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-page 7

Building the Capacity to Better Serve

2004-2005 Working Playground Report

1. Executive Summary



This year Working Playground (WP) continued its steady growth with particular focus on examining core beliefs, building instructional capacity, creating new models for assessment and deepening our programmatic reach within 28 schools citywide. With relatively new leadership, a board that is in the process of expanding and renewing itself and the addition of new full time staff, WP is an organization undergoing positive change. This process has been framed and articulated by a strategic planning process led by A.T. Kearney which will be completed by December 2005.

In 2004-05, WP focused on deepening its relationships with partner schools by increasing the number of programs offered at each site. At New Design High School, M131, East Side Community High School, The Heritage School and Gregorio Luperon High School, WP offered at least double the amount of programs than the previous year, reaching more students and teachers school-wide. This year 28 schools were served in comparison to 26 last year, 5000 students were reached in comparison to 3,500, 3,412 classes were taught compared to 1,495 and the average number of classes taught were 122 per school, in comparison to 57 in 2003-04.

Recognizing the need for more formalized assessment strategies that measure the effectiveness of our programs with quantitative as well as qualitative data, WP has piloted two new assessment models this year. In partnership with Dr. Sun Yat Sen Middle School, WP received a prestigious Center for Arts Education grant. With help from The Center WP has designed and implemented an assessment model that will be disseminated to select in-school integration sites this coming fall. The new assessment model, designed for WP's In-school Art Integration programs examines our effectiveness in building the subject teacher's capacity to incorporate the arts into content curriculum and measuring the increased student learning that ensues. In addition, we have joined a consortium of partners who have created an interactive web-based assessment program where we can track

student attendance, attitudes, progress and improvements in academic performance in our After School Programs. This initiative is led by Dr. Gerald Landsberg, from New York University School of Social Work.

For over a decade, WP has seen its arts programs successfully motivate students who were struggling academically and not responding to a more traditional curriculum. Each year we teach, we find that integrated arts education has the unique ability to nurture individual learning and creativity in ways that enable students to express themselves and reach their full potential. It is crucial that we find arts education a permanent place in the school community if it is to have an enduring effect. We believe that our programs have the capacity to create lasting change in schools, communities, and in each individual we serve. As we create better models for teaching, students are inspired to grow and create a better world.

2. Improving the quality of our presentations

In early March of 2005, seven of our after-school programs presented their Dangerous Myths at MTV's Paramount Screening Room in Times Square. The goal for this event was to bring together our Dangerous Myths programs and provide students with a forum to present their 'process pieces' to peers in order to inspire and challenge each other in a collegial atmosphere. As a teacher and administrator working in New York City public schools for the past ten years, I have experienced many powerful and moving events; however, I have never experienced one quite like the March screening. In arts education we often focus on the product, simply because we are judged by the product. In late May and early June, we turn up the heat and prepare for thrilling exhibitions, screenings and performances. Everyone scrambles, and

- like magic - everything comes together, we are amazed and moved by our students, and we say, “ Yes, I was worried there for a moment but I knew they had it in them all the time.”

What happened in March was a first for WP. We created a pressure-free environment where students from Crown Heights to the South Bronx, Long Island City to Washington Heights, shared unfinished work and through connecting to a larger community of peers and creative professionals stopped for a moment, listened to other people’s ideas, kept what they needed, threw out what they didn’t, and launched into the second semester renewed, refreshed and with ideas bubbling hot. At WP we have been implementing this peer critique approach for years, but that night at MTV the approach was crystallized.

Many of our partnering academic teachers are concerned that students these days do not understand the importance of revision, that students will write something once, hand it in and be reluctant to reconsider, to look again. They struggle with how they can help these students to understand that through revision, an F can become a C, and a C can become an A. How do we help students to embrace this process? I can now happily point to our Dangerous Myths program where students began the second semester with one thought: How do we take what we have, which is good, and by incorporating feedback, make it great?

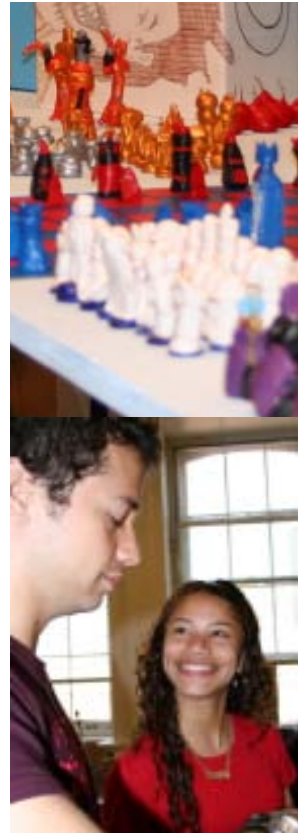
One of our many responsibilities as arts educators is to find synergy between the academics and the arts. At WP we are committed to finding these connections and exploiting them to their full potential. In June, students in the Dangerous Myths program presented their final Myths at the New York Film Academy to an audience of their peers, families and professionals from the field. It was heartening to see that revision had indeed taken place, and that students clearly understood that by revisiting their ideas and clarifying what they

really wanted to say, they were able to create truly engaging, great art.

3. Working Playground at New Design High School

New Design High School is a small third year high school located on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. The School, which was created as part of the restructuring of Seward Park High School, is a college preparatory school with a focus on design. As part of the Seward Park HS Complex, 83% of the students are at or below the poverty level, 98.6% are considered an ethnic minority, and 29% are recent immigrants. According to the 2000 US Census, 46% of the target population on the Lower East Side do not have a high school diploma, and 22% have less than a 9th grade education. In light of these statistics, it is crucial that the restructuring of Seward Park High School be successful in re-engaging the Lower East Side community with rigorous and engaging in- and after-school programs. WP was brought in as the school’s cultural partner and since the opening of its doors in September 2003, we have seen many challenges, but have also witnessed immense progress.

WP’s and New Design’s vision is to integrate the idea, concept and process of design into a progressive, academic, high school curriculum, thereby offering a model of innovative and comprehensive education. New Design is striving to be a school in which traditional subject matter will be integrated and taught through the design process used by the design fields. We believe that using design as a base for all teaching allows students to experience an inquiry-based education focused on





understanding real world contexts, encourages self-expression and develops problem solving techniques. When students are engaged in the process of designing, they are learning to observe, seek problems, identify needs, work collaboratively, explore, appreciate solutions, and communicate their ideas verbally, graphically and three dimensionally. To this end WP and New Design have created Education by Design. Education by Design creates a holistic school-wide approach the integration of the design fields in every aspect of the school. The program consists of three strands, Design Studios geared toward the acquisition of design skills, Design Integration geared toward the marrying of academic subject and the design fields and Design Culture geared toward using the underpinning values from design to inform and create an aligned school culture. WP educators work alongside teachers and art specialists in all three strands to co-create and co-deliver a comprehensive approach to school reform.

4. Highlights

New Partners, Greater Reach New In-school programs

Working off the successful cultural partnership at New Design High School and our comprehensive Urban Arts Partnership programs, WP has played a significant role in the planning of two new schools, **The Facing History School** and **Technology Arts Sciences Studios**, which both opened their doors in September 2005. Two years ago, Facing History And Ourselves, a renowned educational organization, was approached by Chancellor Joel Klein and Robert Hughes of New Visions to be a lead partner for a new, small high school. The school will develop effective models of differentiated classrooms that address the needs of all learners. (TASS) is a progressive middle school serving students in grades 6 through 8. Embracing the research of Howard Gardner, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Robert Jackson TASS is founded on the principles

of Multiple Intelligences and Constructivist Learning Theory. At both sites WP will be responsible for building an integrated arts culture and for implementing arts integrated residencies school-wide.

New 21st Century After-school Programs

In 2005 WP expanded its programmatic reach for the third consecutive year. WP was recently awarded eight new 21st Century After-school contracts within six public schools located in Brooklyn, Long Island City and Jackson Heights, Queens, and the Upper West Side of Manhattan. These new additions have created the need to expand WP's Teaching Artist pool from 25 to roughly 32 artists. Similar to our existing 21st Century programs these are multi-year grants and will run from October through June.

Awards

Two films out of MS 131, "The Dream Fast" (2003) and "Boy Pharaoh" (2004), both created in cooperation with teacher Britney Montgomery's classes and WP Teaching Artists Rob Weiss and Anna Strout, have received honors at the Locomotion Film Festival out of Utah. "The Dream Fast" won 1st Prize for Best Youth Animation.

On Thursday, March 24th, "Pizza Math" was screened as part of the "Urban Visionaries Youth Film Festival" held at the Museum of Television and Radio in Manhattan. "Pizza Math" is a 10 minute animated short produced in the spring 2004 by a small 8th grade special education class at PS 328- located in East New York, Brooklyn.

5. Partner Schools

BRONX

Alfred Smith - Video Arts
MS 184 - Cartooning, Dance

BROOKLYN

MS 240 - Theater
JHS 220 - Video Arts
JHS 198 - Mural Making
John Adams - Video Arts
Franklin K. Lane - Mural Making
Thomas Jefferson HS - Guitar Making
MS 390 - Video Arts
Wingate - Music Production
Erasmus HS - Guitar Making
IS 2 - Video Arts
MS 271 - Video Arts

MANHATTAN

Washington Heights

HS for Law and Public Service - Web Design
HS for Media and Communication -
Digital Photography

IS 52 - Theater
Luperon HS - Video Arts
JHS 44 - Spoken Word
JHS 244 - Video Art

Harlem

The Heritage School - Theater, Poetry

Lower East Side

New Design High School – Visual Arts, Design,
Poetry, Theater
East Side Community High School - Dance,
Video Arts, Visual Arts, Theater, Poetry
M 131: Dr. Sun Yat Sen - Theater, Video Arts,
Visual Arts

QUEENS

Our World Neighborhood Charter School
– Video Arts
Aviation HS - Video Arts
LIC HS - Video Arts, Dance
IS 230 - Comic Book Art
IS 145- Theater

SCHOOLS SERVED: 28
STUDENTS SERVED: 5,000

CLASSES TAUGHT: 3,412
AVERAGE # OF CLASSES PER SCHOOL: 122



6. Results

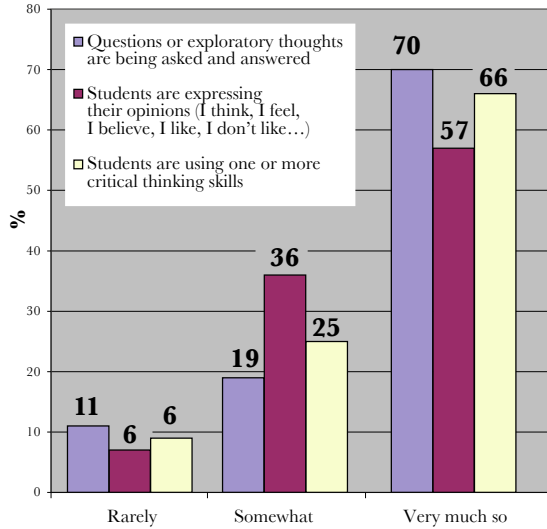
This year in association with The Center for Arts Education, WP developed and piloted an assessment model that yielded telling results. The assessment examines how effective the Art Integration program is at reaching students and their teachers while building their capacity to learn. The specific areas studied were:

1. An inquiry model of learning is being used to teach the core curriculum through the arts.
2. Core subject teacher is using or demonstrating knowledge of arts-integration strategies.
3. Art instruction, core subject content, and literacy are woven into a cohesive curriculum.
4. Program is aligned with NYC DOE Blueprint for Instruction in the Arts.
5. Student self assessment and feedback

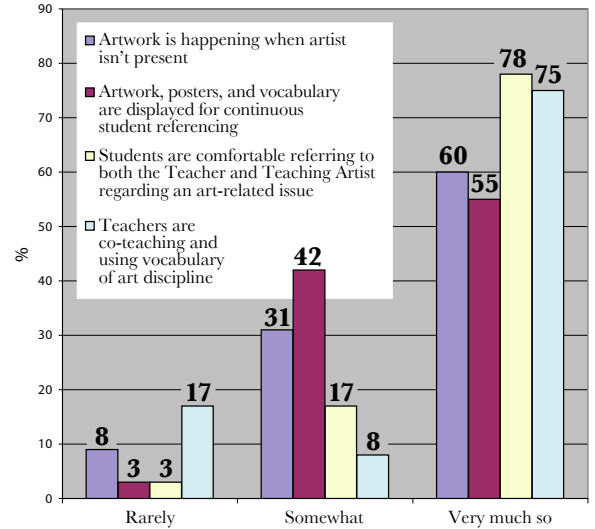
The following data was collected and analyzed through teacher and artist journal entries, samples of student journals, samples of student artwork (videos, 2-D work, and plays), weekly review forms, observation reports, and curriculum outlines. Twice during the year, artists and teachers chose three students' artwork and journals, and contributed two of their own journal entries to loan to the assessment committee. Some forms, such as the weekly review forms, were handed in on a weekly basis.



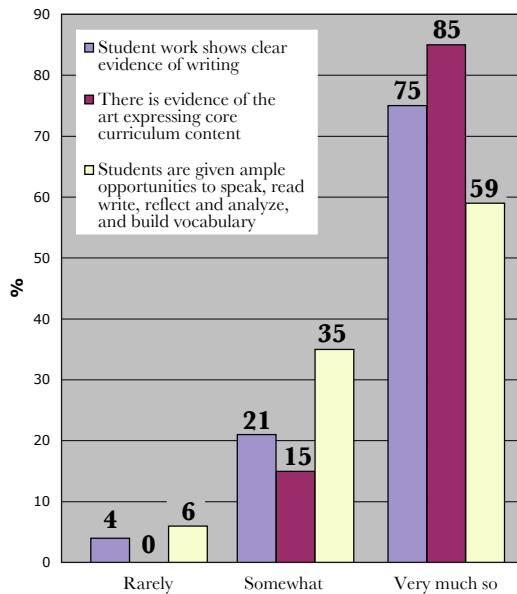
1. An inquiry model of learning is being used to teach the core curriculum through the arts.



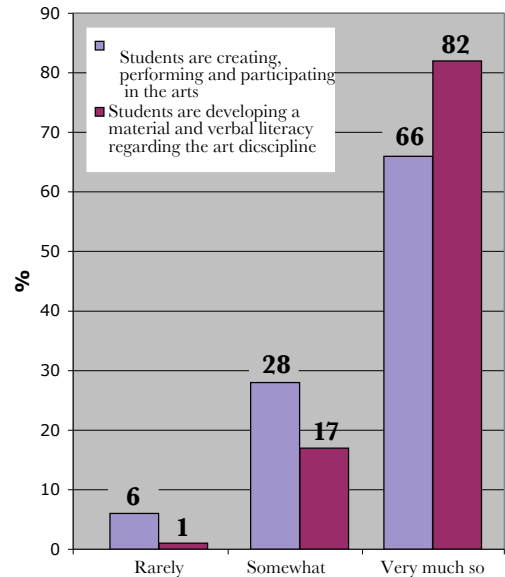
3. Art instruction, core subject content, and literacy are woven into a cohesive curriculum.



2. Core subject teacher is using or demonstrating knowledge of arts-integration strategies.



4. Program is aligned with NYC DOE Blueprint for Instruction in the Arts.



5 Student Self Assessment

- 95% of students felt that they are more likely to come to school because of their WP class
- 79% of students in a WP class understood subject better because they studied it through an art form
- 90% of students felt that they would use skills acquired in their WP class in other classes and outside school

What our students say

“Just in terms of learning, I think that we learned more than how to act or make a play happen. I think we learned life skills, how to work in a group and how to speak, so I think we learned so much more than we thought we would. It is so much more fun to actually stand up, act, talk and move around the classroom. My Working Playground/American History class is not like other classes where we’re just sitting down and focusing on the text book. To look forward to go to the American History class is a really great thing!”

Ozzie, Senior Student - Heritage HS

“Through this class I’ve gained more trust in myself. Now I feel that I might have a talent for making films. The technical knowledge I have learned is especially useful because I can use it professionally. I can get a job in television and even though I might not know everything, after taking this class I have a pretty good basic knowledge.”

Miguel Robles, 10th grade - Gregorio Luperon HS

“I learned that team work is the most important key for someone to be successful.”

7th grade, Mis 5, - M 131

“Art can help you to learn more about history, like you can make your own sculpture of the statue of liberty and learn about history, and how they make buildings.”

8th grade, ELL, - M 131

82% of students in a WP class developed critical thinking skills

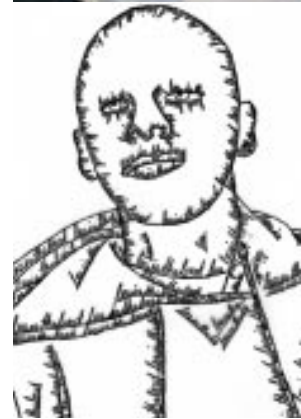
79% of students in a WP class are better at taking and giving critical feedback to their peers

89% of students in a WP class have a greater appreciation for being an artist and making art



“I always felt scared of what people might say when showing my work. I never wanted to show my work. But after our presentation teachers and peers came to me, and told me ‘that’s excellent, that’s beautiful’ now I’m not scared anymore.”

7th grade, ELL, - M 131



What our teachers say

“C.B. was a low skill reader and writer. Between the work he did in *Poetry and Creative Writing Class* with Miss A from WP and with Glen in the after-school film program, today he’s a student who is committed to learning. I honestly think he was someone at the risk of dropping out or failing all his classes and being held back. He has now become a student who is constantly working on his classes as well as his work outside school. C.B. is a prime example of someone for whom this program really worked very well.”

Brett Burns, Teacher - New Design HS

“I enjoy collaborating with thoughtful teaching artists such as Mr. Schachner. I value the arts and believe that the arts can have a positive impact on students’ historical understanding. As a result, I make efforts to provide arts related instruction in all my social studies classes.”

Daniel Nichols, Teacher - Heritage HS

7. Finances

Income

| | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Contributions | \$191,602 |
| Government grants | \$388,694 |
| Program Fees: DOE | \$247,800 |
| Events | \$63,791 |
| Interest | \$881 |
| Total: | \$892,768 |

Expenses - By Function

| | |
|----------------|------------------|
| Administrative | \$63,248 |
| Programmatic | \$686,905 |
| Fundraising | \$82,222 |
| Depreciation | \$4,533 |
| Total: | \$836,908 |

Expenses - By Category

Salaries and Benefits

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| Administrative Personnel | \$112,726 |
| Programmatic Personnel | \$485,924 |
| Fringe Benefits | \$73,664 |

Program Expenses

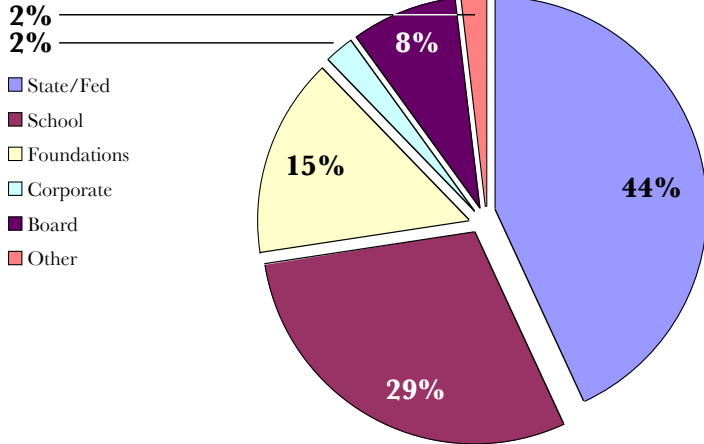
| | |
|--------------------------|----------|
| Program Equipment | |
| & Supplies | \$64,146 |
| Promotion | \$4,245 |
| Professional Development | \$18,660 |

General Operating

| | |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Rent | \$22,501 |
| Telephone | \$6,041 |
| Professional Fees | \$9,004 |
| Postage | \$3,074 |
| Insurance | \$7,618 |
| Memberships and Dues | \$152 |
| General Office Expenses | \$7,150 |
| Payroll Service | \$2,578 |
| Travel/Meals | \$10,809 |
| Database Software | \$4,083 |

Total \$836,908

Fundraising Breakdown 2004-05



8. Supporters

21st Century Community Learning Centers
 24 Hour Plays
 Abraham Fuchsberg Family Fdn
 Altria Employee Fund
 Anonymous
 Center for Arts Education

David Rockefeller Fund
 Department of Education, NYC
 HBO
 JP Morgan Chase Fdn
 National Endowment for the Arts
 New York Children's Fdn
 New York Community Trust

New York State Council on the Arts
 New York Times Company Fdn
 Planet Impact
 Prudential/Wachovia Securities Fdn
 Rush Philanthropic Arts Fdn
 St. Paul Travelers Fdn

9. Board of Directors

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