



# Program Evaluation Report 2007–2008

Prepared by Mary Murray, MEM Consultants





## **Letter from the Executive Director**

This report represents the culmination of Arts Corps' evaluation work during the 2007-2008 program year. I am pleased to present the results from our program evaluation, focusing on three key goals: expanding access to arts programming, providing quality arts classes and fostering creative habits of mind in youth participants. Arts Corps has conducted rigorous program evaluation since inception and have refined our focus each year to better explore and describe the impacts of arts classes on students.

Our evaluation process extends through the year, engaging multiple constituencies in examining the merits of our arts programs and providing quantitative information regarding our ability to reach students with limited opportunities for arts education. Our results represent a cross-section of viewpoints from these different constituencies: students, teaching artists, classroom assistants and program partners. Middle and high school students fill out pre- and post-class surveys with questions about class quality and the creative habits of mind that students practice in an arts classroom. Additionally, we piloted a program of pre- and post-class focus groups with elementary school students seeking to explore their understanding of their art form and their ability to practice creative habits of mind. Teaching artists, meanwhile, completed surveys with questions about how their classes functioned, how they taught various creative habits in their classes and what behaviors students exhibited. Program partners were interviewed about their perception of class and teaching artist quality as well as the effect of classes on students' creative capacities. They also provided demographic information on the young people they serve.

These surveys and interviews provide us a wealth of information regarding our classes, helping us both to continue to develop our program around the core goal of fostering creative habits of mind in youth participants and to showcase the unique and powerful process students experience in the arts classroom. As Arts Corps moves forward and engages broader audiences as advocates for arts education, we will continue making sure our programs demonstrate the power of quality arts learning as a necessary element in the education of all young people.

Sincerely,

**Elizabeth Whitford**  
**Executive Director**

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## **Executive Summary**

### **Access to Arts Education**

Arts Corps continued to expand access to arts education, bringing classes to youth who often have no other opportunities to take arts classes. More students were served in more classes with more program partners than in past years, exceeding annual targets. Overall attendance was better than past years and met the target of 70%. Most enrollments were in classes that met for fewer than 16 hours per quarter, in part because of the large number of enrollments in workshops, special projects and residencies. Most classes in our core after-school program met for more than 16 hours per quarter.

Arts Corps continues to provide classes at partner sites with few or no other arts programs; 40% of program partners reported that the youth they serve have few or no other arts classes available to them. Similarly, the organization continued to work primarily with partners serving low-income students; 79% of partners had student populations with at least 60% being eligible for free or reduced-price lunches, a standard measure of living below or near the poverty line.

### **Class and Teaching Artist Quality**

Survey questions about the quality of Arts Corps' programming continue to receive overwhelmingly positive feedback, with slight increases over last year in most indicators. In particular, surveys reveal that youth have very high regard for the abilities of teaching artists, while program partners say that teaching artists provide challenging, engaging lessons for their students.

### **Artistic Competencies and Artistic Expression**

As in previous years, indicators suggest that Arts Corps classes and teaching artists have had a high degree of success in fostering youth artistic competencies. In general, responses to end-of-year survey questions have been consistently positive over time, though this year saw a large increase in the number who strongly agree with the statement "I know what my unique talents are when I make art" when compared to last year.

### **Creative Habits of Mind**

Matched pre- and post-class surveys revealed consistent, statistically significant increases in 10 out of 10 indicators of creative habits - an improvement over last year's results. Of the five creative habits of mind upon which Arts Corps' evaluation efforts focus, *imagining possibilities* is the habit that most teaching artists report focusing on and that elementary school students were most likely to spontaneously discuss in a focus group.

# **Expanding Access to Arts Education**

## **Introduction**

Arts Corps recognizes that there are significant structural barriers to arts learning in our schools, driven by funding shortfalls and the increasing focus on standardized tests such as the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL). These barriers are particularly prominent in low-income communities and communities of color as a result of the inequities created by a funding system that forces schools to rely on parent-teacher-student associations for any programming beyond the bare minimum required by law.

Arts Corps seeks to redress this inequity by increasing access to arts programming, delivering the vast majority of our classes at program partner sites that serve primarily low-income students. This allows Arts Corps to provide arts learning experiences to youth who would not otherwise have access to the power of arts. Arts Corps also seeks to expose more youth overall to the power of the arts, through increasing the scope of our arts programs. Through these efforts, student enrollments increased 28 % in 2007-2008 over the previous year.

Arts Corps selects a wide range of data on the students they serve from a variety of sources, including program partner demographics, attendance and student and program partner surveys. These combine to provide a clear profile of the students worked with, helping them to measure progress in expanding access to arts programming.

## **Demographic Information**

In the 2007-2008 school year, Arts Corps served more students in more classes at more locations. While total contact hours with students also grew, the average per student contact time decreased with the addition of one-time workshops as a new program type.

- Arts Corps partnered with 41 sites this year, up from 37 last year.
- Arts Corps provided 202 classes this school year and an additional 19 during the summer of 2007 for a total of 221, compared to 172 last year.
- 2705 unique students were served by Arts Corps during the 2007-2008 year. This represents a 50% increase from the previous year (1785 unique students). This is well above the target for the year, which was 1874.
- There were 3296 distinct enrollments in quarterly classes during the school year, and an additional 276 during the summer of 2007. Total annual enrollment, 3572, represents a 28% increase over last year (2785 enrollments). This also exceeds the yearly target of 3003 enrollments.
- Approximately 39% of students enrolled in two or more Arts Corps classes during this year, up from 35% last year.

## Class Length, Enrollments and Attendance by Class Type

- The median and average class length was 10 hours.
- Overall attendance ratio: 70.5%

### After-school classes

- 1601 enrollments
- The typical (median) student was in a class that met for 16 hours while the average total hours per class was 17.
- Overall attendance ratio was 66%
- 71% attended at least half of the classes
- The average enrollment received 11 contact hours per class (this does not reflect the aggregated hours of unique students who enrolled multiple times).

### In-school residencies

- 774 enrollments
- The typical (median) student was in a course that met for six hours total, and the average 'total hours' per class was also six .
- Overall attendance ratio was 81%
- 82% attended at least half of the classes
- The average enrollment received four contact hours per class (this does not reflect the aggregated hours of unique students who enrolled multiple times).

### Summer classes

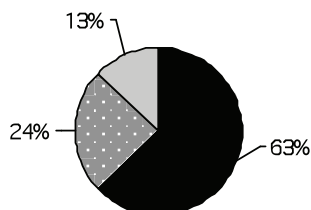
- 276 enrollments (186 in out-of-school programs and 90 in workshops)
- The typical (median) student was in a class that met for 12 hours while the average 'total hours' per class was 11.
- Overall attendance ratio was 77%
- 85% attended at least half of the classes
- The average enrollment received nine contact hours per class (this does not reflect the aggregated hours of unique students who enrolled multiple times).

### Workshops and special programs

- 523 enrollments in workshops and 469 in special programs during the school year
- Both met for one to two hours, with the average 'total hours' per class at 1.3.
- By definition, workshops and special projects have 100% attendance

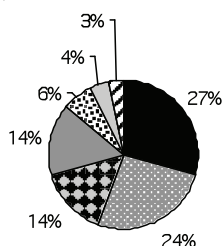
Number of Classes by Class Type

■ After School Programs  
 ■ In School Residencies  
 ■ Workshops and Special Projects



Enrollments by Art Form

■ Dance (30% )  
 ■ Visual Art (29% )  
 ■ Music (15% )  
 ■ Poetry/Spoken Word (14% )  
 ■ Interdisciplinary (8% )  
 ■ Theatre Arts (6% )  
 ■ Digital Media (3% )



- The average enrollment received one contact hour per class (this does not reflect the aggregated hours of unique students who enrolled multiple times).

### **Reaching Underserved Students**

- 15% of middle and high school students report their Arts Corps class as their first art class they have taken of any kind.
- 40% of program partners report that Arts Corps provides the only arts classes available to the vast majority of their students.
- 79% of school year classes were held at partner sites with at least 60% of their students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, a standard measure of living below or near the poverty line.

Eighty percent of partners reported on the demographic breakdowns of their student populations. The following overall averages were derived from these reports:

- 67% of the student populations served are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

### **Race/Ethnicity of Youth at Partner Sites**

African American	33%
Asian	27%
Caucasian	21%
Hispanic	17%
Native American/Alaskan	2%



# Class Quality

## Introduction

Arts Corps is committed to providing the best classes possible to students, giving them artistic experiences that engage and challenge them. Students come to arts classes because they provide the opportunity to learn new artistic skills in a safe environment, and Arts Corps constantly works to ensure that our classes provide this. Arts Corps asks students a range of questions regarding their experience in the class. Program partners are asked whether the class meets their expectations and to describe how Arts Corps classes impact students.

## Student End-of-Class Surveys

Four questions on the student survey addressed qualities of the class itself.

This Class...	Almost Always and Very Much or Often (combined)
Challenged me to be a better artist	80.5%
Encouraged us to work together in a team	84%
Was a safe place to try new things	91.7 %
Was a psitive experience	95.2%

## Program Partner Surveys

Partners were asked to rate the overall quality of Arts Corps classes.

	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Needs Improvement
Please rate the overall quality of the Arts Corps classes at your facility	50%	50%	0%

Partners were asked specific open-ended questions about Art Corps' impact on increasing artistic competency, fostering personal expression through art and fostering creative habits. Additionally, they were asked: "In what other ways did you see Arts Corps impacting the students it serves?" Responses to this question clustered into the following themes. Example comments representative of each theme are provided.

## Exposure to Art

Partner sites were pleased with the opportunities for youth to do art and be exposed to new experiences.

- "Arts Corps classes broaden their mind to a spectrum of what art really is."
- "Kids may not have been exposed to ceramics if there had been no Arts Corps class."

## Role Model/Relationships

Several of the sites noted the positive relationships built between the students and teaching artists, as well as the important role model position the teaching artists played for many of these youth.

- "[This teaching artist] was a positive male role model. It is important for kids this age to have adult role models of each gender."
- "Students thrive on positive relationships. Teaching artists are positive role models and kids are excited when they are coming and sad when they are not here."

- “Teachers are positive role models. (They) help culturally balance staff, (thus) portraying all cultures to students.
- *(This teaching artist) being himself, is a great role model – a caring person with a passion to share his work.”*

## Other Skills and Habits

Several sites noted that Arts Corps taught life skills or creative habits not explicitly named during the interview.

- “Students were impacted by the power of working together as a group and what they can do as a group that is greater than the individual underlying every class. They were all part of something pulling them together. It was very powerful, positive. It reaches out into other areas of a person’s character in a concrete way.”
- “The music group learned how to coordinate with each other. Polyrhythm takes collaboration; holding your own beat but it has to fit; a complex kind of collaboration.”
- “[This teaching artist] teaches the respect of other people’s opinion and what they’re doing and what they’re capable of - so many times kids don’t see that in other kids. He says, “When someone is acting, come on, respect when someone’s on, your fellow actor;” and they rise to the occasion. It’s nice to see.”
- “It’s good academically. They learn dance moves and beats. It’s good for left brain-right brain, and they gain a new confidence level.”

# Teaching Artist Quality

## Introduction

Teaching artists are the core of Arts Corps' classes, as each class relies on the individual talents and enthusiasm of the teaching artist. Because of their key position, Arts Corps places an emphasis on developing teaching artists' skills through regular professional development workshops and a mentorship program through which experienced teaching artists provide support to new members of the faculty. Similarly, program evaluation provides insight on the strengths of our teaching artists and is used to develop professional development opportunities we provide. Students and program partners responded to several questions gauging the abilities of teaching artists to foster a compelling class dynamic.

## Student End-of-Class Surveys

Four questions addressed qualities of the teaching artist.

My teaching artist...	Almost Always and Very Much or Often Combined
Inspired me to take creative risks	88.4%
Made me feel included	92.6%
Gave me personal attention	84%
Was an excellent teacher	96.6%

This survey also asked open-ended questions including: "What were the things you liked best about this class?" and "Is there anything else you want to tell us about this class?" Some students used this as a chance to praise their teaching artist:

- "(This teaching artist) was very positive."
- "The teacher was cool and I learned how to dance."
- "We have the best encouraging teacher."
- "This class is a class that can get you motivated."

## Partner Program Surveys

Partners were asked to rate each teaching artist they worked with on nine factors. Forty-seven responses were received (if a teaching artist worked at multiple sites, they were rated multiple times).

This teaching artist...	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Challenges students to learn	87%	13%	0%	0%
Engages all students	85%	15%	0%	0%
Prepares for class	78%	22%	0%	0%
Provides personal attention	78%	20%	0%	2%
Delivers an effective lesson	78%	20%	0%	2%
Engages students in teamwork and cooperation	77%	21%	0%	2%
Plays an important role in each students education	73%	24%	2%	0%
Arrives on time	67%	33%	0%	0%
Handles misbehavior appropriately	64%	33%	2%	2%

Partner program representatives were also asked: What else would you like us to know about this teaching artist? Responses to this question clustered into the following themes. Example comments representative of each theme are provided.

## **General Praise**

Many partner sites indicate satisfaction and pleasure with the teaching artist's teaching style and ability to handle a classroom of kids.

- "I received excellent feedback from all the teachers whose students participated in her class. Good management and engagement of students."
- "Very creative with students...worked to engage them in storytelling, to turn books into play. She worked ways into lessons to engage all learning styles. I was very happy with how she made class work and successful. Kids felt they succeeded."
- "He handles class with professionalism - works well with teachers, students and parents. He has a very easy demeanor, doesn't put people on guard if he has to talk about something sensitive. He overflows with energy and enthusiasm. Students are very excited to be in class. He made it fun to learn. He has an amazing ability to engage. Even staff/parents were drawn into an impromptu skit."

## **Connection with Youth**

Slightly different from the theme above, some comments focused on the teaching artist's ability to connect and work well with the youth in their classes.

- "She's very knowledgeable in regards to what works well in each program (boys-teens, girls-teens, children's), given her long history here. She's caring, nice and has genuine concern for each kid."
- "Wonderful. Kids are open to her - they can talk to her, they are respectful of her and they enjoy what she's teaching them. "
- "Both [of these teaching artists'] work is special. The way they interact with the kids is so positive. They also dealt with challenges in a positive way. (For example: we had a situation in which student stole a cell phone. The teaching artists were strict but positive - they treated it as a wrong behavior choice and not the child who was wrong). They have great patience and genuinely like the students."

## **Flexibility/Adaptability**

Several partners commented on the teaching artist's willingness to be flexible when necessary to best serve the students.

- "(The teaching artist) was interested in learning about and working with this population of youth, and adapted to add more structure to the class when needed."
- "Very flexible. Worked with the most difficult child in our program and handled it extremely well. Works well with challenging students."
- "(This teaching artist) had to adjust his class to meet our needs. (The censors were coming off the windows when kids were drumming, which posed a security risk.) But he was able to incorporate other activities into his lesson, which worked for him and for us."

He pays attention to what kids are saying and incorporates their thoughts and ideas."

## **Communication**

Several partners commented on the teaching artist's open, proactive communication.

- "We had struggles with class numbers and [this teaching artist] was willing to work on a solution. Met once per week and worked extra days for Showcase."
- "[This teaching artist] calls ahead of time to see how many kids are coming, so she knows how many materials to bring and how to structure her lesson for that day."

# Artistic Competencies

## Introduction

While arts learning fosters a wide range of creative behaviors that students take out into their lives outside of the arts class, it is also important that students learn the fundamentals of the art form being studied. Students come out of Arts Corps classes well versed in the art form they have learned, in terms of ability to apply artistic techniques, understanding of artistic concepts and vocabulary, knowledge of the history and cultural context of the art form and understanding of the criteria for what constitutes a good artistic creation. Arts Corps asks students to respond to questions about their knowledge of techniques and concepts related to the art form and program partners to judge the success of teaching artists in fostering artistic skills. Meanwhile, teaching artists are asked to gauge their focus on enhancing students' artistic skills in their classes.

## Student Surveys

Three questions directly addressed artistic competencies.

Because of this art class...	Almost Always and Very Much or Often combined
I know concepts and vocabulary related to art	80.8%
I can use new skills and techniques	91.3%
I recognize when art is well done	91.9%

## Teaching Artist Surveys

Teaching artists were asked how much they focused on "Fostering artistic competencies [skills, knowledge] among students" when delivering their classes.

My biggest priority [4]/Consistently a big focus [3]	Quite a bit [2]	Somewhat [1]	Not at all
47%	50%	3%	0%

## Partner Program Surveys

Partners were asked, "Arts Corps works to increase skills and competencies related to art. How successful were we at this site in increasing art skills?"

Very successful	Generally successful	A little successful	Not at all successful
54%	38%	8%	0%

# Expression Through Art

## Introduction

Student self-expression through art is consistently identified by parents, students, teaching artists and program partners as among the most important effects of arts classes. These diverse constituencies have repeatedly emphasized the importance of a creative outlet for students to express their ideas and feelings. Arts Corps' classes help students discover ways to articulate the way they think and feel, while also encouraging them to develop aesthetic sensitivity to the link between artwork and everyday experience. Students are given the chance to demonstrate their developing artistic skills at each year's Student Showcases, a performance and exhibition at the end of winter quarter.

Program evaluation efforts also seek to judge students' perception of their artistic growth through their classes. Arts Corps asked students to respond to questions about how their class has helped them express ideas and feeling and gauges their confidence in their talents as artists, while program partners are asked to judge the success of teaching artists in fostering student self-expression. Teaching artists were asked to measure how much emphasis they place on student self-expression in their classes.

## End-of-Class Student Surveys

Two questions addressed artistic expression.

Because of this art class...	Almost Always and Very Much or Often Combined
I can express my ideas and feelings through art	88%
I know what my unique talents are when I make art	87.9%

## Elementary School Student Focus Groups

In both the pre- and post-focus groups, students were asked how they can show their feelings when they dance, sing, paint or draw. Appropriate follow up questions were also asked.

In both the pre- and post-focus group, the primary theme of this discussion was around using colors to express feelings:

- **Pre-class:** *"If I were sad I would draw a really bluish with different designs of a painting and if I were happy I would make it sunny and show how I feel inside, not just like smiley face. I would show how I feel inside maybe by drawing or color."*
- **Post-class:** *"When I am mad and drawing it turns into a big black scribble. The black is my future."*

The second theme of these discussions was around singing songs that express feeling.

- **Pre-class:** *"When you are sad you sing the blues."*
- **Post-class:** *"I sing a song!" Student then sings a happy song while other student sings a sad version of the same song.*

There was no apparent difference in their understanding of how to use art to express feelings before and after the class.

## Teaching Artist Surveys

Teaching artists were asked, “When delivering your classes, how much did you focus on ‘Encouraging students to use art to share ideas and feelings’?”

My biggest priority [4]/Consistently a big focus [3]	Quite a bit [2]	Somewhat [1]	Not at all
51%	34%	14%	0%

## Partner Program Surveys

Partners were asked, “Arts Corps encourages students to express their ideas and feelings through art. How successful do you think we were at this?”

Very successful	Generally successful	A little successful	Not at all successful
46%	38%	8%	8%



# Creative Habits of Mind

## Introduction

Arts Corps has always been committed to exploring the ways in which arts classes impact the students who take them. As Arts Corps has refined its thinking over the years, it has become steadily more focused on the role of arts education in developing creative habits of mind in youth participants such as imagining possibilities, critical thinking, persistence & discipline, courage & risk-taking and reflection. Students in arts classes do not merely apply artistic techniques, they are asked to conceive of imaginative possibilities and respond to new ideas; to solve problems creatively and examine ideas thoroughly; to work outside of comfort zones and tolerate ambiguity; to recognize what is distinctive about themselves and their work; and to develop mental and physical discipline that allows them to concentrate and persist in their work. These skills stay with them beyond their arts classes, giving them the tools to engage creatively with whatever tasks and challenges come their way.

Arts Corps asked students to self-report prior to and at the end of their classes with Arts Corps on the behaviors relating to these creative habits of mind that they utilize. Teaching artists and classroom assistants were asked to judge their capacity to give students space to practice a wide range of creative habits, while program partners were asked to identify creative habits of mind that they have witnessed students practicing.

## Student Survey – Matched Pre- and -Post

Students completed the same 11 questions on a pre-survey and again on a post-survey. Changes in their matched responses are shown in the table on the next page. Creative habits were measured by two questions each, as follows:

Creative Habit	Question #1	Question #2
Imagining Possibilities	I can come up with lots of ideas.	I like to imagine new ways to do things.
Critical Thinking	I can solve problems.	I think before making a decision.
Persistence & Discipline	I don't give up easily.	I work at something until I get better.
Courage & Risk-taking	I try things even when I might fail.	I don't hold back, even when something is new.
Reflection	I like to find ways to do a better job.	I know when I have done a good job.



## Changes in Students' Practice of Creative Habits of Mind

Survey Indicators:

- 4 = this describes me exactly
- 3 = this describes me somewhat
- 2 = this describes me a little bit
- 1 = this does not describe me at all

*Paired sample t-tests were used to determine the probability that the difference between each pre-survey mean and the post-survey mean was caused by chance (rather than caused by Arts Corps classes as hypothesized). It is customary to say that if the significance level is <.05, that difference is "statistically significant," or likely not caused by chance. If the probability is more than .05 but <.1, it is customary to say there is a "trend" suggesting a difference between the two means that is likely not caused by chance.*

**\*\* indicates a statistically significant difference.**

**\* indicates a trend.**

## Elementary School Student Focus Groups

The focus group was designed to primarily address creative habits, and most of the discussion centered around creativity and the practices of artists generally.

One theme that emerged is related to “imagining possibilities.” In both the pre- and post-class focus groups, the students define creativity as involving a good deal of imagining.

### Pre-Class

- *“Make up something, imagine something and then do it.”*
- *“You know what artists do? They make up things. They just make something up. They are like, ‘I am imagining something.’”*

### Post-Class

- *“Imagining is creativity.”*
- *“Imagine it in your mind first, then get the stuff to do it.”*
- *“To invent something new, you would need to get a crew and imagine what you see inside and what to create. They need the supplies and materials to make something.”*

Another theme is related to “persistence & discipline.” In both the pre- and post-focus groups, the students bring up practice as relevant. They are more elaborate in their descriptions of what persistence & discipline requires in the post-focus group.

### Pre-Class

- *“They get good by practice.”*
- *“They get good by doing it a lot.”*

### Post-Class

- *“You have to practice.”*
- *“Artists have to start all over, dancers mess up, they trip. They get up and drink water and try again.”*
- *“When I mess up lyrics....I start all over. When I make a mistake, I want to try again and see if I get it right this time.”*

A third theme is related to “reflection.” In both the pre- and post-focus groups, the students bring up thinking as relevant to art-making. They are more elaborate in their descriptions of what kind of thinking is required in the post-focus group.

### Pre-Class

- *“Artists are good at drawing. They could be good at thinking.”*

### Post-Class

- *“First do a lot of thinking, ask for help and focus: ‘What do you want it to be like? What do you want this song to be about?’”*
- *“Artists have to think about what to paint and do, think of the notes they want to make.”*
- *“They think, they go through really hard work and they feel proud of all they’ve done. They feel proud they didn’t throw a tantrum when frustrated.”*

## Teaching Artist Surveys

Teaching artists were asked how often they encouraged students to practice creative habits when delivering their classes.

My biggest priority [4]/Consistently a big focus [3]	Quite a bit [2]	Somewhat [1]	Not at all
69%	26%	6%	0%

Teaching artists were also asked how often they provided opportunities for students to practice each creative habit.

	Almost always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely
Imagining Possibilities	74%	24%	3%	0%
Critical Thinking	45%	36%	15%	3%
Courage & Risk-taking	56%	26%	18%	0%
Persistence & Discipline	42%	36%	18%	3%
Reflection	53%	29%	12%	6%

## Partner Program Surveys

Program partners were asked to give examples of students practicing the five creative habits that stood out to them. The preponderance of comments related to imagining possibilities or courage & risk-taking. A few comments were related to critical thinking or persistence & discipline, while none addressed reflection.

## Teaching Artist Focus Groups

The focus group was designed to primarily address creative habits, although themes around classroom climate emerged. Teaching artists reported that each of the five creative habits resonate for some or many of them. Comments that can be classified as “imagining possibilities” came up most frequently.

Some teaching artists expressed confusion around the difference between critical thinking and reflection as well as a belief that they should be merged into one category.

Teaching artists also brought up other habits beyond the five that are particularly important to them. Teamwork is a primary focus for many, but not all, teaching artists. Expression through art is also important to the teaching artists and came up in conversation even though it was not explicitly brought up in the questions.

## **Lessons Learned and Next Steps**

Arts Corps' program evaluation for the 2007-2008 school year reveals a range of positive results as well as some areas for improvement. In particular, there is an opportunity for Arts Corps to boost student attendance and maximize the impact of its classes. While this year saw a relative improvement with an overall attendance ratio of 70.5%, this remains below the optimal level. To a degree, this ratio represents some of the structural challenges facing Arts Corps' program model. Because most classes operate through after-school programs where attendance is not compulsory, attendance can fluctuate based on tutoring mandates, competing after-school academic sessions and seasonal sports programs. Arts Corps staff will work with program partners to identify ways minimize the impact of scheduling conflicts on students' participation in Arts Corps classes.

Additionally, the organization has not tracked "drops" with students who come to only one class session; thus, students who came at the beginning of the quarter and then did not attend afterwards have been counted against the overall attendance ratio even though they have — for all intents and purposes — dropped the class. To remedy this phenomenon, Arts Corps has implemented a policy for the 2008-2009 school year that students who come to two or fewer sessions should be considered to have dropped the class and will not count against the class attendance ratio. Most importantly, Arts Corps will continue to focus on and improve its recruitment efforts, as bringing more students to each class more frequently will support the organization's goal of expanding access to arts programming in a cost-effective manner. Arts Corps will review attendance records and policies of similar out-of-school arts programs to identify useful benchmarks to gauge student participation. With a clearer attendance picture, program staff can make more informed decisions about which classes to phase out in favor of wait list classes.

Interviews with program partners and teaching artist surveys made clear that Arts Corps' in-school offerings in the form of residencies presented challenges. Residencies have typically involved placing a teaching artist at a school for around 16 hours over the duration of two months; however, the organization allowed schools to schedule the teaching artists' contact with students. Because of this, some schools had teaching artists work with numerous different classes for a very limited amount of time. Teaching artists noted that this made it difficult to develop a rapport with students and to create complex lesson plans that fostered student learning at a high level over time. Arts Corps has now instituted a policy that teaching artists in residencies must have at least five hours of contact time with each class in which they work.

During interviews and focus groups overall, teaching artists brought up classroom management as a consistent class issue, including how to handle student misbehavior. Arts Corps staff will continue to provide classroom management training to new teaching artists, as well as refresher courses for seasoned teaching artists, focusing on handling disruptive students in class. A new behavior management training will also be implemented for classroom assistants. New teaching artists will continue to be supported through mentorships, further assisting with problem solving in the classroom.

Program evaluation for the 2008-2009 program year is continuing along the same general outline as the past year, with some minor procedural shifts and additions. Now, rather than having each student in middle and high school classes fill out pre- and post-class surveys at the beginning and end of each quarter, Arts Corps will ask each student to fill out only one pre-class survey at the start of their first quarter of class, and a post-class survey at the end of each quarter. This will provide a more coherent

chronological picture of student growth through their arts classes. Survey results and feedback will be shared with Arts Corps program staff earlier in the evaluation process to allow more time for planning. Additionally, Arts Corps will develop quarterly evaluation reports to share with program staff, teaching artists and program partners earlier in the evaluation process so that findings and recommendations can be gathered and applied later in the program year, rather than the following year. To enrich evaluation responses from younger participants, the organization also hopes to add two more elementary-age focus groups.

In an effort to better understand the processes and benefits of learning through the arts, Arts Corps is piloting a documentation project that will focus on three classes at the elementary and middle school level. Teaching artists and classroom assistants will work together to document the artistic work students create in these classes throughout the year and capture student learning through photographs, audio and video. Other project observers will collect lesson plans and study the teaching artist-student interaction and conduct interviews throughout the year. In an effort to shed light on the value of reflective learning practices, which include peer evaluation and collaborative learning environments, observers will record student-to-student and teaching artist-to-teaching artist interviews about the art-making process. Detailed teaching artist journal entries of day-to-day learning will also contribute to this evaluation. In the end, the project, titled "Concentric Conversations" in reference to the mutual learning between students, teaching artists and classroom assistants, will result in a thorough and tangible narrative of student-centered learning reflecting the change students undergo through the unique processes of arts learning. This documentation will serve as a strong companion piece to the quantitative and qualitative evidence from Arts Corps' regular program evaluation. In addition, Arts Corps will share this valuable evidence of student learning with families, teaching artists and schools, contributing more insight to the field of arts education.

Through these steps, Arts Corps will continue to take a leadership role in our field by using evaluation as a tool to more precisely and thoroughly understand the impacts of arts classes and to communicate these impacts to funders, schools, parents and elected officials.