

What Teaching Artists Can Offer Teachers

Professional Development Workshop

Evaluation Results

Conder Elementary School

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Introduction

On September 12, 2005, teachers at Conder Elementary School participated in the professional development workshop *What Teaching Artists Can Offer Teachers* (hereafter, *Teaching Artists*). As a component of the project ImPACT's evaluation, the South Carolina Educational Policy Center and the Office of Program Evaluation at the University of South Carolina provided a professional development evaluation survey to Conder Elementary School. The purpose of this survey was to offer participants the opportunity to provide feedback about various aspects of the workshops in an effort to improve quality assurance. Twenty-two participants completed the Project ImPACT Professional Development Survey about the effectiveness of this workshop. The surveys contained items divided into five areas: demographic information (questions 1 – 4), logistical information (questions 5 – 8), practical application of the workshop (questions 9 – 18), information about the presenter and presentation (questions 19 – 26b), and finally, open-ended responses (questions 27 – 29). Prior to discussing the results from the closed-ended responses, an explanation of the methodology used in analyzing the data from the surveys is given. The demographic make-up of the workshop's participants is also described.

Methodology

Apart from the demographic information, the closed-ended responses (logistics, practical application, and presenter/presentation information) are Likert-scaled items, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). For each closed-ended item, we determined the means for each item based on participants' aggregate responses. Possible means for each item range from 1 to 6. The standard deviations were also calculated for each survey item to note variability.

A domain analysis was conducted on the open-ended responses. Domain analysis seeks out semantic relationships between terms for inclusion into a cultural category (Spradley, 1980). For example, concepts phrased as "knowledge," "learning," and "understanding new

information” all have similarities so they can be collectively grouped (e.g., into a domain titled “in-depth study/learning”).

Demographic Information

Twenty-five participants completed the Project ImPACT Professional Development Workshop Survey for the *Teaching Artists* workshop. Eighteen of the participants reported they teach Kindergarten through 2nd grade. Two participants indicated they teach grades 3 through 5. Finally, 2 participants indicated they teach multiple grades.

When asked their position within the school, sixteen of the participants indicated they are “classroom teachers.” Three reported they were an “other teacher,” one reported to have some “other” position, and two participants did not respond to this item.

Closed-Ended Items

Following is a discussion of the results from the closed-ended items. The first section of questions on the survey sought feedback on the logistics of the training (i.e., time, location, and atmosphere). As shown in Table 1, workshop participants’ responses on items 5 through 8 were positive with means ranging from 5.68 to 5.95. The two statements with the highest mean (5.95) were, “The workshop location was convenient and accessible,” and “The food and beverages provided were adequate.” The statement with the lowest mean (5.68) was, “The meeting schedule (i.e., beginning and ending times, breaks, time for lunch) was appropriate.”

Table 1

“Teaching Artists” Results of Logistical Information Questions

Question Number	Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
5	The workshop location was convenient and accessible.	5.95	0.21
7	The food and beverages provided were adequate.	5.95	0.21
6	The facilities were adequate (room temperature, size, space, cleanliness).	5.86	0.35
8	The meeting schedule (i.e., beginning and ending times, breaks, time for lunch) was appropriate.	5.68	0.65

The second set of questions sought responses about practical application of the workshop (i.e., strategies discussed and ideas presented). As shown in Table 2, workshop participants' responses on items 9 through 18 were positive with means ranging from 4.36 to 5.59. The statement with the highest mean (5.59) was, "The demonstrations of strategies were useful." The statement with the lowest mean (4.36) was, "I already use most of the strategies presented today."

Table 2

"Teaching Artists" Results of Practical Information Questions

Question Number	Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
13	The demonstrations of strategies were useful.	5.59	0.59
15	The visual aids were easy to read.	5.57	0.51
9	The content of this workshop will be useful to me.	5.55	0.51
14	The handouts were clear and complete.	5.55	0.60
17	The workshop has deepened my understanding of the instructional strategies presented today.	5.55	0.51
10	My understanding of the topic presented has increased.	5.50	0.51
11	I have learned new instructional strategies in this workshop.	5.50	0.51
18	I plan to use the instructional strategies presented today in my classroom.	5.45	0.60
12	The instructional strategies acquired in this workshop will help me improve student learning.	5.41	0.59
16	I already use most of the strategies presented today.	4.36	1.05

The third section of questions sought information about the presenter and the presentation (i.e., how the workshop was facilitated). As shown in Table 3, workshop participants' responses on items 19 through 26(b) were very positive with means ranging from 5.64 to 5.95. The statement with the highest mean (5.95) was, "The presenter(s) were knowledgeable." The statement, "The presenter(s) provided sufficient examples of application in the classroom," had the lowest mean (5.64).

Table 3

“Teaching Artists” Results of Presenter and Presentation Questions

Question Number	Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
19	The presenter(s) were knowledgeable.	5.95	0.21
21	The presenter(s) encouraged participation.	5.91	0.29
22	The presenter(s) were well prepared.	5.91	0.29
20	The presenter(s) kept the discussion focused.	5.86	0.35
23	The presenter(s) were able to answer questions from the participants.	5.86	0.35
24	The presenter(s) provided sufficient opportunities for the participants to share and discuss information.	5.82	0.39
26b	The presenter(s) connected the workshop ideas and strategies to the magnet theme.	5.82	0.39
26a	Overall, this was a good workshop.	5.77	0.43
25	The presenter(s) provided sufficient examples of application in the classroom.	5.64	0.58

Open-Ended Items

Participants were asked to respond to three open-ended items about the workshop.

These included:

- 27. List ONE strength of this workshop.
- 28. List ONE improvement you would suggest for this workshop.
- 29. From this workshop, what is ONE thing you want to know more about?

Among the twenty-two participants completing the workshop survey, commonalities among respondents became evident. When asked to name one strength of the “*Teaching Artists*” training, 7 of the 22 participants mentioned that the hands-on activities were strong points of the workshop. Another 7 participants noted that the presenter(s) were knowledgeable and/or engaging. Four reported that connecting the arts to the curriculum were strengths of the workshop. One person mentioned a logistical issue as a strength; 3 participants did not respond to item 27. Table 4 provides themes, frequencies, and exemplars.

Table 4

“Teaching Artists” Strengths as Reported by Participants

Theme	Frequency	Exemplar Statements
Hands-on activities; active learning	7	“Hands on Activities!” “Active involvement.”
Knowledgeable, engaging presenters	7	“Enthusiasm of the presenters; knowledge base was great.” “The presenter - very knowledgeable; definitely experts in their fields.”
Connection of arts and the curriculum	4	“Helping me see visually the interconnections of the Art form to curriculum areas.”
No response	3	N/A
Logistical issue	1	“At our home-school.”

Item 28 asked participants to suggest an improvement for the workshop. Table 5 highlights the responses from the participants in the *“Teaching Artists”* training. Six participants responded to item 28 by indicating they could not think or name something that needed to be improved. Three participants mentioned some logistical issue; two mentioned they would like to have seen more connections of curriculum and the arts, and two responded they would have liked more hands-on activities and examples.

Table 5

“Teaching Artists” Suggested Improvements as Reported by Participants

Theme	Frequency	Exemplar Statements
No response	9	N/A
None noted	6	“None.” “None noted.”
Logistical issues	3	“Time - very hard to focus after school!”
More connection of curriculum and arts	2	“More curriculum development.”
More examples; hands- on activities	2	“Continued hands-on is helpful.”

Nine participants did not respond to item 28. The themes, frequencies, and exemplars can be found in Table 5.

Item 29 asked participants to name one thing about which they would like to know more. These data are summarized in Table 6. Four participants asked for lesson plans and/or lesson ideas. Another four inquired about implementing arts into the curriculum, and four more asked some aspect of visual arts. Three mentioned some other classroom instructional issue, and two asked about bringing artists into their classroom. Five participants did not respond to this item.

Table 6

“Teaching Artists” Future Learning as Reported by Participants

Theme	Frequency	Exemplar Statements
No response	5	N/A
More lesson plans and/or ideas	4	“More lesson ideas.” “More instructional strategies/ lessons to increase student learning.”
Implementing arts into the curriculum	4	“More info on relating arts to curriculum.”
More knowledge about visual arts	4	“I would like to incorporate more visual arts.” “Visual arts connection.”
Other classroom instructional issue	3	“Classroom management.”
Bringing artists into the classroom	2	“Availability of teaching artists to come to our classroom.”

Commendations and Recommendations

For the closed-ended items, all means were very positive, with the lowest being 4.36 on a 6-point Likert scale. When noting the lowest mean, however, it is important to note that the 4.36 mean was for item 16, “I already use most of the strategies presented today.” This is important to note because it seems that most participants did not already use the information provided. The higher means, however, for the practical items indicate that participants felt as if

their knowledge base about the topic increased. In addition, another commendation to note is the high averages for the presenter(s) and presentation. Those means ranged from 5.64 to 5.95. These data correlate to the open-ended responses given by participants. Specifically, the most frequent theme noted in question 27 related to the presentation and/or presenters, which included the knowledge of the presenters and the hands-on activities the presenters used.

In terms of noting areas to improve, most participants either did not respond to item 28 or indicated they could think of no improvement to suggest. Those comments that were suggested seemed to indicate participants wanted more of what they noted as strengths (i.e., more hands-on activities and connection of arts and the curriculum). With areas for continued learning, comments such as asking for lesson plans, connections to the curriculum, and using artists in the classroom seem to indicate that participants would like additional support in terms of the practical application of the topic presented.

The South Carolina Educational Policy Center and the Office of Program Evaluation at the University of South Carolina, hope these data provide staff at Conder Elementary and project ImPACT with useful information about the *Teaching Artists* workshop as well as information for future professional development.

Sources

Spradley, J.P. (1980). *Participant Observation*. Hartcourt College Publishers: Fort Worth.