

The logo for 'In the Mix' features the words 'in the mix' in a white, stylized, lowercase font with a distressed, torn-paper texture. The letters are set against a solid red rectangular background. A registered trademark symbol (®) is located at the top right of the word 'mix'.

# ARTS EDUCATION...A+

A half hour special from *IN THE MIX*, the award-winning weekly PBS teen series and **MetLife Foundation**

Recent studies have shown that arts education helps young people develop skills in areas such as math, science, and verbal and written communication; tools that can help them succeed in the workplace and life in general. But when school budgets are cut, arts education is usually the first to go...so how do students and educators fill the gap?

This *In the Mix* episode looks at how schools, communities, and organizations are working together to keep the arts alive, and what it means to the teens involved. The program and guide were made possible by MetLife Foundation.

## HOW TO USE THIS PROGRAM

Independent research on previous *In the Mix* specials have shown that these programs engage the interest of teenagers, deliver information, catalyze discussion on critical issues, as well as promote analytical thinking and a greater sense of self-efficacy among teens. The aim is to encourage thought and allow teens to generate their own creative solutions.

In this guide, we have outlined specific questions based on the program's content, along with answers. These questions can be used to open up more analytical discussion about related concepts. Also included are in-class activities and longer-term projects. We suggest showing the entire program to the group and then running individual segments followed by discussion.

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Young people who participate in the arts for at least three hours on three days each week through at least one full year are four times more likely to be recognized for academic achievement, participate in a math and science fair, and win an award for writing an essay or poem.
- Studies suggest that for young children, students from economically disadvantaged circumstances, and students needing remedial instruction—learning in the arts may be uniquely able to advance learning success in other areas.
- Students involved in after-school activities at arts organizations showed greater use of complex language than their peers in activities through community-service or sports organizations

## *In the Mix* AWARDS

- CINE Golden Eagle Awards for:  
*Media Literacy: Get The News?; 9-11: Looking Back...Moving Forward; Financial Literacy: On the Money; Living With Diseases; Student Power: Organizing for School Reform*
- Young Adult Library Services Association's "DVD/Videos List" for: *Living With... (Illness); Student Power: Organizing for School Reform; Arts Education: A+; ECSTASY; Live by the Gun, Die by the Gun; School Violence: Answers From the Inside; 9-11: Looking Back...Moving Forward*
- National Mental Health Association Media Awards for: *Depression: On the Edge; website*
- Academy of Television Arts and Sciences'
- Emmy for Community Service Programming

Please visit [www.inthemix.org](http://www.inthemix.org) for full descriptions, video clips, transcripts, resources and more about this and other *In the Mix* programs.

# ARTS EDUCATION...A+

This guide to **ARTS EDUCATION...A+** contains four major sections which include questions and discussion topics, plus an activities section. A list of arts education resources is also included.

## SECTION 1

### ESSENTIALLY ELLINGTON:

Each year, celebrated musician and composer Wynton Marsalis leads the Jazz at Lincoln Center's *Essentially Ellington* high school jazz competition. Students come to New York City from all over the U.S. to participate in workshops, perform with others and share their love of the art form.

1. According to Marsalis, what is it about jazz in particular that is beneficial to young musicians? Why does he feel that *Essentially Ellington* is important?

***jazz involves improvisation and projecting a personal style onto a composition, which helps young people develop their individuality; the Essentially Ellington competition puts students in close contact with the mind of Duke Ellington, and Marsalis feels that the best way to learn about jazz is to play it***

#### Further Discussion:

Do you agree with Wynton Marsalis when he says, "What teaches you the most about the art form is the art itself?" Do you think it's more effective to learn about jazz or any music by playing it rather than listening to it or reading about it? What are some examples of other ways students can learn about an art form by doing it? (Ex. Performing a scene from a Shakespeare play instead of just reading it; painting in the style of Monet instead of looking at and discussing his work.)

2. What is Marsalis' advice for young people who want to learn to play jazz?

***find someone who can teach you how to play; find a way to get an instrument; use ingenuity if you have to; take pride that you took the initiative to pursue something new***

3. What do some of the *Essentially Ellington* participants enjoy most about performing jazz music?

***jazz music always cheers you up; it provides freedom and allows you to be creative; you do it not because it's a "field" but rather something you're compelled to do; you learn to work with others; jazz helped one student learn about himself and the way he interacts with other people***

#### Further Discussion:

If you had the opportunity to learn an instrument, would you take it? If so, why? If not, what would stop you? Do you feel that many people are reluctant to learn to play music because they don't feel they'd be any good at it? Is it necessary to do something well in order to get benefits from it? If you were struggling to play an instrument, what could you still gain from your experience?

## SECTION 2

### WRITEGIRL:

In Los Angeles, the organization WriteGirl pairs teen girls with adult women writers for one-on-one mentoring and group workshops. Together, they explore genres such as poetry, fiction and songwriting as a means to self-expression and empowerment.

1. According to WriteGirl director Keren Taylor, why is it important for young women in particular to explore writing?  
***developing strong verbal and written communication skills helps you communicate your true feelings, which is valuable throughout life; girls often don't have a voice in school because boys talk the most; many girls live in male-driven families where they're not allowed to speak freely; writing gives girls a chance to find out who they are***

#### Further Discussion:

When you listened to Kyla read her poem, "I Am Me," what were your reactions? What kind of person do you think Kyla is? What types of feelings is she exploring with this piece of writing?

Glenda's piece is about a fifteen-year-old boy and how he behaves when his family fights. What emotions is she bringing up with this character? Do you think Glenda is writing about a fictional character or someone real? Read poems at [www.pbs.org/inthemix/artseducation\\_index.html](http://www.pbs.org/inthemix/artseducation_index.html).

2. According to the girls, what are some of the benefits of writing?

***Kyla feels that writing poetry lets her express thoughts and emotion; Glenda likes to write everything out of her system instead of thinking about something because it's therapeutic***

#### Further Discussion:

When Janine performs her poem at the WriteGirl event, you can tell that the audience is reacting positively to it. What do you think Janine is gaining from the experience of sharing her writing with others, rather than keeping it private? What's the difference between any art you do for yourself and art you share with others? Does writing help people deal with their emotions and problems?

3. How does WriteGirl get the funding it needs to operate?  
***they get funding from different groups, including the Los Angeles Unified School District; they do benefit performances; they sell books of WriteGirl members' writing***

## SECTION 3

### SUMMER SCHOOL OF THE ARTS:

In Rochester, NY, young men and women take part in the intensive Summer School of the Arts, an out-of-school program made possible by cooperation between the local Monroe County, Monroe #1 BOCES program and Nazareth College. These students talk about how learning dance is helping them in sports performance, working with others and dispelling stereotypes.

1. This program focuses on dance, but how do the participants say it helps them with other physical activities?  
**one girl says the stretching and warm-ups make her more flexible for sports like running and soccer; Brendan feels it makes his legs stronger so he can better jump and shoot in basketball**
2. Did the boys in the program have to overcome any preconceived notions about dance?  
**yes; there's a stereotype that dance is a more feminine activity; their guy friends made fun of them for participating; other guys their age think dancing isn't "cool," or that it makes them less attractive to girls; Brendon points out that girls like guys who dance**
3. The teen members of the program talk about learning skills that they hope to carry with them throughout their lives. What are these skills?  
**how to give constructive criticism; how to trust others; how to forgive someone if he or she makes a mistake; the value of teamwork and how to make the most of it; determination to see something through to the end**

#### Further Discussion:

Like WriteGirl, the Summer School of the Arts is a program that exists outside of school. What are the differences between a program that's part of your school curriculum, and one that's not? Do you feel there are benefits of one over the other?

Do any programs like the Summer School of the Arts exist in our community? If so, would you consider participating in them? Why or why not? If there are no local programs like this, how do you think students and community members could start one?

## SECTION 4

### URBAN ACADEMY:

Manhattan's Urban Academy, a small public school, is able to stretch a limited budget to provide a wide variety of arts classes and programs. Students are required to demonstrate an arts proficiency each year as a graduation requirement...not necessarily for career training, but for the sake of a well-rounded education.

1. How does Urban Academy make sure that all students get some arts education before they graduate?  
**art proficiency is a graduation requirement; the administration establishes art as having the same weight as academic classes**
2. According to art teacher Marcella, why is it important that the art proficiency is based on a student's progress over time, rather than the quality of his or her finished work?  
**the school wants to emphasize to students that the process of creating art is more important than the end product; students relate to the classes better if they're not intimidated by having to create a "perfect" piece of art**
3. Nells says that he started out as someone who didn't like art and had a negative attitude about school. How does he feel about it now that he's been taking classes?  
**he realized he could do a lot of different things with it; the success makes him feel better about himself; he wants to improve and give life to his paintings; he's now able to do well at other things, like math and social studies, that he never thought he could**
4. How do Peter's graphic design, like animals and the pentagon inside a circle help him with math?  
**he says that drawing helps him to understand math in a visual sense, allowing him to do better on tests; he used a math formula for his pentagon design**

#### Further Discussion:

How might art also help with English and literature? Social Studies? A Science subject such as Biology?

5. What does April say she's gained from being involved in visual arts classes?  
**she's normally hyperactive but art helps her set a goal and focus on it until it's finished; it helps her learn things about herself that she never knew; watching other people's reactions to her art helps her learn things about them as well**

#### Further Discussion:

Simon, Crystal, and April show us their work and describe the meaning behind the pieces. If you didn't know what Crystal was trying to do with her ceramic pitcher, what would you think it symbolized? What about April's doll? When you're looking at a piece of art, do you think it's important to know the artist's intention? Can art mean one thing to the artist, and another thing to the person experiencing it?

#### Related Activities:

These activities can be adapted for use with students, parent groups, or anyone else who wants to maximize arts education in their community.

## ACTIVITIES SECTION:

### MAKE DO, MAKE MORE, MAKE IT WORK

Activities for making the most of existing arts budgets and programs

- There may be teachers who are on staff for an academic subject but are also skilled in a particular arts discipline. Create and distribute a questionnaire for faculty members in order to determine who is able and willing to teach arts to students as a class or after-school club; for instance, a math teacher whose hobby is photography.
- Stretch arts supply budgets by soliciting donations of goods. Start with local businesses and offer credit where appropriate, such as a thank-you on an event program. Go online to find out if larger specialty retailers have school donation programs.
- Arts programs outside the school may be available in your community, but many students, parents, and educators are not aware of them. Research any programs or organizations that offer students a chance to explore different arts disciplines, and create a list that includes details such as: when and where the program takes place, who is eligible to participate, time commitment, costs involved, etc. Using these lists, create a local arts program “guide” for students and community members.
- Research and ask local artists, writers, photographers, graphic designers, etc. to teach a workshop at school.
- Brainstorm a list of art activities you would like to get involved in. What do you think you would get out of each activity?

### GET MOTIVATED, GET INVOLVED, GET ACTION

Activities for organizing to get arts programs back

- Increase awareness of the need for arts education. Make a list of life skills students gain with an arts education; for example: “The ability to communicate with others” and “Self-discipline.” Create a flyer or poster highlighting these things urging parents and community members to get involved in bringing arts education back. Distribute and display throughout the community.
- Learn your state’s arts education standards ([www.aep-arts.org/policysearch/searchengine/](http://www.aep-arts.org/policysearch/searchengine/)) and find out whether or not your district is paying attention to them. Arrange a meeting with a school district arts coordinator, school board member, or other administrator to determine whether or not they’re trying to expand the district’s arts program to better implement high standards. Ask if they need community support to do so, and how parents, teachers, and students can get involved.
- Organize an advocacy group focused on increasing or reinstating arts education in your school district. Stay in touch with the school board by attending meetings and writing letters to members.
- Organize a group whose mission is to raise independent funding for arts programs in your community. Make a list of ideas for fundraising, such as: a benefit variety show that allows students to show off their talents and interests; a benefit art show of student work available for sale; a cash donation drive; researching and applying for applicable grants; charity auctions on eBay.

### RESOURCES:

#### Featured on the program:

#### **Essentially Ellington**

(212) 258-9800  
[www.jazzatlincolncenter.org](http://www.jazzatlincolncenter.org)

#### **WriteGirl**

(323) 327-2555  
[www.writegirl.org](http://www.writegirl.org)

#### **Summer School of the Arts**

(585) 249-7026  
[www.naz.edu](http://www.naz.edu)

#### **Monroe #1 BOCES**

(585) 377-4660  
[www.monroe.edu](http://www.monroe.edu)

#### **Urban Academy**

(212) 570-5284  
[www.urbanacademy.org](http://www.urbanacademy.org)

#### **Umbrella organizations:**

#### **Arts Edge—The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts**

[www.artsedge.kennedy-center.org](http://www.artsedge.kennedy-center.org)  
(202) 416-8000  
E-mail: [curric@artsedge.kennedy-center.org](mailto:curric@artsedge.kennedy-center.org)

#### **National Art Education Association**

(703) 860-8000  
[www.naea-reston.org](http://www.naea-reston.org)  
[naea@dgs.dgsys.com](mailto:naea@dgs.dgsys.com)

#### **National Assembly of State Arts Agencies**

(202) 347-6352  
[www.nasaa-arts.org](http://www.nasaa-arts.org)  
E-mail: [nasaa@nasaa-arts.org](mailto:nasaa@nasaa-arts.org)

#### **President's Committee on the The Arts and the Humanities**

(202) 682-5409  
[www.pcah.gov](http://www.pcah.gov)  
E-mail: [pcah@neh.gov](mailto:pcah@neh.gov)

#### **Arts Education Partnership**

(202) 326-8693  
[www.aep-arts.org](http://www.aep-arts.org)  
E-mail: [aep@ccsso.org](mailto:aep@ccsso.org)

#### **Americans for the Arts**

(212) 223-2787  
[www.artsusa.org](http://www.artsusa.org)  
[info@artsusa.org](mailto:info@artsusa.org)

#### **National Endowment for the Arts**

Phone: (202) 682-5400  
[arts.endow.gov](http://arts.endow.gov)  
E-mail: [webmgr@arts.endow.gov](mailto:webmgr@arts.endow.gov)

### How To Reach *In the Mix*:

ARTS EDUCATION...A+ carries one-year off-air taping rights and performance rights. Check your local PBS listings for airtimes.

For information about *In the Mix*, including program descriptions and schedules, visit us at [www.inthemix.org](http://www.inthemix.org), or e-mail us at [mail@inthemix.org](mailto:mail@inthemix.org). You will also find discussion guides, transcripts, video clips, resources and more for over forty programs. Select programs are also available with Spanish subtitles.

Other *In the Mix* programs of interest to grades 6-12, college are available on topics including: Organizing for School Reform; Living With serious Illness; ECSTASY Abuse; Steroid Abuse; Dealing with Death; Sex and Abstinence; School Violence; Financial Literacy; Cliques; Drug Abuse; Teen Immigrants; Depression and Suicide; Gun Violence; Computer Literacy; Self-Image and the Media; Sports Participation; Media Literacy; Activism; Alcohol and DWI; Dating Violence; Getting Into College; School to Work Transition; Careers; Relationships; AIDS; and others.

For a complete catalog and ordering information, visit [www.inthemix.org/educators\\_index.html](http://www.inthemix.org/educators_index.html); [www.castleworks.com](http://www.castleworks.com); call (212) 684-3940 or (800) 597-9448; fax us at (212) 684-4015; or write to us at: 114 E. 32nd Street, Suite 903, New York, NY 10016.

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