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## K-12 Students see STEAM everyday

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## K-12 Students see STEAM everyday

### **Abstract**

Today's students exist in a visual world. A new semiotic language has emerged in the digital age. It consists of an ever-evolving vocabulary of signs and symbols that one can rapidly decipher. Icons represent applications and functions on a plethora of modern devices. Sounds indicate changes and the start and end of activity. The exposure of new audio and visual media are part of everyday communication, now more than ever. The Arts teach our students to better perceive these cues and the information that they deliver.

### **Author/Artist Bio**

Meghan Reilly Michaud is a current RISD Trustee, and past Alumni Association President, who has been a tireless STEAM champion. Meghan's petition to support House Resolution 51 in support of STEAM can be seen here: <http://beta.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-resolution/51> . In addition to her RISD degree in Graphic Design, Meghan holds an MEd in Secondary Education from Salem [MA] State University. She became a National Board Certified Teacher in Visual Arts in 2009. Meghan teaches fine arts at Andover (MA) High School. In addition, she is the principal of Visual Identity Studio, a freelance graphic design business focused on print, interactive and packaging for a variety of corporate and nonprofit clients, <http://visualidentitystudio.com/>

### **Keywords**

K-12, students, STEAM, art, education

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## **K-12 Students see STEAM everyday**

Meghan Reilly Michaud

Today's students exist in a visual world. A new semiotic language has emerged in the digital age. It consists of an ever-evolving vocabulary of signs and symbols that one can rapidly decipher. Icons represent applications and functions on a plethora of modern devices. Sounds indicate changes and the start and end of activity. The exposure of new audio and visual media are part of everyday communication, now more than ever. The Arts teach our students to better perceive these cues and the information that they deliver.

Art is no longer simply a means of injecting culture into the classroom. Students encounter art and recognize it in their everyday experience, not just on the walls of a museum or the aisles of a theatre. Art is an ever more important part of education as students become well-rounded learners.

The Arts allow for the development of global thinkers that can relate in a cross curricular environment. They are a tool for teaching students critical thinking and how to make connections in their minds. Art can translate concepts across disciplines. In a Visual Arts course a student learns to draw a cityscape in perspective. The ideas learned through perspective can help this student to better understand the geometric concept of dilation in a Math course. They can see the underlying structure of a Renaissance painting and make sense of why the representation of depth was important in History. It is in this way that the Arts not only educate, but they also engage students in the concepts that they are learning.

The critique process used in both the Visual and Performing Arts allows students to see how others perceive, interpret and evaluate the intention of their work. This teaches students to how to pursue their ideas and have a sense of ownership. Students present their work, and often defend it as well. When students reflect on the meaning and intention of their own work and how it is perceived they can not only learn to have pride in what they create, but also see meaning in the work of others.

Art teaches essential skill sets for students pursuing any field. No discipline stands on its own. Visuals can simplify complex data in Science in the same way that Mathematics can structure appealing rhythmic patterns in Music. When combined with the STEM subjects, the skills learned through Art techniques, processes and self-evaluation allow for true innovation, STEAM.