

Abstract

Los Angeles Unified School District

Integrating L.A.'s Culture & Context into Visual Arts Professional Development

Through a collaborative partnership between the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), Loyola Marymount University (LMU) Family of Schools Collaborative, LMU professors and students, professional artists and art educators, the Integrating L.A.'s Culture & Context into Visual Arts Professional Development Project will improve academic outcomes for Los Angeles-area students in underserved populations, and provide professional development to build teacher confidence and capacity for school wide integration of visual arts and content area instruction. During a 6-8 month planning period, the Co-Project Directors and Project Evaluator will refine the measurable objectives and outcomes proposed in our application as part of a comprehensive evaluation plan, which have been specifically written to address the Absolute Priority and Competitive Preference Priority for Technology that are a part of this grant competition.

Our research-based model will be implemented and evaluated over three years, impacting three cohorts (30 each cohort, 90 total) of first through fifth grade teachers from six LAUSD schools serving predominately low-income students. Participants will receive comprehensive training that incorporates knowledge building, practical application and lesson plan development. Thirty teachers each year will undergo a rigorous series of training, classroom-based coaching and mentoring, and reflective experiences that includes a minimum of 40 hours of hands-on learning experience. They will study African American and Latino cultural history, create art pieces, effectively use technology and collaborate to develop lesson plans that integrate art into content area instruction. It is hypothesized that the training curriculum will improve pedagogical practice, increase school site capacity for integrated visual arts instruction and enhance student achievement.

Through our robust partnership and the delivery of this dynamic professional development, it is anticipated that this scalable model can be duplicated in other LAUSD schools and local school districts. The need to provide students with access to the academic, aesthetic and technological skills that will equip them for 21st century success is apparent. Visual arts education supports the development of creativity and critical thinking. These abilities have a positive effect on content area instruction, as they translate into adept problem solving and higher order reasoning skills. In LAUSD, the implementation of Common Core State Standards mandates that teachers equip students to more readily and consistently incorporate these skills into everyday learning. Unfortunately access to visual arts education has been reduced. Arts are not integrated into other curriculum because of a lack of teachers' training and coaching support in strategies of effective arts integration. LAUSD and lead partner Loyola Marymount University believe this project is a means for achieving this end at schools participating in this Project.