



Creative Education Quarterly

ISSUE 019 | Winter 2003

What We're Learning II | Emerging Themes from the CEP Study

By Dana Powell, Ed.D., Director, Creative Education Program

The first "What We're Learning" article was written by Kate Cochran and appeared in Issue 10, October 2000.

In Fall 2001, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation commissioned the American Institutes for Research (AIR) to study the structure, function and impact of the Creative Education Program (CEP). The purpose of the study is to evaluate the impact of the cash grants, technical assistance, and related activities on the quality, content, reach, and sustainability of arts programs, instruction, and student development among CEP participants. In 2003, the final results of the study will be analyzed and presented along with data from a concurrent evaluation of the Packard Foundation's School Arts Program in Santa Cruz County to determine whether broader lessons may be learned about the implementation of large-scale arts education initiatives.

Research Activity To date, the AIR research team has collected data in four forms: 1) existing text and video documentation of the CEP and its grantees; 2) notes from researcher participation in program meetings, workshops and symposia; 3) interviews with program staff and participants; and 4) school site visits that included interviews, focus groups and classroom observations. AIR recently compiled an interim report of emerging themes from the study, which creates a window on the progress and the challenges of implementing both the Creative Education Program and the school arts programs that the CEP supports.

Emerging Themes The emerging themes are defined by AIR as "patterns of information, or impressions," as opposed to conclusive findings. These themes serve as the springboard for ongoing research, described in the Next Steps section below.

Under the theme of *Technical Assistance and Grant Management*, it was reported that grantees recognized the usefulness of technical assistance, in particular the support of the

mentors in program planning and improving instruction. Grantees sometimes found it difficult to meet the grant requirements, such as monthly meetings and financial reports. Challenges to the provision of technical assistance included cultivating buy-in and accountability within some districts.

With regard to the theme of *Resources and Infrastructure*, it was reported that strong leadership, advocacy, a policy or master plan, and the existence of an arts task force or coordinator were among the critical success factors. The most common factors believed to impede program success were lack of materials, facilities, instructional time, and evaluation, as well as competing priorities such as standardized testing.

On the theme of *Instructors*, teachers expressed great appreciation for the work of artists-in-residence from local arts organizations. Teachers saw the benefits of these contracted arts teachers to be high levels of student engagement, learning directly from professional artists, greater subject matter expertise, and regularly scheduled instruction. In addition, teachers expressed the desire for further professional development in the arts, citing a lack of resources and adequate time for effective training under the present conditions.

Emerging themes related to *Instruction* included the provision of interdisciplinary versus discrete arts instruction (i.e., integrated versus single-subject). Participants reported that interdisciplinary instruction is easier to promote than discrete arts instruction in the current climate of standardized testing. Even so, limited concerns were voiced that even interdisciplinary arts instruction might detract from the other core subjects. Based on classroom observations, it was reported that the degree of integration was often superficial, and that planning and delivering balanced interdisciplinary lessons presented considerable challenges. Despite these challenges,

researchers observed that the arts programs utilized high-quality arts supplies, the facilities were usually adequate (if not dedicated), and that students were actively engaged in arts learning.

With regard to *Standards*, there is considerable evidence that the CEP, program managers, arts task forces, and arts coordinators support the State arts standards. Several districts had adopted the standards, and others were in the process of doing so. Many

Continued on Page 2

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Strategy Spotlight | State-Adopted Curricula in the Arts

By Lilia Agüero, School Grants Coordinator

The Strategy Spotlight series highlights effective strategies for the development, implementation and sustenance of school arts programs.

Nearly 25 years after the decimation of state funding for in-school arts instruction resulting from the passage of Proposition 13, and 33 years after the elimination of arts methods courses from the multiple subject credential, California has taken significant steps to rebuild arts education in its public schools. The cornerstones of this effort include the adoption of the Visual and Performing Arts Framework in 1996, the adoption of instructional materials in the Visual and Performing Arts in 1998, and the adoption of State Content Standards in the Visual and Performing Arts in 2001. These adoptions represent important progress toward the successful implementation of comprehensive and sequential arts education programs.

In June 1998, the California State Board of Education adopted seven visual and performing arts curricula, four in visual arts and three in music, for use in grades K-8. These are the most current state-adopted instructional materials in the Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA). All programs are aligned with the *Visual and Performing Arts Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten through Grade Twelve* (1996), although not with the Visual and Performing Arts Content Standards, which had not yet been adopted at the time. These materials help schools to: 1) incorporate dance, music, theatre and visual arts into the core curriculum; 2) provide arts education programs that include access to the arts through technology and in the community; and 3) support implementation of comprehensive and sequential visual and performing arts programs.

Adopted materials offer school districts resources and options as they work

to ensure that students achieve literacy in and through the arts. School Grant recipient, Campbell Union School District, pursued a strategy that introduced and implemented a K-3 visual arts program taught by generalist teachers. A linchpin of the strategy was the district adoption of the visual arts curriculum, *Art Connections*, published by SRA McGraw-Hill. The district selected 8-10 lessons per grade level and expanded each to address the language arts standards as well. The integration of the lessons with language arts standards facilitated implementation of the program, and inspired teachers to further integrate the lessons with other core subjects. Franklin-McKinley School District adopted the *Adventures in Art* curriculum and has aligned it with the *Into English* language development program to create a curriculum that supports interdisciplinary and multicultural approach teaching and learning.

Funding Sources State funding for the purchase of state-adopted materials is provided by the K-8 Instructional Materials Fund (IMF). During 2001-02, the rate was approximately \$33.06 per pupil based on average daily attendance (ADA). Funding may be spent for instructional materials in any subject area on any current State Board of Education adopted materials list. Districts have the flexibility to use up to 30% of these funds for other purposes such as in-service training. Districts may also petition the State Board of Education to spend 100% of their IMF funds for non-adopted materials. IMF monies can be used to purchase VAPA state-adopted materials until the current adoption expires on June 30, 2006.

Future Developments California will continue its efforts to rebuild arts education in the public schools with the

adoption of a revised VAPA Framework in 2003, based on the State VAPA Content Standards of 2001. The Content Standards specify what students should know and be able to do in dance, music, theatre and visual arts at all grade levels, while the Framework provides a vision for a balanced and comprehensive arts program. In 2010 a new Framework and Content Standards will be adopted together.

California's current budget crisis may disrupt the State's plans to proceed with curricular support of the arts. State leadership is signaling a shift in IMF spending policy and may move to require that districts utilize funding to purchase state-adopted materials in other core subjects first, to ensure that these subjects are given higher priority over the arts. Remaining funds may then be used to buy state-adopted materials in the arts. Flexibility in expenditures may be limited further by the elimination of the 30% IMF allowance for supplemental materials and services. The California legislature is considering a \$1.7 billion cut to education in the current 2002-03 budget, leaving school districts with gaping holes in their budgets midway through this school year. While the State's budget deficit presents the legislature with very difficult fiscal decisions, it is critical that we remind them that education must remain a top funding priority. ●

Sources:

California Department of Education (CDE) (1998). *The Visual and Performing Arts Instructional Materials Adoption Report 1998*. Review of instructional resources, K-8. Curriculum Frameworks and Instructional Resources Division (CFIR), CDE, www.cde.ca.gov/cilbranch/cfir

Gray Davis, Governor, State of California. *Mid-Year Spending Reduction Proposals*. December 2002. www.dof.ca.gov/HTML/BUD_DOCS/midyr02.pdf

Uribe, Olga and Susan Martimo, Education Program Consultants. Overview of State Adopted Curricula, CFIR, CDE. December 2, 2002, Franklin-McKinley School District.

CEP Study continued from Page 1

teachers were unfamiliar with the new standards while others felt overwhelmed by them; however, it was reported that the technical assistance and professional development offered by the CEP were improving teachers' ability to understand and apply the standards. Participants noted challenges in ensuring that the programs of arts providers and parent volunteers are aligned with the standards, and that additional teacher training on the standards is needed.

Creating *Community* around the school arts programs also emerged as a theme in the study. Many grantees report-

ed beneficial partnerships with arts provider organizations and parent groups. District arts task forces have been effective in raising funds, awareness and interest in the new arts initiatives. Participants again cited standardized test pressure as an obstacle to building support for the arts within the school community, but stated that high-profile fundraisers, student performances and encouraging students to take art projects home help to bolster support.

Next Steps In Spring 2003, AIR will implement a series of surveys with school grant program managers, arts coordinators and generalist teachers in each CEP school district. The questions will explore

funding, technical assistance, infrastructure, professional development, program reach, arts instruction, student development, and the future of arts education. Teacher outcomes will be explored, such as increased confidence in providing arts instruction. Teachers will also share their observations regarding the relationship between the arts and students' cognitive, emotional and social development. In addition to the surveys, AIR researchers will conduct a second round of site visits to schools. CEP staff will be available to assist grantees with the logistics of participating in the surveys and site visits. ●

① Dana Powell at 408.283.8508 or dana@ci-sv.org.

Profiles in Practice | Phoebe Mauricio, Shirakawa School, FMSD

By Aimée Ipson, Professional Development Coordinator

The Profiles in Practice series explores the challenges, strategies and successes of Santa Clara County elementary teachers who are committed to integrating the arts into the core curriculum.

Phoebe Mauricio has worked with students in grades two through five, with most of her classroom teaching at the third grade level. She chose to teach second grade this year, excited about the challenge of learning and implementing new lessons as well as the prospect of "looping up" with her students when they matriculate to third grade.

Mauricio channels the students' energy into constructive opportunities for self-expression and creative presentations of their learning and understanding. She finds that students sometimes have difficulty in finding the words to express exactly what they are thinking or feeling, and the arts provide a means for expression. "The arts have given me a medium with which to reach the students at their level," Mauricio reflects. In a recent math lesson, Mauricio asked students to form teams and develop posters to explicate math concepts. Student teams found inventive ways to answer such questions as, "How do you know it is an odd or even number?" and created brief performances to demonstrate their points.

The arts play an integral part throughout her curriculum, both as independent learning opportunities and in integrated lessons. Recently, Mauricio used an *Adventures in Art* lesson as a springboard for a visual arts and writing lesson unit in which she asked students to think about how artists and writers use lines, shapes and words to express feelings in their work. Mauricio first read from an Ezra Jack Keats story, *Louie's Search*, to provide a forum for exploring expression and emotion. While reading the story, she asked students to identify expressions depicted in the illustrations of characters' faces, and to act out their own demonstration of those expressions.

Students then turned to a visual arts segment, during which they used construction paper and markers to create collage portraits that conveyed the emotions they had discussed. Mauricio set up a gallery walk for the students to display their work and to comment on the expressions that they interpreted in their peers' pictures. Following the gallery session, each student developed a word web with expression words that were then expanded upon to form sentences.

Mauricio designs her lessons to give students an opportunity to explore the arts, while reinforcing their vocabulary

and helping them make connections among words and with literature. The *Louie's Search* lesson connected reading, discussion and arts activities with the building of each student's "word bank." "I want them to build their vocabulary. I think I've found a successful way to do that, and that's through the arts." Mauricio feels strongly that, by combining a study of vocabulary with visual and performing arts experiences, students can internalize and articulate feelings, thereby enhancing their own tools for self-expression.

Mauricio has chosen an author-illustrator theme for the year, and is develop-



Aimée Ipson

ing artist/writer workshops for her students. The processes involved in writing and art-making are analogous, Mauricio asserts, and share the stages of brainstorming, drafts and revision. "My goal is that, by the time they leave my classroom, they're going to be authors and illustrators. I want them to put their stories together, so that they can walk out of here feeling like they've accomplished something. 'Hey, I'm an author and I'm an artist.'"

Much of Mauricio's inspiration for arts-based and integrated lessons spirals from her participation in an array of professional development programs. She has taken part in school- and district-level workshops on topics including arts implementation in the classroom and strategies for teaching writing. Her enthusiasm for such training opportunities has translated into more in-depth undertakings; Mauricio previously participated in a week-long institute with the Bay Area California Arts Project, and delved into a four-week training seminar this past summer with the San José Area Writing Project.

Her active learning in these profes-

Bi-monthly Workshops for Grant Recipients

This year's curriculum emphasizes leadership development, infrastructure building and strategies for sustaining arts programs.

Attendance is required for Program Managers (or a proxy), who may invite one guest to each workshop. Lunch is included.

R.S.V.P. is required for all participants.

LOCATION: Franklin-McKinley District Office, 645 Wool Creek Road, San José

Monday, February 3, 2003
12:30 - 3:30 p.m.

Monday, April 7, 2003
12:30 - 3:30 p.m.

Monday, June 2, 2003
12:30 - 3:30 p.m.

R.S.V.P.: Lilia Agüero at 408.283.3408

sional development workshops has informed her approach to designing learning experiences for her students. Drawing upon the California Subject Matter Projects' training in the "backwards design" model of curriculum development, Mauricio selects the standards that a unit will address, identifies assessment strategies, then develops lessons that work to build students' understanding of and capacity to meet those standards. Lessons are designed to meet content standards in the visual and performing arts as well as in other core subjects. Standards-based learning is as important to Mauricio as the students' learning experience. "I want to make sure that [educators] know that I'm not implementing arts activities just to kill time or to 'do art.'"

To address any such concerns, Mauricio shares the related standards with her students at the beginning of lesson units and throughout the curriculum. She has found this method to be effective in all subject areas. Laminated copies of content standards in the core subjects are posted around her classroom.

Mauricio recognizes that Franklin-McKinley is a school district with a strong commitment to the arts in the classroom. She attributes her success and professional progress in the arts to support from her principal and from visual and performing arts facilitators, guided by the

Continued on Page 4

Contact Us

Lilia Agüero
School Grants Coordinator
Creative Education Program
408.283.3408
lilia@ci-sv.org

Aimée Ipson
Professional Development Coordinator
Creative Education Program
408.283.3409
aimee@ci-sv.org

Dana Powell, Ed.D.
Director, Creative Education Program
408.283.8508
dana@ci-sv.org

Pattie Tripunitara
Arts Education Mentor
Creative Education Program
408.839.3336
wolfwork@hotmail.com

Julie Ulmer
Arts Education Mentor
Creative Education Program
650.255.1991
julierulmer@hotmail.com

Profile continued from Page 3

district's Language Development Department. Boosted by the backing of her district, Mauricio has been encouraged to implement the arts as a forum for creative expression as well as reinforcement of other academic concepts. "Even when I'm not focusing specifically on the arts," Mauricio states, "I think the arts provide an effective strategy. I couldn't see teaching any other way at this point." ●

① For more information about the Summer Arts Intensive series and other professional development opportunities in the arts, please contact Aimée Ipson at aimee@ci-sv.org or 408.283.3409.

Upcoming Creative Education Symposia

March 19, 2003

Jay McTighe on Understanding by Design Standards-Based Curriculum Development, 6:30 p.m., Le Petit Trianon Theatre, San José.

April 30, 2003

Arts Education Expo School Arts Programs + Arts Provider Organizations, 4:00 p.m., location to be announced.

① Aimée Ipson at aimee@ci-sv.org or 408.283.3409.

