ARTS FOR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

The Problem of Reform in Urban High Schools: A Tale of Two Teams

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BY

Carol J. Freeman
Karen Seashore Louis
The Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement
College of Education and Human Development
University of Minnesota
612-624-0300

Executive Summary

This research was conducted as part of an Annenberg Foundation funded program. The purpose of the Annenberg Challenge is to transform teaching and learning through partnerships between schools and artists and arts organizations. The theory of action underlying the initiative is that when teachers and artists collaboratively develop instruction that integrates arts and non-arts disciplines, instruction in non-arts disciplines becomes more effective and student achievement increases.

The two teams involved in this analysis were assigned to work with general program ninth graders who had not enrolled in either of two magnet programs at the high school. Their students were at-risk of low achievement, poor attendance, and behavioral problems. The goals of the two teams arts initiative were to (1) help students feel more connected to their team and to school through participating in activities as a community, (2) increase students' exposure to various arts forms, and (3) infuse arts activities into their classes to improve students' engagement and understanding.

An illustrative arts integrated lesson, one of mask-making, portrayed the changes demanded of the teachers and students and the difficulties of moving through the arts toward the objectives the two teams set for themselves. The teams needed to learn how to select and work with artist partners who could adapt activities to effectively engage their students.

From the example, one may conclude that arts integration has the potential—at least for "at risk" 9th grade students—of changing their experiences and providing them with opportunities for academic growth. In addition, it is equally clear that teachers learned from the experience, and were able to generalize from the single project to gain lessons about how best to teach students whom they viewed as more immature, behaviorally challenging, and academically unmotivated

than those they had encountered in previous years. However, arts integration did not occur without enormous effort within the school.

Prior to this project, team members had little or no previous experience with arts instruction and no experience in using the arts in their own teaching. Nor did they have extensive experience in interdisciplinary teaching. Both teams used the first year to schedule arts "events," some related to literature read in an English class or to a math unit, but most were episodic experiences. During end of the year reflections, both teams felt they had built some relationships with artists and would not start from scratch the following year. Though the first year, in particular, did not foreshadow profound changes in teaching and learning, the arts activities changed the way the teachers thought about teaching. They no longer automatically rejected thoughts about bringing artists into their classes or taking a field trip related to their curriculum.

In years two and three, the experiences of the two teams diverged, largely due to conditions that were outside of the teams' control, though their goals remained the same. The Diversity Team membership was stable and each year their work built on what they learned the previous year. In year two, the team planned two arts partnerships directly related to curriculum units. One was a mask-making unit designed to build community among team members; the other a play-writing activity for students creating a final performance for a career unit. In year three, the Diversity Team developed an overarching theme around which they did community building and student behavior modification activities, as well as tying in curriculum units throughout the year. While episodic arts events also occurred, the teachers and students talked most about their efforts to work thematically and to deliver the same messages – through the arts.

The other team, the Inclusive Team, had all new members in year two. The English teacher, an intern, assumed coordination of their Annenberg activities that year. While the English

teacher thought deeply about how to incorporate planned arts events, as a novice, he was hard pressed to do more than superficial activities within the curriculum that was already planned. Challenges for the team surfaced; the new team did not "gel," and they had difficulty coping with student behavior issues. They continued primarily with episodic field trips and brief in-class experiences. During the third year of the project, three of the four teachers were again new to the team. The returning teacher coordinated the team's arts integration work the third year and carried it out in his classes, although he was minimally involved the previous year. The same pattern of episodic incorporation and low levels of teacher involvement, permeated the third year of the project. As the third year of the Arts for Academic Achievement project drew to a close, it was doubtful whether any of the members of the team would be back for the fourth year of the project.

Clearly a major difference between the two teams involved staffing stability. The Diversity Team took advantage of this "luxury" by developing a stronger and deeper sense of commitment to particular learning goals and strategies to reach their students. As it turned out, this commitment saw them through what would, otherwise, have been an extremely difficult year the second year of the project. In a sense, the teachers realized early on that the grant was not only an opportunity to build community among the students, but also among themselves.

Continuity also increased the stake that all of the teachers had in the project – even those who were less involved during the first year. Teachers began to develop a new understanding of what an interdisciplinary curriculum could do for them, especially writing across the curriculum, as contrasted to an "add on" to engage students. This became particularly apparent during the third year's successful focus on the Seven Ojibwe Virtues. The teachers returned to the team because the team – and the collaboration provided by arts infused work – became important to them.

There is little question that these kinds of learning experiences—whether they deal with civil behavior, understanding the beauty of the Ordway Concert Hall in St. Paul, or learning how to express an idea or an emotion in multiple ways—have a positive effect on students. Although our research will not examine the impact on standardized test scores[1], teachers at Lakeside High School believe that they are providing the grounding for student success, by increasing attendance, engagement, and an understanding of the connection between school and self, and they believe that the arts integration is central to their goals.

[1] Our research will not examine the effects of the program on secondary school achievement as measured by state or district standardized tests because there are no available longitudinal measures that are relevant to the intent of the program, which is focused on the 9th grade.

Ask any urban Superintendent about their school reform initiatives. They will typically point with some pride to developments in their elementary schools—improved reading and math scores, new professional development programs that focus on constructive pedagogies, and supplementary programs that are intended to support student development, ranging from increased art education to supplementary learning experiences after school. Ask the same Superintendents about high schools, and they will describe some planning efforts, but their voices will trail off as they admit that they are perplexed about what to do.

There are no "magic bullets" for urban schools. In this report we present data, collected over several years, that shows both the promise and the difficulties inherent in trying to change highly institutionalized structures so that they work better both for students and for adults. Our data come from a study of efforts to integrate the arts into on-going reform efforts in a single district; within this district we focus largely on a single high school. In doing so, we hope to illuminate the hard work that teachers and students are engaging in, on a daily basis, as they make sense of the intellectual and emotional needs of adolescents who struggle with the meaning of education in their lives.

Introduction: The Problem of High Schools

The evidence from many sources is overwhelming: U.S. elementary schools look pretty good in comparison with those of other countries, but begin to fall behind slightly in middle school. By high school, on the other hand, the U.S. ranks in the bottom half in science, and the bottom third in math (Gonzales et al., 2000). Our graduation rates are relatively flat, while they have been climbing in most other countries (OECD, 2000), and the dropout rates are highly skewed by race (Kaufman, Kwon, Klein, & Chapman, 2000). The results of the trend data

available from the National Assessment of Educational Progress indicates that there is some improvement in the performance of high school students, but that improvements over the past 10 years, during which there has been much hand-wringing about education, are limited—especially compared with the progress made nationally at the elementary and middle school level (Braswell et al., 2001; Wirt et al., 2001, p. 81). Perhaps most perplexing is the finding that many students actually learn almost nothing in the latter years of high school, at least as measured by conventional tests in mathematics and science – largely because of the bloated and unchallenging curriculum (Lee & Smith, 1997).

Teams: One Structural Solution

There is increasing evidence that the design of the comprehensive high school, which is large and laissez-faire, may be part of the problem (Lee, Smerdon, Alfeld-Liro, & Brown, 2000; Lee & Smith, 1997). In an effort to reach disadvantaged students, and prevent early dropouts, many urban schools have been considering ways of reducing size by creating schools-within-schools, in which a smaller groups of students works closely with a team of teachers (Raywid, 1995). Some view the creation of small, self-contained 9th grade teams as a particularly promising approach to ease struggling students' often-difficult transition to high school (McPartland, 1996).[i] The goal is to build on emerging research about learning that emphasizes the importance of social learning and "communities of learners" as contrasted to individualistic knowledge consumption (Brown, 1997; Crawford, Krajcik, & Marx, 1999; JohnSteiner & Mahn, 1996).

Teaming is also viewed as a powerful mechanism for enhancing teachers' work life—particularly in schools where teaching disadvantaged students poses daily challenges and uncertainties (Kruse & Louis, 1997; Pounder, 1999). Pounder, for example, found that teamed

teachers reported higher skill levels, more knowledge of their students, more satisfaction and professional commitment, and higher work motivation than teachers who were not teamed. Team members tend to view their work as interdependent, but also have a stronger sense of collective responsibility for the outcomes of their individual tasks (van der Vegt, Emans, & van de Vliert, 1998). Research in non-school settings indicates that teams may provide particularly important psychological benefits where the work of team members is highly complex and unpredictable—as, for example, teaching (Van Der Vegt, Emans, & Van De Vliert, 2000). Teams may be particularly important where invention and innovation—the generation of new ideas—is critical to success (Paulus, 2000).

Introducing interdisciplinary teams into high schools is hardly a simple change, however. The culture of high schools is, traditionally, highly individualistic (Lortie, 1975). High schools have, in general, considerably lower levels of professional community than do elementary and middle schools (Louis, Marks, & Kruse, 1996). Furthermore, the traditional structure of high schools is disciplinary, and not interdisciplinary. Insofar as teachers seek out collegial support for their work, they tend to do so among those who teach in similar subjects (Siskin & Little, 1995). In addition, the organization of the work day in high schools mitigates against teaming: complex "master schedules" often mean that it is difficult to schedule a group of teachers to have the same planning period, and even when they do, the brief time available may not permit in-depth conversation around tough topics – like interdisciplinary curriculum, new teaching methods, or strategies for increasing student engagement. Yet until these tough topics are addressed, the daily routines of high school classrooms are likely to remain unchanged (Newman & Associates, 1996)

Arts Integration as a Curriculum Reform Strategy

The teams may provide social support for students, but research indicates that social support is insufficient to create student learning (Lee & Smith, 1999). Urban high school teachers are hard-pressed to develop new curriculum models that provide the kind of "authentic pedagogy" that will keep students engaged with subject matter and create an understanding of the joy of learning (Cross & Applebaum, 1998; Newmann & Associates, 1996; Smith, 1997). One of the challenges is to stimulate and stretch students without watering down the curriculum (Cross & Applebaum, 1998).

One does not have to be an advocate of the "Mozart effect" (Altenmuller, Bangert, Liebert, & Gruhn, 2000) in order to immediately move toward considering the potential of the arts in reviving the high school curriculum. One important argument concerns increasing "cultural capital" among disadvantaged students, who may be less likely to acquire experience with art in their home environment. Exposure to, and understanding of "high culture" has been shown to be an important factor in post-secondary and adult success (Dimaggio, 1982; Lamb, 1989). National and at least 32 state curriculum standards demand serious study of the arts in the high school curriculum.

Simply increasing arts education does not address the problem of stagnation and poor performance in the core disciplines. This is where advocates of integrating the arts into the "core disciplines" argue that arts can be most effective. Research suggests, for example, that "triarchic instruction," in which combines creative activities with practical applications and analysis, is more effective than traditional approaches in raising student achievement (Sternberg, Torff, & Grigorenko, 1998). Artistic disciplines are also excellent vehicles for social learning, since students can easily observe each other at work, and can often collaborate around a "production" of

an artistic event. Art disciplines may also provide particularly effective vehicles for meeting the non-academic, but important, goals of education-- social, ethical, and civic dispositions; attitudes toward school and learning motivation; and metacognitive skills (Battistich, Watson, Solomon, Lewis, & Schaps, 1999). While art is not the only means of making instruction and assessment more "authentic" (Newmann & Associates, 1996), it is clearly an important asset, and one that has been shown to be particularly effective in "scaffolding" understanding of disciplinary concepts (Davis, 2000; Dove, 1997; Kamberelis & Bovino, 1999), and the treatment of art as a process as well as a product (Illich, 1982) may help to increase students' metacognitive skills. In addition, using art as a vehicle for engaging students from minority cultural backgrounds may provide support for extended learning (Ford, Howard, Harris, & Tyson, 2000; Moje, 2000). Today's media and computer-savvy students may also find that their learning is deeply enriched by integrating activities that are at the boundaries of emerging multi-media art (Buckley, 2000).

There is little question, however, that the pressures on high school teachers, who are laboring under increasing demands to cover an ever-widening curriculum, who are trained in a single discipline, and who typically feel the greatest responsibility for making sure that students pass high stakes state tests, mitigate against arts integration.

Methods

Our research was conducted as part of an evaluation of an Annenberg Foundation funded program in Minneapolis. The program, "Arts for Academic Achievement," (AAA) included both Annenberg funds, and local matching funds, largely from the McKnight Foundation. The project's overall goal was to increase arts integration in all Minneapolis schools in ways that took advantage of the local "arts-rich" community, and would be sustainable after the initial funding period.

The AAA Project in Minneapolis

The Annenberg Challenge is to transform teaching and learning through partnerships between schools and artists and arts organizations. The theory of action underlying the initiative is that when teachers and artists collaboratively develop instruction that integrates arts and non-arts disciplines, instruction in non-arts disciplines becomes more effective and student achievement increases.

Unlike arts integration initiatives that focus on partnerships as a way to restore discipline-based arts instruction to the curriculum, the purpose of the Arts for Academic Achievement project is to strengthen instruction and improve student learning in non-arts areas such as reading and science. In this project arts integration is not intended to replace the comprehensive, sequential arts instruction that is already provided by trained arts educators in the district. Instead, the project is based on the belief that students benefit from a curriculum that includes both disciplinary-based instruction in the arts and non-arts instruction that is enhanced by integrating the arts. The major issue of this project is not about which is better, disciplinary education in the arts or arts integration, but rather what, when, and how to use each in order to teach students most effectively.

Currently in its third year of implementation, the project has funded 44 sites, which represents 42% of the schools in the district. The majority of the sites are elementary schools (34) but three middle schools and seven high schools are also involved. Arts for Academic Achievement is a "bottom-up" change effort; a team of interested teachers within a school initiates a project by designing a program of arts integration and arts partnerships that reflects the unique context of its school and community. Teams are required to link their program goals to school and district improvement plans, which include standards for student learning, but the project does not specify a curriculum framework or model for teacher-artist collaboration, nor does it stipulate

which arts and non-arts disciplines should be included in the plan. As a result, a variety of art forms and non-arts disciplines are included in the project. To deepen the change process, teams are required to do an annual action research project related to how arts' integrating is affecting student achievement. More than 100 arts partners, including arts organizations and individual artists in dance, theatre, visual arts, music and media are involved in the project, as well as certified visual arts and music teachers.

Lakeside High School as a Site

Lakeside High School[2] is a grade 9-12 comprehensive high school. It draws its student body of about 1900 students from across the city (as do all Minneapolis high schools). The high school is a popular school of choice in the city because of its two magnet programs. The third program in the school, drawing students from the neighborhood who have not selected a specific high school program, is called the General Program. The majority of Lakeside's students are white (63%), with 18% African-American, 9% Asian, and 6% Native American students. 31% of students are eligible for free or reduced lunch. There are approximately 100 certified teachers on staff.

Ninth grade teachers who worked with General Program students wrote the following rationale for the goals they set for the ninth grade AAA project at Lakeside:

> "Only one-third of Lakeside's student body is part of the General Program, [but] many General students feel inferior and disenfranchised because of the selective Open and Liberal Arts programs which encompass the rest of school. General freshmen quickly became aware of the stigma attached to their program, and some freely say they are embarrassed to admit what program they are in to other students. Coupled with the fact that many General students are "at-risk" because of low achievement in junior high, poor attendance, behavioral problems, and lack of support at home, Lakeside continues to face the challenge of finding ways to encourage General Program students to succeed."

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[2]The name of the school, the programs within the school, and the names of individual teachers have been changed to protect anonymity.

In its 1998 application for Annenberg funds, Lakeside High School teachers described themselves as "committed and moving into full partnership" with arts partners. Lakeside had two visual arts teachers, a ceramics teacher, two music teachers, and a graphics teacher, and a fully developed theater program with theater classes for credit. There were two, two-credit, trimester classes open to 10-12th graders: one went to the Guthrie every day for two hours, and the other was a class developed in partnership with the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, ArtSmart, and other partners. Lakeside also was in the third year of a funded "mega partnership" with two K-8 elementary schools "with the noble idea of developing a K-12 curriculum that infuses the arts and joins all three schools in collaboration."

Even with all these activities, few arts activities had been available specifically to the ninth graders in the General Program, nor had either ninth grade team been involved in arts programs at Lakeside. They were at the beginning of partnering and introducing arts experiences into their team activities and curriculum. It was part of Lakeside's school-wide improvement plan to increase the integration of the arts into the school curriculum and to expand opportunities for concentrated experiences in various arts forms.

Ninth Grade Teams

The Lakeside High General Program included two ninth grade teams of teachers and students. One team, called the Inclusive Team, had four teachers of math, science, English, and social studies and about 100 students. The second team, new in 1998-99, called the Diversity Team, had five teachers (math, English, social studies, special education, and physical education) and about 100 students, many of whom were Native American.[ii] Each team meet daily during one common preparation period. Both teams were born of the efforts of teachers concerned about students who came into Lakeside as ninth graders but had not applied for one of the magnet

programs. These students had proved to be at risk for dropping out of Lakeside, if not out of high school.

The two teams articulated a shared purpose to create a feeling of community within each team to help students feel connected to their team and to Lakeside High School. The ultimate goal was keeping students in school, specifically at Lakeside. Annenberg grant goals and activities of both teams supported this goal of team building. Specifically, the Annenberg goals of the two teams were to (1) help students feel more connected to their team and to school through participating in activities as a community, (2) increase students' exposure to various arts forms, and (3) infuse arts activities into their classes to improve students' engagement and understanding.

During the first year of Arts for Academic Achievement, all ninth grade teachers were engaged in many other initiatives. The ninth grade math curriculum was new, the science curriculum was new, and the English and social studies teachers were implementing new curriculum and state graduation standards "performance packages." On top of this, both were developing a new team or a team with new members.

The other sites for data collection, which are used in this paper primarily to substantiate our findings from Lakeside High School, include another of the city's comprehensive high schools (Lakesidewest High School), and two smaller alternative high schools that worked with students who were new to the system, or who had experienced difficulties in larger school settings.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected as part of a larger project evaluating the AAA effort in Minneapolis. The data gathered from the personal interviews, group interviews, and observations came from teachers and classes in a variety of schools within the school district. The schools ranged from elementary schools to high schools and from traditional school sites to non-traditional "opportunity

centers." The experience of each school with the arts varied greatly from site to site with some schools entering the project as magnets for the arts and some schools entering having no music or visual arts specialists on staff. Six schools were selected for more intensive case studies over a three-year period; Lakeside was one of these. As part of the case study, the senior author of this paper attended most team meetings, many of the arts activities, and conducted informal interviews on a regular basis. She also had access to information collected by the teams as part of their action research activities.

All interviews (both group and personal) were recorded and transcribed verbatim. The data were then entered into a qualitative software program (NUD*IST) and coded to appropriate categories (e.g., Teacher interaction with students, conceptions about what a classroom looks like or is run, delivery of instruction, reflection about teaching, use of standards, collaboration with other teachers, use of professional development, and other practice changes). Emergent patterns and themes were then analyzed and trends from year one to year two were identified. This approach facilitated checking reliability among the three coders and assured accuracy in findings.

Images of Effective Arts Integrated Lessons: The Masks Project

In order to fully understand the kind of changes that were demanded of both teachers and students by the AAA project, it is necessary to briefly describe what goes into an arts-integrated lesson in a high school setting. Only if we understand what arts integration can look like can we begin to discuss how difficult it is to move towards the objectives that the two teams set for themselves. We will present one lesson—an activity that covered several months during the second year of the Arts for Academic Achievement project—to illustrate what integration looks like in practice. We emphasize that this is not the only exemplary activity that we observed; it is

only one that we followed throughout the period of implementation, and whose consequences for the project we have traced through later years. Other interesting and creative efforts will be referred to later in the paper.

The mask-making unit involved a partnership among the Diversity Team's English, reading, and special education teachers and the Galumph Theater. All students assigned to the team participated through their English or reading classes.

Early Planning with Galumph

The Diversity Team teachers reported that they spent about two hours with Galumph ahead of time preparing. The special education teacher who was most involved facilitated the contacts with Galumph. She said,

> Nancy (math) and I talked with them at the Urban Retreat at North, and then we set up a time . . . in August when Katia (English) and I met with them. We talked about what we wanted. They told us more about what exactly they did – we kind of selected the particular type of masks that we wanted to make and then we talked about what we were building around that…I had several other conversations with them about the materials they gave us. They sent us a list of supplies that we needed to have here, and some of the things I wasn't familiar with so I had to talk with them.

All of the involved teachers remarked that their artist partners were very easy to work with, particularly noting that they were responsive to the teacher's desires to incorporate (or at least foreshadow) particular disciplinary concepts into the artistic event. Illustrating the difficulty that highly scheduled high school teachers have planning anything in a group, several echoed the following comment:

> They knew it was going to be absolutely impossible to call me. They knew that if they were going to get anything to me that they had to either bring it to me or they had to call me at home. They were great. They obviously had done a lot with schools. (Special Ed. Teacher)

Evolving Teacher Goals

The teachers tied the mask making activity to their opening of the school year team-building activities and to their writing curriculum. The special education teacher articulated the primary goal: giving their "at risk" student population "a way for the kids, in a more informal setting, to share who they are with one another…a chance to talk about their own identity in a way that was not particularly threatening." The goals quickly evolved as the team discovered that the year's group of students were "far less mature than last year's group – far, far less mature. These students are still, still in the middle school mentality." Teachers agreed that "We didn't feel like the mask making wasn't useful, or that it wasn't a good thing to do because it was such a different group, but it did turn out to be different than we anticipated." On reflection, most teachers felt that students had gained more skills in writing and completing complex projects than they had in developing emotional bonds with each other—in other words, the academic objectives of the teachers ended up being more successful than they anticipated.

Setting the Scene with the Artist Partner

Galumph Theater artists helped the English, reading, and special education teachers plan activities that would prepare the students for making their mask. Their contributions were not specific, but adaptable suggestions that were intended as warm-ups. The teachers, on the other hand, used them as opportunities to develop other skills. For example, the English teacher used the artist's suggestions to help the students work with the integration of emotions, color and writing:

> The first day, we did an examination of emotions. First, we brainstormed about 50 different kinds of emotions that they would just throw out there. Then I would have them pick one and write about it – how they felt or how they think they would feel, and then I had them associate a color with it. Some of them were really good, very creative, so I was very pleased with that. The second day, I brought in six different pieces of music… I turned the lights down really low – had a lamp in the back – played the pieces of music and had them just listen to it initially and then had them write what the music made them feel or any images that they would associate with music. Some of the kids were dead on…One of

> the pieces…was a very violent piece, and they picked up on that right away. They associated colors with that, which I thought was really interesting. The next day there was a visualization piece. They didn't quite get that. It is something that I think I would need to set up differently in the future because they weren't quite into visualization. I'm not sure why. The last day, I showed a slide show that the Galumph people had provided. [That was a] really, really great collection of masks. And the kids really enjoyed it.

The special education teacher added that, "The things I do are always a little more simple, but similar. We were working off the same ideas and we talked about what we were going to do."

Making the Masks

Teachers and students participated together in making the masks (although teachers were available for classroom management when necessary). The special education teacher, who was nervous about the potential for acting out on the part of her students, was impressed:

> (The artists) really worked at engaging the kids. It wasn't like, oh, we're here now and it's up to you. If these kids aren't engaged, it's your fault. I felt that they really went the extra mile, because some of the kids are difficult to engage, and I thought that they really personalized things and made contacts with kids in such a good way. They are just great people to work in the schools.

The mask making activity was not an "event" but a multi-day process in which students learned what the creative structure of the activity was like:

> It was so effective. They had a little stage…and a little puppet show to show what needed to be done that day….The first day, they had a little piece of paper dancing around and pretty soon, that little piece of paper got mushed into a ball. And then the kids knew the step without somebody standing up there and saying, do this, do that. It was great. And the next day, I know my kids were all ready, 'well, let's see what we're going to do today.' It was really wonderful. The kids that I have don't pay attention to everything and…that was so much better than putting a list on the board or talking to the kids.

Teachers were also amazed by the effect of having constant music on the behavior of their students. Although some of the students noted that they didn't like the music (probably because it was unusual world music), the teachers believed that they had gotten many ideas about instruction from the project.

Follow-up and Results

The special education teacher described the writing assignment her students did:

> The kids [all wrote] a story about their mask…we actually used an excerpt from the Jim Carrey movie The Mask – "if my mask could talk, this is what is would say.

The English teacher used a different stimulus, but with a similar goal. Later, the teachers created an exhibit of the masks and the writing in the school library, and parents were invited to visit it during the parent-teacher conferences evening. The teachers involved in the project believed that the academic results were greater than they had anticipated.

> I don't know, but they had a bigger investment in this because – at least I felt this way for my students – because they wanted to say something about this thing …Effort wise, it was way superior to any other written project we've done."

Another teacher gave an example of the impact that the project had on her students:

> The other day I was doing an assignment, a personal narrative, and I was talking about details – 'you have to have details – when was the last time we talked about details?' I'd been thinking of another assignment that we did recently. And this one kid said, 'you know, when you were talking about the mask.' Oh, wow, something carried over. It was really delightful, because I hadn't even thought of that.

Motivation and success were also part of the student experience. The special education teacher noted that some of her students said 'I never did anything like that before. I didn't know I could do anything like that,' while the English teacher found that some students were motivated to work outside of class to finish the project, and that she was pleased to work alongside them, changing the usual relationship between teacher and student:

> I had the materials available in my classroom if they wanted to come in and work on it to finish the project if they needed to finish it… I had about five kids come in consistently for 2-3 days to make sure that they got it done. And I was there working with them because I had originally painted my mask on the last day, but I didn't like the color, so I repainted it another day. By the end of that next week, I had been adding little bits and bobs to it."

The special education teacher also noted that her students, who were separate from the regular English classes, were able to work alongside of, and perform as well as their peers. In addition to increasing her understanding of the students' academic potential, it also reduced the sense of social and academic isolation:

> It really was a positive experience in the fact that they were doing it with another class. I noticed as the week went on that kids started to sit with other kids, and I sat with kids from the other class too.

How Did This Happen? A Tale of Two Teams

The experiences described above were not isolated, although not all efforts to integrate the arts were as extensive or involved teachers in such intense collaboration as these. Still, one may conclude from this example that arts integration has the potential—at least for "at risk" 9th grade students—of changing their experiences and providing them with opportunities for academic growth. In addition, it is equally clear that teachers learned from the experience, and were able to generalize from the single project to gain lessons about how best to teach students whom they viewed as more immature, behaviorally challenging, and academically unmotivated than those they had encountered in previous years. However, arts integration did not occur without enormous effort within the school.

Year One: "Messing Around with the Arts"

None of the teachers who were involved with the Arts for Academic Achievement effort had previous experience in teaching the arts, or using arts in their own teaching except in very superficial ways. Nor did they have extensive experience in interdisciplinary teaching. How then, is it possible, that the Masks Project came to fruition in a relatively short period of time, and had such a profound effect on at least some teachers and some students? Based on the first year's experience in the school, it would have been difficult to predict a successful conclusion—nor is the

story of the school's progress without its lumps and bumps. The first year, in particular, did not foreshadow profound changes in teaching and learning. We share a sample of the teachers' efforts during the first year.

The Diversity Team learned of the AAA grant just after their team was formed, in the spring of 1998. Because the team was completely new, they had much planning to do before the next school year. One member said:

> I think our summer was really consumed with just figuring out what the team was going to be…and we just tried to figure out what we were going to be doing – how we were going to function as a team.…We were really starting at zero. We saw [the Annenberg project] as a supplementary, wonderful benefit that we needed to learn how to use.

The Diversity Team artic ulated an informal goal—or a hope— for their first year,

> …by being able to offer some of these different opportunities to the kids, hopefully, we were going to hook a few more kids in. We see it as a way for some kids to connect. To say that we're more elevated than that would not be particularly truthful. Our main goal was to have these kids go on to be sophomores…

True to their goal, the Diversity Team used their Annenberg funding to try and increase school attendance through exciting sponsored events, of which there were seven—some successful in the eyes or teaches and students, and some less so. A few included:

- All teachers and students went on a field trip to the Lyric Theatre[iii] to see *Jemmy*, based on a novel by Jon Hassler. Students read the play before attending. Students noted that the presence of two students from their local high school in the play, and taking a field trip together, as a group, was a positive experience.
- Seventeen students who attained a 2.5 and above GPA were rewarded with a field trip to see a group of Japanese drummers at a major theater. Students had mixed evaluations about the activity. They did not know what to expect and thought they should have known

more about it before going; A few reported (shamefully) that some students laughed because they did not understand it. Students also talked about what they learned about another culture, and Native American students noted that the Japanese treat the drum quite differently from Native Americans.

- Native American actors, some known to the students, performed a play called "Ni Nokomis Zagayug". The play dealt with issues faced by teenagers today, including family relationships, drugs, sex, AIDS, and attending school. The students enjoyed the performance and appreciated the messages of the play. They were particularly respectful during the performance because they knew the actors.
- Math and English teachers planned an activity around "Pit and the Pendulum." An actor came in to set the mood with costuming, recitation, and discussion of the poem. The math teacher taught the math concepts related to pendulums, a major unit in the math curriculum. Though the students had been prepared by reading the poem in class the actor did not know how to engage the students. One teacher said,

> [The students] said that they didn't understand the words. Right at the beginning of the poem there was a lot of difficult vocabulary…and I think they started to already think that they weren't going to get it. It was even difficult for me to figure out what the poem was saying.

The math teacher expressed similar disappointment because the concept of a pendulum was not well explained.

The Inclusive Team's specific purposes and experiences also evolved through the first year. Although the Inclusive Team was well established in the school, in 1998 three of the four teachers were new to the team and had not previously worked in a team setting before. Like the Diversity Team, they began by selecting activities they hoped would help students "feel like a team." A first field trip/arts effort was viewed as unsuccessful by teachers because of student behavior, and by

students because it was boring. They searched for other activities that would engage their students, such as the "Ni Nokomis Zagayug" arranged by the Diversity Team. Their students' reactions were equally positive.

Using project resources, individual teachers also planned activities they could infuse into their curriculum. The science teacher had an artist come to his science classroom to teach drawing skills, and used the lesson to work on the relationship of shadowing, perspective, and angles of drawing to the counterpart science concepts. He said he tried to have them draw something once a week, with positive outcomes:

> A lot of them said they had some exposure in first, second, and third grade but nothing much since about fourth grade. I think they associate that with little kid's work, especially drawing and painting…[but] He felt it helped them learn science. "We talked about techniques, and we talked about making a science connection. We talked about shadowing and perspectives and the angles . . ."

The math teacher joined with the Diversity Team to attend the "Pit and Pendulum" performance. He hoped it would give the students a better understanding for setting up the problem for the unit and making it a little more fun. He explored the idea that an oral history storyteller "might help them with their vocabulary and just understanding the whole picture" but the activity did not occur. In social studies, a book arts artist taught the students how to make books in which to write. Students in these classes wrote a new ending to the book, *Animal Farm*, while storytellers came into the English classes (while the teacher was on leave) and connected activities to the book that the students were reading. The teacher wanted these experiences so that her students would have something interesting to look forward to while she was gone.

During the second half of the year, the team planned an after-school arts field trip a month which included parents. By this time, the team felt more positive about the cohesiveness of their team, but they did not feel comfortable enough to have all-team events. Selected students (those

who wanted to go) went to two plays in the evening at Penumbra Theater.[iv] Students who were interviewed indicated that they enjoyed the plays and that they got to know the other students in a different way than they did in school. However, there were only 25 or so students who went to each performance, and teachers felt that the self-selection resulted in a group that was already more positive about school. Another 25 students went to a workshop by Street Sounds[v] where they were led through listening, discussion, and creation exercises. The students complained that there was too much lecture, while teachers were unhappy about some students' behavior. It was exposure – one of the goals of the Annenberg project for this team. The most successful—in terms of attendance—was an African drumming event, which drew half the students. A teacher reported that "they really enjoyed it. . . . It kept their attention the whole time."

End of the Year Reflections: Both teams met separately several times during the first year with their "arts coach"[vi] who helped them identify artists and events that would connect with what they were doing in their classes and with their goal of community building. This year, all of the events that involved artists from outside the school were arranged with the help of the arts coach. Both teams found her extremely helpful in getting them started; they managed to work with artists; and they felt that they learned a lot although they were distracted by other reforms and the novelty of working in teams. No one, however, viewed the year as a major change in teaching practice. One team member summed it up, "I was happy that we built some relationships. Our goal was to help us to build relationships this year that we can carry through to next year, so we are not trying to start over from scratch again." In addition, some teachers were both impressed and intimidated by some of the meetings they attended with other AAA project schools. One said, "They seem so far advanced in their ideas and interdisciplinary curriculum and involving the arts with that. We're mostly concerned right now about getting the kids to school, to class." Another said:

> We felt like a bunch of losers – no, not really. We talked about whether we were all supposed to be artists and if we were supposed to have some heavy-duty arts background, because none of us felt like we did.

The vagueness of the goals and the demands for interdisciplinary curriculum were also intimidating. One teacher suggested, for example, that:

> What would be helpful to me would be to meet with other teachers … to talk about how we could incorporate the arts into our very specific ninth grade curriculum.

Both teams agreed, however, that the arts activities changed the way they thought about teaching. One teacher said:

> I know I look at things differently. As a teacher, most of the time I hear or read about things and immediately block them out as not being possible, because that would cost

money. It is changing my attitude toward that—we can consider some of the possibilities out there…I'm getting better at that in that I don't reject things right away as easily.

Another teacher from the other team talked about how it has affected her thinking:

> … we can expose the kids to certain events… because they are exposed to what they may normally not be. [But] what I would like to see more of is what [another high school] does—incorporating artsy stuff into my classroom….I don't want my kids to think, 'in English class, we only read or write,' but there are far more different endeavors that one can do in that classroom environment.

Nevertheless, the same teacher still thought of art as a "reward" rather than the real material:

> There was an article put in our mailboxes about three weeks ago…talking about the fears we create and how we basically personify them…I had the kids read it, and then I handed them drawing paper, and I told them they had to personify (draw) their monsters…. *they had been working on a paper all week, so I wanted to reward them with not writing*. When I told them they were going to draw, their little jaws hit the floor…. We had some really impressive drawing….This one girl drew a girl with no face, and over the face she wrote accomplishments, and she said she is afraid of succeeding. The fact that she was that perceptive to recognize she was afraid of succeeding, I was just blown away. I definitely want to do more of that kind of thing.[vii]

A social studies teacher indicated that her thinking had been stimulated by the arts partners:

> It has certainly forced us to expand our thinking…in terms of seeing something as being arts related. I feel that we have come a ways anyway from being so uptight about how to work with artists to thinking that we can do some of these things.

Years Two and Three: Continuity vs. Distraction

The second year of the project, both ninth grade teams felt that the goal from the Lakeside High School Improvement Plan to which the Annenberg goals most closely connected was "creating a respectful environment." The primary goal for both teams continued to be to help the students feel connected to the school in order to increase retention. While this goal appears simple on the surface, it did not feel that way to the teachers nor their arts partners. One arts partner said:

> . . . These kids have far more friends and groups outside of their school life at the high school level and getting them to connect with school seems like a simple goal, but I think it's a tough thing to do.

In spite of their commonalities, however, the efforts of the two teams diverged, largely due to conditions that were outside of the team's control.

The Diversity Team and Steady Work: The Diversity Team experienced a growing sophistication in thinking about art and the curriculum. Their goal, which was to increase retention of students who were at risk of dropping out—particularly Native American students—was met, and one teacher summarized the team's sense of success:

> We had 64 10th grade Native Americans this year [e.g., students who completed 9th grade and enrolled again at Lakeside]. I guess that was enough for me to think we needed to do it again, it's that connectiveness thing and creating this sense of community.

In addition to the Mask-making project described above, the team continued to build their curriculum around planned arts events. One particularly problematic curriculum dilemma was the need for the 9th grade students to complete a state required unit on career planning, which involved a "show what you know" demonstration as well as written tests. This particular unit was dreaded by the teachers because of the difficulty of getting at risk students, many of whom came from unemployed or under-employed families, to engage with the concept of career planning. However, the team decided to tie the unit into a local stage production of Studs Terkel's *Working*. Before the production, several of the actors came to meet with the students, while a playwright and an actor continued to work with the students afterwards to write monologues on their future employment. The special education teacher, who collaborated closely with the English teacher around this project, reflected:

> I guess I've been so impressed with the people from [the Stages Theater] because they clearly know the kinds of things that a school [like ours] needs. I mean there is no doubt in my mind that Mark has a really good sense of "well, you know, you can't just get up in front of a group of kids and expect them to do everything you suggest", and he has a million things in his back pocket that he is ready to pull off.

The artist and teachers reflected about the importance of having artists as teachers on this project. Teachers felt that it provided better grounding than the teachers' own pre-event discussions, while one of their artist-partner added that she wished that she had also been able to engage students in post-discussions at the school. Both agreed, however, that the effort was more successful than the previous year in getting students to think about employment and careers. Aside from the Masks project, this was the most extensive arts integration activity of the year, although there were a number of other successful (according to teachers and students) "exposure" activities that involved students viewing and participating in arts performances.

In the third year, the Diversity team picked up one new member, but moved forward thoughtfully around the role of the arts in their core curriculum and learning goals. At the beginning of the year, the team reflected that:

> Our plan sort of grew out of last year's problems. We had so many behavior issues last year that we decided that our focus for all the things that we did with the arts this year would be on values and ethical behaviors…What we did first is we talked to these 7 Ojibwa teachings, they are kind of equivalent to the 7 virtues or values. They are values like honesty and truth and respect, wisdom, love, humility, courage….That was really our whole idea with going with this is that we would have this platform that we could use all year long….It's not to suggest that everything was going just perfectly, behavior wise now, but its nice that we all have this common language that we use….[Even the mask making] was different this year. It WAS different. Last year it was more a thing of a kind of representation of you. This time, more to a theme….

The Seven Virtues theme was thematically tied into other curriculum units as well, according to all of the teachers:

> In any of the assignments that we do I try to talk about, like when we're talking about voting and why you cast your votes, what kind of values does this take – how do the virtues or the teachings integrate into that or what kind of values do you need to have to chose who your candidate is going to be and because some of the kids feel pretty passionate about some of the issues…We were able to make connections between ethical behaviors and government and ethical behaviors in citizenship and who you hold accountable and as a government official and how we hold ourselves accountable, things like that. It was very easy and it related to the Civics curriculum (social studies)

> I think we are all trying to talk about those virtues in our classes. We're doing a probability unit in some of my math classes and I talked to them about how important the data they come up with is. In a lot of the units, we compile all our class data so we get big numbers and how important truth is in this. That if they make up the data it's not going to accurately reflect the truth of the situation, and that's what we're trying to find out. What is the TRUTH about the probability of this situation, so it's nice to have them….(math)
>
> They actually have a show that Nancy and I read about and that's why we decided to do it. ..It's something that they move around from school to school involve a very small group of kids – 10-12 to sort of write a play about these ethical behaviors so that it's going to pertain to the school group they are going to be working with….(special education)
>
> In my classroom, we're doing short stories and poetry based on the 8 teachings of ethical behaviors. (English)

While episodic events also occurred, the teachers and students talked most about their efforts to work thematically and to deliver the same messages – through the arts. At the end of the third year, the teachers predicted that all four of them would be back in the fall to continue their common efforts.

***The Inclusive Team: Turnover and Continued "Messing Around*"**:** In contrast to the Diversity Team, the Inclusive Team continued to struggle both with creating a team spirit among the teachers, and with how best to use the Annenberg project funds. The four core (English, social studies, math, science) members of the ninth grade Inclusive Team were all new to the team at the beginning of the second year,[viii] and an intern English teacher was assigned to do most of the coordination and implementation of the Annenberg activities. Early in the year, the team designated each Friday at 2:30 as the time to talk about the Annenberg Project. Special education and reading specialist services were provided to the students on the team but these teachers were not involved in the Annenberg activities. Because the team was entirely new, surviving day to day was the priority and felt they did not have the time to do the kind of planning that it would take to tie the arts activities closely to the curriculum. Most of their Friday meetings were not spent on

Annenberg planning. At the start of the year, a project deadline pressed the team to complete a budget that they later felt limited their options. In a February 7, 2000, interview, one teacher said:

> I know one problem was that at the start of the year, we were told that we had $5000, our Annenberg budget… So over [a two week time] period, we were making phone calls thinking about actors that we could bring in…plays we could sign up for. We ended up locking ourselves in…and so it was as if we are fitting our curriculum to match these shows not the shows to match our curriculum – which I think ideally it should be."

The same teacher added:

> It's difficult to talk about how to integrate the arts into the curriculum since the team was new. Policy and procedure has been a main topic. It's the first time the social studies teacher is teaching a [state graduation standards] package. In math, the teacher has to cover her [new] curriculum. We really haven't had much interdisciplinary talk at all. I covered paragraph writing for the science teacher when she had to do that for a project, but aside from that, we really don't collaborate much curriculum wise.

Additional challenges surfaced because the new team didn't "gel," which diminished collaboration and creativity. Student behavior was an issue and they did not feel that they had adequate support from administration. The English teacher said:

> The eternal thing is behavior of students, and it's like we're acting as social workers at times and meeting with parents—all that—things just come up which disrupt our focus and concentration on the curriculum or what's going on with Annenberg.

Because of the other distractions and the "newness" of the team, the members didn't know how to use their "arts broker" and, in fact, did not meet with them until December—after they had committed all of their funds. Over the year, the teachers began to understand the potential of arts integration, but only the English teacher seemed able to actually incorporate arts disciplines--perhaps because "the arts," through writing, are an ancillary part of their discipline.

When they finally met, team members had questions of their "arts broker" such as:

> Since we have most of our activities pretty much planned – we'll be seeing some plays, some museum trips in the spring – what we can do in terms of having those experiences and tapping into what's going on in the classroom. For example, I'm excited to do things in my English classes to prep the students for plays that we have coming, and to see if I can

> have actors visit, and what we could do, for example, with the actors, instead of just having a big group discussion….

While the arts partner was pleased to meet with the team, their representative was cautious because of her experience during the previous year, in which planning was uncoordinated and communication poor:

> I'm so grateful that you have planning time and that we know that there is a set time. …With last year's team it wasn't clear what our role was and when the meeting times were happening.

One team member concluded, "We have kind of outlined our financial obligations for the year. It sounds like a lot of this in terms of thematic teaching is something perhaps for next year" while another teacher wanted specific assistance in coordination between the planned arts events and his curriculum – "some ideas of some stories or poems that students could read before hand that relate to the themes of the play." The arts partner responded:

> I think from where you're at, you just mentioned that your textbook has something. You could probably come up with questions from those. You could make it more relevant than I could to actually what you're doing in your class."

While the English teacher thought deeply about how to incorporate the planned arts events, and attended as many district and arts partner sponsored professional development activities as possible, as a novice he was hard pressed to do more than superficial activities within the curriculum that was already planned.[ix]

Other activities were also viewed positively by the teachers, but reflected the inexperience that they had both with the arts and with teaming. For example, the whole team attended a play dealing with differences of sexuality and gender—an issue that concerned teachers. Teachers like the show and its messages, but it is unclear that there was any lasting impact. According to one teacher:

> That was one of the very first things that we did back in September or October, I don't even remember that clearly. But it went over well because it was very humorous, and it made the kids think about which lines they were crossing. I still see kids misbehaving but it gave them something to think about at the time….

Teachers prepared somewhat more for integrating other art experiences, but again the effects were mixed because of limited collaboration with the participating artists. The English teacher had the students do some reading in preparation for a theater production on poverty in Brazil, but was disappointed:

> [I thought they would talk about the] Theater of the Oppressed a bit and how it came about – how it developed out of a need for people to express themselves, for the poor to express themselves. But the actors never talked about Brazil specifically or talked about the connections with poverty….I ended up telling them a bit myself about the history of the Theater of the Oppressed. It was okay; the kids were into the stories to varying degrees, but there ended up not being a clear connection with what went on that I would have liked."

Another teacher reported that although he included one preparatory assignment, there were no followup activities or discussions, while another teacher reflected that "I should have asked them even more questions, even more specific…Since we're all new to this is was difficult…"

` Other experiences were similar. One, for example, included the formal arts partner, but teachers and the partner failed to engage in sustained curriculum coordination. The arts partner was clear on the ideas that could be incorporated,[x] but teachers and students were less sure. A teacher indicated that students, who read a few stories and discussed the abstract issues involved in class, were not prepared:

> It was difficult. Since we saw the show only a day or two before winter break, I didn't have a big assignment to do afterwards. We just talked about it.[xi]

Another teacher reinforced the fact that they did not adequately prepare students:

> [The arts partner] told us about some of the themes present in the show, but the thing that the students weren't ready for, as well as the teachers, was the lack of dialogue or the fact that there wasn't a traditional story line with a beginning and an end. It was a bit more abstract than we were expecting…

The regularities of life in high schools also impinged on the effectiveness of the arts experiences. Four ninth grade regular classes were observed on December 10, before the day of the performance. Students were very cooperative in all the classes, but engagement varied a great deal, interrupted by a fire drill, journal writing with low participation, and a test. Only one English class was engaged throughout the period.

An English teacher incorporated some acting in his classes throughout the year, but without the assistance of an arts partner. In addition, like the Diversity team, the Inclusive group continued to participate in events that were largely unconnected to the curriculum. However, relatively early in the spring they admitted that team morale was low, and that "the team never worked well." Three teachers, including the coordinator, decided not to return.

The only returning teacher coordinated the team's arts integration work the third year and carried it out through his classes, although he had been minimally involved in the previous year. The same pattern of episodic incorporation and low levels of teacher involvement, made more difficult by the fact that the team was new, permeated the third year of the project. Only two teachers were involved:

> [We have done] a lot of the legwork in terms of contacting arts partners, making decisions about how we would host [them]…The other…teachers didn't feel that they could actively participate or felt that they were able or willing to apply these experiences to their curriculum.

Even these two teachers held relatively low expectations for what the arts could do for their students. The social studies teacher, for example, reflected that incorporation of arts experiences into the curriculum was hampered because of student behavior, and that "what it means to be an audience member" (the teachers' code words for appropriate behavior in a performance) was the primary learning:

> The one thing that I'm probably proudest of…is their awareness of what it means to be an audience member, which is something that every teacher fantasizes about because that makes so many other things possible…I think a lot of them understand that now. …As I observed my students [at an arts event outside of the school] , I saw some very positive and appropriate behaviors that probably would not have occurred, had I not hosted as many arts partners in my classroom…

Arts experiences were viewed as important because they engaged some students in learning in ways that his teaching normally did not, and brought kids with poor attendance records into school for the performances. He saw the potential of the arts activities:

> I have a number of students who have a lot of reading difficulties and so these kinds of auditory and visual experiences are right on the mark for them…it's provided me with another tool. The arts provide a very important function in terms of helping me with another way to present information to the kids based on the students' learning style or their ability or lack thereof. It's another tool that I can use to present a topic, an idea or situation in another way where the student feels more engaged.

As the third year of the Arts for Academic Achievement project drew to a close, it appeared that none of the members of the team would be back for the fourth year of the project.

Explaining the Team's Different Trajectories

Clearly a major difference between the two teams involved staffing stability. However, it is too simple to suggest that mandating stability would solve the problems that plagued the Inclusive Team, or ensure the progress of the Diversity Team. Rather, stability engendered other social responses that fostered the goal of arts integration.

Creating "Real Team" Commitments: The Diversity Team took advantage of the "luxury" of their stability by developing a stronger and deeper sense of commitment to particular learning goals and strategies to reach their students. As it turned out, this commitment saw them through what would, otherwise, have been an extremely difficult year. The teachers met over the

summer to reexamine their team's project goals. While similar to those of the first year, they were more clearly articulated:

- To help students feel more connected to their team and to school through participating in activities as a community;
- To increase students' exposure to various arts forms; and
- To infuse arts activities into their classes to improve students' engagement and understanding.

Teachers pointed out that, by having to develop a clear statement of their goals, the project "is providing an opportunity that otherwise would not have been there for us to have dialogue, as teachers who support students…" In a sense, the teachers realized early on that the grant was not only an opportunity to build community among the students, but also among themselves.

Continuity also increased the stake that all of the teachers had in the project—even those who were less involved during the first year. The teachers were learning together, and sharing their learning; their colleagues, even when they were a bit bemused about how it would fit in to their courses, wanted to celebrate that growth. One teacher summarized this:

> They may not all be interdisciplinary activities, but it's something everybody has a stake in…. I know our expectations were higher [this year]…We expect to end up feeling like we HAVE more when we get done with something now, than we did last year. Last year, we didn't know what we WANTED to have."

Teachers began to develop a new understanding of what an interdisciplinary curriculum could do for them, as contrasted to being an "add on" to engage students. This became particularly apparent during the third year's successful focus on the 7 Ojibwe Virtues. The social studies teacher commented, for example:

> I think this theme thing is a really important part of being able to integrate because I can't integrate government with making masks. But I can integrate the theme surrounding this

> mask making project with the theme of ethical behaviors and government. And because of our theme, because of the 7 Ojibwe teachings being so close to the ethical behaviors, I can relate being ethical to everything I teach—to Economics, to civil rights, to career choice, to decision-making, to citizenship and government—everything I teach. It's a snap. It's easy. You can always pull it in.

Working together around themes also made it easier for the teachers to carry out the much advocated but rarely practiced strategy of teaching writing across the curriculum. But all of this required a different mind-set from what the teachers had been used to. The teachers talked openly about the need to make adjustments within each of their classes in order to accommodate the thematic work – or arts events that come up, or kids reactions to events and elements of the curriculum:

> If people really knew how we planned units and planned activities through the year they would think teachers aren't very organized and deliberate, and we should have a laid out curriculum and here's the goals and here's. That isn't really the way we do it…. It's like an idea will come up and Tracy will say, well, I have a book that will tie in so well with that so we'll do that. It's just – we seem more – it just seems easier for us to do this year – I don't know if it's just a function of just having a little more experience under our belt working with other people.

In summary, teachers returned to the team because the team—and the collaboration provided by arts infused work— became important to them.

Meeting the Needs of Students As a Group: This increase in cohesiveness occurred at the same time that they, and the Inclusive Team, both faced severe challenges from the students.[xii] Both teams agreed that the behavior of the 9th graders who were not part of the school's magnet programs was much more difficult. The new teachers on the Inclusive Team all left after the 2nd year, in large measure because of the challenges; the Diversity Team worked hard during the year to maintain a sense of hope and progress, and to address the needs of immature students as a group. One clear example was the Masks project, initiated during the 2nd year, which the teachers expanded in scope and importance as they realized the difficulty their students had in expressing

themselves. Teachers shared stories about student success (sometimes measured in tiny steps), and refused to give up on taking the students to events outside of the school, although their first experience with "audience behavior" was painful. Rather than eliminating outside activities, they worked on figuring out how they could use creativity to find the best in their students:

> [Art] really gives them a safe arena… We really push the safety and the respect. It really gives them an arena to say who they are and let themselves get out there. They really start to make friends and get to know each other and respect and care about each other. I rarely see that in my classroom, that 'Let me see your assignment and see how [well] you did…' They really respect each other for what they create.

They also, as noted above, used the difficult 2nd year to plan for themes around civility and virtue that dominated the curriculum during the 3rd year.

Learning from students – even difficult students: The Diversity Team also committed themselves to making data-based decisions that permitted them to think about how best to fine-tune the arts integration programs. The team required each student to do an individual, open-ended evaluation after every type of event that the students were engaged in. They viewed this as a teaching tool, and well as learning for themselves:

> We get feedback from the kids and we feel that its really important for the kids to learn how to critique things and to give us input on their likes, their dislikes, whether they felt they learned anything from this…

Not surprisingly, not all student comments were thoughtful, but the act of asking and reading the responses was very respectful—particularly given the poor behavior of some of the students. In the Inclusive Team, in contrast, data from students was gathered at the end of the year (obviously after it would have any impact on their own experiences), and through standardized surveys that did not encourage students to express their own views.[xiii]

Learning from artists – thinking about teaching: As part of the reflection that emerged from the increasing team dialogue, the Diversity Team began to look at their work with their artist collaborators as the most important source of professional development.

> Our team – maybe we haven't been going out to workshops, but we've been working with people like Sandy and Mark and those artists that came in to do Arts Day, and the people with Galumph. We did a lot of planning with them. It's a whole different way to plan, and we've learned a lot of different things from doing that."

Learning from other teachers in the district – which is not common in large and impersonal urban settings – was also important. First, the teachers were shocked by their naiveté when they first became involved ("we really felt like a ditsy bunch last year") but then they began to suck up information from other teachers and schools, particularly in the project sponsored Retreat for the Urban Arts, an annual event.

Their learnings were reflected in the way that they thought about teaching – and taught, at least according to the teachers. A Diversity teacher said:

> I know that teachers on our team are doing some things that they didn't do a year ago in terms of building these things right into classroom situations….I remember when I discovered that Stages was doing *Working* and we had been tossing around this whole thing about this careers unit….I thought, 'My gosh! We could DO something with this.' I didn't know WHAT, but it was strong enough of a hook-up. . . . And I think that we ALL do that now, on the team. We'll say, 'Hey, I saw this or that about such and such.' It's like we think about it differently now.

There is little question that the Diversity Team teachers believed that they changed their ideas about teaching because of their involvement with arts partners. Statistical evidence clearly demonstrating this impact cannot be easily found. Yet, the determined teachers of the Diversity Team believe that they are on the right course to improve their goals – retention and engagement—and they have developed multiple measures to track this over time. This persistence demands, of course, that at least a core group of teachers are there, over time, to maintain a commitment to the decision to collect and analyze data.

Student learning: Any evidence? The Annenberg and McKnight Foundations – the major funders of the Arts for Academic Achievement initiative in Minneapolis – had the goal of raising student achievement. We believe that the way in which the AAA program was initiated in high schools precludes an easy answer to that question. Our research will not examine the effects of the program on secondary school achievement as measured by state or district tests because there are no available longitudinal measures that are relevant to the intent of the program, which is focused on the 9th grade. However, teachers are deeply concerned with the answers, and have developed their own qualitative approaches to how they can use art to assess student learning better. Two examples suffice. The first is from a student whose insight was not apparent in art, but was revealed in composition:

> One mask was decorated so generically that [we] just assumed that [the student] was trying to get through the assignment as thoughtlessly as possible. …Until we had them write the little paragraph explaining why they…designed it the way they did. And his explanation was…so specific and so in-depth …and he's a kid who's a very disabled writer. And we said to him 'We would have never known without you writing that ... what it was you were really trying to get across with that' [and, when I was telling] the kids how important it was to write this thing I said... 'I read one and I was amazed, and it really changed my mind about what the grade it was going to be.' Chris got a big smile on his face and said, 'You're talking about mine, aren't you?'

Another teacher recounted the way in which the Ojibwa teachings were brought home in very particular ways to students:

> I want to tell a little story about how these values are kind of starting to come into play. [One of my students] was adamantly against making these masks because they have to rub Vaseline on their face and then put plaster of Paris over their eyes and their mouth, and it's scary….He was absolutely no way going to do it. But…not do it would have severely hindered his grade. So I talked with his [parents] and his dad came into the classroom the day that he needed to do it, and …said 'now Jesse this takes courage. This is the courage that you're talking about in these 7 teachings. Courage is the one …that you value the most and now is your chance to use that courage.' and he did it.

There is little question that these kinds of learning experiences—whether they deal with civil behavior, understanding the beauty of the Ordway Concert Hall in St. Paul, or learning how to

express an idea or an emotion in multiple ways—have a positive effect on students. Although we are unable to examine the impact on standardized test scores, teachers at Lakeside High School believe that they are providing the grounding for student success, by increasing attendance, engagement, and an understanding of the connection between school and self, and they believe that the arts integration is central to their goals.[xiv] The Diversity Team has discussed how they want to evaluate their impact (other than persistence to 10th grade), and has come to the conclusion that they need to track quantitative indicators. However, because of the variability in the student population between years, and other factors, it is difficult to show a causal link between arts integration and student outcomes:

> One of the things we did is we've been gathering data since the team started…we were going to look to see if the number of suspensions went down. And so we do have that information and yes, they have. But who can say, for sure? Is that really a function of the activities? Is it a function of having a different group of kids this year?

So, in this project, like most, teachers are driven back to their own assessments of student progress, and easily available measures, like persistence, suspensions, attendance. What is different in the Diversity Team is the group's common focus on student outcomes, and the connection that they collectively make between what they do as a team, and what students are learning. This reflective discussion has cemented both collegial and adult-student relationships—at least in the stable Diversity Team.

Reflections on Changing High Schools

When the Annenberg Foundation funded the Minneapolis Public Schools' Arts for Academic Achievement project the intent was to reach all students at all grade levels. No one associated with the project believed that this would occur during the limited funding period. More importantly, the informal and accepted belief that 'high schools are different' permeated the initial design phases, which included significant advocates for arts education for adolescents. The project

design permitted individual schools to design arts integration activities that would fit within the very specific local context, and meet local needs. The team focus of Lakeside High School, targeted at 9th grade, incorporated the growing national emphasis on providing effective transitions to secondary education for "at risk" students with the arts integration emphasis of the Annenberg-funded Arts for Academic Achievement initiative.

The initial interest for most secondary schools was the promise of money—'a match stick floating by' as a proverbial life vest. What we see in the case material above is that supplementary funding for the arts may have benefits for 'at risk' students and those who teach them. We described only one arts experience in-depth, largely because the planning and execution of the most interesting activities at Lakeside High School require pages and not paragraphs to suggest how and why they have changed the experiences of those participating. We have also excluded the voices of the artist participants who were similarly changed by their experiences.

Our analysis is clearly preliminary. The descriptions of events and perceptions are limited largely to one high school and, in terms of success, to one team. We are happy to report that less intensive data from other secondary settings elaborates on these findings rather than challenging them.[xv] Whether the results generalize to other settings and students who have different opportunities in their out-of-school lives is more debatable. We contend, however, that the results from Lakeside High School suggest a number of findings that are worthy of investigation – and action research – in other settings.

First, we conclude that *teaming is not, per se, a solution* to the problems of urban high schools. Teams can work to effect change; but without the appropriate support systems they may provide little more than a "safe place" for incoming high school students. Teachers who are assigned to groups of students for a single year may also, like the teachers in Lakeside's Inclusive

Team, believe that they are thwarted in their desire to have an impact on the destiny of inner city students.

A second related observation is that Lakeside High School, a "good school" in a "good urban district" provided additional support for teaming teachers, such as common prep time and additional funds from the AAA project, yet these minimal supports did not create the professional community that would facilitate the goals of the Annenberg program. What is not present in the typical high school—even a well-run high school like Lakeside—is support for teacher collegiality. The teachers in the Diversity Team realized that this was a significant issue for the other team, but were unable to fill the gap because of the logistical and time pressures of urban high schools.[xvi]

Second, improving urban high schools requires *continuity*—in administration (not discussed directly in this analysis), in staffing, and in policies. The learning that we document only occurred among groups of teachers that established a commitment over time.

Third, both *teachers and students are affected* by integrating the arts into regular and on-going classroom practice. Teacher learning is as robust an outcome as student learning—assuming, of course, that the teachers remain in the profession.

Fourth, the arts integration activities may, within a stable team of teachers, engender *reflective discussions* about teaching and subject matter comprehension that will lead to significant improvement in urban high schools. Teacher discussions focused on learning and increased cognitive and life skills outcomes.

Fifth, integrating the arts as a vehicle for change *does not demand expert teachers* who are already enthusiasts.[xvii] Attentive arts partners and good listening by teachers can generate significant changes in curriculum and practice that will benefit students – and teachers.

Sixth, arts integration energizes teachers in their *disciplinary practice*, encouraging them to work on both state standards and in-depth learning appropriate to their student population. We focused on Lakeside High School in part because we found that all teachers – social studies, math, English, special education and science—benefited from the introduction of arts and the discussions around arts integration.

Given the initial goals for this paper, which is part of a larger set of analyses of the effects of one initiative in a single city, we are naturally reluctant to generalize. On the other hand, we also observe not only in Lakeside High but in other settings, the substantive conversations among teachers about what is being taught, and why and how it is being taught that are largely absent from the national reform conversations about standardized testing. According to teachers (and artists, whose voices are absent in this paper) the discussions about how to teach and what to teach are profound learning experiences that move the partners far beyond any typical, event oriented, professional development activity.

In sum, we argue, based on our limited data , that arts integration initiatives should be considered an important component of efforts to change high schools. Like teaming—a structural solution that is easier to implement—the arts provide a critical and unthreatening vehicle for teachers of 9th grade high school students to examine the challenges of interdisciplinary teaching and collaboration, both of which are shown to increase student achievement. Our research leads us to propose combining structural and curricular innovations, but only with the administrative support required to maintain team stability and arts integration.

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[i] Some critics of 9th grade teams have expressed concerns that the self-contained 9th grade experience may create two transitions.

[ii] Some time prior to the creation of the Diversity Team, Lakeside created the Diversity Program to address specific needs of Lakeside's Native American students. In the words of Diversity team members, "This team grew out of the Diversity Program in that we saw a strong need for some kind of stronger support system for incoming ninth graders. We had seen a pattern through the years. We have about 100 [Native American] kids on average come in every year as ninth graders, but by the time they get to eleventh or twelfth grade, we might have 15 of these students left. It doesn't mean that all those kids dropped out of school, but they never got connected enough to be committed to staying with the Lakeside program."

[iii] A local repertory theater

[iv] A local repertory theater

[v] A local repertory theater

[vi] A well-respected representative of a local arts group.

[vii] Several themes are notable. First, the teacher saw art as a reward, rather than as an integral part of teaching English. Second, the art activity made the teacher see levels of insight and thinking in her "at risk" students that she was not aware of in the "regular curriculum."

[viii] One member was promoted to an administrative position, two were transferred, and one opted out.

[ix] The team with more continuing members was conscious of trying to help the new members of the team that was, officially, better established. "We thought we were going to be much more involved. We had talked a lot in the summer about what was going to happen with this other team. We knew it was all new people coming in, and how are they going to know anything about this? But we didn't know till the last minute who was going to be on the team, and by then we're also in the thick of getting set up for the school year, so we certainly weren't much help, and we had wanted to be, but when you are out of time, you are out of time."

[x] The arts partner commented that : It's really about "to gyrate" or gyroscope, or circling, and cycles, cycles of life, cycles of evolution in ecology and how people play a role in that. Sandy Speeler, the director would have a multitude of other things to say about it – deeper. It's an incredible visual spectacle, it incorporates giant puppets, shadow puppetry, a live Indonesian Gamelan – the group that plays live music. It also has percussive foot choreography – He's a tapper and quadder; he's taken it to new heights and beyond, but he does the choreography for the show. There are 13 performers, multiple cultures of people, five Americorps people in it. Amazing things have been done with cardboard and paper mache and light. There's so much richness in the piece that's really about how things blossom, and how things grow, what destruction man has done to the environment. It all becomes ash and out of the ash grows something new again."

[xi] Students' attention to the performance was exemplary all the way up to the intermission. This was in spite of the play being very abstract. Even the adults, the CAREI observer included, did not understand the play all the way through. No teacher had seen the performance ahead of time.

[xii] Challenges were real. One artist reported that in an early event "They were so outrageous during that production. At one point, one of the actors was walking through the audience, a young girl, and one of Margie's students spit on her as she was coming down the aisle."

[xiii] The team's coordinator during the first year was using the student evaluation data for a course paper.

[xiv] Anecdotal evidence of impacts on individual students predominate our data. One teacher, for example, was profoundly affected by the experience of one student: "Yesterday we were at the Children's Theater, which adjoins the Art Institute, and on the bus over, we were talking about being able to go there in the summer when it is hot. You can just walk in, it's free and air conditioned, and you can look at paintings as long as you want. You don't have to wait for school to take you

over there. We had one girl who is living in the motel [next to the Art Institute, which is located in a low income area] – they're homeless – across the street, and now she is seeing that maybe things aren't as hopeless as she has been feeling."

[xv] **We will report on these findings in a later analysis.**

[xvi] One Diversity teacher stated that: "We knew it was all new people coming in, and how are they going to know anything about this? But we didn't know till the last minute who was going to be on the team, and by then we're also in the thick of getting set up for the school year. I don't think they got nearly as much help as they should have gotten. We were very separate in the building. We see one another once a month if we're lucky because they are up on one floor and we're down on another floor so our teams are really not connected much."

[xvii] The second comprehensive high school in which we collected data had an unusual complement of teachers who were also artists or deeply involved in the arts. Their work is not highlighted here because they were successful—but not comparable to a more typical group of teachers.