



Students Demonstrate Learning Through the Arts:  
Innovative Partnerships with Artists in the Classroom

## **Moving Toward a Culture of Evidence:**

Documentation and Action Research  
inside CAPE Veteran Partnerships

**Veteran Partnerships Report 2005 – 2006**

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## Introduction

There has been a shift in focus for arts organizations in partnerships with public schools in response to state and federal funding requirements to demonstrate effectiveness. For the Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE), this requirement to provide evidence of student learning has resulted in a growing conversation to rethink traditional program evaluation, transforming CAPE's internal accountability procedures to incorporate research. Arts providers are grappling with the challenge of responding to school districts' calls for accountability and data driven practice, while maintaining their unique positions as external artists and performing organizations. How such community artists and teachers make learning and teaching visible is the crux of this year's veteran partnership program. (CAPE's "veteran partnerships" are those CAPE partnerships that have a developed arts integration practice and have made a multiple-year, collective commitment to documentation and action research.) This evolving mission for arts partnerships can be characterized as a turn toward a culture of evidence involving shared research collaboration among partners in multiple roles.

Researchers, funders, and art providers are examining these questions as community arts organizations become more engaged in the business of providing evidence that what they offer to schools and classrooms contributes to student learning. Some arts organizations are taking further steps to examine the impact of arts partnerships on teacher learning, specifically focusing on the impact that teacher participation in externally sponsored research has on instructional decisions made in the classroom by classroom teachers, arts specialists, and teaching artists. In this emerging practice, teachers and partner teaching artists participate, not just in implementing arts projects and programs; they are also engaged in documenting and investigating their work with respect to student learning and their own professional development. These conscious practices of documentation and investigation of student and teacher learning may contribute to arts educators' understandings of both arts specific and arts integrated instruction. Arts organizations that enter into a culture of evidence are exploring methods to not only illustrate what they do, but also improve their contributions to learning in and through the arts in schools.

## Rethinking Program Evaluation in Arts Partnership Work

Documenting and assessing the value of arts teaching and learning provided by external arts organizations has challenged traditional procedures and goals for program evaluators. Typically, arts organizations hire an evaluator or evaluation team per the requirements of the funded project. As arts partnerships move beyond traditional models of objectives-oriented or expert-oriented program evaluation toward more participant-oriented approaches, researchers are exploring the use of new processes, instruments, and applications of results (Fitzpatrick, Sanders & Worthen, 2004). Two such participant-oriented processes are *documentation* and *action research*. Participants are actively engaged not only in providing documentation for evaluators, but also are involved directly in determining the nature and substance of that documentation. Teachers and artists who are engaged in action research, posing an inquiry question either collaboratively or independently, and then collecting and analyzing data systematically to address that question, raise new issues that evaluation teams may not discover or be able to address.

Evaluation has, as its core premise, the charge of judging or assessing the value of a program. The agenda for evaluation is typically set by the stakeholders, which includes funders, board members, and consumers. The agenda shifts when participants in the implementation, in this case mainly teachers, artists, and students, contribute as data gatherers and analysts to that agenda. The relationship *between program evaluation* and *research* becomes a focus for discussion and policymaking. Boards and funders must decide how to incorporate findings that can be characterized as *layered research*, by university researchers, administrators, as well as teachers

and artists that contribute to the knowledge base in arts education, while still requiring the evaluative procedures that provide them with direction for future planning.

## **Documentation: Going Public with the Work**

Often modeled on the documentation methodologies of the early childhood programs of *Reggio Emilia*, CAPE is increasingly creating multi-media documentation of student, teacher, and artist processes, thoughts and products, making these products increasingly available to a variety of public audiences through websites, documentation panel displays in schools, and public space exhibitions. CAPE has become a leader in the arts education field in an increasingly widespread practice of synthesizing and disseminating student performances and art products and teacher and artist practice and reflection through on-line templates and accessible video clips that illustrate classroom teaching and learning. (See [www.capeweb.org](http://www.capeweb.org), [www.Arts4learning.org](http://www.Arts4learning.org), [www.pz.harvard.edu](http://www.pz.harvard.edu), [www.music-in-education.org](http://www.music-in-education.org))

This kind of documentation serves multiple purposes. Arts partners understand that their collaborations are not just ephemera for short periods in the classroom, bound by funding cycles or project implementation phases. The work becomes a contribution to the field of arts inquiry beyond the individual classroom. Inquiry-based documentation invites teacher and artist partners into an ongoing exploration of their practice, rather than a closed system of discrete activities. It also provides tools for peer-to-peer professional development that engages other teachers and artists outside of a particular partnership into an unfolding inquiry process that has the potential to revitalize school learning communities. The partnership's work makes teaching and learning visible for the wider arts and education world in ways that specific program evaluations do not.

Documentation helps others see what the work looks like; it validates the learning that is occurring and provides visual and aural images for thinking processes. It is an extended process, building on artists' natural impulses to perform and present, that can expand classroom teachers' vision of their roles in schools, communities and the arts education field. One teacher explains, "I always thought I was a good teacher. Documentation helps me know how and when I actually am."

## **Action Research inside Arts Partnerships**

Some arts education partnerships are investing in a culture of evidence in which practitioners and students ask questions, collect data, and do analysis of their practice in collaboration with each other and with formal research teams (See [www.espartsed.org](http://www.espartsed.org), [www.music-in-education.org](http://www.music-in-education.org) / [www.kennedy-center.org/education/kcaeen](http://www.kennedy-center.org/education/kcaeen), [www.capeweb.org](http://www.capeweb.org).) Funders are including an action research component in applications for funding documents and results of such research are increasingly shared beyond a local audience. School districts in many states are providing incentive systems for teachers, including recertification credit and professional development points, for those who engage in action research. Action research is not a new term in education; national and international efforts have placed action research processes squarely in professional development agendas at the district and state levels. The introduction of these practices among artists and arts partnerships is just now beginning to keep pace with the larger field of teacher development. The challenge of viewing action research as a legitimate contribution to the research represented by an arts learning organization and not solely as a professional development system remains worthy of investigation.

Arts partnerships that increasingly acknowledge the value and legitimacy of this research are also addressing the relationship between this practitioner-based research and formal research. What Cochran Smith and Lytle call "inquiry as stance" has become an integral part of how arts learning and teaching is occurring. Formal research that incorporates classroom-based inquiry by

artists and teachers must find a way to provide support for this inquiry, propose methods and instruments for such inquiry, and simultaneously pursue the larger research agendas that necessarily transcend individual classroom practices. A key component of this current shift is the belief that it is not enough for teachers' work to be studied; they need to study it themselves (Stenhouse, 1975).

## **An Arts Partnership Case: Investing in Layered Research**

CAPE has been exploring such a system of insider/outsider research over the past three years, in which university researchers work with artists and teachers to develop authentic questions, assessment instruments, tools, and processes. The organization, through a process of engaging stakeholders, arrived at a research plan three years ago that is currently being renewed and updated for the next three years. The organization's research questions—focused on *the impact of arts integration on student learning and teacher/artist development* guide program and project-specific research. Within the more veteran partnerships, the teachers and artists have been partners in examining the role of practitioners in the research. These experienced partnerships have been working together for between four years and fourteen years. They are now assumed to be experts at planning and implementing arts projects. Even in the cases where there are teachers engaged in CAPE work for the first time this year, the veteran partnership schools are experienced CAPE partners, and novice teachers and artists have the support of experienced planners for arts integration.

The organization has referred to the multiple extensions of the investigation plan as *layered research*. Becoming part of a research team now challenges them to design and use standards-based assessments; to pilot and provide feedback for universal instruments in use across partnerships; to document their own processes and products on-line and in public physical spaces; and to ask and answer inquiry questions through systemic data collection and analysis.

**CAPE's multiple-year research plan enabled the organization to pursue an approach to these goals with a research team that includes university researchers, organization staff research assistants, teaching artists, arts specialists in schools, classroom teachers, and increasingly, students.**

**CAPE acknowledges that it requires years of solid, strong work by the partnerships in arts integration implementation before they were ready to discuss notions of evidence as more than displaying or exhibiting the work. The partners were not only a part of a community of artists and teachers; they joined a community of researchers to contribute to their own knowledge, the knowledge in the field of arts integration, and the arena of public policy.**

The chronology of the *layered research* thus far is as follows:

- From 2002-2004, veteran partnerships participated in intensive professional development to learn how to selectively document their work focused on inquiry questions
- In 2004-2005, from initial documentation collected, the university researchers extricated the teaching practices of arts specialists, teaching artists and classroom teachers, comparing them against the research-based standards for excellence in teaching proposed by the Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence ([www.crede.org](http://www.crede.org))
- These observed and documented teaching practices were used to develop an observation and self-reporting instrument in 2005-2006 to track teaching strategies across classrooms and art forms in the partnerships, integrating existing research on best practice.

- The instrument called *What Teaching Looks Like in CAPE Veteran Partnerships 2005-2006* was refined, edited, and simplified as part of the professional development workshops for teachers and artists during the fall of 2005
- The research team then administered the tool in survey form in February of 2006. (See Summary of Results in Table 4)
- The results were shared in a general discussion with the veteran partnership teams in April of 2006, and the tool is being refined and field-tested by the CAPE Veteran Partnerships for on-going use.

At all junctures, the practitioners and the researchers worked together to build a culture in which evidence, analysis of teaching and learning, and meaningful documentation were cornerstones of the practice. The layers of research incorporated a university research team, classroom teachers, arts teachers, and teaching artists in classrooms engaged in their own inquiry and in the larger research agenda of the organization. The underlying implication of this process can serve as a counter-balance to arts education programs that focus on short term learning goals and the research studies and program evaluations that are designed to address these short-term goals. Learning goals that continue to be addressed and achieved year after year, with new groups of students and lessons and units that may or may not engage an external arts partner can only be achieved if the teacher and the artist learn to use the repertoire of best practice teaching strategies and research tools. This repertoire, then, is not attached to a single unit; it becomes a part of the artist or teacher practices. The group of artists, teachers, and researchers agreed on this common framework for examining their own instruction across multiple years, in part because it was based on credible research in diverse school systems, and in part because the specific indicators for recognizing the standards stemmed from their own work in the partnerships. This approach also seeks to respond to, in an evidence-based and problem-solving manner, the primary criticisms of arts education provided by uncertified teaching artists- that visiting artists often do not fully understand *how to teach*, the fact that their presence in schools is necessarily often short term, and that the impacts of artists' engagement with children are often asserted, but have not been clearly identified, articulated and "evidenced".

## **2005-2006 Documentation by School-Based Teams**

A careful and systematic focus on documentation and action research by teaching artists, arts specialists and classroom teachers also suggests that practitioners can contribute to a research framework in which teaching and learning processes become visible. A guided inquiry process, in which teacher and artist teams raise significant questions focused on content curriculum, student learning, and student engagement, shapes practice and reshapes the notion of research 'with' as opposed to research 'on' practitioners in schools.

An analysis of sixteen CAPE PowerPoint documentation templates filled out by teacher/artist teams for 2005-2006 revealed four patterns that contribute to CAPE's general research plan, addressing changes in teaching, changes in school climate, and focus on student learning. (See examples of CAPE's documentation template: [www.capeweb.org/rexamples.html](http://www.capeweb.org/rexamples.html)) In other words, these four patterns indicate that the CAPE action research plan for veteran partnerships is making a difference in how and what students are learning as a result of CAPE arts integration partnerships. These four patterns are:

**A) A growing understanding of the role of inquiry questions in focusing teachers and artists on what students are actually gaining from the arts integration partnership. This increasing awareness is evident in partnership documentation that describes *the evolution***

*of questions to more specifically address areas of student learning that are measurable and/or observable as a result of arts integration processes.*

**Example #1:** One teacher in a veteran partnership, in collaboration with a teaching artist, worked through a question that ultimately had more focus, more measurable outcomes, and would address her students' specific needs in improving their writing. She began with the inquiry question, *How can drama improve the writing skills of 6, 7, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Learning Disabilities students?* Then, according to the documentation, she moved into the more affective, engagement issues surrounding writing with two additional questions:

*Can drama improve writing confidence and attitudes? And can drama help students to establish a personal voice and style?* While these questions were interesting and confirming of the process that she and the teaching artist engaged in, she became aware that she was not yet fully satisfied with her own inquiry. **The question, in other words, still did not address what it was she wanted students to do** to "improve their writing skills".

She writes: *From my observation, I think my students writing skills have definitely improved. From the self-assessment checklist I think that most of my students would agree that they have more writing confidence and have developed a personal voice.*

As I continued down the road of this project, what I found challenging was that **I realized that I did not have a clear idea of what constituted "improved writing" in a truly meaningful and measurable way. I had a vague idea of what I thought improved writing should look like, but I definitely could not articulate it.**

She continues to explain how she arrived at the actual, authentic, student-learning focused inquiry question: Finally, as a result of the evolution of this project I have been able to narrow down just what I am looking for in terms of improved writing skills for my LD students. To continue this project my question will be:

**Can drama improve pre-writing strategies and lead to more elaboration in the student's writing?**

The evolution of questions also indicates the evolution of the teacher's thinking about what she would and could assess, specifically. Again, in this case, the teacher began with the general "improve writing skills". She then wondered about confidence, attitudes and personal voice/style. She finally then narrowed down to two specific and measurable writing outcomes: *the use of pre-writing strategies and elaboration of ideas*. This is not a hierarchy of questions. It is rather evidence of her growing understanding of a variety of dimensions of the writing process and a clear focus on how the affective can in fact inform the specific skills that she was looking for in the first question. In this researcher's view, the process of developing inquiry questions has supported her learning as a teacher and her skills in providing students with specific strategies that will in fact improve their writing.



**Example #2:** Another teacher discussed the evolution of her thinking about her Inquiry Question (termed Essential Question): As I worked on this project with the students and teachers, I realized that my Essential Question (**Can the integration of technology, fine art and language arts increase student motivation and self-esteem?**) was not what finally was evaluated. What I really had wanted was to see the students achieve a greater level of comfort with the use of different types of technology and discover how to create a work of art through combining various technology tools with art forms that included fine arts and music.

Before beginning this project, I had specific expectations of the skills the students were to achieve, with a major focus on the technology initiatives described in the National Education Technology Standards (NETS). I wanted to see growth in their use of technology, including word processing and using digital peripherals, such as the digital camera.

It's possible that this teacher is beginning to understand that motivation and self-esteem are more obvious when students in fact do become more proficient in using specific technology tools. She seems to realize that she cannot measure motivation and self-esteem without also measuring what students in fact could do with the different types of technology within art forms and art products that the integration project(s) supported.

This is a crucial learning and suggests that at least some of the veteran partnership teams are ready to study both affective, cognitive, and performance gains in these arts integration projects. It may no longer be sufficient to affirm that students enjoyed the activities or gained confidence through arts integration, important as those outcomes may be. The exploration of practice through inquiry questions has, for some, invited more evidence-based learning that is affective AND cognitive in nature.

**B) Teachers and teaching artists are demonstrating increasing sophistication in their assessments to address student learning, engagement, perception, knowledge and skills. More teacher/artist teams employed pre/post assessments this year involving students' attitudes and perceptions as well as base line knowledge and skills in an art form and other content area. The pre/post assessments were particularly creative and compelling. Assessment, it seems, is beginning to be a part of the project or unit. In embracing that need for evidence, however, artists and teachers are attempting to make the assessment aesthetically interesting and authentic.**

**Example #1:** One team conducted video interviews with individual children (Murray, grade 2). They asked individual children on camera, *Can you change something flat like paper into an object? What is 2D? What is 3D?* The responses must have been useful as the artist/teacher team planned the project to address the young children's obvious misconceptions or confusions—a typical challenge in scientific concept knowledge acquisition.

**Example #2:** In another classroom, autistic students working on developing new vocabularies about emotional states were given a pre-test prior to studying a new emotion and the same test again after studying the emotion for several weeks (Agassiz, ages 7 -11). The teacher/artist comments reveal what they learned from this pre/post approach to documenting learning. The project was even more complex as the team compared the autistic children's learning with the general education students with respect to vocabulary acquisition.

**Example # 2, cont.:** *Students taking pre- and post-tests when studying a new emotion was helpful to us because it gave us a baseline to how well, if at all, they understood the emotion. Giving the tests to the general education students was also interesting. Many students who were older than our students lacked the vocabulary we were teaching. Two weeks after our performance our students interviewed 10 students from 1<sup>st</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> grade about what they remembered from the play. While they remembered a few of the vignettes our students performed, the most interesting thing was that only 1 of the 10 used vocabulary that didn't contain the words "sad" and "happy". Our students, who struggle with expressing and interpreting emotions, are using more complex vocabulary than their peers.*

*We assessed students with autism to see how familiar they were with the emotions: ashamed, jubilant and vengeful. Each student was given a pre-test prior to studying the emotion and then given the same post-test after several weeks. The tests for vengeful and jubilant was also given to general education students prior to our all school assembly and our bulletin board being displayed, and then again following after.*

*The results indicate that both groups were able to learn new vocabulary. The students with autism learned through exposure to stories, acting, games and writing. The general education students learned through exposure to the bulletin board, the assembly performance, and through coaching from the students with autism as they were photographed for the slide show.*

At Orozco School, eighth grade students were asked to write pre-post project responses to a music prompt. The inquiry question was simply, *does music improve comprehension of the spoken and written word?* While these writing responses are not sufficient to fully respond to that question, the "After" writing samples noted in the documentation show much greater elaboration, extension, and reflection than the "Before" samples in each case. (See Table One) The teacher's analysis: *After listening to the music, students often changed their perceptions and tended to write more as well.*

Table One: Students Pre/Post Responses to Music Prompts – Grade 8 Orozco School

Student	Before Music	After Music
No. 1	"Whatever, blah..."	"...kind of a downer, and then kind of energetic and heavenly."
No. 2	"The theme is the world is messed up."	"The theme is everyday you are supposed to wake up and do something better than what you did the day before, because it's a brand new day and you are supposed to get a good start."
No. 3	"I think this work is mostly about when you are feeling down, don't make yourself feel lower. Just pick your self up. This work is sad, but angry and depressed."	"I think this work is mostly about taking care of the earth ...and yourself. This is serious because it makes you think. Instead of thinking it was going to be sad, it made me feel serious and think about the song, even though the song ended."
No. 4	"The person was sad for some time because they can't trust nobody in the world and it is a back stabber. I think he feels isolated in the world. Best friends turn out to be your worst enemies."	"You can't hold yourself back from anything; do what you got to do. I think it sounds happy and cheerful. The artist is trying to say about dreams and goals in your life and self-confidence. (My feelings) changed by feeling more cheerful because I thought it was about trust. The beat affected the lyrics because at first I thought you couldn't trust



Table One: Students Pre/Post Responses to Music Prompts – Grade 8 Orozco School

Student	Before Music	After Music
		nobody and the beat made it sound truthful and have self confidence, dreams, and goals in your life.”
No. 5	“I think this work is confusing. I didn’t understand it.”	“It’s full of energy, crazy energy. The feeling I get from this work is psycho, crazy, lunatic. I think this artist is trying to say, ‘Hey everyone, listen to me. Yeah, that’s right, you better hear me!’”

Even a casual observer looking at these tables can note the elaboration evident in the “After Music” entries. The teacher/artist action research analysis continued as part of their documentation: *Students created a listening journal. In general, responses tended to be vague or blank for the first reading without the musical accompaniment. Responses also tended to focus on mere recall of certain lyrics instead of an overall theme or emotion. Only students sitting in the front row had much of anything to say. Overall listening experience was strained. Audience members were inattentive and participants reluctant.*

*The second performance with their music was a much better experience. Responses were more productive overall and attention was improved with less interruptions and misbehavior. In hindsight I would have conducted oral interviews after both to compare responses. (See Table Two.)*

Table Two: Pre/Post Writing Regarding Reading With/Without Music Accompaniment—Grade 8 Orozco School

Student	Before Music	After Music
No. 1	No Response,	“I think the mood is exciting, because they said they were looking at the Sox stadium, so they were excited. The think their message of this poem is to never stop believing in someone or something.”
No. 2’	“I heard, but did not understand”	“The theme was about what they like to do and not to believe in rumors. The mood was happy.”
No. 3	No Response.	“This is about the White Sox game. I feel ... the people screaming ‘White Sox won.’”

The final teacher/artist analysis of this music project: In general, I feel students showed greater comprehension of written and spoken work when it was accompanied by music. Weak readers benefited most from the addition of music. Students who had difficulty interpreting a work prior to the music, often interpreted the work to be mean, abusive, or about a person who is being betrayed, suggesting the students’ frustration with the material was projected onto the work.

After completing this project, I also realized that I needed to provide students different ways in which to express their observations. I repeatedly asked students to use the same format of observation and response, thinking that it would be easier to show change over time, but many students grew bored with the format and provided less data. I should have had students conduct taped interviews with each other to see if they could ease the questioning fatigue.

This teacher’s comments reveal his growing sophistication with being a teacher researcher. He is exploring the most beneficial means to collect worthwhile data; he is also looking at his own practice and acknowledges the need to stretch his own repertoire in order to optimize what his students can do. This is a crucial outcome of the partnerships and one that is often overlooked.

Teachers who open themselves up to data collection in this way see things they could not see otherwise. They see actual progress through a pre/post method of assessment. They also see what they as teachers need to do to obtain even better results from students.

**C) More teams are using rubrics designed to address the projects in their arts integration units. But, and perhaps more importantly, a few teams are seeing the rubric as essential for students to help invent and use throughout the arts integration projects.**

One team even focused an inquiry question on the potential of the rubric to raise the quality of the performance/products created by the students. The teacher/artist team at Healy offered this inquiry question: *In what ways do student created rubrics inspire students to make improvements in their projects when allowed to analyze and improve their work?* This team realized the direct and crucial relationship between learning and assessment. They also recognized the potential for assessment to actually inform students and help them improve their work with and without instructor grading.

Other teacher/artist teams also experimented with the notion that students, not just teachers, can use assessment tools. In some cases, these instruments were distributed to students ahead of time and used as a guide for producing the work as well as assessing its quality at the end (*See Table Three*). If next year’s documentation template explicitly asks for assessment approaches, and if teams share these approaches and worked on them with the research team, there will be even more evidence of quality assessment that is a part of the arts integration process.

An Agassiz School teaching artist notes: While at first the teachers were the ones critiquing the students’ performance using the assessment tool, eventually the students took over this role.

**D) More veteran partnership teams are beginning to understand the concept of generalizable knowledge as they began to participate more willingly in ‘strands’ (common content/conceptual groups that extend beyond individual classrooms and schools).**

During 2005-2006, school-based teams began to discuss themes, knowledge and skills that could be assessed across grade levels and projects, referred to these themes as “strands”. Strand themes included such cross-school inquiry questions as *What is the balance needed between individual and group work in arts integrated classrooms? How does arts integration challenge students to explore the nature of materials? How do students investigate space in arts integrated classrooms? How does going public with student products impact student learning?*

Table Three: Murray School Rubric for Drama Development

You will be given a situation that might happen between Omri and Little Bear. Although it is a situation that does not happen in the book, you need to use what you know about the characters' emotions and actions to write a **SHORT** script about what might happen. Here is what you need to do:

- o With partner, decide how to organize the actions and dialogue in your script. Think about your script before jumping into writing it.
- o Write script. Be sure to include any appropriate emotions or actions for your characters. It should be around one to two minutes long.
- o Practice script. You do **NOT** need to memorize it, but you should know your script well enough that you are not staring at your paper. We suggest using note cards.
- o Perform scene to class. You will also be videotaped while you are performing.
- o Be a good audience. Your grade will also depend on your behavior while other students are performing.

	4	3	2	1
<b>Appropriate character actions and speech</b> – Are you acting like Omri and Little Bear might act? Did you avoid laughing?	Excellent! Very appropriate LB was demanding + Omri made sure to not let LB push him around.			
<b>Use of emotion</b> – Do you display emotions correctly to your audience?	Excellent! Was very well done.			
<b>Behavior</b> – Were you a good audience for your classmates?	MS	CP	CP	
<b>Script</b> – Have you written a script that details what you are going to say and do? Is it the right length?	well written			
<b>Prepared</b> – Are you prepared to perform? Is your scene the appropriate length?	Memorized + was appropriate length.			

Colby:  $\frac{17}{20}$  B  
Mauria:  $\frac{20}{20}$  A

They also experimented with common assessment tools to administer across classrooms. While this was strictly an experiment and data were not collected due to the rudimentary nature of these strand tools, the process of designing and discussing elements that would be assessable and useful in a larger research context was crucial professional development for the next step of generalizing impact, which is important to CAPE’s research plan. As one teacher commented, *I think CAPE has matured beyond journals to expect a real product.*

## **Strand Impact Evidence**

### **Teacher/Artist Comment from Agassiz School:**

CAPE organizes its action research into “strands” across schools, based on commonalities between inquiry questions at different sites. The “Feelings” unit with the autistic students at Agassiz School became a part of the “Going Public” strand. The strand title meant something slightly different to each school involved in the strand:

*Going public meant three things to us. First, it meant sharing our portraits with the school as we hung an interactive bulletin board that asked others to match the feeling word with the portrait it represented. Second, it meant that the students would be sharing their short stories with the public by performing them on stage as part of an all-school assembly. Thirdly, students coached some general education students as they posed for photos to represent 18 different emotions. The photos were used in a slide show during the all-school assembly.*

The documentation seemed to suggest that naming the strand and asking cross-school groups to discuss its meaning encouraged this team to concretely ‘go public’ with the work at the school level.

### **Teacher/Artist Comment from Telpochcalli School:**

Telpochcalli School became part of the strand that was investigating how arts integration works when students are working across more than one culture. The Mexican-American students at Telpochcalli were setting up communications with students in Turkey, using a former Telpochcalli teacher who was now living in Turkey as the liaison. The concept of the “Cross - Culture” strand influenced the choice to make masks:

*Initially the idea was to simply have some kind of dialogue and use video and web-chat to talk to each other long-distance and thus create a dialogue about identity and who we are as well as our differences, perceptions...*

*The making of masks seemed like a perfect way to speak about identity in a creative and fun way. It was also practical to work with especially in a long-distance project because it was something each class could work on individually and then share online.*

*The conversations about the masks and the students’ identities were ongoing components of the class – integrated into class meetings, poetry writing activities, and the creation of each student’s personal page in the 8th grade yearbook.*

In this comment, the artist acknowledges that the strand topic influenced the art making directly. The term ‘cross-culture’ suggested communication using masks, art objects that convey and communicate across cultures and countries. This team developed the strand into an art exchange project with their sister classroom in Turkey, extending the topic to a larger context.

The use of strands needs more support, discussion, and collaborative professional development if generalizable data are to be collected across schools next year. Recommendations include the consideration of organizing strands around specific art forms, as well as organizing strands around specific grade levels. (See Appendix for Veteran Partnership action research

questions sorted by art form). Researchers need to be more directly involved in helping action researchers to develop consistent and useful tools to articulate impact and learning across multiple classrooms.

## **Research on the Impact of Teachers on Student Learning: The Rationale for Common Documentation Focused on Teaching Strategies and Approaches**

Current research stresses the importance of developing strong teachers for today's and tomorrow's schools. Forty or fifty years ago, it was commonly assumed that schools and teachers made little difference in what children, particularly poor children, could achieve (Coleman, 1966). Today's research, however, provides compelling evidence that schools and teachers do matter (Darling-Hammond and Bransford, 2005). Students who are assigned to several highly effective teachers in a row have significantly greater gains in achievement than those who are assigned to less effective teachers; furthermore, the influence of each teacher has effects that spill over into later years (Sanders and Rivers, 1996).

One compelling and persistent finding is that student achievement seems to be higher when teachers have high verbal skills (Ehrenberg and Brewer, 1995; Ballou and Podgursky, 1997) as well as strong knowledge of the content they teach. In addition, teacher professional development on supporting higher-order thinking skills in students positively impacts student performance. Students whose teachers emphasize higher-order thinking skills outperform their peers (Wenglinsky, 2000).

Why are these results important for CAPE? CAPE has invested resources in school programs as a form of community outreach and engagement. While focus on student achievement and gains in student test scores are desirable and easily understood by parents, communities and decision makers, it's not often clear what teachers could do to actually effect those gains. CAPE's intensive work on professional development, working with artists and teachers as action researchers who consistently reflect on their processes, can contribute to a much broader research agenda for arts education that focuses not just on student gains but on teacher improvement as well. A clear articulation of strategies and approaches used in the CAPE partnerships is consistent with the research on teacher quality, affirming the fact that teaching matters. The more that effective teaching can be recognized, practiced, and encouraged, the more students will learn.

Research on teacher knowledge and teacher learning raises issues about whether practice observed in classrooms really indicates knowledge and awareness on the part of teachers and, in this case, artists. Researchers may be attributing knowledge to teachers that teachers have not claimed to possess. CAPE is discovering that only when teachers are intentionally involved in addressing the organization's research questions, as well as her/his own inquiry questions, do intentions and intended actions become clear. Such practices also suggest how important it may be to challenge teachers with specific, expected pedagogical goals.

This year, the CAPE veteran partnerships were given an adaptation of excellence in teaching standards based on the CREDE Effective Teaching Standards. These standards were applied by reviewing 2004-2005 documentation templates produced by teachers and artists in order to determine what approaches were endemic to arts integration teaching in these partnerships. The Standards for measurement then came from their practice as well as from the research literature. The CREDE Effective Teaching Standards, such as *Connecting lessons to students' lives* or *Developing language and literacy skills* are broad enough to be accessible; the indicators are specific enough to challenge artists and teachers to look at *how they taught* in and through the arts, not just what the content of the unit or project would be. While their own classroom-based research focused on different content in a variety of grade levels, the five standards for effective

teaching with specific indicators of those standards from the partnerships’ own work became useful tools for documenting *how* the arts were being taught across schools and classrooms. The long-term goal for this layer of the research is to be able to more accurately articulate what excellent teaching in an arts partnership looks like.

Professional development for artists and teachers that engages them in these practices is intended to be long-term, multi-year, and sustainable. As an arts organization increasingly commits to a culture of evidence, it also increasingly commits to in-school arts specialists as leaders and designers of evidence-based practice in schools, intentionally championing the idea that certified arts teachers and visiting teaching artists can and should be working collaboratively toward improving arts instruction. Such an approach builds toward the long-term rather than focusing on the short-term benefits of engagement in the arts.

## **Common Documentation: Adapting the CREDE Instrument to Investigate Teaching in Veteran Partnerships**

The CREDE Tool resulted in an ongoing professional development discussion among the veteran partnerships. In February, after seeing the instrument several times in the fall, the teachers and artists completed the survey in terms of the 2005-2006 CAPE arts integration work they had done or were currently doing in the classroom. Results of that survey reveal some trends for the work that will hopefully suggest the next steps with school partners and teaching artists.

### **The Artist/Teacher Survey: February 2006**

Of the thirty-four respondents, sixteen identified themselves as teaching artists and eighteen as teachers who completed the survey titled *What Teaching Looks Like in CAPE Veteran Partnerships, 2005-2006*. Twelve schools were represented: Agassiz, Hawthorne, Healy, Sheridan, Murray, Northside Prep, National Teachers Academy, North Kenwood Oakland Charter, Orozco, Telpochcalli, Walsh and Waters. For this year, results were not differentiated between artists and teachers. This may be something to investigate in the future.

In general, respondents reported that they used these approaches, recognized in the research as Standards for Effective Teaching “Usually” or “Always” (See Table Four).

Table Four: What Teaching Looks Like in CAPE Veteran Partnerships 2005-2006\*  
Teachers and Teaching Artists Self-Report Summarized Results

Teaching Standards <a href="http://www.CREDE.org">www.CREDE.org</a>	Usually or Always evident
Teachers and students work together during arts integration projects. (3 indicators)	80%
Language and literacy skills appear across the curriculum during arts integration. (5 indicators)	72.4%
Arts integration connects to students’ lives. (4 indicators)	73.3%
Arts integration engages students in challenging activities. (6 indicators)	81.7%
Dialogue happens more than lecture during arts integration projects. (3 indicators)	90.3%

The overall self-reported frequencies in each of the five general Effective Teaching Standards areas are quite high, with averages above 70%, as Table Four indicates. Within those generally high percentages then, it is useful to identify the specific teaching behavior indicators that were rarely or only sometimes used, in other words less than 70% of the time. Six specific indicators that were used *rarely* or only *sometimes* were:

- *Students keep arts integration journals (Language/Literacy Standard)*

- *Students use pre and post writes (Language/Literacy Standard)*
- *Students develop the criteria for assessment (Connection to Students' Lives Standard)*
- *Students assess each other (Connection to Students' Lives Standard)*
- *Students create their own inquiry questions (Challenging Activities Standard)*
- *Students reframe, focus, simplify, or change curriculum that teacher/artist planned (Challenging Activities Standard)*

These quantitative results from the self-report survey are largely consistent with the narrative/written responses teachers and artists offered on the survey. (See Tables Five and Six below) The survey indicators provided them with an added menu of options – some of which they had not thought about previously, according to the discussion in April of 2006.

The results were also consistent with their goals for themselves and for CAPE for 2006-2007. The top four teaching approaches that the teachers and teaching artists noted that they wanted to work on during 2006-2007 were:

- *Students plan and negotiate with each other (9)*
- *Students assess each other (10)*
- *Students create their own inquiry questions (12)*
- *Students develop the criteria for assessment (14)*

The top three teaching approaches that teachers and teaching artists wanted CAPE to address in professional development during 2006-2007 were:

- *Students organize and develop their reading and writing through visual arts strategies (8)*
- *Students create their own inquiry questions (12)*
- *Students develop criteria for assessment (13)*

The survey also asked them what completing this instrument revealed to them about their teaching. Because the work inside CAPE veteran partnerships has, for the past three years, been very much focused on teacher and artist development, inquiry, and innovative teaching, the partners are accustomed to reflecting on themselves as well as their students through documentation. This is the first time they have been asked to actively name the processes and approaches they have used in their work. The survey evoked different responses, most of which were indicative of how intensely devoted teachers and artists are to their own continuous learning, supported by CAPE. After completing the survey, a teacher incredulously noted that *this was the first time anyone had actually named these practices*. Just giving approaches names provided goals for teachers and artists. (See Table Five)

The comments expressed in Table Five are also largely consistent with the quantitative results in the survey, in which teachers and artists self-reported the frequency of their use of twenty indicators across the five CREDE Standards for Excellence in Teaching. Note that teachers and artists are extremely focused on the role of students in their own learning. This may well be the guiding strength of an arts integration approach in classrooms. The student-centered teaching engaged in by artists and teachers allows all learners to become engaged. The way in which we describe and measure this engagement may be one of the important contributions of arts integration practitioners and researchers. Anecdotally, researchers hear repeated testimonials to the value of arts integration for second language learners, for those with special needs, for shy students, and for those who may struggle with developmental delays. The pedagogies that focus



on individualizing instruction and engaging students in planning, negotiating, and assessing may be a key feature that can be identified and replicated in arts integration lessons.

**Table Five: What Completing the CREDE Survey Revealed to Teachers and Artists About Their Teaching: Narrative Responses**

<p><u>The Survey and Students</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I need to involve students more in planning.</li> <li>• Sometimes students can change the direction.</li> <li>• I value student reflection on their work and teacher reflection on practice.</li> <li>• Students can be more involved in the criticism, reflection and inquiry process.</li> <li>• That I de-emphasize assessment and self-analysis by students.</li> <li>• It makes me think about how some things are easy to assess while others are not.</li> <li>• That I am involving students in more of the process, offering more choices, but that my fear of students handling equipment keeps me from letting their document their own work.</li> <li>• It reminds me to keep focused on what skills students are acquiring.</li> <li>• This survey tells that that our students are free to discuss and collaborate and make choices in their learning. It also tells me that we could use a language arts component.</li> <li>• Students are engaged by the project, but I need to make sure they are still focusing on self-reflection.</li> <li>• I question if students should be more in control of assessment. I think we should turn this over to them; it may lead those less engaged to be more engaged.</li> <li>• That I need to encourage student self-documentation.</li> </ul>
<p><u>The Survey and Teaching</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That I am moving in the right direction.</li> <li>• It pulls together teacher expectations and focus.</li> <li>• I need to actively document</li> <li>• That there are some areas for improvement.</li> <li>• My teaching – all teaching – is a constant struggle to balance all the good things we do with more good things- things that we know we need to find time for.</li> <li>• That it's an ongoing process of exploration and self-analysis.</li> <li>• It's intimidating because, although maybe not intentionally, it implies that some things should be getting done and that I'm not doing everything CAPE wants me to do.</li> <li>• It reminds me to keep all the plates spinning while in the classroom, not just while planning.</li> <li>• It makes me feel that I am doing quite well, but that there are still a few things that I can work on.</li> <li>• (This survey) helps me focus on what outcomes I'd like to see.</li> <li>• (This survey) helps me realize what areas I need to focus on.</li> <li>• That I have made many strides with CAPE projects, but I still have more ways to grow as a teacher</li> </ul>

When asked if CAPE “has influenced your practice in the classroom”, an impressive 82% said yes, while 17% answered, “Not really.” When asked to explain, here were the responses, grouped by the researcher in four particular areas.

**Table Six: How CAPE has Influenced Teacher/Artist Practice: Narrative Responses**

<p><b>CAPE has...Expanded the teaching repertoire</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'm thinking in a different way, exploring nontraditional ways of teaching nontraditional learners to improve their academic skills.</li> <li>• (CAPE) has brought the importance of assessment, pre and post, using rubrics, setting goals and objectives.</li> <li>• CAPE has influenced my practice in that I have increased appreciation for the retention of material for students. I have always known that art integration helps students obtain information, but I didn't realize how effective it is at helping students retain information.</li> </ul>
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**Table Six: How CAPE has Influenced Teacher/Artist Practice: Narrative Responses**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Instead of just doing projects, it makes you look at more ways to involve what you have learned from CAPE projects into everything you do with your students. The practices learned find their way into other grades and units.</i></li> <li>• <i>CAPE has broadened my resources – brought me out of the self-contained classroom to look “in” on myself, my methods and my students.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>CAPE has... Supported adult collaborations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>It really gives an opportunity to work with other teachers, not only from your own school but others. You get exposed to many ideas and it makes you think about teaching in general.</i></li> <li>• <i>CAPE has given me the opportunity to collaborate in the classroom in many different schools. This experience in itself has improved my teaching techniques and skills.</i></li> <li>• <i>The cross-communication of artists and teachers is the <u>best</u> I've been involved in over 15 years.</i></li> <li>• <i>CAPE has influenced my practice deeply by:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Helping me establish collaborations with many very different teachers and artists</i></li> <li>• <i>Engaging me in a larger dialogue about the role of the arts in teaching and learning.</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <i>I'm not exactly sure what my teaching would look like if not for CAPE. As a matter of fact, the work with CAPE has altered my “work”. When I look at the financial situation in CPS, I want to leave. But my collaboration with CAPE is so embedded into my practice that it makes my decision to go to the suburbs extremely hard. Thanks.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>CAPE has...Invited analysis of teaching</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>My teaching is far less language based and more visual and movement oriented.</i></li> <li>• <i>Although all teachers reflect on their teaching constantly, CAPE “forces” me to do this in a more formal, structured way, specifically with collecting and analyzing documentation.</i></li> <li>• <i>CAPE has made me much more intentional in my planning, thoughtful about documentation, a better co-teacher.</i></li> <li>• <i>Informative meetings and programs provoke me to reassess my own art integrated classroom teaching programs, allowing more flexibility and less structure to encourage student inquiry and creative skills/involvement.</i></li> <li>• <i>I think I am more reflective of my teaching practice. I definitely think more about documenting. Most of all, I've learned a new method of co-teaching, which I love. I think differently about really integrating arts into the curriculum rather than just making an arts project.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>CAPE has increased my options for student engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>I am more likely to encourage arts integration in student documentation and allow student choice.</i></li> <li>• <i>Students become much more aware of what they are learning and remember it. They also transfer skills to other subjects and are able to use the skill independent of the teacher. They can become teachers themselves for those who missed lessons and become much more detailed about their work.</i></li> <li>• <i>Each year that my students work on this course of study, I learn more about how students think and create. I modify the unit and continue (I hope) to improve how the students create their video (their process of learning) and now am working on the students assessing their own work and hopefully improve what they produce.</i></li> <li>• <i>Even when I am not involved in a CAPE residency, when I work with teachers in arts integration, I try to find out what it is that they want the students to investigate and what is their inquiry question. For myself through the residencies, I continue to find new ways to engage the students. I think through a lesson more than I did when I first started and I listen to what the students question in respect to their work.</i></li> <li>• <i>It's made me more observant of students' reaction or reception (to) lessons.</i></li> <li>• <i>CAPE has given me tools and ideas about learning that I did not previously have. My ability to negotiate with children with different learning styles has strengthened my teaching. Now, when I look at a child, I'm looking for their personal learning style and not necessarily how they learn the way I teach.</i></li> </ul>

Table Six: How CAPE has Influenced Teacher/Artist Practice: Narrative Responses

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>CAPE has made me acutely aware of the need for quality documentation. I've really had to consider each aspect of the unit. I am very interested now in engaging the student in such a way that encourages them to want to educate themselves.</i></li><li>• <i>I create my curriculum around the knowledge that my students wish to attain more often. They are more engaged and invested now that they are choosing our topics.</i></li></ul>
<p>CAPE has...raised the bar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>I feel like I have evolved as a CAPE artist/teacher and am constantly striving to hit extremely high goals.</i></li><li>• <i>CAPE pushes my comfort level and forces me to swim against the current of boredom that rages through the hallways and classrooms of schools. I think CAPE has matured beyond journals to expect a real product.</i></li><li>• <i>By asking me lots of questions I can't answer and asking <u>me</u> to ask questions I can't answer.</i></li></ul>

## Conclusions

The action research work during 2005-2006 occurred in three layers: in individual classrooms, in strands across classrooms and schools, and across the whole network of veteran partnership schools. Individual classroom teachers and teaching artists completed documentation templates, focused around at least one inquiry question that they personally and uniquely designed. Strands with some common focus or theme were invited to share their assessments and even develop a common instrument/tool to use across classrooms to gain some generalizable understanding of learning, impact, or outcomes. The entire network helped to develop, revise, and finally utilize a universal tool, **What Teaching Looks Like in CAPE Veteran Partnerships 2005-2006**.

CAPE has now completed three years of a research plan (2003-2006) and recently completed a Strategic Planning Process for the next three years. Enormous progress has been made regarding the level of funded research and evaluation programs that CAPE is now planning and implementing in Chicago. The veteran partnership work in action research is just one portion of the larger initiative that represents CAPE. The work has gone beyond arts integration to developing sustainable leadership, cross-school mentoring, literacy-based arts instruction, and intentional collaboration to focus multiple arts organizations on common research and evaluation goals and methodologies (Collaborative Arts Network/CAN).

Specifically in the veteran partnerships, the work is rich enough now to be about more than planning and implementing arts integration projects. The work in 2005-2006 points toward a CAPE arts integration methodology that influences *teaching* in a more conscious and crucial way. Long-term CAPE teachers are telling us that they have learned something about teaching that impacts their work well beyond the arts integration projects. Teaching artists are now focused much more on students and what they are thinking, learning, and doing. These outcomes come at a time when the field of education is looking more and more at issues of *teacher quality* as the basis for improving schools. We are now beginning to understand that structures and organizational patterns in schools may be innovative and consistent with business models, that physical plants may be state of the art, that technology may be plentiful and parents may be present and willing. But if the teachers in a building are not equipped with a repertoire of teaching approaches, strategies and content capacity, children will not achieve. It appears from the 2005-2006 data that CAPE teachers are becoming and have become *quality teachers* because of their work with the network. Next steps may be to continue to gather evidence regarding this premise and to further investigate impact on student learning.

On a larger scale, as CAPE's research plan enters into the next three years, it may be time to look for variables to investigate across funded projects. This means more communication and

collaboration among the researchers working on individual projects. It means the identification of specific points for investigation that are transferable across projects, despite the individual focus areas of each. Some areas for this cross-project investigation include:

- *Teacher leadership for school-based change through the arts*
- *The role of arts teachers/specialists in partner schools*
- *Literacy and language and arts integration across all projects,*
- *Professional development*
- *Student Engagement*
- *Teacher quality*

School change literature often addresses the challenge of bringing projects or innovations to scale. Often the innovation barely scratches the surface **because it does not reach into the classroom in order to influence instruction** (Cuban, 1988, Elmore, 1996, Coburn, 2003). Perhaps CAPE could consider working in the reverse. The action research plan has been directed toward instruction at the classroom level. The next step toward bringing effective teaching to scale may in fact be extending the pedagogy of inquiry-based arts integration in order to bring about meaningful change in and across school communities. Arts integration can provide much of the rich, varied, and compelling practice-based “stuff” needed as evidence for meaningful action research, and action research can provide much of the intentionality and focus that arts integration needs in order to assume its proper place in the field of effective school improvement.

## **Final Thought**

Steve Seidel’s keynote speech at the March, 2005 conference, *Beyond Arts Integration*, offers some points of conversation regarding where to go from here with respect to arts integration as an approach. In his address, entitled, *To Get To The Other Side: Curricular Integration, Dangerous Ignorance, and the Drama of Learning*, he posed six topics for consideration that are inherently integrative, useful at all levels K-12, and worth considering for getting ‘beyond arts integration:’

- Human Rights
- Languages
- Globalization
- Monuments
- Sadness
- Density

He then suggested six distinct artistic processes that are also useful at all levels K-12 and invite the kind of thoughtful application that those engaged in arts integration might consider as mainstays:

- Improvisation
- Composition
- Interpretation
- Practice
- Performance
- Critique

Might CAPE be at a time and place where research could focus on distinct artistic processes as they are applied to quality teaching, using generative and rich integrative concepts shared

across classrooms? Might CAPE veterans be ready to combine their talents and expertise to look at larger issues? Action research extended to strands or collective documentation may be the 'network of networks' that will contribute to CAPE research for the next three years.

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## Appendix

### 2005-2006 Veteran Partnerships Selected Classroom Inquiry Questions By Art Form

#### Drama and Arts Integration Questions

1. Can children with autism learn new vocabulary that will introduce them to more complex emotions?
2. Can they then learn to display/recognize these emotions by creating an emotional alphabet?
3. Can drama improve pre-writing strategies and lead to more elaboration in the students' writing?
4. How do improvisational and dramatic techniques impact students' comprehension of a novel with respect to character development?
5. The original question was: How can drama improve the writing skills of 6,7,8<sup>th</sup> Grade Learning Disabilities students?

As we got more into the project the question changed as I realized that before writing skills can improve, attitudes about writing need to change. So the next question was: Can drama improve writing confidence and attitudes?

As a result of that prior question, I felt that if confidence and attitudes improve, it could lead to more investment personally on the part of the student in his/her written product. So the question then became: Can drama help students to establish a personal voice and style in their writing?

Finally, as a result of the evolution of this project I have been able to narrow down just what I am looking for in terms of improved writing skills for my LD students. To continue this project my question will be: Can drama improve pre-writing strategies and lead to more elaboration in the students' writing?

#### Visual Arts and Arts Integration Questions

6. Can using the arts increase science knowledge and understanding?
  - What is Observation?
  - What is sketching?
  - What is detail?
  - What is shading?
  - What is living and non living?
  - What are structures of life?
  - Identify the parts of a Plant? Crayfish? Bird?
  - Write about / Talk about the growth process of the crayfish, the plants and the animals they observed.
  - Observe details
7. How can students explore ways to express themselves artistically through a study of cultural symbolism?
  - What is a symbol?
  - How can a symbol send a message or tell a story?
  - What is culture and how would you describe your culture?
  - How can a symbol tell about your culture and the culture of your peers?

8. We wanted to know how building a garden could enable student to take ownership in their community.
9. How do the materials used (sumi e and mixed media) affect students motivation and understanding of landscapes and seasonal changes?
10. How will students engaging in an extended study of landscapes cause them to think about the landscapes around them?

### **Media Arts/Technology and Arts Integration Questions**

11. What are the effects of integrating the media arts on students of various learning styles & various academic achieving levels?
12. How does the integration of media arts impact students' learning abilities?
13. In what ways does a cross-cultural art exchange increase awareness of one's? Own identity, as well as teach about perceptions of this identity in a different country?
14. How effectively can art, with the help of virtual technology, be used as a medium to learn collaboratively about identity across culture, time & distance?
15. Can the integration of technology, fine art and language arts increase student motivation and self-esteem?

### **Music and Arts integration Questions**

Does music improve comprehension of the written and spoken word?