much time as needed in order to complete the reflection. All students finished within the 48-minute period.

The final interviews were conducted by the researcher two weeks before the end of the semester. All students who were considered at-risk were interviewed including the additional two students. This results in 12 at-risk students who were interviewed. All interviews took place during the class period in a secure and private location away from other students. Each interview was conducted within 10 minutes or less. Answers to questions were recorded on paper by the researcher. The study's research question was listed in the mix of interview questions for students to answer (refer to Table 4.4).

**Table 4.4**

*Interview Responses (Interview 2)*

Question 6: Do you think this art class has the possibility of increasing your overall behavior, participation, view on school, or overall well-being? Why?	
Student Number	Response
Student 1	"I have always loved art so yes; this class makes me happy to come to school".

Student 2	"I don't know if this class positively effects my school day or not. I just know that I really like this class".
Student 4	"This class always makes me really excited to come to school. I love art and this class lets me make some really cool projects and be creative".
Student 7	"I would say yes, this class has been really great. I was able to make some nice friends that I didn't have in the beginning of the semester".
Student 9	"With my difficulty hearing, this class has been great. I don't have to listen to presentations or try to listen to reading out of a textbook. I am able to build with my hands and be creative which is cool".
Student 11	"I am not sure if this class effects my school day".
Student 12	"You know I have high stress; you see it every day. I look forward to this class every day because it gets me ready for the rest of my day".
Student 16	"Beginning ceramics class has changed my view on school because at the beginning of the semester I didn't have a lot of friends and in this class, I was able to make two new friends".
Student 18	"I do like this class a lot, but I am not sure if it positively effects my day here at school".
Student 20	"Yes, I think this class is really nice".
Student 21	"You know I am not the best at art, but this class was really fun. I enjoyed taking this class and hope you will be my teacher next semester when I take advanced ceramics".
Student 22	"I am not the type of person who would usually take an art class. I took this class because I didn't know what else to take. At the beginning of the semester, I did not have high hopes for me doing well in this class. Now at the end of the semester, I realized that I enjoyed my time throughout this class and looked forward to it every morning".

## Data Analysis

### Starting Observations

The majority of the data collection for this study was completed by the researcher through observations. According to researchers Li, Kenzy, Underwood, and Severson (2015), observational data collection was the most efficient way of seeing the impact of visual arts on students. Another reason observational data collection was chosen is due to the fact that as educators, we observe and visualize the social, emotional, and physical appearance of students daily. Looking at just the surface of a student can provide a fraction of data that helps support how a student is doing in a class socially, emotionally, and physically. Viewing how a student

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interacts socially within a class can provide data to better understand how that specific student communicates and verbally shows themselves in the classroom setting. Emotions can sometimes be seen by observing but can also be hidden. Throughout this study, the researcher observed all students to gauge how students show their emotions based on how they present themselves. Notes were kept on the observational spreadsheet in order to track any changes of emotions in students. Finally, physical appearance is important to record for this study because of change that could have occurred over the course of the semester. Sometimes, how someone is feeling can be shown through how they dress and appear to the eye.

As the researcher, the first two weeks were crucial to collecting as much observational data as possible in order to better understand the students. Notes like student appearance, friendships, absences, and details from one-on-one conversations with researcher and student were recorded. Out of all 22 students who chose to participate in this study, 10 students were identified as at-risk within the first two weeks of school (refer to Table 4.1). Of the 22 student participants, six students identified as at-risk because they come from split family homes. Five students were identified because they have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), 504 Plan, or have a Gender Identity Plan. Student 7 falls under two of the at-risk categories because they come from a split family home and have a gender identity plan.

Visual art classes can sometimes be frightening to students because of the creative freedom and skill that is shown throughout assignments. Often, students can view risks in the art room as a feeling that they don't belong. This could be a difficult environment for at-risk students because they may feel unsafe (Willcox, 2017). This is why in the classroom where the study took place, the researcher did not require assigned seats. Students had the choice to sit next to their friends or whoever they wanted to in hopes that this would deem the art room as a safe



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place. Having the freedom of choosing your seat on the first day allows for students to feel more comfortable in a classroom when they can sit next to who they want. It was observed that all of the students who were identified as at-risk sat next to students who were a mix of at-risk and not. Throughout the observations in the first two weeks of the study, the researcher noticed that many of the students vocalized their appreciation for allowing them to pick their own seats.

The first two weeks of school are prioritized for the educator to learn about and connect with students and begin teaching the basics of their subject focus. The first few weeks in the beginning ceramics class were utilized as a time to introduce the class syllabus, describe classroom rules, and understand the basics of clay. Students received the opportunity to learn and play around with clay before any assignments were given. Within that time frame, the researcher was able to teach, have one on one conversations, and began building connections with all students. Students were mostly reserved and quiet the first couple days of school but began to open up more moving into the semester. After the first two weeks of school and getting the chance to collect observational notes on each student, a self-reflection survey was taken.

### **Self-Reflection Survey 1**

A student self-reflection survey was taken twice by every student participating in the study. The first survey was taken two weeks after the first day of school and the second survey was taken towards the end of the semester. The first semester of the 2022-2023 school year was about 17 weeks not including holidays and days off. These surveys were used as a data collection tool because it allowed students to answer questions relating to art, school, and mental health in a private and safe way. The researcher found this to be a helpful tool because there were significant changes in some answers from the first survey to the second survey. A challenge with collecting data in the form of a survey was finding an adequate way to share the information.

## Visual Arts for At-Risk Students

With all of the short answer questions provided on the self-reflection survey the researcher found it difficult to display data in the form of a table or figure. Some students found that the reflection also had too many questions which was challenging to encourage them to take the survey two weeks after the validity test. Results from the first survey were found to be very useful. The responses allowed the researcher to look past just the observations on the surface to see what students feel about art, school, and their mental health.

Throughout the responses from the first survey, it was noticed by the researcher that most of the students who felt like they have poor mental health were indicated as at-risk in the beginning of the semester. Many researchers believe that the visual arts create a safe environment and increase well-being for a variety of students including at-risk (Brown & Jeanneret, 2015; Li, Kenzy, Underwood, & Severson, 2015; Snyder & Cooper, 2015). Looking at these results and comparing them to the statement by multiple other researchers, it shows that students who are considered at-risk may need extra support. Many researchers and school districts have found that, due to traumatic events or experiences that led students to become at-risk, teachers may need to provide extra support or resources (Iamarino, 2018; Brown & Jeanneret, 2015; Castro, 2016; Kay & Wolf, 2017; Van Katwyk & Seko, 2019). Given the number of different experiences and trauma students may encounter inside and outside of school, it is important that students are given a space to feel safe.

Looking at some of the survey responses, student 9, an at-risk student, stated that they feel, “art classes are a way for me to calm my body and mind especially with this class being at the beginning of the day. I look forward to this class every morning because the art room feels like a relaxing environment”. Student 4 comes from a split family home, they state that, “I have taken two art classes prior to this one. My mom is my biggest inspiration to me, and she really

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enjoys creating art. I take these classes to better my skills and feel like I am making my mom proud. The art room gives me a sense of clarity and is a place where I feel welcomed". The majority of students stated that they enjoy art classes because it is different than all of their core classes. Researchers Brown and Jeanneret (2015) conducted a similar study where at-risk students were provided a creative space where they could connect with friends, create art. That space provided a safe environment for students to connect with others, focus on artistic and personal strengths, and sparked self-belief for the at-risk students who were involved (Brown & Jeanneret, 2015). Creating a similar space in the visual arts room through seating choice, connections, and encouragement have shown that some at-risk students in the study felt safe and welcomed which improves their well-being while at school.

### **Interview 1**

After looking at tools other researchers chose to use throughout their similar studies, interviews were found to be a helpful tool. Within this study, the researcher found that interviews with the students who are at-risk was a great way to ask the research question of this study. Every student considered at-risk at the time of these interviews completed a one-on-one interview in a secure location away from other students with the researcher (refer to Table 4.3). In Kay and Wolf's (2017) study, they created a program at an alternative school that involved the collaboration between an art teacher and art therapist. The goal of this study was to support the development of the at-risk students' strengths. Ultimately, the researchers found that a collaborative approach to art education could provide at-risk students with the opportunity to strengthen their abilities and improve their well-being through artmaking (Kay & Wolf, 2017). Within this study, questions relating to students' mental health were asked. To ensure safety for all students, the school counselors were suggested to students based on how they replied to the mental health questions. This was to provide extra support to students in case it was needed.

## Visual Arts for At-Risk Students

Looking at the results in Table 4.3, it was found that some students felt that art positively effects their school day. Other students were not sure if art effects their school day and one student stated that art doesn't affect their day. This study along with Kay and Wolf's (2017) study are relatable to a study completed by Higa (2011) where students at an alternative school were given multiple art classes in hopes of increasing their academic motivation. In the beginning of all of those studies, researchers found similar results that were found in this first interview. Results show that the majority of students interviewed felt that having the beginning ceramics art class in the beginning of the day made them look forward to coming to their first class.

### **Ongoing Observations**

Once the study reached the halfway point and the middle of the semester, two additional students fell under the description of being at risk. Observational notes were taken leading up to the addition of the two new at-risk students, however, the first interviews were not conducted for those participants. Student 11 and 18 began to have a lack in their participation/attendance. Student 11 was falling behind in participation by not using their work time wisely and stopped completing projects. This led that student to start falling behind in beginning ceramics. The researcher kept notes on the student from the beginning of the semester but was not able to figure out why the student was falling behind. By looking at the student's data collected, around the time of Halloween is when the student began to fall behind. The researcher encouraged student 11 to push through and keep working on assignments. It was offered to the student that they could come in during study hall to get some work done but the student refused to show up. Like Kay and Wolf's (2017) study results, extra support and encouragement was given to student 11 but that did not seem to have an effect on the student's participation in class.

Around the halfway mark of the semester, the researcher noticed that student 18 had been starting to miss two or three days of class per week. This is what determined the student to be at-

## Visual Arts for At-Risk Students

risk. After having a conversation with the student, they expressed that they were having some difficulty with their mental health. This led the researcher to suggest talking to their guidance counselor or suggested coming into the art room when needed. The student took that advise and began showing up to study hall at least one day of the week to work on missing projects. This continued for the following two weeks but then student 18 stopped coming to study hall to work on projects and continued to miss two or three class times per week.

Identifying student 11 and student 18 as at-risk brings the total number of students who are at-risk in this study to 12 students (54%). Both students were a challenge, but the researcher continued to reach out and support the students as much as they could throughout the rest of the semester. The continued support was given because of a different study that focused on providing extra support to students in need in order to succeed (Kay & Wolf, 2017).

### **Self-Reflection Survey 2**

Once the first semester came close to the end, the researcher sent out the same self-reflection the students took at the beginning of the semester. All 22 students took the survey for the second time two weeks before finals. The researcher again, found this to be a helpful tool because there were significant changes in some answers from the first survey compared to the second survey. The same challenges were experienced while collecting data in this form because it was difficult to share the results. All of the results allowed the researcher to look past just the observations on the surface and see what students feel about art, school, and their mental health.

Analyzing the results from the surveys displayed the significant change of answers students gave to some questions (refer to Table 4.2).

Looking at the results, student 7 stated that they felt excited to come to school in the mornings because their first class of the day was beginning ceramics. Student 7 is an at-risk student who answered the following in the first reflection, "I kind of feel uncomfortable coming

## Visual Arts for At-Risk Students

to school”. After completing some more observations, this student had opened up more in beginning ceramics towards the end of the semester. The researcher pushed creativity and welcoming connections with students to allow students to focus on creating. This relates to the quote by Iamarino (2018), a researcher who focused on students rather than so much on the curriculum, “the first step toward equality and inclusiveness in education is to let go of perfection” (p. 82).

Student 1 and student 4, at-risk students, had similar answers regarding why art had been their favorite class. Both students explained that art classes allow them to learn in a different way rather than through a test or paper. They described their love for having art in the morning and expressed that they wish they could have art more throughout the day. By analyzing the responses from student 1 and student 4, it appears that it would be beneficial to incorporate more art-based learning into core curriculum classes. A study conducted by Li, Kenzy, Underwood, and Severson (2015) discusses the amount of pressure revolving around student achievement that is measured by different standardized tests and test scores. Throughout their research, they explored how arts-based learning impacted at-risk students. Over the course of their study, arts-based learning included art, music, drama, or dance activities into core education subjects. The data collected showed the dramatic impact of arts-based learning on the at-risk students’ behavior, motivation, and academic achievement (Li, Kenzy, Underwood, & Severson, 2015). Furthermore, another researcher also believed in the visual arts increasing the motivation within students (Wahed, 2019). Within the findings of that study, data indicated that arts-based learning can have a positive effect on at-risk students when incorporated into their core education classes.

Student 9 is at-risk because they have a 504 plan. This student has difficulty hearing and has many accommodations in order for them to be successful. On the second survey, this student

## Visual Arts for At-Risk Students

stated that they really enjoy art because it is a different way for them to show what they learned. They expressed that with a hearing disability, art allows them to feel more relaxed with the hands-on learning. These results relate to a study that was done by researchers Ricks, Babel, & Kitchens (2020). Their research goal was to integrate these therapeutic activities to approach transition issues associated with adolescent students who struggle with newly acquired disabilities (Ricks, Babel, & Kitchens, 2020). Throughout the research, it was found that with the inclusion of narrative storytelling and painting, adolescents were able to use self-expression and exploration as a form of communication (Ricks, Babel, & Kitchens, 2020).

By reading the results, the big changes in answers reflect the changes and experiences that the students went through during their time in beginning ceramics. Not only did the researcher notice large changes in answers on the survey, but other changes were noticed during the second interview and the final observational notes.

### **Interview 2**

The second round of interviews took place two weeks before the end of the semester. Every student considered at-risk at the time of these interviews completed a one-on-one interview in a secure location away from other students with the researcher. All 12 identified at-risk students completed the second interview.

Analyzing the results of the interviews, the questions asked by the researcher were helpful in understanding the school life and mental health of these students. The main research question of this study was asked during the interviews (refer to Table 4.4).

Student 22 stated that, “I am not the type of person who would usually take an art class. I took this class because I didn’t know what else to take. At the beginning of the semester, I did not have high hopes for me doing well in this class. Now at the end of the semester, I realized that I enjoyed my time throughout this class and looked forward to it every morning”. The

## Visual Arts for At-Risk Students

researcher was ecstatic to hear this response from student 22 because they started the semester not wanting to do the projects, to ending the semester with a letter grade of A and showed enjoyment making projects. A recent study conducted by Schroth and Helfer (2020) presented that all students from gifted and talented, to at-risk, should have the opportunity to be involved in an arts-based program, regardless of their talents. These results indicate the growth seen over the course of the semester from this student.

Student 16 stated in their first interview that they do not have a lot of friends. They struggled to make friends because they are shy and don't enjoy school. Student 16 mentioned in their second interview that the beginning ceramics class has changed their view on school. Within the art class, student 16 made two new friends and became more cheerful in the morning when they arrived at art. These results support the overall research question. The student stated their experience in the beginning of the semester and how the art class has changed their view on school.

Looking at the results in Table 4.4, it was found that the majority of students felt that art positively effects their school day. Few students were not sure if art effects their school day. There were not any students who felt that a visual arts class doesn't have a positive effect on their overall behavior, participation, view on school, or well-being.

### **Final Observations**

Over the course of the first semester and the entirety of this study, the concluding number of students who were considered at risk was 12 students. By analyzing the results from the observational notes, it was shown that all students whether they are at-risk or not can have good or bad days. Nearly 20 students expressed verbally at least once throughout the semester that they enjoyed their time throughout the beginning ceramics course. Of those 20 students, 14



## Visual Arts for At-Risk Students

students shared that they would enjoy taking another art class throughout their time in high school.

Student 11 and student 18 did not show any improvement in their participation or attendance from the middle of the semester to the end of the semester. These results show that every student is completely different. Students function and go through experiences differently. Not all solutions are going to work for every student. In a study completed by Hannigan, Grima-Farrell, and Wardman (2019), they describe an aim to connect students and teachers through art experiences in a way that is meaningful and effective while addressing the strengths and needs of students. In addition to providing support for student 11 and student 18, the researcher believes that having created a better connection with these students might have resulted in a different outcome.

Although the researcher found it challenging to collect the observations into a table or chart, the data collected through observation were very noticeable and eye opening to the researcher.

### **Conclusion**

Gardner's (1983) theory expresses that students learn in multiple ways and at different times throughout childhood. That is why the implementation of visual arts in a child's life is important. It gives them the opportunity to be self-expressive, creative, vulnerable, and think critically. All of which are not always expressed through their core curriculum. Guided by the results and the analyzed data from this study, there were multiple positives shown by students from taking a visual arts class. These positives were shown by both at-risk and non-at-risk students. A small number of students did not encounter a positive experience from taking a visual art class that affected their K-12 experience.

## Visual Arts for At-Risk Students

Throughout this study, the researcher gathered data throughout multiple forms and utilized them to analyze the results. The researcher encountered an interesting observation by analyzing the surveys and connected those to the school districts goal for 2022-2023. This year, the researchers school districts focus is on relationship mapping. That is, collecting data to see how many students throughout the district feel like they have a connection with at least one staff member. After the results were finalized from that study, an astonishing number of students at the high school felt that the researcher, or visual arts educator, was the person that they felt the most connected too.

After hearing about the relationship mapping data from the school district and connecting that back to this study, a door was opened to a new understanding. A large number of students throughout this study expressed that a visual arts class is a great way to be creative, be in a safe space, have fun, and try new things. The researcher believes that throughout the daily conversations they had with the students, this created a safe space and a connection which made the students feel safe. Due to the different structure of a visual arts class compared to a core subject class, a visual arts teacher has more time to have one-on-one time with each student every day because of the large amount of work time. This resulted in a large number of students feeling connected to the visual arts teacher which made them feel welcomed, safe, and excited to come to school.

Overall, this study has allowed the researcher to gather a variety of data and analyze the results in a way that shows the benefits of taking a visual arts class. Although not every student feels like a visual arts class has a positive effect on their K-12 education, a large number of students do.

## CHAPTER 5. IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

### Introduction

Education is changing constantly as the world and people around us evolve. Teachers work in a profession where it is important to continue learning and growing with the current student population. This provides students with the appropriate learning and curriculum in order for them to succeed. Therefore, educators continuing their education and conduction of research is a staple in the realm of education in order to provide the best resources and practices for our students.

Conducting research not only allows educators to see different effects in a classroom, but it also allows for educators to analyze data in order to make changes that are needed. By analyzing data, students, educators, parents, and community members are able to see what needs to be done in order to give students the most beneficial experience within their K-12 education. In order to grow with the changing world, research should be seen as an important tool to which helps us understand how to be more innovative.

### Action Plan

As the researcher, I wanted to see if a visual arts course has an effect on an at-risk students' overall behavior, participation, or well-being. Due to the high numbers of students who are becoming at-risk after the COVID-19 pandemic (Blackwell, C. K., et. al, 2022), I thought it was an important topic to focus on and observe. The intention was to examine how a visual arts class may help these students in order to make a difference throughout their K-12 education. With my strong passion for helping others, this led me to conduct how I would be able to personally assist in helping students who are at-risk.

## Visual Arts for At-Risk Students

As for me professionally, I believe that this research helps me understand the impact that my art classes or myself can have on students. A visual arts teacher can provide students with many different experiences than what they may experience throughout their core classes. As I went through the first and second survey responses, it really opened up my eyes to see the number of students who rely on or enjoy a visual arts class. At-risk or not, almost all students who participated in this study have stated that they feel a visual art class has a positive effect on their K-12 education. Based on the responses, the positive impact can be social, emotional, or mental depending on the individual student. This has led me to believe that even if a visual arts class is not for everyone, it can still leave some sort of impact on a student.

Throughout the duration and completion of this study, the biggest impact has affected me professionally and personally. Before this study, I understood that students come from many different places, backgrounds, homelives, and experiences. However, this study has helped me navigate my understanding on how those differences and experiences can affect a student during their K-12 education. The daily observation of behavior, absences/participation, and noticeable well-being was just a fraction of what guided me to see the surface of each student. The main component of the observation notes was checking in and connecting with each student every day. I believe that the connection we have with students can greatly impact the experience they encounter in our class. Being an educator that the student feels safe and welcomed being around can be the concept that changes the impact on their everyday life and K-12 education. As a visual arts educator, I feel that I have an advantage at getting to connect with every student in my classroom. Teaching at the high school level, art projects take about two weeks to complete which means a lot of time spent in the art room is worktime. This gives me the advantage to have more time than the regular core class educator to have a conversation and connect with every

## Visual Arts for At-Risk Students

student almost every day. The greatest impact this study left on me professionally has been that making connections with every student everyday can change the experience that a student has throughout their daily life and time within their K-12 education. Moving forward, I am making it a goal to always check in and have a conversation with my students every day to continue making them feel safe, welcomed, and heard. We as people relate to each other and thrive off of connections which is why this study has also helped me grow personally. What could be a small two-minute conversation could actually be the moment that makes someone's day without us even knowing. This is why being present and listening during conversations is important. That conversation could be the interaction that changes someone's day.

Moving forward, this study has the evidence to show the positivity that a visual arts class can bring to almost any student's experience throughout K-12 education. Encouraging schools to require every student to take at least one visual arts course could benefit students, teachers, parents, and the overall school climate.

I have seen so many student's lives change right in front of me. Even though the focus of this research was to see the effects that visual arts have on at-risk students, I have seen so many other students being positively impacted as well. These experiences have been left a huge impact on myself which I could not be more grateful for. It is with great hope that this research can make a change for at least one student, staff, family, or community member. I fully believe that all students should take a visual arts class because of the hands on, creative, critical thinking, and welcoming environment.

### **Plan for Sharing**

Core subject educators sometimes feel like it is difficult to connect with students because all students are required to take their specific class. I believe this study would be an

## Visual Arts for At-Risk Students

encouragement to non-visual arts educators because it shows that communication and connection are an important aspect in creating a positive K-12 experience for any student. Educators can sometimes get so caught up in the curriculum and forget about the importance of creating connections with students. Having a space somewhere in the school where a student feels safe, welcomed, and heard could be the key to making sure they have a positive K-12 experience.

As educators, we can only imagine what a student goes through and experiences while they are not at school. For those at-risk, it is more of a challenge for them inside and outside of school. After seeing the results of this study, I feel it would be beneficial to share this with other educators, administration, and the community. Encouraging students, especially at-risk students, to take at least one visual arts course could impact or have an effect on their experience in school. Finding the place or class where a student feels most comfortable could greatly impact their experience throughout their K-12 education.

As for other visual arts educators, I feel the need to share this study to help others see the impact they can have on their students. Every spring, I attend the National Art Education Association Convention. This is a collection of visual arts educators from around the country that come together to learn from each other. I would like to create a presentation proposal of my research and share my findings with other visual arts educators as a presenter at a future NAEA Convention. Findings from this study could be first step to address the impact that visual arts have on students who are considered at-risk.

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**APPENDIX A**

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval

**Institutional Review Board**



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**DATE:** September 12, 2022

**TO:** Nicole Seidler, C&I, Principal Investigator

**FROM:** Dr. Robert Nava, Chair  
Minnesota State University Moorhead IRB

**ACTION:** **APPROVED**

**PROJECT TITLE:** [1958222-1] The Effect of Visual Arts Involvement on At-Risk Students

**SUBMISSION TYPE:** New Project

**APPROVAL DATE:** September 12, 2022

**EXPIRATION DATE:**

**REVIEW TYPE:** Exempt Review

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this project. The Minnesota State University Moorhead IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Exempt Review based on the applicable federal regulation.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to the Minnesota State University Moorhead IRB. Please use the appropriate reporting forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to the Minnesota State University Moorhead IRB.

This project has been determined to be a project. Based on the risks, this project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate forms for this procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date of .

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years after the completion of the project.

## Visual Arts for At-Risk Students

If you have any questions, please contact the [Minnesota State University Moorhead IRB](#). Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

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This letter has been issued in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Minnesota State University Moorhead's records.

**APPENDIX B**

School District Approval



**MENOMONIE HIGH SCHOOL**

School District of the Menomonie Area  
1715 5th Street West • Menomonie, Wisconsin 54751 • TEL (715) 232-2606 • FAX (715) 232-2629  
School District Web Page • <http://msd.k12.wi.us>

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CASEY DRAKE Principal	SUSAN MOMMSEN Assistant Principal	JOHN SAMB Associate Principal	STORM HARMON Dean of Students	PERRY MYREN Activities Director
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Aug 26, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to grant Ms. Nicole Seidler permission to conduct an action research study at Menomonie High School during the 2022-2023 school year. My understanding is that this study poses no risk to those persons involved or the School District of the Menomonie Area. Also, the information collected will be kept confidential and student participation will be contingent on their parent/guardian providing written permission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Casey Drake".

Casey Drake

MHS Principal

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*"The School District of the Menomonie Area, by embracing the unique needs and using the strengths of our diverse community, is dedicated to preparing ALL people to be life-long learners, caring individuals and responsible citizens."*

## APPENDIX C

### Informed Consent Letter



#### Curriculum and Instruction

Principal Investigator  
Kathy B. Enger  
Phone: 701-429-1857;  
Email: [Kathy.Enger@mnstate.edu](mailto:Kathy.Enger@mnstate.edu)

Co-Investigator  
Nicole Seidler

#### Letter of Consent Participation in Research

**Title:** The Effect of Visual Arts Involvement on Students

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to determine if your student's participation in a visual arts class has an effect on their overall behavior, participation, view on school, or overall well-being.

**Study Information:** Your child was selected because they are currently enrolled in a high school visual art course. If you decide to participate, please understand that your child will be asked to complete the following:

1. Your child will create art projects that would regularly be completed over the duration of this class.
2. Students will be asked to complete a total of three written reflections over the course of this class. Examples of questions could be:
  - a. How do you feel after art class today?
  - b. Is there something that happened in art class that changed your overall mood today?
  - c. Do you feel safe in the art room?
  - d. What is your favorite and least favorite part of being in art?
3. Some students will also be asked to do a one on one interview with me where I will ask them a few questions regarding their experience in art class.

**Time:** The participants will complete this study over the duration of their scheduled beginning ceramics class time. This will take place during the first semester of the 2022-2023 school year.

**Risk:** Participation in this study involves minimal to no risk.

**Benefits:** Participation in this study is no different than what they would experience during a regular class period. All students, participant or not participant, receive the exact same instruction, projects, and relationship with me as they normally would. Participation in this study improves the participants ability to reflect and recognize the effects that visual arts have on themselves.

**Confidentiality:** Participant's identity will not be shared with anyone beyond the principal investigator, Kathy Enger Ph.D, and the co-investigator, Nicole Seidler. All individual information will be recorded and tracked under an identification number and not the participant's name.

**Participation and Withdrawal:** Participation in this study is optional. Students can choose not to participate or choose to withdraw at any time without any negative effects on grades, relationship with the instructor, or relationship with their school.



**Curriculum and Instruction**

Principal Investigator  
Kathy B. Enger  
Phone: 701-429-1857;  
Email: [Kathy.Enger@mnstate.edu](mailto:Kathy.Enger@mnstate.edu)

Co-Investigator  
Nicole Seidler

**Contact:** If you have any questions about this study, you may contact any of the following people:

Any questions about your rights may be directed to Dr. Robert Nava., Chair of the MSUM Institutional Review Board, at 218-477-4308 or by [robert.nava@mnstate.edu](mailto:robert.nava@mnstate.edu). You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

“I have been informed of the study details and understand what participating in the study means. I understand that my child’s identity will be protected and that he/she can choose to stop participating in the study at any time. By signing this form, I am agreeing to allow my child to participate in the study. I am at least 18 years of age or older.”

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Child (Print)

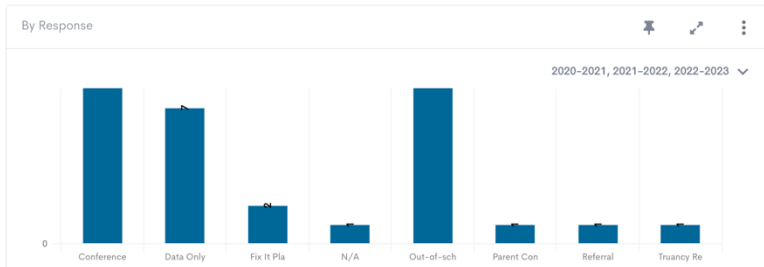
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/Guardian  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Investigator  
Date

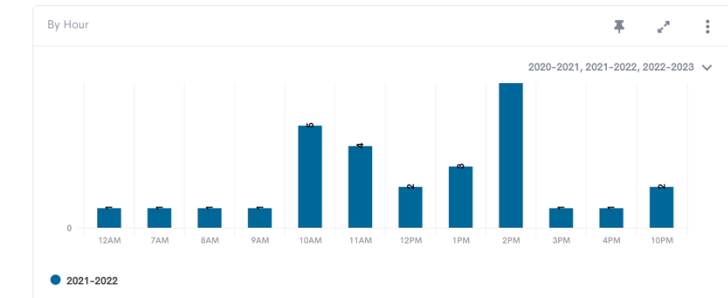
APPENDIX D

Behavioral Referral Tracking System

Student Incidents



Student Incidents





APPENDIX E

Skyward Attendance Tracking Program

Alerts	Student Indicators	Last Name↑	First Middle	GR	Sch	MOI	Absent <a href="#">Select All</a>	Tardy <a href="#">Select All</a>	Present <a href="#">Select All</a>
				12	MSH		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	<b>2</b> <b>3</b>			12	MSH		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
				10	MSH		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
				10	MSH		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
				11	MSH		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
				10	MSH		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
				09	MSH		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
				10	MSH		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	<b>4</b>			09	MSH		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
				09	MSH		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
				12	MSH		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
				11	MSH		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
				12	MSH		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
				10	MSH		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
				09	MSH		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
				10	MSH		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
				11	MSH		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
				11	MSH		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	<b>2</b>			10	MSH		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	<b>2</b>			11	MSH		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
				12	MSH		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**APPENDIX F**

**Researcher Spreadsheet Example**

1	Student Name	Date: XX/XX/XXX	Date: XX/XX/XXX	Date: XX/XX/XXX	Date: XX/XX/XXX	Date: XX/XX/XXX
2	John Smith					
3	Observational Notes	How does the student present themselves physically, emotionally, socially? Are they staying focused or getting distracted? Any interactions with others?				
4	Participation/Attendance	Was the student in school today? How was the overall participation? Did the student work on the project? Use class time wisely? Listen to the given directions? Make progress on project?				
5	Behavior	How is the student acting today? Are they acting different than usual? Any behavior referrals today?				
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
13						
14						

## APPENDIX G

### Student Reflection Example

(Format of a Google Form)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Class: \_\_\_\_\_  
Period: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Art**

Answer the following questions as truthfully as possible.

1. Have you taken any art classes in high school before this class? Which ones?
2. What goal do you think should be accomplished every day in art?
3. What goal do you think should be accomplished by the end of the semester in art?
4. What is your opinion of art classes? How do they help you? Why do you take them?
5. What do you hope to gain from this beginning ceramics art class this semester?

#### **School**

Answer the following questions as truthfully as possible.

6. What is your favorite part of the school day? Why?
7. What is your least favorite part of the school day? Why?
8. What is your favorite subject in school? Why?
9. What is your least favorite subject in school? Why?
10. What is your opinion of school? Do you find it useful? Do you like the structure? What are some things you like? What are some things you think could be improved? Go into detail.

**Health**

Answer the following questions as truthfully as possible.

11. Please rate your overall happiness on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Very Unhappy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very Happy

12. How would you describe your mental health currently? Good? Okay? Poor?

13. What is something that helps you mentally? Is there an activity or something you like to do? Explain.

14. How would you describe your overall well-being?

15. Any Questions? Thoughts? Concerns?

## APPENDIX H

### Interview Questions

1. How do you feel about being in an art class? Are you excited? Do you like art?

Notes:

2. What are you hoping to get out of this semester in art?

Notes:

3. What are your thoughts about school?

Notes:

4. How is life outside of school? Home, Work, Extracurricular...

Notes:

5. What would you say is a big challenge for you in and outside of school?

Notes:

6. Do you think this art class has the possibility of increasing your overall behavior, participation, view on school, or well-being?

Notes:

7. Any other comments, concerns, or thoughts you would like to share?

Notes:

## APPENDIX I

### Class Syllabus

### Art Syllabus

**Subject:**

## BEGINNING CERAMICS

Room 177

**Teacher:** Ms. Seidler

**Contact information**

 nicole\_seidler@msd.k12.wi.us

 (715) 232-2606 ext. 40177

**Course Description**

Beginning ceramics is an introduction course that focuses on the the art of using clay to create vessels, forms, and functional pieces. Students will use various materials and techniques such as hand building and throwing on the pottery wheel to create 3D ceramic artwork. Students will also be actively involved in completing multiple sketchbook assignments that utilize various techniques and practices.

**Fees and Costs**

Each student is required to have a 8.5"x11" sketchbook.

Students will collectively share the classroom tools and supplies for this class. Please be respectful to all of the tools..

**Course Expectations**

Utilize the art of hand building to create 3D functional and non functional pieces of art.

Utilize the art of throwing on the wheel to create 3D functional pieces of art.

**Classroom Rules**

**Respect**

- The Classroom
- The Supplies
- Your Classmates
- The Teacher
- Yourself

**Come Prepared and Ready to Create!**

- Have the Needed Materials
- Listen to Directions
- Work During Work Time

**Clean Up**

10 minutes before the end of class, clean up your materials and work space.

Everyone is responsible for helping clean up.

You will have classroom clean up jobs.



### Assessment of Student Learning

The course grade is calculated by:

1. Major Projects = 50%
2. Sketchbook Assignments = 30%
3. Critiques/Participation = 20%

### Cell Phone Policy

Cell phones must be put away at all times.

Exceptions:  
Listening to music during work time.  
Research for project or sketchbook assignment.

The teacher has the right to take away a phone not being used for the exceptions listed above.

### Follow on Instagram



**@artwithmisseidler**

Follow me to see your artwork shared and to see what the other art classes are up to!

### Late Work Policy

All projects are due on the assigned critique day which is announced well in advance.

Students are always given enough time to complete assignments inside and outside of class.

I do understand that life happens, so late work will be excepted, but a penalty will be given if not discussed with Ms. Seidler 24 hours before the project is due.

If the student does not have a logical excuse for the project being late, 3 points will be deducted from given grade for every day the project is late. See the chart below:

Days Late	Grade Deduction
1 Day Late	- 3
2 Days Late	- 6
3 Days Late	- 9
4 Days Late	- 12
5 Days Late	- 15
6 Days Late	- 18
7 Days Late	- 21

### For Students and Family

This is a course that requires time more than many others, to be successful. Spending only class time on projects may not be enough time to complete them. It is expected that a student will work outside of class on their projects if needed. Their "homework" is different in this class, as many materials or equipment cannot be taken home. I am available by email always and can be contacted at any time.

-----

By signing below, you are showing that you have read and understand the contents of the syllabus.

Student Name (printed): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please bring in a sketchbook  
by Tuesday, September 6th**

**Please return this page by  
Friday, September 9th**



## APPENDIX J

### Interest Form

(Format of a Google Form)



### Interest Survey

Please fill out this form during the first week of school.

Your Name \*

Your answer

Preferred Name (if different than above)

Your answer

Hour \*

1st Hour

7th Hour

8th Hour

What do you enjoy doing in your free time? \*

Your answer

What is an interesting fact about yourself? \*

Your answer

## Visual Arts for At-Risk Students

What genres of music do you enjoy? \*

Your answer

---

What genres of music do you listen to? \*

Your answer

---

What is your favorite material to use when creating art? \*

Your answer

---

What do you hope to learn from this class? \*

Your answer

---

Why did you take this art class? \*

Your answer

---

What is a project you would like to make? \*

Your answer

---

Is there anything you would like Ms. Seidler to know?

Your answer

---

Questions?

Your answer

---

**Submit** [Clear form](#)

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Google Forms

**APPENDIX K**

**Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative Certificate**

