

# STORY STUDIO

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## Project Narrative

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**A. Significance (1) Addressing the Absolute Priority**

This proposal addresses Absolute Priority 4, subpart a to increase the number and proportion of English language learners (ELs) in successfully completing courses in core academic subjects, using an approach grounded in arts integration<sup>1</sup>. This project addresses the need for universal teacher preparation to effectively support development of language skills among students who have the lowest proficiency in English. By year 4, the project will serve 15,400 students and 400 teachers in ESL, ELA, and Social Studies classes in 16 public schools in the two largest US cities, New York and Los Angeles. Targeting outcomes related to both learning and teaching, and producing a replicable model for raising the capacity of schools to serve the needs of ELs, the project will produce results of national significance. Additionally, encouraging interaction among ELs and English proficient students in mainstream classrooms will be beneficial to all students, promoting communication and allowing youth to learn from each other.

Working directly with grade 6-8 teachers, this project will support learning needs of students who cannot speak, read, write, or understand English well enough to participate meaningfully in educational programs. As virtually every teacher has at least one EL in their classrooms, many teachers are serving this population but have no preparation to do so, creating an urgent need for “ESL infusion” in teachers’ preparation (Nutta et al eds. 2012). The Story Studio i3 project will support ELs by increasing the effectiveness of ESL classes as well as making non-ESL classes more accessible to ELs.

Urban Arts Partnership (UAP) will work in partnership with two LEAs (New York City

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<sup>1</sup> The Kennedy Center defines arts integration as “an approach to teaching in which students construct and demonstrate understanding through an art form. Students engage in a creative process which connects an art form and another subject area and meets evolving objectives in both.”

District 6 and Los Angeles Unified School District) to develop, implement, and evaluate an instructional approach based on personal narratives and integration with English Language Arts, Social Studies, Visual Arts, and Theater. Telling personal narratives has been found to be successful in building competency in English among ELs, as outlined in the *Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis* of language development (Krashen 1981, 2008) and evidenced by UAP's successful experience implementing Story Studio in 121 classrooms in NYC and LA. Critical to content area literacy, we will address the challenges ELs have acquiring the same background knowledge as their English proficient peers (Reardon et al 2012) by combining personal narratives with non-fiction content. The i3 Story Studio project will incorporate ESL, ELA and Social Studies including technology and Common Core alignment not previously implemented. This will support students in **accessing challenging content and completing core academic courses** (Goldman 2012). Aligning with Common Core ELA standards, Story Studio will provide opportunities to practice skills in a safe environment: supporting and presenting arguments (standard SL4), analyzing and interpreting word choice and phrasing (standard RI 4), and editing and refining their work (standard W5). Students will use technology to research, produce, and publish artifacts, such as presentations, art works, and writing. Student work will be in response to literary, art, historical works, and oral history projects<sup>2</sup> relevant to their heritage and the heritage of their neighbors and peers, including comparing and contrasting different historical experiences.

This project brings together two successful efforts to create a scalable and sustainable program design: UAP's 2010 Arts in Education: Model Development and Dissemination (AEMDD) grant in which Story Studio was piloted, and the professional development (PD)

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<sup>2</sup> See Olmedo, 1993.

approach used in our 2009 i3-funded Everyday Arts for Special Education (EASE) project. A combination of classroom-embedded PD, PD workshops and retreats, coaching, and e-learning tools will be used to develop a self-sustaining model of peer collaboration among teachers ready to support ELs in their classroom.

By supporting the needs of ELs in both ESL and mainstream classrooms, the project will have a direct impact on the number and proportion of ELs successfully completing courses in core academic subjects. In addition to direct impact on teachers and students, the project will produce digital and physical artifacts to be used in further disseminating the project. UAP will use private funding sources to provide a match of 19%, and is committed to bringing the project to scale, including the ongoing development and maintenance of an online learning platform. Starting the project in NYC and LA will support efforts to bring the project to scale, allowing the model to develop in two major metropolitan areas with different cultures and educational challenges.

Story Studio, which is supported by a strong theory and significant preliminary evidence of success, will help close the achievement gap by serving high needs learners. ELs make up 36% of all students in NYC District 6 and 29% in LAUSD—in many target classrooms, the percentage of ELs and former ELs is 100%. Students who are foreign born or the children of immigrants have well documented disparities in educational outcomes with their peers whose parents are US-born (Batiz 1996, Walqua 2000, Gibson and Ogbu 1991). Through the art of storytelling, Story Studio empowers ELs to engage with school and become more connected to their school/home communities, improving their academic achievement, engaging in their education, and ultimately living up to their full potential.

## **(2) Implementing a Novel Approach**

UAP will build on its partnerships with NYC CSD 6 and the LAUSD to address the needs of

the large and diverse populations of ELs in each, with a **novel approach based on a sustainable, self-replicating model to support fluency and academic achievement among ELs**. This project is novel in its use of **arts integration, incorporation of sustainability in the program model, and the use of e-learning tools**.

Program staff will provide embedded PD, co-teaching with classroom teachers weekly to deliver Story Studio lessons and work towards creating a long-term project portfolio for each student to be presented at StoryGiants Festivals in January and June. By researching questions directly relevant to students, including oral history interviews, students will practice important, Common Core-aligned skills of research, developing arguments, and editing and revising work promoting success on ELA tests. Story Studio activities, including researching, telling stories, listening to others, and engaging in conversation with others, will support practice of social and academic language in and out of the classroom and promote fluency and explicit vocabulary. Development of student portfolios, including artistic and written work, will reflect increases in English fluency and vocabulary. Participating teachers become Coaches as they grow in their skill and knowledge of the model, supporting the spread of the model to other classrooms and schools. The details of the Story Studio program designed are provided in Section b2.

While other projects have implemented PD in arts integration for ELs, they do not provide a sustainable solution that can be readily disseminated, nor were they Common Core-aligned. This includes federally-funded projects implemented by the Alameda County Office of Education and NYC DOE District 25 in 2011. These projects aimed to improve teaching and learning in classrooms with high numbers of ELs, but did not address how specialists would no longer be needed over time, and thus, how a school community could be transformed long term. PD approaches in existing i3 projects address academic development for ELs and focus on text-

based analytical instruction, but do not address sustainability or the importance of student engagement in the project's implementation. Using project- and arts-based approaches proven to engage even the most at-risk ELs, Story Studio creates an environment that fosters enthusiasm, trust, and participation, contributing to student success.

Story Studio's **use of technology will move the field forward**, developing e-learning content with modules and curriculum resources organized in a Learning Management System (LMS). Users of the system will interface with a community of educators to share challenges, best practices, and input to further refine the program. Development of the LMS will be user-informed and flexible enough to support teachers of all populations of ELs in diverse settings. This project will exponentially increase the number of educators supported in their practice with ELs and ELs receiving research-based instruction proven to be effective.

### **(3) Advancement of Theory, Knowledge, and Practices in the Field**

Innovative and novel in its approach, Story Studio has demonstrated success after four years of implementation. It currently serves 1,300 ELs and 97 teachers in New York City and 319 ELs and 24 teachers in Los Angeles, in grades 3-12. When analyzing data from 2012-2013, Story Studio students were found to have Median Adjusted Growth Percentile Scores of 67% in ELA and 72% in Math (compared to scores of 50% indicating equivalence with the comparison group). Additionally, 82% demonstrated increased knowledge of academic vocabulary. Participating ESL teachers improved their ability to integrate visual arts and theater units with their ESL curriculum (85% and 79%, respectively). Ninety-seven percent of participating teachers increased communication with other teachers across subject areas.

This project is of national significance, and will be poised for dissemination to schools throughout the country where ELs are struggling to succeed. It will build on evidence-based

models of instruction, PD, and school-wide support, combined with the innovative approach of arts integration and telling personal narratives within an historical context, to **advance the theory, knowledge, and practices** in the field. A combination of direct instruction, embedded PD, coaching, peer education, and interactive digital curricula will be used to create a sustainable model of teacher PD and arts integration in the classroom. By the end of four years, there will be 80 Coaches in 16 schools poised to carry the model forward. The approach will be usable in both ESL and mainstream classrooms, meaning it has applicability in schools with both types of instructional programs for ELs.

This project will **advance theory** related to supporting ELs in ESL classes as well as mainstream classes, especially ELA and Social Studies. By building the capacity of classroom teachers, the project will build on this existing research base to advance the understanding of arts integration's role in supporting English language learners – something embedded in the LAUSD Arts Education and Creative Cultural Network Plan (2012). The project will build on theory of ESL infusion (Nutta Et al eds 2012) to **1) expand ESL infusion to ongoing development of teachers, 2) incorporate collaboration between ESL and non-ESL teachers, 3) incorporate embedded PD, joint planning, workshops, and retreats.** Building on the existing body of research about PD (AEL 2004), this project will advance theory of PD in general, especially as it relates to peer learning communities and coaching.

Through direct work with teachers and students, the project will **advance knowledge** around important concepts in the education of ELs. For example, building literacy in adolescent grades requires combining skill-based and knowledge-based competency (Goldman 2012). The project will advance knowledge supporting development of both competencies for ELs, through helping students to find context to learn and understand new words and strategically use instructional

tools—such as short videos, visuals, and graphic organizers—to anchor instruction and help students make sense of content area instruction (Lesaux 2012). Another important element of content area literacy is addressing the challenges English Language Learners have with acquiring the same background knowledge as their English proficient peers (Reardon et al 2012). Through the telling of personal narratives, combined with historical and social context, Story Studio will support acquisition of relevant background knowledge. The project will provide students the opportunity to use both social language and academic language, and expand our knowledge of how to promote the acquisition of academic language<sup>3</sup>.

The project will address the importance of creating inclusive learning environments, accessible to ELs in classrooms across the country. The direct practice of Story Studio is integration of core subjects with the use of technology, visual and theater arts. The project will **advance the practice** of arts integration in the classroom, creating learning environments that are fully accessible to ELs and all learners. Building on successful practices from the What Works Clearing House, Story Studio will integrate oral and written English language instruction into content areas and use small groups and pairs to provide opportunities for students to work and talk together about writing and their experiences. Story Studio will support ELs in meeting standards on vocabulary, reading, writing, and speaking, including inter-personal communication and presenting arguments (Standard SL4), use of social and academic language (Lesaux 2012), and self-expression as a motivator for language learning (Krashen 1981, 2008). The project will also develop best practices around using interaction to support language development among ELs, including interaction with teachers, other ELs, and English proficient students.

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<sup>3</sup> The acquisition of academic language is considered to be a key skill for ELs to acquire (Francis et al 2006).

Building on the experience of the i3-funded EASE project in NYC District 75, Story Studio will forward the practice of promoting collaboration among teachers. Within schools, the project will develop practices for ESL teachers to act as Coaches to promote ESL infusion and support mainstream teachers in working with ELs. The project will advance the practice of using digital tools in conjunction with in-person coaching and mentoring to develop promising practices in providing ongoing support to new and veteran teachers.

**B. Quality of the Project Design (1) Explicit plan to achieve goals**

The Story Studio i3 project addresses three short-term and three long-term goals, as outlined in the Logic Model (see Appendix D). Please see section C1 for a full timeline.

**Goal 1) Students will improve in English fluency, including ELA test scores, explicit vocabulary, and use of technology. In the long-term, ELs will achieve to their full capacity.**

This goal is addressed directly through work with ELs in ESL, ELA, and Social Studies classrooms. Program staff will provide embedded PD, co-teaching with classroom teachers weekly to deliver Story Studio lessons and work towards creating a long-term project portfolio for each student to be presented at StoryGiants Festivals in January and June. By researching questions directly relevant to students, including oral history interviews, students will practice important, Common Core-aligned skills of research, developing arguments, and editing and revising work promoting success on ELA tests. Story Studio activities, including researching, telling stories, listening to others, and engaging in conversation with others, will support practice of social and academic language in and out of the classroom and promote fluency and explicit vocabulary. Development of student portfolios, including artistic and written work, will reflect increases in English fluency and vocabulary. This goal will be supported indirectly through improvements in teacher practice addressed in Goal 2, described below.

**Goal 2) Teachers will improve in implementation of arts integration to support success among ELs. In the long-term, the arts will drive innovation in education for ELs.**

The work of the Story Studio i3 is not only in the classroom but includes multiple activities to infuse ongoing teacher development with ESL content. Beyond weekly embedded PD, each participating teacher will receive 1 hour weekly of coaching and planning time, PD workshops, a summer retreat, and access to an ever-growing body of digital tools. The content of coaching sessions will be individually tailored to teacher needs and prior knowledge – for example, ELA teachers will receive more coaching related to the language learning needs of ELs, while ESL teachers will receive more coaching related to working with content-area colleagues and creating arts-based lessons. PD will be aligned to Story Studio implementation and will include creating differentiated arts-based lessons, using interviewing and oral history in the classroom, using arts-integration to build skill-based and knowledge-based competencies, and understanding current research on language acquisition. PD will grow with teachers as they progress through years 1-3, learning to serve as Coaches for colleagues. These workshops will be provided by Program Staff, and will be developed in conjunction with current research and best practices in the ESL field. The delivery and progressive support provided to teachers in order to promote use of arts integration to support ELs in the classroom will also directly support Goal 3, creating self-sustaining communities to spread arts-based ESL infusion into ongoing teacher development.

**Goal 3) The project will lead to the creation of self-sustaining local and digital communities of educators implementing Story Studio. In the long-term, there will be a national community of educators implementing successful curriculum for ELs.**

Collaboration and community-building is central to Story Studio. After receiving intensive support in years 1 and 2, teachers will become Coaches in year 3, working with Story Studio

program staff as mentors and concurrently mentoring other teachers in their school. UAP will work with the districts to ensure Coaches are provided with time in their schedule to work with other teachers, and Coaches will be provided with per-session pay to compensate them for extra planning time. In year 1, Story Studio will work directly with ESL teachers, who are in a unique position to work effectively with other teachers in their school as Coaches because of their position as specialists. ELA and Social Studies teachers will begin participating in years 2-4. Coaching and planning time will be scheduled so ESL, ELA, and Social Studies teachers can work together with Teaching Artists to plan lessons, discuss challenges, and share successes. PD workshops will be open to all other teachers at participating schools, encouraging a culture of widespread ESL infusion in the school.

Throughout the project, participating teachers will use digital tools to support their Story Studio PD, such as sample lesson plans and planning guides, summaries of ESL research, fact sheets to stimulate discussion, examples of student work, videos demonstrating teacher and student practice, and idea banks where teachers can contribute ideas around a specific topic. Online tools will be interactive, allowing both coaching and peer-to-peer support. The bi-coastal nature of the project will allow a unique opportunity for participating teachers to engage with and learn from others operating within both similar and different educational systems. The LMS will be designed in such a way that tools are of direct benefit to users, incentivizing participation. By coupling e-learning with in-person learning, we will be seeding the online communities with participants who will be able to immediately use the tools to their direct benefit. The Story Studio LMS will be promoted through distribution channels used by UAP and partner LEAs, encouraging educators from throughout the country to join. Growth in utilization and satisfaction

will be closely monitored as part of the program evaluation, to ensure the digital component of the project will develop alongside classroom and workshop practices.

Additionally, the program will support fulfillment of the **performance measures as laid out by the i3 program**. We will implement the project with fidelity to the approved design, and will evaluate our project at the standard of moderate evidence (above and beyond the goal to produce evidence of promise). We will utilize continuous quality improvement (CQI) to ensure evaluation data is used for periodic assessment toward achieving intended outcomes, and will also monitor the cost per student served in our project. Evaluation data will be used to facilitate further development, replication, and/or testing in other settings. UAP and partners will participate in Communities of Practice, including convening other i3 grantees when possible, sharing best practices, and problem solving collaboratively.

## **(2) Complete plan for achieving goals and mitigation of risks**

The project goals, as described in section B1 above, are related in a coherent structure where achievement of each goal supports the other two. Project staff will work directly with students, teachers, and school and district administrators to support improvement in learning and teaching. Teachers will work with each other to promote community building among educators. The plan for achieving these goals is outlined below, as well as in the timeline of program activities and milestones in section C1.

By augmenting classroom teacher practice, we offer a systemic solution for underlying reasons ELs fail, and a means of exponentially increasing the number of ELs impacted by effective instruction. Participating teachers will join a collaborative community across LA and NYC, scaffolding a national network of teachers prepared to support ELs in their classrooms, mastering arts-integrated approaches, and developing the creative competencies necessary to

engage their students. The project will increase the diversity of research currently being conducted and contribute to the impact and magnitude this research will have as knowledge, theory, and practice is advanced around supporting ELs.

Table 1 presents potential risks for reaching each of the three program goals, along with strategies to mitigate those risks.

<b>Table 1: Mitigation of Risks</b>	
<b>Goal 1: Increasing academic achievement among ELs → ELs achieve to their full capacity</b>	
<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
Out-of-school risks faced by students	Holistic support provided through whole-school models and CBOs providing social services at target schools.
Resistance to the use of arts integration in the classroom	Teachers self-select to participate; project is aligned with teachers’ classroom/Common Core goals; proven curriculum developed over past four years
Teacher turnover and movement	The use of digital tools to encourage wide dissemination
<b>Goal 2: Increasing knowledge and use of arts integration targeted to meet the needs of ELs → arts drive innovation in education</b>	
Resistance from teachers and administrators	Self-selection at both the classroom and school level; pay incentives for participating teachers who reach Level 3; Common Core-aligned program goals
Lack of knowledge about arts integration and confidence among teachers	Provision of coaching and modeling, along with materials differentiated for each program level and need
<b>Goal 3: Creation of self-sustaining local and digital communities to support dissemination of Story Studio → national community of educators implementing successful curriculum for ELs</b>	
Lack of schedule overlap during planning time	Collaborative scheduling with administrators and teachers
Lack of freedom during PD days for Coaches to provide PD	Training specialists with less mandated PD, specifically ESL teachers, as Coaches
Coaching is outside of teaching contract	Offering per session pay for preparation time
Lack of utilization of digital tools	Incorporating use of digital tools from the beginning of implementation to develop familiarity; developing tools in a process responsive to stakeholder needs

**C. Management Plan (1) Responsibilities, objectives, milestones, metrics, and annual targets**

UAP has experience operating projects of this size, in collaboration with NYCDOE and LAUSD, including the EASE i3 project and the Story Studio AEMDD project. The management team will build on lessons learned through these projects to ensure smooth implementation. Table 2 identifies key members of the management team along with their responsibilities for project implementation.

<b>Table 2: Members of the Management Team</b>	
<b>Team member</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
CEO Philip Courtney (0.07 FTE)	Oversees sustainability and scale-up planning, fiscal management, and dissemination; reviews progress towards implementation and outcome goals, participates in CQI and project planning through quarterly meetings
Project Director, Jennifer DiFiglia ( 0.3 FTE)	Supervises Project Manager; High level oversight in implementation of project; participates in weekly review sessions and monthly meetings to monitor data collection from schools and program administration; is a principle lead in curriculum development and all conference and dissemination strategies; participates in CQI and project planning through Curriculum Committee
Program Manager Greg Ayres (1 FTE)	Manages day-to-day activities of program and staff; liaises with partner schools for ongoing effective communication and evaluation, schedules PD workshops, liaises with evaluation team; supervises Project Coordinators; facilitates Curriculum Committee
Project Coordinators (LA and NYC, Yr 1 0.5 FTE, Yr2-5: 1 FTE)	Coordinate with Project Director, Curriculum Committee, evaluator, teaching artists, teachers, and school administration to manage day-to-day details of program in each city; supervises Teaching Artists in each city
Teaching Artists (1 FTE - 8 total)	Implement collaborative classroom modeling and on-site coaching and planning time; deliver PD workshops; participate on Curriculum Committee.
Instructional Designer Carla Repice (contractual)	Works with Curriculum Committee to develop and write curriculum and to conduct professional development workshops
Evaluation Principal Investigator Glass Frog, Dr. Rebecca Casciano (contractual)	Manages evaluation team to provide evaluation services for the project, including evaluation reports, support for dissemination efforts, and participation in CQI and project planning through monthly meetings

<p>Teacher Coaches ██████ per year @ 30 teachers per year, Y3-4)</p>	<p>By year 3, Coaches will mentor their peers in delivering the Story Studio curriculum; foster a strong school community; facilitate whole-school participation in the online learning tools; facilitate a network of teachers</p>
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Table 3 presents a timeline of activities, giving a plan for meeting the three goals in section B1.

Table 3: Timeline for Implementation of Program Plan to Achieve Program Goals	
Year 1	4 Schools NYC, 4 Schools LA
Jan – Mar 2015	1) Planning meetings with Principals, Key Personnel, Teachers & Teaching Artists. 2) Plan immersion training (launch event) with ESL instructional specialists; 3) Series of planning meetings with school administrators. <i>Curriculum Team meetings will continue monthly throughout the project.</i>
April	Selection of teacher teams
Jul/ Aug	1) Launch Event/Summer Immersion training I; 2) Teaching teams plan first integrated unit of study; 3) Launch prototype digital platform. Begin school year (4 schools NYC, 4 LA).
Sept	1) Co-teaching residencies begin; 2) Pre Surveys completed and collected; 3) Teaching teams refine and edit integrated curriculum; 4) <i>Ongoing upload of ESL materials</i>
Oct	2) Observations by Evaluation team – ongoing
Nov	1) Level 1 Teacher Team PD Session
Dec	1) Students present personal narratives and oral histories at school-based event
Jan 2016	1) Level 1 Teacher Team PD Session; 2) Teaching teams plan second integrated unit
Apr	1) Mentor/Coaching discussions (including initial consultation) begin
June	1) Students present personal narratives and oral histories at Story Giants Festival; 2) Post-Surveys completed and collected; 3) Compile and analyze data; 4) Teacher Team Group Reflection and Planning Session;
Jul/Aug	1) Level 1&2 Summer Immersion training. Begin school year (6 schools NYC, 6 LA)
Nov	1) Level 1 & 2 Teacher Team PD Session; 2) Collect ELA/Social Studies materials
Jan 2017	1) Level 1 & 2 Teacher Team PD Session
Jul/Aug	1) Level 1,2 &3 Summer Immersion training;
TBD	1) First Conference Presentation 1) Second Conference Presentation
Apr	1) Develop Individualized Learning Plans for Level 3 Teachers
Sept	1) Implement Mentor/Coaching Model for Level 2&3 teachers; 2) Launch digital dissemination of full Story Studio curriculum, including ESL, ELA, and Social Studies classrooms. Begin School year (8 schools NYC, 8 LA)
Nov	1) Level 1, 2 &3 Teacher Team PD Session ; 2) Upload ELA/Social Studies materials
Jan 2018	1) Level 1, 2 & 3 Teacher Team PD Session
TBD	1) 3rd conference presentation
Jul/Aug	1) Level 1,2,3 & 4 Immersion training; 2) Digital dissemination design and implementation updated as needed; Begin school year (8 schools NYC, 8 LA)

Nov	1) Level 1, 2, 3 & 4 Teacher Team PD Session
Jan 2019	1) Level 1, 2, 3 & 4 Teacher Team PD Session
Jun	1) 4th conference presentation; 2) Host Presentation Panel on all products and findings; 3) Launch Story Studio LMS; Promote digital platforms to other districts

Metrics for assessing program progress will be gathered at least monthly and will be discussed at Curriculum Team meetings. The metrics for each project activity, with annual targets, are outlined in Table 4.

<b>Table 4: Metrics for assessing program progress, with annual targets</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Metric of Program Progress</b>	<b>Annual targets</b>
Embedded PD – delivery of Story Studio lessons	Hours of embedded PD provided by classroom	1.5 hours weekly per classroom
	Teachers participate in delivering Story Studio lessons	85% of teachers increase participation as evidenced through TA reports and observation
	Progress in Story Studio curriculum plan by classroom	Completion of planned Story Studio lessons each year
Presentations of student work	Progress in Student Portfolios, including examples of student work and Research in Action Dialogues	All students will complete a portfolio each year
	Logistical plans for StoryGiants Festivals, including venue availability	StoryGiants will take place each January and June; will include 90% of participants
All activities provided directly to students	Interim and end-of-year values related to improvement in English fluency, ELA test scores, explicit vocabulary, and use of technology	75% of participating ELs will increase in one or more measure related to academic achievement each year. Please see Appendix J.
Coaching and planning time	Hours of coaching and planning time provided by Teaching Artist and Participating Teacher	Coaching and collaborative planning time will be provided to each teacher annually as outlined in Appendix D.
	Teaching Artist notes on relationship building with participating teachers	All teachers and TAs will build collaborative working relationships, ensuring 85% of teachers complete three years in the project
PD Workshops	Hours of PD provided by topic	PD workshops will be provided each year, differentiated to meet the needs of those attending; outlined in Appendix D.
	Attendance at PD workshops, including teachers participating in embedded PD and others	85% of cohort teachers will attend all PD workshops and 240 other

		teachers will attend at least 1 PD workshop starting in year 2.
	Teacher evaluations of workshops	85% of teachers will express satisfaction with workshops, and 80% will demonstrate growth in knowledge of ESL education and arts integration.
PD retreat	Attendance by participating teacher cohort	All teachers in L1 and L2 will attend the retreat, 90% of L3 and L4 Coaches will attend
	Analysis of pre/post test surveys from retreat participants, including recommendations for changes the following year	85% of teachers will express satisfaction with each retreat, and 80% will demonstrate growth in knowledge of ESL education and arts integration.
All PD activities provided to teachers	Interim and end of year values related to increases in knowledge and use of arts integration in support of ELs	80% of teachers will demonstrate increases in knowledge and use of arts integration in their classrooms as measured through observation, analysis of student work and RADs, and pre/post test surveys. See Appendix J.
Creation and refinement of online tools	Catalog of electronic tools available through the project website, compared to Story Studio lessons, PD workshops, and important topics identified through stakeholder feedback	By July each year, all Story Studio lessons and PD/coaching activities will be reflected in the collection of electronic tools.
	Usage statistics	Teachers will access Story Studio electronic tools at least an average of 4 times per month during year 1, increasing 75% each year; other hits to electronic tools will increase at a growth rate aligned with community wide workshops.
Online and local collaboration among teachers	Progress towards goal of creating self-sustaining local and digital communities in support of Story Studio implementation	In year 1, 90% of participating teachers will demonstrate participation in local collaboration within their school, 90% will demonstrate collaboration with other schools in their district, and 90% will participate in digital community, with 75% growth in participation rates each year. See Appendix J.

**(2) Commitment of key partners**

UAP, LAUSD, NYC CSD 6, Glass Frog, and Cornerstone OnDemand Foundation have demonstrated their commitment to this project through involvement in the proposal planning process, and will continue to support the project in implementation. The project will benefit from the broad support of stakeholders including youth, parents, teachers, and school administrators. Please see Appendix G for letters of support and MOUs further demonstrating this commitment.

UAP will serve as project lead, providing fiscal and project oversight and taking primary responsibility for project implementation, hiring and managing project staff, working with the evaluator (Glass Frog), and interfacing with the US DOE, its technical assistance providers, and the national i3 evaluator. UAP will coordinate participation in Communities of Practice, encouraging the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders. UAP will provide a private sector match of 19%, drawn from multiple sources (see Appendix C), and is committed to sustaining the project and bringing it to scale. This includes the ongoing investment in the LMS, which will be fully developed during this project. UAP will use the experience from this and other efforts to seek Validation or Scale-up funding, and also will seek additional public and private funding. The partnerships with LAUSD and NYC DOE will be instrumental in project sustainability, and UAP will work with schools to actively encourage school-wide adoption of arts-based ESL infusion. Given the current NYC administration's commitment to innovation in education, and the LAUSD's commitment to arts integration, we are well poised to create a culture shift in the way newly arriving immigrant children and others with limited English proficiency, many of whom have experienced multiple and enduring trauma, are supported in their education.

LAUSD and NYC CSD 6 support the project, promoting partnership between participating schools and UAP. Participating schools will identify a school-based Project Liaison to work with

UAP to ensure successful implementation in each school. This includes identifying teachers interested in participating in the project, coordinating schedules to foster collaboration among teachers, and participating in the project Curriculum Committee. Support from partner LEAs and participating schools will ensure long-term success for the project by promoting active collaboration among teachers, administrators, other educators, and UAP. Their active participation will help reduce implementation barriers and create a school-wide culture of innovation, art, and ESL infusion at the classroom, school, and district level.

Glass Frog will implement an evaluation design at the standard for moderate evidence and participating in CQI to refine the program design. Serving as an active member of the management team and Curriculum Committee, Glass Frog will promote long-term success of the project by ensuring it remains grounded in the evidence of how arts-based approaches can be most effective at raising the achievement of ELs, promoting classroom implementation, and creating a sustainable model through collaborative professional communities. The evaluation team will include two PhD-level researchers, Dr. Rebecca Casciano and Dr. K Maeve Powlick, both of whom have collaborated with UAP on other projects as evaluators and consultants and are committed to the long-term success of the project.

### **(3) Feedback and Continuous Improvement**

The project will follow a model of CQI based on rapid-time data analysis, stakeholder involvement, and flexibility to make mid-course corrections. The Curriculum Committee, including representatives from the evaluation team, will meet monthly and will review data on progress towards implementation and outcome goals at each meeting. Quarterly and annual formal evaluation reports will build on this process, incorporating feedback and goals identified during Curriculum Committee meetings to provide recommendations relevant to implementation

at each step. Ongoing feedback and CQI will not be limited to monthly meetings, with open channels of communication between teachers, Teaching Artists, administrators, the Management Team, and the evaluation team. Teaching Artists will meet at least weekly and more as needed with their Project Coordinator, during which time they can discuss day-to-day implementation of Story Studio lessons and planning, identify needs for workshop topics, and share ideas and challenges. The two Project Coordinators will participate in a weekly conference call with the Project Manager. This ongoing communication will allow the team to identify any immediate needs for support or changes in the field. The Project Director will meet monthly with other UAP Project Directors to share best practices and work through challenges with others implementing similar arts-based programs. The Chief Executive Officer will participate in Curriculum Committee meetings at least quarterly, and will be kept abreast of progress in the project through ongoing communication with the Project Director and Manager and minutes from Curriculum Committee meetings. Other stakeholders, including youth, parents, and teachers, will be asked for feedback through surveys and open communication at project events. While it is typically not possible for teachers and parents to attend monthly off-site meetings, they will be encouraged to attend, with at least 3 outside stakeholders attending during Quarterly meetings.

#### **(4) Project Director Experience**

Project Director Jennifer DiFiglia, MSW, has been the VP of Programs at UAP since 2009. During this time she led programmatic growth from a \$1.5 million annual budget in 2009 to the \$8 million current annual budget. In this capacity, she has managed bi-coastal projects of a similar scale to the one proposed, including the current Story Studio AEMDD project. Her management experience includes all aspect of the program department, including budgeting, compliance, operations, fundraising, partnerships, and monitoring of individual and team

performance goals. Prior to 2009, she was the Managing Director at Groundwork Inc, directing extended learning and summer programs serving 600 children in East New York. She also has experience as a consultant, program site coordinator, and student and family counselor, giving her many years of experience both in the field and in management. She is joined in the management team by Greg Ayres, the Program Manager, who has managed Story Studio since 2010 AEMDD. Both have supervised project teams in NYC and LA. Together, they have successfully responded to challenges, such as building teacher learning networks spanning geographical distances and identifying and meeting the needs of stakeholders with drastically different perspectives. An example of this includes the successful problem solving they used to maintain and build the relationship with a partner school in LAUSD during leadership change, when a supportive principal was unexpectedly removed mid-year. Ms. DiFiglia and Mr. Ayres were able to maintain the partnership, building a strong relationship with the new principal and continuing seamless program implementation. Please see resumes in Appendix F.

#### **D. Quality of Project Evaluation (1) Key Questions and Methods**

The evaluation plan is grounded in Story Studio's logic model (Appendix D) and tailored to the performance management and evaluation needs of the program during its developmental phase. The evaluation team will collect data to address research questions in order to determine whether the program is meeting standards of Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness. This plan includes an analysis of both implementation and outcomes and addresses three research questions. A full explanation of all research methods is included in Appendix J.

**Question 1:** *Is the program implemented with fidelity to the model? Is there fidelity across sites? Is the program meeting crucial implementation milestones?* This question will be answered through systematic observations, classroom activity trackers, in-depth interviews,

analysis of text documents such as meeting notes, and surveys with teachers involved in Story Studio.

**Question 2:** *Is the Story Studio program achieving its intended outcomes?* This research question has three sub-questions: **a)** Does the program increase academic achievement among ELs? **b)** Does the program increase knowledge and use of arts integration methods that support ELs? and **c)** Does the program create self-sustaining local and digital communities? Question (a) will be addressed using a quasi-experimental interrupted time series design,<sup>4</sup> using performance on state standardized English language proficiency exams and ELA exams, respectively. Story Studio students' performance on these exams will be compared to that of students in the comparison samples (see Appendix J). The team will gather student-level data from the New York City and Los Angeles Departments of Education to measure students' scores and proficiency levels. Question (b) will be addressed through classroom observations, survey and interview data, student work, and Research in Action Dialogue (RAD) portfolios prepared by Teaching Artists. The development of local and digital communities (question (c)) will be measured through growth in membership and participation in the LMS, and survey and interview questions related to sharing and discussing Story Studio methods with other teachers in the school, the district, and online.

**Question 3:** *Which program components are the strongest drivers of program outcomes?* Using a mixed method approach, the evaluation will use the triangulation of four data sources to identify the program activities most closely associated with the achievement of the program's academic and teaching outcomes: 1) student academic performance data, 2) classroom activity trackers, 3) observations of teaching practices, and 4) teaching artists' assessments of student

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<sup>4</sup> Since we are aiming to demonstrate moderate effectiveness, this design will meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards with reservations. IES [What Works Clearinghouse Procedures and Standards Handbook, Version 3.0.](#)

growth based on their RAD portfolios, which are used to identify students whose language and storytelling skills are at various developmental stages. The goal of the analysis is to identify students and classrooms that showed low, moderate, and high growth, and then use mixed methods to measure the extent to which variations in program inputs and activities are associated with variations in program outcomes. Table J2 in Appendix J shows the outputs/outcomes and data collection tools associated with answering each question.

## **(2) Analysis Plan**

The analysis plan was designed with two goals: providing ongoing feedback to the program team and producing an evaluation at the standard of moderate evidence of program effectiveness. The full sampling and analysis plan is presented in Appendix J.

Guided by the What Works Clearinghouse standards, the evaluation sample of students will overlap with the population receiving the treatment, the sample size will be sufficiently large to detect significant effects, and the sample will be drawn from multiple sites across two school districts. To estimate the program's impact on state scores in this multi-state setting, we will use a fixed effects weighting method recommended by Somers, Zhu and Wong (2011).<sup>5</sup>

In Year 1, the treatment sample will include all 1,000 students working with the program across eight schools and a balanced comparison sample of students (n=1,000) selected from comparison classrooms. For both student and teacher outcomes, the evaluation team will estimate standardized effect sizes, looking for evidence of both statistical and substantive significance, using the What Works Clearinghouse handbook's standards for calculating and reporting effect sizes to determine whether there is evidence of promise. The minimum

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<sup>5</sup> Somers, Marie-Andree, Pei Zhu & Edmond Wong (2011). *Whether and how to use state tests to measure student achievement in a multi-state randomized experiment: An empirical assessment based on four recent evaluations*. [IES NCEE Technical Report 2012-4015](#).

detectable effect (MDE) for a sample of this size across eight treatment and eight comparison classrooms in the context of an interrupted time series design with three prior years of data and detailed controls for school and classroom-level variables is .20 (assuming a power level of .8 and an alpha of .05). The MDE will continue to decline in Years 2-4 of the study, as the plan is to increase the treatment N to 2,000 students in Year 2, 3,000 students in Year 3 and 4,000 students in Year 4 (see Table 5).

Table 5 shows the desired sample for Years 1-4. In years 2 and 3 of the project, four new schools will join the Story Studio cohort (two in NYC and 2 in LA), and these schools will serve as the comparison group in years 1 and 2, respectively. In subsequent years of the study, classrooms and students previously in the comparison group will be moved into the treatment group as they start working with the program, and a new sample of “future” partner schools will be used for the comparison group.

Table 5: Proposed sample sizes for Years 1 through 4

		Year			
		1	2	3	4
Schools	Program	8	12	16	16
	Treatment	8	12	16	16
	Comparison	8	4	4	4
Classrooms	Program	40	80	120	160
	Treatment	40	80	120	160
	Comparison	40	40	40	40
Students	Program	1000	2000	6400	6400
	Treatment	1000	2000	3000	4000
	Comparison	1000	1000	1000	1000

The analytic approach for addressing each research question will follow a mixed method design. Qualitative and quantitative data will be collected in both treatment and comparison classrooms to assess the influence of variations between classrooms on implementation goals. Data from surveys, observation rubrics, and activity trackers will be summarized to assess

variations among classrooms and analyzed alongside data from in-depth interviews, student work, field notes, and other sources in order to provide context and analyze processes at play in understanding differences in implementation and progress towards outcomes.

Analysis will be completed at multiple points during the academic year in order to provide feedback to the program team on an ongoing basis and participate in the continuous quality improvement process. The evaluation team will be in contact with the program team via email, phone, and in-person meetings, including participation in monthly Curriculum Team meetings. The evaluation team will also provide formal quarterly reports regarding fidelity of implementation and progress towards outcomes, including analysis of systematic observations, in-depth interviews, surveys, classroom trackers, and software/app utilization statistics. An annual report will analyze performance of the past years' cohort on outcome measures including test scores and pre/post test surveys. Drawing on qualitative and quantitative data, the reports will both summarize results and provide recommendations for how evaluation results can be used to inform programmatic decisions. All results will be made publicly available, through journal articles and online access to annual reports, and the evaluation team will provide assistance to the program team in communicating results to professionals in the teaching and arts communities who are grappling with similar challenges. Results will be presented in formats that will facilitate dialogue and problem solving among communities of practice.

### **(3) Key Components and Outcomes, with Measureable Threshold for Implementation**

The evaluation plan in Appendix J includes all key components and outcomes as included in the project logic model. Measurable thresholds for program implementation will be determined through three criteria used to create an overall score for each classroom comparable across classrooms to measure fidelity in implementation throughout the program: number of students,

teachers, and schools exposed to the program; dosage; and consistency of implementation with the intended design of the program. Classrooms with a score indicating the program is being implemented below two-thirds of maximum participation, dosage, and implementation consistency will be considered beneath the minimum thresholds. The evaluation team and program team will meet prior to the start of program implementation and throughout the program to make adjustments to the criteria and thresholds as needed to ensure implementation fidelity is accurately measured.

#### **(4) Resources for Evaluation**

The evaluation team consists of research professionals and practitioners with experience and knowledge well-suited for this project. The Principal Investigator (P.I.) for the evaluation is Dr. Rebecca Casciano. Dr. Casciano is the Founder and Managing Director of Glass Frog Solutions ([www.glassfrog.us](http://www.glassfrog.us)), a nonprofit evaluation firm with extensive experience providing evaluation services to early stage programs. Dr. Dawn Perlner, Lead Data Analyst at Glass Frog Solutions, will oversee the analysis of all quantitative data. The project will be managed by an experienced project manager and field research, including classroom observations and interviews, will be handled by a team of experienced, trained teachers. Dr. K. Maeve Powlick, a mixed-method researcher and evaluator, will oversee the analysis of all qualitative data. The evaluation budget includes all activities associated with research planning, data collection, analysis, and, as discussed previously, includes a plan for sharing data and findings with the program team on an ongoing basis. All data will be made available and reports and research briefs will be disseminated to communities of practice. Best practices will also be shared directly with the Story Studio teaching community.

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