



DataBrief provides arts educators and arts policy makers with highlights of SNAAP data and insights into the value of arts-school education. Contact us for more information.

Spotlight on First-Generation Artists (PART 2)

In the previous DataBrief, we examined what challenges arts alumni face depending on whether their parents or close family members have navigated a career in the arts. The idea of “first-generation artists” was discussed relative to institutional satisfaction as well as differences by race, ethnicity, and chosen major. We found that first-generation artists seem to choose majors that have a clearer career path, such as architecture.

Now we will examine the career outcomes for first-generation artists and discover whether they have similar success to their counterparts in finding employment, as well as whether that employment is arts-related. This DataBrief draw upon data from 67,978 undergraduate-level arts alumni from 140 postsecondary institutions in the United States, collected between 2011 and 2013.

First-Generation Artists (FGAs) and Careers in the Arts

Alumni were asked how long it took for them to receive their first job or work experience after graduation. For those who sought work after graduation, first-generation artists were less likely to find work quickly, and were more likely to still be in pursuit of work. Additionally, those with artist parents/relatives were less likely to pursue further education and more likely to not search for work after graduation. However, these differences were not large.

Table 1: *Time to obtain first job or work experience*

	FGA	Not FGA	Total
Prior to leaving	35%	36%	35%

Less than 4 months	37%	37%	37%
4 to 12 months	18%	17%	17%
More than a year	8%	8%	8%
Have not yet found work	3%	2%	3%

For those that found work after graduating, first-generation artists believed that this first job or work experience was not as closely related to their training as their counterparts.

Table 2: *Relatedness of first job to training at institution*

	FGA	Not FGA	Total
Not related	22%	19%	21%
Somewhat related	23%	23%	23%
Closely related	56%	58%	56%

Furthermore, 83% of first-generation artists said they intended to work as artists when they began at their institutions, slightly less than the 86% of those with artist parents/relatives who stated they intended to work as an artist. Nearly three-quarters (72%) of first-generation artists were currently working or had previously been working in an occupation as a professional artist, as opposed to the 80% of their counterparts who responded the same. Even when only accounting for those who intended to work as artists while at their institutions, those numbers increase to 78% for first-generation artists and 84% for their counterparts.

Regarding where alumni spend most of their time, 63% of first-generation artists stated they spend the majority of their work time in an occupation related to the arts, lower than the 68% of their counterparts who reported the same.

Alumni were also asked how relevant their arts training is to their current work. As the chart shows below, first-generation artists were slightly less likely to find their arts training relevant to their work. This exemplifies the advantages that come from having a parent who spends a majority of his/her time as an artist or who works in an arts-related occupation.

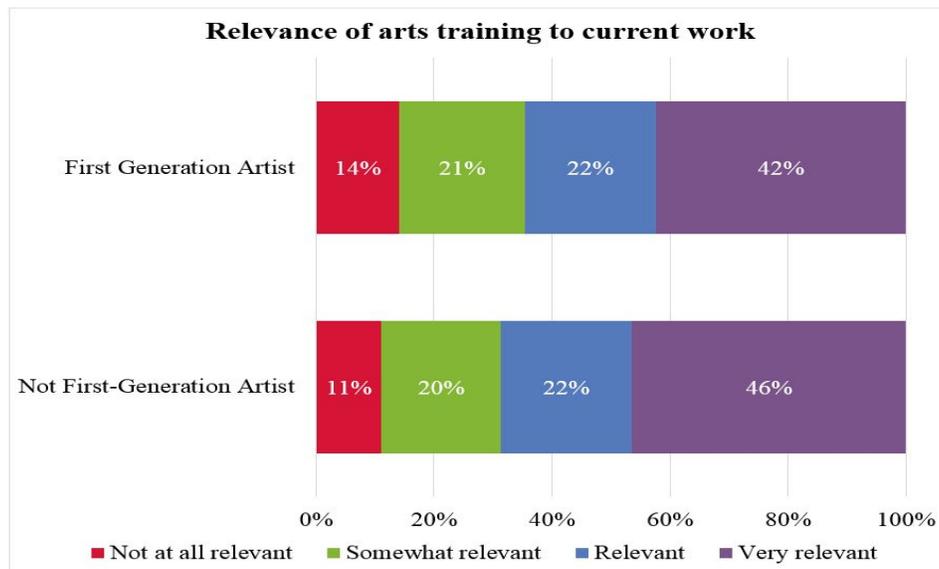


Figure 1: *Relevance of arts training to current work*

Opportunities for Future Study

While this brief, as well as the previous one, provides evidence that first-generation artists seem less satisfied with many aspects of their education and may struggle more to achieve their career goals, there is opportunity to both apply a more rigorous approach to the topic as well as expand our understanding of these alumni.

Further study should first analyze the relationship between first-generation artists and first-generation college students; to what extent do the resources provided by college-educated parents compare to advantages from having an artist parent/relative? Additionally, future study should consider whether the effects shown in these briefs are more prominent in some arts disciplines than others. Lastly, a study seeking to identify the advantages that first-generation artists lack can provide an opportunity to develop programming to better bridge that gap.

This DataBrief was written by Zach Morgan, with assistance from Alex Frenette, Sally Gaskill, and Angie Miller.

2016 News from SNAAP

We are excited about the upcoming [3 Million Stories conference](#), March 3-5 at Arizona State University. If you've not made your plans to join us, please do so! At this one-of-a-kind conference, participants will probe issues ranging from curricular reform for the arts in higher education to institutional transformation—along the way covering such themes as the future of work, the entrepreneurial artist, the potential impact of arts in communities, and how to interpret and use SNAAP data.

Leaders from seven arts schools will share their experiences in using SNAAP data. These include California Institute of the Arts (CalArts), California College of the Arts, Kent State University, Rhode Island School of Design, University of Massachusetts Amherst, and the University of Utah.

Meanwhile, SNAAP staff at Indiana University are working hard to prepare more than 160 reports for the institutions that participated in the 2015 survey. They will be

completed by late spring.

Registration for SNAAP 2016 will open in April.

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