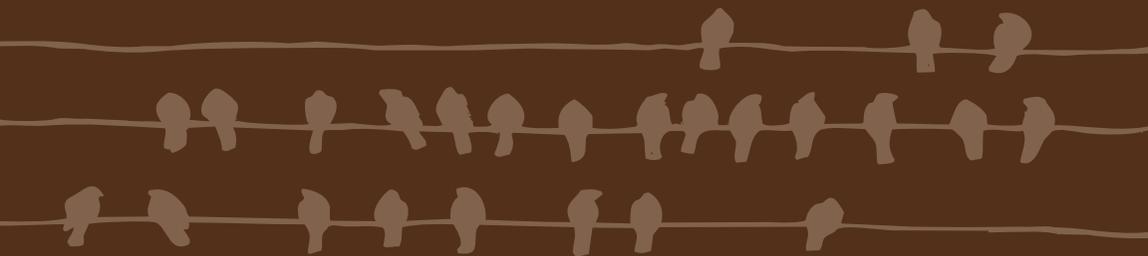


EVALUATION REPORT

ARTS CORPS 2005-2006



This report reflects the results of an internal evaluation process facilitated by an evaluation consultant. Arts Corps staff worked in partnership with Mary Murray, MEMconsultants, to develop an evaluation plan, design data collection instruments and collect data; MEMconsultants conducted data analysis and compiled this report; edits and suggestions on report drafts were provided by Arts Corps staff, and are reflected in this report as the consultant deemed appropriate.

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SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

ABOUT ARTS CORPS

Arts Corps is a nonprofit arts education program located in Seattle and serving King County. Founded in May 2000, Arts Corps provides quality after-school arts education classes free of charge to youth, particularly in underserved, low to middle income neighborhoods. The program recruits and places experienced teaching artists in a variety of existing in-school and after-school programs, where they provide structured art instruction in a range of art forms for young people in grades K-12.

Arts Corps has identified evaluation as integral to successful programming. It has conducted evaluations of its programs every year, and has continually refined its evaluation plan. This year Arts Corps implemented a smaller pilot of a more comprehensive evaluation plan with a narrowed focus on three key goals:

- 1) Provide access to quality arts programming.
- 2) Foster creativity among youth participants.
- 3) Elevate the status of teaching artists in the community.

To study how well Arts Corps' programming met these goals, we surveyed students, parents and teaching artists on questions related to these goals.

What follows is a brief summary of our methodology and an analysis based on the outcomes of these surveys.

METHODOLOGY

Arts Corps implemented its pilot evaluation program through several measurement tools, targeting different audiences and categories of information. Evaluation efforts measured Arts Corps' efforts toward fulfilling all three goals. For this year's pilot, five main tools were used to gather information:

1. ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES CHECKLIST

A small representative group, including staff and a board member, completed an organizational practices checklist to assess how Arts Corps designs and delivers programming in relation to identified best practices. Each rated Arts Corps on 58 items using a four-point scale ranging from inadequate to exemplary. Highlights of program accomplishments related to organizational structure,

program design and class delivery are derived from this assessment tool unless otherwise specified.

2. PROGRAM RECORDS REVIEW

Arts Corps keeps careful records of class length, student enrollment, attendance and teacher-student ratio. Program highlights related to these are derived from a review of these internal records.

3. STUDENT SURVEY

Students completed a survey at the end of the spring quarter. Based on piloting, two distinct formats of the survey were developed: one for elementary school aged students, and one for middle and high school aged students. Older students received a longer survey that asked students to respond to items on a four-point scale; younger students rated items on a three-point scale. Students were also asked open-ended questions. Only students ages eight and up completed the survey; any survey that had no variability between answers was considered invalid and not analyzed. A total of 164 valid surveys were collected and analyzed, representing 20% of students taking classes in spring quarter.

The survey asked questions about classroom characteristics and learning as a result of class participation, and included a self-report about their personal creativity. All program accomplishments based on student reports were gathered from this survey.

4. TEACHING ARTIST SURVEY

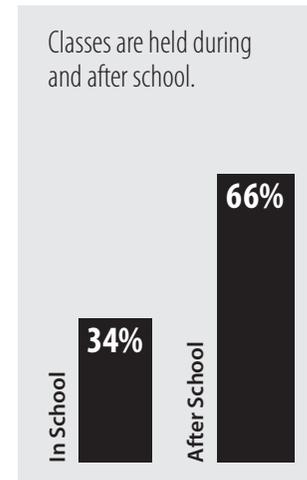
Teaching artists were asked to take an online survey at the end of spring quarter. Questions addressed all three goals of the program, classroom practices and their attitudes toward Arts Corps.

5. PARENT SURVEY

Parents were interviewed at Arts Corps' two student showcases in May. Questions addressed how Arts Corps classes fostered creativity.

SECTION II: MEASUREMENT

GOAL: PROVIDE ACCESS TO QUALITY ARTS PROGRAMMING



In response to requirements associated with the No Child Left Behind Act, schools across the nation have opted to make more time for reading and math by cutting time for other subjects; one recent study reveals that art and music have been cut in 22% of elementary schools nationwide over the last four years.¹ These cuts disproportionately occur at schools serving low-income communities, while affluent districts have generally chosen to maintain a rich body of electives that include art classes.² Arts Corps remedies this inequality of opportunity by increasing access to arts programming for those who would otherwise not have such options.

Arts Corps hires professional teaching artists and places them in a variety of youth-serving settings in King County, where they provide structured art instruction. Art classes are offered free of charge to youth in a wide variety of

¹ "From the Capital to the Classroom: Year 2 of the No Child Left Behind Act." Center on Education Policy, 2004.

² Kozol, Jonathan. *The Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America*. Crown Publishers, 2005.

subjects including dance, music, theatre, poetry and visual arts. These free arts classes are held in existing school-day and after-school programs at facilities such as community centers, youth organizations, and public or parochial schools in primarily underserved, low to middle income neighborhoods.

- Arts Corps classes are offered during fall, winter and spring quarters, with limited programming offered during the summer.
- During the 2005-2006 year, Arts Corps partnered with 30 organizations to provide 139 classes to over 1,450 young people.³
- Because approximately 39% of students enrolled in two or more Arts Corps classes during this year, there were 2,377 distinct enrollments in quarterly arts classes during this period.
- At least 60% of the young people served at partner facilities qualify for the free or reduced school lunch program, an indicator of financial need.

Exhibitions and performances are an important component of Arts Corps programming, as they provide students in Arts Corps classes an opportunity to

proudly display their newly acquired art skills and provide the community a chance to see the gifts and talents young people have to offer. This year, Arts Corps sponsored or supported 68 such events at the neighborhood facilities, as well as at Seattle museums and theaters.

Arts Corps intentionally designs and delivers programs in a way that is consistent with or pioneers best practices in arts programming. These best practices are identified through ongoing review of research in the fields of arts education and youth development,⁴ extensive communication and information sharing with local and national professionals and arts programs, and staff reflection on experience.

Arts Corps' organizational structure is an exemplary model of best practices in the field of arts programming for young people. Program leadership, oversight and administration are

³ A "class" is defined as one quarter of programming. In many instances, the same teacher remained in the same setting for three quarters in a row, in effect delivering one year-long class; however, for the sake of consistency in accounting and reporting, such a circumstance is counted as three distinct quarterly classes.

⁴ Self-Assessment Instrument in "Powerful Voices: Developing High Impact Arts Program for Teens." Surdna Foundation, 2002. (http://www.surdna.org/usr_doc/powerfulvoices-eng.pdf)
Berkas, Thomas H. and Kathryn L. Hong. *First Steps in Evaluation: Basic Tools for Asset-Building Initiatives*. Search Institute, 2002.

provided by eight employees. Positions include an executive director, deputy director, program director, community investment director, classroom support manager, community partnerships manager, finance manager, and volunteer coordinator/program assistant. Support of 80 volunteers, hundreds of individual donors, 14 corporations and 25 foundations provides the resources necessary for Arts Corps to exist and thrive.

The organization's mission and vision create a powerful foundation for artistic and youth development. Organizational practices foster youth empowerment and independent voice. Personnel practices are consistent with those of healthy youth-serving arts organizations.

Arts Corps has been recognized nationally as an after-school program that excels in demonstrating best practices. This year Arts Corps was chosen by the National Partnership for Quality Afterschool Learning for exemplifying best practices. The National Partnership for Quality Afterschool Learning helps state education agencies and local practitioners develop high-quality, bal-

anced programming to engage student learning. Nationally, 1,600 programs were reviewed, and only 36 were selected; Arts Corps stood out as one of only seven arts programs selected that works to improve student achievement.

Arts Corps' program design consistently demonstrates satisfactory alignment with best practices in the field, and often exceeds these standards. Arts Corps programs are designed to eliminate barriers to student participation, resulting in high attendance rates in most classes.

Middle and high school students report that this class was a positive experience:

Always	74%
Often	18%
Sometimes or Never	8%

- 81% percent of students participating in after-school programs attended at least half of the classes.
- Lower attendance rates are attributed to students who joined the class later in a quarter, those who moved away during the quarter and those who experienced barriers to participation, such as competing activities and family obligations.
- Interestingly, middle and high school students, who have the most freedom of choice, reported extremely high satisfaction rates with their participation in the after-school program.

Class schedules are established to allow sufficient time for full engagement in artistic activities.

- The typical after-school class met for 90 minutes two times a week over eight weeks, for a total of 24 classroom hours.
- The typical in-school class met for one hour once a week over ten weeks, totaling 10 classroom hours.
- Overall, individual class schedules varied to accommodate the needs of facility partners, with sessions of one to three hours in length and a quarterly class meeting four to 22 sessions.
- Most of these classes were offered two or three quarters in a row, allowing for continuous engagement over much or all of the school year.
- 42% of classes ran for all three quarters; 17% of classes ran for two quarters; and 41% of the classes ran for one quarter only.

Opportunities for ongoing student participation extend beyond continuous classes at the same site, and program leaders take practical steps to vest ownership of the program in students. Arts Corps also identifies this as an area where work can be done to bolster efforts to these ends.

- Students can enroll in an advanced art class.

- Students who show particular aptitude or leadership can become a teaching assistant.
- Arts Corps actively seeks ways to involve youth and enhance youth leadership skills through volunteering and internship roles. Students have responded well to these re-engagement opportunities.
- Students influence curriculum, as the progress of the learning influences what happens next in the classroom.

Small-group interaction between teaching artists, students and staff is a central aspect of the program.

- The median ratio of teaching artists to students is 1:9 in Arts Corps classes, much higher than in normal classroom settings, reflecting the intention to provide each student with personal attention. (This figure includes teaching assistants, who assisted in 58% of classes.)
- The teaching artists and students work together consistently and frequently, and the program is designed to promote mentoring relationships between teaching artists and students.

Attention is given to program planning and evaluation as ways to further develop effective programming. Programming is designed with attention to the relationship with parents/guardians and the local cultural and community context.

Arts Corps' class delivery typically demonstrates exemplary alignment with best practices in the field. The

organizational practices checklist revealed that high expectations of students are maintained in Arts Corps classes. At the same time, support and encouragement are given to students without diluting the emphasis on high standards. The program provides a trusting and caring atmosphere for young people, stimulating student confidence to take risks.

Youth participant feedback gathered through an end-of-quarter survey provides further evidence that the organizational checklist findings are valid.

Elementary school students report that this class challenged them to be a better artist:

Often	53%
Sometimes	18%
Never	8%

Elementary school students report that this class was a safe place to try new things:

Often	68%
Sometimes	26%
Never	6%

Middle and high school students report that this class challenged them to be a better artist:

Always or Often	77%
Sometimes	14%
Never	9%

Middle and high school students report that this class was a safe place to try new things:

Always or Often	93%
Sometimes	5%
Never	2%

Arts Corps classes provide personal attention and opportunities for small group work.

- Class sizes are limited, typically ranging from six to 25 students depending on the subject area and site.
- The median class size is 12 for after-school classes and 16 for in-school classes.
- Students report receiving personal attention, working in teams and feeling included.

Elementary school students report that their teaching artist gave them personal attention:

Often	37%
Sometimes	49%
Never	14%

Elementary school students report that this class encouraged them to work in a team:

Often	39%
Sometimes	52%
Never	9%

Elementary school students report that their teaching artist made them feel included:

Often	66%
Sometimes	28%
Never	6%

Middle and high school students report that their teaching artist gave them personal attention:

Always or Often	81%
Sometimes	11%
Never	8%

Middle and high school students report that this class encouraged them to work in a team:

Always or Often	79%
Sometimes	11%
Never	10%

Middle and high school students report that their teaching artist made them feel included:

Always or Often	83%
Sometimes	10%
Never	7%

Students report that Arts Corps classes foster artistic and personal development.

The program structure and curriculum provide opportunities for students to build artistic competencies, and students report success toward this end.

Elementary school students report that they know new ways to make art:

A Great Deal	70%
Somewhat	23%
Not at All	7%

Elementary school students report that they know new words and ideas about art:

A Great Deal	45%
Somewhat	43%
Not at All	12%

Elementary school students report that they can recognize what makes well-done art:

A Great Deal	64%
Somewhat	27%
Not at All	9%

Elementary school students report that they can express their ideas and feelings through art:

A Great Deal	52%
Somewhat	32%
Not at All	16%

Middle and high school school students report that they know new art skills and techniques :

A Great Deal	68%
Somewhat	17%
A Little Bit or Not at All	15%

Middle and high school school students report that they know new art vocabulary and concepts:

A Great Deal	42%
Somewhat	35%
A Little Bit or Not at All	23%

Middle and high school school students report that they can recognize what makes well-done art:

A Great Deal	72%
Somewhat	20%
A Little Bit or Not at All	8%

Middle and high school school students report that they can express their ideas and feelings through art:

A Great Deal	67%
Somewhat	19%
A Little Bit or Not at All	14%

Students report increased personal competencies are a result of participation in Arts Corps classes.

Elementary school students report that they keep trying when things are not working out:

A Great Deal	52%
Somewhat	34%
Not at All	14%

Elementary school students report that they can work well with others or in teams:

A Great Deal	54%
Somewhat	38%
Not at All	8%

Elementary school students report that they know what their unique talents are:

A Great Deal	59%
Somewhat	27%
Not at All	14%

The program structure and curriculum also provide opportunities for children and youth to explore their personal values and competencies.

Middle and high school students report that they keep trying when things are not working out:

A Great Deal	71%
Somewhat	15%
A Little Bit or Not at All	14%

Middle and high school students report that they can work well with others or in teams:

A Great Deal	54%
Somewhat	32%
A Little Bit or Not at All	14%

Middle and high school students report that they know what their unique talents are:

A Great Deal	60%
Somewhat	29%
A Little Bit or Not at All	11%

GOAL: FOSTERING CREATIVE HABITS AMONG YOUTH

Arts Corps asserts that fostering creative habits among youth participants is of great value to individual youth and society as a whole. Notwithstanding the wide variety of class types delivered by Arts Corps, each encourages youth participants to practice creative habits within the class and in their life.

Creativity is a term used in many different ways by disparate groups, ranging from educators and psychologists concerned with human development to artists concerned with their vocation to corporations concerned with productivity and innovation.⁵ Arts Corps defines creativity in the following ways:

- Creativity encompasses character traits, behaviors, practices and habits.
- Everyone has the ability to be creative; it is not a gift endowed only on certain people.
- Creativity can be nurtured and developed, and creativity can be ignored and left to atrophy.

- Creativity includes four clusters of habits: generating ideas, digging deeper into ideas, demonstrating courage and openness to explore new ideas, and listening to one's "inner voice."
- The practice of creative habits helps develop and grow creative potential.
- Certain settings or environments can encourage or foster creative habits.
- Creative habits often result in creative products.
- Creativity is useful in many settings, not only in the practice of fine arts. Creative habits foster better school performance, better social skills, and better workplace performance. They may well foster better personal and spiritual development.

⁵ An ongoing review of psychological and educational research about creativity informs Arts Corps' definition of creativity.

Assessing Creativity: A Guide for Educators. The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented, December 2002.
Costa, Arthur L. and Bena Kallick (ed.s). *Discovering and Exploring Habits of Mind.* Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2000.

Maslow, A. H. *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature.* Penguin Books, 1971.

MacKinnon, D. W. *In Search of Human Effectiveness: Identifying and Developing Creativity.* Creative Education Foundation, 1978.

Students report increased creativity as a result of participation in Arts Corps classes.

Elementary school students report that because of this class they are more creative:

A Great Deal	62%
Somewhat	33%
Not at All	5%

Elementary school students report that their teacher inspired them to be more creative:

Often	71%
Sometimes	23%
Never	6%

Middle and high school students report that because of this class they are more creative:

A Great Deal	56%
Somewhat	33%
A Little Bit or Not at All	11%

Middle and high school students report that their teacher inspired them to be more creative:

Always	59%
Often	26%
Sometimes or Never	15%

Parents report that “As a result of this [Arts Corps] class, I believe my child grew more creative or got in touch with existing creativity”.

Parents of elementary school students believe their child grew more creative:

Very Much	67%
Somewhat	33%
Not at All or Don’t Know	0%

Parents of middle and high school students believe their child grew more creative:

Very Much	70%
Somewhat	30%
Not at All or Don’t Know	0%

Teaching artists intentionally fostered creative habits in Arts Corps classes.

Teaching artists report that they intentionally worked to foster creativity among the students:

Quite a Bit, An Extreme Amount, or Biggest Priority	95%
Some of the Time	5%
None of the Time	0%

CREATIVITY EXPRESSED IN A VARIETY OF WAYS

Four main areas of creative habits were identified by a team of researchers who reviewed the literature in the field of education: Generating Ideas, Digging Deeper into Ideas, Demonstrating Openness and Courage to Explore Ideas, and Listening to One’s Inner Voice.⁶ The practices reflected in these clusters of habits map closely on to the everyday practices of professional artists. Arts Corps teaching artists develop classroom lessons, facilitate classroom discussion and, through the art form they teach, encourage students to develop these habits individually.

GENERATING IDEAS

Most people think about the development of new or unique ideas as a product of creativity. In fact, what individuals do when they develop new ideas includes many different habits, including quickly brainstorming a large number of ideas, identifying novel ideas, identifying useful ideas, shifting the direction of one’s thinking as necessary and further developing ideas to make them complete.

Parents report that “As a result of this [Arts Corps] class, I believe my child learned to generate new ideas”.

Parents of elementary school students believe their child learned to generate new ideas:

Very Much	61%
Somewhat	33%
Not at All or Don’t Know	5%

Parents of middle and high school students believe their child learned to generate new ideas:

Very Much	60%
Somewhat	30%
Not at All or Don’t Know	0%

Arts Corps students perceive themselves as young people who generate new ideas. Students surveyed at the end of the spring quarter were asked to assess themselves in relation to different aspects of creativity. 72% of elementary aged students and 62% of middle and high school aged students reported that one or both of the following statements describe them *exactly*:

- I often come up with unique or unusual ideas.
- I like thinking about different possibilities.

⁶ *Assessing Creativity: A Guide for Educators*. The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented, December 2002.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO IDEAS

Another important aspect of creativity is the ability to dig deeper into ideas, something closely akin to critical thinking. What individuals do when they dig deeper into ideas includes habits related to analyzing, synthesizing, reorganizing, redefining and evaluating ideas.

Parents report that “As a result of this [Arts Corps] class, I believe my child learned to use critical thinking skills”.

Parents of elementary school students believe their child learned to use critical thinking skills:

Very Much	38%
Somewhat	50%
Not at All or Don't Know	11%

Parents of middle and high school students believe their child learned to use critical thinking skills:

Very Much	70%
Somewhat	20%
Not at All or Don't Know	10%

Arts Corps students perceive themselves as young people who dig deeper into ideas. 73% of elementary aged students and 65% of middle and high school aged students surveyed reported that one or both of the following statements describe them *exactly*:

- I like to dig deeper into ideas.
- I like to think about ideas carefully.

DEMONSTRATING OPENNESS AND COURAGE TO EXPLORE IDEAS

One's interests, experiences, attitudes and self-confidence are important aspects of creativity. Habits clustered as aspects of openness and courage to explore ideas include those related to aesthetic sensitivity, curiosity, sense of humor, playfulness, imagination, responsible risk-taking, willingness to grow and openness to experience.

Parents report that “As a result of this [Arts Corps] class, I believe my child has learned to demonstrate openness and courage to explore ideas”.

Parents of elementary school students believe their child has learned to demonstrate openness and courage to explore ideas:

Very Much	67%
Somewhat	33%
Not at All or Don't Know	0%

Parents of middle and high school students believe their child has learned to demonstrate openness and courage to explore ideas:

Very Much	80%
Somewhat	20%
Not at All or Don't Know	0%

Arts Corps students perceive themselves as having openness and courage to explore. 77% of elementary aged students and 81% percent of middle and high school aged students surveyed reported that one or both of the following statements describe them *exactly*:

- I have openness and courage to explore.
- I enjoy having new experiences.

LISTENING TO ONE'S INNER VOICE

A solid foundation of personal understanding, a vision of where you want to go and a commitment to do what it takes to get there are fundamental to creative production in the arts and in life in general. Creative habits characterized as aspects of listening to one's inner voice include persistence or perseverance, self-direction, introspection, concentration, energy and work ethic.

Parents report that “As a result of this [Arts Corps] class, I believe my child has learned to listen to their inner voice”.

Parents of elementary school students believe their child has learned to listen to their inner voice:

Very Much	44%
Somewhat	44%
Not at All or Don't Know	11%

Parents of middle and high school students believe their child has learned to listen to their inner voice:

Very Much	90%
Somewhat	0%
Not at All or Don't Know	10%

Arts Corps students report listening to their inner voice. 84% of elementary aged students and 68% of middle and high school aged students reported that one or both of the following statements describe them *exactly*:

- I listen to my “inner voice”.
- I like to do things my own way.

GOAL: DEMONSTRATING THE VALUE OF TEACHING ARTISTS

Teaching artists are the source of Arts Corps' success, and the most important resource for fostering creativity among youth participants. Arts Corps intentionally develops and maintains its pool of teaching artists by providing teaching artists with a working environment where they feel valued for their skills and contribution. Professional artists with a history of teaching are recruited, selected and provided with the training, ongoing professional development and compensation required for the organization to maintain this outstanding resource over time. In 2005-2006, Arts Corps contracted with 32 teaching artists, 11 of whom have worked with Arts Corps for at least three years.

Teaching artists report feeling valued by Arts Corps. Teaching artists completed an anonymous survey at the end of the year in which they were asked the extent to which they felt valued by Arts Corps, as well as by other groups.

88% report that they feel valued "an extreme amount" or "as much as possible" by Arts Corps, while only 53% report feeling the same high levels of value from other similar employers.

Arts Corps works to boost the value of teaching artists in the community by sharing their work with students, parents, facility partners and other community members.

Teaching artists report feeling valued by students.

Teaching artists report that they felt valued by students:

Quite a Bit, An Extreme Amount, or As Much as Possible	94%
Some	6%
None	0%

Students, in fact, report a high regard for their Arts Corps teachers.

Elementary school students report that their teaching artist was an excellent teacher:

Often	77%
Sometimes	21%
Never	2%

Middle and high school students report that their teaching artist was an excellent teacher:

Almost Always	69%
Often	20%
Sometimes	8%
Never	3%

SECTION III: CONCLUSION

LESSONS LEARNED

Results of student surveys are stronger for after-school than in-school classes. In almost all circumstances, overall student responses reflect a more desirable result for after-school classes than in-school classes. There are meaningful differences in the structures of each type of class that may contribute to these differences.

- A typical in-school class meets for a total of 10-13 hours in a quarter, whereas a typical after-school class meets for a total of 18-24 hours per quarter.
- In-school participants, especially at the elementary level, typically do not have a choice regarding participation, whereas most after-school students attend by choice.
- Arts Corps teaching artists have less freedom over their environment when delivering their classes; they must conform to existing classroom norms and must contend with many contributing factors to the classroom culture outside of their control.

For all of these reasons, some students may perceive these art classes as somewhat similar to other school classes, rather than as a contrasting type of learning environment. Only recently has Arts Corps begun having such a strong presence during in-school

hours. It makes sense to reflect on this program direction to determine if it is the best way to achieve organizational goals. If Arts Corps continues to provide a significant portion of its programs in such settings, perhaps a modified set of program objectives and evaluation questions should be developed specifically for in-school programming.

Results of student surveys are stronger for middle and high school than elementary school students.

In almost all circumstances, overall student responses reflect a more desirable result for middle and high school students than for elementary school students. There are at least two possible explanations for these differences. Arts Corps classes may be better serving the developmental needs of older students. Alternatively, older students may be better able to self-reflect and provide an accurate assessment of the ways Arts Corps has changed them. The elementary student survey was developed with the input of young students and piloted, and was only used with students ages eight and older (as the pilot suggested that only at this age are the

surveys consistently a valid reflection of their opinions). However, a survey may still have limited reliability and validity for younger students. Alternative data collection strategies should be used to further investigate these differences.

LOOKING AHEAD

With these lessons in mind, Arts Corps will be widening and deepening its evaluation efforts in the coming year. Arts Corps will continue with its parent, teaching artist and student surveys with changes to specific questions, and implement a new pre- and post-school-year survey for facility partners. The student survey program will be expanded to include a pre-class and post-class survey, and will focus on students who have never taken an Arts Corps class in a given art form before. This will allow Arts Corps to more specifically measure how its classes affect students with regard to creative habits.

Arts Corps will also be implementing new evaluation measures. Principal among these is a new classroom observation program in which outside

observers will sit in on classes and watch student behaviors. The results should increase understanding of what creative habits are fostered in the arts classroom and how this process occurs. Other new efforts will include post-class focus groups with students and a rubric assessment of students' artistic portfolios. All of these aspects of Arts Corps' evaluation plan will help the organization better understand the ways creativity is fostered among student participants and the impact this has on their lives.

