

Chicago Arts Partnership in Education

A Summary of:

“Chicago Arts Partnership: Summary Evaluation” by James S. Catterall and Lynn Waldorf in *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning* (1999) The Arts Education Partnership & The President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities.

Focus

- Early Childhood
- ✓ Primary School
- Middle School
- ✓ Secondary School
- Postsecondary
- Extended Learning

Overview

The Arts Education Partnership, sponsor of this report, is a private, non-profit coalition of more than 100 partners representing arts, education, business, philanthropic and governmental organizations. Its goals are to demonstrate and promote the role of arts education in helping students to succeed in school, life and work. *The Champions of Change* report examines how arts education can change young people’s lives and raise their academic achievement. This summary focuses on one program described in the report, the Chicago Arts Partnership in Education (CAPE). Founded in 1992, CAPE brings artists and arts agencies into partnerships with teachers and schools. Teams of teachers and artists create and co-teach courses that

POPULATION

The CAPE program in the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) has a majority of students from racial or ethnic minority groups: 52.5% African American, 34.2% Latino, 10% Caucasian, 3.2% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 0.2% Native American. More than 84% of CPS students come from low-income families. In 1999, the evaluators compared 19 CAPE schools to 29 other CPS schools with similar demographics that did not have arts partnerships.

integrate arts instruction with academic goals in subjects such as reading, social studies and science. At full implementation strength, the CAPE program involved 37 Chicago schools, 53 professional arts organizations and 27 community organizations.

Key Findings

CAPE schools outperformed other CPS schools in all 52 test score comparisons run by the Imagination Project evaluators. Between 1992 and 1998, they increased their lead over schools using traditional curricula in:

- ◆ 25 out of 40 reading tests (grades K-8)
- ◆ 16 out of 40 math tests (grades K-8)
- ◆ 7 out of 12 reading tests (grades 9-11)
- ◆ 8 out of 12 math tests (grades 9-12)

Evaluators compared the reading scores for sixth graders in CAPE schools to sixth graders citywide and to sixth graders in similar schools.

“The first thing you notice in an arts integrated class is that everybody’s working. Everybody’s on task. Everybody is thinking and doing things and nobody is sleeping or day dreaming, and that’s a really significant difference in classes. You can just tell in class – there’s an electricity in the classroom, there’s energy in classes using arts integrated things.”
—Local CAPE coordinator

- ◆ Between 1992 and 1998, the percentage of CAPE sixth graders above grade level on the Iowa Test for Basic Skills (ITBS) Mathematics

increased by 50% (from 40% to 60%) while non-CAPE sixth graders increased by 30% (from 28% to 40%).

- ◆ During this same period, 14% more CAPE sixth graders scored above grade level on the ITBS Reading test compared to a matched group of sixth graders in non-CAPE schools.

Due to the small number of CAPE high schools participating in the study, score differences were not statistically significant at this age level. However, ninth graders in CAPE high schools did exhibit positive gains (one grade level) on reading tests relative to CPS ninth graders more generally.

Program Components

In CAPE schools, more than half of the teachers include at least one unit during the year that is co-taught by an artist, and about a quarter of the teachers plan four or five units which integrate arts into academic subjects.

A wide variety of artists, including musicians, dancers, actors, painters, writers, and others, worked in classes across the academic spectrum, from chemistry and physics to English and history. Math proved the most difficult subject to integrate with arts instruction.

Teacher-artist pairs planned unit curricula together and co-taught classes during the regular school day, integrating arts education into both humanities *and* science curricula. In one classroom, fourth graders created a musical composition tied to the history of

Chicago. In another, an artist taught high school students about the history of textiles and dyes, while the chemistry teacher helped them link this knowledge to principles of chemistry.

Sample lesson plans and curricula shared the following components:

- ◆ Planning for an artistic product.
- ◆ Explaining academic goals.
- ◆ Connecting artistic goals to state academic standards.
- ◆ Assessing students' achievement of academic and artistic goals.

Contributing Factors

Alternative Learning Strategies

Surveys with teachers, artists, coordinators and principals indicate that CAPE contributes to the development of skills such as speaking, decision-making, writing and creative thinking. Integrating arts with traditional subjects has offered alternative learning strategies for all students, and this appears to be especially beneficial to students struggling with traditional curricula.

Reduced Class Size

CAPE provides two adults for every classroom. Team teaching allowed both teachers and artists to give students more individualized attention and instruction.

Professional Development

Both teachers and artists have opportunities to participate in extensive professional development. In addition to the benefits of team-teaching, CAPE offers nearly a dozen workshops throughout the year for teachers and artists to work together, planning lessons and learning how to integrate arts into the classroom. However, because teachers and artists often have different work schedules, evaluators noted that participation was not as high as it should have been with the average teacher and artist attending only 1-3 workshops a year.

Clear Program Goals

A survey of teachers and artists involved in CAPE explained that well-defined learning objectives, matched to assessment, were crucial to the program's success. A well-planned schedule was necessary to facilitate artist school visits.

Administrative Support/Staff Commitment

Program staff also indicated that supportive principals, highly skilled artists and adventuresome, risk-taking teachers contributed to CAPE's success. The program ran well when teachers worked with art forms that they themselves liked.

Community Involvement

Artists from the community serve as role models for inspiring the youth, but they are not the only members of the community critical to the sustainability of arts education. Without the support of parents, families, artists and arts organizations, school boards, superintendents and school principals, CAPE and other arts education initiatives cannot survive.

STUDY METHODOLOGY

The CAPE evaluation included in the *Champions of Change* incorporates data from a long-term study by the North Central Regional Laboratory (NCREL) and a 1998-99 study by the Imagination Project at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Evaluators collected data on student achievement in reading and mathematics on standardized tests such as the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and the Illinois Goals Assessment Program (IGAP) test. The NCREL study also used large-scale surveys of teachers and students to obtain an overall view of classroom practices. The *Champions of Change* researchers also summarized an earlier study of CAPE conducted by the Imagination Project. This study focused on comparisons between CAPE and non-CAPE schools with similar racial/ethnic and socio-economic student populations. Students at CAPE schools were already doing slightly better than those in non-CAPE schools before the program, so evaluators tried to determine whether the CAPE schools' advantage grew over the course of program implementation. The evaluators reported that findings for elementary school students were significant, but that due to the small sample size of CAPE high schools in the study the data from this age group were not statistically significant.

EVALUATION FUNDING

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GEOGRAPHIC AREAS

Though this summary focuses on Chicago, Illinois, *Champions of Change* includes snapshots of arts programs across the country.

CONTACT INFORMATION**Research Contacts**

Richard Deasy
Arts Education Partnership
Council of Chief State School Officers
One Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20001-1431
<http://aep-arts.org>
www.pcah.gov

James Catterall, Professor
Graduate School of Education
3341 Moore Hall, Box 951521
University of California at Los Angeles
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1521
jamesc@gseis.ucla.edu