



BAC ARTS IN EDUCATION PROGRAM EVALUATION BRIEFING

Thanks to a generous grant from The Heckscher Foundation for Children, Brooklyn Arts Council worked with a professional evaluator to develop, implement, and analyze an evaluation of our in-school Arts in Education (AIE) workshops in the 2008-2009 school year. The evaluation encompassed 32 AIE workshops in a range of arts disciplines serving 667 students at six public schools. These workshops were a representative sample of BAC's in-school workshops, which reached close to 4,000 students last year alone. Through this project, we sought to measure how effectively we are meeting the core goals of our AIE workshops so that we can continue to improve and refine our programs.

We are pleased to report that the evaluation found our AIE workshops achieve a range of positive outcomes. It demonstrated that students in BAC workshops:

- Are highly engaged in workshop activities: By offering participatory lessons and through their open, enthusiastic teaching styles, BAC teaching artists ensure students are highly engaged in workshops. Surveys completed by students, classroom teachers, and teaching artists as part of the evaluation, as well as site visit observations, all documented high levels of student engagement. In fact, teachers reported that students who were normally disengaged in regular classroom activities enthusiastically participated in and enjoyed BAC workshop activities such as writing.
- Gain significant exposure to the arts and build arts knowledge: BAC workshops play a critical role in keeping the arts alive in schools. We found that two-thirds of students in the workshops evaluated were studying a particular art form for the first time. In addition, comparing pre- and post-workshop student surveys showed that students made clear gains in arts knowledge relevant to the arts disciplines they studied.
- Build self-esteem and confidence in their abilities: Increased numbers of youth described themselves as creative and good at the art form they studied in post workshop student surveys. These surveys also revealed that students felt the work they made was unique and special; they felt good as a result of participating in the art form studied, and comfortable sharing their work with others.
- Apply and strengthen critical thinking and problem solving skills: BAC teaching artists give students numerous opportunities to practice critical thinking and problem solving, such as having them brainstorm ideas and solutions, and assisting them without taking control when asked for help. As a result, surveys of classroom teachers, teaching artists, and site visit observations all showed students in BAC workshops strengthened critical thinking and problem solving skills.

Overall, the evaluator concluded that BAC's "in-school workshop program is highly valued by students, classroom teachers and teaching artists for being a remarkable supplemental school day program. There is a growing body of research which provides evidence for the positive

impact of arts on youth development in communication, critical thinking and problem solving skills. This study provides evidence that BAC AIE in-school workshop participants are growing in these domains.”

We at Brooklyn Arts Council are most grateful to The Heckscher Foundation for Children for providing us this opportunity to examine the effectiveness of our Arts in Education programs. We look forward to maximizing what we have learned to continue to improve our programs, and to extend the benefits they offer to many more young people throughout New York City.

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