

Executive Summary:

Evaluation of Creative Kindergarten Connections (CKC) Program (2014-15)

Key Findings

- 455 students in 19 classrooms in 8 different schools participated in the CKC Program.
- Positive change in the “best” result was reported for sixteen of the seventeen items in the CBRS. Thirteen of the items showed double-digit growth from the fall to spring assessments. The outside evaluator analyzed the aggregate ratings from CKC classrooms and 2 classrooms that did not receive AWaH programming. The data indicate a measurable positive effect of the AWaH programming on every one of the CBRS measures in comparison to the non-AWaH classrooms. 100% of 12 teachers surveyed would recommend CKC to other teachers and schools.
- Overall the aggregated data from the Child Behavior Rating Scale (CBRS) showed a trend towards improved self-regulation among CKC students both externally (in their relationship with others) and internally (in their approach to study). The data shows that the best results increased by 12 percentage points between the fall and spring.
- 11 of 12 teachers indicated an interest in continuing with CKC [subsequently the 12th teacher has also confirmed participation for the current school year].
- Specific positive features of the program that were mentioned most often during teacher interviews were the quality of the literature-based modules, the variety of materials and techniques used in the modules, and the organization of the material boxes.
- 8 of 8 classrooms showed improvements in some areas in the Creative Indicators Survey (CIS).
- 6 of the 8 classrooms were rated as “advancing” or “systematic” by the observer in all of the nineteen indicators of the CIS. Comparison of observer scores in the CIS suggest that classrooms with volunteers with more experience interacting with young children received more “systematic” ratings than other classrooms. This observation supports the AWaH emphasis on volunteer training and development.
- Eighteen students were interviewed in February and April 2015 by the Director of CKC Program. The highest level of growth in students’ abilities in articulating their responses during student interviews were “What do you see around you that makes you think of Art With a Heart lessons” with a 23.4% increase in the highest rating and “Pick a picture that you made during Art With a Heart. Tell me how you made this picture. What did you learn?” with a 40.9% increase.
- Volunteers provided overwhelmingly positive feedback with a minimum of 25 out of 27 respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing to statements about the quality of their experience and the program.

Methods

Art With a Heart (AWaH) engaged Ruprecht and Hoke Consulting in 2014 to develop a more comprehensive multi-perspective approach to evaluation of the Creative Kindergarten Connection (CKC) Program. The approach built on the findings of the strategic planning process of 2014-15 to focus on measuring student improvements in short-term and intermediate outcomes that based on the AWaH Theory of Change would lead to improved long-term student achievement.

The instruments selected were based on developmentally appropriate methodologies that focused on five questions:

1. How is the CKC program being implemented?
2. What tangible benefits do classroom and art teachers see in the program?
3. What do students learn about the process of art?
4. How does participation increase students' art knowledge? Does participation in the program increase students' persistence to stay on task?

The initial year of rolling-out the evaluation tools focused on the nine CKC classrooms which were in operation for both the fall and spring semesters. In addition to gathering baseline data, the focus of this year was to improve the tools and the data collection process to maximize the return on investment.

The evaluation plan included a mixed-methods approach of observations, surveys, and interviews. Evaluations in subsequent years will also include analysis of academic performance. Detailed analyses of the results of each of the following methodologies are also available.

1. Child Behavior Rating System (CBRS)
2. Creative Indicator Survey (CIS)
3. Fidelity Checklist
4. Student Interviews
5. Site Visits and Teacher Interviews
6. End of Year Teacher Surveys
7. End of Year Volunteer Surveys

Recommendations for Improving Evaluation Process in 2015-16

- Focus on collection of fall data earlier in the semester to increase the time between fall and spring assessments.
- Determine if two years of data will be sufficient for measuring change in academic performance of CKC students. Continue discussions with Rooney Foundation for accessing student achievement and testing data.
- Increase outreach to non-CKC classrooms to provide more "control" group participation.
- Increase the involvement of 1st grade teachers in evaluating the skills and behaviors of CKC participants in comparison to non-participants.

Site Visits and Teacher Interviews

A member of the evaluation team visited each of the nine AWaH Creative Connections Classrooms during the spring semester to observe the AWaH program being delivered. In addition, in-person or phone call interviews were conducted with seven teachers from three schools in April of 2015.

General Observations from Site Visits

- Students were engaged throughout the three rotations in almost every classroom.
- Very little discernable differences in the behavior of children at tables led by the volunteers or by the teachers.
- Students understood and communicated concepts such as warm and cool colors and horizon lines.
- Students often referred to past projects in relation to the techniques they were using.

Teacher Interviews

- Teachers were overwhelming enthusiastic and supportive of the partnership with AWaH.
- Specific positive features of the program that were mentioned most often were the quality of the literature-based modules, the variety of materials and techniques used in the modules, and the organization of the material boxes.
- A few of the teachers raised concerns that they didn't have enough time to prepare for the lessons, the transitions from one station to another could be problematic, and the creation of the portfolios was a time-consuming process that needs to be improved.
- All of the teachers agreed that the assessment tools were appropriate and measured the impact of CKC and were developmentally appropriate for their students.
- Most of the teachers commented that their partnership with AWaH had increased their ability to teach art and reach their students:
 - Second year teacher: "I was much more confident in my ability to teach the art programs the second year and AWaH makes it so easy for us with very clear instructions. We love the fact that each of the projects is built around a story that ties in our language skills with the art project."
 - Second year teacher": "This year was easier for me. I knew most of the specific methods and programs. I also knew that the kids would succeed based on my experience from last year even with the new lessons."
 - "This program allows me to teach the way I way I was trained to teach and can see the positive results with the students." The teacher went on to explain that in the past few years she feels like she is more focused on tests and procedures rather than interacting with her students on an individual basis.

Creative Indicator Survey (CIS)

The Creativity Indicator Survey is a tool presented to AWaH by Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE) during AWaH's strategic planning process in 2013. The instrument was adapted from the original (for older students) to be age-appropriate for kindergarteners by a consultation between AWaH and Ruprecht and Hoke Consulting. The tool lists 19 behaviors considered to be representative of highly creative thinking for the age group and is applied at the classroom level rather than individual students. Teachers are asked to consider behavior in the context of a specific period of time to ensure consistency across classrooms.

Each classroom teacher completed the evaluation in the fall and spring based on their experience operating the art activity center. In addition, an outside trained observer assessed each classroom during the spring semester by observing all three activities centers.

Overview

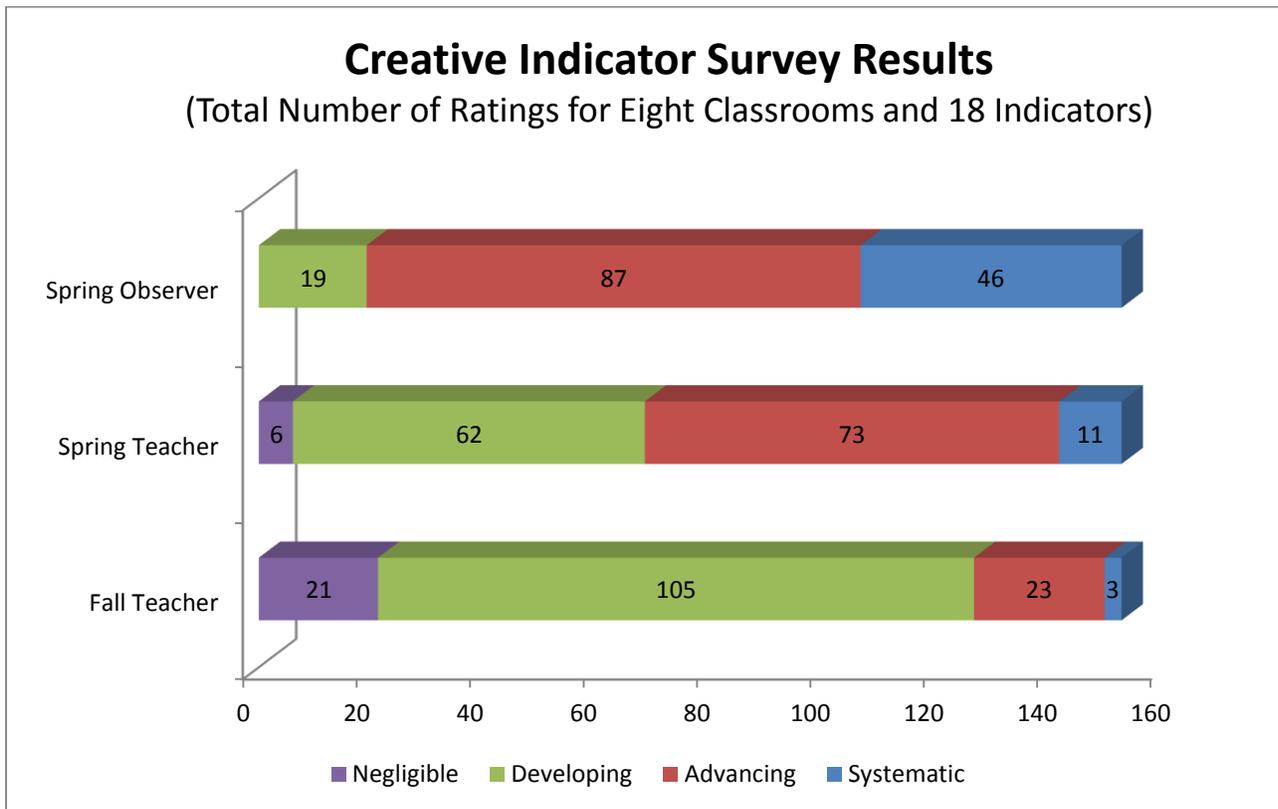
- 8 of 8 classrooms showed improvements in some areas
- 6 of the 8 classrooms were rated as "advancing" or "systematic" by the observer in all of the nineteen indicators.
- 6 of the 8 classroom teachers reported positive change for the indicator "Are students recognizing routines and patterns?" between the fall and spring semesters.
- The indicator which teachers rated with the least amount of change was "Are students anticipating difficulties?" with 6 of the 8 classroom teachers rating their classrooms the same in the fall and spring semester.
- Results based on observations of all three centers show higher levels of improvement over results based solely on the observation (by the teacher) of just the art activity center.
- Comparison of observer scores suggest that classrooms with volunteers with more experience interacting with young children received more "systematic" ratings than other classrooms. This observation supports the AWaH emphasis on volunteer training and development.

The impact of the CKC Program can also be supported by the evidence of examples of "systematic" or "advancing" classrooms:

- Students shared their work, asked for and took suggestions from their teachers, and commented nicely on their neighbors work. More than explaining how they created their work, they shared what they created, often explaining the "back story." All in all, the children appeared to be engaged, enjoying themselves, and free to make personal choices with the artistic tasks given to them.
- Students have become more skilled planners of their work, both in figuring out how to fit all of their objects on the page in the counting books and using pencils before markers, etc.
- Students often told stories about their pictures and why they drew what they did. This was not only true with the teacher, but especially with each other. As to different points of view, they

displayed this when drawing the queen's face under a crown: e.g., "My queen's face is gray because she's old." "My queen is never going to die." "My queen is pretty with earrings."

- "Oh yeah, we made water blue, green, and purple when we did our turtles." "The water turns the same color as the paint!" "I'm putting fins on too because fish has fins too." "Look, my brush is a dancing ballerina!"
- On seeing connections, students said the marble paintings reminded them of Dr. Seuss, that the "warm" colors looked like fall, that the marbled paintings looked like spider webs...just to cite three examples. But these connections were frequently voiced at every station. All students knew the AWaH routine and which tools to use for each task.
- Some students made connections between the chameleon and a Lego class they had the day before.
- When the class did the Dot lesson, they decided among themselves to make the paper into twists, and to make huge paper sculptures that looked like roller coasters. They placed the paper strips going east to west, and north to south, and then attached those to each other.



Child Behavior Rating Scale

The Child Behavior Rating Scale (CBRS) has achieved national recognition as a reliable measure of Kindergarten readiness. CBRS' applicability for students actually in kindergarten is relevant in our opinion, especially in a system like Indianapolis Public Schools where kindergarten is the first experience in an educational situation for many students. The instrument measures factors that relate to success in future elementary school grades and is consistent with the United Way of Central Indiana's goal to have 90% of 3rd graders reading at grade level by 2021.

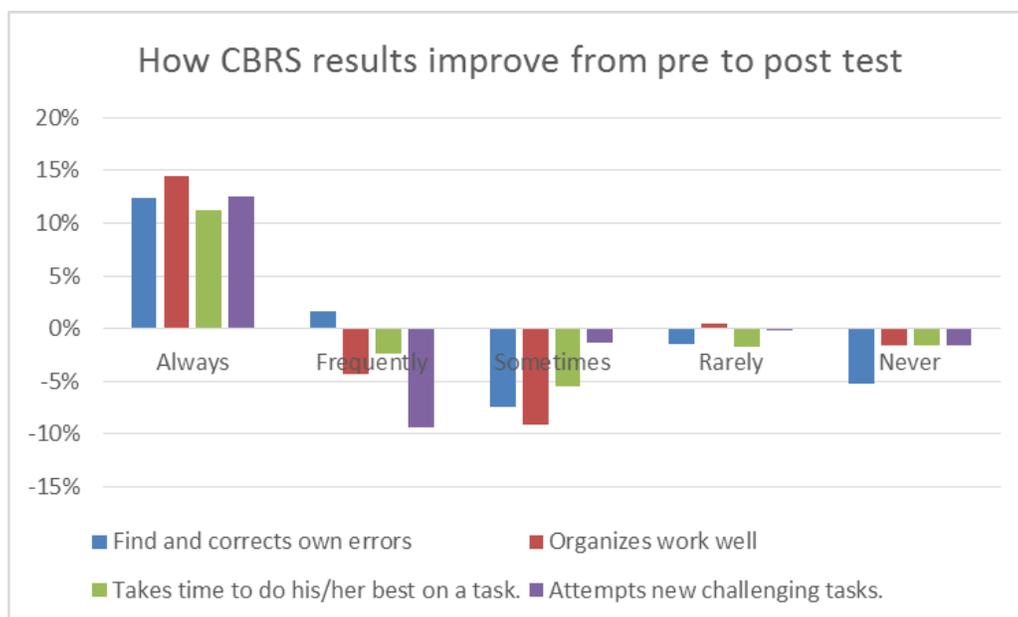
The CBRS is composed of 17 items related to the child's interaction with other children and adults in the classroom. The CBRS was conducted in nine CKC classrooms and two non-CKC classrooms. Classroom teachers completed the instrument for all of the students.

Overview

Overall the aggregated data showed a trend towards improved self-regulation among CKC students both externally (in their relationship with others) and internally (in their approach to study). The data shows that the best results increased by 12 percentage points between the fall and spring.

Positive change in the "best" result was reported for sixteen of the seventeen items. Thirteen of the items showed double-digit growth from the fall to spring assessments. The outside evaluator analyzed the aggregate ratings from CKC classrooms and 2 classrooms that did not receive AWaH programming. The data indicate a measurable positive effect of the AWaH programming on every one of the CBRS measures in comparison to the non-AWaH classrooms.

The graph below shows the aggregate change in four of the critical indicators of desired classroom behavior.



166 students in CKC classrooms were assessed by their classroom teachers in both the fall and spring semesters. Each rating was assigned a score between one and five with the “best” rating receiving a five. A delta score was calculated for each student on each item of the CBRS with the highest possible delta being a four with the lowest possible being a negative four.

- For all of the seventeen items, “no change” was more frequently reported than either positive or negative change or CKC students.
- For sixteen of the seventeen items, positive change was reported more frequently than negative change for CKC Students.
- 81% of the positive change in CKC students noted by teachers was a one-step increase in the rating scale. “Sees own errors in tasks and corrects them” and “Returns to unfinished tasks after interruption” had discernable more students increase scores by two or more steps along the five point scale.
- A higher percentage of CKC students showed positive change in twelve of the seventeen items in the CBRS as compared to non-CKC students.

Student Interviews

Eighteen students were interviewed twice in February and April 2015 by the Director of CKC Program representing all of the CKC classrooms in schools offering programming in both the fall and spring semesters. The same five questions were asked during both interviews.

The highest level of growth in students’ abilities in articulating their responses were “What do you see around you that makes you think of Art With a Heart lessons” and “Pick a picture that you made during Art With a Heart. Tell me how you made this picture. What did you learn?”

<i>What do you see around you that makes you think of Art With a Heart lessons</i>			
	Negligible	Developing	Advancing
February	10.53%	68.42%	21.05%
April	0%	56.56%	44.44%
<i>Pick a picture that you made during Art With a Heart. Tell me how you made this picture. What did you learn?</i>			
	Negligible	Developing	Advancing
February	0%	63.16%	36.84%
April	0%	22.22%	77.78%

Teacher End-of-Year Surveys

Twelve teachers from eight schools completed the online survey which was distributed to all classroom teachers involved in CKC for at least one semester during the 2014-15 school year.

- 100% of 12 teachers surveyed would recommend CKC to other teachers and schools.
- 11 of 12 teachers indicated an interest in continuing with CKC [subsequently the 12th teacher has also confirmed participation for the current school year].
- Children are using media [materials] that they otherwise wouldn't have.
- The practices and lessons learned are adapted and applied by students outside the CKC program time.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Students were enthusiastic about the AWaH program	9	3	0	0	0
Connection between art and curriculum and/or life skills was clear	6	5	1	0	0
Program content supports students' abilities to meet KDG standards	7	4	1	0	0
I learned new ways to use visual art in other areas of my curriculum	5	6	1	0	0
Participation in the program increased my interest to incorporate additional visual art activities within my curriculum	6	5	1	0	0
I have increased my use of hands-on learning in other areas of my curriculum	3	7	1	1	0

How have you used art in other parts of your curriculum?

- I've connected some of the books that were for Art with a Heart with similar books, books by the same author or theme.
- We were better able to talk about technique during our illustration study unit during writing workshop.
- We have incorporated it in many other curriculum areas to reinforce skills.
- I typically use art or craft lessons to go along with literacy lessons and books
- Centers: To enhance and enrich our planners/units of study
- I have used some of the supplies for students to create projects during center time.
- We discuss art often. We always talk about the illustrators when we read. The students are encouraged to illustrate when we journal or write (or dictate) stories. We illustrate math word problems.
- I have done observational drawings of objects with the children.
- We changed our inquiry unit How we express ourselves to include AwaH and across the curriculum.

What about your experience with the AWaH program would you share with other teachers/schools/organizations?

- This is a wonderful experience for our children. They are using media that they wouldn't have as well as learning how art is incorporated and very much a part of our lives/world.
- Students show tremendous growth in what they create and become sophisticated communicators when talking about their work.
- I love that the children look forward to it and talk art in my classroom on a regular basis.
- It is an experience that will help to broaden a child's understanding of how art affects our lives in multiple ways as it is part of all we do. It helps to develop the children's observational skills. The motto used here at our school is "Art is part of smART"
- The students loved AWaH! They were able to create projects that reinforced academic skills such as letter recognition.
- The students love the AWaH program. I just introduced a new book to the class (Golden Domes and Silver Lanterns- A Muslim Book of Colors by Hena Khan, illustrated by Mehrdokht Amini) and showed the class some of the beautiful pictures. One of my students said, "Maybe we could paint that in AWaH." I love the class thinking about art and knowing that they can make beautiful art."
- It is a great program, the children love it and they learned many new art techniques.
- It is a great program that teaches so much more than art. Students learned to be observant, add details, eye hand coordination increased, and putting their thoughts into words.

Volunteer Survey

Twenty seven volunteers from eight schools completed the survey at the end of the spring semester.

- Volunteer provided overwhelmingly positive feedback with a minimum of 25 out of 27 respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing to statements about the quality of their experience and the program.
- 100% of the volunteers felt that their role was important for the AWaH program.
- 100% of the volunteers indicated that their children enjoyed participating in AWaH. (74.1% strongly agreed and 25.9% agreed.)
- 26 out of 27 volunteers indicated an interest in continuing with AWaH.
- One aspect of the program that may warrant additional conversations with the volunteers is how to improve the pre-classroom training.

Appendix A: Impact of the CKC Program in 2014-15	
Artworks	4,635
AWaH Staff Hours	2,576
Volunteer Hours	1,392
Hours of Art Instruction	516
KDG Students	455
Art Letter Books	455
Art Counting Books	455
Art Portfolios	455
New Artwork Cubbies	270
New Picture Books	144
Teacher Professional Development Hours	120
Volunteer Professional Development Hours	63
Parent & Community Volunteers	44
Containers of New Art Materials	36
Kindergarten Teachers	22
Special Education Teachers & Teaching Assistants	8