

# **Summary of Large-Scale Arts Partnership Evaluations**

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January 2004**

**Pre-publication copy**

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## Introduction

This report synthesizes findings from six large-scale evaluations of arts education partnerships: (1) Arts in the Basic Curriculum (ABC), South Carolina; (2) Arts for Academic Achievement: Minneapolis Annenberg Challenge for Arts Education; (3) the Partnership Grant Program of the Center for Arts Education, New York City; (4) the A+ Schools Program, North Carolina; (5) Transforming Education Through the Arts Challenge (TETAC); and (6) the Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE).

The Arts Education Partnership first hosted presentations on the progress of these large-scale evaluations at its June 2000 meeting in Durham, North Carolina. Since that meeting, each of 7 the projects has released various reports and studies. An overview of these more recent findings was presented at the June 23, 2003 meeting of the Arts Education partnership. The focus of that meeting was “What Practitioners Learn from Research and Evaluation.” After the initial presentation, meeting participants joined five concurrent breakout sessions to pursue discussions about their own experiences with program evaluations, as policy makers, researchers, or practitioners.

Discussions were focused on the process of evaluating arts education programs at three different levels:

**Early Stages of an Evaluation:** This session was intended for those planning or in the early stages of an evaluation. Two groups discussed issues ranging from selecting an evaluator and developing a design, to identifying targeted audiences and stakeholders, to lessons learned during this stage.

**In the Midst of an Evaluation:** Two groups attended this session which was intended for those who were well into the evaluation process and have already identified and are working with an evaluator. Some of the issues discussed included applying early findings to improve the program, adjusting goals and expectations in mid-stream, and reporting to funders who have required an evaluation as part of the overall program development.

**From Evaluation to Program Improvement:** This session was intended for those that have completed a major evaluation involving a number of schools, a variety of programs, or their overall organizational performance. Among the issues discussed were how to best communicate results to various audiences, examining findings, questions and issues that were identified that merit further research, determining the quality of the evaluation design and understanding how could it have been made more effective.

In this report, we attempt to highlight some of the most salient recent findings in each of the evaluations. Most data presented here were released between 2000 and 2003. It is beyond the scope of this report to try and summarize all of the findings contained in the original evaluation reports. Interested readers should certainly consult the primary documents for far more detail than can be presented here. We have attempted, however,

to draw together those findings most valuable to practitioners, evaluators, funders and policy makers.

First, we will briefly describe each of the programs and their evaluations, citing research questions and methods, with commentary on the pitfalls and challenges in arts partnership evaluation. Then the findings are presented, categorized according to issues of implementation, school change, teaching practice and student outcomes. Finally, we offer lessons learned for those developing or evaluating arts partnerships.

## **The Six Large-Scale Initiatives**

### **Arts in the Basic Curriculum, South Carolina**

The ABC Project is a statewide collaborative initiative begun in 1987, whose goal is to ensure that every child in South Carolina, from pre-school through college levels, has access to a quality, comprehensive education in the arts, including dance, drama, music, visual arts and creative writing. The Arts in the Basic Curriculum (ABC) Project is cooperatively directed by the South Carolina Arts Commission, the South Carolina Department of Education and the College of Visual and Performing Arts at Winthrop University.

The ABC program evaluation, The Arts Education Research Project (AERP), is funded by the South Carolina Arts Commission. The specific purposes of the evaluation are to (1) document types of arts instructions; (2) determine the effects of increased, modified, or integrated arts instruction; and (3) identify potential influences that promote, inhibit, or sustain changes in schools. Principal Investigators of the evaluation project are Michael Seaman and Ching Ching Yap, of the University of South Carolina. For this report, we reviewed three annual evaluation reports released since the Durham meeting, as well as a study of state test (PACT) scores.

### **Arts for Academic Achievement: Minneapolis Annenberg Challenge for Arts Education**

The AAA project is a five-year partnership between the Minneapolis Public Schools and the Perpich Center for Arts Education that is designed to accelerate student achievement in and through the arts. Throughout the five years, AAA staff and the superintendent have engaged in long-range planning about how to turn the AAA project into a permanent feature of the Minneapolis Public Schools. Professional development with teachers is a key element of the initiative.

Arts for Academic Achievement was evaluated by the Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI) in the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Minnesota. Their study was funded by the Minneapolis Public Schools through a Challenge Grant from The Annenberg Foundation. A recent Summative Evaluation Report by Principal Investigators Debra Ingram and Karen

Seashore was reviewed for this report, as well as two other reports: *What Does Arts Integration Do for Students?* by Debra Ingram and Eric Riedel, and *Models of Implementing Arts for Academic Achievement: Challenging Contemporary Classroom Practice* by Carol Freeman, Karen Seashore and Linnette Werner.

### **Center for Arts Education, New York City**

The Center for Arts Education (CAE) is a not-for-profit organization committed to restoring and sustaining arts education as an essential part of every child's education in the New York City public schools. They identify, fund and support partnerships and programs that demonstrate how the arts contribute to learning and student achievement. Initiatives of the Center for Arts Education include: (1) the Partnership Grant program, which has awarded grants to schools to form arts partnerships with cultural and community organizations; (2) the Parents as Partners program, which funded arts activities for families to help build long-term support for arts education; and (3) the Career Development Program, providing school-to-career activities for high school students and educators. This program exposes students, teachers, guidance counselors and administrators to career options in New York City's arts-related industries.

The programs of the Center for Arts Education have been evaluated by the Center for Children and Technology of the Education Development Center (EDC/CCT). The Center is releasing an evaluation report of the initial five years of the Partnership Grant program. In addition we reviewed the annual evaluation reports of EDC/CCT. The Principal Investigator for the evaluation was Terry Baker, Senior Research Scientist of EDC/CCT.

### **The A+ Schools Program, North Carolina**

The North Carolina A+ Schools program is an educational reform initiative planned by schools and school districts in partnership with community-based arts professionals. In April 1995, 25 schools were selected from a statewide application process to join the A+ Schools Program and participate in a four-year evaluation conducted by outside researchers. The A+ approach combines arts integration with an understanding of the role of multiple intelligences in teaching and learning to support comprehensive school reform. The A+ program's premise is that the arts foster a deeper learning and understanding of the school curriculum because creativity taps the multiple ways that children learn.

The A+ Schools program was evaluated by Principal Investigators Dickson Corbett, George Noblit and Bruce Wilson. The evaluation culminated in a series of seven policy reports: (1) *Placing A+ in a National Context: A Comparison to Promising Practices for Comprehensive School Reform*; (2) *A History of the A+ Schools*; (3) *Reforming with the Arts: Creativity in A+ Classrooms and Schools*; (4) *Educational Resilience in the A+ Schools Program: Building Capacity through Networking and Professional Development*; (5) *Wise Practices in the North Carolina A+ Schools Program: A Practitioner's Guide to Reforming with the Arts*; (6) *The A+ Schools Program: School, Community, Teacher,*

and Student Effects; (7) The Arts, School Identity, and Comprehensive Education Reform: A Final Report from the Evaluation of the A+ Schools Program.

### **Transforming Education Through the Arts Challenge (TETAC)**

In 1996, the National Arts Education Consortium began a five-year national educational reform initiative, the Transforming Education Through the Arts Challenge, to link comprehensive arts education with national and local efforts to reform the nation's schools. The main mission of the National Arts Education Consortium was to create school environments that ensure positive and rigorous intellectual development in the arts for all learners. TETAC comprises 36 schools in 8 states, and is supported by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Annenberg Challenge for Arts Education.

A team from Westat conducted the evaluation of the TETAC initiative. Joy Frechtling was the Project Director. Westat released their final evaluation report in July 2002.

### **Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE)**

The mission of the Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE) is to serve students by advancing the role of the arts in K-12 public education. CAPE catalyzes and supports school improvement through the creation of partnerships that integrate the arts into the overall educational program of Chicago public schools. These partnerships connect teachers and schools with artists and artistic resources. The program develops curricula through collaborative planning and arts-integrated instruction. The initiative comprises 19 partnerships in 30 Chicago schools, and involves 45 professional arts organizations and 11 community organizations.

The North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL) conducted a program evaluation during the initial four years of the CAPE project. Continued research was conducted by James Catterall and Lynn Waldorf of UCLA and published in *Champions of Change: The Impact of Arts on Learning*.<sup>1</sup> More recently, two studies on aspects of CAPE have been released: (1) *How Arts Integration Supports Student Learning: Students Shed Light on the Connections* by Karen DeMoss and Terry Morris, and (2) *The Professional Artist as Public School Educator: A Research Report of the Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education* by Lynn Waldorf. These two studies were reviewed for this report.

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<sup>1</sup> Catterall, J. S., & Waldorf, L. (1999). *Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education summary evaluation*. In E. B. Fiske (Ed.), *Champions of change: The impact of arts on learning*. (pp. 47-62). Washington, DC: The Arts Education Partnership and the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities.

*Further information on these partnership initiatives and evaluation reports can be found at the following websites:*

Arts in the Basic Curriculum (ABC), South Carolina  
*<http://edpsych.ed.sc.edu/ope/projects/artseducation/>*

Arts for Academic Achievement: Minneapolis Annenberg Challenge for Arts Education  
*<http://www.mpls.k12.mn.us/aaa/menu/htm>*

Center for Arts Education, New York City  
*<http://www.cae-nyc.org/>*

A+ Schools Program, North Carolina  
*<http://www.aplus-schools.org/>*

Transforming Education Through the Arts Challenge (TETAC)  
The report is available on the AEP website: *[www.aep-arts.org](http://www.aep-arts.org)*

Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE)  
*<http://www.capeweb.org>*

Each of these large-scale arts initiatives is unique, yet each faced similar implementation challenges. They represent a diverse set of participants, engaging many teachers, artists, schools and community organizations in coordinated efforts at integrated instruction. The initiatives were driven by diverse conceptions of arts instruction and integration, yet shared many common characteristics, including roles for artists, community or cultural groups, higher education or other groups working in collaboration with local school systems. Additionally, each project worked with external researchers to develop multi-year comprehensive evaluations of their programs. Viewed together, these evaluations provide great insight into developing successful large-scale arts initiatives, implementing them within individual schools, and discovering what children learn in and through the arts.

## **Context and Significance**

The six large-scale evaluation projects make a valuable, cumulative contribution to the fields of arts education and school reform. Their reports were released within a broader context, as discussion has ensued on the role of the arts in schools and the relationship of the arts to broader educational concerns. After many years of systematic cuts in arts education programs, there has been a renewal of arts teaching in recent years, supported by a growing body of research exploring the contribution of arts programming and arts

learning to education and the school environment.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, there has been discussion about who should teach the arts, and how they can best be taught. Some observers have responded to the research as exemplifying a split between those who seek to teach the “arts-for-arts-sake” and those who would use the arts instrumentally to serve the needs of other academic disciplines. Others have noted that this is a false dichotomy, with each side representing an extreme inconsistent with our understanding of how children learn. The large-scale evaluations reviewed here are valuable in how they describe multiple teaching and learning experiences, drawing on the collective skills and resources of varied participants from the school community, and the broader community. Teachers and artists have learned to move across boundaries and collaboratively develop programs designed to draw on the best abilities of all.

More recently, the arts are again on the defensive in many school districts as they increasingly focus on high-stakes standardized tests as measures of success in learning, teaching, and school administration. This more recent trend has been accentuated by the demands of the Federal *No Child Left Behind* bill. The trickle-down effects of this bill, combined with state budget shortfalls, may be having an unintended, but negative, consequence on attempts to sustain arts in schools. Although the arts are defined as part of the core curriculum in *No Child Left Behind*, they are not systematically assessed in American schools. There are valid reasons for this, not least of which is that developing and administering valid measures in the arts on a widespread, systematic basis is exceptionally problematic. But because school districts are under great pressure to demonstrate improvement on high-stakes tests, they tend to focus their available resources – of time, staff and funding – on academic areas in which they are held accountable. The studies reviewed in this report highlight the challenges and successes of those trying to implement arts partnerships in an environment where the arts are often described as core, but funding is increasingly defining them as ancillary. Each of these programs has been successful at providing needed resources to place the arts as central to the overall curriculum.

The call for scientifically-based research on school programs in the *No Child Left Behind* bill has led to increased interest in more rigorous evaluation of arts programs. Programs such as those described in this report are inherently complex and multi-dimensional, and don’t easily lend themselves to experimental designs and purely outcome-based evaluations. The reviewed studies present models for how to do this work, with suggestions for how we might do it better. There are a wealth of approaches, methods, and findings in this report. They can be used by evaluators, by practitioners working with external evaluators, or by those seeking to do local evaluation on a much smaller scale but with a specific need for models or guidance. These evaluations contribute to our knowledge and understanding of how to do this work. They provide models,

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<sup>2</sup> Fiske, E. B. (Ed.). (1999) Champions of change: The impact of arts on learning. Washington, DC: The Arts Education Partnership and The President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities.  
Deasy, R. J., (Ed.). (2002). Critical links: Learning in the arts and student academic and social development. Washington, D.C.: Arts Education Partnership.

implementation strategies and sets of instruments that others can learn from to adapt to their own needs.

Additionally, their work is significant because of a set of similarities: in challenges, processes and findings. They contain similar findings in areas of teacher growth and change, school climate and reform, and student learning. Collectively, these areas of commonality add to the reliability of the individual findings, as the sum becomes more compelling than each of the parts.

## **Choices and Challenges in Arts Partnership Evaluations**

Although we examined some “final” evaluation reports – comprising summary data on these initiatives – experience informs us that initiatives such as these are continually in a state of growth and change. Large-scale initiatives such as these, attempting to infuse the arts across many sites, are not static, fixed targets waiting for the evaluator’s careful measuring. A successful program or partnership must evolve, as it develops within a real-world context of schools and outside organizations. Professional development of teachers in the use of the arts, collaborative curriculum development, and the partnering of community resources are all complex processes that grow over time. Evaluators face considerable challenges when trying to capture and measure the diverse experiences of these initiatives and their effects on teaching and learning. There are choices to be made in focus, limitations, research questions, methods and analysis. There is no perfect evaluation design, for each is bounded by limits of time, resources, funding, expertise and context.

Let’s consider some of these challenges, in order to help us interpret the evaluation findings. One troublesome issue is determining how to define the characteristics of a program well enough in order to measure it, and then establishing a causal link between these characteristics and desirable outcomes, such as student achievement. To address this challenge, it can be helpful to first sort out types of data within three broad categories: (1) program conditions, (2) program characteristics, and (3) program outcomes.

### *Three Categories of Evaluation Data in Arts Partnership Initiatives*

**Program Conditions** refer to characteristics inherent to a program, but not necessarily changed by a program, such as demographics, schools, local/state standards and curriculum, teacher and artist backgrounds, and culture and programming of cultural partners.

**Program Implementation** refers to variables influenced by participating school systems or external partners, including arts or academic programming, collaboration between schools and cultural partners, collaboration between different arts providers (such as teachers and artists), professional and curriculum development, planning, and scheduling.

**Findings and Outcomes** refer to changes in school climate or culture, teaching, and student learning, presumably as a result of program implementation.<sup>3</sup>

Upon obtaining reasonable definitions of variables within these categories, the researcher can determine appropriate means for measuring them, either through developing instruments or using those already available.<sup>4</sup> Assuming valid and reliable measurements are obtainable, the evaluator can then either describe findings within categories or try and identify causal relationships among them. Most evaluations of arts initiatives fall somewhere along a continuum of establishing cause and effect, ranging from descriptive, through correlational, to quasi-experimental designs.

The studies presented here fall along that continuum as well. None were able to implement a classic experimental design with random assignment (for very valid reasons). However, they each took on the challenge of trying to find compelling evidence of how the programs lead to desired effects on teaching and learning. For instance, some studies (such as TETAC and AAA) established methods for rating the degree of successful program implementation, and then compared results with program outcomes, such as student achievement. A+ used a comprehensive qualitative approach to develop a deep understanding of the program, its history, and its effects. All of the evaluators employed multiple methods of data collection, comparing results from each to develop consistent findings. In these evaluations, there are many examples of qualitative data,

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<sup>3</sup> Horowitz, R. & Baker, T. (2003, April). *Program evaluations of arts education partnerships: challenges and outcomes*. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Education Research Association, Chicago, IL.

<sup>4</sup> In-depth qualitative approaches can be invaluable for identifying and defining variables for further research.

such as interviews or classroom observations, informing quantitative procedures, and vice versa.

Now we'll move on to the evaluations themselves and review their approaches, data and findings. What issues did they address? What did they find? What can we learn from their experiences about how to develop large-scale initiatives and local partnerships? How can they best be evaluated?

## **Focus and Methods**

### ***Research and Evaluation Questions***

The evaluations studied a range of initiatives, partnerships, schools and teaching situations. There was also a range of research and evaluation questions that were used to focus the evaluations. They each identified areas for focused investigation, such as school change and reform, successful implementation, definitions of arts integration, and effects on student learning.

#### ***Large-Scale Evaluations: Areas of Focus***

##### **Arts in the Basic Curriculum (ABC), South Carolina**

The purpose of the evaluation was to: (1) document types of arts instructions, (2) determine the effects of increased, modified, or integrated arts instruction, and (3) identify potential influences that promote, inhibit, or sustain changes in schools.

##### **Arts for Academic Achievement: Minneapolis Annenberg Challenge for Arts Education**

The goal of AAA was to foster system-wide reform in the Minneapolis Public Schools in and through the arts. The program sought change in four areas: (1) change that benefits students directly, (2) change in how teachers teach and schools are run, (3) change in the way communities see their schools and schools see their communities, (4) change in the way the District makes policy. The evaluation sought to determine the effects of the AAA program on these areas.

##### **A+ Schools Program, North Carolina**

Many issues were addressed across the seven policy reports. Research questions included: (1) What is A+ and how have schools implemented it? (2) What is different for A+ schools, communities, teachers, and students after four years? (3) What evidence is there that these effects have been institutionalized? (4) What lessons does the A+ experience hold for

effective school reform generally? (5) How does the A+ model of comprehensive school reform compare with national standards for school reform?

### **Center for Arts Education, New York City**

The Center for Arts Education funded partnerships in 81 NYC schools. Center partnerships were required to focus their efforts on five guiding principles: (1) developing committed partnerships, where the strengths and missions of the school and cultural organizations complemented one another; (2) providing arts curriculum and instruction that include skills-based instruction in at least two arts disciplines, aesthetic education, and arts integrated with core curricular areas; (3) building in extensive professional development for teachers and teaching artists; (4) including program evaluation and assessment of student learning; (5) supporting existing school reform. Each funded partnership was expected to develop a site-specific evaluation process to document the effectiveness of the program and its effects on student learning. The Center for Children and Technology of the Education Development Center provided formative evaluation, collected program data, examined local site evaluations, analyzed test score data, and investigated integrated curricula and its effects on student learning.

### **Transforming Education Through the Arts Challenge (TETAC)**

The TETAC study was planned as a summative evaluation focused around six areas of inquiry:

1. **Student learning**: What impact has comprehensive arts education (CAE) had on student learning in the arts and in non-arts areas?
2. **School climate and culture**: How has CAE affected the school as a place of learning? To what extent is arts education recognized as a critical part of the instructional program? Is there an integration of instruction across subject areas? Is there an environment of inquiry and active engagement?
3. **Implementing the CAE approach**: What progress have the 35 schools made in implementing the CAE approach? What factors have facilitated and/or hindered the success of comprehensive arts education in the partner schools?
4. **Collaborations**: What kinds of collaborations have been established? How have these affected the view of arts education? The instructional climate? The instructional program?
5. **Professional development**: What types of professional development are being delivered to prepare teachers and others in the CAE approach? Who is receiving the support? What areas/skills are

covered? What has been the impact of such professional development on classroom instruction?

6. **General school reform:** What other school initiatives are currently underway in the partner schools of TETAC? What has been the interaction between CAE and the other school reform initiatives? What impact have existing school reform initiatives had on the implementation of arts education reform efforts (and vice versa)? To what extent has CAE served as an agent for broader school reform?

The focus of the evaluation evolved during the course of the study, and the evaluators reconfigured their research questions for their final analysis:

1. How has Comprehensive Arts Education been implemented and what are the effects of TETAC on the school and its staff?
2. Has there been an impact of Comprehensive Arts Education on student learning in the arts?
3. Has there been an impact of Comprehensive Arts Education on student learning in other areas?

### **Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE)**

The focus of the Waldorf study<sup>5</sup> was to explore the ethos and work of professional artists who choose to involve themselves in classroom partnerships with teachers. The main topics investigated were: (1) the teaching artist experience, (2) the artists' influences in the classroom, and (3) teaching artists and school change. Specific questions in the latter topic included: How and when does an artist or a "team" of artists become part of school culture – a recognizable part of the fabric of a school community? What larger roles do artists play in the education of teachers and other members of school communities, and what challenges and opportunities face them as they contemplate future work in partnerships with teachers and schools?

The purpose of the DeMoss and Morris<sup>6</sup> study was to conduct exploratory analyses that might advance understanding of students' cognitive processes when engaging in arts-integrated instruction. There were three focusing areas of inquiry:

1. Learning with and through the arts does not necessarily include explicit experiences in math or reading; nevertheless, math and reading score improvement, both in absolute terms and in terms of rates of

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<sup>5</sup> Waldorf, L. A. (2002). *The professional artist as public school educator: A research report of the Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education, 2000-2001*. UCLA Graduate School of Education & Information Studies.

<sup>6</sup> DeMoss, K. & Morris, T. (2002). *How arts integration supports student learning: Students shed light on the connections*.

growth, is correlated with arts work in general. These findings suggest that the cognitive processes that arts work fosters can support learning in other areas. What might these processes entail and look like?

2. Tests are able to measure only a small band of student learning and development. The arts, particularly arts-integrated teaching, show capacities to develop many typically unmeasured facets of student development. Can some typically unmeasured facets of student development (due to arts-integrated teaching) be identified and assessed, if only in preliminary fashion, to advance the field of arts education research?
3. How do cognitive processes gained through arts-related experiences fit within a larger picture of student academic and personal development?

## ***Evaluation Methods***

Evaluators in the six projects employed a diverse set of research methods, with many common characteristics. Overall designs encompassed a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches. Most evaluators relied on a mixed-method approach, in order to enhance the reliability of their studies. They ranged from quasi-experimental, to descriptive, to ethnographic designs. They shared similar data collection approaches, such as surveys, site observations, interviews, focus groups, and the gathering of demographic data. Some attempted to formally assess student learning in the arts or other areas with self-developed measures, while others used standardized test data. Qualitative approaches included case studies and systematic, extended site visits.

### ***Large-Scale Evaluations: Data Collection***

#### **Arts in the Basic Curriculum (ABC), South Carolina**

(1) Surveys of parents, teachers, and students; (2) classroom observations; (3) interviews with teachers and administrators; (4) focus groups; (5) field testing of South Carolina Arts Assessment Project (SCAAP); (6) standardized tests in English language arts and mathematics (PACT); (7) school data, such as student attendance, discipline, teacher employment, and numbers of art shows and performances.

#### **Arts for Academic Achievement: Minneapolis Annenberg Challenge for Arts Education**

(1) Teacher surveys; (2) classroom observations; (3) group and individual interviews; (4) case studies; (5) district standardized tests in reading and mathematics; (6) school demographic data.

### **A+ Schools Program, North Carolina**

- (1) Surveys of teachers, principals, parents, students, and partners;
- (2) observations; (3) interviews; (4) focus groups with teachers and students;
- (5) case studies; (6) test scores.

### **Center for Arts Education, New York City**

- (1) Surveys of teachers, teaching artists, project coordinators, and cultural organization administrators; (2) observations; (3) descriptive data; (4) interviews with project planning team, classroom practitioners, and school principals and other partnership leaders; (5) focus groups; (6) standardized tests; (7) school demographic records, such as attendance and discipline data; (8) examination of student work; (9) multiple methods in site-specific local evaluations;
- (10) meta-analysis of local evaluations.

### **Transforming Education Through the Arts Challenge (TETAC)**

- (1) Teacher, mentor, and student surveys; (2) observations; (3) interviews;
- (4) school data, including demographic characteristics, test scores, attendance, mobility, and dropout rates; (5) curriculum unit analyses; (6) arts assessments;
- (7) case studies.

### **Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE)**

- (1) Artist surveys; (2) observations; (3) artist and student interviews; (4) focus groups; (5) student writing.

## **Findings on Program Implementation**

Several of the programs dealt with similar implementation issues and strategies, but they developed different ways to describe and categorize the structure of the programs. Categorization is a useful tool for evaluators. It helps researchers define the variables they attempt to measure or observe, and sort out the incoming data for analysis. It is also valuable for interpretation and reporting, to inform readers of the most salient findings and help practitioners find useful applications for their own contexts. Throughout these evaluations, the researchers created systems of categories, sometimes describing similar phenomena with different language.

The Minnesota evaluation team delineated five different implementation models in Arts for Academic Achievement (AAA) Schools. The models reflected each school's level of experience with arts-integrated instruction. The simplest, the residency model, defines a traditional approach to artist participation, with visiting artists making little effort at arts integration or collaboration with teachers. Other schools were able to work more

comprehensively with resident artists, or with integrated teaching of cross-curricular concepts.

The set of implementation models can be helpful to other initiatives in gauging the depth of their partnerships and integrated instruction. The following excerpts from an AAA report define each of the five implementation models:

### **Residency Model**

*...the “residency model” involves the school or teacher bringing in one or more artists for a period of time to engage students in the resident artist’s program. The purpose is usually to give students a wider range of arts experiences than the school staff can provide. The experience does not directly support the curricular goals of other non-arts disciplines.*

### **Elaborated Residency Model**

*An “elaborated residency” is fundamentally an arts experience, but this residency is intentionally tied to developing non-arts skills identified by the teachers. The artist is the primary teacher and it is their program, but the teacher is available to assist with carrying out the experience.*

### **Capacity Building Model**

*The “capacity building” model prepares teachers to use an art form in their own teaching. The artist’s role is to instruct teachers, while the teacher participates with the intention of learning the process and products of the art form. Teachers may work alone, directly with the artists, or with colleagues to identify ways to infuse the art form’s skills and concepts with non-arts disciplines.*

### **Co-Teaching Model**

*The “co-teaching” model involves teacher-artist pairs integrating concepts from the arts and non-arts disciplines that reinforce each other. At different points, students’ experiences may focus more on the art form or on the non-arts subject, while at other times the arts and non-arts instruction appear seamless. The teacher and artist create lessons that guide the artist during sessions that focus on the arts, and clarify what the teacher will do when the artist is not present.*

### **Concepts Across the Curriculum Model**

*We define the “concepts across the curriculum” model as involving three or more people who select a unit of study in which their disciplines have common concepts. Though teachers and artists plan together, each discipline instructs students separately using the common concepts. The projects that fit this model involved arts and non-arts teachers employed in the school selecting an art form that would further reinforce the concepts in the unit of study.<sup>7</sup>*

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<sup>7</sup> Freeman, C., Seashore, K. R., & Werner, L. (2003). *Methods of implementing Arts for Academic Achievement: challenging contemporary classroom practice*. University of Minnesota: Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement, pp. ii-iii.

The models were developed through analysis of interview and observational data, based upon (1) the roles of classroom teachers, arts partners, and/or arts specialist teachers, and (2) the quantity of arts and non-arts disciplines involved. The evaluators found that sites engaged in a learning process of becoming an arts integrated school, improving their commitment over time. The data demonstrate that artists in the program became dissatisfied with a traditional residency model due to their experiences with AAA and sought stronger relationships with schools and teachers.

*It's not the UFO model, as I put it. The landing, doing the thing, and then leaving. It's really about what I'm here to try to enhance, embellish, infuse – what it is I do with what you've already got going on. I don't want to be landing from outer space. I want it to make sense. (AAA artist)<sup>8</sup>*

The models help define a common challenge for initiatives in arts partnerships or school reform: Should participating sites emphasize the depth of the program, through increased involvement of ongoing participants, or increase the breadth of the program by bringing on more participants? The evaluators found that some schools improved the implementation of arts integrated experiences by deepening the relationship between the school and an artist or art discipline. Other schools increased breadth, involving more teachers, grades, artists and arts forms.

The A+ Program recognized that two “organizational strategies” supported implementation of instructional change necessary for their vision of comprehensive school reform:

1. Increasing professional collaboration among teachers
2. Strengthening schools' partnerships with parents and the community

To support new instructional strategies, such as increased arts instruction, arts integration, and hands-on learning, the A+ program promoted organizational change within participating schools. Teachers needed to break out of their traditional isolation and learn to work collaboratively with their colleagues. They took “collective responsibility for student learning” as the program empowered them to be “active creators and evaluators of curriculum and classroom strategies.” Effective collaboration enabled them to change their schedules in order to focus more on developing curriculum.

The A+ program also found that the drive for arts-integrated instruction “forced them” to “look outside of the school walls” to draw on the collective resources of the broader community. Relationships with parents, community groups, arts organizations, and institutions of higher education were all strengthened to more effectively implement arts-driven instructional change. This took the schools beyond traditional models of donated outside resources towards committed partnerships.

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<sup>8</sup> Ingram, D., & Seashore, K. R. (2003). *Arts for Academic Achievement: Summative evaluation report*. University of Minnesota: Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement, p. 9.

Instruction in the TETAC initiative was based upon the conception of Comprehensive Arts Education (CAE) , which evolved from Discipline-Based Arts Education (DBAE). The CAE model retained an emphasis on history, criticism, aesthetics, and production in the arts disciplines from DBAE. It also emphasized five other features: (1) arts instruction embedded in the core of instruction and integrated with other subject areas; (2) use of inquiry-based approaches to teaching; (3) support to curriculum through guidelines for high-quality curriculum units; (4) engagement in arts instruction by the classroom teacher as well as the arts specialist (if available), and (6) a focus on the whole school as the unit of change.<sup>9</sup>

The TETAC initiative developed curriculum units based upon the CAE model. Schools were provided with guidelines for developing or selecting high quality curricula. They rated the curriculum units with these criteria:

1. Foundations – the extent to which the units address enduring ideas
2. Content – adequacy, depth, and logical coherence in addressing the four arts disciplines
3. Instruction – the extent to which the instructional activities are of high quality and appear likely to engage students
4. Assessment – the quality of the assessment activities in terms of structure and alignment with important ideas
5. Design – the coherence of the sequencing of lessons and clarity of relationships among concepts

Curriculum units were collected and scored. They showed steady improvement according to these guidelines. However, the evaluators noted that the development of curriculum units were not by themselves reliable indicators of successful CAE implementation. The evaluators identified three factors that influenced the successful implementation of the curriculum:

- Adaptation or adoption of tools and resources to support Comprehensive Arts Education.
- Strong school leadership, with most progress made when there was strong school administrative support for teaching the curriculum. The school leaders were not always the principal, but sometimes other administrators.
- Development of a cohesive, collaborative staff team focused on developing integrated instruction.

### ***Conceptions of Arts Integration and Interdisciplinary Teaching***

The evaluators also developed models or conceptions of arts-integrated and interdisciplinary teaching. Some of the projects developed systems of categorization, making distinctions about the type, amount, and quality of arts integration. This is a

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<sup>9</sup> Frechtling, J., et al. *Final evaluation report of the Transforming Education Through the Arts Challenge: Executive summary*. Rockville, MD: Westat.

valuable contribution, as it helps define how the arts are taught across the curriculum, how closely the arts align with other subject disciplines, and whether instruction is effective. Models or categorizations of implementation strategies can also provide points of comparison with measures of student learning or personal development.

Researchers at the University of Minnesota, studying the AAA project, examined variations in observation and interview data to develop the Varieties of Arts Integration (VAI) assessment tool. The researchers attempted to delineate degrees of arts integration. They describe it as a work in progress, not a prescription for how to integrate the arts. The researchers determined that observed variation in arts integration occurred along seven dimensions: (1) the art discipline involved; (2) the non-art discipline involved; (3) learning goals for students; (4) who instructs and assesses learning; (5) how arts instruction is related to non-arts instruction; (6) the purpose of integrating the arts; and (7) the theory underlying arts integration.

The VAI itself is presented in the form of a grid with successive stages of successful arts integration. Distinctions are made between teachers' and students' knowledge and their observable behavior. Four overall categories include: (1) Teacher: concepts of knowledge integration; (2) What the teacher does: interface between disciplines; (3) What the student experiences: expressed knowledge about the integration; (4) What the student produces: integrated product/degree of learning. At its lowest level, there is little or no interaction between teaching and learning in arts and non-arts disciplines. As one proceeds up the hierarchy of integration, relations between the disciplines become mutually supportive and interactive.

The tool can be used to assess the degree of success in aligning arts-integrated instruction. Practitioners or researchers can assess if teacher behaviors align with teacher conceptions or intentions. Student behaviors or work can also be examined to see how they align with instructional practices. An online presentation of the VAI can be viewed at: [http://education.umn.edu/CAREI/Programs/Annenberg/VAI\\_Intro.html](http://education.umn.edu/CAREI/Programs/Annenberg/VAI_Intro.html)

Researchers studying CAPE also observed variations in their data on how arts were used within the general curriculum.<sup>10</sup> They distinguished between “arts integration” and “arts enhancement.” The categories reflected the degree of “coupling” between the arts and other academic subjects, with arts integrated situations reflecting an equal status for arts content. Classroom instruction typically fell on a continuum between these two categories. In some ways, the arts-integrated category also reflects accepted characteristics of good pedagogy.

Classrooms focused on arts enhancement had three observed characteristics:

- **Content coexistence**, where the arts and academic subjects might be taught in parallel with little observable interaction. Usually, either arts or academics are predominant.

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<sup>10</sup> DeMoss, K. & Morris, T. (2002). *How arts integration supports student learning: Students shed light on the connections.*

- **Division of labor**, with artists and classroom teachers primarily “invested” only in their disciplines.
- **Variations of student involvement**, reflected by a “focus on activities” with most of the teacher’s and artist’s attention drawn to the most productive students.

Classrooms focused on arts-integrated teaching had six observable characteristics. The following definitions are excerpted from the DeMoss & Morris report and represent desirable characteristics of arts-integrated programming.

- **Clear activities, expectations, and outcomes:** The teacher clearly communicates to students the academic and artistic content areas to be covered, along with the activities and expectations for the arts-integrated unit. The class actively pursues the content between artist visits.
- **Student work habits:** Students understand and incorporate the expectations and student responsibilities that were required of the arts-integrated unit – such as set up and clean up processes, collaborative roles inside student work groups, peer critique procedures, and agreed-upon classroom management rules.
- **Equal participation, connected instruction:** The teacher and artist participate equally in teaching, explicitly connecting and reinforcing each other’s instruction, and modeling coordination, cooperation, and mutual support. Both support what the other teaches in the classroom and are able to shift roles, with the classroom teacher sometimes addressing arts content, and the artist sometimes addressing academic content.
- **Content integrity:** Artists and teachers both maintain the integrity of their content areas.
- **Applied arts concepts:** Art concepts are actively applied to investigate and deepen academic content.
- **Democratic inclusion:** All students have clear, focused, and active roles.<sup>11</sup>

Through analysis of student interviews, the researchers identified three “themes” that defined how arts-integrated environments affected student learning: (1) improved learning environments; (2) engaged content; and (3) broadened learning communities. The improved classroom environments and engagement with the materials appear to have affected students’ motivation to learn. Students seemed to be more intrinsically motivated, were challenged by their work, and were more interested in pursuing the content outside of class.

## **Findings on Program Outcomes**

A review of this length cannot do justice to the wealth of findings and data presented in these reports. In this section we focus on reported findings on the impact of the programs’ on schools, organizations, teaching practice, and students.

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<sup>11</sup> DeMoss & Morris, p. 7.

## **School Change**

Some of the large-scale initiatives also had an effect on entire school systems. For instance, the Partnership Program of Center for Arts Education was credited by political and school leaders for helping to reverse the decline of arts instruction in New York City. Other school-based arts initiatives were subsequently launched, with the goal of restoring arts education in every school.

The Center for Arts Education funded local, flexibly conceived partnerships among school communities, collaborating organizations and artists. Partnerships were required to develop arts programming for all students in a school, as opposed to isolated pockets of artist residencies. In the most successful partnerships, connections were made between teachers as they engaged in professional or curriculum development. Artists worked more collaboratively with teachers. The program helped to break down barriers between teachers, grade-levels, disciplines, and in-school and external arts providers. In the best examples, the whole-school approach helped create connections among teachers, artists, children, and parents. Local site evaluators also reported improvements in school climate and the development of schools as learning communities.

Additionally, the overall project evaluator reported these effects on participating schools:

- Teachers incorporated arts activities into their instruction when the teaching artist was not present.
- Teachers used new classroom management techniques acquired from teaching artists.
- Teachers increased knowledge about art forms.
- New teachers were inducted into the culture of the school and practice of arts integration through professional development activities.
- Project coordinators judged those programs to be most successful in which certified arts teaching staff were integrated into the project.
- Some schools reported the development of a “distributed leadership” model where teachers throughout the school took on responsibility for the programs.<sup>12</sup>

The North Carolina A+ Schools Program evaluators applied a framework for school reform developed by Shields and Knapp<sup>13</sup> to help determine whether components of the A+ Program could serve as a school reform model. Shields and Knapp identify three dimensions of school reform design: (1) scope, (2) a focus on teaching and learning, and (3) a time frame for change. Additionally, they define three organizational strategies: (1) locus of authority, (2) collaborative engagement of participants, and (3) professional

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<sup>12</sup> Baker, T., Bevan, B., & Admon, N. (2001) Final evaluation report on the Center for Arts Education’s New York City Partnerships for Arts and Education Program New York: Education Development Center/Center for Children and Technology, p. 23.

<sup>13</sup> Shields, P. M. & Knapp, M. S. (1997). *The promise and limits of school-based reform: A national snapshot*. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 79(4) 288-294.

development opportunities. The evaluators found that within each dimension the A+ Program fell within the range where the “most promising examples of school-based reform are most likely to occur.”<sup>14</sup> They also point out that the complexity of the A+ program goes beyond the Shields and Knapp school-based framework, due to the involvement of the entire A+ Network.

The A+ evaluators described additional, but complementary, effects on the participating schools. Not every school was affected in the same way, and not all were equally successful. The evaluators found that the arts were increasingly legitimized within many schools, “viewed as fundamental to the way teachers teach and students learn.”<sup>15</sup> There was evidence of improved communication within individual schools and among different A+ schools. Schools developed increased organizational capacity through professional development and the development of new internal structure. The schools also seemed to acquire a more focused identity, as they saw themselves as part of a broader, arts-based school reform initiative.

The ABC Program in South Carolina reported some similar findings to the New York City and North Carolina evaluations. They describe several program effects on school ecology. Schools had an increased organizational capacity and improved channels of communication. The community perception of participating schools was improved. Parents developed a stronger sense of affiliation with schools. They were more participatory and became more aware of the school curriculum. Teachers and principals reported that students had better behavior and that there was an increase in positive school climate.

### ***Changes in Arts and Cultural Organizations***

Through the Partnership Program of the Center for Arts Education, cultural and community organizations developed whole-school partnerships with New York City schools. Organizations participated in collaboratively-planned curriculum and professional development as they became more fully engaged with their partner schools. This provoked change in many organizations. They developed deeper relationships with the school community. Often, they found they needed to reconfigure their instructional offerings as they attempted to work within the context of school curricula and state standards.

In order to meet these more demanding requirements, many organizations developed their infrastructure and capacity, adding staff and expertise. Some organizations began or increased their professional development programs for teaching artists. Artists learned to co-plan with teachers, developing curriculum connections between the arts and other subjects. According to evaluator Terry Baker, “Many teaching artists reported in

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<sup>14</sup> Adkins, A. & McKinney, M. (2001). Placing A+ in a national context: A comparison to promising practices for comprehensive school reform. Winston-Salem, NC: Thomas S. Kenan Institute for the Arts, p. 7

<sup>15</sup> Nelson, C. A. (2001). The arts and education reform: lessons from a four-year evaluation of the A+ Schools Program. Winston-Salem, NC: Thomas S. Kenan Institute for the Arts, p.8

interviews and surveys that they experienced significant changes in their own practices – more carefully listening to the needs of teachers, looking for curricular connections, thinking about student learning and assessment, and learning more about developmentally appropriate instruction.”<sup>16</sup>

## ***Changes in Instructional Practice***

All of the evaluations described various ways that teachers changed because of the initiatives.

The Arts for Academic Achievement evaluators in Minnesota found that the program promoted teacher change in two areas, learning and leadership. The evaluators described three areas where teachers demonstrated how they had learned new skills or knowledge:<sup>17</sup>

- **Instruction became more child-focused.** Through AAA teachers became more comfortable acting as facilitators of student learning rather than solely as knowledge dispensers. Arts integration enabled students to explore concepts and make connections at their own pace and develop connections that were personally meaningful to them.
- **Teachers expanded their toolkit of instructional strategies.** By co-developing instruction with arts partners and integrating the arts into non-arts lessons, teachers learned new strategies for engaging students in learning. [These strategies included an emphasis on revision and improvement of student work, the use of critique, and encouraging students to take risks in their learning.]
- **Changed perceptions about student capacity.** Arts integration allowed teachers to see strengths in students they had not expected and discover options for assessing student learning, making them aware of change and learning in students that they might have overlooked before.

The AAA teachers also developed leadership skills. Because they needed to take the lead and actively participate in collaborative instructional settings, they developed an ability to hold each other accountable and resolve conflicts.

The North Carolina A+ Schools Program saw professional development of teachers as a means for capacity building, rather than training. They encouraged teachers and principals to view themselves as activists, curriculum leaders and professionals who could promote school-based change. Professional development was delivered via the A+ Network, consisting of the Kenan Institute, A+ Fellows (primarily site-based teachers), principals, site coordinators, and a steering committee. The A+ researchers

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<sup>16</sup> Baker, T., Bevan, B., & Admon, N. (2001) Final evaluation report on the Center for Arts Education’s New York City Partnerships for Arts and Education Program New York: Education Development Center/Center for Children and Technology. p. 40.

<sup>17</sup> Ingram, D., & Seashore, K. R. (2003). Arts for Academic Achievement: Summative evaluation report. University of Minnesota: Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement, p. 7-8.

found that the program’s investment in capacity building helped the program stay “resilient” to challenges to school change, such as inadequate funding, time constraints, personnel turnover, and high-stakes accountability.

Although instruction varied within each of the A+ schools, the evaluators identified five overall strategies within the schools that promoted instructional change. Schools applied a mix of these approaches suitable to their site-specific needs.

1. **Increasing arts instruction.** Schools increased the amount of arts instruction by both specialist and generalist teachers. Arts integrated instruction increased, due to professional development, collaborative planning, and participation of arts specialists as team teachers and instructional coaches.
2. **Fostering two-way arts integration and ending the isolation of the arts.** Schools sought to place the arts on an equal footing with other subjects through infusing arts with other subject disciplines, while also infusing those core subjects with the arts. The two-way arts integration “placed the creative ways of knowing fostered by the arts at the center of teaching and learning in the school.”
3. **Tapping multiple intelligences.** Teachers attempted to design instruction appropriate to different learning styles and “intelligences.”
4. **Emphasizing hands-on learning.** Teachers increasingly provided students with “opportunities to engage concepts and problems directly and provide their own interpretations and solutions, rather than just listening to or reading about ideas.”
5. **Integrated thematic approach to major ideas in curriculum.** Teachers worked with grade-level or school-wide curricular themes. These provided students with the opportunities to synthesize and apply arts-integrated instruction within a broader context than their individual classes. The A+ Summer Professional Development Institutes were instrumental in helping teachers plan arts-integrated units.

Other studies cited ways that teachers participated or were affected by the large-scale initiatives. The TETAC evaluators found that teachers (1) engaged in more collaborative teaching; (2) had more opportunities for thematic, integrated instruction; and (3) valued the role of the arts in the curriculum. Most teachers believed that skills from the arts can transfer to other subjects, but that state and district testing mandates were among the barriers to more complete program implementation.

Teachers involved in South Carolina’s ABC program were more likely to seek out professional development opportunities. There was an increased interest by teachers in pursuing professional development in teaching an arts-immersed curriculum.

New York City schoolteachers engaged in a wide variety of professional development opportunities within the 81 local partnerships in the Center for Arts Education’s Partnership Program. Most partnership grants required teachers to learn to work collaboratively, such as through co-planning curriculum and aligning instruction with visiting artists. In the most successful partnerships, teachers acquired new skills and knowledge in using the arts, working collaboratively, and assessing student growth.

Naturally, as with the other projects, these effects were not evenly dispersed among each school site.

Specific areas of change included:

- Teachers acquired new skills in using the arts in the classroom and became more familiar with different art forms. They learned to use the language of the arts and developed their confidence at arts integration. Partnership projects developed new ways of teaching that integrated the arts with core curricular areas. Teachers incorporated arts activities into their instruction beyond the experiences brought to the schools by teaching artists.
- Integrated arts lessons introduced new ways for teachers to evaluate student progress beyond test scores.
- Teachers found new ways to reach their students.
- Teachers developed new insights into how their students learned and behaved in class.
- Arts experiences helped teachers see different aspects of their students that they otherwise would not have been exposed to. Teachers deepened their understanding of their student's abilities and potential.
- Teachers systematically collaborated and co-planned with artists and other teachers
- Teachers were exposed to, and learned to work with, a wide variety of community and arts resources.

Several of the evaluations presented in this summary report gathered data on their program from the teaching artists' perspective, adding to the available literature in this area. For example, local site evaluations in the New York City initiative documented teaching artist professional development programs, peer review groups, and mentoring systems designed to help artists improve their classroom skills. In Minnesota, artists described how they had experienced much deeper relationships with teachers because of the AAA program. One artist tried to explain the more fulfilling experience of being better integrated into the instructional fabric of a school: "I used to be the cream on the cake and all of a sudden, I'm the cake! I am part of the actual work, not as much a flash in the pan, but part of a long term partnership."

A study by Lynn Waldorf examined the perspectives of teaching artists on participation in CAPE partnerships.<sup>18</sup> Most often, evaluations of arts partnerships have tended to look at the *effects* of artist participation, rather than the artists themselves. One contribution of this study is that it provides profiles of artists, describing their background, experiences, beliefs and attitudes. They reflect on their influence on teaching and learning in the classroom and their role within the schools.

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<sup>18</sup> Waldorf, L. A. (2002). *The professional artist as public school educator: A research report of the Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education, 2000-2001*. UCLA Graduate School of Education & Information Studies.

Waldorf found that the artists' aspirations fell into four categories: (1) artistic goals, such as instilling a passion for the arts, and helping students experience new ways of thinking and seeing; (2) educational goals, such as enriching academic learning, developing learning skills and confidence, and informing instructional practice; (3) social goals, such as equity, diversity, and community; and (4) personal goals, such as teaching arts skills, career development, and financial compensation. Artists felt they made an important classroom contribution to development of thinking and kinesthetic skills. They thought they could be more effective with better support from school administrators, closer relationships with school teachers, and better understanding of school subjects and classroom management.

## ***Impact on Student Learning***

### **Learning in the Arts**

The TETAC evaluators developed a visual arts assessment based loosely on the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) in the arts. NAEP test items were compared with the four components of Discipline-Based Arts Education (DBAE): art criticism, art history, aesthetics, and art production, and adapted to fit the Comprehensive Arts Education model based upon DBAE.

Sample groups of students were tested in third grade and retested in fourth or five grades. The students' scores were compared with the degree to which participating schools had successfully implemented the Comprehensive Arts Education (CAE) model. Results indicated that students learned the visual arts at a faster rate in those schools that most successfully implemented the program. These results were consistent when controlling for socioeconomic status, ethnicity and gender.

In coordination with the South Carolina Arts Assessment Project (SCAAP), evaluators for the Arts in Basic Curriculum project field-tested assessments in music and visual arts. SCAAP developed 240 multiple choice items and four performance tasks which were piloted, in three music and three visual arts forms, with fourth graders in 13 different ABC schools. The results of this administration provided some indication that the ABC arts-immersed curriculum supports higher achievement in the arts. The highest scoring arts scores came from the school which also had the highest parent and student survey scores on dimensions of arts-immersion. The lowest scores came from a school with little experience in arts-immersion.

In New York City, evaluators reported increases in the amount of sequential arts instruction in the Partnership Program schools. Arts programs encouraged and developed self-expression within the various arts disciplines and students became familiar with materials and language of the arts and artmaking.

One program of the NYC Center for Arts Education, *Student Learning in and through the Arts*, (supported by the National Endowment for the Arts) brought together artists, teachers and researchers to look closely at rich examples of arts integration and their

effect on student learning. Ten paired teams of teachers and artists, each with the support of a researcher, defined the goals of their arts-integrated approaches to teaching and collaboratively developed assessment instruments to “capture” evidence of student growth.

Teachers and teaching artists participated in workshops as part of the Center’s *Looking at Student Work* project. Initially based upon the assessment practices of Steven Seidel of Harvard Project Zero, these sessions helped the educators develop a richer understanding of their own teaching and assessment of children’s work in the arts.

## **Learning in Academic Subjects**

Several of the large-scale evaluations explored the relationship between project programming and students’ performance on standardized academic tests. Although some significant relationships were found, the overall results were inconclusive. All of the studies, however, reported evidence of effects on student learning obtained through surveys and qualitative methods, such as interviews and site observations. Looking cumulatively at the studies, it appears there is a relationship between arts-integrated programming and learning across academic areas when they are more broadly defined than through the skills contained in high-stakes tests.

Evaluators for the Minnesota Arts for Academic Achievement project compared the degree of arts-integrated instruction within reading and math classes with scores on the Northwest Achievement Levels Test. Three years of data were analyzed for grades three, four and five. In the first year of the study, there were significant relationships between arts-integrated instruction and fourth grade reading and math scores, as well as with third and fifth grade math scores. There were no significant results in the second year of the study. In the third year, there were significant relationships between arts-integrated instruction and reading performance in each of the three grades, and with third grade math students, but not fourth or fifth graders. These relationships were consistent when controlling for socioeconomic status, ethnicity and gender.

In a report released in 2002, the South Carolina Arts in Basic Curriculum evaluators analyzed three consecutive years of performance on state tests (PACT) in English language arts and mathematics.<sup>19</sup> Scores in three arts-immersed schools were compared with scores from three comparison schools. Schools were matched according to socioeconomic status (free/reduced lunch) and number of tested students. Results showed steady increases over the three years in percent of students identified as Proficient or Advanced, as compared to the comparison group. The evaluators caution that these results, by themselves, do not establish a causal relationship between arts immersion and PACT performance. However, there may be aspects of instruction in the arts-immersed schools that affect PACT scores. The researchers conclude that the data demonstrate PACT scores were not adversely affected by the introduction of the arts-immersed

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<sup>19</sup> Office of Program Evaluation: University of South Carolina (2002). [PACT performance for arts-immersed and comparison schools.](#)

curriculum. This should allay the fears of some administrators that more emphasis on arts programming will detract from traditional core subjects.

The TETAC evaluators attempted to compare standardized test scores in academic subjects with estimates of the degree of program implementation. This proved challenging, because the TETAC program was implemented in several different states, each with its own system of student assessment. Additionally, the tests were changed in some sites during the evaluation period. Analysis of site-specific data found no significant relationship between program implementation and performance on reading and math tests. However, other data demonstrate a consistent belief by teachers that the program improved students' skills in creative thinking, writing, motivation and other areas. The evaluators conclude that this is not just "wish fulfillment" on the part of the teachers. The academic tests, themselves, are not designed to measure those areas where the arts are most likely going to have an impact. The evaluators recommend examining the standardized tests themselves to understand how closely they align with the teacher data. They believe that a research agenda is best suited for exploring this further, rather than a study geared towards evaluation.

TETAC surveys revealed the areas where teachers thought the program had the biggest impact on academic performance or engagement. Large majorities of teachers reported that the program had an impact on students' abilities to: (1) express themselves through writing, (2) make connections across different subject or content areas, (3) understand how information and skills learned in school relate to the "real world," (4) work cooperatively with others, and (5) develop and evaluate alternate solutions to problems. Similarly, they reported increased motivation to learn and engage in instructional activities.

Performance on state test scores within A+ Program Schools were closely matched to scores in other North Carolina schools. However, the evaluators report that many A+ teachers did not view the state tests as reliable indicators of achievement within their arts integrated curriculum. Different kinds of assessment instruments are needed to validly capture creative and higher order thinking skills supported by the program.

Evaluators found that NYC Center for Arts Education Partnership Program schools within lower socioeconomic status groups had slightly higher reading scores than non-participating schools. However, the differences were not statistically significant. Even if they were, the differences in performance could not be convincingly linked to the Partnership Program due to the difficulty of controlling for other variables and the transience of the student population. A subsequent analysis by evaluator Terry Baker found increases in scores at certain schools, but these results were not consistent throughout the funded partnership schools. He concluded that more research was needed to understand how certain aspects of the funded programs might influence performance on standardized tests. Baker emphasized that these findings did not undermine the "remarkably positive" qualitative findings on the program.

Additional findings on student learning encompassed a wide range of potential outcomes, due to the site-based diversity of the project. Partnership schools were located throughout New York City and provided a wide range of arts and arts-integrated instruction. Each of the individual partnership sites was required to implement their own site-based evaluation. Reports by local partnership evaluators cited numerous examples of student learning. Overall project evaluator Terry Baker cautioned that most partnerships lacked the expertise to implement successful evaluation plans, even though they were required to assess the impact of the program on student learning. Baker cited findings from several local evaluations in his reports. The school-based evaluators claimed that students in partnership schools were more motivated, had better attendance and behavior, developed expressive abilities, and improved their test scores.

### **Other Effects on Students**

Several of the evaluations described areas of student development beyond skills within arts or academic subjects. There are many descriptions of children's growth in thinking skills and social abilities. In my own research as an evaluator for an individual NYC Partnership Program site, I attempted to extend research begun as part of a Champions of Change study.<sup>20</sup> This research, in a Brooklyn school, employed systematic, qualitative methods to build upon a model of potential transfer within cognitive, personal, and social domains of learning. Student growth in several areas was identified through comprehensive, qualitative analysis:<sup>21</sup>

- Students became more fluent at verbal expression. There was an increase in children's ability to discuss art and art making. They became increasingly adept at verbalizing and writing about their learning, their learning process, and the arts.
- Students developed creative thinking abilities, such as elaboration, originality, and imagination.
- Students became positive risk-takers, taking personal steps of courage as they created art and expressed themselves before the school community.
- Children gained in self-confidence as they found they could achieve or perform new and challenging tasks.
- Students demonstrated increased motivation in the classroom.
- Students developed their capacity for task persistence as they learned to focus and concentrate on challenging tasks.
- Students demonstrated gains in collaboration and cooperative learning.

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<sup>20</sup> Burton, J., Horowitz, R., & Abeles, H. (2000). Learning in and through the arts : The question of transfer. *Studies in Art Education*, 41(3), 228-257.

<sup>21</sup> Horowitz, R. & Kleiman, A. (2002, April). *The relationship between arts learning and cognitive skills, social competencies, and personal dispositions*. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Education Research Association, New Orleans, LA.  
Horowitz, R. (2001, 2002) *Program evaluation of the P.S. 130 – ArtsConnection NYCPAE partnership: Third and fourth year reports*.

- Children developed their ability to observe, attend, and focus their perception on artworks and their environment.

These findings are consistent with those from several of the large-scale evaluations. They are also similar to findings from several other multi-arts studies summarized in the recent compendium of research, *Critical Links*, although these studies sometimes use different language to describe comparable areas of student growth.<sup>22</sup>

There are descriptions of similar kinds of general effects on children's growth in the large-scale evaluations. CAPE researchers DeMoss and Morris interviewed children, examined student writing, and observed classes to determine how arts-integrated teaching supported student learning. They found qualitative evidence that students' written analytic interpretations were more developed in arts-integrated classes. Students were also more likely to make affective connections in their writing, drawing on their personal experiences, feelings, or narratives. DeMoss and Morris also found evidence of increased motivation and engagement in arts integrated classes and an interest in continuing to pursue learning outside of class. The researchers believed that the learning experiences helped the students engage subject content "in ways that reflected more complex cognitive processes" as they scaffolded analytical thinking skills.<sup>23</sup>

Evaluators of the large-scale initiatives reported on effects on students' development of social and school relationships. Researchers studying the Minnesota AAA project defined four areas of change in student-to-student relations through analysis of interview and observation data. These included: (1) improved communication in groups, (2) the emergence of unlikely leaders, (3) the blending of special needs children into their peer group, and (3) improved student teamwork to accomplish a goal.

The North Carolina A+ evaluators described heightened engagement and enthusiasm for learning in an arts-enriched academic environment. Teachers and students reported a growth in enjoyment and enthusiasm for school and learning. The evaluators concluded that the program promoted "equity" for students, as effects were consistent across subgroups of students, such as high or low achievers, or special needs students. School principals attributed higher attendance to their enthusiasm for school activities.

NYC Center for Arts Education evaluators surveyed teachers, teaching artists, project directors, and cultural organizations to determine their perceptions on the programs' benefits for students. Their responses indicated that they believed that students felt more successful and positive because of the programs and were more interested in continuing with arts education.

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<sup>22</sup> Horowitz, R. & Webb-Dempsey, J. (2002). Promising signs of positive effects: Lessons from the multi-arts studies. In R. J. Deasy (Ed.), *Critical links: Learning in the arts and student academic and social development*. (pp. 98-100). Washington, D.C.: Arts Education Partnership.

<sup>23</sup> DeMoss & Morris, p. 22.

## Implications for Design and Implementation

The large-scale evaluation reports describe various challenges to successful implementation and offer some lessons learned through experience. The evaluators often cited the need to reconcile the requirements of state-wide assessment procedures with the assessment and programmatic needs of their projects. It was also difficult for some sites to change entrenched teaching practices or to engage schools in broader networks due to competing priorities in curriculum or assessment. It is evident, upon reviewing the various reports, that the work of implementing large-scale arts initiatives and partnerships is continual and ongoing, both within and across schools.

The reports itemized some of these challenges. Terry Baker described six issues that challenged implementation in the NYC initiative: (1) sufficient time to plan and reflect; (2) sufficient professional development; (3) experience in assessing student learning; (4) compartmentalization of time and content domains; (5) constant flux of school and cultural organization staff and leadership; and (6) the pressures of high-stakes testing.<sup>24</sup> TETAC evaluators cited significant obstacles “posed by lack of planning time, state/district assessment programs, and the demands of new and changing mandates.”<sup>25</sup> The A+ Project schools faced similar challenges during their first four years: “(1) inadequate funding, (2) time constraints, (3) personnel turnover, and (4) state demands that included implementation of a new high-stakes accountability system.”<sup>26</sup>

Practitioners responsible for planning and implementing arts initiatives can learn from these experiences. It is apparent that the depth of commitment within schools and from initiative leadership makes an enormous difference. Depth of commitment can be manifested in several ways, from sufficient funding, thoughtfully designed professional development, building connections and communication among all participants, and choosing appropriate assessment and evaluation processes that match the program’s design and instruction. Not surprisingly, quality matters.

According to the Minnesota AAA evaluators, “the amount of arts integrated instruction and the depth in a partnering relationship make a difference for program impact. Spreading too little funding among too many sites limits the impact of the project for everyone involved.”<sup>27</sup> Enough funding and sufficient depth of programming is essential for achieving the desired impact on teaching and learning. In another part of their report they emphasize this point again while describing their findings:

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<sup>24</sup> Baker, T., Bevan, B., & Admon, N. (2001) Final evaluation report on the Center for Arts Education’s New York City Partnerships for Arts and Education Program. New York: Education Development Center/Center for Children and Technology, p. 16.

<sup>25</sup> Frechtling, J., *et al.* Final evaluation report of the Transforming Education Through the Arts Challenge. Rockville, MD: Westat, p. 29.

<sup>26</sup> Groves, P., Gerstl-Pepin, C. I., Patterson, J., Cozart, S. C., McKinney, M. (2001). Educational Resilience in the A+ Schools Program: Building capacity through networking and professional development. Winston-Salem, NC: Thomas S. Kenan Institute for the Arts, p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> Ingram, D., & Seashore, K. R. (2003). Arts for Academic Achievement: Summative evaluation report. University of Minnesota: Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement, p. 10.

*As these results illustrate, the amount of arts integration matters. When teachers integrated the arts into their mathematics lessons “a lot”, for example, their students showed greater achievement gains than teachers who integrated the arts “very little”. **It was not the mere presence of arts integration, but the intensity that related to gains in student learning.***<sup>28</sup>

TETAC evaluators stressed that professional development of teachers is an essential ingredient for successful implementation. They also cite three additional areas that are most important for implementing their vision of Comprehensive Arts Education (CAE): (1) adaptation or adoption of tools to support the teaching of CAE, (2) strong leadership, and (3) the development of a cohesive, collaborative team focused on developing CAE.<sup>29</sup> These recommendations seem applicable to other initiatives, as well.

Recommendations by the A+ Schools Project evaluators can also apply to other programs:

- **Leveraging the power of a network** – schools viewed themselves as part of a larger group, which had benefits in joint learning opportunities, collaboration, and collective responses to external challenges.
- **Adopting a school-wide approach to professional development** – all teachers in a school participated.
- **Changes in culture and practice must be supported by structural changes, particularly in the use of time.**
- **Accept ambiguity and the need to balance seemingly opposing approaches** – The A+ Program sought to transcend potentially divisive dichotomies such as “arts for arts sake vs. arts as instrumental” or “top-down vs. bottom-up reform.”
- **Sustainable education reform requires a political strategy.**

In one of the A+ Schools Policy Reports, the evaluators itemize nine “wise practices” that they found support school reform through the arts. They should not be viewed as a model or checklist, but instead as “an artist’s palette of colors” for school reform. Different contexts might make different use of these wise practices.<sup>30</sup>

In summary, they include:

1. **Learning from evaluation:** Evaluators conducted longitudinal assessment on effects on schools and students, investigated “the nature of A+ as an educational reform” and studied “internal dynamics” of individual A+ schools. They employed a balance of formative and summative evaluation processes.

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<sup>28</sup> Ingram, D. & Seashore, K. R. (2003), pp. 4-5.

<sup>29</sup> Frechtling, J., *et al.* Final evaluation report of the Transforming Education Through the Arts Challenge. Rockville, MD: Westat, p. 89-90.

<sup>30</sup> Groves, P., McKinney, M., Urrieta, L., Gillman, C. Disla, L., Cleveland, D., & Noblit, G. (2001). Wise practices in the North Carolina A+ Schools Program: A practitioners’ guide to reforming with the arts. Winston-Salem, NC: Thomas S. Kenan Institute for the Arts.

2. **Tapping multiple intelligences:** Practitioners subscribed to Multiple Intelligences theory and its applicability to reforming school instruction.
3. **Integrating curriculum through the arts and thematic units:** A+ schools sought to increase the amount of arts instruction through both specialized instruction within the arts disciplines and through integration with the general curriculum.
4. **Opening new channels of communication:** Teachers were encouraged to break out of their traditional isolation and work together across disciplines and grade levels.
5. **Investing in professional development:** teachers were encouraged to “take charge of instructional and school-wide change.”
6. **Enriching assessment:** assessment strategies were developed to more closely align with arts integrated instruction.
7. **Strengthening parent and community involvement.**
8. **Opening up governance.**
9. **Networking.**

The evaluators of each project make consistent recommendations for engaging all participants in a collaborative approach to teaching and learning. Some of the evaluations emphasize the need to include arts specialist teachers in initiatives that are largely based on instruction by classroom teachers or visiting artists. The Minnesota AAA evaluators recommend expanding the role of arts specialists within site-based partnerships and TETAC evaluators suggest elevating the status of arts specialist teachers by including them in curriculum development.

## **Implications for Evaluation**

Studies done over several years, such as those reviewed here, are far more valuable than single-year studies. As the programs developed the evaluators were able to adapt as well, making needed revisions in design and instrumentation. They were also able to supply invaluable formative analysis to support the programs’ growth. The TETAC researchers recommend that evaluators become embedded in a project early on, as it is developed. Sometimes programs may feel that they “aren’t ready” for evaluation, and thereby miss out on the opportunity for ongoing input and collaborative planning with experienced evaluators.

All of the projects benefited from a comprehensive, multi-method approach to evaluation. They used a mix of qualitative and quantitative approaches. They investigated program effects at different levels, such as within networks, schools, classroom, while also attempting to assess individual student growth. At the same time, they defined, and sometimes measured, conceptions or levels of program implementation. As the TETAC evaluators assert, a mixed-method approach is essential for these kinds of evaluations.

*Combining quantitative and qualitative data was critical to developing a deep and broad picture of what was taking place. Comparison of the two methods also revealed consistencies and, even more importantly, inconsistencies that either method alone might have masked.*<sup>31</sup>

Because of the difficulty posed by finding suitable comparison groups, Westat scored levels of program implementation in their evaluation of the TETAC project. The evaluators used variations in program implementation as a grouping variable to explore the relationship between successful implementation and student outcomes. While the evaluators caution that their approach may not provide results as compelling as randomized control groups it was a “feasible and reasonable approach, given real world constraints.” Besides the obvious practical benefits, this approach can help evaluators define characteristics of successful program implementation and establish links between elements of the program and types of student outcomes. It can also help practitioners see the link between successful instructional practice and student performance.

There is still a critical need to find better outcome measures, particularly in areas of student growth. Several evaluators mentioned that the standardized tests they used (in reading or math) were insufficient for assessing learning within the projects. These measures were only loosely linked to the arts programming or they didn’t capture the full extent of learning within arts-integrated contexts. The evaluators did cite compelling examples of local site-based assessments. However, because they are context-specific, the results from these assessments are not easily aggregated for the large-scale reports. Evaluators should seek to develop additional valid, reliable, and usable instrumentation to assess the kinds of student learning developed through these large-scale initiatives.

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<sup>31</sup> Frechtling, J., *et al.* Final evaluation report of the Transforming Education Through the Arts Challenge. Rockville, MD: Westat, p. 93.