

## **2005-2008 STUDY**

The following information is excerpted from the evaluation report, *Changing Education Through the Arts (CETA): Final Evaluation Report, 2005-2008* by George Mason University (GMU)<sup>1</sup>.

### **Introduction**

The Kennedy Center Education Department contracted with the College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) at George Mason University to evaluate the effectiveness of the Changing Education Through the Arts (CETA) program related to its stated goals and objectives. The overall effectiveness of CETA is examined from the perspectives of both the Kennedy Center and participating schools and districts. The Kennedy Center stakeholders are interested in assessing the degree to which the following two of its five program goals are being met: 1) affecting school change through arts integration and 2) developing the knowledge, skills, and beliefs among individual teachers to integrate the arts across the curriculum in order to enhance student learning. Special attention is directed to CETA's effect on teachers' classroom instructional practices, the school's culture, and on students' learning, performance, and progress. The collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data, including four case studies of selected schools, provides a holistic picture of CETA.

This evaluation examines ways in which teachers' understanding and implementation of arts integration techniques influence their pedagogical growth as a result of participating in the CETA program. Teachers' perceptions of the ways that CETA has influenced school culture are analyzed. The evaluation also looks at students as beneficiaries of their teachers' CETA professional development. Evaluators observed ways in which students were engaged in arts-integrated learning. Student understanding of both the arts and the non-arts content is analyzed.

### **Evaluation Design**

Information was gathered from different sources, using multiple methods of data collection and analysis: Document review, observation of professional development and classroom activities, individual interviews, focus group interviews, and on-line surveys. In-depth data were collected from four case study schools. Data from all teachers and administrators across the participating CETA schools were gathered through annual surveys. The evaluators observed CETA professional development courses and arts coaching to gain an understanding of the CETA professional development offerings and participants' experiences. Observations and interviews were conducted through the lens of the five themes identified in the early stages of the evaluation--support, engagement, growth, implementation, and culture.

### **Limitations**

A holistic approach was taken to this three-year evaluation of the CETA program. Data collection and analysis were conducted to portray the operating context of the CETA

program as a whole. While student test score data are included in this evaluation, they are not being used to imply cause or attribute academic effects to the CETA program. Scores were compiled at the school level and could not be disaggregated by individual teacher or by students. Quantitative and qualitative data were used as complementary sources and served to triangulate with and enrich one another.

## **Summary of Findings**

### Overview of Four Questions

Four questions were identified jointly by the Kennedy Center staff and the evaluation team at the outset of this three-year evaluation, which occurred from September 2005 – August 2008. The following questions guided instrument development, data collection, and data analysis/interpretation:

- 1) How are teachers' and administrators' attitudes, knowledge, and skills in integrating the arts changing as a result of their professional development experiences?
- 2) How do the changes in teachers' and administrators' attitudes, knowledge, and skills affect student work?
- 3) How effective is CETA in establishing and sustaining a collaborative school culture with a community of learners (i.e., teachers and administrators) focused on student learning through arts integration? What changes occur in the culture of each school as a result of CETA? How is each community of learners supported?
- 4) How effective is CETA as a program and how might it improve its effectiveness?

### Question 1

#### **How are teachers' and administrators' attitudes, knowledge, and skills in integrating the arts changing as a result of their professional development experiences?**

Data from all sources identified findings in two major areas:

- the recruitment of teachers into CETA and
- teachers' increased application and use of arts integration pedagogy.

#### Recruitment of Teachers

Each year that the CETA partnership is maintained, more teachers participate in arts-integrated professional development and grow in their knowledge and use of arts integration. Based on interview data from teachers, principals, and CETA school coordinators, each of the four case study schools began with a small group of teachers participating in CETA. Recruitment was often difficult for two reasons: the large time commitment required and teachers' lack of understanding of arts integration. However, as non-CETA teachers began to see what CETA teachers were doing in their classrooms, their interest was piqued. These four case study schools have reached a point where teachers are taking courses and voluntarily enrolling in CETA.

### Application and Use of Arts Integration Strategies

Change can also be seen in the way teachers apply and use CETA strategies. The longer teachers remain in CETA, participating in professional development courses, working with arts coaches and with study groups, the more arts integration becomes a part of their pedagogy. CETA has provided teachers with both the theoretical and practical knowledge needed to change their practice. As teachers grow in their comfort and ease with integrating the arts, applying CETA strategies becomes more natural and internalized. Survey data show that as teachers gain more exposure to arts-integrated teaching, through both professional development and their own implementation, they move from focusing upon the challenges of changing their pedagogy to include arts-integrated teaching to focusing upon the benefits of arts-integrated teaching on student learning. To illustrate, as one teacher states,

*“I originally thought that teaching through the arts was too time consuming. But I changed my mind when I saw my students going farther with the content through their arts-integrated experiences. I believe they are anchoring learning for life as a result.”*

During the final year of this evaluation, teachers spoke less of the struggle to master techniques and more about how CETA has inspired, renewed, and energized their practice.

*“CETA has re-energized me. I’m excited about my own learning in the CETA program and I try to carry that excitement back to the classroom to my students as I implement lessons.”*

Across all CETA schools, teachers range in their level of application from replication of specific activities to planning entire integrated units. Among the teachers surveyed, over 90 percent each year reported their comfort with replicating the arts integration techniques presented in professional development courses. The same proportion of teachers, over this evaluation period, responded that they were comfortable adapting or extending arts integration techniques taught during workshops. While some teachers integrate only when they see a natural fit or with an art form with which they are most comfortable, others integrate every day as a natural part of their practice. Although each school looks very different in its levels of use, implementation, and extension of arts integration techniques, all are using what has been learned through CETA.

### Question 2

**How do the changes in teachers’ and administrators’ attitudes, knowledge, and skills affect student work?**

#### Three Major Findings

Data from all sources identified three major findings:

- 1) Increased use of arts-integrated pedagogy has enabled students to demonstrate and express knowledge and understanding in multiple ways
- 2) An ability to reach more students from underrepresented populations, and
- 3) Positive students' dispositions toward learning.

Benefits for students drive these schools' commitment to an arts-integrated focus. Across all schools, both teachers and administrators report that repeated exposure to arts-integrated instruction has helped students to make connections between and among content areas, take risks in their learning, and show their knowledge in multiple ways. Survey data from 2008 alone show that 93 percent of the teachers use arts integration to address the variety of students' learning styles. CETA has provided teachers with the tools and ideas to reach all types of learners. As one teacher reports,

*"I have been given the resources to get students really involved in learning. They are able to demonstrate genuine learning, transfer across the curriculum, and enthusiasm for the subjects and techniques."*

These multiple ways of demonstrating understanding are of particular importance in schools like Kenmore Middle and Bailey's Elementary that serve high populations of students with limited English proficiency and special needs.

Arts-integrated instruction is particularly beneficial for students who might not be able to succeed or express themselves through traditional teaching methods. This finding is consistent across all data sources for the entire evaluation period. Teachers have learned that CETA strategies allow them to engage students' attention and interest and unlock the potential of those who might not otherwise be able to express their knowledge. Through arts-integrated instruction, teachers address a variety of learning styles and incorporate authentic assessments of children's deeper levels of understanding, unlike traditional assessment modes that often measure more superficial learning. Across all three years of this evaluation, more than 90 percent of the teacher survey respondents used arts integration most frequently to help students demonstrate understanding in different ways and to address a variety of learning styles.

According to teachers and principals, CETA strategies and arts-integrated instruction bring more than just the arts and content together in learning; they teach, facilitate, and reinforce personal dispositions. Teachers repeatedly spoke of the ways in which arts-integrated instruction engages students in learning, creates excitement, and adds depth to lessons. Through CETA lessons, teachers report, students have learned how to be team members and are more engaged in the learning process that helps them produce more depth in their work. As students demonstrate their knowledge through an art form, their confidence in their work increases, which often unlocks the potential of children who are reluctant, shy, or have low self-esteem.

### Question 3

**How effective is CETA in establishing and sustaining a collaborative school culture with a community of learners (i.e., teachers and administrators) focused on student learning through arts integration? What changes occur in the culture of each school as a result of CETA? How is each community of learners supported?**

#### A Common Goal

Results from interviews, observations, and surveys suggest that the CETA model has positively influenced school culture by bringing teachers together to share a common goal, one in which arts integration has become the focus. Collaboration, pedagogy, and student learning clearly emerged as key attributes of the CETA model.

#### Collaboration: “A Profound Change”

Across all data sources, increased collaboration among teachers was cited as the most profound change since joining CETA. Teachers report increased collaboration as important to their implementation of arts integration. More than half (58%) of the teachers in 2008 alone reported that collaboration with other teachers at the school was a critical resource. Through professional development courses, study groups, and professional learning communities, teachers work together and support one another in arts-integrated teaching across grade levels and content areas. The belief in, and commitment to, arts integration has excited, renewed, and engaged teachers as professionals, especially as they grow more comfortable with its implementation and realize its benefits.

#### Shared Beliefs

Arts integration was prominent across all CETA schools in this evaluation. Ninety-three percent of the teachers surveyed in 2008 reported that integrating the arts adds value to their repertoire of instructional strategies. At Bailey’s Elementary, Kenmore Middle, and Kensington Parkwood, a belief in arts integration permeates the culture. Teachers, both new and experienced, are changing their practice as they realize that arts integration is not “something extra.” Rather, it is a value-added way of delivering the curriculum. CETA has also helped to increase the collaboration between arts specialists and classroom teachers. As schools increase their implementation and use of CETA strategies, specialists are redefining their roles by moving from the periphery to becoming active team members who help in planning, modeling, and co-teaching school-based integrated lessons with teachers.

#### School Environment

The environments of the case study schools also reflect the ways in which the culture embraces arts integration. Student work is prominently displayed in classrooms, hallways, and common areas. In most cases, both the other content and the arts standards, along with a description of the process, are shown with the artifacts. These displays enable teachers to see what others are doing, which has led to increased collaboration. Displays also educate the community and visitors to the schools. All case study schools demonstrate a commitment to educating parents about arts-integrated instruction. Schools are gaining the support of the community through mini workshops for parents, arts

integration school nights, and opportunities for parents to participate in arts-integrated lessons with their children.

### Administrative Support

Administrative support of the CETA program has been integral to the successful implementation and transformation of the school culture related to arts-integrated teaching. Interview, observation, and survey data indicate that the amount of support provided is positively related to the participation, growth, and sustainability of the CETA program. Teachers and administrators across all sites acknowledge the importance of this support. Interviews and observations at case study sites provided more evidence of the power of positive administrative support. Principals who were vocal about their belief in arts-integrated teaching sent this message to teachers by participating in CETA courses, supporting teachers in their learning, and encouraging them to implement CETA strategies.

Each principal has worked to gather resources that include school district and grant-funded financial support as well as creating advocacy networks from various local and state-based educational organizations. Administrators have also arranged each school's organization to embrace arts integration by setting expectations for teacher participation, defining and articulating a vision for the schools' growth, and developing and implementing goals that deepen the level of arts-integrated teaching. Kensington Parkwood, Bailey's Elementary, and Hunters Woods have all undergone changes in principal leadership since the inception of the CETA program at those schools. Two of these leadership changes occurred during the time of this evaluation. Despite this change in leadership, each school has been able to sustain arts-integrated initiatives and, in fact, has expanded its participation in CETA.

### Arts Integration Resource Teacher

Data also revealed the importance of an arts integration resource teacher. Both teachers and principals report that such a person can promote arts integration as a school-wide focus and can help to bring a school to a higher level of application of CETA strategies. Three of the case study sites - Bailey's Elementary, Kensington Parkwood, and Kenmore Middle - have arts integration resource teachers (AIRT), a resource that has helped them reach a high level of arts integration. While the specific responsibilities of each position differ across sites, general similarities in this role are evident.

Across all data sources, the importance of this role is evident not only in providing support to the administration for program sustainability, but also in the ways that staff members feel supported by the AIRT. They co-teach, model, and help plan arts-integrated lessons across grade levels, which increases teachers' exposure, use, beliefs, and knowledge. This role is especially evident at Bailey's Elementary, where the arts integration resource teacher spends the majority of her time working with teachers to plan and implement lessons.

### Administrative Support

While most teachers believe that their principals support their teaching, others believe that a lack of encouragement for the CETA program has led to tensions in the school as illustrated in the following quote. *“I don’t think that the administrators really have a clue how good many of us have gotten at arts integration. We do not get the credit that I think we are due for... taking risks to integrate [the arts] into our core classes.”*

Additionally, some administrators have used designated study group or collaboration times to schedule school meetings, sending the message to teachers that *“this is not as important.”* Over the three years of the survey, few of principals and assistant principals selected study group meetings as one of the most important professional development activities for successful implementation of arts integration. These examples demonstrate the importance of principals’ support for CETA, even in the unintended negative messages they may send.

### Question 4

#### **How effective is CETA as a program and how might it improve its effectiveness?**

#### “Professional” Professional Development

The structure of the CETA model is integral to its success in schools. Teachers are drawn to the CETA program and maintain their participation because it is one of the few professional development models that treat them as “professionals,” they report. Professional development courses meet during the school day throughout the school year, which allows teachers to learn during school hours, making participation easier than adding to after-school or week-end obligations. CETA also provides teachers with numerous research-based ideas, resources, and support that allow them to try out activities the very next day or to build upon existing knowledge and extend lessons. Materials provided by the Kennedy Center help teachers to implement a lesson and immediately see exactly how workshop leaders use them in instruction. These materials also facilitate classroom instruction because teachers do not have to create them or find them on their own. By teaching courses throughout the year, learning is kept *“on the front burner”* unlike other professional development courses that meet only once or over the summer months.

#### Arts Coaching

Many teachers report that arts coaching is a fundamental aspect of the CETA program. Arts coaches support teachers throughout the year by observing classes, modeling and co-teaching lessons, and helping teachers to plan integrated units. Knowing that an arts coach will be supporting them throughout the year helps teachers to integrate, refine, change, and grow. Teachers report that because arts coaches get to know teachers and their students, they are able to understand when teachers need to be pushed, helped, or directed to other resources in the school.

#### Study Groups

CETA study groups keep learning about arts integration by bringing teachers together in a small group setting to collaborate, support, and learn from one another about specific

arts topics. Teachers feel supported by their colleagues and use study groups to plan and reflect on integrated lessons.

#### Arts Integration Resource Teacher

An arts integration resource teacher (AIRT), or similar role, can be an avenue to arts integration as a school-wide focus and can help a school move to a higher level of implementation of CETA strategies. Because the AIRT position is unique to three of the case study schools, Hunters Woods is more representative of a typical CETA school, where a classroom teacher takes the responsibility of CETA coordinator to organize the professional development courses, arts coaching visits, study groups, and collection and management of assignments. While most schools do not have access to an AIRT, teachers continue to grow and develop in their understanding and use of arts integration. However, based on the data collected, it is possible that having an AIRT on-site leads to greater implementation, sustainability, and growth of the CETA program in a school. Survey responses across all CETA schools also reveal that most teachers believe that having an AIRT in their school would help the growth of the program by providing additional support for teachers. Because teachers in all CETA schools are familiar with the AIRTs through CETA workshops, they have a sense of how this type of role would enable their schools to attain higher levels of arts-integrated instruction.

#### Relationships with Parents

Teachers surveyed were unsure of CETA's influence on their relationships with parents. The majority of teachers who responded to the survey remains undecided or does not see a positive effect of CETA on their relationships with parents. However, across the case study schools, an improved relationship between teachers and parents is apparent. At these schools, the approach to relationships with parents has shifted from showing a final product to including parents in the process of creating those products. This shift in approach to arts integration with parents has become more institutionalized in the schools as more teachers continue or extend their involvement in CETA. Making sure that parents understand the process behind the product is important for all the schools as they continue to modify performances and celebrations to include parental learning.

#### Sustainability

All case study schools are exploring ways to become more independent in order to sustain and develop their schools' arts integration programs. Administrators are interested in using the skills and leadership of experienced CETA teachers as resources for professional development so that training can occur more often at the school level. Both administrators and arts integration resource teachers are interested in bringing local community resources into the schools to extend the arts programs and arts-integrated instructional opportunities (e.g., artists-in-residence, local artists, other arts partnerships). Many teachers have reached a level of independence in arts-integrated instruction after years of participating in CETA professional development, and are now able to design and implement lessons on their own. When teachers reach this point, they rely on one another, rather than course instructors or arts coaches, for new ideas, support, and feedback.



**In summary, data across all sources during this three-year evaluation period suggest findings in four areas.**

- First, there was evidence of change in teachers' and administrators' attitudes, knowledge, and skills as they relate to recruitment of teachers for the CETA program and how teachers applied and used arts-integration pedagogy.
- Second, data indicated that changes in teachers' and administrators' attitudes, knowledge, and skills have affected student work through increased use of arts-integrated pedagogy that has enabled students to demonstrate and express knowledge and understanding in multiple ways; an ability to reach more students from underrepresented populations; and positive students' dispositions toward learning.
- Third, across all data sources, collaboration, the school environment, and increased attention to parent education were among the major changes in school culture.
- And finally, all sources of evidence support the structure of CETA as being integral to its effectiveness in the schools

---

<sup>1</sup> *Changing Education Through the Arts: Final Evaluation Report, 2005-2008*

Prepared by Joan Isenberg, Professor and Associate Dean, and Jennifer McCreadie, Director, Assessment and Program Evaluation, with Jennifer Durham and Bernadine Pearson, Graduate Research Assistants, George Mason University, College of Education and Human Development, Fairfax, VA April 13, 2009.