

TRANSFORMING EDUCATION THROUGH THE ARTS CHALLENGE



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NEW STUDY OFFERS GOOD NEWS FOR ARTS EDUCATION

The Southeast Center for Education in the Arts is proud to announce the results of our five-year involvement in the *Transforming Education Through the Arts Challenge* (TETAC). This national project offers an integrated method of arts instruction that is successfully adaptable to schools across the country – rich or poor, urban, suburban or rural. The program not only ensures that students across the national learn more about the arts, but also teaches teachers to create effective new curricula that meet the pressing demands of existing regional and local instructional mandates.

The \$15 million study, *Transforming Education Through the Arts Challenge*, is part of the closely-watched Annenberg Challenge and received matching and additional funds from The J. Paul Getty Trust. TETAC served 25,175 students in eight states: California, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Nebraska, Ohio, Tennessee and Texas. Teachers in 35 participating schools received professional development services, technical support and the expertise of arts mentors to help them develop curricula using a multidisciplinary approach titled Comprehensive Arts Education.

The method, which blends the best lessons learned from past studies on both arts education and curricular reform, focuses on collaborative lesson planning across disciplines around an “enduring idea,” such as man’s relationship to an unpredictable natural world or the concept that material things reveal the history, beliefs and values of a people. Through workshops, site visits, university courses and mentoring, teachers developed the tools to fashion meaningful educational instruction in the arts that can be seamlessly integrated into other disciplines – enriching student understanding of the subject and meeting demanding curricular mandates at the same time.



The TETAC study includes a range of findings, all of which point to the effectiveness of the TETAC approach. Overall, schools able to incorporate the greatest number of TETAC elements into their programs saw the greatest rate of success in student learning. At these schools, fifth-graders, initially tested in third grade, showed an increase of as much as 42 points on an art assessment tool developed by the project. In the results of a survey about the impact of TETAC on their students, 84 percent of teachers reported that their students have increased motivation to learn and engage in

instructional activities; 86 percent stated that their students are able to make connections across different subject or content areas; and 79 percent believe their students express themselves through writing more effectively than students not taught using the TETAC approach.

The study also points to significant benefits for teachers. Schools able to implement the new program most fully saw a significant change in institutional culture. Among teachers participating in the pilot program, collaboration in instructional planning increased from 25 percent at the start of the project to 73.7 percent at the project's end. The teachers' use of community resources, such as museums, changed from 32.5 percent to 81.5 percent, and teachers who reported that they saw themselves as arts advocates grew from 50.3 percent, and teachers who reported that they saw themselves as arts advocates from 50.3 percent to 88.3 percent.



Teachers also stated that the professional development services they received prepared them well for sustaining the program after the pilot's end, with 93.6 percent of respondents expecting to use arts-integrated instruction in their classroom five years from the project's completion.

“In this period of high-stakes testing and a constantly shifting landscape of national and regional requirements, it has been harder than ever for American teachers to incorporate meaningful arts education into existing curricula,” comments Donald Killeen, director of the National Arts Education Consortium, which coordinated the study. “TETAC addresses the intense pressures facing our teachers by providing a flexible, adaptable approach to arts learning that can be successfully implemented in any learning environment and saves the arts from becoming marginalized in relation to other disciplines.”



The TETAC project was initiated by the National Arts Education Consortium, which comprised six regional associations in six states – California, Florida, Nebraska, Ohio, Tennessee and Texas. Since 1987, these organizations have worked collectively developing, testing and refining professional development and curriculum implementation programs to advance a comprehensive approach to arts education in the nation's public schools. The collective effort was designed to create and nurture networks of teachers, schools, districts, arts organizations and funders committed to arts education. The NAEC's main mission is to create school environments that ensure rigorous intellectual development in the arts for all students.

RESULTS

- TETAC significantly improved learning in the arts.
- TETAC proved successful in any learning environment – rich, poor, urban, suburban or rural.
- Schools that incorporated the greatest number of TETAC elements saw the greatest increase in student learning.
- Students who learned the most saw an increase of as much as 42 points when assessed.
- Collaboration among teachers increased almost 200 percent.
- Integration of the arts with other subjects increased to 81 percent.
- Use of museums and other resources jumped to 63 percent.
- Almost 90 percent of teachers saw themselves as arts education advocates by the project's end.
- TETAC can be incorporated into any curriculum and meet the goals of educational mandates.

The National Arts Education Consortium is comprised of six organizations:

- The Southeast Center for Education in the Arts
- The California Consortium for Arts Education
- The Florida Institute for Art Education
- Prairie Visions: The Nebraska Consortium for Arts Education
- The Ohio Partnership for the Visual Arts
- The North Texas Institute for Educators on the Visual Arts

The Southeast Center worked with 6 of the 35 schools engaged in the project:

- Lusher Alternative Elementary School, New Orleans, LA
- Mandeville Middle School, Mandeville, LA
- Mary Lin Elementary School, Atlanta, GA
- Browns Mill Elementary School & Magnet for High Achievers, Lithonia, GA
- Wallace A. Smith Elementary School, Chattanooga, TN
- West Side Magnet School, LaGrange, GA

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