



Inner-City Arts

Title VII: Project ALL, Arts for Language and Learning Biennial Evaluation - Executive Summary, 2002

Founded in 1989, Inner-City Arts is a highly successful, nonprofit children's art school serving young people living in downtown Los Angeles. The students participating at the Center are among this nation's neediest youths who live in an environment rife with violence and a high crime rate. The area we serve is a point of entry for many immigrant families -- 78% of the local students have limited English skills, and many face the challenges of poverty and homelessness.

We serve more than 5,600 students from twelve elementary schools with daytime classes, and an additional 2,400 participants through after-school programs, high school programs, and activities for families and the community. The school focuses on visual and performing arts to develop creative and critical thinking skills, English acquisition, and a higher standard in overall academic achievement. Classes are fully integrated into the core academic curriculum, and meet the Student Learning Standards of the Los Angeles Unified School District. Sessions in ceramics, visual arts, dance, music, drama and animation run seven to fourteen weeks and meet twice weekly. Inner-City Arts is located in a 16,000-square-foot facility, containing six studios. Inner-City Arts' multiple arts curricula promote creative self-expression while developing increased creative and critical thinking skills. In a positive learning environment that encourages self-expression, children explore the arts as they relate to their own lives. These students are validated for their life experiences, and empowered to make choices and decisions. They explore and broaden their knowledge, receiving validation for each creative attempt and participatory commitment. All programs are delivered by professional artists/educators.

The Los Angeles Unified School District partners with Inner-City Arts to provide our full arts program. The District transports students from twelve elementary schools to the Inner-City Arts teaching complex during the students' regular instructional day. Additionally, the School District provides campus security and some maintenance. Advisory support from the District has been an important part of shaping the direction of Inner-City Arts curriculum development. With the adoption of new standards for the visual and performing arts, the Los Angeles Unified School District embraced arts instruction for its students. The 1999 Student Learning Standards of the District provide an integrated curriculum, with the arts as one of six core subject areas. Inner-City Arts' teaching practices and programs are aligned with these new standards, and enhance the ability of classroom teachers to infuse their classrooms with arts-related activities. In accordance with the *State of California's Visual and Performing Arts Framework*, Inner-City Arts programs strive to address the learning needs of students, while providing exposure and more intensive study in the arts.

Arts for Language and Learning (Project ALL)

Inner-City Arts and the Los Angeles Unified School District are also partners in a unique project funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Bilingual Education, Title VII. The five-year, \$2.8 million *Arts for Language and Learning Project* (Project ALL) serves the needs of English Learners through direct studio experiences, aiming to improve the District's Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE), and foster staff development training programs. It brings teleconferencing technology and interactive instruction from Inner-City Arts to classrooms at seven elementary schools, and serves as an important model for future facilities promoting academic, cognitive and mathematics skills through arts-based education.

Project ALL is based on the premise that arts-based learning provides students who are English Learners with opportunities they need to succeed. The Project goes beyond the popular concept of the magnet school for the arts. Magnet schools generally give students more time to work in the arts, but provide traditional instruction in other core subjects. Project ALL uses the arts as a means to connect all areas of the curriculum and to make the learning experience a coherent one. Arts experiences are used to strengthen language development, and the artists/educators use precise, carefully selected vocabulary in studio classes as part of their lessons.

Project ALL provides students with an arts-integrated classroom where reading, writing and calculating are emphasized whenever possible in connection with the various arts, and teachers with the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to prepare students for a successful transition to English proficiency. Professional development strategies integrate the arts and technology-based learning within all areas of academic study, e.g. the arts-based SDAIE curriculum and support the integration of instructional strategies utilized in the arts curriculum within core subject areas. Additionally, Inner-City Arts provides materials from the Resource Library and training through workshops for classroom teachers to integrate literature, vocabulary and arts information across this curriculum.

Research and Evaluation Methodology and Results

We are currently in the fourth year of the five-year Project ALL. Ongoing evaluation demonstrates the correlation between our programs, teacher and parent involvement, and student success, with empirical studies showing the important role that teacher and parent involvement plays in student success. We monitor student achievement in three key areas: academic achievement, English language development, and self-concept (self-esteem, creativity and motivation).

Project ALL gauges students' cognitive development through the *Visual Arts Criteria Assessment (VACA)* and the *Writing Arts Concepts Assessment (WACA)*. A pilot study was conducted in Fall 1997. Artwork produced by students participating in Project ALL programs and classes showed a marked increase in usage of descriptive features and spatial relations in a manner more consonant with real-world observations in their drawings. These students also, through their writing, demonstrated a very strong positive change in English-language fluency, based on pre- and post-tests over a fourteen-week period. The study results clearly implied measurable cognitive enhancement through joint student and teacher participation in the project. Evaluation of student achievement and teacher and parent involvement will continue through the year 2002. A full report of the findings follows in the Biennial Evaluation, May 2000.

Evaluation Results

The following outcomes measure the success to date of Project ALL in attaining the program's main goals and objectives. The goals of the project include: improving the learning outcomes of elementary-level English Learners in all academic areas through the development of language proficiency and through the participation in arts programs; improving academic motivation and self-esteem; offering intensive development training to teachers and paraprofessionals; encouraging parent participation through training and education programs, and wide-range dissemination of these program models.

- ***Improve Learning Outcomes:***

The success of this goal is measurable by improvements in Stanford 9 testing scores in the areas of reading, language arts, and mathematics. Evaluation results clearly indicate that when classroom teachers participate in 10 or more hours of professional development in our comprehensive teacher training program, we see a marked increase in student achievement. Results also show that when students participate in studio classes and the teacher is not engaged, student performance is adversely affected. As noted below, dramatic increases have been realized in all areas: an 18% increase in reading scores, an 8.3% increase in language scores, and a 34% increase in mathematics scores for students participating for a full year whose teachers participate ten or more hours per week.

Students and teachers being used in the control group for project evaluation are categorized by levels, with Level 1 being no exposure and Level 4 the highest level of exposure. As follows, the results are dramatic, with Stanford 9 scores increasing significantly in students with long-term program exposure whose teachers use Project ALL techniques. (A more complete description of the Levels can be found on page 4 of the *Biennial Evaluation**)

- **Result of Stanford 9 (1999) Test Scores:**

Content Area	Level 1	Level 4	Total	+Difference
Reading	29.12	43.28	28.86	+ 17.8%
Language	30.73	33.28	30.41	+ 8.3%
Mathematics	33.47	42.14	33.71	+ 25%

- **Improve English language proficiency:**

The success of this goal is measurable by improvements in *The Writing Arts Concepts Assessment Tool* (WACA), and the *Visual Arts Criteria Assessment* (VACA). WACA measures English proficiency, and VACA measures mastery of visual art concepts. The WACA and VACA work together to test the development and progress in these areas, and to gauge progress in important cognitive skills, as expressed in two different modalities. A longitudinal study is being conducted over the three-year period from 1999-2002, which will then be contrasted to the short-term gains of students reflected in the annual Performance Reports.

- **Improve academic motivation and self-esteem:**

The success of this goal is measurable by improvements in *The Abedi Creativity Test*. Inner-City Arts' students show improved retention rate among English Language Deficient (ELD) students through the implementation of arts-based learning activities, which improve academic motivation and self-esteem. Strategies focus on promoting language and academic development through SDAIE, cooperative learning, and innovative problem solving.

- **Offer intensive professional development opportunities for teachers and paraprofessionals:**

Quality professional development positively affects teaching methodology and is reflected in student achievement. Project ALL works with teachers to affect change at a deep level by providing teachers with opportunities to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to prepare students for successful transition to English proficiency. Professional development strategies focus on integrating the arts and technology-based learning within all areas of academic study, which improves the practices of bilingual teachers serving a linguistically and culturally diverse student population. Our Professional Development program also allows for individualized and structured group intern projects, and provides development training for off-track teachers.

- **Provide Parent Education and Outreach Programs:**

Parent integration into the learning process is of paramount importance to student development, and Project ALL provides valuable programs that focus on family participation. We engage families in meaningful interactions through classes and events, providing tools to encourage creativity and focus on achievement, regardless of the language of instruction. Parents work with Project ALL staff to formulate and execute workshops, and Family Days provide a forum for parents and students to create an atmosphere and tradition of creative learning together.

- **Dissemination of models for fostering language development through the arts:**

Project ALL fosters language development through arts education, and seeks to widely disseminate program models demonstrating how arts integration into school curricula advances standards, expectations, and student performance levels. The arts-based instructional model advocates school and district reform, and demonstrably raises student performance in the areas of language acquisition, cognitive skills and mathematics. It advances reform in all three areas of the learning curriculum: the formal curriculum (subject-specific instruction in such areas as reading, writing, social science, math and science), the meta-curriculum (thinking skills, imagination, and oral and written expression), and the hidden curriculum (social behavior, self-motivation, self-esteem and social interaction).

Project ALL advances reform by meeting national education goals, while defining and integrating successful teaching methods that utilize arts education as a primary tool in achieving higher results in other educational areas.