ART 211 Research Paper:

For my research question, I wanted to focus my idea on something I’ve been thinking about for a while, it’s been in the back of my mind, but I’ve never really had any reason to go digging into it until now. For reference, I am an art education major and am currently applying for a minor in Psychology. I have always thought that the world of art/ the arts either if that’s performative, visual, etc. was important and helped grow people’s perspective of the world around them but have never really looked to see the uses or developments in my day-to-day life. So, I thought, how does having access to working with visual art develop human growth over time?

For the first article I looked into the author Meera Rastogi (“Review of Understanding the Beauty Appreciation Trait: Empirical Research on Seeking Beauty in All Things.” *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts.* 571-572) compares her career of being an art therapist/ psychologist to her love of art and beauty, working under the ideas and question of how that appreciation/love of pretty things can be a strength and how so? Her working ideas fell under how the dependent variable is her and her student’s appreciation of the world around them, art, nature, people, etc. while the independent variable is the subject as a whole. (i.e., Appreciation of art = dependent, while art itself = independent.). To summarize her findings, Rastogi explains that throughout her finding, especially through Rhrett Diessner’s writings, there are many different angles to look through, whether that be the foundations of beauty through either a mental/ cognitive idea vs. the biological conception of beauty, human engagement with what we consider to be ‘beautiful’ or social standards of pretty, as well as the development of what beauty is over time, with Diessner referencing many different ideas, lessons, and real world examples of what humans have portrayed as beautiful, and in turn the ”beauty standards’ at the time.

The second article, “Playing in the Mud: Health Psychology, the Arts and Creative Approached to Health Care” *Journal of Health Psychology*. 287-298, by Paul M. Camic, focuses on the uses of art therapy and art uses in modern health care, looking for the affects that it has on clinical/ social settings and if its participation within said environment is helping with human development, with a wide range of areas such as health benefits/ prevention of sickness, helping in ailments/ illnesses and just an overall improvement in the health care system we know today. In Camic’s writings, he defines that the dependent variable in these studies is the effects of art on the overall health care, physically and emotionally, of people socially/ around the health care system, while the independent variable is the choice of arts itself predominantly the use of art ( i.e. General well-being with use/ without use of art = dependent, while the use of art, that being visual, poetry, writing, etc. and whether it is used vs. not = independent). Camic describes many different parts of his findings, one major component listed at the beginning is how the ideas of art therapy as a whole open up the health care providers to, while less of a ‘traditional’ routine and knowledge of intervention times, as well as a less precise order, it can open the doors for more motivational and happier results, it also gives the health providers a chance to see more evidence of how these ideas work, instead of the predictive results that more linear process of therapy, consultation, etc. would provide. He then goes on to explain how arts as a whole have been a huge part of not only societal changes throughout history but evolution of the human mind, emotional/cognitive development, and stimulation for the brain which can be used to help build healthy psychological coping skills and grow general health benefits. He ends his thoughts with the idea that art therapy, as well as just the general use of art in the health system can be used as a tool for self-reflection, mental struggles, building on breaking negative or repetitive thinking patterns, and building on developing newer evolutionary ideas, that he compares to evolutionary theory.

For the third and final article, Tawnya D. Smith’s research (“Music Education for Surviving and Thriving: Cultivating Children’s Wonder, Senses, Emotional Wellbeing, and Wild Nature as a Means to Discover and Fulfill their Life’s Purpose.” *Frontiers in Education (Lausanne)*. 1-10.) begins with the idea that while there are many world-changing things happening in our day to day lives, whether that be intense global warming, natural disasters caused by human intervention, the fears of societal collapse, music, while not the first thing on many people’s minds, should still be at the forefront and not have funding/access taken away from it, in fear of taking away that stability, enjoyment, and human adaptation/development of music and what it can bring to the world around us. She focuses her dependent variable as the effect that music can/ does have on people, society, communities, etc. while the independent variable is the use of music itself, whether it is being used, taught, educated, or introduced into the lives of people, predominantly children/ young kids going through the educational system at this moment. (i.e., well-being and connection with self and others = dependent, while music use, teachings, education, awareness = independent). She begins her article by explaining that while the world is taking focus on many other things, we as people, and especially the future educators need to be able to focus a curriculum, or teaching method on encouragement, positivity (or how she phrases it ‘stubborn optimism’), and a collaboratively to be able to get all ends of education taught and not to cut out what people can deem “unnecessary’ because of the world phenomenon’s. Her focus later turns to the predictability and patterns in teaching that either teacher fall into, schools heavily enforce, etc. that do not work for more art-based teachings, whether that be more traditional ideas of art like visual (painting/drawing/clay/ whatever) to poetry, and her main point music. Smith ends her ideas by focusing on how to better these areas of education in the world can build a much more trusting and esteemed environment for the next generation, it can also help build on our earth’s different cultures, economies, living situations/democracies, and much more.

*Part Two:*

The first article (“Review of Understanding the Beauty Appreciation Trait: Empirical Research on Seeking Beauty in All Things.” Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts.) Heavily focuses on the beauty aspects that art is derived from. This is very similar to the other two articles where each one has a different representation of art styles, uses, and ideas being helpful in not only individuality systems, but economic and community lighting. Regarding the first article, there is a heavy focus on the beauties of art with influences mentioned from Greek art, while in the second there are mentions of poetry being used as a sense of therapy for many people through the ages, and again in the third with the subject of the renaissance being brought up as a major form of community creating and causing the social and economic world to thrive because of the powerful influence art had. In the first two articles there is a much heavier focus on the induvial perspective of how art can emotionally affect a person. It’s primarily focused through, either the angle of the first article on how it makes you feel to notice the beauties, and self-expression through that, vs the second article where it is seen through a more psychoanalyzes perspective, focusing on the effect of art beauty through the social constructs of the health care systems. This, whereas in the third article (“Music Education for Surviving and Thriving: Cultivating Children’s Wonder, Senses, Emotional Wellbeing, and Wild Nature as a Means to Discover and Fulfill their Life’s Purpose.”) there is a main focus on the societal and economic impacts of this, as well as the group relations of music/ art on the world, rather than the induvial experiences.

A main theme I noticed throughout all of it however is how little art therapy, use, and importance people focus on it if they are not involved within the world itself, it is quickly dismissed and pushed aside with references of its weird uses in medicine (people believing it lacked in any actual help) the ideas of taking many of these out of school because they are more “disposable” than other subjects, etc. It’s actually a pretty sad realization to see this, when people forget the importance, it can have/ does have on our lives daily, it’s one of the many reasons I wanted to focus my writings around it.