

Music Center National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) ACT III Program

Year End Evaluation Report
July 2008

Submitted to:



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Introduction

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) ACT III program in Los Angeles County is a multi-year partnership between the Music Center and seven elementary schools. The program is comprised of a five-day summer intensive training Institute for teams of elementary school teachers and their administrators, follow-up support from Teaching Artists (TAs), provision of school program resources, leadership support for principals, teacher involvement at Saturday workshops, and project-wide Reconvenings during which participants share their processes, challenges, and successes.

After training at the summer Institute, participating teachers were expected to develop a Project Plan to implement an anchor work lesson series with their students. As they implement the lessons, teachers receive support from Teaching Artists (TAs) who work with them and with students in the classroom. The type of support offered by the TAs has varied across program years; in the first year, TAs primarily *observed* teachers as they implemented their Project Plans, and offered feedback. During subsequent program years, however, TAs provided more intensive levels of support, meeting with teachers to review their Project Plans, offering suggestions prior to implementation, co-teaching the lessons at the school sites, and in some cases, modeling the lessons to facilitate the professional development of participating teachers so they would become more adept at presenting art-based lessons in the classroom.

In 2007 the Music Center contracted with ETI, a non-profit research and consulting firm in Los Angeles, to conduct an evaluation of the NEA ACT III program. In accordance with the Music Center's request that the evaluation focus on partnership-building between the TAs and classroom teachers, data were collected from teachers and Teaching Artists throughout the duration of the third year of program implementation. The report to follow presents the results of that research effort.

Methodology

A mixed-methods design employing both quantitative and qualitative methods was utilized to gain a rich and detailed view of the effectiveness of the program in fostering collaborative relationships between teachers and TAs and meeting classroom teachers' needs for professional development in the arts. Specifically, the evaluation included:

Teacher Journals

ETI developed a journal entry template that participating teachers were expected to complete following each TA classroom visit. In addition to capturing demographic information, the journals addressed:

- Teacher preparation for the classroom visit;

- Type and quality of assistance provided by the TA;
- Student engagement;
- Extent to which student learning goals were achieved during the lesson;
- Insights gained into the arts teaching process;
- Challenges experienced while teaching the lesson; and,
- Next steps, including strategy adjustments or plans to adapt or re-teach the lesson.

Teaching Artist Reflective Surveys

Following each in-class session, TAs also completed a survey. Survey items gathered information about:

- Demographic information such as the teacher, school, lesson number observed, and subject area(s) being taught;
- Classroom setting;
- Anchor work of focus;
- Type of assistance provided (modeling, co-teaching, verbal feedback);
- Lesson quality;
- Students' reactions to the lesson;
- Teacher preparedness, successes, and challenges; and,
- New insights gained into how to better support teachers to implement an anchor work lesson series.

Teacher Interviews

To garner more detailed feedback about teachers' experiences with the program, ETI conducted in-depth interviews with a sample of teachers at the conclusion of the program year. An interview protocol was developed to garner teachers' attitudes about:

- The Institute for Educators;
- Number and quality of TA visits;
- Planning and debriefing processes;
- Student reactions;
- Support provided by school administrators and the Music Center; and,
- The successes and challenges of the program.

Teaching Artist Focus Group

Similarly, Teaching Artists attended a focus group at the conclusion of the program year. Lines of questioning addressed:

- The summer Institute and teacher preparation;
- Program structure, including number and length of TA visits;

- Experiences and insights into working with the classroom teachers;
- Students' reactions;
- Successes and challenges; and,
- Support provided by administrators and the Music Center.¹

The teacher interviews and Teaching Artist focus group were recorded and transcribed to ensure accuracy.

Observations

Finally, to supplement the quantitative and qualitative data collected from the classroom teachers and TAs, ETI staff attended two days of in-class sessions at NEA ACT III elementary schools and observed the two Reconvenings hosted by the Music Center.

Findings

Summary Statistics

Seven elementary schools have participated in the NEA ACT III program over the course of the past three years (2005/2006, 2006/2007, and 2007/2008). Teacher participation at the schools has varied from year to year, and attendance at the summer Institute was not a requirement for receiving in-class support from Teaching Artists. Teachers from across grade levels, from kindergarten through the 7th grade, participated in the program. **Table 1** below presents the number of teachers receiving TA visits each year by school. **Table 2** on the following page displays the number of teachers by grade level for each program year. It is important to note that the evaluation was conducted during the third year of the program.

Table 1
Number of Participating Teachers Receiving TA Visits by Program Year

School	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008
Bret Harte Elementary	4	5	4
Thomas Jefferson Elementary	4	4	4
D.D. Johnston Elementary	4	4	4
Multicultural Learning Center	2	4	4
Charles Helmers Elementary	6	5	6
Birdilee V. Bright Elementary	6	5	4
Colfax Elementary	5	3	4
Total:	31	30	30

* Some teachers participated in multiple program years, so counts are duplicated from year to year.

¹ Copies of all instruments used in the evaluation can be found in the **Appendix**.

Table 2
Grade Level Representation by Program Year

Grade Level	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008
Kindergarten	0	6	1
1st Grade	4	2	5
2nd Grade	4	4	10
3rd Grade	7	4	4
4th Grade	9	8	3
5th Grade	5	5	4
6th Grade	2	2	3
7th Grade	0	1	2
Total:	31	32	32

* Some teachers taught multi-grade classes. Values are duplicated.

As discussed in the **Methodology** section, teachers and Teaching Artists were asked to complete a journal entry or reflective survey following each TA classroom visit. In addition to qualitative data which will be presented later in this report, both groups responded to a number of quantitative survey items designed to provide an overview of the interactions that teachers and TAs experienced over the course of the 2007/2008 program year. A total of 169 Teacher Journal entries and 271 Teaching Artist Reflective Surveys were received. A summary of the results is presented in tabular format below.

According to the TAs, visits ranged in duration from 20 minutes to two hours. On average, visits were approximately an hour (**Table 3**).

Table 3
Duration of Visit
Teaching Artist Reflective Surveys

Statistic	Value
Minimum	20 minutes
Maximum	120 minutes
Mean	58 minutes

As presented in **Tables 4** below and **5** on the following page, lessons were most likely to address theatre (59 percent) and to be taught in a classroom setting (87 percent). “Other” settings included music rooms, meeting rooms, and empty classrooms.

Table 4
Subject Areas Taught
Teaching Artist Reflective Surveys

Subject Area	Number of Visits	Percentage of Visits
Theatre	174	59%
Puppetry Arts	46	16%
Visual Arts	37	13%
Dance	20	7%
Music	19	6%
Total:	296	100%

**Table 5
Setting
Teaching Artist Reflective Surveys**

Setting	Number of Visits	Percentage of Visits
Classroom	210	87%
Other	25	10%
Auditorium	6	2%
Total:	241	100%

Almost all the classroom visits (92 percent) were utilized to provide lessons addressing Maya Angelou’s poem, *On the Pulse of the Morning*, the anchor work for the 2007/2008 summer Institute (**Table 6**).

**Table 6
Anchor Work Used as Focus of the Lesson
Teaching Artist Reflective Surveys**

Anchor Work	Number of Visits	Percentage of Visits
On the Pulse of the Morning	238	92%
There is a Time	20	8%
The Negro Speaks of Rivers	0	0%
Total:	258	100%

When asked how prepared the teachers were for the TA visits, the artists found the majority of the teachers to be “very prepared” for 82 percent of their visits. Interestingly, the teachers were somewhat less positive, indicating that they were “somewhat prepared” for 34 percent of the TA visits (**Table 7**).

**Table 7
Teacher Preparedness
Teaching Artist Reflective Surveys and Teacher Journal Entries**

Teacher Preparation	Teaching Artists		Teachers	
	Number of Visits	Percentage of Visits	Number of Visits	Percentage of Visits
Very prepared	240	82%	83	60%
Somewhat prepared	38	13%	47	34%
Not at all prepared	13	4%	8	6%
Total:	291	100%	138	100%

According to both respondent groups, the visits were most often dedicated to TA modeling of arts-based lessons (43 percent and 34 percent, respectively). Co-planning comprised approximately one quarter of the meetings. Fewer than 20 percent of the lessons were led by the classroom teachers (e.g. artist observation and coaching). Results are presented in **Table 8** on the following page.

**Table 8
Type of Assistance Provided
Teaching Artist Reflective Survey and Teacher Journal**

Assistance Provided	Teaching Artists		Teachers	
	Number of Visits	Percentage of Visits	Number of Visits	Percentage of Visits
Modeling	114	43%	55	34%
Co-planning	76	28%	41	25%
Artist observation and coaching	40	15%	31	19%
Co-teaching	36	13%	24	15%
Other	2	1%	11	7%
Total:	268	100%	162	100%

Almost all teachers rated the quality of assistance they received from the Teaching Artists as good (11 percent) or excellent (88 percent) following each classroom visit.

**Table 9
Quality of Assistance Provided by the TA
Teacher Journals**

Quality of Assistance	Number of Visits	Percentage of Visits
Excellent	140	88%
Good	17	11%
Fair	2	1%
Poor	0	0%
Total:	159	100%

When asked to report on students' reactions to the lessons, both teachers and Teaching Artists almost unanimously agreed that students were very engaged (**Table 10**). In addition, almost three quarters of the student learning goals (73 percent) for each lesson were completely achieved according to teachers' self-report (**Table 11** on the following page).

**Table 10
Student Reactions to the Lesson
Teaching Artist Reflective Surveys**

Level of Student Engagement	Teaching Artists		Teachers	
	Number of Visits	Percentage of Visits	Number of Visits	Percentage of Visits
Very engaged	218	88%	137	91%
Somewhat engaged	30	12%	14	9%
Unengaged	1	0%	0	0%
Total:	249	100%	151	100%

**Table 11
Goal Achievement
Teacher Journal Entries**

Student Learning Goal Achievement	Number of Visits	Percentage of Visits
Completely	283	73%
Somewhat	103	27%
Not at all	2	1%
Total:	388	100%

Case Studies

Teacher journals and Teaching Artist reflective surveys were also used to record challenges, observations, reflections, and insights into the collaborative arts partnership process after each class visit. The class visits varied in format and included co-planning, modeling, co-teaching, and artist observation and coaching. This process allowed for teachers to occupy different roles and levels of leadership which ultimately increased their confidence and strategic knowledge of arts implementation in the classroom. The case study below is an outstanding example of a successful partnership, reflecting a clear pattern of learning and growth across the year. Over the course of 10 visits with a first grade class, the teacher and the Teaching Artist collaborated in teaching the anchor work *On the Pulse of the Morning* through puppetry arts. In two final visits with a different teaching artist, the class explored the anchor work through the medium of watercolor. The classes met for an hour. While the teacher and Teaching Artist encountered such challenges as lack of time for planning and preparation and the challenges associated with managing creative group work at the elementary level, both reported rich collaborative experiences. Confidence was a major area of growth for the teacher as she sought to bring her academic classroom experience into the realm of teaching the arts. In addition, through the process the teacher and teaching artist learned how to effectively maximize their partnership in facing classroom challenges and developing specific learning strategies.

Teacher Initiative

The teacher's high level of preparation and initiative immediately set the stage for a successful partnership. Commenting on the work the teacher had done prior to the Teaching Artist arriving, the TA noted that the "*Teacher did great pre-lessons with students, drawing images from *On the Pulse of the Morning* and listening to books about trees.*"² In addition, the teacher had immediate suggestions for next steps. The TA explained that "*The teacher suggested that I do an introductory session to share two small shows and masks with the students. The students were very enthusiastic and eager to begin their shows. The teacher appreciated using the opportunity for discussion of the show as a way for students to identify beginning, middle, end, characters, and setting.*" For her part the teacher described that "*Prior to the next session I will read more non-fiction about trees with the class. They have already*

² Comments and quotes have been edited for grammar and readability.

identified five areas of interest so now they need to have more knowledge to take to the process.”

The teacher also prepared for the TA visits by considering how to best organize the class for group work. Specifically, she had the idea to *“inquire whether any 5th grade teachers have five responsible students who could work with my students on the days the Teaching Artist is present. They could be recorders, could ask questions to help the groups clarify ideas, help bring materials to the group, etc.”* She did, in fact, follow through with the plan to enlist the help of 5th graders. On day two of the arts partnership the TA commented, *“The teacher did a great job of organizing the categories for student brainstorming—organizing 5th graders to help with the tasks and splitting the class into working groups.”*

Deciding how much initiative to take was a consideration for the teacher, however. On day three she commented, *“I’m not sure how proactive to be. I keep wanting to step back and have the TA give all the guidance. I tried to listen to the tips she was giving and then give them myself when called for. I was never sure I was doing things right. That’s not about the TA, that’s just my natural insecurity about things artistic.”* The teacher attempted to strike a balance between learning from the TA and using the teaching skills and abilities she already had to strategize for the lesson. The comments from both the teacher and the Teaching Artist, however, indicate that a successful balance was achieved. The TA described the contextual groundwork the teacher laid when on day three she wrote, *“The teacher had spent the afternoon before reading a book about trees that touched on many of the aspects that we are focusing on in this project. The class also observed a flock of wild parrots, noting their camouflage and search for food.”* The teacher also prepared very practically for the lessons. After day four, for example, the TA wrote, *“The teacher had done prep work with the students in which groups worked on their stories. The teacher prepared worksheets that helped them place their story into a five or six frame unit.”*

Making Connections

Instead of treating the anchor work and corresponding art of puppetry as disconnected from her skill set as an educator, the teacher grasped the connections between anchor work project and the academic subjects with which she was familiar, commenting early in the process, *“I love the way all aspects of this lesson are connected to other subjects and lessons. Making the prosceniums generated conversations about patterns and symmetry (math!). Choosing a title was all about compromise and majority decisions (social studies). And of course the script writing...”* In addition, the teacher felt the connections were a useful way to approach the arts. She described one such moment when she noted, *“Finding the way that art could connect to the science unit really helped.”* On one hand the teacher noted how the program’s activities contributed to other subjects. On day three, for example, she commented, *“It really struck me today how powerfully reading comprehension and writing skills are being taught through this artistic process.”*

Challenges

Finding the time to complete activities and prepare for class proved to be challenges. After the second meeting the TA noted simply, *“Time was a challenge.”* After apparently discussing the issue with the teacher the TA reported, *“The teacher opted to keep the hands-on part of the project and to add some more class time between sessions.”* The teacher and TA dealt with the preparation issue similarly, by coming up with a practical solution. The TA explained *“Challenges were posed in prep—having paper ready and not arriving early enough to do last minute prep before class. We made a plan to more clearly identify who will be responsible for what prep on a given and day and to list supply needs.”* Indeed, communication proved to be invaluable in quickly and practically solving the challenges that arose. The TA described their pattern of communication stating, *“We checked in ahead of class, assessed at mid-point of class, and evaluated at lunch after class.”*

The fact that the class was comprised of first graders working together in groups also posed several challenges. The TA described the issues surrounding students working together creatively: *“The teacher and I have been discussing the challenges of first graders creating their own stories. The teacher would like to find a way to meet with each group individually to work on the stories. We realized that the work that the groups did today to choose symbolic icons for their prosceniums will help inform the story-making decisions.”*

Aside from creative collaboration, the social dynamics of group were a challenge for this class. The teacher described the situation by writing, *“One of the five groups is rather dysfunctional. There is one extremely powerful personality suppressing the other three. It’s frustrating working with them. I finally had to separate the one student from the group so the others could work without criticism.”* The Teaching Artist also offered her perspective and described how she and the teacher coped with the situation. She noted, *“One group was facing challenges in working with each other. The challenge became how to keep the rest of the class going and not being drawn into their challenges and how to keep that group going at a pace that would keep up with the others. The teacher and I took turns interacting with the challenged group to take some pressure off the teacher. I also tried to focus positive attention on what the group was accomplishing.”* The teacher and Teaching Artist also worked together to convey to the young students the importance of interacting positively in a group. The Teaching Artist related, *“Some group members had been mean to others during the past session. The teacher began by sharing a story about how much being part of a positive and supportive group had helped her succeed in her puppet-making. I followed up on and supported the teacher’s story and comments. We also asked class members to commit to being good team members for this session.”*

These challenges, however, were not always present. On day eight for example, the teacher commented, *“Sometimes it flows! Today was the least challenging of all days. The children all looked like they had been doing this for years. Even the one group that had some trouble working well together sailed along, happily engaged.”* In addition,

despite the challenges, the teacher and Teaching Artist indicated the overall process as extremely rewarding.

Strategy, Approach, and Support

The teacher actively engaged in supporting the collaborative process in her students. As related to the level of support first grade students require to facilitate their work, the TA described how they managed this process writing, *“The teacher utilized the fifth grade helpers. She made individual time to work with each group before the lesson. She used me as a resource to work with the groups that were having difficulty fulfilling the tasks.”* The teacher also structured this support so that the groups could foster creative ideas. For example, on day two the teacher noted, *“Prior to the TA’s next visit, I will have each group brainstorm ideas about their tree theme. In this way I hope they will be prepared to begin to form these ideas into a story.”* The Teaching Artist also added valuable insight into sustaining group work. She described her insight into critique: *“I like the idea of using the project criteria as a guideline for when to, and when not to interject, question, or make a suggestion to the student working groups. This takes critique out of ‘I liked this’ or ‘This works’ and into the world of ‘Are you using information about your subject matter?’; ‘Does the story having a clear beginning, middle, and end?’, and ‘What is the conflict and how is it resolved through the scene?’”*

More generally, in the classroom the teacher attempted to maintain a balance between encouraging creativity in her students and maintaining a supportive, controlled environment. Although the teacher had enlisted the help of the fifth graders to promote group work she worried, *“At times I have trouble knowing how to guide the fifth graders. I really want them to just be a support and recorder. I don’t want them to impose their ideas too much. It’s hard because they are just kids too and want to participate fully.”* The TA clearly recognized the teacher’s attempt at providing guidance and encouraging freedom by writing, *“The teacher was nervous about having groups write their own stories. She wanted to find a balance between allowing creative expression and asking them to fulfill the content criteria.”*

The teacher also encouraged and allowed the children’s natural exuberance to shine through. On day two she noted, *“I was amazed by how clearly each child felt about choosing a tree theme about which to craft a story, theater and performance!”* Again, on the last day of the partnership, the teacher was struck by her students’ enjoyment explaining, *“Once again I was reminded how much children love to paint! They all felt successful and happy.”*

In contributing to the success of the classroom, the Teaching Artist felt that *“one of [her] major roles is to help the teachers identify how they can use the existing knowledge and experiences that they already have to share content through an arts lesson.”* In addition to supporting teachers in using their existing knowledge and skills, the Teaching Artist noted that it is important to *“Give them the space and support to remember what they know.”* For example, on one occasion *“The teacher was nervous about how to assemble the puppets. I agreed to model the part that she was nervous about. She*

later made the connection that she already had all the experience she needed to teach the project.” The teacher, for her part, understood that all the knowledge and experience she was gaining was a process and one that she had to be willing to trust. She noted on day nine, *“It really struck me today how much I just had to trust the process. Having never guided students through a process like this I just have to trust the discovery process.”*

Confidence and Personal Stake

Like most teachers involved in the arts partnership, this teacher experienced a process of confidence-building. On day nine she confessed, *“My main challenge has never changed. I am outside my comfort zone and don’t have ownership of the process. I’m not sure when to step in and when to step back.”* On the next visit she added, *“In looking back over these pages I realize that I generally felt only ‘somewhat prepared’ to teach each lesson. I think this goes with the territory of teaching something new. It’s not a bad thing—only inevitable. I realize my personality only feels truly prepared when I have had lots of experience. That comes with time!”* The teacher had a moment of clarity, however, on day five when she realized that not only did she have the experience to instruct her students, but that she could share her own experiences of learning to instill confidence in her students. She described the moment, writing, *“I realized today that I could instruct my students in this process. I could do so fairly comfortably because of my own experience this summer. I could explain my fears of doing things “right” and how I loved my puppet in the end and so did the rest of my group. I hoped to empower the kids as I had been.”* The Teaching Artist recognized the change noting that *“The teacher is feeling more relaxed and optimistic.”*

The teacher had the opportunity to instill confidence into one student in particular. She related the situation: *“One student doesn’t see herself as artistic at all. She was very frustrated by her puppet, thinking it ugly. I found her puppet to be one of the most interesting and told her so. The TA did too. She finally calmed down and accepted her puppet. I hope she comes to like it as much as I do!”* Eventually, the whole class seemed to feel rewarded and validated by the process when, in what the teacher described as *“just a wonderful moment,”* the *“class attended a production of Alice in Wonderland at a legitimate theater. When we walked in they were so excited—the stage had a proscenium with all the elements they had created. They announced that it was a ‘toy theater.’”*

In addition to grappling with her confidence issues about teaching the arts, the teacher at times was nervous about the process. On one occasion where the Teaching Artist *“taught the bulk of the lesson, modeling masks and puppetry forms and motivating the students immensely,”* the teacher reported that she was *“just a bit nervous about how it would flow and about how much we could accomplish realistically.”* She also worried about *“how everything will be done by the Teaching Artist’s last visit!”* and wondered if there would be *“any time to rehearse.”* Through dedication and collaboration on the part of both the teacher and Teaching Artist, however, the performances were a success. After the final performance the teacher raved, *“The kids were amazing! They did so*

well! Their shows were phenomenal! They learned so much through this artistic pursuit!"

After the process was successfully completed with the first Teaching Artist, the teacher received two more visits, this time from a visual artist who specialized in watercolor painting. Interestingly, during these days the teacher revisited the subject of confidence. The teacher noted after the first meeting, *"Although I could never have done what this Teaching Artist did so beautifully, I feel more confident in my ability to re-teach the lesson in the future."* She then revealed, *"I lacked self-confidence because I have amazing painters in the family and I am not one of them. It increases my empathy for kids who get frustrated."* Not only did exposure to this different and more familiar medium deepen her level of confidence in teaching the arts, it solidified her commitment. On the final day of the arts partnership the teacher announced *"I will do more watercolor painting with my students. I have already ordered brushes! I also will ask my mother—a watercolor artist—to come work with my kids!"* The arts partnership process was clearly a success in this classroom, instilling in the teacher a deep level of connection to the arts and a willingness to build on the foundation of knowledge established thus far.

The journal entries summarized above offer useful examples of how the NEA ACT III collaborative partnership facilitated learning and growth for the teacher, TA, and students alike.

Teacher Interviews

In the last month of the 2007-2008 school year, ETI contacted 13 participating NEA ACT III teachers to request a telephone interview regarding their experiences with the program. The 11 teachers who consented to the interview had worked with the Teaching Artists during the 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 program years. Lines of questioning explored during the telephone interviews included differences in a teacher's experiences across program years and the effectiveness of the varied modalities of in-class support (co-planning, modeling, co-teaching, artist observation and feedback, etc). Questions were also designed to assess the extent to which the type of in-class support influenced teachers' perceptions of support quality and success implementing the anchor work lessons. Additionally, teachers were asked to share the successes and challenges they faced during program implementation and encouraged to offer their recommendations for improvement.

Demographic Profile

Teachers participating in the telephone interviews were asked a series of questions to ascertain their demographic characteristics. Nine of the teachers reported that they had been in the teaching profession for less than 10 years, while teachers participating in the evaluation were most likely to have taught at their current school for three to five

years. Five of the 11 teachers presented the program to students in the fourth and fifth grades during the 2007/2008 program year (**Tables 12 through 14**). One of the 11 teachers interviewed was male (data not tabled).

**Table 12
Number of Years Teaching**

Sample Size	1 to 2 years	3 to 5 years	6 to 10 years	11 to 20 years	21 years or more
n=11	--	n=5	n=4	n=2	--

**Table 13
Number of Years Teaching at Current School**

Sample Size	1 to 2 years	3 to 5 years	6 to 10 years	11 to 20 years	21 years and above
n=11	n=2	n=5	n=3	n=1	--

**Table 14
Grade Level of Students Receiving the Program**

Sample Size	K-1 st Grade	2 nd Grade	3 rd Grade	4 th - 5 th Grade	6 th - 7 th Grade
n=11	n=2	n=1	n=2	n=5	n=1

Three of the 11 teachers had participated in the first NEA ACT III program in 2005. Only one of the 11 teachers did not participate in the 2007-08 summer Institute, but she incorporated the anchor work throughout her classroom curriculum and received six teaching artist visits (**Table 15**).

**Table 15
Number of Years Participating in the NEA ACT III Program**

Sample Size	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
n=11	n=3	n=7	n=10

Teachers' Motivation for Participating and Professional Development Goals

Teachers shared a variety of reasons for participating in the NEA ACT III program. Several teachers were avid supporters of the arts and excited about partnering with real, working artists. Some teachers had heard positive things about NEA ACT III from colleagues or were encouraged to participate by the Music Center liaison. Most were proactively seeking innovative approaches to enhance the learning experience for their students and stretch their own capacities. Teachers' commentary below sheds light on what brought them into the program and the goals they hoped to achieve through participation in NEA ACT III:

- *“I have a Master’s degree in theatre. When I started teaching, I knew I had to have the arts in my curriculum. I’m absolutely passionate about it.”*
- *“It was an incredible opportunity to learn from real artists.”*
- *“It was my first year at this school so I wanted to build relationships and I’m interested in integrating different subjects across our curriculum.”*
- *“When the Music Center program liaison encouraged me, I was ready to jump into something arts-related.”*
- *“One of the teachers on our campus was saying such great things about it so I decided I wanted to investigate and I fell in love with it.”*
- *“I wanted to become better at implementing the arts because as teachers we just don’t get enough training in the arts to implement the Standards.”*
- *“I’m more comfortable with visual arts so by participating in the program I was able to get insight into the other disciplines.”*
- *“I wanted something that would make me stretch as a teacher and deepen students’ understanding of the art world.”*
- *“I know that kids are interested in art; it motivates them, so I wanted to be able to use that in my classroom.”*

Teachers were also motivated to participate in the program by their concern that students, in general, are not receiving adequate instruction in the arts. They felt that participation in this program could provide numerous benefits to their students:

- *“I feel the kids are not getting enough arts education, and even though we try to provide it, sometimes we need instruction on how to provide exposure to different disciplines.”*
- *“The mandated curriculum that we have...leaves hardly any time for the arts. So, I thought by participating in this kind of program, I can teach art legitimately, so to speak.”*
- *“It exposes the children to so much more than what they would get in a regular classroom or just going to a museum.”*

Institute Training and Teacher Preparation

Teachers were asked how effectively the summer Institute prepared them to implement anchor work-based lessons with their students and to continue the theme of the anchor work throughout their curriculum. All the teachers had high praise for the training they received at the Institute. They particularly liked the hands-on participation, experiencing the lessons from a student’s point of view, and exposure to teaching strategies that support mandated standards. The teachers departed feeling not only well-prepared, but inspired to implement the anchor-work:

- *“They did an absolutely fabulous job giving us the information we needed to participate with our students and prepare them to work with the TAs.”*

- *“It’s an experience I wish every teacher had because it builds you up, you become a participant, you develop lessons. Without that hands-on component, you don’t understand the ‘why’ of the things.”*
- *“Treating us as participants going through the process—like making our own connections with the poem just like the children would be asked to do—was very helpful.”*
- *“The sessions were very hands-on, the teachers were experts in their fields, very professionally done. I definitely learned a lot and felt prepared to implement the lessons.”*
- *“It was intensive and that’s what I liked, because people think art is just coloring but there are actual Standards to be mastered. It was well worth my summer time.”*

Teachers who participated in consecutive Institutes across program years were able to provide valuable comparative viewpoints, expressing their appreciation of the prepared lesson plans that were provided during the 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 Institutes:

- *“I felt more prepared for the Jose Limon dance piece because we knew we would be taking what we learned and applying it to the same anchor work whereas with the Langston Hughes piece, we had to shift gears and do something all our own. That was more challenging and took a lot of time, but it was equally helpful because I learned how to select an anchor work and develop lessons around it. I was definitely more confident the second time around, but I learned a lot through the first process.”*
- *“The first year, I know a lot of teachers were overwhelmed by having to prepare a unit totally on their own. I was, too. On the other hand, preparing my own unit was beneficial in terms of applying what we had learned, making it grade and curriculum-specific. It gave me the opportunity to develop something I knew would be ongoing. In fact, I used the unit I prepared two years ago again in my class this year.”*
- *“I prefer the later programs where we can take back the lesson plans and activities and apply them directly in the classroom.”*
- *“I liked the detailed lesson plans that I could mix up and change around. Getting so much information in printed form was so much nicer this time because when we get back to school in August, I’m not trying to remember what I did back in July based on my own notes. Printed lesson plans are so much better.”*

A teacher also pointed out that the Institute’s positive impact builds through participation in consecutive years: *“Each time a teacher attends, it becomes clearer how to implement anchor work-based lessons at the school level. It was a little unclear my first year and we were all trying things out our own way. The next year it got a lot easier. This past summer, from the feedback I’ve gotten from other teachers, we have a firm handle on how to connect the puppetry to the anchor work.”*

None of the teachers had participated in a program year without also attending the preparative summer Institute. One teacher’s comment highlights the singular

importance of the training the Institute provides: *“If I hadn’t gone to the Institute, I would have been lost. I wouldn’t have been able to teach my children about the anchor work. I learned everything I needed to explore this great piece of art work they had selected.”*

A few teachers felt a bit overwhelmed by the workshop’s pace and quantity of information, but they also expressed ambivalence about curtailing that format:

- *“I would like it to be a little longer because they tried to do so much. I wouldn’t mind spending more of my summer there because sometimes we felt a little rushed.”*
- *“There’s so much content in a short amount of time. I just felt like I was rushed and that was a little difficult. Maybe lessening the content and having a deeper understanding of it? But everything was good; I used everything I learned.”*
- *“There’s a part of me that would like to do fewer things but go deeper. On the other hand, it was good to be exposed to so many things.”*
- *“Maybe a chance to try out the lessons because at the Institute everything is so truncated, you almost don’t have time to breathe; you’re running from one activity to another and they all sort of merge together. But then again you only have a week to show all the strategies for each discipline because the anchor work changes each year.”*

When asked to provide suggestions for improving the Institute, several teachers expressed complete satisfaction with the benefits they had derived from the experience and couldn’t think of any ways it could be improved. Only one teacher suggested *“a bit more instruction on how to work this information and strategies into my current curriculum as a 4th grade teacher.”*

Another teacher felt that the material lacked teacher input: *“The curriculum was great, but when you look at it from a teacher’s point of view it wasn’t necessarily teacher-friendly, which means it’s not necessarily kid-friendly, either. It was rigorous but if they’d had more input from real classroom teachers, it would have gone better for me because I had to contour the material for first graders a lot more than I’d like to.”*

Finally, a teacher suggested videotaping the training workshops: *“Then we could immediately take the tapes back to show colleagues at our school sites. A video tape of the workshops would help grade level planning and get the whole school team on board. To be helpful though, it would need to be immediate, not getting the tapes and showing them months later.”*

Program Structure and Teaching Artist Visits

Teachers were asked if the number of TA visits they received was adequate to achieve the goals they had set for each year. Their responses varied widely, and satisfaction with the number of TA visits often revolved around the difficulty of the anchor work and the teacher’s comfort level with it, rather than the number or duration of the visits:

- *“It depends on the anchor work, really. It was dance, as opposed to working with a poem. Compared to the year before [eight visits], I would have liked to have had a few more visits this year [three visits].”*
- *“The number of visits is dependent on the nature of the anchor work. The more difficult it is, the more support the classroom teacher needs.”*
- *“It depends on the anchor work and how in-depth you want your students to go with it.”*

Another factor influencing teacher satisfaction with the number of TA visits was how effectively those visits were scheduled throughout the school year and how well they were coordinated—or didn’t interfere—with the school’s calendar and the teacher’s mandated activities:

- *“Originally, they wanted us to have 16 visits and that’s unreal. People who do not teach do not understand how much we have to do every single day, in addition to assemblies and testing. When you have to go by the artist’s schedule, it’s hard because you can’t really do the lessons in sequence. Sometimes I can’t wait for the artist to visit; I need to go ahead or it’s going to stall what I’m doing.”*
- *“The visits were scheduled at a time when they conflicted with another arts program going on at our site, so it was a little overwhelming, not having enough time to teach. If we’re aware of our schedule and plan accordingly, the number of visits would be perfect.”*
- *“It’s important to space the visits, not have them all in one quarter, because we do the anchor work throughout the whole school year.*
- *“I wish my class had two more visits. The TA saw the beginning of what we were doing, but he didn’t get to see the children at the end.”*

Several teachers concurred that, *“the more visits the better because the artists are so well received, they always have good input and the kids love having the guests come in.”*

In terms of agreeing on an optimal or minimum number of TA visits that would maximize teacher productivity and collaboration, the minimum number of visits ranged from three to 10, whereas the optimum number of visits ranged from five to 12. One teacher related, *“Each year we are involved in the program, we’re becoming a little more independent. As teachers who have been through the Institute a couple of times become more confident and versed in these skills, we will be more comfortable with fewer visits. This year I felt a lot more confident.”*

Reconvenings

All the teachers interviewed found the Reconvenings helpful. They benefited from seeing what their colleagues had accomplished at other school sites, networking with teachers from other schools, and from the sense of community they felt during the meetings:

- *“I found it helpful to see what other schools were doing and how far they took it. Seeing all the different applications and how the classrooms connected it actually gets the wheels in my head turning on ways I can implement it in my classroom.”*
- *“It was helpful to hear from other teachers and it’s a good way to assess what you can do better, differently, or more of.”*
- *“The nicest thing about the Reconvenings, beside the food which was delicious, was the idea sharing and the feeling that you were part of something.”*
- *“The first Reconvening, showing the process, was my favorite...I preferred seeing how far a long everyone was, getting ideas from people during the process, seeing how I could improve what I’m doing.”*
- *“The round tables were really interesting and allowed us to share out.”*

Some teachers, however, mentioned that there was an element of redundancy to the Reconvenings that could be eliminated without losing the benefits of the gathering:

- *“Initially you get your two cents in but I felt like I had to reiterate myself a lot...They only need one Reconvening.”*
- *“What was happening in the first Reconvening seemed to be same thing that was talked about in the second.”*
- *“A lot of people felt it was redundant. We were just saying what we learned and we didn’t have to do that in two meetings.”*

Type of Support Provided by the Teaching Artists

Teachers were asked to indicate which type of support provided by the TA proved most helpful to them. However, no discernible preference for one support modality over another was detected in the teachers’ responses. Again, it seems that the teacher’s individual level of comfort with the artistic discipline and the difficulty of the anchor work influenced the kind of support the teachers found most helpful:

Modeling

- *“At the Institute, one of the things you hear teachers say is ‘Yeah, this seems great but try doing it in my class with my students.’ So modeling is valuable because the TAs are in your environment with your actual students and they show you that it can work.”*
- *“I internalized the modeling and copied the strategies the TA had used.”*
- *“The modeling was big for me. I really like to see how an expert does it.”*

Co-planning

- *“The ability to sit down and talk about what we were going to do next time and what I was going to do in the interim until she returned was very helpful.”*

Co-teaching

- *“Sometimes I would do a kind of parroting of what the TA was saying or doing to emphasize a point or make it more accessible to my students. Or, she’d ask me to jump in. The children gained the most that way, and it also gave me a chance to practice.”*
- *“Collaboration is better for gaining ownership and comfort with the material. I learned more.”*

Observation and Feedback

- *“It’s valuable to have the TAs observe and give feedback because they obviously know a lot more about the arts and the anchor work. It’s nice to have time with them to reflect on what you’re doing.”*
- *“Most helpful to me was when the TA observed and then came up with suggestions on how I could improve the way I’m teaching because a lot of it is stuff I’ve never really had much exposure to so turning around to teach it to the students is not easy. Its nice to have someone say ‘Ok, you did a really great job with that; let’s see how we can improve it.’”*
- *“Often I did a pre-lesson and then she would come in with comments and reflections on what the kids were doing. Her feedback was very helpful.”*

Several teachers agreed that a fluid mix of the above support modalities was ideal:

- *“I liked it when we shuttled back and forth between observing or leading or co-teaching. I like it open that way because all the different forms of support are helpful.”*
- *“The observations give me immediate feedback on how I’m doing and the modeling is good because I can see someone doing the strategies and it’s so much easier for me to go and do them the next time.”*
- *“I loved the way we did it this year—the artist did some modeling, then we did co-teaching, then she observed and gave me feedback. I think that mix was perfect and very beneficial.”*
- *“With the dance piece, the TA did more of the modeling. He was in charge and worked with our students. Then he observed and we met afterward to hear what we were doing well, what we could improve on, and how to make those improvements.”*

Quality of TA Support

Teachers described the quality of support they received from the TAs in glowing terms and offered examples of what they found most helpful:

- *“Amazing. Just wonderful. Always positive with suggestions. Great support with the modeling, planning, and communications.”*

- *“Top notch. They were totally engaged, they knew their craft.”*
- *“Their depth of knowledge and the fact that they can bring the anchor work down to the children’s understanding—that’s what is so valuable.”*
- *“She was very flexible and able to understand exactly where I was in the lesson and jump right in.”*
- *“Encouragement to do it myself. Doing it along side each other is a real confidence builder; the feeling that you have a partner supporting you.”*
- *“The TA and I truly collaborated. It was more work for me but it was wonderful because that’s part of why I got so much more out of it.”*
- *“They allowed me to choose the approach as I gained more confidence.”*
- *“They listened to my ideas and we figured it out as we went along. Sometimes, I needed to model for them how to control a very kinesthetic group of students. We’d make corrections on the spot; they were flexible.”*

Teachers were hard-pressed to think of recommendations for how the Teaching Artists could improve the quality of assistance they provided because all of them were pleased with the level of expertise and support they received from the TAs. Only one teacher offered a suggestion: *“If the TAs would ask specifically, depending on the time and month, what we’re currently working on in the classroom as far as curriculum or subject matter and make connections to that, it would be helpful. Kind of be more proactive in figuring out where we are in the curriculum flow.”*

Planning and Debriefing

Teachers reported that planning and debriefing meetings occurred mostly through email exchanges and phone calls. They also made good use of brief opportunities for “face time” before and after the classroom visits:

- *“When I needed help I would email her or call her. She was also on campus on days that she wasn’t coming to our classroom (visiting other NEA classrooms), so I could go to her then and say this is what we’re doing, I need help with this, etc. She was always available and accessible. Communication was no problem at all.”*
- *“I would let him know through email back and forth what I was trying to do and he would give me feedback and then we’d bring it together in the classroom.”*
- *“We’d email and then after our lessons we’d debrief. Sometimes we would meet before the lessons in person. It worked fine.”*
- *“Sometimes we’d plan the subsequent visit right after the current visit. We’d take 15 minutes or so after the kids left for a one-on-one and that worked out pretty well.”*
- *“She’d give me feedback and we would talk when the kids broke out into groups. If she had anything else to add, she’d email me. We could have met at other times but I felt it was more beneficial to have her visit the classroom, observing me to see what I could do better.”*

- *“We emailed mostly. I could have been better with communicating, but our schedule was so crazy. I definitely think you need to communicate before the day of the lesson, not just 10 minutes before.”*

One teacher said that the coordinator at her school handled *“all the visits and most of the communication for us, so she made it work.”* However, others were clearly dissatisfied with the lack of debriefing time available following the classroom visits.

- *“Debriefing with the TA right after the lesson ended didn’t give me any real time to reflect on what we did, especially with students still in the room.”*
- *“This year, there was no time to do feedback/reflection with the TAs after the visits.”*

Challenges

In addition to scheduling sufficient time to plan/debrief, teachers experienced other challenges during implementation of the NEA ACT III program. Factors underlying the challenges included teacher insecurity about the capacity of students to work independently, making the anchor work relevant for specific grade levels, time and space limitations, and students with behavior and emotional issues. The sampling of their comments presented below illustrates the wide variety of challenges teachers faced and overcame in collaboration with the TAs:

- *“Allowing my 2nd graders to work in their groups was a challenge for me. I was worried they would goof off but I quickly found out they were so engaged it wasn’t a problem. It was a challenge to give up that control but I gained confidence in their capacity to work together and do a great job.”*
- *“My challenge at first was just figuring how to make the anchor work accessible to 4th graders, but with the TA’s help we were able to make it understandable for 10 year olds.”*
- *“Figuring out the process of having 1st graders write their own puppet plays. I had no clear view of how to go about that and couldn’t have done it without the TA.”*
- *“On the Pulse of Morning was a little difficult for my students. We did a lot of acting out of the words and used puppets. We figured out the meaning in the end but it took a long time.”*
- *“We stumbled on integrating the music in the dance piece and were really glad to have the TAs say, ‘This is what we suggest you try’ to get through to some of the kids who were struggling with it.”*
- *“We had a space challenge with the children building toy theatres and puppets over a 10-week period. We needed to get the materials organized and stored but accessible so they were readily available twice a week.”*

Three teachers faced unique challenges implementing the anchor-based lessons in their classrooms: *“My school administration was doubtful about me participating because I was teaching 6th and 7th grade math and science and the poem, obviously,*

connects better to social studies and language arts. It was definitely a challenge to connect a work of poetry to math and science throughout the school year, but the TA made the difference. I would say to him, 'This is what we're learning now. How can we connect the poem to this? Is the connection too abstract? Are the kids going to get it?'"

A teacher who worked with the Jose Limon dance piece during the 2006/2007 program year in her mainstream classroom tried doing the same anchor work with her current class of special needs students: *"It looked a lot different because we had such different kids. I wasn't able to accomplish as much as I had hoped, but it was nice having the TA's support because we had to scale back the lessons to meet the needs of these kids who have difficulty with expression and concepts. We did just a little choreography compared to last year when the kids were able to absorb the material faster. Next year, continuing with these students, they could get there too. We just need more time."*

Another teacher implemented the anchor work based lessons with *"a very challenging group of third graders. Kids exposed to gang violence, and poverty. These kids had been so wounded I was told there wasn't anything that would motivate them. For them to care about the arts, it had to have meaning and I had no idea how we were going to do that."* How this teacher and others turned their challenges into success stories is explored in the following section.

Success Stories and Student Reactions

Teachers were enthusiastic about describing the success stories and breakthroughs they and/or their students experienced as a result of participation in the NEA ACT III program. They also reported positive changes in students' emotional and social growth, creativity, analytical skills, and enthusiasm for learning. The following extended citations from the telephone interviews with teachers illustrate how "success" through this program comes in many forms:

Professional Growth and Insight for Teachers

Teachers described learning how to be more flexible with lesson plans and student management, experiencing success when working collaboratively, and stepping outside their comfort zones as educators.

- *"I'm very structured in my teaching, but when we did these activities with the poem, I didn't give guidelines, just told them what we needed in the final outcome. With all this freedom they were allowed, the breakthrough for them, and for me as a teacher, was that they turned out amazing creative things with their bodies and the puppetry."*
- *"My lessons became more open-ended. I knew what I wanted to achieve but I let my students guide the process so it became whatever that group of students was capable of."*

- *“It has always been a struggle for me to work collaboratively but I learned from the kids, seeing what they could come up with working both collaboratively and individually.”*
- *“For those of us who are more into the visual arts, we stepped out of our comfort zones by doing a different type of art with our kids. That was a big success for us and the kids felt successful, too.”*

Emotional and Social Growth for Students

One teacher whose students performed puppet shows saw her shy students come alive with confidence once they had puppets in their hands: *“They loved doing the voices. They might not be the best readers in the class but they were able to shine in other ways for their classmates.”* Several other teachers also saw improvements in students’ social skills, confidence, or capacity to collaborate as a group:

- *“Students who were self-conscious and silly at first seemed to get past that and take it seriously. It was neat to see that kind of transformation. Kids who were at first uncomfortable with it enjoyed it by the end.”*
- *“My 3rd graders became more able to manage their time. I saw positive changes in their behavior, too.”*
- *“A lot of the kids became less shy because they were performing and creating something on a regular basis for other people. I could see them becoming a little more outgoing and confident.”*
- *“We did a lot of group work and I saw them learning to work more cooperatively.”*

Creative Breakthroughs for Students

Students grew to think of themselves as artists, and teachers’ confidence in their students’ abilities grew as well. Taking creative risks was embraced as a positive norm by the both adult and student participants, resulting in emancipating feelings of self-discovery and group accomplishment:

- *“It enabled me to see some of my students in a different light, especially the ones who have the acting bug. Giving students opportunities to show that also teaches the teacher about her students.”*
- *“They have grown tremendously in terms of their appreciation of the arts and being able to use the arts in what they do. They’re also much more comfortable on stage.”*
- *“My kids never had the opportunity to have an extended look at an art work so going over and over and coming back to it in different ways, each time mastering their comprehension of it was a plus. To see them move from a lofty idea down to putting it into practice was a real success.”*
- *“One of my students, who has no confidence in herself artistically, wanted to throw away the puppet she created. I personally thought it was the most interesting of all the puppets by far, and let her know, and she felt empowered by the end of it.”*

Academic Skill Building for Students

- *“I don’t see my students giving up quite as easily now. I don’t get that ‘I don’t understand it so I’m not going to try,’ whether it be a math problem or a story they’re struggling with. Now they stop and say ‘Ok, this is just like On the Pulse of Morning. We can do this, we just need to take our time and break it down to figure it out.’”*
- *“This program made such a difference for my second language learners, with very low writing skills. More than any other year. They were able to understand plot and character because we were acting out the concepts. With the toy theatre and puppet shows, they could grasp the material without having to write about it.”*
- *“One student talked about how the rock, the river, and the tree were like Maya Angelou’s life. It wasn’t easy for her growing up, then she started to calm down, like the river, through learning and education, and now she wants to shelter and protect all the people around her like the tree, sharing her knowledge with everyone. That was a real breakthrough for the kids. From then on they started getting into the underlying meaning.”*

Extended Success Stories

The following extended stories illustrate how teachers, with support from flexible, creative TAs, turned ostensibly challenging situations into success stories. The teacher whose principal doubted that *On the Pulse of Morning* could be effectively integrated into 6th and 7th grade math and science was successful in connecting the anchor work to the curriculum. The following examples of anchor work integration illustrate how her effort animated the math and science lessons and captured the attention of her teen students:

- *“Middle school students really love popular music and there was a John Mayer song they really liked, ‘Waiting for the World to Change’ when we were starting the program. Maya Angelou’s poem talks about standing up for what you believe in and changing the world, but the song was saying the contrary. So we contrasted the poem with the song and talked about why songs are important. The students felt that songs bring a message, like poems, so I had them write lyrics to popular songs explaining how to work math operations with lots of steps and sequences. It came from the themes of the Angelou poem, like making sure that people are informed, and educated, and not afraid to speak up. It was an incredible opportunity to do something different. They stood up and performed those songs for their parents because they believe that math is important to their lives.”*
- *“When the 6th graders were doing earth science (how rivers shape land forms, weathering, etc.), we were able to make many connections with Maya Angelou’s poem centering around the rock, the river, and the tree as three elements of our world and how our world is shaped. From there we jumped to studying*

earthquakes and the students created shadow puppet shows depicting earthquake legends.”

In so doing, she gave her “self-conscious, hard-to-get-moving” middle school students a safe outlet for self-expression: *“Changing voices with the puppets allowed them to do that. If I had asked them to dance or do drama, they would have been a lot more resistant, but the fact that they could be behind these puppets, not be themselves, allowed them to express their ideas and show what they knew.”* This teacher’s breakthrough came in realizing *“that having something students can really connect with makes a huge difference in their learning.”*

Similarly, the teacher whose group of third graders had been subjected to gang violence and poverty found ways for her students to connect Maya Angelou’s poem to their daily lives and explore themes of survival and resiliency. Despite their emotional wounds and combative classroom dynamics, she worked with them to create a performance based on the poem for the school’s winter assembly: *“The parents loved it and everyone was impressed that the students were so natural at it. My principal even got teary-eyed when she saw their innocence and sweetness come out in the performance because these kids were really rough and mean, some of them had stolen; they were in counseling. She saw them lovely and focused. She saw them happy. She said they were all going to become philosophers and poets.”*

Expanded Application of Skills and Strategies

Many teachers successfully applied the skills and strategies they learned at the summer Institute to other areas of their regular curriculum. Their expanded teaching toolbox included using theatre games, puppetry, and movement to engage and motivate students in language arts, social studies and science learning:

- *“I use toy theater in our social studies and science activities. I also do more directed inquiry groups and reader’s theatre with the whole class.”*
- *“I applied the cranky box to one of our science units as a reinforcement. We also did a shadow puppet play in language arts. It was great to apply these strategies to others things I was doing in the classroom.”*
- *“I go back to our focus routine where we stand in a circle and quietly model someone, follow their motions. With kids who have attention issues, that helps them refocus.”*
- *“When my kids are struggling, we break the material down the way we did with the poem, sometimes acting out words. For team building, I use the warm-up activities that we teachers did at the summer Institute.”*
- *“We still use the group work and collaboration strategies we implemented for the anchor work.”*
- *“I use the tableau and different acting strategies to interpret literature and history with my students all the time.”*

Administrative Support

The quality of administrative support that teachers received from their principals was described as “*outstanding*” and “*phenomenal*.” Teachers had no complaints or suggestions as to how their administrators could have better supported the program. They often directed high praise to the principals for seeking out the program and making every effort to accommodate the participating teachers’ need for time to meet with the TAs. The following comments are exemplary of how the teachers felt about their principals’ support of the NEA ACT III program:

- *“Our principal is always asking us what else we need. Just the fact that she allowed me to do this with a math and science class is incredible.”*
- *“Our principal was the one who got me interested in the program and got the whole school around it. She made it exciting and pushed it for us. We had great support at our site.”*
- *“Our principal helped find the funds to participate every year.”*
- *“Our principal has been supportive of the arts and has gone out of her way to make sure we have the time and space to do what we can with this.”*

Recommendations for the Music Center

When asked what the Music Center can do to improve the NEA ACT III program and better support teachers, most respondents were hard-pressed to come up with recommendations because they were very satisfied with the program in its current form. The majority of teachers offered commendations and praise:

- *“I saw a huge improvement from the last program to this year. My needs were completely met this time around. Everything was very clear, well laid out; I understood my responsibilities, what I should be doing, and how it was all going to work out. I feel they’re definitely doing a great job.”*
- *“They’re doing a phenomenal job.”*
- *“I feel very supported in my role. There’s nothing I can think of to improve.”*
- *“What the Music Center has been doing is really wonderful.”*
- *“I thank the Music Center for the program because I really learned a lot and my kids absolutely loved it and I hope it continues.”*

When further probed to reflect on ways to enhance the program, four teachers focused on how communication and scheduling with the TAs might be improved:

- *“The first planning meeting was kind of confusing because we got mixed messages as far as what we were supposed to do. The TA was clear but then another lady from the Music Center came late and by the time she was finished it was something else. I know the Music Center has to be involved but I think as far as the artist’s visits, if the artist and the teacher can just do the communicating it would be better.”*

- *“Scheduling the visits according to the calendar is really important so this program doesn’t conflict with other ongoing programs. Knowing the time frame that the TA is available and better communication around our school schedule would make the program easier to implement.”*
- *“We really need to schedule reflection time at lesson’s end for feedback from the TA. It was an issue this year because the TAs are only allowed to visit your school for four hours. With four teachers participating, the TA scheduling, our school schedule and the amount of hours they are supposed to give you (counting recess and lunch too), it didn’t allow for any reflective time or planning with the TAs. To get more time, we would have to pay or one teacher would not get the services, so we pretty much compensated through email. We really need a little bit of give there.”*
- *“It is incredibly valuable to actually have time to sit down and reflect with the TA.”*

Three teachers also offered concrete suggestions related to visual and online resources to support their implementation of the anchor work-based lessons:

- *“It would be nice to have a website we could go to for resources and tips from the TAs on past anchor works. Teachers who’ve done the anchor work in past years could share strategies or lessons with teachers at other schools who are currently working on that piece with their students.”*
- *“Video tapes of the workshops would help grade-level planning and get the whole school team on board. Showing the tapes to our colleagues within a few weeks of the Institute would be helpful.”*
- *“Maybe as an incentive for program participation, each teacher could receive a little money to purchase materials that will help them implement the anchor work lessons.”*

Another teacher suggested a strategy to increase teacher interest and participation in the program:

- *“It’s hard to get teachers to participate on Saturdays because they are so burned out by the weekend. If there’s a way to offer these kinds of workshops on campus, like coming out to the sites when there’s already staff development going on, you would have a captive audience and get to more teachers that way.”*

Summary of Teacher Telephone Interview Findings

The interviews revealed that there is no ideal number of TA visits that would maximize the program’s effectiveness across all schools and artistic disciplines. Rather, it is the timing of the visits, strategically paced throughout the school year, and the quality of the interaction between TAs and teachers that determines success in the classroom. A critical factor influencing the TA/teacher interaction is ample opportunity for substantive feedback following the lessons.

Teachers feel well-supported by the program and value the opportunity to participate. They participated not only for the tangible benefits that exposure to the arts brought to their students (increased confidence, focus, group collaboration, analytical skills, and pride in accomplishment), but also because they themselves grew professionally through the experience. Teachers stretched beyond their comfort levels, enjoyed creating unique works with their students, and added new skills to their instructional toolkits. They found encouragement and satisfaction in collaborating with real artists who brought insight and dynamism to their classrooms. Many now have the confidence to continue applying arts-based instructional strategies throughout their curriculum, even when not participating in an official arts program.

As one teacher pointed out, *“The trick is to enable teachers to feel comfortable doing arts instruction and not feel like they’re missing out on valuable time for academic instruction, given the big push to improve test scores right now. But it is so important for the kids to have this exposure because they don’t learn just by sitting and listening and reading and writing all the time. Getting them up and experiencing the arts is such a great vehicle for them; it reinforces the learning.”*

The program enabled students to distinguish themselves, revealing innate talents and capacities they and their teachers had not known were there. This process of individual and group discovery engendered a positive environment in which creativity flourished and all participants ultimately arrived at a greater appreciation and command of the arts.

Teaching Artist Focus Group Findings

Teaching Artists were at the core of the NEA ACT III program, as they were largely responsible for presenting the content of the summer Institute and providing guidance and professional development via classroom visits. The section to follow presents a summary of focus group findings garnered from a discussion among seven Music Center Teaching Artists. Major trends are summarized thematically, followed by representative quotes from the TAs.

Summer Institute and Teacher Preparation

Focus group participants were asked how effective the summer Institute had been in preparing teachers for their role in the program. They were also asked for recommendations on how to improve the summer Institute.

Effectiveness of Summer Institute

While most participants felt the Institute was successful in providing teachers with inspiration and motivation, many felt it fell short on providing classroom preparation tactics to teachers. On the whole, participants longed for training that put emphasis on teacher empowerment with an eye on integrating the anchor work into in-class curriculum. As one participant explained:

- *“I think the Institute is really helpful just in introducing the program to teachers and in [rousing] their desire. Is the Institute useful? Yes, it is.”*

This participant went on to say that although she felt the Institute had helped to inspire and excite teachers, it was lacking when it came to preparing teachers for the reality of the classroom. She, along with others, felt that when it came time for teachers to implement what they had learned at the summer Institute, they were quick to defer to Teaching Artists.

- *“I was hard pressed to get some of the teachers to step out of – well you’re the expert, go ahead and do it.”*

Others wished for there to be more consistency and structure within the Institute:

- *“...it would have been nice if yes, the first year started them out, the second year they got a little more active, the third year they finally had a branch officer doing the whole thing, but that’s not what we’ve seen. Because each year it’s been such a different art form that they’ve been exploring.”*
- *“I think that the actual intention of the Institute has changed over the years... Because it was the very first year using an anchor where it wasn’t quite clear how to follow up on the whole thing... there was a lot of confusion and some feel that a mistake was being made by allowing the teachers to choose their own anchor work. I think that over the years, it’s been evolving, it’s a process and I think we’re actually beginning to find out how we can teach and do an Institute and have effective follow-ups, because I don’t think that has been fully realized.”*

Institute Recommendations

When participants were asked what sort of recommendations they could make in an effort to improve the summer Institute, suggestions were mainly focused on building teacher confidence and pushing teachers toward finding more stable footing in-class. For example:

- *“It would be great if we could sit down at some point with all the first grade teachers, take what they’ve learned from the Institute and [figure out a way] to apply it. Having a brain-storming meeting... then coming up with their plan after that.”*
- *“They really have to set a regimen,” mentioned one participant eager for the Institute to delineate the difference between teachers and Teaching Artists. “This is going to happen on this day, this is going to happen on this day and on this day, no matter what, come hell or high water, the teacher is actually going to be the one out there teaching.”*
- *“I think that one piece that could be added would be for the teachers to actually have to teach a little bit within the Institute so that when they go back into their classroom it is not the first time.”*

Yet another participant suggested doubling the time spent at the summer Institute:

- *“Two weeks to give the teachers content and then also actually training them on how to implement.”*

And for the more skeptical teachers who enter into the program, one participant suggested that new teachers partner with seasoned teachers in an effort to learn more and alleviate apprehension over in-class performance:

- *“New teachers actually partner with a teacher who has done the Institute before, or a couple of teachers to actually present some small part of the Institute in really showing an integrated lesson. So that – especially for the teachers that are hesitant and think, ‘Oh well they’re all artists so they think we can just do art all the time,’ to have one of their own demonstrating something that they’ve learned that they did last year, and showing it integrated into a lesson that they know they have to teach.”*

Program Structure

Because the number and length of in-class sessions has varied among the schools and participating teachers, focus group participants were asked what the optimum or ideal number of sessions would be, and whether their use of lessons changed depending on how the number and length of the meetings varied. Interestingly, participant responses varied. Some felt they made the most of the time they were given, however minimal:

- *“I absolutely planned my time out firmly and considered exactly what I had to do and what I had to accomplish and I accomplished it in three sessions. And it was meaningful for me and for the students and the teachers.”*

Some would have liked more time:

- *“I would say you would need an hour pre-planning. You would need then an hour to model, then you would need an hour to have them plan what they were going to do. And then they do what they’re going to do and then you would have to have at least another meeting to talk about what that was and then probably one more so that they could refine what they did and do it more than one time. So I’m thinking a minimum of six.”*

Others were more flexible:

- *“...clearly six would be great, but if it doesn’t happen, I can work within the constraints of that.”*

Teaching Artist Role

Focus group participants were also asked to give their thoughts on the significance of their own role in the program, as Teaching Artists.

Teaching Artist Approach

Most participants spoke to the large amount of preparation that needed to be done prior to entering the classroom. Some claimed the amount of work that went into preparing a lesson plan had increased due to the more recent need to tailor fit the anchor work to the existing curriculum. As one participant noted:

- *“We used to just have our lesson plans and then we would go and teach them. Now you have to actually tailor what you do to the curriculum. It requires a lot of preparation time. Much more so than before. Like if the class is going to study the water cycle, well then you have to figure out what the water cycle is, and how that relates to the poem, and how you are going to use theater to connect the poem with the water cycle.”*

Classroom Strategies

When asked what types of strategies were employed when working with teachers hesitant to teach on their own or co-teach, participants noted that teachers seemed to respond well to gentle encouragement and support. Others expressed an interest in receiving more guidance from the Music Center on how to properly navigate the Teaching Artist/teacher relationship. For example:

- *“We chose to be really, really delicate about it. I mean, I certainly did. I would really try to inch teachers forward that were resistant and try to get them to help.”*
- *“At the first planning meeting I made it really clear that I was there to support them in implementing their plan, so I really put it on them. I asked, ‘How do you think I can support you? What kind of help do you think you need?’ And some of them were really clear and had a good idea of what that was. I didn’t know how else to approach it. This is your project and I am here as support. So I’m here to be an outsider. If there are skills that you want to learn, maybe I can model that for you.”*
- *“I do think something we can learn a little bit more about is how to really engage the teachers.”*
- *“I think this is something that the Music Center could help out with in terms of how do you deal with these people and how do you figure out how far to go? ... It really requires a lot of sensitivity on the part of the Teaching Artist to know how far to be able to push someone. And we probably could use more training.”*

Many participants also expressed frustration with “extremely specific lesson plans” (e.g. the anchor work curriculum) and longed for more flexibility within the classroom:

- *“Much better that we have a template for the lesson plans and give them certain points that they can then apply to their specific circumstances.”*
- *“[This] needs to be conveyed to the teachers. These lesson plans are more of a loose framework that they can use for their classes.”*
- *“One teacher said, ‘I never did a puppet show.’ But that’s okay. She did a play. She did something else. But they feel this anxiety of all the stuff they’re supposed to achieve and I think they should be aware that it is a little bit more open.”*
- *“That’s the problem. They think they have to use the [lesson plans]. It’s like one size fits all. It doesn’t.”*

Planning and Debriefing

Focus group participants were also asked whether they felt they had sufficient opportunity for planning and debriefing meetings or exchanges with teachers. Similar to the teachers who participated in the telephone interviews, the majority expressed a strong need for more time to work with teachers outside of scheduled class time.

- *“As for planning with the teachers, there’s no time to debrief. That just doesn’t really happen. There is no debriefing time. But I did plan with the teachers, most of them the first week of school.”*
- *“I was there for 40 minutes, you know, debriefed them for 10 minutes, planned for 10 minutes.”*
- *“I have the same problem. They don’t have the time to talk to me, so I met them on their break.”*
- *“Debriefing wasn’t scheduled and I just said, ‘I need to talk to you afterwards and I need to talk to you before so we can figure out how it’s going to work.’ And that worked. But they never had the time unless you took their lunch. Or you’d meet after school. Unless they had a planning period. But it doesn’t usually work out that way.”*

A Collaborative Venture

When participants were asked to what extent they felt the program had been a collaborative venture with the teachers, most reported feeling an in-class imbalance. Several participants noted an overall reluctance from teachers who generally felt more comfortable deferring to the Teaching Artists. As one participant reported:

- *“...there’s no pressure on them to [teach]. They feel like, ‘if I do it, great, if I don’t, I don’t.’ Basically, they are all sort of doing this because I think they get points and the more points they get, the more money they get paid. So they think, ‘I’m getting more points, I’m getting more money whether I do it or not. Whether I stay here and type on the computer, take notes of what she’s doing or whether I completely ignore her, I’m getting my points just by her being here.’ There is no actual pressure on them to do this.”*

Teachers

Institute Teachers versus Non-Institute Teachers

One participant noted a significant difference in working with teachers who had attended the Institute versus those who had not. Surprisingly, one participant noted more willingness from non-Institute teachers than from Institute teachers:

- *“The teachers who had not been to the Institute, they were like, ‘go for it,’ so you helped them to understand the problem and then you left – that was all they wanted. But at the other school the teachers who had been at the Institute were still sort of reluctant to [move forward] – and they would say they were going to, but then when I got there it hadn’t happened.”*

Conversely, another participant noted that his in-class expectations were met:

- *“With the non-Institute teachers I did do some anchor work, but it was never expected that they would then also teach. Whereas with the Institute teacher I worked with, it was understood that I was going to model, then we were going to co-teach, then she was going to do it herself.”*

Success Stories

During the focus group, TAs were invited to offer examples of breakthroughs they had witnessed in the classroom. Participants described stories of teacher improvement, often resulting from the Teaching Artists’ patience and persistence:

- *“There was one teacher that I felt was really open to wanting to learn to do the things she was really unsure of in the beginning. It was kindergarten and kind of a difficult class, and she was only there two days a week. It was not a good situation, but just by giving her...a little bit to work on she had success.”*
- *“Every week I said, ‘I am here to support you... and what do you need?’ Every week... I gave her a little bit more responsibility... and we worked it out so that she was doing more and more each week.”*
- *“I had one particular [teacher] who kept saying, ‘Well I know so much about the arts, but I’m so busy. So please help me. I know so much... and I could do this myself, but I’m so busy.’ And by the third time she said that I finally said, ‘you know, I respect that you’re busy, because we’re all busy. But I would really like to learn something from you...I feel like I want to grow as an artist too.’ She realized the partnership... [I] finally got her to get up there and do it.”*

Students

In response to queries addressing students' reactions to the program and any changes participants had observed in student responsiveness and learning, reactions were resoundingly positive. One commented, *"They love it."* Others responded with similar enthusiasm, noting that students learn best while having fun:

- *"The kids are pumped. Whatever you bring in, as long as it's well done and well thought out, the kids are so excited. To get access to novels through different avenues – through arts – they were into it. It was a love fest."*
- *"They don't realize they're learning. They're like, 'this is way better than when we have to learn stuff.' They have the poem, they know about the poem, they know about symbolism in the poem, they know similes, they know metaphors, they know all this stuff... they think, 'this is so much more fun than when we have to learn stuff.' And yet they've learned a ton of stuff. So it's really cool."*
- *"I think more than anything what we do is play."*

Administrative Support

When asked about administrative support within the school, participant responses were positive overall. Respondents did note that they benefited *most* from administrators who were willing to plan ahead and delegate responsibilities. As one participant expressed:

- *"We had a long planning meeting and before the planning meeting [the school administrator] had asked the teachers to set goals for what they wanted to do in class, so those teachers who actually had set the goals came in with the goals and then we met as a small group with the teachers that we were going to work with and we asked, 'what are your goals?' and then 'oh, okay, so what do you want to do? How do you think we should focus this whole thing?' And that really seemed to work very well."*

Music Center

Participants were asked to indicate what kinds of program improvements the Music Center could make in an effort to help teachers and students, as well as what sorts of changes can be made to better support Teaching Artists.

Teachers and Students

The most popular in-class improvement suggested by participants was the need for more professional development. For example:

- *"I think that is an essential, crucial step between the big Institute and when the classroom stuff starts to happen. You've got to have a big professional*

development, a couple of days and what would be great is if you did professional development together with the teachers at the Institute.”

- *“At the one school where the teachers were really participating a lot, I had gone in and done professional development with them. So I had already exposed all the teachers to what I was going to do...Whereas at the other school...they were supposed to have a professional development, but it never happened. And I think maybe if that had happened they would have come to the table with more of an expectation, more of an excitement. But since the professional development never happened, they were just like ‘well, I kind of remember some of the stuff from the summer, but I kind of don’t.’ So I think having a PD is huge. I think that made a big difference for me.”*

Teaching Artists

When focus group participants were asked for ways in which the Music Center might help support the Teaching Artists, the most popular responses requested technological support, financial support and increased time for planning:

- Provide a technological center where teaching artists could *“check out a video camera,”* or *“burn CDs.”*
- One participant reported the need for *“our own IT person.”*
- Almost all participants noted the need for a larger budget with which to buy materials. As one participant described, *“There’s no budget for workshops here. I mean, for materials. So I had to scrounge around for material.”* Another participant suggested that teaching artists be provided with a stipend for materials, up front.
- Many participants also mentioned that the Music Center could schedule more time for planning: *“I found myself really brainstorming and calling other artists to find out what was going on. So if the Music Center had a paid planning time when all the artists could get together while they are in the middle of this process, maybe three months in, two months – that would be good.”*
- *“I just think the Music Center should have a retreat for the artists. We did that before. It was the anniversary celebration, and we all met for three or four days in a row at Eagle Rock and it was like day camp.”*

Closing Thoughts

At the close of the focus group, Teaching Artists were asked for their parting thoughts. Overall, participants saw great value in the Music Center program and appreciated being part of its evolution.

- *“I absolutely just loved this program. It went beyond my wildest dreams.”*
- *“They [the Music Center] do evolve and I really respect that. They ask for feedback and then they actually listen to a lot of that feedback and they try to put it into action. I really do appreciate that.”*

- *“I do feel like they are constantly refining and adjusting the program, which I think is great.”*
- *“I do overall think that it was really, really valuable for me and for all of the teachers I worked with. I saw a great multitude of teachers, and they all learned and grew. Granted some grew a lot and some grew a little, but every single teacher I worked with grew and every single class that I was in the kids were so enthusiastic, and they would cheer when you walked in the room and they would know that this was the time that the teacher was going to break out of her regular teaching mode and turn to something different that gave them a little bit more freedom, and they loved that...I really loved being a part of the program. I learned a lot from the teachers, the kids, and I think it's just a really valuable thing, so I wanted to clarify that. Ten percent of complaints really doesn't in any way make me negative about the 90 percent that I enjoyed.”*

Summary of Teaching Artist Focus Group Findings

Teaching Artists overall were satisfied with the program and reported a positive response from both teachers and students. Most felt they would have benefited from additional structure, scheduled planning/debriefing, and compensation for scheduled planning/debriefing. Moreover, TAs would like to see more Professional Development added to the program, as well as Institute training geared toward preparing TAs and teachers for the reality of the classroom. Additionally, TAs thought they would benefit from extra technological and material support from the Music Center.

Conclusions and Recommendations

As can be discerned from the NEA ACT III evaluation, the program has demonstrated positive outcomes for participating teachers, students, and Teaching Artists. A summary of the evaluation findings is presented below, followed by recommendations for program improvement.

Summary of Findings

Summary Statistics

- TA classroom visits were approximately an hour in length, on average.
- Theatre was the art form of focus for 59 percent of the in-class lessons, almost all of which centered on *On the Pulse of Morning*, the 2007 summer Institute anchor work.
- Teachers and TAs agreed that the teachers were well-prepared for the classroom visits.
- Visits were used most often for TA modeling of lessons. Classroom teachers led less than 20 percent of the lessons, with TA observation and coaching.
- The majority of the teachers rated the quality of support received from the TAs as excellent (88 percent). Qualitative interview data supported this finding.
- According to the majority of the teachers and TAs, students were very engaged in the lessons (88 percent and 91 percent, respectively).

Teachers

- As a result of their participation, teachers learned to be more flexible with the model lesson plans and student management.
- In addition, teachers added new skills to their instructional toolkits. Teacher commentary provided evidence that skills learned through the NEA ACT III program were applied across disciplines. Teachers used theatre games, puppetry, and movement to engage and motivate students in language arts, social studies, and science.

Teaching Artists

- No single support modality (modeling, co-planning, co-teaching, teacher demonstration, etc.) was preferred by the teachers. Rather, teachers appreciated that the TAs were able to offer a mix of modalities, finding different types of assistance to be more helpful for different purposes.
- Similarly, teachers did not identify an ideal number of TA classroom visits. They did emphasize the importance of scheduling visits in coordination with the school calendar and events.

Students

- Participating students demonstrated creative, emotional, and social growth. According to their teachers, students took the program seriously and demonstrated an increased appreciation for the arts. They also exhibited positive behavior changes, were more outgoing and confident, and worked cooperatively with their peers during the lessons.

Administrative Support

- The quality of administrative support that teachers received from their principals was described as “outstanding” and “phenomenal.”

Recommendations

Institute for Educators

The summer Institute was well-received by participating teachers who appreciated the prepared lesson plans and departed feeling well-prepared and inspired to implement the anchor work with their students. One teacher specifically noted how the positive impact of the Institute trainings builds through participation in consecutive years.

Teachers reported that the quantity of information presented at the summer Institutes was at times overwhelming, but also indicated that the content was very useful. They suggested that opportunities to practice the model lessons, and additional guidance on how to adjust the model lessons to different grade levels would be helpful. It was also suggested that a video of the Institute would be helpful in grade level planning and to extend the utility of the Institute among teachers who could not attend.

TAs recommended that the Institute content could be improved to better train teachers to implement anchor work lessons with their students. One artist suggested that it could be beneficial to focus on a single art form over a multi-year span to deepen teachers’ skill in a particular area of arts expertise.

Reconvenings

The Reconvenings were also well-received by the teachers. They enjoyed networking with their colleagues and the sense of community that the meetings fostered. Some teachers, however, felt that the Reconvenings were redundant and that only one was necessary.

Program Structure

Constructive feedback provided by the Teaching Artists suggested that the program would benefit from increased structure. A clear flow of in-class lesson use in which teachers progress from observing the TAs as they model lessons to presenting their own anchor work lessons while TAs observe and provide feedback was recommended by the TAs. It is important that the teachers have a clear understanding that the goal of

the program is that they learn (and practice) teaching anchor work lessons to their students. They suggested that providing teachers with an opportunity to teach model lessons during the summer Institute might facilitate the intended teacher growth process.

TAs also related that the model lessons should be presented to participating teachers as a loose framework that can be adjusted for individual teacher/classroom needs. They made this suggestion after noting that some teachers struggled to implement the model lesson series *exactly* as it is described in the curriculum.

Scheduling

Recommendations were also made for scheduling improvements. Teachers and TAs alike related that there was insufficient time for planning and debriefing. Telephone calls, emails, and short face-to-face meetings prior to or preceding in-class lessons limited the ability of TAs and teachers to engage in meaningful dialogue about the anchor work or how to effectively collaborate. However, some teachers indicated that the short time made available for planning/debriefing was sufficient, while TAs reported experiencing difficulties accommodating teachers' busy schedules, often using their lunch period to meet.

TAs also requested that the Music Center make an effort to schedule classroom visits with a narrow span of grade levels; jumping among 2nd, 4th, and 6th grade classrooms in a single day was a challenge.

Professional Development

TAs requested professional development to improve their skills in effectively encouraging teachers who are resistant to teach their own anchor work lessons. They also recommended that additional PD be offered to teachers at the start of the school year to reinforce summer Institute content.

Resources

Teachers and TAs requested funds to purchase materials for their lessons. TAs also requested technical support, such as a center where they could check out a video camera or burn CDs, and suggested that an opportunity for TAs to meet and collaborate mid-year would be helpful. Teachers indicated that a website with resources and tips would assist them in their efforts. Successful strategies and lesson plans from teachers participating in previous program years were also requested.

Appendices

Appendix A: Teacher Telephone Interview Protocol

Appendix B: Teaching Artist Focus Group Moderator's Guide

Appendix C: Teacher Journal

Appendix D: Teaching Artist Reflective Survey

Appendix A: Teacher Telephone Interview Protocol

Music Center Moderator's Guide for Teachers

I. INTRODUCTION

My name is _____. I am from the Evaluation and Training Institute, the non-profit research and consulting firm contracted by the Music Center to conduct the evaluation of the NEA/SGVPSP projects. The purpose of this interview is to gather your attitudes and opinions about the program. More specifically, the interview will address the summer Institute for Educators, Teaching Artist visits, your experience as a participant in the program, your students' reactions, and suggestions for program improvement.

I would like to record our conversation so that I can be sure to accurately capture your comments. However, the interview will be confidential- I will never tie your comments to your name. Do you have any questions before we begin?

II. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

- 1) How long have you been a teacher?
- 2) How long have you taught at this school?

III. SUMMER INSTITUTE AND TEACHER PREPARATION

- 3) Why did you decide to participate in the program? What did you hope to get out of it? What were your goals for the program?
- 4) I understand that you have participated in the program during the XX years. During which program years did you attend the summer Institute? How effectively did the summer Institute prepare you for your role in the program? After leaving the summer Institute, did you feel prepared to implement anchor work-based lessons with your students? If you participated in any program year without having attended the summer Institute, how prepared did you feel without it?

NOTE: The Institute for Educators is to immerse teachers as "reflective arts learners" in the anchor work study and content knowledge of the arts disciplines. The follow-up visits are for "teacher-artist collaborative partnerships" that focus on implementation of the Music Center's model curriculum unit lessons. Teachers do not have to write lessons now. Only in 2005/06. Each year, we've worked to make the Model Lessons more teacher-friendly and do-able for inexperienced arts people.

- 5) Do you have any recommendations to improve the Institute's 5-day intensive PD experience combined with the series of artist partnership follow-up visits to implement the model lessons? Probes: length, content, structure, strategies for teacher-artist relationship-building/partnering?

IV. PROGRAM STRUCTURE

- 3) I understand that you received XX TA visits during the XX program year, XX visits during the XX program year, etc. Did you receive an adequate number of visits to achieve your goals each year? What is the optimum or ideal number of sessions or session length needed? What is the minimum?

TEACHING ARTISTS

- 4) Over the course of the program, you received different types of support from the Teaching Artist(s), such as co-planning, modeling, co-teaching, debriefing, assessing and observations and feedback. Which types of assistance were most helpful? For what purpose?
- 5) How would you describe the quality of support you received from the Teaching Artist(s)? What did the Teaching Artist(s) do that was most helpful to you?
- 6) Do you have any recommendations for the Teaching Artists so that they can improve the quality of assistance they provide?
- 7) Have you had sufficient opportunity for planning and debriefing meetings or exchanges with the Teaching Artist(s)? What other means of communication and problem-solving did you and/or your partner work out?

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

- 8) What challenges have you experienced during the program?
- 9) I would also like to hear a success story- an example of a breakthrough you experienced during the program.
- 10) Have you applied any skills or strategies learned in the Music Center program to your regular curriculum? If so, please describe.

STUDENTS

- 11) How have your students reacted to the program? What changes have you observed in your students' responsiveness, social growth and learning?

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

- 12) Please describe the quality of administrative support you received from your principal during the program. Are there any ways that your administrators could have better supported the program at your school?

MUSIC CENTER

- 13) What can the Music Center do to improve the program?
- 14) What can the Music Center do to better support you in your role? Probes: resources, scheduling?

VIII. CLOSING

- 15) Is there anything else you would like to add? Questions I should have asked but didn't? Additional recommendations to improve the program?

That concludes our interview. Thank you very much for your valuable input and participation!

Appendix B: Teaching Artist Focus Group Moderator's Guide

Music Center
National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)
Moderator's Guide for Teaching Artists

I. INTRODUCTION

My name is Katie Winters. I am from the Evaluation and Training Institute, the non-profit research and consulting firm contracted by the Music Center to conduct the evaluation of the NEA project. The purpose of today's focus group discussion is to gather your attitudes and opinions about the program.

II. GROUND RULES

Before we begin I am going to lay out some ground rules. The rules will help us to complete the focus group in the available time, and also to ensure that I hear feedback from everyone who would like to provide it.

- All of your answers will remain confidential. Your names will not be linked to your comments in any reports.
- There are no "right" or "wrong" answers. I welcome everyone's opinion.
- It is okay to say, "I don't know."
- I will be audio-recording the discussion to help us correctly recall the discussion. In addition, Jenna Blough will be taking notes. To ensure that we are able to accurately capture your comments, please let someone finish speaking before you begin.
- The discussion will last approximately one hour, and to keep things moving, there will be no breaks. However, you can leave to use the restroom at any time. (Explain where the restroom is located.)
- Do you have any questions before we begin?

III. SUMMER INSTITUTE AND TEACHER PREPARATION

- 1) (Preface question with an explanation of teachers' roles. Explain that in Year 1 teachers are expected to be a "collaborative partner with some practice of strategies," while in Year 2 the teacher is expected to take on the role of a "facilitator of student arts learning" with some artist modeling, co-teaching, and teacher demos). How effectively does the Summer Institute prepare teachers for their role in the program?

- 2) Do you have any recommendations to improve the Summer Institute? Probes: length, content, structure, strategies for teacher-artist relationship-building/partnering?

IV. PROGRAM STRUCTURE

- 3) I understand that the number and length of the in-class sessions has varied across schools and individual teachers. How does your use of the lessons change depending on how many meetings you have and how long they are? What is the optimum or ideal number of sessions or session length needed? What is the minimum?

TEACHING ARTIST ROLE

- 4) What insights have you gained into your own process? Have you made any changes to your approach? Probes: Have you identified any key directives or activities? How do you build on teachers' strengths?
- 5) How were you able to draw teachers into some level of practice of arts strategies or teaching lessons? Probes: How have you responded to teachers who are hesitant to co-teach or teach on their own? How do you increase teachers' confidence? What strategies have been most successful?
- 6) How have you used planning and debriefing meetings as you work with teachers? Have you had sufficient opportunity for planning and debriefing meetings or exchanges? What other means of communication and problem-solving did you and/or your partner work out?
- 7) To what extent has the program been a collaborative venture between you and the teachers?

TEACHERS

- 8) **OPTIONAL (time permitting):** Which of your roles (observing, modeling, and co-teaching) has proven most important to facilitate teachers' abilities to teach anchor work-based lessons?
- 9) What challenges are teachers experiencing? How have you responded to the challenges and which strategies have been effective? What can teachers do to make a greater contribution to their own learning process?
- 10) I would also like to hear some success stories- examples of breakthroughs you've observed in the classroom.

STUDENTS

- 11) How are students reacting to the program? What changes have you observed in student responsiveness and learning?

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

- 12) How have the school's administrators contributed to the program? Do you have any suggestions for administrators to better support/implement the program at their schools? How might administrators help to define and support the roles and goals of teachers and their artist partners?

MUSIC CENTER

- 13) What can the Music Center do to improve the program for teachers and students?
- 14) What can the Music Center do to better support you in your role? Probes: resources, technology, scheduling?

VIII. CLOSING

- 15) Is there anything else you would like to add? Questions I should have asked but didn't?

That concludes our focus group. Thank you very much for your valuable input and participation!

TEACHERS

- 8) What components of the program make the greatest contribution to teachers' abilities to teach effective, anchor work-based lessons? Probes: Summer Institute, planning meetings with Teaching Artists, classroom sessions, debriefing sessions, Reconvenings?
- 9) **OPTIONAL (time permitting):** Which of your roles (observing, modeling, and co-teaching) has proven most important to facilitate teachers' abilities to teach anchor work-based lessons?
- 10) What challenges are teachers experiencing? How have you responded to the challenges and which strategies have been effective? What can teachers do to make a greater contribution to their own learning process?

STUDENTS

- 11) How are students reacting to the program? What changes have you observed in student responsiveness and learning?

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

- 12) How have the school's administrators contributed to the program? Do you have any suggestions for administrators to better support/implement the program at their schools? How might administrators help to define and support the roles and goals of teachers and their artist partners?

MUSIC CENTER

- 13) What can the Music Center do to improve the program for teachers and students?
- 14) What can the Music Center do to better support you in your role? Probes: resources, technology, scheduling?

VIII. CLOSING

- 15) Is there anything else you would like to add? Questions I should have asked but didn't?

That concludes our focus group. Thank you very much for your valuable input and participation!

Appendix C: Teacher Journal

Please complete a journal entry following EACH lesson with your Teaching Artist. Thanks!

**Music Center: Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles County
Teacher Journal 2007-2008**

1. Your name: _____
2. Artist visit # _____ 3. Which lesson is this in your sequence of lessons? _____
4. Artist partner's name: _____
5. School: _____

6. Date of visit:

						2	0	0	
Month			Day			Year			

7. Grade level of students (please check all that apply):

- ₁ Kindergarten ₂ 1st ₃ 2nd ₄ 3rd ₅ 4th ₆ 5th ₇ 6th

8. Type of assistance provided by the Teaching Artist:

- ₁ Co-planning ₂ Modeling ₃ Co-teaching
₄ Artist observation and coaching
₅ Other (please be specific): _____

9. Quality of the assistance provided: ₁ Poor ₂ Fair ₃ Good ₄ Excellent

10. How prepared were you to implement this lesson?

- ₁ Not at all prepared ₂ Somewhat prepared ₃ Very prepared

11. How did your students react to the lesson?

- ₁ Unengaged ₂ Somewhat engaged ₃ Very engaged

12. Please use the table below to list up to four learning goals you set for the lesson and then use a check to indicate the extent to which your students achieved each goal.

Goals	Extent to which each goal was achieved		
	Not at all	Somewhat	Completely
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

Please continue on the following page.

Please complete a journal entry following EACH lesson with your Teaching Artist. Thanks!

13. Please use the space below to describe any new insights into the arts teaching process that you gained during this lesson.

14. Please use the space below to describe any challenges or issues you faced as you taught this lesson.

15. What are the next steps? Will you adapt, re-teach, or do anything differently?

Appendix D: Teaching Artist Reflective Survey

Please complete a Reflective Survey entry following EACH in-class session. Thanks!

**Music Center: Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles County
Teaching Artist Reflective Survey 2007-2008**

1. Your name: _____

2. Artist visit # (e.g. the number of the visit with this **particular** teacher) _____

3. Your position (please check one): ₁ MC Artist ₂ MC staff

4. Site visited: _____

5. Name of teacher observed: _____

6. Date of visit:

						2	0	0	
Month			Day			Year			

7. Duration of visit: _____ hour(s) _____ minutes

8. Subject area(s) being taught (please check all that apply):

₁ Dance ₂ Theatre ₃ Music ₄ Puppetry Arts ₅ Visual Arts

9. Setting: ₁ Classroom ₂ Auditorium ₃ Other: _____

10. Anchor work used as focus of the lesson:

- ₁ The Negro Speaks of Rivers (NEA)
- ₂ There is a Time (NEA)
- ₃ On the Pulse of the Morning (NEA/SGVPSP)
- ₄ Sleeping Beauty (SGVPSP)

11. Type of assistance provided:

- ₁ Co-planning ₂ Modeling ₃ Co-teaching
- ₄ Artist observation and coaching
- ₅ Other (Please be specific): _____

12. How did students react to the lesson?

- ₁ Unengaged ₂ Somewhat engaged ₃ Very engaged

Please continue on the following page.

Please complete a Reflective Survey entry following EACH in-class session. Thanks!

13. How prepared was the teacher to implement this lesson?

₁ Not at all prepared ₂ Somewhat prepared ₃ Very prepared

14. Please use the space below to describe any successes you observed as the teacher implemented the lesson.

15. Please use the space below to describe any challenges or issues the teacher faced in implementing the lesson.

15a. How did you work with the teacher to address these challenges? Please indicate whether your assistance was successful and why.

16. Please use the space below to describe any new insights you gained into how to better support teachers to implement an anchor work lesson series.