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_____ART IN EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF ARTS IN ACTION_____

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ABSTRACT

The arts has been at the core of learning for humans since the beginning of time. However as the economy changed the learning systems has changed its approach creating an educational hierarchy deemed by retention instead of development. Approaching students as whole beings with a need for balance and health of their mental, emotional, spiritual and physical selves is not a common teaching practice in Trinidadian educational systems however the arts in action's approach to learning may shed some light on what works so that the arts can be integrated in teaching practices. This case study examined one group's approach to working with different levels of learners specially high school students. This research explored the practices and beliefs about teaching, understanding the needs of those taught, how the methods and strategies were efficiently used with students. This research was, conducted during the course of six months from September 2019 to June of 2020. This was a qualitative and quantitative case study, which allowed the researcher to use questionnaires and interviews to collect and analyse data within a conceptual framework. The collection of data was analysed, reduced, organized and a description of the case written. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that the group in question used the arts to approach teaching and therefore allowed students to connect with the lessons on their terms in an engaging and fun way. There was emphasis on the ability of art to develop the holistic student simultaneously. A variety of teaching strategies were employed to reach and develop skills and learn. The study allows for increased understanding about the arts and its potential for use in public education. A number of recommendations for teacher practice were made as a result of the findings of the study

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Destinee Blanc

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Art in Education: A Study of Arts in Action

INTRODUCTION

Thesis statement. The art-based teaching approach that the AIA uses can help student understanding, participation and educational development if it is integrated into the teaching practices of high school systems in Trinidad.

Rationale. It is no secret that Trinidad's education system is flawed and its capabilities to meet students where they are at has come into question several times. Between 2012 and 2018 the dropout rates at secondary level has increased expeditiously, within seven years a total of 5,074 students dropped out of school according to Documents submitted to Joint Select Committee (JSC) members. These alarming dropout rates should foster urgency to evaluate the current systems as well as engage in alternative teaching practices that can diminish these rates. After all "formal education is highly instrumental and necessary to improve the productive capacity of a population. In short, human capital theorists argue that an educated population is a productive population... Education is an investment in human beings...which is considered as equally or even more worthwhile than that of physical capital" (Woodhall, 1997). Consequently if education is not taken seriously the surplus of uneducated citizens can derail the economy of a country and leave room for 'nefarious' means of survival. Kallon purports that the dropout dilemma is "more complex than

individual failure,” he labels it as “a developmental process influenced by a series of in-school and out-of-school experiences.” To answer the question “why do students leave school prematurely?” he introduced 4 theories.

“The self-esteem model is associated with the concept that students who do not do well become frustrated early in school causing low self-esteem.(1).” In turn this “notion of low self-esteem is used to blame students, thereby masking the structural and institutional inequalities and contradictions these students have to deal with (1).” Therefore it is evident that the current teaching practices may not take every student’s learning ability into consideration. There are many different ways students learn however it seems as though many teachers opt for one over the other. The second model Kallan introduced is the participation-identification model, this theorises “identity and socialization is found through the involvement in school activities, however the lack thereof can cause students to be marginalised from the student body or from the school system as a whole and subsequently drop out (1).” To battle this the researcher must find a way to create fun interactive spaces for interaction among students through class activities. In addition, the deviance model suggests that being branded as a deviant for not adhering to the school rules can also cause dropouts. “With time, the deviants internalise such institutional labels by redefining themselves in terms of their deviant behaviour and are pushed out of school (2).” Another theory that explains school dropout is the “alienation model, to explain why students give up on school when their lived realities do not match the expectations that society and schooling have created (2).”

All in all it seems as if the underlying cause of dropout are cause and effect of teaching practices, student understanding and connecting. The research may not find a way to tackle all of Kallan’s theories however alternative teaching practices is one small step in addressing the issue.

A perfect case study opportunity as it relates to the Caribbean and art-based alternative teaching approaches is the ‘Arts in Action’ of the Department of Creative and Festival Arts (also known as AIA). The AIA was founded in 1994 by Dr Dani Lyndersay and Mr Rawle Gibbons to use theatre and the arts as a means of public education. They believed that the ‘arts’ have a role to play in the process of societal and attitudinal change and development. Their work has been nationally and internationally recognized on several occasions, as it ventures into the public schools as well as community centres and offices.

Parameters of the research. A case study of the AIA sets physical boundaries to the Caribbean region, specifically Trinidad; however the parameters of the study are guided by a detailed understanding, evaluation and comparison of the AIA in relation to the research problem.

Objectives. As a result of this research one should become fully familiarised with the systematic approaches of AIA. The researcher hopes that the results of this research will be able to produce alternative ways in which the arts can be integrated into teaching practices. This research can also be used to inform other research studies in this area. Perhaps it can be used as a model in which a more creative centred learning system can be forged. Furthermore, this research should also generate ideas to formulate new ways to approach student understanding.

Chapter outline. This document layout will consist of three chapters. The first Chapter will contain a literature review that elaborates on the history of education, benefits of art and the connection between play and arts. Chapter two will unfold the analysis of the AIA & student response from the case study. Lastly, chapter three will house the conclusion, solutions and comments of the research.

METHODOLOGY

Genre of Study. The design of this study follows a basic case study approach as the research is geared to uncover how a particular organization (AIA) or system works. Case studies are usually used to research the anthropological studies of cultures, classrooms and communities. The general approach of this genre is close and continuous observation using common techniques such as interview, observations, and literature such as field notes. However the process of case studies varies and therefore they can consist of different elements

Data collection. For this case study the research participants are active members of the AIA, the participating students of AIA sessions as well as a random sample of Trinidadian high school students from Carapichima Secondary School. The data gathered would be sourced through written and oral interviews, questionnaires, and secondary documentary analysis.

The interview is a very flexible approach to collect qualitative information about the experiences, views and feelings of individuals and groups. An interview is a guided conversation between a researcher and the informant. Interviews are good tools for engaging in open-ended conversations and best possible way to gather detailed information.

The questionnaire is a series of written questions for the purpose of collecting quantitative data from respondents. These questions would consists of both open and closed questions in order to create charts and tables for the study.

Lastly, the use of documentary analysis can reveal a great deal about the people or organisation that produced them and the social context in which they emerged. This technique involves obtaining data from existing documents such as newspaper articles, Government policy records, leaflets and minutes of meetings, films, songs, videos, websites and photographs.

Data utilization. The research would be approached from an Empirical (positivist) standpoint whereas the research would be guided by the data collected. In addition both Qualitative and quantitative approaches would be used to breakdown the findings therefore the document would consist of scribal comments of the data as well as statistical interpretations presented in the form of charts, graphs and tables etc.

LITERATURE REVIEW

History of education. To understand the standardized education system present in the 21st-century one must first become familiarised with the history of education and the foundation on which standardized learning was established. According to Gray in the Brief History of Education “with the rise of agriculture and later the industry, children became forced labourers.” This was the gateway to forced structural routines that automatically suppressed a child’s freedom to create and explore. In relation to child labour their natural wonder was now interpreted as a vice that had to be beaten out of them.

Gary explained that eventually “the idea of universal, compulsory education arose and gradually spread for various reasons, some religious and some secular.” According to the Marxist sociology theory this is described as a bourgeoisie and proletariat relationship, in which the governing class decided what was to be learned, making it easier to control masses as this system could be easily used to implant belief systems and cultural norms on a wider scale.

Education was understood as a form of inculcation .With the rise of schooling, people began to think of learning as children's work. The same power-assertive methods that had been used to make children work in fields and factories were quite naturally transferred to the classroom. Punishments of all sorts were understood as intrinsic to the educational process but play was not considered to be a vehicle of learning. In the classroom, play was the enemy of learning. Further in his article (Gray) reveals the complicated views of John Wesley's rules for Wesleyan schools “As we have no play days, so neither do we allow any time for play on any day; for he that plays as a child will play as a man.” similarly miller reiterates in a later paper that “games were largely seen as a waste of time, and more emphasis was placed on routine and memorization (Miller).”

Linking play to the biology. The notion that play has no place in learning overlooks the clear biological link between games and the way humans have learned through the earliest decades (Miller).

In hunter-gatherer societies, human development and learning depended primarily on the method of playing games. Children would play hide-and-seek, manipulate rocks and sticks, and interact with nature in the form of games to learn about their surroundings. This type of information absorption, synthesis, and analysis is the natural, biological way that we have been programmed to learn (Miller).

In many societies, there are studies that prove the standardised educational structure inefficient over the years while some questioned if it truly ever worked in the first place. “The tension within education about play being used as a vehicle for formal and informal learning is a ridiculous one, especially when you think about play as a biological drive (Jenkin).” In addition many historians state that for “hundreds of thousands of years, children educated themselves through self-directed play and exploration and song (Gray, Brief History of Education).” Jenkin proposes that “we should be asking ourselves what right we have in not allowing play to be a major part of children's learning experiences. He asks the question “who do we think we are, suppressing another human being's natural way of engaging with the world? (Jenkin).” As the first prime minister and wise scholar Dr Eric Williams puts it, “To increase student engagement and ownership of learning, we should give students opportunities to do meaningful work.”

Play is connected to art. Further investigation realised the connection between play and art. The “theory is that hunter-gatherers everywhere learned that they could reduce aggression and promote cooperation and sharing by essentially turning all of their social life into play. The playfulness of hunter-gatherer social existence were evident in the adults and

not only in children: “they all engaged regularly and playfully in music, dance, art, and non-competitive games.” here we see the overlap between play and the arts and I wonder are they both the same. (Gray) continues to state the obvious fact that “we are, unfortunately, raising our children now without much play, and they are going into adulthood without much playfulness” Perhaps this contributes to our poor communication as a society, we cannot even agree on what is unbiasedly good for the future of education.

The reason for change. In the 21st century we are not faced with the predisposed problems of the agricultural or industrialisation age, therefore there is no reason to remain stagnant in the way we educate. There is adequate research suggesting that play is a normal part of the human development. Perhaps by using the arts to guide and fulfil the need of play in education the gap can be filled at secondary level. According to Christie “play develops in a 'U' shape, it peaks in preschool and then disappears somewhere during primary school (30-31).” Therefore, if play disappears the arts can be used as a credible alternative to continue a smooth learning process at higher levels of education.

Teaching is a complex, transactional process. In selecting a strategy, a teacher must take into account both the principles of learning and also specific information about his student. A child does not exist independent of his world. Each event in the turn continues to modify him as well as he leaves his mark on each situation he encounters (Gordan 5).

In essence, this quote reflects the famous words of Ignacio Estrada “if a child cannot learn the way we teach we should change the way we teach.” The first step in the right direction may be to cultivate what already exists on the inside of a child, a natural curiosity to learn through play.

On the other hand, there are so many proven studies that suggest the arts are able to elevate a student's level of comprehension and understanding of basic subjects such as Maths and English. One of these studies reported by "the Arts Education Partnership states that school children exposed to drama, music and dance may do a better job at mastering reading, writing and math than those who focus solely on academics, says a report by the (Henry)."

"While it is unknown exactly how learning about art helps literacy skills, the hypothesis is that the use of both talking about art and using inquiry to help students tease apart the meaning of paintings helps them learn how to tease apart the meanings of texts, too. They apply those skills to reading (Kennedy)."

As far as I can tell, it is that the politicians who make education policy and many of the administrators who enforce it, know little about children or learning, and don't pay attention to the two groups of people who do: those who research child development, and the teachers who see directly how the policies affect children (Gray, "Kindergarten Teachers Speak Out").

Gray recalls the times "teachers were trusted to formulate custom-made lessons geared to each child's needs" but because of grade motivated policies and intense syllabus made by constitutions, children are becoming anxious and resentful towards learning." This approach is endangering the health and social development of children.

"Reading can't be rushed. It has been around for only about 6,000 years, so the ability to transform marks on paper into complex meaning is not pre-wired into the brain. It doesn't develop 'naturally,' as do other complex skills such as walking; it can be fostered, but not forced. Too often that's what schools are trying to do now."

(qted in Strauss)

“Children are seen as data points, not individuals. School is treated as a race to the top. Education is not a race, it's an amble. Real education only occurs when everyone is ambling along their path. There is a new emerging gap, the "reality gap"—a gap between the way research shows that young children learn best and the curriculum the district requires us to teach (Gray).”

The arts in education. Although Gray may seem trivial, it is in fact, crucial in terms of today's concern over the type of education the ‘future’ of our society gets. Strauss, an education writer agrees and states that “this approach comes at the expense of children's developmental needs and meaningful content. Play and activity-based learning have been disappearing ... along with the children's natural motivation and love of learning.” Children should enjoy learning and not feel too much pressure, especially at a young age.

Young children are also meant to move around and explore. Many children who sit for long periods experience frustration, muscle cramps, and disruptive behaviours. We have seen an increase in the number of children diagnosed with ADHD and behaviour issues within our schools and we know why this is happening. Yet, we are doing things that will only exacerbate the problem rather than make it better. Kindergarten is the bedrock of lifelong learning, a place where kids should learn how to justify their ideas and solve problems (qted in Gray, “Kindergarten Teachers Speak Out”).

Studies show that various art forms benefit students in different ways.

Drama helps with understanding social relationships, complex issues and emotions; improves concentrated thought and story comprehension. While music improves math achievement and proficiency, reading and cognitive development; boosts verbal exam scores and skills for second-language learners. Dance helps with creative thinking, originality, elaboration and flexibility; improves expressive skills, social tolerance,

self-confidence and persistence. it is also believed that visual arts improve content and organization of writing; promote sophisticated reading skills and interpretation of the text, reasoning about scientific images and reading readiness. Multi-arts like theatre (a combination of art forms) helps with reading, verbal and math skills; improves the ability to collaborate and higher-order thinking skills (Henry).

Jenkin quotes several educators' point of view on play and arts aiding in education. a few policymakers shared their shared experience of the conversion to support early years' approach, where children are encouraged to learn through play and active learning. "It's been interesting to watch this approach percolate through the primary school, where play is now often used productively with older children". However, most think the same approach would not apply to the secondary school curriculum because "the secondary school curriculum has evolved into a set of formal learning outcomes that often lead the teacher to adopt a methodology where they have complete control over the nature of the learning process, the criteria by which success will be measured and the duration of the learning experience. This is driven by a tacit expectation that 'good' teaching requires explicit goals and formalised learning steps."

Thankfully through associations and groups like the Arts in Action, Trinidad, Sistren, Jamaica and Theatre for Development in Africa and Asia students could engage and learn through the use of theatre and the arts. However these associations are not limited to schools and standardized curriculums, their education relies on "pertinent societal issues as it educates all of society". It is a common belief among them that "the arts have a role to play in the process of social and attitudinal change and development" the use "art-based techniques to treat with issues ranging from change management to AIDS/HIV to maths". However most of these groups are not government funded, although they are all internationally known and have received awards.

Conclusion. As has been noted “for hundreds of thousands of years, children educated themselves through self-directed play and exploration and song (Gray, Brief History).” With the rise of agriculture and later the industry, children became forced labourers and as a result play was labelled as the enemy. However in the 21st century there is no reason to remain stagnant in the way we educate. There is adequate research suggesting that play is a normal part of the human development and quite competent. As previously stated the arts are the closest thing to play and they are proven to boost the understanding of academic knowledge. Therefore incorporating the arts in teaching practices has the ability to bridge education and play. The researcher believes that the close observation of any association that use the arts to teach may uncover potent data to better structure our educational system for a new generation of effective teaching.

CHAPTER 2: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Introduction. This descriptive study presents the Arts in Action approach to teaching while uncovering methods and student observations. The study sought to understand the problems students faced in class as well as their views on the arts. This particular study was pursued to understand the nature of the arts as a whole in relation to education. A deeper understanding of the arts in action was deemed important in hopes that it would illuminate an alternate way to approach education and give reason push out or adjust the current form of public education. A conceptualized framework was used to collect and analyse this data. The references made in this section to the interviews uses the simple format of the interviewee name in brackets at the end of interview excerpts. The study is outlined by three questions, how does the AIA educate, why is it important to change the way we educate and how would methods of the arts be effective on education.

AIA's idea and beliefs about education. The core values and theories of education that guide the Arts in Action outreach programme is an extension of the AIA's founder, Dr. Dani Lyndersay. She believes that there is no 'one size fits all' method, she heavily states within her replies that "everyone learns differently" and therefore education must transcend past the idea of learning to repeat. It is her objective that "knowledge is not simply received but that the learner needs to be given opportunities to take new knowledge, reflect upon it, use it, sometimes reshape it and eventually fit it into what is already known."

Probably the most important point to consider is that we are not trying to be COOKS – i.e. following a recipe in the hopes that it will solve all problems. We are trying to be CHEFS -- i.e. those that build their own repertoire (or menu) – adapting to the situation and using their world experience and their culturally sensitive attitudes to touch the palettes and senses of their participants. (Dr. Lyndersay)

Furthermore, she believes that the arts play a huge role in creating these opportunities for student edification. Her lengthy experience with the arts and AIA has afforded her the confidence in “the creative arts and its processes as vibrant tools for learning, problem-solving, communication and pro-social behaviour.” As a result of the AIA’s art-based approach to education both academic understanding and the holistic development of a student can be attained. In addition to as a constant overlap between the two are evident.

Academic. The theory that children are biologically inclined to methods of learning that involves drama elements such as visuals, sound, movement and role-play is consistent with her personal belief that “drama forms are the expressive mould which all learning develops out of” therefore using it as a vehicle to teach academics certainly improves a child’s likelihood to understand what is taught in class.

Holistic education.

I strongly believe that of all the arts, drama/theatre is best suited to be an illuminator of ourselves and the issues in our lives.

It is a magic casement, opening worlds and doors which engage participants affectively through explorations in movement, sound, the visual arts, improvisation, speech and role play – to name just some of the ways in to these worlds.

It exemplifies the processes of exploring, perceiving, creating, and appraising as reinforced through experiences in art, dance, drama, and music, and demonstrates how one area of learning generates activities, and change, in another.

Dr. Lyndersay describes the holistic development of students to be just as essential as academia for a bright future.

If this (the arts) can deepen and challenge students' perceptions of themselves, encourage them to assume responsibility, work independently, and, socially accept group decisions, develop new interests, increase their inventiveness, and certainly motivate them toward new information – then new clear horizons for the future can be envisaged.

Improving the current educational approaches to Education in Trinidad. Dr.

Lyndersay acknowledges that “there is an approved (national) syllabus which is recommended and has been created with a lot of thought.” However she interjects that “the environment is continually changing since both the person and society change and grow, physically as well as intellectually.” The problem is that the current curriculum and its approaches appear somewhat outdated. The needs of this student generation have changed and so have the challenges and they face. The economy is shifting in a new direction where technology is increasing and many jobs we are being prepared for may be replaced with robotic systems or change altogether. However, the need for creative and critical thinking skills will be an asset. Therefore the use of the arts and its approaches can secure a better future for this generation of learners

If a young person is given opportunities to explore and understand his changing environment through activities involving sensory perception, then a heightened awareness of his surroundings will develop.

Drama and the arts can play an important role toward this awareness and therefore to the development of students who will become capable of responding rationally to their changing environment.

Current student issues in class. Education can be viewed as a business investment that can generate profit. By that same standard the success of a business depends on the ability to understand the issue and meet the needs of the consumer. Fig.6. clearly show that students in this survey has a 75% liking towards school and learning, therefore idea of learning is not the problem. However when it comes to understanding lessons in class only 20% claim to always understand while an alarming 76% of the students understand sometimes(see fig.10.). What is more concerning is that out of that 20% who always understand only 4% of students are awarded grade A's. The average grade of the sample are C's which account for 56% (see fig.14.). It can be interpreted that the point from understanding to testing is flawed or perhaps it is simply the misunderstanding of what understanding entails in academics, either way there is a breakdown of communication between student and teacher concerning what he understands. In relation to (fig.14.) evidence of lower performance is seen in CXC exam sections for understanding and comprehension. Through this data it can be inferred that the approach in developing a student's critical thinking skills and analysis skills. As well as it can simply mean that students are not thought how to do these things at all. In addition there more than 50% of students indicate that they don't feel comfortable enough to make it known that they don't understand things (see fig.11.). Perhaps this is another reason for the high percentage of students that only understand class lessons 'sometimes'. Furthermore (fig.7.) suggests other factors if unaddressed can decrease a student's the willingness to learn. Perhaps (fig.7.) in relation to (fig.11.) insinuates that these factors are actually detrimental to student education because they do not feel comfortable sharing what hinders them.

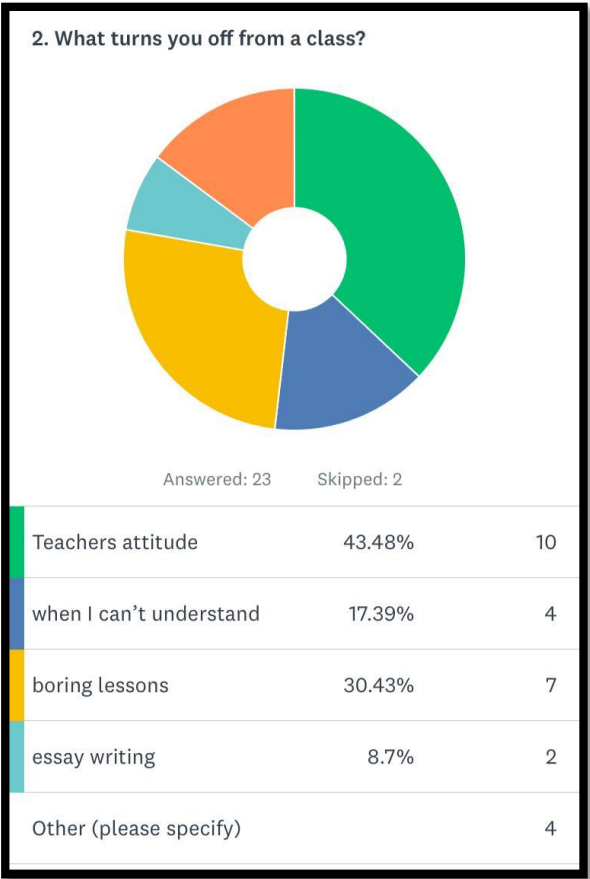


Fig.7. factors that contribute to students not liking the classroom

A lot of times we see teachers hold onto an authoritative demeanour that is not always beneficial to a child’s learning and only that create a gap between student and teacher communications. (Interviewee A)

Different learning abilities.

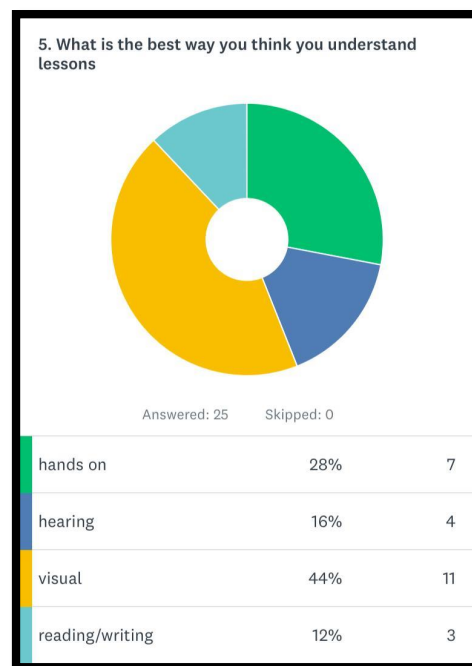


Fig.5. comparison between different methods of learning

In (fig.5.) it is clear that classrooms are filled with a mixture of learners. The figure listed four ways of learning, however within one of Dr. Lyndersay's answers she mentioned the "the nine intelligences, the proven scientific fact that each adult/ student/child learns differently. (Howard Gardner)"

1. The Linguistic intelligence (word smart)
2. Visual intelligence (picture smart)
3. Logical-mathematical intelligence (number/reasoning smart)
4. Bodily-Kinaesthetic intelligence (body smart)
5. Musical intelligence (music smart)
6. Interpersonal intelligence (people smart)
7. Intrapersonal intelligence (self-smart)
8. Existential Intelligence (ability to question existence)
9. Naturalist intelligence (nature smart)

Upon analysis it became clear that most of these intelligences are not recognised in schools and therefore it is possible that the gifting of many students are not cultivated and used to help them understand and develop as students. In comparison, the AIA's educational focus fosters all nine intelligences as through its art-based approaches and methods, whereas there are better learning outcomes.

We create applied integrated arts—drama and theatre—for any and every subject: no holes barred. If there is a subject that requires or requests an Arts-in-Action intervention, we do our research and create a production with audience participation. (Dr. Lyndersay)

Furthermore the definition of success is changed when the arts are used to teach. The objective shifts from 'learning to retain' to 'learning to develop holistically'.

Interviewee A

Success is usually dependant on how many students participate and how much they give. Whether or not they change their opinions, the important thing is that they are able to voice their opinion and reflect why they think a certain way. The main goal is that it creates opportunity for discussion and intrapersonal skills. Once this is seen it is deemed successful.

Effective art-based methods and strategies. This case study of the AIA reflected a tremendous amount of information on methods and strategies used to teach students. The findings from the written and oral interviews were very descriptive and often shared observations of the student development and effectiveness of particular methods.

By weaving the arts into and through our content, in naturally (culturally relevant) aligned ways, we are providing significance to student learning, and

giving them an opportunity to connect their world to our classrooms. Definite choices are made, so that we can empower them and encourage them to find the solutions and ways to solve (class, race, ethnic, family) issues themselves (Dr.Lyndersay).

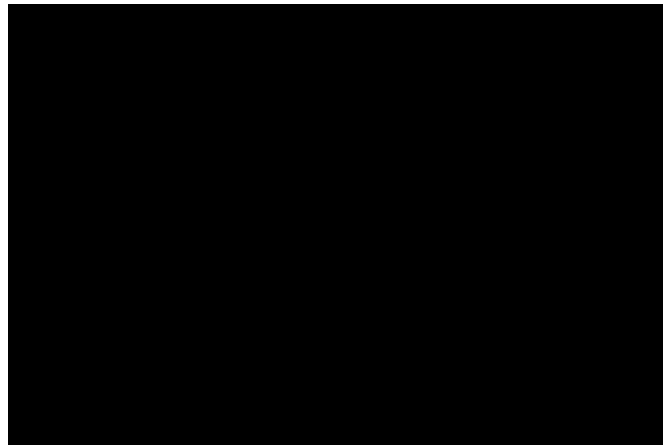
One of the most important questions that was asked to these field AIA members is if they think students understand academics better with the aid of the arts and why? From this simple question I was able to assess if they believed in the work they were apart of as well as gage its efficiency since I was unable to complete any field- observations for this case-study.

Interviewee A

Yes they do, the arts uses different methods of hands on teaching and every aspect of art targets different student skills. Whether it is oral, visual or something else the arts challenge and teach students outside of the conventional means of teaching. This is good because there is something for everyone including the students who cannot adapt to conventional teaching methods.

Interviewee B

Students do understand academics better with the involvement of the arts, reasons being in this opinion is the difference in a person's learning abilities. The arts is an Avenue of learning that allows one to broaden their perspectives be it issues in society, education and much more.

Student learning.

In fig.15. Camp recap video from Caribbean Arts-in-Action; “Arts-in-Action clean”; youtube; March 14, 2018, www.youtube.com/watch?v=We_Yz47bCwE

This video showcased some art-based methods that the AIA used at one of its camps, the video is a compilation of photographs, videos clips and song. The photographs used showcased student creations from recyclable materials and gardening, whereas the videos conveyed student artwork based on saving the environment as well as verbal explanations of their work and their thoughts of its importance. Another method observed is the use of student directed dramatization, and poetry/ spoken work. Although the music itself was not observed as a method used to teach students in this video, the music coincides with the topic and therefore demonstration that musical forms of art could be used as another method of teaching.

Some techniques used in the arts that can help teach different parts of the high school curriculum and education across the board:

Mirroring: statues, sculptor and clay, blind group photos, etc. Partners “mirror” each other’s actions. This strategy is used in many different situations in drama-in-education, but is specifically useful in drama and dance; (even physics and algebra =

balance connectivity etc.) It is a technique that provides students with one of the many ways to share their understanding of a situation using movement, concentration, and problem-solving skills.

Stepping into a Painting or a Photo: A photograph or a painting is chosen (relevant to the issue at hand), which is studied, and “inspected” to try and find a personal meaning for each participant. Scenes can be created (through a group consensus) to create a global story from the painting or photos – i.e. to find the analogies. (Cloth and props, and art materials, as well as simple musical instruments, can be used to enhance the experience.)

A call-and-response activity: found objects are used to create “music” which is then incorporated to build improvisations and composition skills, and even to practice fluency. Because it is rhythmically based with an *ostinato*, (but can also use a large array of song-games), it can be used effectively with reading and math concepts. Students are encouraged to record the “music” with invented (group agreed) symbols and drawn out on lines like music and a ‘conductor’ is engaged to lead the rendition.

(Dr. Lyndersay)

Teaching teachers. The AIA also tries to facilitate teacher development as this practice can help them adopt better teaching methods and art techniques for further student development and understanding. In addition to inviting teachers to observe AIA sessions, short and long workshops and courses are developed and geared towards specific teacher based needs.

If convenient we will do pre-workshops to prepare teachers, or follow-through with workshops geared specifically for teachers, again with activities geared for further investigation for classroom work which will deepen the experiences or work. These

might be called “Lesson Seeds”i.e. activities which continue to spark the interest, the needs and ways to find solutions to issues.

(Dr. Lyndersay)

Arts-in-Action is an OUTREACH programme however we create “Made-to-Order” workshops – responding to the immediate needs of a community or school... not necessarily trying to systematically qualify all teachers at all levels to incorporate the arts into their classrooms and their syllabi (programmes).

Since 1990 the Centre for Creative Arts (now The UWI Department of Creative & Festival Arts) has been running -- month long; semester long; two to three-year-long courses for Primary school teachers, Community social workers (Best Village etc.) and compulsory courses on the-ins-and-outs of Drama in Education = Educative Theatre, for Secondary school teachers. (Dr. Lyndersay)

Conclusion. All in all the aim of the study was achieved and the case study on the arts in Action was able to decode alternative way to teach both student and teacher with methods that were lodged within the visual and performing arts. These methods and strategies proved to be efficient in relation to the student surveys and field observations of the current and active members of the Arts in Action. The research gave more insight than anticipated and seemed to make room for further investigation. Although the aim was to find methods from the arts that could be used to help academic education, it presented to be much more effective than current teaching practices. These art-based methods also develops the student socially, emotionally, physically and morally so that they are able to critically analyse the world around them and find their place.

CHAPTER 3: CONCLUSION

Introduction. In this final chapter, recommendations for practices, policy and further research will be the basis of the body followed by a brief closing statement.

Recommendations for practices. One of the main factors that drove this research was the need of the student therefore in order for educational institutions to remain student-centered and keep the student's opinion in mind it is best to and leave the line of communication open. Practices that incorporate some form of annual/termly teacher evaluation survey at secondary and even primary levels should be a requirement. It would help to minimize the teacher-student gap as this is a form as accountability and therefore challenges the teacher to keep up with the needs of his/her students. Perhaps this idea of double accountability can be applied between the ministry of education/ schools and their teacher. The idea leans into community building and if it starts at the top then a trickle effect can be achieved. If two-way accountability becomes a core value in the education system the experience of education will improve across the board. Furthermore method-based workshop for teachers should become a mandatory practice, this way the teacher has a community of other teachers and educators to help build the teachers ability to practice the methods efficiently and become innovative enough to structure their own methods and student interactions.

Recommendations for policies. Understanding the nine types of intelligence and having methods to foster efficient learning is good however it can be used a step further. This intelligence structure should be the foundation that students are grouped into classes and taught. New enrolling policies that schools should adapt is the notion of grouping by innate intelligence not grades. This way the student builds on what he already has inside of him and the teacher is able to fulfill his educationally needs better because his needs are clear. The

grouping would help structure classes and meet the needs of students as a whole. They would also need to group teachers and educate them through tailored workshops and outlines.

Recommendations for further research. More independent studies and investigations should be done and proposals submitted to the government officials and education sectors. Forward thinking educators from all over the world should be outsourced to help educate and develop the education sector on all forums. Maybe the questions need to change. Instead of looking for ways to improve the existing system, maybe it should be abolished and something entirely new take its place create different spaces. More research on the other ways to further develop student's holistic experience in schools such as the environment, activities, buddy systems and self-directed learning.

Closing statement. This study has made it possible to learn about education and the arts as it relates to the development of the student, and in the context of history, how it is it used in the country and what it can become. This case study was very informative on many levels and not only was it able to prove the thesis statement but add to it. In conclusion there I can say the importance of the arts in in education.

APPENDIIX A

Written Interview (structured)

1. What are the values that guide your work with these students?
2. What do hope to achieve by working with schools, is it holistic development or educational understanding?
3. What are the pillars of education that the AIA stands on?
4. What theories and beliefs influence the way you teach and work with students?
5. Do you think art-based teaching is better than traditional approaches for at-risk students and why?
6. Tell me how do you approach situational learning in comparison to academic learning sessions with high schoolers? Would the approach change much when working with different grades.
7. Could you systematically break down how each element of the arts is used by the AIA for the benefit of the student?
8. What factors do you consider when choosing art elements to teach specific academic subjects in schools?
9. What are your thoughts on using the arts to help teach the high school curriculum across the board?
10. Do you have any teacher focused workshops and why?
11. From your professional perspective is the notion of integrating the arts into all academic education realistic and to what extent?
12. When teaching students what subjects does the AIA mainly focus on and why?
13. Do you ever have teachers assist with developing /planning your academic sessions?

Oral Interview (semi-structured)

1. Do you think students understand academics better with the aid of the arts and why?
2. What is the most used aspect of the arts when it comes to furthering student: understanding, educational development and participation in your sessions?
3. Can you give an experience where the attitude of a student(s) changed during the course of your session? What do you think was responsible for that change?
4. How often do you invite teachers to observe the learning experience you have cultivated?
5. Have you had any experiences where a teacher expressed that your methods would have influenced them to make adjustments to their teaching style?
6. Can you comment on how you determine the success of a session?
7. Share one experience where you witnessed the impact of your work on students?
8. How has working with students within the AIA affected your personal view of what education should be?
9. Give your view of our current teaching practices within our education system and how it could be improved.

Questionnaire 1 (close ended)

1. Does the 'arts in action' session feel like?
 - ☐ Work
 - ☐ Fun

2. Do you think you learn a lot more in this setting than in class?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No

3. What would you say if the arts in action thought you all your subjects at school?
 - ☐ Strongly agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Agree somewhat
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Strongly disagree

4. What do you like most about these sessions?
 - ☐ Art
 - ☐ Dance
 - ☐ Music
 - ☐ Drama
 - ☐ Other

5. What is the best way you think you understand lessons?
 - ☐ Hands on

- Hearing
- Visual
- Reading/ writing

Questionnaire 2 (semi-structured)

1. Do you like school and learning in class?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

2. What turns you off from a class?

- ☐ Teacher's attitude
- ☐ When I can't understand
- ☐ Boring lessons
- ☐ Essay writing

Other (please specify)

3. What would make learning in class fun?

- ☐ Creative projects
- ☐ Dramatization
- ☐ Artwork
- ☐ More teacher-student engagement

Other (please specify)

4. How do you feel about the assignments you get in class?

- ☐ Difficult
- ☐ Easy
- ☐ Bored
- ☐ Anxious
- ☐ Confused

5. Do you participate in any activities in school aside from classes and how does it make you feel? _____

6. How often do you understand the work in class?

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Barely
- ☐ Never

7. Do you feel comfortable asking for help in class when you don't understand things?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

8. Do you feel like you can keep up with your class?

☐ Yes

☐ No

9. Are you classified as a good student or a delinquent?

☐ Good

☐ Delinquent

10. What do your average grades look like on test scores?

☐ A

☐ B

☐ C

☐ D

☐ F

APPENDIX B

Answers to oral interviews

1. Do you think students understand academics better with the aid of the arts and why?

Interviewee A

Yes they do, the arts uses different methods of hands on teaching of teaching and every aspect of art targets different student skills. Whether it is oral, visual or something else the arts challenge and teach students outside of the conventional means of teaching. This is good because there is something for everyone including the students who cannot adapt to conventional teaching methods.

Interviewee B

Students do understand academics better with the involvement of the arts, reasons being in this opinion is the difference in a person's learning abilities. The arts is an Avenue of learning that allows one to broaden their perspectives be it issues in society, education and much more.

2. What is the most used aspect of the arts in AIA when it comes to furthering student: understanding, educational development and participation in your sessions?

Interviewee A

I would think that it is visual arts, the graphics, pictures etc as they are used on a wider scale to explain topics and ideas. It also helps to engage students in participation and creative thinking when they are given artistic tasks. The visual aspect of art is very versatile and I think it is used the most even in conventional teaching.

Interviewee B

I would say drama in education & theatre in education are one of the most utilized techniques that are utilized by AIA in their student engagement, it is easy, fun and interactive. A lot of different topics can be learned as it relates to society and education. Drama & theatre are commonly used in the holistic development of a student. It has the ability to start social issue conversations as well as discussions for possible solutions from the view of the participants, it gets them thinking.

3. Can you give an experience where the attitude of a student(s) changed during the course of your session? What do you think was responsible for that change?

Interviewee A

For this one session at the beginning of a session it was a common belief shared among the students that a man was supposed to be strong and take charge. However after doing a domestic violence scene where the man acted both strong and in charge another discussion about manliness and the intent behind the actions. This simple demonstration caused them to critically think about gender norms and rationalization. The aim is not to change their opinions or ideas but to encourage critical thinking skills and a clear thought process.

Interviewee B

Often times students open up and testify about changes in their approach to problems be it major or minor. One experience of attitudinal change was a young man's realisation that his anger was out of hand and had to change his approach to situations that angered him. The workshop in 'CCCC' entitled choices was able to demonstrate an issue, highlight cause and effect and discuss different ways a person get help. I think the drama

and music was able to build the students analytical thinking and therefore helped him reflect and realise his short-comings

4. How often do you invite teachers to observe the learning experience you have cultivated and why?

Interviewee A

We invite teachers very often so that they can learn ways to openly communicate with students. A lot of times we see teachers hold onto an authoritative demeanour that is not always beneficial to a child's learning and only that create a gap between student and teacher.

Interviewee B

Teachers are welcomed to observe especially when we teach how to deal with social issues such as bullying. However the main reason they are invited to tap into our learning resources is to combat communication issues and gain effective learning methods.

5. Have you had any experiences where a teacher expressed that your methods would have influenced them to make adjustments to their teaching style?

Interviewee A

The most common thing that teachers usually take away from us are 'attention grabbers' for student engagement, whether it's an exercise or the in which we use language to communicate with students.

Interviewee B

Yes there were testimonies from teachers that credited our AIA approaches however they mostly came from primary school teachers really. One particular technique these teachers favour is the theatre-based 'one clap'. It's a attention rester that is used to quiet down younger students when they are restless.

6. Can you comment on how you determine the success of a session?

Interviewee A

This is usually dependant on how many students participate and how much they give. Whether or not they change their opinions, the important thing is that they are able to voice their opinion and reflect why they think a certain way. The main goal is that it creates opportunity for discussion and intrapersonal skills. Once this is seen it is deemed successful.

Interviewee B

My session's success is determined by the responses I get from students, I often keep in contact with my students and give them an open line for communication. This has afforded me insight to continuous student development outside of the sessions. For instance some students would have confided in me their struggles with school, parents or the will to continue fighting after we covered different topics through the arts. It almost always leads to that student applying what he learned in the session and developing himself.

7. Share one experience where you witnessed the impact of your work on students?

Interviewee A

I cannot share just one experience. Overall I witness students that are motivated to try again whether it's to do better in class or CXC. A simple interactive presentation can go a long way as it not only focuses on learning to repeat but it allows students to voice their thoughts and feel heard. Holistic development actually helps the process of learning. A child who feels heard will feel more inclined to listen because they feel comfortable addressing their needs because they are confident it will be met.

Interviewee B

As I have previously said I like leaving the lines of communication open and because of this I have witnessed a long term impact on a student. Before attending the session he recalled constant conflict between him and his father concerning morning chores. However after using what he learnt in the session about conflict resolution he and his father was able to find a way to end the conflict and he comes to school happier on mornings now.

8. How has working with students within the AIA affected your personal view of what education should be?

Interviewee A

It has led me to believe that education and teaching does not have to be grounded in the whole 'black board' mentality or PowerPoint presentation. A lot of times we forget to talk to our students for them to understand why we are doing certain things. We need to create bounds and understand them in order to teach them and motivate them to want to learn. Even in my own experiences with education I realise that the typical teacher doesn't just comes in to teach a lesson without really understanding the student and his needs and that needs to change.

Interviewee B

Arts in action broadened my horizons on perspectives and techniques that can be utilized when approaching education. It made me aware of the wide variety of teaching and learning styles and how the arts can benefit students. It has also made me aware of many problems students face and multiple ways to solve them. AIA has taught me that education is not really about books. More innovative ideas are needed to challenge young minds and cause them to think for themselves.

9. Give your view of our current teaching practices within our education system and how it could be improved.

Interviewee A

This would vary from classroom to classroom and I can't speak for everyone and their practices, however there is always room for improvement and the AIA has made that clear. There are always methods in the arts that are deemed to be more successful than techniques used today but a lot of teachers are unaware of it. Perhaps they should become more familiar with psychology and theatre methods and how these subjects cross into education. This way the classroom dynamic is changed and student based issues can be addressed. As a teacher I believe you teach more than content you help students live lives therefore more emphasis should be placed on teaching practices than content.

Interviewee B

Our current teaching system is trash and is long overdue to make changes that keep the student development in mind. However, as seen with AIA it can be improved if more investment was made into the arts department. So many schools lack proper rooms and tools to cultivate student interest. The arts can promote a diverse individual who would benefit from the skills of the disciplines and have a creative outlet.

Answer to written interview.

From Dani Lyndersay, PhD. © June 2020

To answer some of your questions I am going to quote from a number of my different published and unpublished articles, or else it will be very time consuming...)

1. What are the values that guide your work with these students?

Probably the most important point to consider is that we are not trying to be COOKS – i.e. Following a recipe in the hopes that it will solve all problems. We are trying to be CHEFS -- i.e. those that build their own repertoire (or menu) – adapting to the situation and using their world experience and their culturally sensitive attitudes to touch the palettes and senses of their participants.

I strongly believe that of all the arts, drama/theatre is best suited to be an illuminator of ourselves and the issues in our lives.

It is a magic casement, opening worlds and doors which engage participants affectively through explorations in movement, sound, the visual arts, improvisation, speech and role play – to name just some of the ways in to these worlds.

It exemplifies the processes of exploring, perceiving, creating, and appraising as reinforced through experiences in art, dance, drama, and music, and demonstrates how one area of learning generates activities, and change, in another.

2. What do you hope to achieve by working with schools, is it holistic development or educational understanding?

Certainly it is BOTH... and they overlap continually.

3. What are the pillars of education that the AIA stands on?

Since 1994, Arts-in-Action, has attempted to fulfil the urgent need to empower persons—young and old—with appropriate tools of behaviour to generate options in living and working more effectively.

Our conviction is that the creative arts and its processes are vibrant tools for learning, problem-solving, communication and pro-social behaviour—and we have seen that this conviction has invigorated, stimulated, and empowered thousand of Trinbagonians in schools, communities, corporate boardrooms, or even on the streets liming.

4. What theories and beliefs influence the way you teach and work with students?

My personal beliefs are based on the concept that knowledge is not simply received but that the learner needs to be given opportunities to take new knowledge, reflect upon it, use it, sometimes reshape it and eventually fit it into what is already known.

I believe and know that drama forms the expressive mould out of which all learning develops. Think how a child learns: watching, listening, mimicking, and trying out new ways, words and manners: succeeding, sometimes failing, but always ready to try again.

That is the overall goal: the development of the whole person—socially, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually.

If this can deepen and challenge students' perceptions of themselves, encourage them to assume responsibility, work independently, and, socially accept group decisions, develop new interests, increase their inventiveness, and certainly motivate them toward new information – then new clear horizons for the future can be envisaged.

5. Do you think art-based teaching is better than traditional approaches for at-risk students and why?
 - I am not a child therapist or psychologist, but I have 'studied' drama therapies and seen amazing developments.
 - Each child (student/participant) must be carefully assessed: one set of Art-based strategies cannot and will not solve all the issues that at-risk students are faced with on a daily basis.
 - When drama and the arts (music (drumming), visual arts (freedom of manipulative materials & expression), puppetry (playing out in protected spaces), movement and dance (imagination, timing, listening, improvisation to sound and space), etc. are employed effectively, the major learning processes of observation—imitation and participation—are realized.
 - 'Vocabularies' grow (be they physical, mental and spiritually), independent thinking is stimulated, as well as comprehension and the appreciation of their life situations.
 - Furthermore, drama and arts activities offer participants a well-spring of opportunities which allow him or her to classify, categorize, and take part

in deductive thinking which is the basis for all scientific and reflective thinking.

- When these opportunities are offered, then the participant can be given the time to learn deference, self-discipline, and begin to establish tangible experiences and relationships on which to base his likes and dislikes.
- When he or she is encouraged to build a sense of respect for his or her own ideas, to become aware of and understand his feelings – and actions—to interact creatively with others, then a firm foundation can be built on which he/she may develop further.

6. Tell me how do you approach situational learning in comparison to academic learning sessions with high schoolers?

Academic learning situations are always there. There is an approved (national) syllabus which is recommended and has been created with a lot of thought.

BUT --- everybody's environment is continually changing since both the person and society change and grow, physically as well as intellectually.

Students need experiences to help them understand what their bodies can do, where and how they can move, and why their bodies are changing so rapidly. If a young person is given opportunities to explore and understand his changing environment through activities involving sensory perception, then a heightened awareness of his surroundings will develop.

Drama and the arts can play an important role toward this awareness and therefore to the development of students who will become capable of responding rationally to their changing environment.

Would the approach change much when working with different grades?

Yes certainly. The content will change, but the methods (strategies & techniques) need not.

At each age level and at each grade level young people need to be given the appropriate opportunities to understand and to explore their changing environments. Some of these activities may specifically “help” him to learn to move and speak confidently and appropriately in a wide variety of situations; explore and ‘rehearse’ activities which can prepare him/her for life; as well as gain specific training in social behaviour; expand his resources and thereby promote an open and ready mind for fresh learning.

This is holistic learning/education.

BUT: it is recognized and appreciated that many teachers are concerned with the “how to” and believe they don’t have the space, time or resources to integrate the arts into their core subjects: how to use Music and Math together; Social studies and Art; Language and Literature with Dance or IT; Drama and writing, and on and on. There are hundreds of videos on the internet for inspiration and “know how”. Check them out and begin to collect a library of techniques.

7. Could you systematically break down how each element of the arts is used by the AIA for the benefit of the student?

Please research this yourself.... But probably the most important element in your search is to understand the Nine Intelligences... the proven scientific fact that each adult/ student/child learns differently. (Howard Gardner)

8. What factors do you consider when choosing art elements to teach specific academic subjects in schools?

By weaving the arts into and through our content, in naturally (culturally relevant) aligned ways, we are providing significance to student learning, and giving them an opportunity to connect their world to our classrooms. Definite choices are made, so that we can empower them and encourage them to find the solutions and ways to solve (class, race, ethnic, family) issues themselves.

9. What are your thoughts on using the arts to help teach the high school curriculum across the board?

Definitely valuable. See my reasons above... and why the arts are essential for the education for all intelligences (H. Gardner) within all periods of history.

See: creative drama, drama in education, educative theatre, integration drama, process drama, etc. etc. etc. activities that encourage improvisation, and creation will be ultimately follow.

Some immediate examples might be:

- (i) Mirroring: statues, sculptor and clay, blind group photos, etc.

Partners “mirror” each other’s actions. This strategy is used in many different situations in drama-in-education, but is specifically useful in drama and dance; (even physics and algebra = balance connectivity etc.) It is a technique that provides students with one of the many ways to share

their understanding of a situation using movement, concentration, and problem-solving skills.

- (ii) Stepping into a Painting or a Photo: A photograph or a painting is chosen (relevant to the issue at hand), which is studied, and “inspected” to try and find a personal meaning for each participant. Scenes can be created (through a group consensus) to create a global story from the painting or photos – i.e. to find the analogies. (Cloth and props, and art materials, as well as simple musical instruments, can be used to enhance the experience.)
- (iii) A call-and-response activity: found objects are used to create “music” which is then incorporated to build improvisations and composition skills, and even to practice fluency. Because it is rhythmically based with an ostinato, (but can also use a large array of song-games), it can be used effectively with reading and math concepts. Students are encouraged to record the “music” with invented (group agreed) symbols and drawn out on lines like music and a ‘conductor’ is engaged to lead the rendition.

10. Do you have any teacher focused workshops and why?

I don’t know what Department or courses you are taking at the moment, or what this questionnaire is for: BUT YES since 1990 the Centre for Creative Arts (now The UWI Department of Creative & Festival Arts) has been running -- month long; semester long; two to three-year-long courses for Primary school teachers, Community social workers (Best Village etc.) and compulsory courses on the-ins-and-outs of Drama in Education = Educative Theatre, for Secondary school teachers.

Arts-in-Action is an OUTREACH programme which very often works with, inspires, and creates “teacher-focused workshops.” BUT more often than not we create “Made-to-Order” workshops – responding to the immediate needs of a community or school... not necessarily trying to systematically qualify all teachers at all levels to incorporate the arts into their classrooms and their syllabi (programmes).

11. From your professional perspective is the notion of integrating the arts into all academic education realistic and to what extent?

I think I have answered this question.

12. When teaching students what subjects does the AIA mainly focus on and why?

We create applied integrated arts—drama and theatre—for any and every subject: no holes barred. If there is a subject that requires or requests an Arts-in-Action intervention, we do our research and create a production with audience participation.

13. Do you ever have teachers assist with developing /planning your academic sessions?

Certainly.... As often as required or appropriate, we do interventions in schools with teachers watching, and then if convenient we will do pre-workshops to prepare teachers, or follow-through with workshops geared specifically for teachers, again with activities geared for further investigation for classroom work which will deepen the experiences or work. These might be called “Lesson Seeds”i.e. activities which continue to spark the interest, the needs and ways to find solutions to issues.

Answers to Questionnaire 1 (close ended)

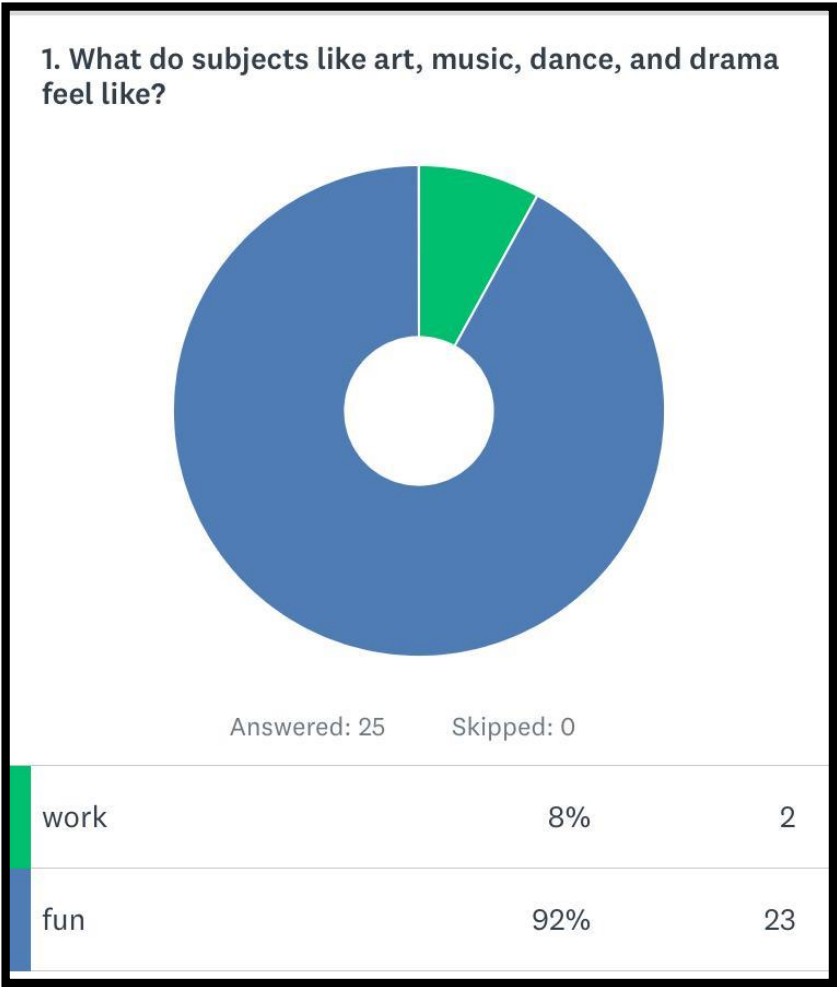


Fig.1. students view on the arts being fun or work



Fig.2. students showing their willingness to engage or not in the art forms

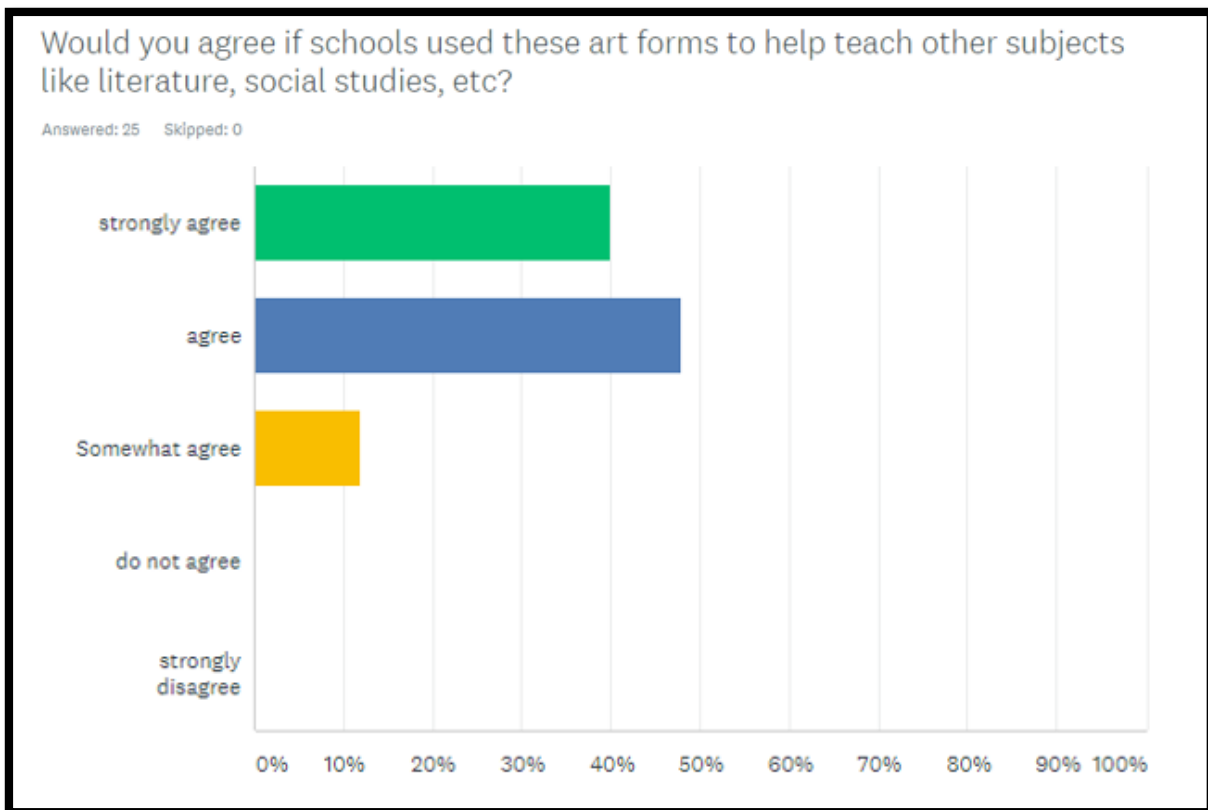


Fig.3. line graph reflecting students' view on using the art forms to assist in teaching other subject areas

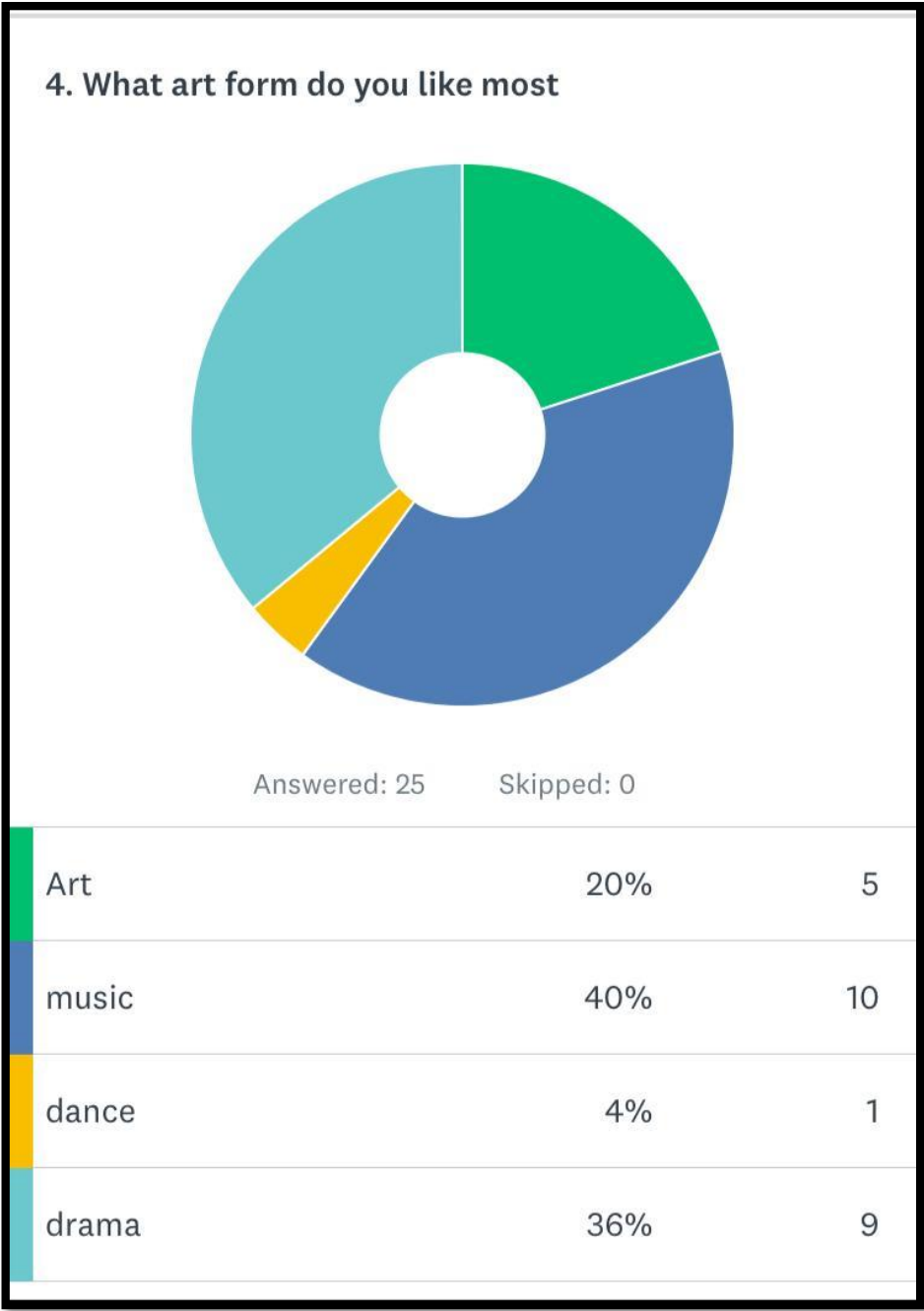


Fig.4.the art form most liked by the students

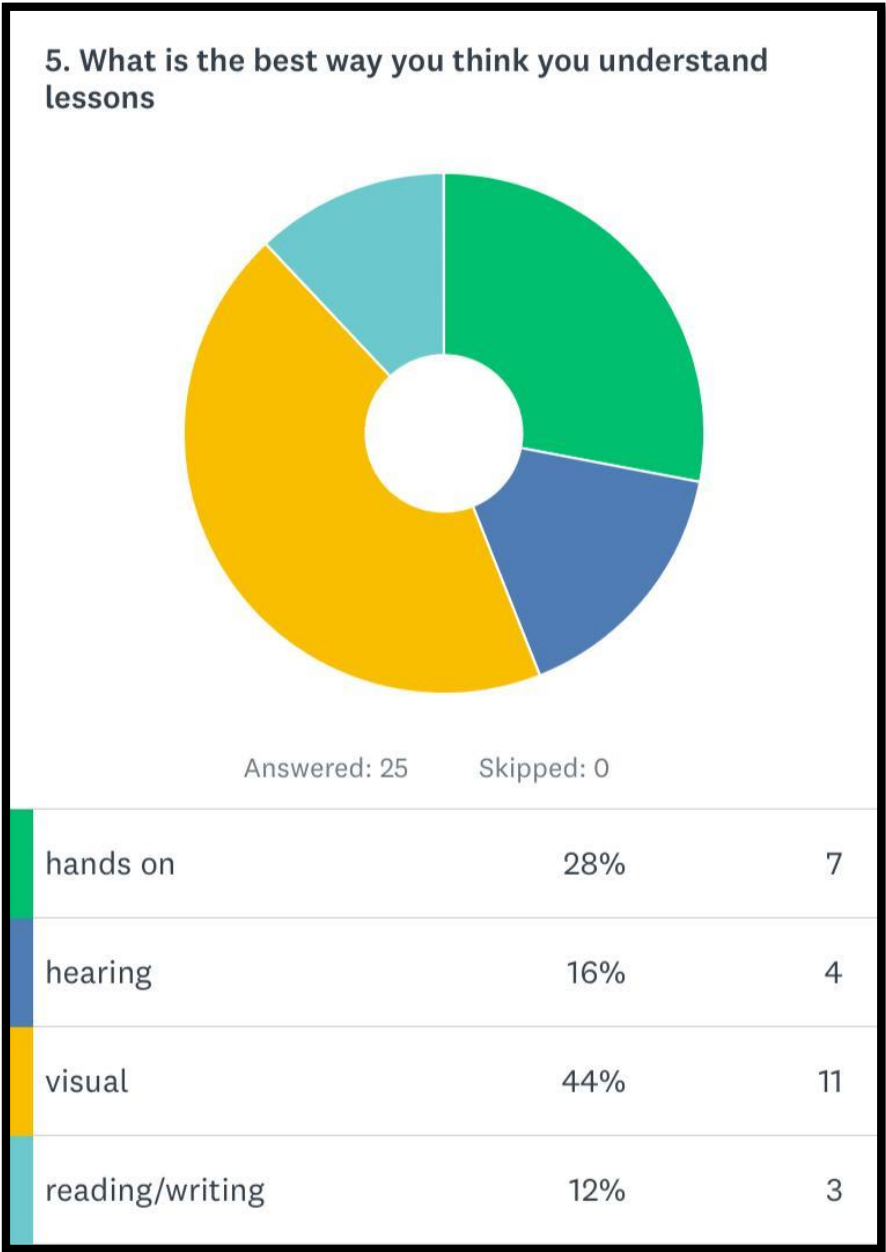


Fig.5. comparison between different methods of learning

Answers to questionnaire 2 (student survey)

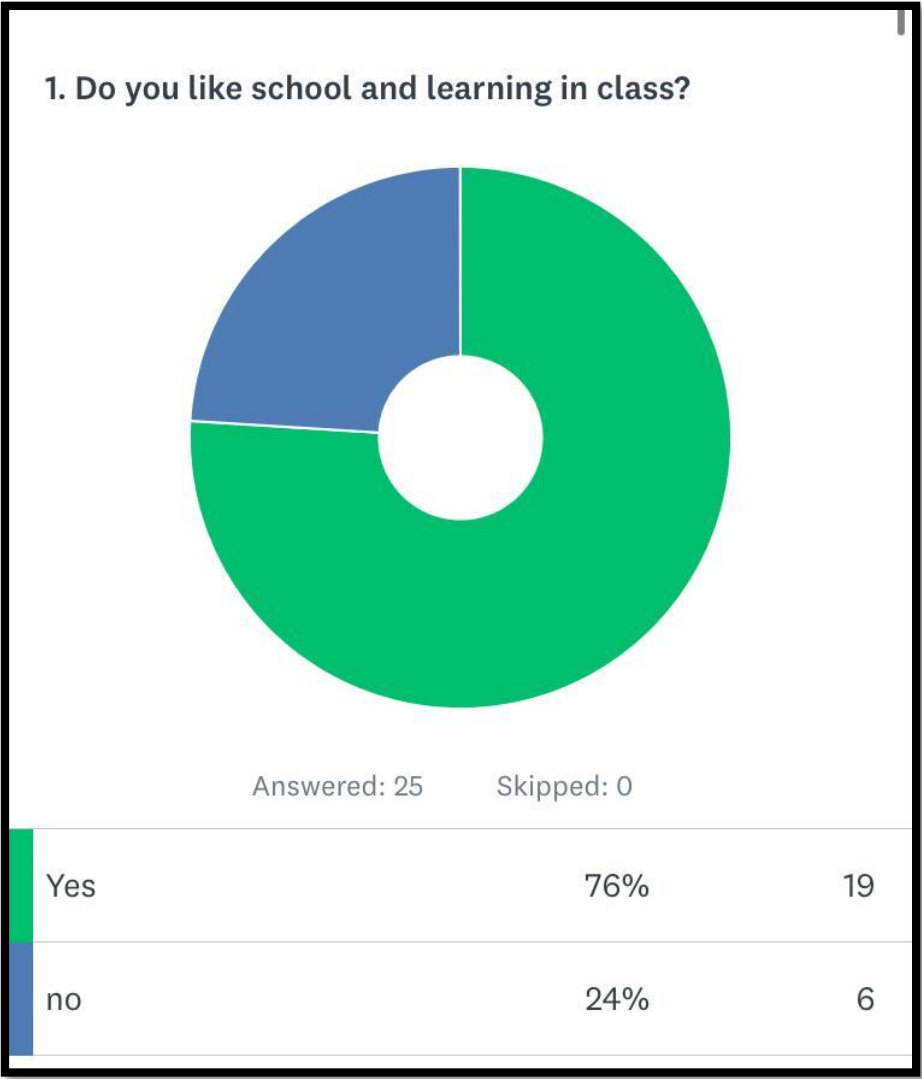


Fig.6. Pie chart showcasing student attitude toward school and classroom learning

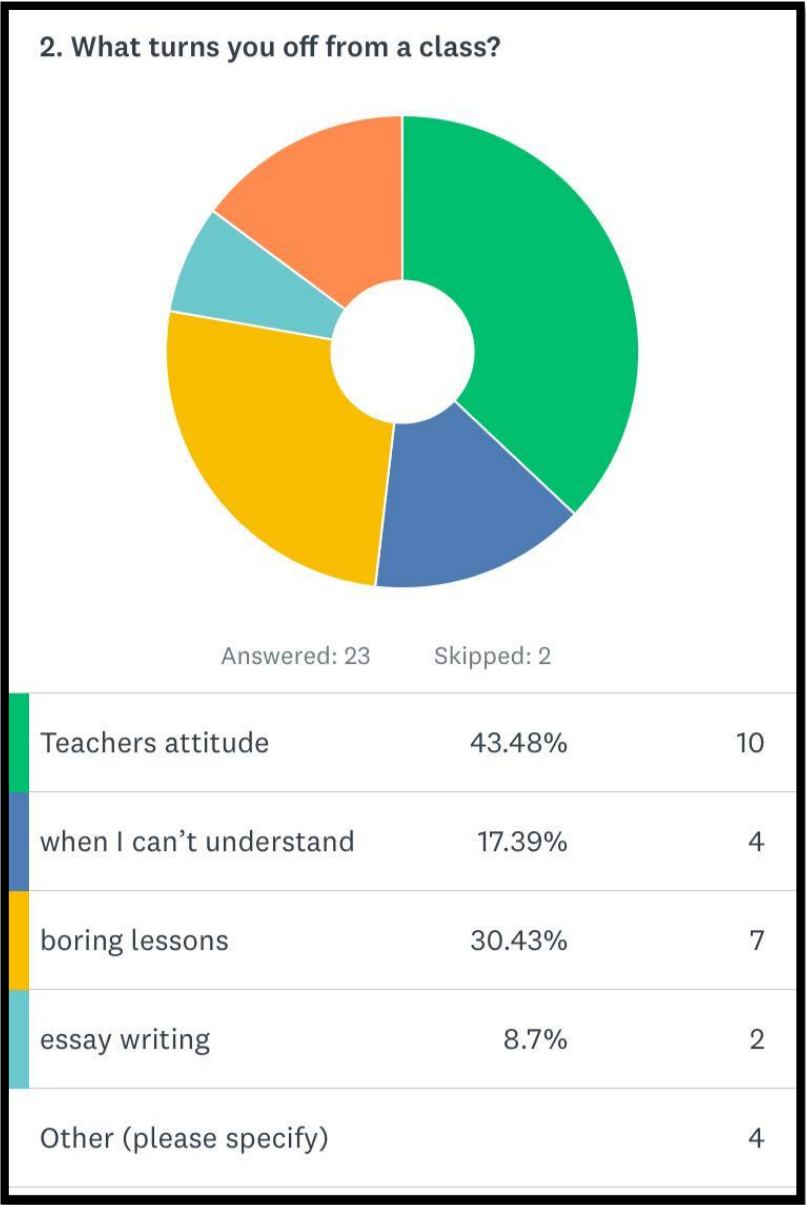


Fig.7. factors that contribute to students not liking the classroom

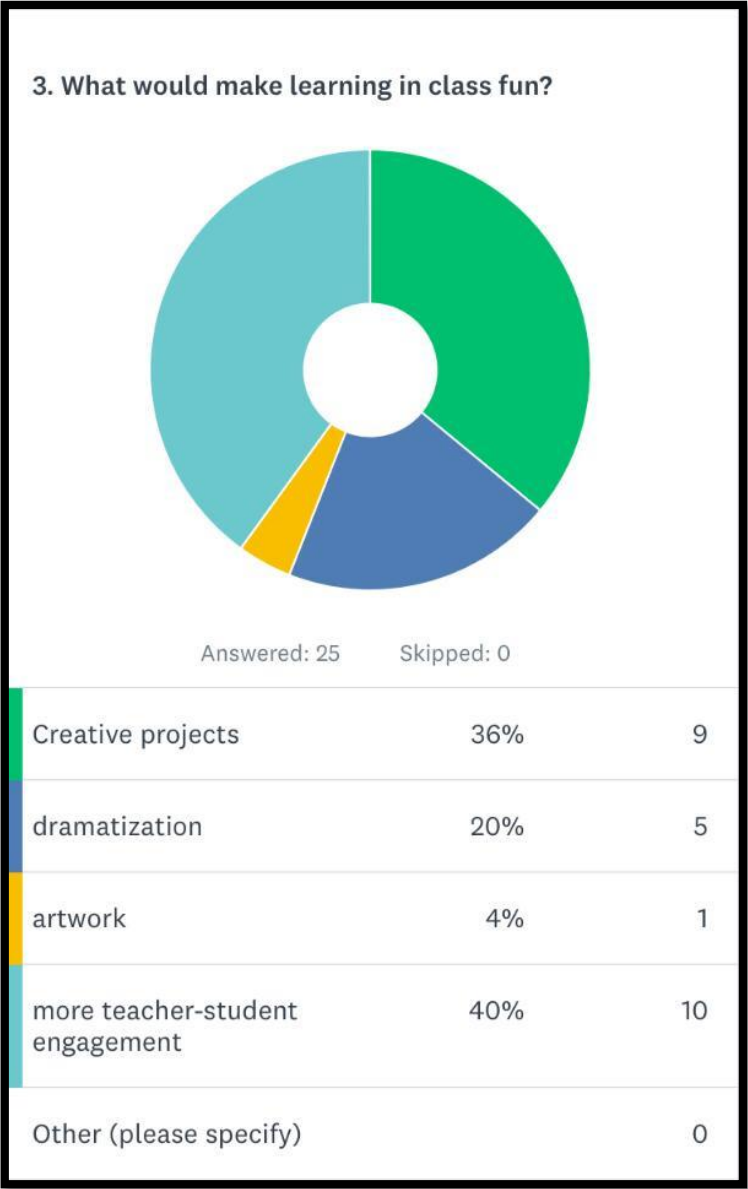


Fig.8. some factors that would make classroom learning fun

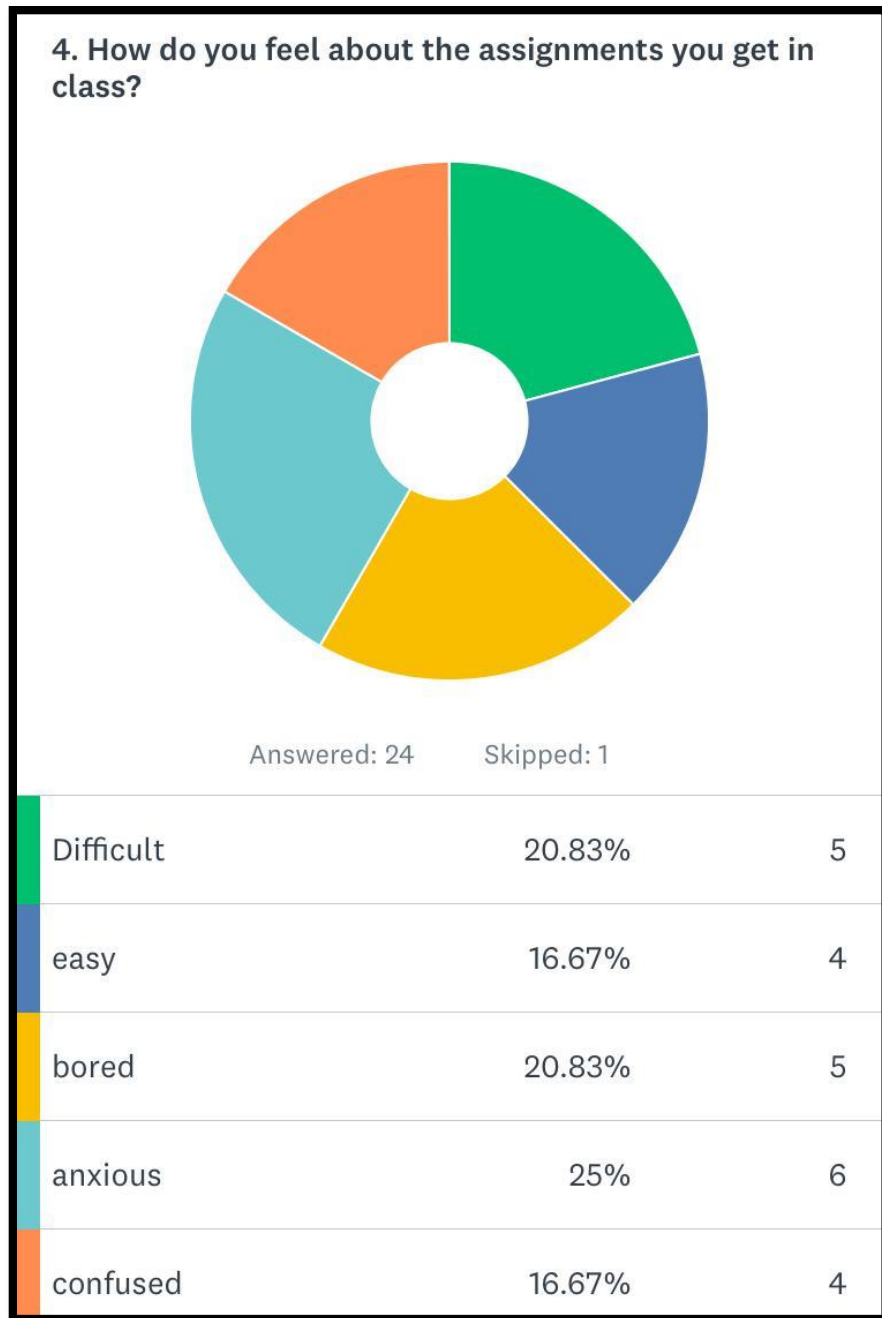


Fig.9. students' reaction to assignments given

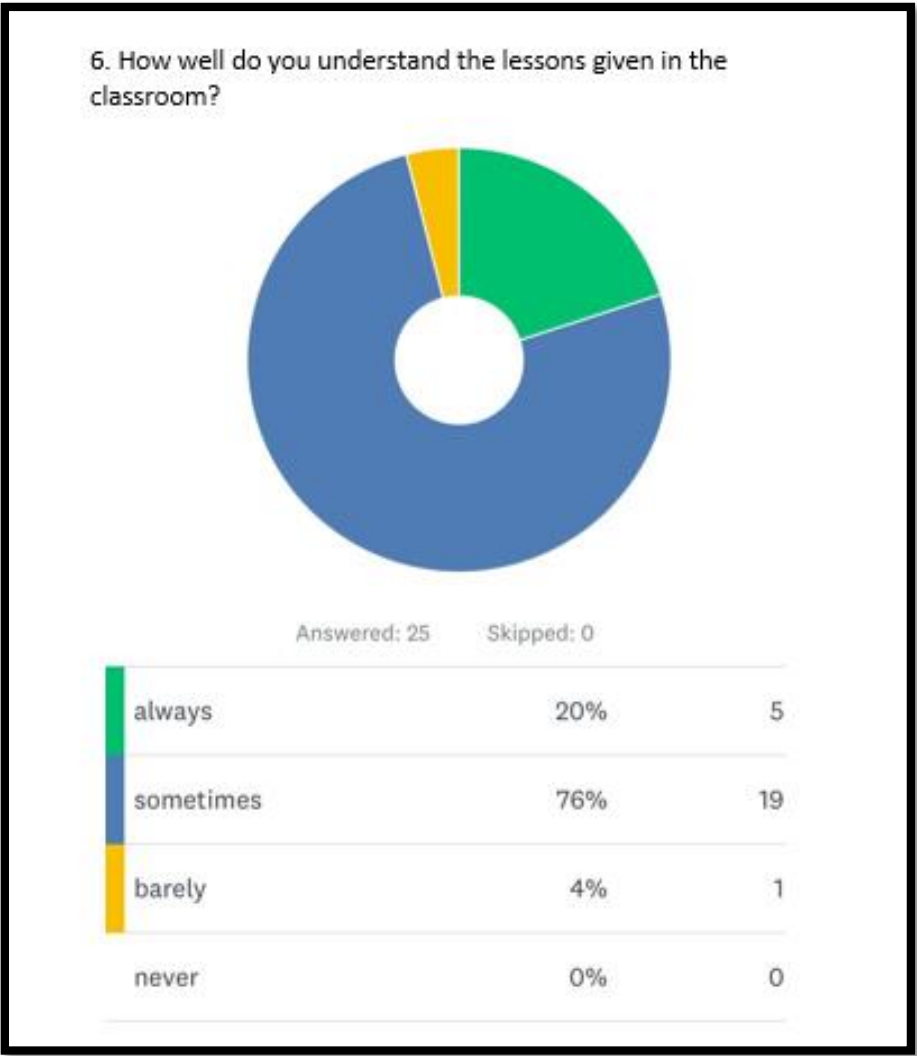


Fig.10. student indication of classroom understanding

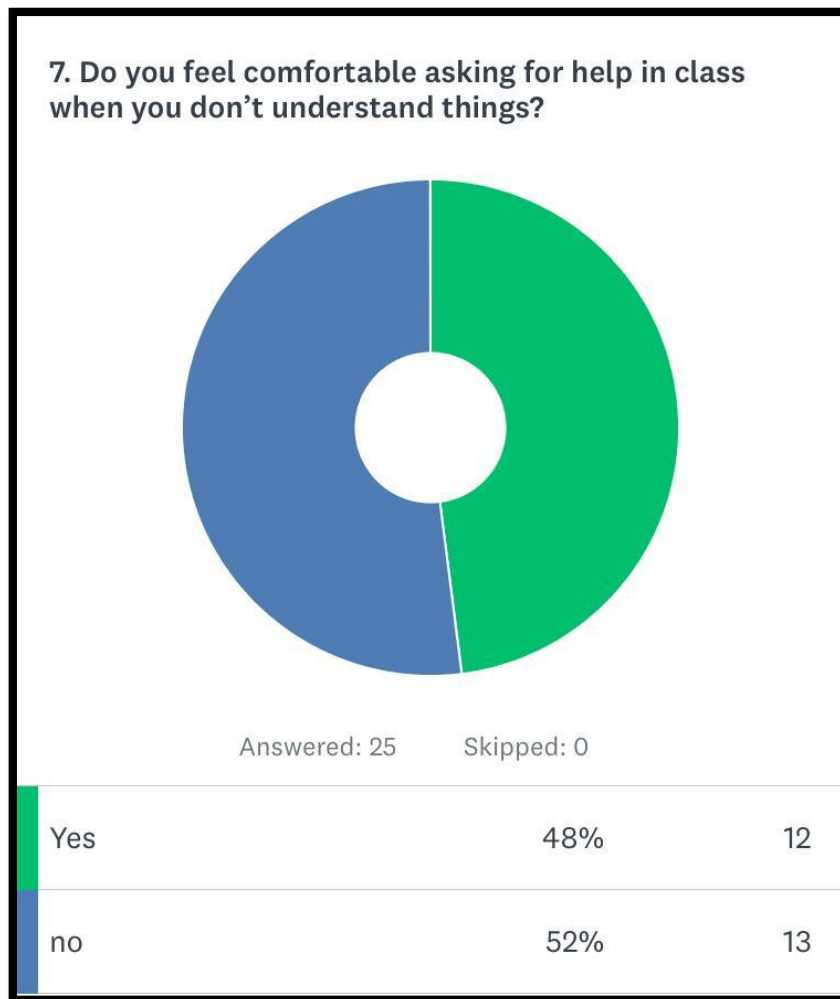


Fig.11. pie chart indicating student comfort to ask for clarification

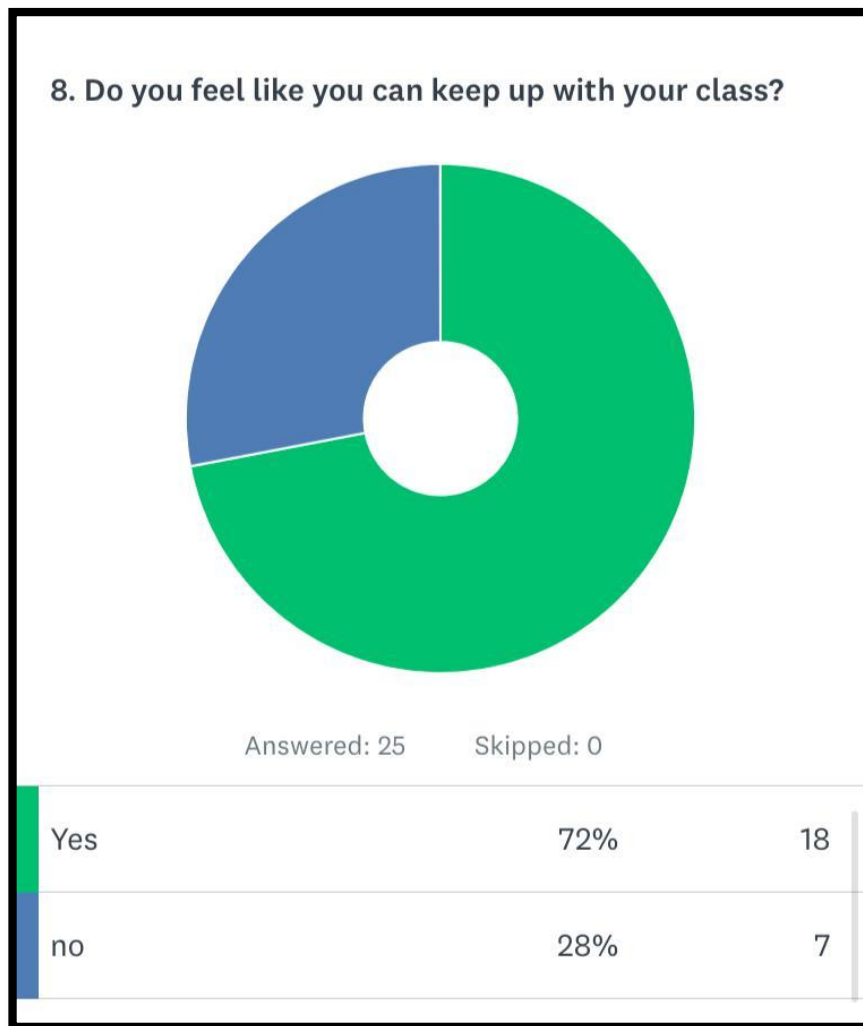


Fig.12. student's ability to keep up with classroom work

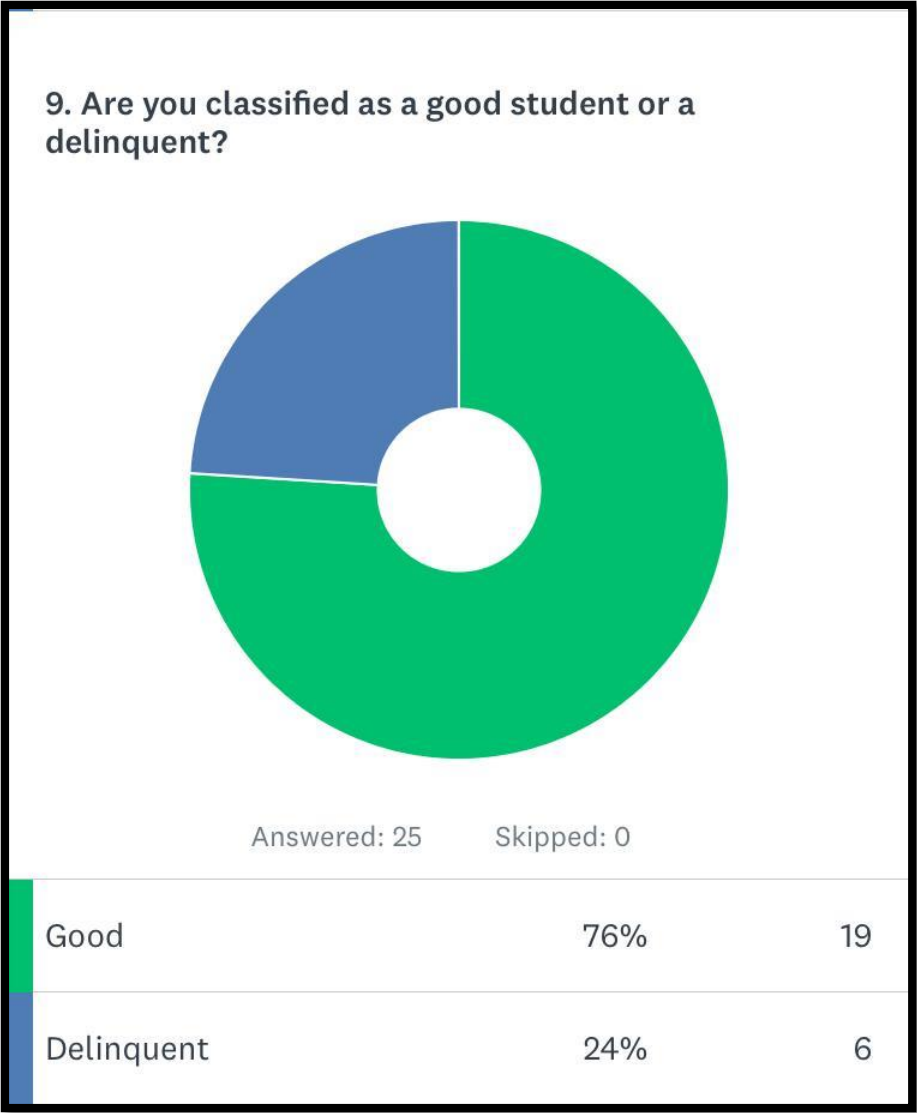


Fig.13. pie chart reflecting student classification

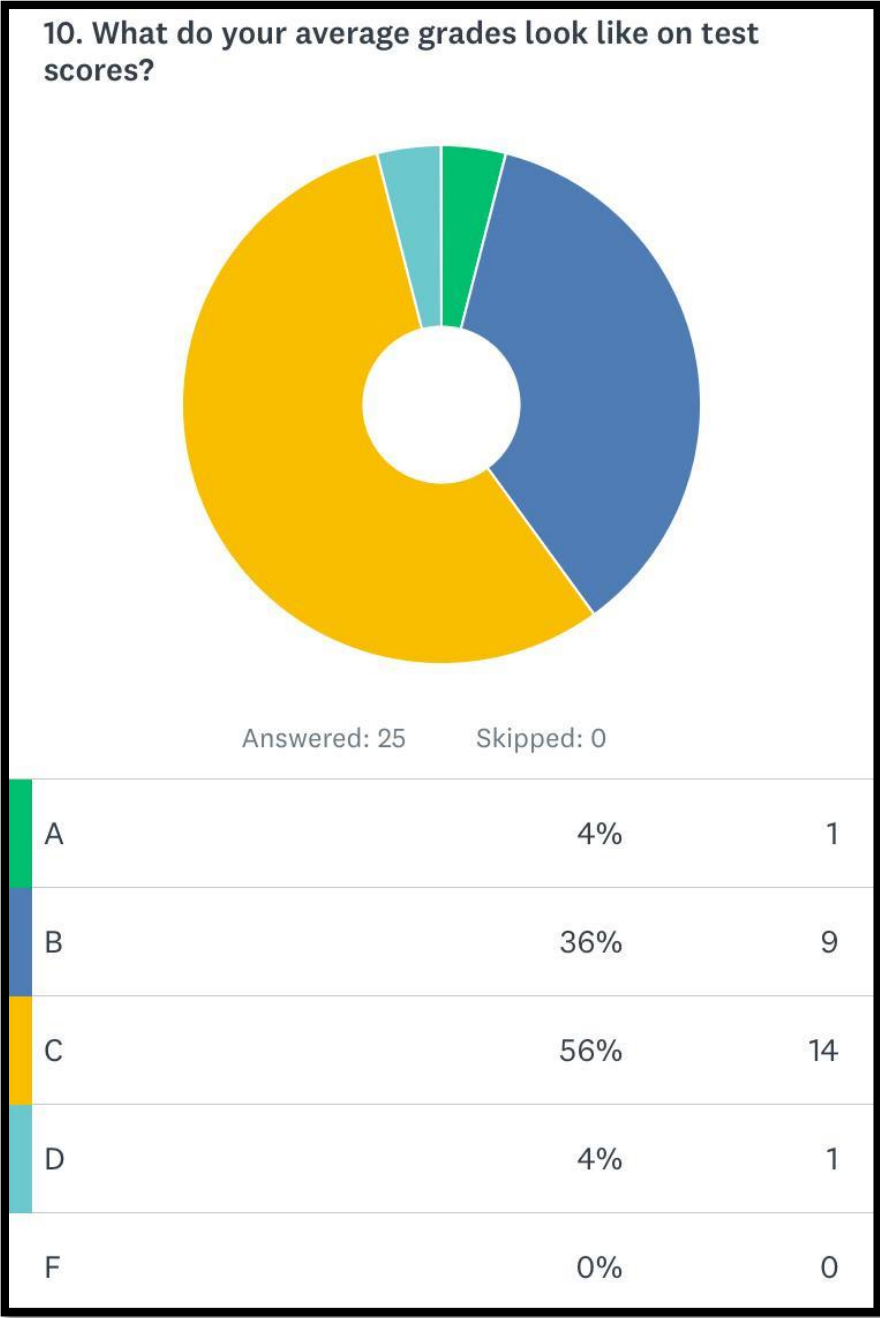


Fig.14. students average grades at classroom test

APPENDIX C

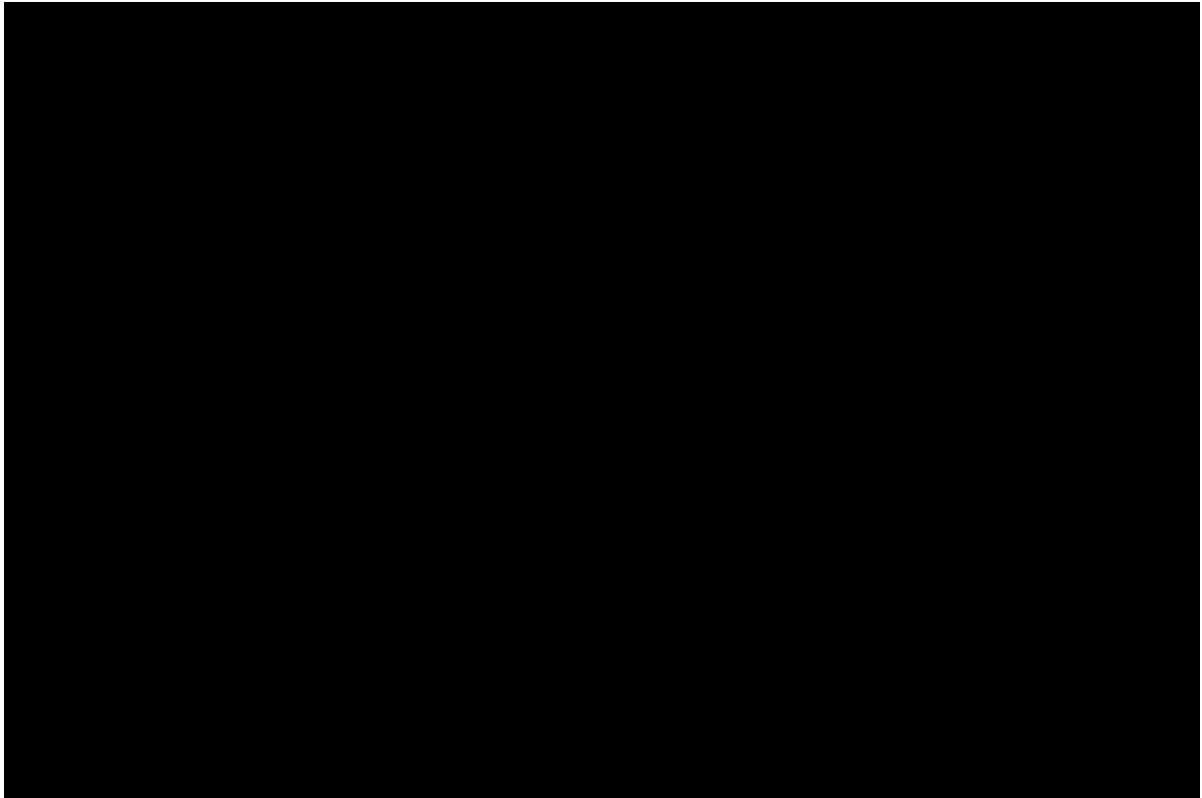


Fig.15. camp recap video from Caribbean Arts-in-Action; “Arts-in-Action clean”; youtube;
March 14, 2018, www.youtube.com/watch?v=We_Yz47bCwE

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