

Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education's Research and Evaluation Series

Contributions to Arts and Learning



**Moving Toward a Culture of Evidence:
Documentation and Action Research
inside CAPE Veteran Partnerships**



Improving Teaching and Learning through the Arts

Founded in 1993, the Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE) is a school improvement initiative that convenes and guides a network of schools, artists, and arts organizations in co-developing and implementing innovative and effective approaches to teaching and learning in and through the arts. These CAPE strategies exist in the larger context of federal, state, and local calls for increased accountability and data driven teaching practice.

Layered Research

CAPE staff, partners, and researchers realized that the best way to learn about effective teaching in and through the arts would require a shift from traditional program evaluation – that focused on individual projects – to a research approach that included formal researchers working in dialogue with practitioners collecting evidence to answer questions about their own work. CAPE calls this approach “Layered Research”, and it includes:

- **Action Research**

CAPE teacher-artist teams develop inquiry questions about their arts-integrated teaching in individual classrooms, and then engage in a cycle of applying innovative arts-integrated teaching strategies, reflecting on the impact of these innovations, and collecting evidence from student and teacher work to answer their inquiry questions.

- **Collective Action Research**

CAPE teacher/artist teams conduct collective action research across schools, meeting with colleagues who share similar inquiry questions to co-create shared data collection strategies across sites.

- **Formal Research**

Formal researchers conduct independent observations, interviews, and analysis of the artifacts of the school level action research and the cross-school collective action research.

This rich mix of layered inquiry, analysis, and on-going feedback has sharpened the teachers’ and artists’ abilities to improve their teaching by paying close attention to the actual impact of their teaching on student work. This approach allows CAPE’s research to move from working “on” practitioners to working “with” practitioners.





New Tools

CAPE has developed new tools to implement this Layered Research approach. Two primary instruments include an observation/analysis tool designed by Dr. Burnaford, called the Effective Teaching (ET) Survey, modeled on the effective teaching standards developed by the Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence ([http://](http://crede.berkeley.edu)

crede.berkeley.edu), and a multi-media documentation template for documenting action research developed by the CAPE staff: (www.capeweb.org/rexamples.html). The ET Survey revealed a high incidence of quality instructional strategies in CAPE's documented practice. (See Table One)

Table One: What Teaching Looks Like in CAPE Veteran Partnerships 2005-2006
Teachers and Teaching Artists Self-Report Summarized Results

Teaching Standards www.CREDE.org	Usually or Always Evident
Teachers and students work together during arts integration projects. (3 indicators)	80.0%
Language and literacy skills appear across the curriculum during arts integration. (5 indicators)	72.4%
Arts integration connects to students' lives. (4 indicators)	73.3%
Arts integration engages students in challenging activities. (6 indicators)	81.7%
Dialogue happens more than lecture during arts integration projects. (3 indicators)	90.3%

Improving Teaching by Looking at Evidence of Learning

This cycle of inquiry based arts integration and documentation at the classroom level, meeting as a professional community with peers from other schools, and receiving feedback from the formal research team has had a transformative impact on teachers and artists. By looking at evidence of what students are actually learning, the teachers and artists discover what they need to do to improve their teaching:

- The question "Can drama improve student confidence in writing?" was refined to become more concrete and specific: "Can drama improve pre-writing strategies and lead to more elaboration in student's writing?" This reframing of the question guided instruc-

tion, and the partners were able to collect evidence and answer their question with a resounding "Yes".

- The question "Can the integration of technology, fine arts, and language arts increase student motivation and self-esteem?" assisted teacher planning by opening up a discussion of the technology skills and content knowledge students needed before they could integrate technology into language arts in a meaningful way. This also opened up a discussion of motivation and self-esteem as more than abstract concepts. Students develop motivation and self-esteem by successfully taking on challenging content and concrete tasks.

CAPE's Value for Teachers and Artists: in Their Own Words

Teachers and artists reported that the action research process and the Effective Teaching Survey helped them improve their teaching by naming what they were doing right. Teachers and artists reported that CAPE's methodology for developing partnerships, arts integration, and critical thinking had significant positive impacts on their teaching and their ability to address their students' learning needs both in the arts and as learners generally:

"I think I am more reflective on my teaching practice. I definitely think more about documenting. Most of all, I've learned a new method of co-teaching, which I love. I think differently about really integrating arts into the curriculum rather than just making an arts project."

"CAPE pushes my comfort level and forces me to swim against the current of boredom that rages through the hallways and classrooms of schools. I think CAPE has matured beyond journals to expect a real product."

"The cross-communication of artists and teachers is the best I've been involved in over 15 years."

"CAPE has influenced my practice deeply by helping me establish collaborations with many very different teachers and artists, and engaging me in a larger dialogue about the role of the arts in teaching and learning."

"I'm thinking in a different way, exploring nontraditional ways of teaching nontraditional learners to improve their academic skills."

"I'm not exactly sure what my teaching would look like if not for CAPE. As a matter of fact, the work with CAPE has altered my 'work'. When I look at the financial situation in Chicago Public Schools, I want to leave. But my collaboration with CAPE is so embedded into my practice that it makes my decision to go to the suburbs extremely hard. Thanks."

"CAPE has made me acutely aware of the need for quality documentation. I've really had to consider each aspect of the unit. I am very interested now in engaging the student in such a way that encourages them to want to educate themselves."

"Students become much more aware of what they are learning and remember it. They also transfer skills to other subjects and are able to use the skill independent of the teacher. They can become teachers themselves for those who missed lessons and become much more detailed about their work."

In Conclusion

CAPE's Layered Research approach has enabled teacher and artist investigations of arts integration methodologies to influence teaching in a conscious and crucial way, which is not bounded by the teachers' and artists' time working on their Action Research unit. Just as the influence of a highly effective teacher has effects that spill over into a student's later years (Sanders and Rivers, 1996), CAPE Veteran teachers and teaching artists develop sustainable methods that contribute to the field of learning, and help them become leaders in creating the schools our children deserve.





CAPE's Mission

CAPE advances the arts as a vital strategy for improving teaching and learning by increasing students' capacity for academic success, critical thinking and creativity.

CAPE's Vision

CAPE works toward a future in which:

- students are valued as creators of culture in our society;
- teachers, artists and students work collaboratively to develop and share innovative approaches to teaching and learning in and through the arts in our public schools;
- teachers, artists, school administrators and parents recognize the arts as a key element in transforming schools into vibrant, creative and successful learning communities;
- professional colleagues and partners regularly communicate and share their practices and research in order to continually improve and evolve the field of arts in education; and
- policy makers, business leaders and all citizens value the arts in education as essential to a just and equal society, a thriving economy and an inclusive democratic culture.



CAPE's Position

Improving Teaching and Learning through the Arts

CAPE convenes and guides a network of schools, artists, and arts organizations in co-developing and implementing innovative and effective approaches to teaching and learning in and through the arts.

Solutions to Educational Challenges

Generating New Knowledge about Effective Schools

CAPE is a learning organization, a living laboratory, in which teacher and artist practitioners partner with each other and with scholars and researchers to develop solutions to educational challenges in their schools, while they simultaneously study and document their practices to contribute new knowledge to the field of educational improvement at the practice, pre-service and policy levels.

Critical and Creative Thinking

CAPE's approach engages the arts as an essential pathway for developing the critical and creative thinking skills needed by learners for success in the 21st century.

Leading Innovation

CAPE's logic model (which includes long-term partnerships, arts learning integrated across the curriculum, and practitioner reflection on effective practice in partnership with formal researchers) contributes to the local, national and international discourse on re-visioning the role of the arts in effective public education.



The CAPE Research and Evaluation Series contributes new knowledge developed in CAPE programs in the Chicago Public School system to the field of arts and learning. These abstracts bring to the fore how arts integrated education, utilizing CAPE's methodology, can positively impact student, teacher and artist learning, and that the collaboration between the three imbues all participants with values that have effects extending beyond the classroom and their time in class.

CAPE's recursive methodology develops self-awareness in its participants – student, teacher and artist, alike. Because participants are more aware of what they are doing (and what they hope to achieve), they are able to adjust their practice as they go through the curriculum unit.

Through their collaborative efforts in melding core curriculum with artistic expression, the participants' whole minds (and often hearts) are engaged in class, and critical thinking and creativity no longer are treated as opposite modalities.

Students, teachers and artists become empowered during this process. The exhibition/performance output of CAPE's logic model allows students the chance to display their work in front of their peers (often the entire student body) and sometimes at-large in the community. Teachers are able to direct their own practice, and team-teaching with an artist allows them the freedom to expand their capacities as teachers. Artists are forced to examine their practice, and display and communicate it from a much more critical stance. This, in turn, enables them to approach their own work from a freshened perspective.

The formal research validates the action research participants' energies and outcomes, and when research results are communicated back to teachers and artists, offers them additional insights that further enrich their practice.

The Research and Evaluation Series is also being published to stimulate educational policy makers to re-envision the role of the arts in schools, to create truly effective public education that graduates life-long learners who excel in critical and creative thinking.



Dr. Gail Burnaford holds a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction from Georgia State University. Since 2003, she has been Professor of Teacher Education at Florida Atlantic University, where she teaches doctoral courses in program evaluation and instructional practices. Prior to this, she was Director of Undergraduate Teacher Education at Northwestern University, with a focus on teacher development, arts education, and program evaluation. She is the author of three books, *Renaissance in the Classroom: Arts Integration and Meaningful Learning*, (Burnaford, Aprill, Weiss, 2001), *Teachers Doing Research: The Power of Action Through Inquiry* (Burnaford, Fischer, Hobson, 2001, second ed.), and *Images of Schoolteachers in America*, (Joseph and Burnaford, 2001 second ed.), all published with Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

She has been an evaluator on numerous projects and programs including the Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education, the New Mexico Arts Council's Ticket to Learning in Roswell, New Mexico, the Ravinia Music Festival, and the Smart Museum at the University of Chicago and has served on the faculty of the Empire State Partnerships Summer Seminar. She is a Principal Investigator and site director for the national initiative with the Music-in-Education National Consortium, in conjunction with the New England Conservatory of Music, Georgia State University, CAPE and the Metropolitan Opera Guild, funded by the Fund for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education.

Dr. Burnaford's full report is available as a PDF document at www.capeweb.org/cape_research/gb_vet.pdf.