

A PORTRAIT OF PERSUASIVE POTENTIAL

The Evaluation Study of

ArtsNOW: 2007-2008

Prepared by

David E. Myers, Ph.D.
Professor and Director, School of Music
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN

For the Board and Staff of Creating Pride, Atlanta GA

November 12, 2008

PRELUDE

In 2002, Elliot Eisner, professor of education at Stanford University, noted that ". . .it is understandable why tight controls, accountability in terms of high stakes testing, and the pre-specification of intended outcomes – standards they are called – should [be attractive]." Eisner challenged assumptions of uniform goals and assessments for all students and subjects. Noting that such assumptions were spurred largely by political response to public concerns about America's schools, Eisner asked, "Do we really believe that tables about school performance published in the newspaper is a good way to understand what schools teach or that the relentless focus on raising test scores is a good way to insure quality education?"

By contrast, Eisner argued, schools ought to focus on the kind of education needed for success in life and work: "The arts provide the kind of ideal American education needs . . . our lives increasingly require the ability to deal with conflicting messages, to make judgments in the absence of rule, to cope with ambiguity, and to frame imaginative solutions We need to be able not only to envision fresh options, we need to have feel for the situations in which they appearthe forms of thinking the arts stimulate and develop are far more appropriate for the real world we live in than the tidy right angled boxes we employ in our schools in the name of school improvement. . . .[these forms of thinking] are relevant to the design of curricula, to the practice of teaching, to the features of the environment in which students and teachers live." (*What Can Education Learn from the Arts about the Practice of Education?*)

Though a large body of research has documented the values of education in and through the arts, Western education has lagged woefully behind an holistic and historic understanding of the role the arts play in human lives and society. Anthropologists and researchers in other fields have noted the centrality of the arts in communication, knowledge sharing, expressing humankind's deepest feelings, and transmitting understanding from generation to generation. Since the beginning of time, people have maintained their optimism and sanity, and often survived, through their ability to imagine, create, devise alternative solutions to problems, and express their deepest feelings in poetry, drawing, acting, and making music. Across cultures, the arts are integrally connected with the celebrations and rituals of family and community existence – from birth to death -- and with efforts to bring not only beauty, but sanity, to the journey called life. In the context of America's vast educational system, increasing numbers of researchers, teacher educators, administrators, teachers, and parents understand that the arts influence learning in a number of important ways, including:

- Positive learning climates that interrupt the tedium of teacher-focused classrooms through active learning that reflects real-world knowledge acquisition, and through understanding based on an integration of concepts and principles from diverse disciplines
- Developmentally appropriate instruction that replicates children's inherent and frequently self-initiated learning through movement, drawing, singing, acting, improvising, composing, reflecting, reviewing, revising, correcting, practicing, and creating, all of which are endemic to arts learning and arts experiences.
- Multiple forms of conceptual development that simultaneously engage mind, body, and feelings
- Enhancing interdisciplinary understanding through authentic conceptual relationships

- Enriched assessment measures that provide students with opportunities to demonstrate learning in multiple ways and to exceed the stifling limitations of pencil and paper assessments that require little more than rote memorization of information
- Specific learning strategies that relate the arts to knowledge and skill development in areas such as language literacy, math literacy, social studies

Despite overwhelming evidence of the arts in the human condition, however, and their essential role in the formal education systems of a global society, American education fails to ensure a consistent, integral place for the arts in children's learning. Rather than looking to the inherent values of the arts across generations as their substantive worth in learning, we seek "proof" that the arts add value to the school curriculum. As Eisner notes, "Statistics can be a comfort; they abstract the particular out of existence." In fact, the question of the arts' value has been answered many times over. What has not been answered is how implementation of the arts in schools can occur in ways that capture the transcendent values suggested above. Unless the arts are infused into school curricula in ways that embody their real-world relevance across generations and societies, their value to the lives and learning of children will be negated. In his 1984 book, *A Place Called School*, John Goodlad noted that while the transcendent values of the arts are frequently invoked to justify their value, too many arts experiences in schools are relegated to non-creative, right-answer, technical work that fails to realize their true power and relevance. In today's assessment-crazed school reform culture, it is too often the case that proponents of arts education fall prey to the "proof" syndrome, thereby reducing arts experiences to enjoyable learning strategies -- what some have termed "tinkering" -- rather than seeking "understanding" of the ways in which the arts embody rigorous learning.

The rush to "prove" the arts' value by linking specific "strategies" to pre-ordained "student outcomes" is one of the most dangerous detriments to the transcendent power of the arts for student learning and development. The notion that all learning can be reduced to simplified assessments based primarily on factual knowledge, or test makers' assumptions of factual knowledge, has proven to be a rapid decelerator of educational excellence. Thresholds that are not met despite inappropriate drilling and repetition and after-school remediation are changed to accommodate these failures in order to reach statistical evidence of "adequate progress." Rather than employing creative teaching-learning processes that encourage the highest levels of understanding and thinking among children, the bar is lowered in order to "prove progress." Such prostitution of statistical evidence poses a significant danger to true school reform, and it diverts us from a profound and powerful commitment to ensuring that children experience, as they deserve, the highest levels of educational excellence of which we are capable. An effort to *understand* the values the arts bring and to explore more deeply *how* they influence learning may offer important considerations for ensuring the kinds of true and lasting educational excellence we all desire.

THE 2007-2008 EVALUATION OF ArtsNOW

Approach to the Evaluation and Limitations of the Evaluation Study

ArtsNOW is a professional development program for classroom teachers, arts specialists, and administrators. The evaluation was situated within this mission/purpose in order to ensure authenticity of findings. The evaluation was conceived as a holistic "program evaluation" rather than an assessment of student learning.

Because the evaluation was also situated, appropriately, in the real-world context of teachers and schools, it did not use a tightly controlled input-output design. Teaching, learning, and schools are highly variable dynamic enterprises that do not conform easily to reductionistic experimental measures. Moreover, the arts, by design, are qualitative. Arts education not only allows for, but encourages, diverse approaches consistent with levels of teacher comfort and expertise, as well as students' developmental learning needs. Arts education evaluation studies that circumvent or defy the qualitative, multi-dimensional nature of arts teaching and learning are highly suspect relative to their validity. This evaluation study therefore used a responsive evaluation approach (R. Stake, *Standards Based and Responsive Evaluation*, Sage, 2003). Responsive evaluation utilizes multiple forms of data, with the goal of *understanding* the quality and influence of a program.

The translation of professional development among teachers to measurable achievement among students is extremely challenging to document and generally cannot be accomplished without a tightly controlled comparative design. Even then, findings can be suspect. Student outcomes in intact school classrooms are influenced by a host of in-school and out-of-school variables that make isolation of any particular variable extremely difficult. As Eisner suggests, though statistics may offer "comfort" to politicians and funders, there is a strong tendency in today's assessment culture to assume influence and impact that cannot be justified when the data are holistically interpreted.

As became evident during the course of this evaluation, endeavoring to "prove" change in student academic achievement based on teachers' having attended and implemented ArtsNOW, or even the Creating Pride Model, in their classrooms was impossible. Beyond inefficacies of the Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT), differences in the levels and quality of ArtsNOW implementation, transient student populations, teachers who taught different groups of students in different years, differences in the art forms used for integration, differences in levels of collaborative planning, and differences in levels of comfort and expertise among teachers were factors that made such analyses, or any conclusions drawn from them, not only unreliable but also misleading. Similarly, efforts to tie Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and attendance data to ArtsNOW/Creating Pride Model implementations yielded no consistent findings.

Four workshops were included in primary data collection: October 2007; December 2007; February 2008; and July 2008. The following data sources were reviewed to compile the evaluation findings, interpretations, and recommendations:

- Pre-workshop surveys of participants' perceptions of arts integration
- Post-workshop evaluations of the quality of the workshops
- Follow-up surveys to assess perceptions and levels of implementation 5 months following the workshops (Workshops conducted August 2007; October 2007; December 2007; and February 2008)
- Four site visits/case studies of schools designated by Creating Pride staff as model implementation sites

- Follow-up phone survey of implementation conducted by Creating Pride staff for select schools in Spring 2008
- Focus Group with participants and observation of workshops

EVALUATION FINDINGS

What are participants' perceptions regarding arts integration, effectiveness of professional development, readiness to do arts integration, amount/success of arts integration, and relevance of *ArtsNOW* to identified professional development needs?

Data From Pre-Workshop Surveys

Profiles of Attendees and Schools

At the outset of the workshop, participants were asked to indicate whether this was their first workshop and, if not, the extent to which they were implementing *ArtsNOW* strategies and/or the Creating Pride Model in their schools. Results are indicated below:

Percent attending first *ArtsNOW* workshop: 85%

Earliest workshop attended: April 2004 (Creating Pride)

Percent currently implementing facets of *ArtsNOW*: 24.3%

Arts Time: 5%

Arts Leadership Team: 4%

Creativity Workshops: 9%

Percent currently implementing Creating Pride Model: 13%

(may include: Level One workshop; Arts Time; Leadership Team; at least 2 in-school workshops)

Reported length of time implementing Creating Pride Model: 2 months to 3 years

Length of time individual teachers report utilizing *ArtsNOW*: 2 months to 3 years

Table 1 provides an overview of education professionals who attended the four Level One workshops that formed the nucleus of the evaluation study. The largest number of participants was elementary-level classroom teachers. The average number of years in professional education ranged from 1 to 43, with 15.6 being the mean among all participants. This number suggests that, in general, participants represented considerable experience as professional educators.

Tables 2, 3, and 4 indicate the percentage of schools having arts specialists, beliefs about the accessibility of different arts for teachers, and beliefs about the accessibility of the four art forms for children. The data suggest a positive relationship between perceptions of "accessibility" and the more frequent presence of music and visual arts specialists than drama and dance specialists. Among the experienced professionals attending *ArtsNOW*, music and visual art are rated as more "accessible." As seen in **Table 2**, it is in visual art and music that most schools have content specialists.

TABLE 1

OVERVIEW OF WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS FOR 4 WORKSHOPS OCTOBER 2007 THROUGH JULY 2008	
SCHOOLS	Total Participating
• Elementary Schools (includes K-8)	40
• Middle Schools	2
• High Schools	7
ROLES	Total Participating
• Administrator/Instructional Leader	31
• Classroom Teacher	115
• Arts Specialist	43
AVERAGE YEARS AS A PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR (Range: 1-43)	Mean # of Years
• Administrator/Instructional Leader	18.7
• Classroom Teacher	10.0
• Arts Specialist	18.1
• All Roles Combined	15.6

TABLE 2

Percentage of Schools with Arts Specialists
(as reported by participants)

Music: 75%

Dance: 30%

Visual Art: 100%

Drama: 35%

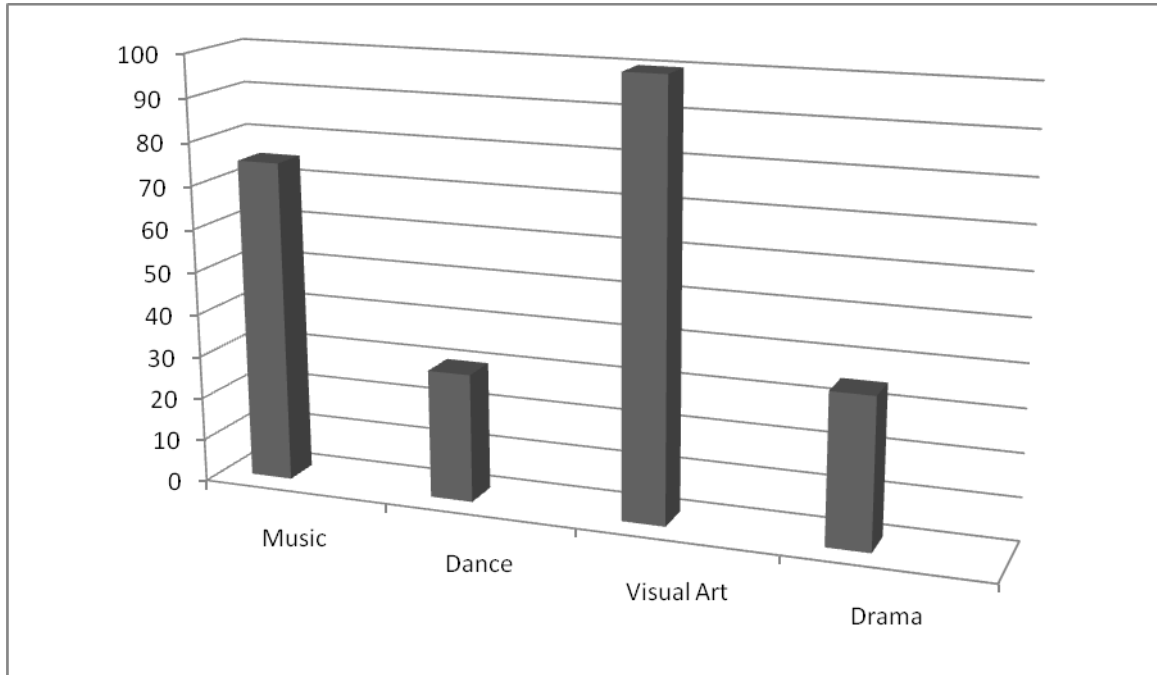


TABLE 3

Participants' Pre-Workshop Beliefs Regarding Arts that are Accessible for Most Teachers

Music: 94%

Dance: 37%

Visual Art: 100%

Drama: 49%

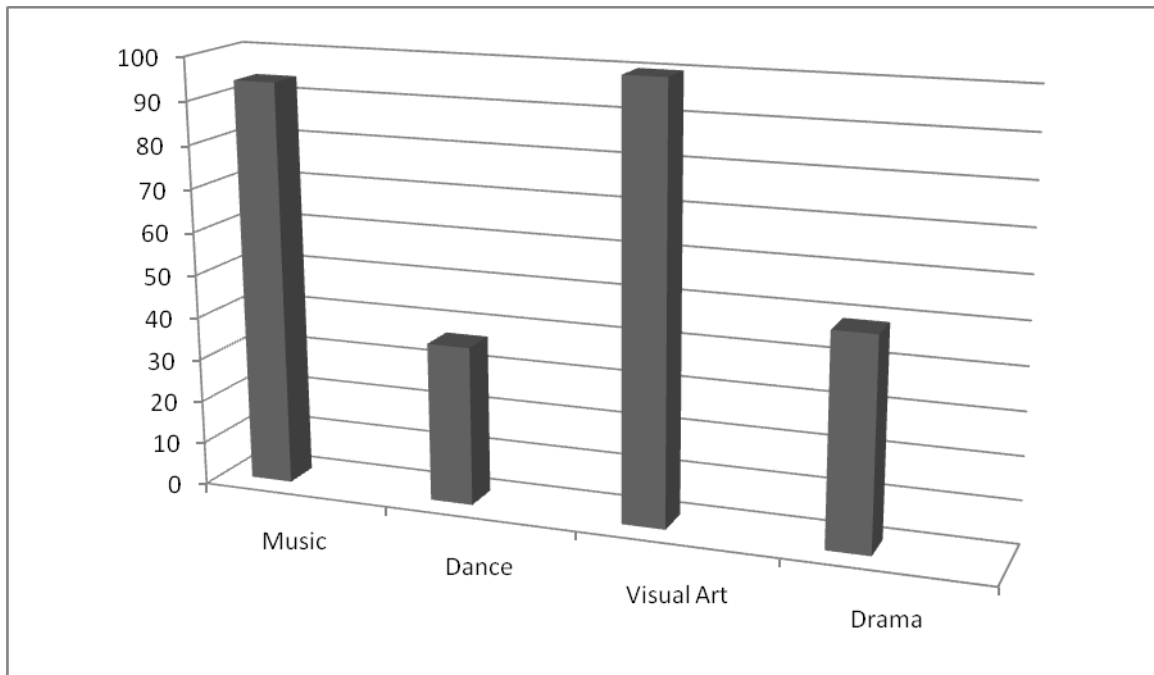


TABLE 4

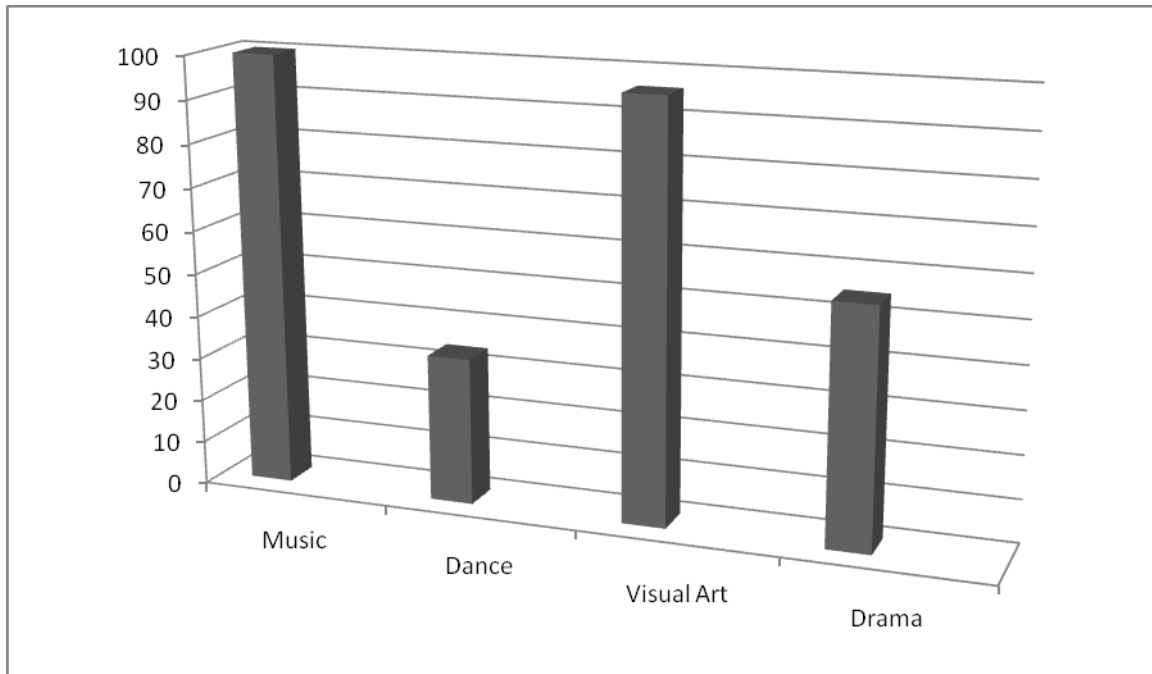
Participants' Pre-Workshop Beliefs Regarding Arts that are Accessible for Most Children

Music: 100%

Dance: 34%

Visual Art: 96%

Drama: 55%



Pre-Workshop Perceptions of Arts Integration

Tables 5 through 8 indicate Level One participants' perceptions of arts integration prior to the start of the workshops. Means (averages) are indicated for responses on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree).

TABLE 5

PRE-WORKSHOP PERCEPTIONS OF ARTS INTEGRATION AMONG ALL PARTICIPANTS (n= 189)		Mean 1(Strongly disagree) to 6(strongly agree)
A. Perceived Role and Value of Arts Integration		
• Arts are important in overall learning and development		5.3
• Arts integration should <u>not</u> take time away from tested knowledge		3.4
• Arts integration should be required across the school		3.9
• Arts make learning enjoyable, but children learn equally well without them		2.8
• Arts integration enhances students' academic performance		4.1
• Arts integration enhances faculty morale		4.8
B. Implementation of Arts Integration		
• I actively strive to integrate arts with academic learning		4.8
• Arts specialists should design integration lessons for others		4.4
• Arts specialists should in-service other teachers on arts integration		4.6
• With training, classroom teachers can effectively integrate arts and academics		5.4
• Only teachers who feel comfortable should do arts integration		2.6
• Specialized arts knowledge is required for effective integration		3.9
• Arts integration should be an individual teacher's choice		3.0
• Visual art and drama are easier to integrate than music and dance		2.7

TABLE 6

PRE-WORKSHOP PERCEPTIONS OF ARTS INTEGRATION AMONG CLASSROOM TEACHERS (n= 115)		Mean 1(Strongly disagree) to 6(strongly agree)
A. Perceptions Regarding the Role of Arts Integration		
• Test scores are a limited way of assessing knowledge		5.3
• Arts take time away from material I am required to cover		3.4
• I would like to have artists come to the school to enrich integration		3.9
• Integrating the arts can make teaching more rewarding		2.8
• Students' attention and interest are engaged through the arts		4.1
B. Self-Perceptions Regarding Teaching		
• I am a creative teacher		5.0
• I feel comfortable integrating arts in my classroom		5.1
• I prefer that arts teachers be responsible for arts integration		2.5
• I am eager to learn more about arts integration		5.5
• I often do collaborative planning with other classroom teachers and specialists		4.2
• I am not sure whether the arts enhance academic learning		2.2

TABLE 7

PRE-WORKSHOP PERCEPTIONS OF ARTS INTEGRATION AMONG ARTS SPECIALISTS (n= 43)		Mean 1(Strongly disagree) to 6(strongly agree)
A. Perceptions Regarding the Role of Arts Integration		
• Arts integration may compromise rigorous arts learning		2.4
• Arts integration makes specialists more valuable in a school		5.2
• Arts integration requires more collaborative planning time		5.1
B. Self-Perceptions Regarding Teaching		
• I frequently work with classroom teachers on arts integration		3.9
• I am comfortable with academic subject matter		4.9
• I incorporate academic subjects into my arts classes		5.3
• I am comfortable working across arts disciplines		5.1
• I initiate collaborative planning for arts integration		4.2
• I participate actively in curriculum planning for all subjects		4.1

TABLE 8

PRE-WORKSHOP PERCEPTIONS OF ARTS INTEGRATION AMONG ADMINISTRATORS/INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS (n= 31)		Mean 1(Strongly disagree) to 6(strongly agree)
A. Perceptions Regarding the Role of Arts Integration		
• Arts integration is important for my vision of our school		5.0
• Arts integration can take time away from knowledge that is tested		2.4
• Professional development in arts integration is important for all teachers		5.3
• Arts specialists are essential for arts integration		4.6
• Arts integration improves teacher morale		5.1
• Arts integration motivates students to learn		4.9
B. Self-Perceptions Regarding Encouragement of Integration		
• I encourage collaboration between classroom teachers and specialists		5.5
• I schedule collaborative planning time for arts integration		3.1

Post-Workshop Perceptions of Level One Workshops

Table 9 indicates participants' perceptions of knowledge gained, quality of leaders and presentations, usefulness of learning, and need for further training upon completion of the Level One workshops.

TABLE 9

VALUE OF LEVEL ONE WORKSHOPS 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree)	Classroom Teachers (n=111)	Arts Specialists (n=31)	Administrators (n=13)	All Participants (n=155)
<u>Knowledge Gained</u>				
• Gained useful teaching and learning strategies	5.7	5.7	5.8	5.7
• More comfortable doing arts integration	5.3	5.3	5.7	5.3
• Got more than I expected out of the workshop	5.3	5.3	5.7	5.3
OVERALL KNOWLEDGE:	5.4	5.4	5.7	5.4
<u>Leaders and Presentations</u>				
• Presenters were knowledgeable and effective	5.7	5.8	6.0	5.8
• Pacing of activities/information was about right	5.3	5.3	5.9	5.3
• Activities were within my capabilities	5.6	5.7	5.6	5.7
• Length of sessions was about right	5.4	5.5	5.9	5.5
• Sessions and materials were well-organized	5.7	5.8	6.0	5.8
OVERALL LEADERS AND PRESENTATIONS:	5.5	5.6	5.9	5.6
<u>Usefulness of Workshops</u>				
• Our team members are on same page about next steps	5.3	5.4	5.6	5.4
• Ready to provide leadership in arts integration in my school	5.3	5.3	5.8	5.3
• The workshop stretched me with new ideas	5.5	5.5	5.6	5.5
• I am motivated to do more arts integration in my classroom/school	5.5	5.5	5.8	5.5
• I feel ready to create arts integration activities and lessons	5.6	5.5	4.7	5.5
• Excellent use of professional development time	5.7	5.6	6.0	5.6
OVERALL USEFULNESS:	5.5	5.5	5.6	5.5
<u>Need for Further Training</u>				
• I need more training before feeling at ease with arts integration	3.2	2.4	2.6	2.4

Discussion of Tables 5 through 9

Among **all participants**, pre-workshop perceptions of arts integration (**Table 5**) were consistently and highly favorable. Results indicated that participants valued the arts in children's overall learning, and believed that the arts enhance learning process and outcomes, strengthen teacher morale, and can be integrated with academics by classroom teachers and arts specialists alike. Among all participants, there was general *disagreement* with the idea that children learn "equally well" without the arts.

Classroom teachers (Table 6) tended to see themselves as creative, believed that tests are a limited way of assessing students' knowledge, felt generally comfortable with arts integration, and were eager to learn more about arts integration. They were not sure, however, whether arts integration would make teaching more rewarding, or whether the arts would enhance academic learning.

Arts specialists' (Table 7) pre-workshop perceptions indicated beliefs that arts integration can enhance specialists' value in the school and that collaborative planning time is essential for successful arts integration. Though they reported incorporating academic learning into their arts' classrooms, they were less inclined to agree that they participated in collaborative planning and school-wide curriculum development.

Pre-workshop perceptions among **administrators and instructional leaders (Table 8)** indicated support for arts integration and collaborative planning. However, agreement levels for actually scheduling collaborative planning time had a mean of only 3.1, suggesting a distinct dichotomy between administrators' strong moral support for collaborative planning and a lower level of actual provision of collaborative planning time. Administrators disagreed that arts integration takes time away from subjects that are tested. They agreed that arts specialists are "essential" and that professional development in arts integration is important for all teachers.

Post-workshop results shown in **Table 9** indicate that participants held strongly positive views of Level One workshops. A preponderance of item means was 5.3 or higher. Participants gained knowledge, increased in comfort levels with arts integration, valued workshop leaders and activities, and gained useful classroom applications. Perceptions tended to be strongest among administrators, perhaps because they were initially less familiar with arts integration knowledge and applications than teachers. Administrators also indicated lower levels of "readiness" to create arts integration lessons and activities than classroom teachers and arts specialists.

The generally low levels of agreement for all participants on "I need more training before feeling at ease with arts integration," combined with higher levels of agreement on "feel more comfortable" and "ready to create activities and lessons" suggest that the Level One workshop successfully encouraged and reinforced participants' ability to feel "at ease" integrating the arts. This finding does *not* suggest that participants feel no need for further training. To the contrary, feeling "at ease" with arts integration is a necessary basis for teachers and administrators to feel confident in pursuing additional knowledge and skills.

Post-Workshop Comments

Participants were asked to offer comments in three categories: a) new learning; b) recommendations; and c) general comments. Comments were grouped into categories and themes, with the most consistent responses indicated below.

Among Administrators

- a) New Learning:
- ways to assist teachers in identifying how they can further develop arts integration
 - how to "redeliver" ideas to more teachers and initiate training for all teachers
 - better able to identify opportunities for arts integration
 - posting students interdisciplinary projects to webpage
 - how to monitor arts-related strategies in classrooms
 - awareness of outstanding materials and lessons
- b) Recommendations:
- encourage schools to offer *ArtsNOW* as a professional development choice for ongoing growth and development
 - engage more administrators . . .they need this kind of understanding of children's learning
 - have administrators do in-service with other administrators around leadership for arts integration
 - pacing could be a bit more measured; some things moved very quickly
- c) General Comments:
- truly "one of the best" workshops in a very long career
 - I felt respected as a learner and educator – that was refreshing
 - "most organized and best prepared professional development I have attended in 25 years as an educator"

Among Classroom Teachers

- a) New Learning:
- how to use materials already in my classroom to integrate arts
 - how to encourage more problem solving through arts activities with multiple solutions
 - how to be more authentic in arts experiences so that integration is deeper
 - how to be more intentional about relating the arts with academic outcomes
 - thinking of artistic ways for children to demonstrate learning
 - better understanding of "tools, themes, and conceptualization"
 - giving my students more ways to integrate ALL of their learning through projects that include the arts
 - opened my eyes to integrating the arts – I already integrate other subjects but have not known how easily I could integrate the arts as well
 - the notion of "revision" carries through many different subjects - -that's a topic I want to explore
 - gained many tools for raising the level of instruction in my classroom
 - performance –based assignments that allow children to demonstrate learning through the arts are far better than pencil and paper assessments
 - integrating the arts does NOT mean taking time away from my subject, but strengthening my subject
- b) Recommendations
- give more indication of appropriate grade levels of activities
 - offer ongoing "follow up" workshops
 - breakouts by grade levels are very helpful

- loved 'brainstorming'
- make it longer
- integrate more role playing
- extend the workshop and provide more time for collaborative planning prior to leaving

c) General Comments:

- an outstanding workshop – every teacher and administrator should be required to take several weeks of this kind of training – it does more for us than 95 percent of the professional development we're forced to take
- "best workshop in 28 years of teaching – please convince our administrators to let us do these things instead of the tedious things we are so often required to attend
- "most effective and well-organized workshop I have ever attended
- "I am truly inspired;" appreciate being treated as a true professional

Among Arts Specialists

a) New Learning:

- discovered how widespread the understanding is that the arts are central to children's learning
- cooperative learning ideas were very helpful
- some of the activities were new to me and I can use them immediately
- as an arts specialist in one area, learning to incorporate other art forms in my classes
- greater awareness of creativity and how to encourage it
- more understanding of other art forms and how to integrate different art forms as well as arts and academics

b) Recommendations:

- breakouts by grade level or special area are very useful
- we need administrators to understand that classroom teachers and arts specialists require dedicated time to work together
- more ideas for students with disabilities
- ways to convince our administrators about the importance of this work

c) General Comments:

- time is our biggest enemy -- we need intentional planning time for collaboration
- it was good to be affirmed for those things we know we're doing well
- integration requires that specialists and classroom teachers work together – arts specialists must be valued both for their own curricula and for what they bring to integration

Follow-up Survey Data

Follow-up surveys were administered to participants of four workshops approximately five months following the workshops. These workshops included August 2007, October 2007, December 2007, and February 2008. The purpose of the follow-up surveys was to assess levels of application and comfort, as well as perceptions of the workshop. The follow-up surveys allowed a period of time during which participants may have implemented program dimensions such as leadership teams, creativity workshops, Arts Time, cooperative planning between classroom teachers and arts specialists, and integrated arts lesson plans. **Table 10** indicates the distribution of roles among participants who responded to the follow-up surveys.

TABLE 10

Distribution of Professional Roles Among Level One Respondents to Follow-up Surveys
(n=74)

Arts Specialist: 27%

Classroom Teacher: 48%

Administrator/Instructional Leader: 25%

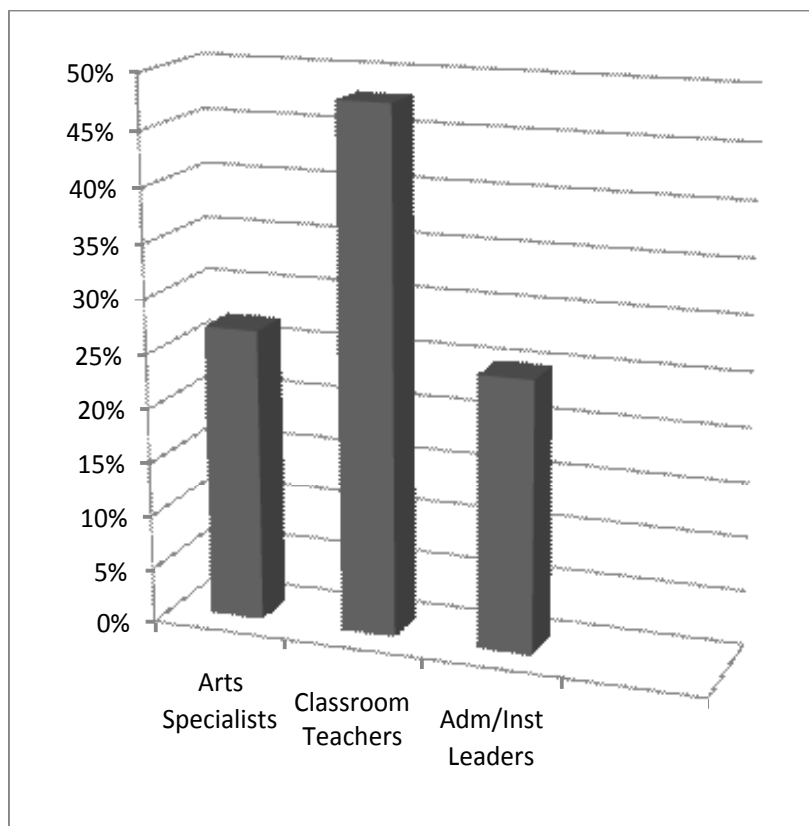


Table 11 indicates follow-up levels of application and comfort with arts integration across **all participants**. Percentages of agreement regarding regular use of arts integration strategies, applications of workshop knowledge, and comfort with arts and academic content tend to cluster toward the high end of the scale (4 and above). Combined with data from the pre and post-workshop surveys, these findings suggest that workshops reinforced and strengthened pre-workshop and post-workshop levels of application, knowledge, and comfort. Data suggest that participants generally were predisposed to the value of arts learning and arts integration prior to the start of workshops.

In terms of implementing facets of *ArtsNOW* in schools, 57% of respondents "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed" that their schools have school-wide arts time. Thirty-seven percent agreed or strongly agreed (4 or above) that their schools had school-wide Arts Time, which, combined, was only 4% higher than those in the single category of "strongly disagree" (rating of 1).

Not surprisingly, comfort levels for art forms were highest in visual art (90% of responses rated 4-6) and drama (87% of responses at levels 4-6). Music was the third highest rating for comfort (79% of responses at 4 or above) and dance was the least comfortable (the highest percentage of "strongly disagree" responses). Though pre-workshop data showed visual art and music as "most accessible" for both teachers and students, follow-up data suggest that teachers became more comfortable with drama, which does not have the immediate technical challenges of music or the discomfort of expressive physical movement often experienced by people new to dance.

(N.B. Respondents within role categories were inconsistent in answering questions across seminars, which tended to skew means and compromise the validity of findings; therefore, data for Tables 11 through 13 are reported cumulatively by percentages of total responses for each question across all seminars rather than by mean ratings).

TABLE 11

Follow-up Surveys: Levels of Application and Comfort with Arts Integration (n=74)	% Strongly Disagree (1)	% (2)	% (3)	% (4)	% (5)	% Strongly Agree (6)
I am using arts integration strategies regularly in my classroom	0	9	12	19	20	40
I am applying knowledge gained in the Level One Workshop	0	2	12	30	28	28
I am comfortable integrating :						
• Music activities	1	6	15	16	32	31
• Visual art activities	0	0	10	17	27	46
• Dance activities	9	15	15	26	14	21
• Drama activities	0	5	8	25	32	30
I am comfortable with the academic content I am expected to teach	1	4	5	8	27	55
My school has a school-wide ARTS TIME for integrating creativity and the arts throughout the curriculum	33	24	6	9	11	17

Table 12 summarizes participant responses regarding student engagement and response. Eighty-nine percent (rating of 4 or above) see students as "more engaged" when they use arts integration, 87 percent indicate that students "respond better" when teachers use arts integration, and 87 percent note that students "achieve at higher levels" when they use arts integration. A longstanding body of research literature documents higher achievement associated with stronger levels of engagement and response among learners. Pre-workshop data indicated relative disagreement with the statement, "I am not sure whether the arts enhance academic learning." Follow-up data indicate that teachers' observations that the arts enhance academic performance were reinforced during the workshop and the application period. Eighty-seven percent of respondents agreed (4 or above) that "My students achieve at higher levels when I use arts integration." Ninety-six percent (3 or below) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement "I cannot tell any difference in student response" and 97 percent disagreed that "there is no difference in student achievement when I integrate the arts."

Table 13 indicates strong perceptions that the workshops were beneficial and met participants' primary professional development needs. Post-workshop numerical data and comments indicated very high levels of agreement that the workshops were an excellent use of professional development time. This perception remained strong five months after each workshop, with 100 percent of participants agreeing or strongly agreeing (4 or above) that "The workshop was an excellent use of professional development time."

TABLE 12

Follow-up Surveys: Student Engagement and Achievement (n=74)	% Strongly Disagree	%	%	%	%	%Strongly Agree
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND RESPONSE						
My students are more engaged learners when I use arts integration	0	3	8	17	36	36
Students respond better when I use arts integration than when I don't	0	3	10	25	30	32
I cannot tell any difference in student response when I use arts integration	51	36	9	2	2	0
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT						
My students achieve at higher levels when I use arts integration	0	0	13	32	29	26
There is no difference in student achievement when I integrate the arts	51	36	10	1	1	1

TABLE 13

Follow-up Surveys: Value of Arts NOW Level One Workshop (n=74)	% Strongly Disagree (1)	% (2)	% (3)	% (4)	% (5)	% Strongly Agree (6)
The workshop has been a benefit to my teaching	0	0	8	15	34	43
The workshop was an excellent use of professional development time	0	0	0	8	31	61
	Not at all	Not much	Can't say	Somewhat	Very much so	
The workshop met my primary professional development need	0	0	6	28	66	

Implementation Data from Phone Survey

In the Spring of 2008, Creating Pride staff conducted a phone survey of participating schools to determine indicators and levels of follow-up. The indicators of follow-up shown below were reported among the 39 responding schools:

Arts Leadership Team in Place: 25 (64%)
 In-service Workshops in Schools: 17 (43%)
 Arts Time: 6 (15%)

Supporting comments indicated considerable unevenness in all three areas. Though arts teams were identified, some do not meet. In-school workshops varied from cursory presentations to faculty in some schools to 5 or more follow-up workshops, some involving parents, others including guest presenters. Implementation of Arts Time also varied considerably, with a few schools dedicating an all-school time each week but most relying on teachers to implement and report activities in their own classrooms.

Comments from Follow-up Surveys and Focus-Group Interview

Follow-up surveys asked respondents to provide comments in two areas: a) primary professional development needs; b) implementation strategies; and c) strengths and weaknesses in implementing arts integration. In addition, a focus-group interview was conducted with Gwinnett County teachers in May of 2008. Analyses of comments from the surveys and interview revealed the themes (with representative comments) indicated below.

Primary Professional Development Need

- Arts Content
 - Specific content in the more difficult areas of music and dance*
 - Knowing curriculum and standards in the arts (we all know academics)*
 - Combining technology with all of the arts*

- Integrative Teaching Strategies
How to integrate the art forms themselves
I need stronger skills in how to be creative using the various arts
Doing arts activities with limited resources
More hands-on teaching strategies
Getting better at engaging students through integration strategies
Quick things I can do without a lot of planning
- Getting School Systems to Provide Strong Professional Development
ArtsNOW training should be integrated with new teacher orientation in the county
The county in-services are completely unfocused with no follow-through – we need programs like this one where we really learn to apply the learning and make a difference
Opportunities for teachers to share great ideas coming out of ArtsNOW experiences
Collaborative in-service time for joint planning and sharing

Implementation Strategies

- Regular Collaborative Planning Time
We need planning time for arts integration built into the schedule
There's plenty of lip service about joint planning but no follow-through
I have many ideas but I have to do them on my own because we do not have shared planning time
As an arts specialist, I am the lunch and planning time break for the teachers, so I cannot participate in planning for arts integration
- Curriculum Change and Development
We have too many "school improvement" programs that are confusing to teachers and kids and create a tangled network of strategies – ArtsNOW is better than the others, but we are not evaluated on whether we integrate arts in our classrooms
Language arts and social studies are the easiest subjects for arts integration
The curriculum is over-crowded with things that don't make a difference, which cuts into time for arts integration, which DOES make a difference
I have begun connecting one or more arts with everything I teach – it isn't that difficult, and the kids love it, and so do I!
I have integrated math, social studies, art, drama, and literature very successfully – the detriment to real change is lack of time for planning and too many different programs in our schools
As an arts specialist, I make it a point to talk with classroom teachers informally about integration strategies – both in their classrooms and mine – we have to do it this way because we do not get collaborative planning time
I have taught this way for a long time – what ArtsNOW did was to affirm my work and give me some strategies I haven't used before
Dance is my hardest area, but I've been able to use some of the ideas from the workshop successfully
Movement has provided a non-verbal way for children to express ideas – a shy student who moved to our school loved being introduced by having classmates do a movement for their names

My students developed a wonderful play as a culminating social studies activity – it was highly successful

I am striving to integrate the arts every day instead of just once and a while

ArtsNOW helped me encourage my students to add more detail to their drawings of stories – this has been a very successful way of increasing their understanding

We made maracas as part of a science unit – the students had to choose different materials to place inside the maracas in order to create different sounds

I have used the mime activities several times during bus call

My students are relating and discussing more with illustrations, paintings, and artists

As I plan for next year, I am integrating more academic concepts into art activities

- Presentations by leadership team
We presented during a faculty meeting and generated a survey to see where the staff are with arts integration
Our team has not really functioned since the workshop
Our administrator has not afforded time for the team to in-service other teachers
We are working as a team, but we have not had success spreading the ideas to the rest of the school

Strengths and Weaknesses

- I have a lot of arts experience in dance, visual arts, and drama but we lack administrative support and buy-in from the faculty – it's generally up to individual teachers to do arts integration
- Visual arts and drama are relatively easy to integrate, but music and dance are more challenging
- Arts integration is becoming infused in my teaching
- I am working to get the arts to be "second nature"
- Arts integration is important for special needs children

Additional Perspectives from Focus-Group Interview

Teachers and administrators who participated in the focus group interview were uniformly positive about ArtsNOW training. This group had been meeting monthly following their workshop to continue planning and sharing ideas. They found this process "really important and helpful," as it provided the scheduled, focused time to share ideas, which kept them motivated. However, they would like to see the same kind of structured opportunity *within* their individual schools.

Participants commented on the quality, thoroughness, sensitivity to teachers' needs, and ongoing support and follow-up from ArtsNOW staff. They credited the staff with being knowledgeable about schools and the pressures on teachers: "They understand us and they help us figure out positive things we can do despite many of the pressures we're under that are not necessarily the best thing for children." Though participants felt "comfortable" and "well supported," they also noted that *time* is an important element to be considered when trying to see any impact on student achievement. As one classroom teacher described it:

"First of all, we have to start using strategies and then designing more – that takes time, and it should involve collaborative planning, which we are generally not given time to do. It's even hard to get our leadership team together unless we do it on our own time. Second, the culture is so heavily oriented toward teaching factual knowledge for testing that it is difficult to 'try'

new ideas in case they don't work. I've found that using arts takes more time in the classrooms, but in the long run the learning is so much deeper - you can't see that on CRCT tests! Third, more teachers need to attend the training. We can try to inspire the others or get them involved, but if they don't attend training themselves it's difficult, again given all the pressures teachers are under. "

In response, a principal offered this comment:

"I have tried to find some ways to give teachers time to get together, and the teachers have been good about doing things on their own time. However, the system really ought to commit to training more teachers. If we had the professional training along with leadership teams, and we were given the authority to build the necessary planning time into our schedules, it could have a huge impact. Instead, it mostly happens on an individual basis or with 2 or 3 teachers who attended training working with each other. Also, those who do attend training want some time to get this developed in their own classrooms before trying to train others in the school."

All participants were completely enthusiastic about the potential of ArtsNOW to effect positive change on school climate, student achievement, and student engagement. However, they felt that potential could not be fully realized unless there is greater buy-in from schools to educate more teachers *and* administrators, and to provide the necessary time, planning, and follow-up opportunities for consistent implementation throughout the school.

As one teacher said,

*"I don't think you're going to be able to see a big impact on test scores because of the way the testing is done; but if you go into classrooms and **see how different** the classrooms are for those teachers who are using ArtsNOW ideas, you'd know that it's making a difference. The kids just **dread** what we do for tests – and it's gotten to the point where, after testing, then kids think school can be fun – but before testing, they are anxious and bored, and we're constantly trying to find ways to make the learning more engaging – but there's so much information to cover that we often end up just hammering it into them."*

Another added,

*"To me, it's not so important whether you can see this change in test scores – the way the tests are set up, you can force-feed kids the information and they'll mostly do OK on the tests, and if that happens everybody seems to be satisfied, no matter whether the kids can think or whether they have deep understanding. ArtsNOW is really about a 'process' --- making learning fit the needs of kids in ways that turn them on and make them **want** to learn! Is there any reason why kids shouldn't enjoy learning?"*

A principal responded again:

"It is very significant that ArtsNOW clearly relates strategies to the state and local standards. Teachers are accountable for those standards, and the validity of ArtsNOW from the point of view of the county will be tied to whether the standards are addressed. Personally, I don't think anyone believes CRCT really gets at true student learning – it's just one way of giving information. Unfortunately, it's gotten out of hand, and everyone feels pressured – and that transfers to the kids. So we all just sort of knuckle down and do it, and then when testing's over we have fun – that's not really the way it should be. ArtsNOW offers a way to deepen learning, and that's what we should be doing all the time."

One important observation made by all participants was the extent to which teachers who were doing ArtsNOW felt energized about their own teaching.

"As an arts specialist, I always felt like I was fighting for my own subject. Now, those of us who took the training are like this great support group. We know how important this is for kids, and we do everything we can to tie things together, and we can see that it makes more sense to them. As a teacher, what you really want is to feel good about coming to work and knowing you're making a difference. ArtsNOW has made that happen for me."

Teachers and administrators agreed:

"The bottom line is we're all there for the kids – and if we see the right things happening for kids, it fulfills us. The second thing is that everybody needs connection with others and the feedback from each other to know you're doing a good job and we're working toward the same goals. That's what ArtsNOW does – it gets us on the same page, and we're enjoying ourselves. So not only is it better for teaching and learning, it's a huge morale boost – and that's important. If the teachers aren't having a good time, the kids aren't going to be learning."

CASE STUDY SCHOOLS: What is the quality of implementation of ArtsNOW in selected schools implementing the model of arts leadership teams and in-school creativity workshops? What successes and challenges are associated with implementation?

Four schools that had evidenced consistent coherence with the principles and strategies of ArtsNOW were selected for site visits. The visits consisted of interviews with administrators and teachers, classroom observations, and reviews of student work.

Narvie J. Harris Traditional Theme School (DeKalb County)

The Narvie J. Harris School (NJH) opened in 1989. Its current enrollment is nearly 1000 students. As a "theme school," students wear uniforms, parents must participate, and student achievement is expected. Teachers from Narvie J. Harris first participated in ArtsNOW training in August 2007. Nine-nine percent of students are non-white, and 42 percent are eligible for free or reduced lunch. The school consistently performs well on CRCT results and Adequate Yearly Progress. The school maintains a Parent Center, where parents assist teachers with a variety of supportive tasks. Parents must volunteer 16 hours per year of support.

The Arts Leadership team at NJH includes a reading specialist, two counselors, a music teacher, a principal, two assistant principals, and a teacher of gifted and talented students. The school has "always" integrated the arts into its curriculum, so, in the words of team members, "ArtsNOW was a perfect match for what we were already doing." The Leadership Team has conducted in-service sessions for the entire school. A full-day session occurred in October 2007, followed by additional shorter programs during faculty meetings and professional development days. The school has maintained a month-by-month comprehensive listing of the extensive arts-related activities undertaken in each grade level.

Administrators, teachers, and parents convey a consistent message regarding the school: they are proud of the record of high achievement, and they value "hand on" learning that engages both the intellect and the senses. During the site visit, students and teachers presented many examples of arts-

integrated work, including poems written in Language Arts classes, a bean mosaic and drawings developed to support science concepts, puppet shows developed in relation to books children were reading, and paintings related to the study of Peru in social studies. The presence of the arts in the school was palpable in the opening exercises, which included a recording of a selection by the 4th-5th grade chorus and a reading from the works of Pablo Picasso on being special.

Classrooms and hallways at NJH are alive with examples of student artwork, and students talk avidly about the creative activities they do in relation to learning academics. Though the school has observed an Arts Time, teachers indicate that they view the arts as an ongoing part of instruction. As one teacher put it, "We should not just be doing the arts for an hour on Fridays – the arts should be part of everything we do."

The quality of art work on display in the school is very high, rich in color and design, demonstrating individual creativity. Similarly, in observing classrooms, I found students eager to participate in singing, reading their original poetry, explaining their drawings, and relating the arts as a "natural" aspect of their learning. A review of CRCT scores for NJH from 2006 through 2008 indicates that the school consistently scores very well on percentages of students meeting or exceeding expectations (typically 90 percent or above). Beyond arts integration, the school also takes great pride in its annual concerts and public art shows. A counselor noted that "The arts are what help us show parents and the community in a very direct way what we are doing here. They are the evidence of how we have students *actively and creatively engaged in learning*. We believe our achievement scores are high because we engage children in creative and active learning, not because we pour information into them. You can't really say the arts are the "reason" for our high achievement, but I am convinced that without arts integration we would not see the consistent results we have had over time."

Huntley Hills Elementary School (DeKalb County)

Huntley Hills Elementary School enrolls 350 students. Sixty-six percent are non-white and 49 percent are eligible for free or reduced lunch. The school uses a Montessori "school within a school" approach. Because of the Montessori emphasis on engagement and integrated learning that includes creativity and the arts, *ArtsNOW* was considered a "great fit" with the school's philosophy. Teachers from 1st and 4th-5th grade classrooms, the principal, and an art teacher attended the August 2007 workshop. A review of CRCT scores indicates that the school consistently scores well on percentages of students meeting or exceeding standards across subjects and grade levels. The school has satisfied Adequate Yearly Progress expectations since 2006.

Participants described the *ArtsNOW* workshop as "professional and inspiring." They appreciated the rich resources that were provided, as well as the high quality of presenters and the user-friendly arts integration strategies. During pre-planning for the 2007-2008 school year, the *ArtsNOW* attendees shared their experiences with other teachers. The school established a monthly Arts Day, during which all teachers focus on arts-academic integration. The school's strings specialist began to incorporate writing about music as a way of integrating with Language Arts concepts. While the "reflective" work was useful, students' music performance declined, so this approach was abandoned. The teacher would like more ideas about how to integrate string instruction with academics in ways that do not sacrifice the students' musical development.

The philosophy of Huntley Hills's principal with regard to school improvement is that "we must work smarter, not harder." This meant that *ArtsNOW* had to "fit" into the school, not feel like an "add-on."

The school approached this by identifying unifying themes that could incorporate dance, drama, music, and visual arts. The themes were related to the Georgia and Dekalb County standards and were determined by teachers. Once the themes were identified, the monthly Arts Day focused on the themes by involving all four art forms and the arts specialists. Teachers at Huntly Hills believe that arts integration is best achieved by classroom teachers and that arts specialists should remain primarily responsible for arts content. To facilitate the Arts Day work, teachers utilized regular Wednesday afternoon planning times, which feature cross-program planning.

Workshop participants reported that getting teachers to understand arts "integration" as opposed to arts "activities" was a lengthy process that did not really begin to show results until the spring of 2008. Discussions occurred in 5 to 6 faculty meetings around the differences between turning Arts Day into a day of activities vs. integrating arts in support of identified standards. Huntley Hills requested the assistance of Creating Pride staff to support teachers in understanding arts integration and tying lessons to the standards. The school also worked with Creating Pride staff to enlist AmeriCorps volunteers to help with a corporate art project.

A culminating arts event at Huntley Hills was the "Panoply of the Arts," an all-school evening celebration of the arts. A grant from the Georgia Council on the Arts allowed the school to collaborate with the Atlanta Center for Puppetry Arts, the Atlanta Ballet, and the Synchronicity Theatre Workshop to hold arts presentations simultaneously with the school's annual concert by the band, choir, and orchestra, and an instrument "petting zoo." *ArtsNOW* participants found this to be a "very successful and fun evening" that emphasized to parents and the community Huntley Hills School's commitment to the place of the arts in the curriculum.

The teachers and principal at Huntley Hills found it challenging to implement *ArtsNOW* at the levels they had hoped. They are considering possible changes in 2008-2009, including more collaboration between arts specialists and classroom teachers and more regular meetings of their arts leadership team. Consistent with other data, they found that dedicating sufficient time to realize potential benefits was difficult in view of many other expectations.

Miles Elementary School (Atlanta Public Schools)

Miles Elementary School enrolls 445 students. Ninety-nine percent are non-white and 86% qualify for free or reduced lunch. The arts leadership team consists of a math coach, a 5th-grade writing teacher, 2 kindergarten paraprofessionals, a physical education teacher, a music teacher, and an art teacher. The team was selected by the principal, who also attended a workshop. Most of the team attended the August 2007 workshop; 1 person attended the February workshops. The school designated Wednesday from 1:00 to 2:00 as Arts Time. CRCT scores at Miles are consistently strong, and the school regularly satisfies Adequate Yearly Progress standards.

Team members reported that there is a culture of collaboration at Miles. "We're very intertwined here," one of them said. Arts Time has been relatively "informal," generally used for "a lot of brainstorming." Teachers felt that the use of Arts Time in the midst of testing provided a good "change of pace" for both teachers and students. In order to engage more faculty in *ArtsNOW* concepts and strategies, the arts team planned a faculty icebreaker during preplanning. Each person was asked to develop a personal portrait, cutting out pictures that represented them. This was an activity learned in the August workshop. The team suggested that teachers might use a similar activity in their classrooms

as a way of introducing students at the start of the school year. The leadership team, however, has not met during the year. Instead, individual members of the team tend to implement activities.

The school adopted several school-wide themes for curricular integration, including "Freedom and Change" and "Culture and Diversity." Team members noted numerous successful projects connected with these themes. In art class, students created quilt patterns, copying from the ones they studied in Social Studies that had conveyed secret messages to help runaway slaves escape. One teacher reported on a project in which students were given words of songs that had been "broken apart." Using Language Arts skills, the students were assigned the task of organizing the words in meaningful ways. As they did so, they began to realize that the words could form different songs. They then sang the songs and interpreted the meanings, using dictionary skills to explore the meanings of words and then thinking about how the words conveyed ideas.

Another example was of bulletin boards that various classes developed to represent many different people in a "community" and their different forms of dress, food, and occupations. In kindergarten, as part of an integrated science and art lesson, a visiting dentist stained a piece of tile with different kinds of food. Using language arts skills, the students then wrote about healthy teeth. In fifth grade, students studied land forms, considering the constructive and destructive forces at work when land forms are created. They then used visual art skills to construct three-dimensional land forms. Miles teachers also have used bulletin boards to demonstrate the arts integration ideas they have developed in their classrooms.

Asked what the primary benefit of *ArtsNOW* has been, team members agreed that it was "creativity." "This has given us many new ideas and encouraged us to be more creative in our school," one team member said. Another pointed to ways in which individual members of the leadership team and staff from Creating Pride have conveyed a "sense of spirit" around art. Examples included the drama club, a school mural, and the corporate art quilt.

The principal at Miles Elementary noted that he was initially "kind of vague and confused" about *ArtsNOW*, but after attending the Level One Workshop, he is now interested in sending more teachers. The arts leadership team endorses this idea: "We need to send all of our teachers to the workshops – that's the way to *really* get it." They also believe, however, that if arts integration is to be successful, the teachers must *want* to do it: "If they're dragging their feet or don't care, then it just won't happen." The leadership team would like to see more "core faculty" participating in leadership. They believe that would send a message to other teachers that arts integration is *important*, "not just something to have fun with, but something that makes a real difference for the students."

Lin Elementary School (Atlanta Public Schools)

Lin Elementary School enrolls 520 students. Thirty-two percent are non-white and 18 percent are eligible for free or reduced lunch. CRCT scores are consistently very strong (percent of students meeting and exceeding standards generally in the 90s) and the school has met its annual Adequate Yearly Progress standards. The arts leadership team includes an art teacher, a music teacher, the principal, a teacher each from grades 1, 2, and 4, and the physical education teacher. Representatives from the school have attended two Level One workshops. After the first workshop, the team met and conducted an in-service on arts integration during a staff meeting.

Lin Elementary has been a designated Discipline-Based Arts Education (DBAE) school for a number of years. Annenberg-Getty funding associated with DBAE has provided funds for professional development in arts integration. Team members believe that *ArtsNOW* has "reinvigorated" the school around arts integration, particularly for newer teachers who were not educated in DBAE strategies. The principal is strongly supportive of both specialist arts content and integration of arts across the curriculum. After the first *ArtsNOW* in-service, the leadership team offered several more after-school workshops. Unfortunately, no one attended. The team members therefore began doing arts integration collaboration among themselves. The leadership team does not have "formal meetings," but the members all implement arts integration within their own programs.

Lin does not have an Arts Time because they do not believe an arts emphasis should be limited to one hour. Instead, the principal and other members of the leadership team want to convey the message that arts integration should be continuous. An example of a successful collaboration occurred during the third-grade study of ancient Greek gods and goddesses. Using knowledge of the gods and goddesses and visual art, children created a "live" sculpture garden in which different children each represented a god or goddess. In addition, they created paper mache busts of the gods and goddesses. The classroom teachers were responsible for ensuring consistency of content with Georgia and APS standards, and the visual art teacher guided the sculpture creations.

At Lin, classroom teachers generally take the lead on arts integration, consulting with specialists for particular assistance. The music teacher has made a special effort to incorporate language arts concepts into music classes by composing songs.

Members of the leadership team feel that Lin Elementary has a "culture of arts integration" that made *ArtsNOW* work relatively easily for them. However, the transfer from the attendees at the workshop to the entire school has been a challenge given the many initiatives the school must deal with. The curriculum is organized around 4 themes per year, which encourages integration of content and concepts. The leadership team feels that attending *ArtsNOW* workshops should be a priority for all teachers and administrators. As with many schools, Lin lacks the formal collaborative planning time that would aid implementation of *ArtsNOW* principles and strategies. Though the school has established planning times, the focus is typically on academic priorities that must be addressed relative to testing; as a result, it is difficult to spend time developing arts integration ideas. The fact that creativity workshops had to be proposed as after-school activities without incentives or rewards made it impossible to transfer the workshop knowledge to more teachers in a substantive way.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions and recommendations are presented as themes that emerged from analyses of the data indicated above. Data are not reiterated in this section.

Conclusions

- ***The ArtsNOW level one workshop is a valuable professional development program that yields a significant return in educational value relative to the required investments of time and money***

Participants consistently gave the workshops high marks for content, delivery, and application. In describing the workshops, they used descriptors such as "best professional development

program in years of teaching." They appreciated the professionalism, high level of organization, and excellent materials. They encouraged participation by a wider range of teachers and administrators, and felt that the knowledge they gained could have a more direct and influential impact on students than more generic professional development programs.

The current content that includes four art forms – music, visual art, dance, and drama – is vitally important, as is the emphasis on collaboration among classroom teachers, school arts specialists, and administrators. Though music and visual art were initially considered the "most accessible" art forms for teachers and children, experience led toward greater confidence among classroom teachers in the areas of visual art and drama. This is undoubtedly related to the more challenging technical demands people associate with music and dance, and with the discomfort many people feel with physical movement. It is therefore essential to build on skills and comfort levels across all arts disciplines, and to empower arts specialists as necessary collaborators in arts integration.

- ***ArtsNOW reinforces teachers' existing beliefs in the importance of the arts and arts integration for children and furthers their awareness of effective strategies, the importance of collaborative planning, and the multi-modality nature of learning in and through the arts.***

Many teachers and administrators clearly are frustrated by the number of "improvement programs" they are responsible for, the emphasis on testing, and the tendency toward "force feeding" factual information in order to improve test scores. They tend to be attuned to the developmental needs of students and the extent to which interdisciplinary learning can enhance understanding. They also know that children need hands-on, engaging activities, and they believe the strategies presented by ArtsNOW fulfill that need. Numerous teachers referred to the fact that the arts engage "mind, senses, and body" to offer a complete learning experience and give students opportunities to develop higher-order thinking skills that both transcend and help deepen understanding of factual information. A high percentage of participants indicated that they felt more comfortable with diverse art forms and with arts integration as a result of the workshop, and there was agreement that arts specialists are "essential" for arts integration.

- ***Most workshop participants increase and improve arts integration in their own work; however, they find that enlarging the work to other teachers and administrators presents challenges.***

Participants report that "time" is perhaps the biggest challenge in setting up an arts leadership team, meeting regularly, and providing creativity workshops. In many cases, the Level One workshop participants become the leadership team by default. Those that did offer in-school workshops often did so in the context of faculty meetings or other time-limited get-togethers. Where Level One participants were able to provide one or more subsequent in-school workshops, reports of collaborative planning and effort were more frequent. Only rarely did participants report that a school specifically dedicated time for collaborative planning between classroom teachers and arts specialists for effective arts integration.

- ***Student engagement, response, and achievement improve with arts integration despite the fact that global measures of achievement, such as the Georgia Criterion-Referenced Competency Test, cannot be specifically linked with ArtsNOW.***

It is widely understood by researchers and other education professionals that tests such as the Georgia CRCT provided only a limited snapshot of student achievement that must be interpreted very cautiously. A host of uncontrolled variables influence scores, including demographics, transient student and teacher populations, and teachers' assignments to different groups of children each year. However, *ArtsNOW* participants consistently reported improvements in levels of active learning engagement, the depth and quality of student responses, and both arts and academic achievement as measured in daily classroom assessments. Uncertainty about impact on academic achievement evidenced in the pre-workshop survey gave way to confidence that arts integration **does** enhance academic achievement on the follow-up survey. Clearly, the extent of application, the comfort levels of teachers, and the quality of applications affected student engagement and achievement; nevertheless, the observations of teachers - those closest to students on an ongoing basis - that student achievement improved is in all likelihood more trustworthy than data collected on the CRCT.

- ***Ongoing support from ArtsNOW staff is a critical component of sustaining participants' momentum for implementation and continuing growth.***

Though the workshop assisted participants in feeling "at ease" with arts integration, continuing support from staff who "understand the practicalities of schools and classrooms" is highly valued by teachers and administrators. The pressures and demands of day-to-day work in schools make it very challenging to maintain momentum without such support. Teachers who experienced regular and ongoing meetings to build on the workshop experience reported energy, satisfaction, and greater confidence in implementing arts integration. They also valued the ongoing interchange with colleagues.

Recommendations

1. Maintain the high quality and professionalism of *ArtsNOW* workshops. In addition to the worthiness of activities and materials, participants consistently commented on how "respected and valued" they felt professionally. Many teachers feel that professional development typically provided by school systems can sometimes be irrelevant to practice and involve a continuing barrage of expectations that are of only limited benefit to students. *ArtsNOW*, by contrast, is perceived as relevant to students' learning needs, teachers' commitments to engaging instruction, deep content understanding, and higher-order critical thinking and problem-solving.
2. Work with systems to communicate the value that participants perceive and to increase the numbers of education professionals trained in *ArtsNOW* principles and strategies. Demonstrate the ways in which *ArtsNOW* taps into the stated professional development needs of teachers and their desire for more engaging strategies that fulfill the developmental learning needs of students.
3. Undertake carefully designed assessments of student learning and achievement that accomplish what the CRCT is incapable of doing. Such assessments would include the following:
 - Specialized training of a limited group of teachers in arts strategies tied conceptually to particular local and state standards
 - Specially designed assessments that track students' growth over time on the identified standards, both in academic and arts content and skills

- Assessments that determine growth in critical thinking, problem-solving, and other dimensions of higher-order thinking
 - Assignment of students to trained ArtsNOW teachers over 2-3 years to assess longitudinal change
 - Ongoing support of teachers who are implementing the *ArtsNOW* strategies, including a commitment from schools for adequate collaborative planning time
 - Classroom observations and interviews to confirm the efficacy of implementation
 - Comparison of *ArtsNOW* data with those of matched control groups, using the same learning assessments
4. Maintain support mechanisms with participants to assist them in tasks such as setting up leadership teams, doing in-school workshops, and documenting teacher and student work in arts integration.
 5. Consider relating *ArtsNOW* to standards for teacher performance, such as the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards or those of the Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence, and include systematic assessments of teacher performance as an ongoing data profile.
 6. Assist schools with finding additional community resources to support their arts integration efforts. Encourage participants to lobby for system-wide commitments to arts integration as a professional development topic for all teachers.
 7. Continue to emphasize the importance of collaboration that includes arts specialists, classroom teachers, and administrators, and that includes all four art forms: music, dance, visual art, and drama.
 8. Maintain the highest standards of authenticity and rigor with regard to academic and artistic content, teaching-learning strategies, assessment strategies, and data reporting. Many stated education standards tend to offer minimums that should be attainable by every student rather than proposing truly rigorous standards that encourage all students to fulfill their highest potential. Teachers, students, and society at-large deserve more, and *ArtsNOW* is an example of the kind of rigorous professional development necessary for true excellence.

CODA

Data gleaned from this study support *ArtsNOW* as an excellent professional development program that is systematically improving teachers' classroom performance and the educational lives of children. The study has been titled *A Portrait of Persuasive Potential* because, while the aims and initiatives of *ArtsNOW* represent the highest standards of professional practice, the potential for full realization depends on further attention and commitments to ongoing and authentic implementation by schools.

In an era of school reform that too often seeks statistical bottom lines to the detriment of deep and lasting improvement in the ways we educate children, it is essential that efforts such as *ArtsNOW* support teachers, schools, and children with expertise and reason designed to effect lasting change. While most professional educators and parents believe that the arts are central to children's learning and development, they find it difficult to ensure a place for the arts in the midst of demands for statistical evidence that are too often short-sighted, politically motivated, and not in the best interests of children or the future of our schools and society.

If there is anything the current economic crisis makes clear, it is that reliance on misappropriated statistics, a lack of persistent values-based thinking about the greater good of society, and a shortfall of creative thinking put our nation and our society at risk. *ArtsNOW* has taken the bold, but risky, step of connecting with the deepest and most profound ways in which children and adults acquire, share, and develop knowledge and understanding. This report demonstrates that looking carefully and authentically at the work reveals important contributions to the lives and learning of teachers and children. Taking the significant influence of this relatively new program to capacity should be the goal of all those who value the place of creative thinking in solving the challenges of the twenty-first century.