Community-Word Project

2016-2017 Evaluation Report

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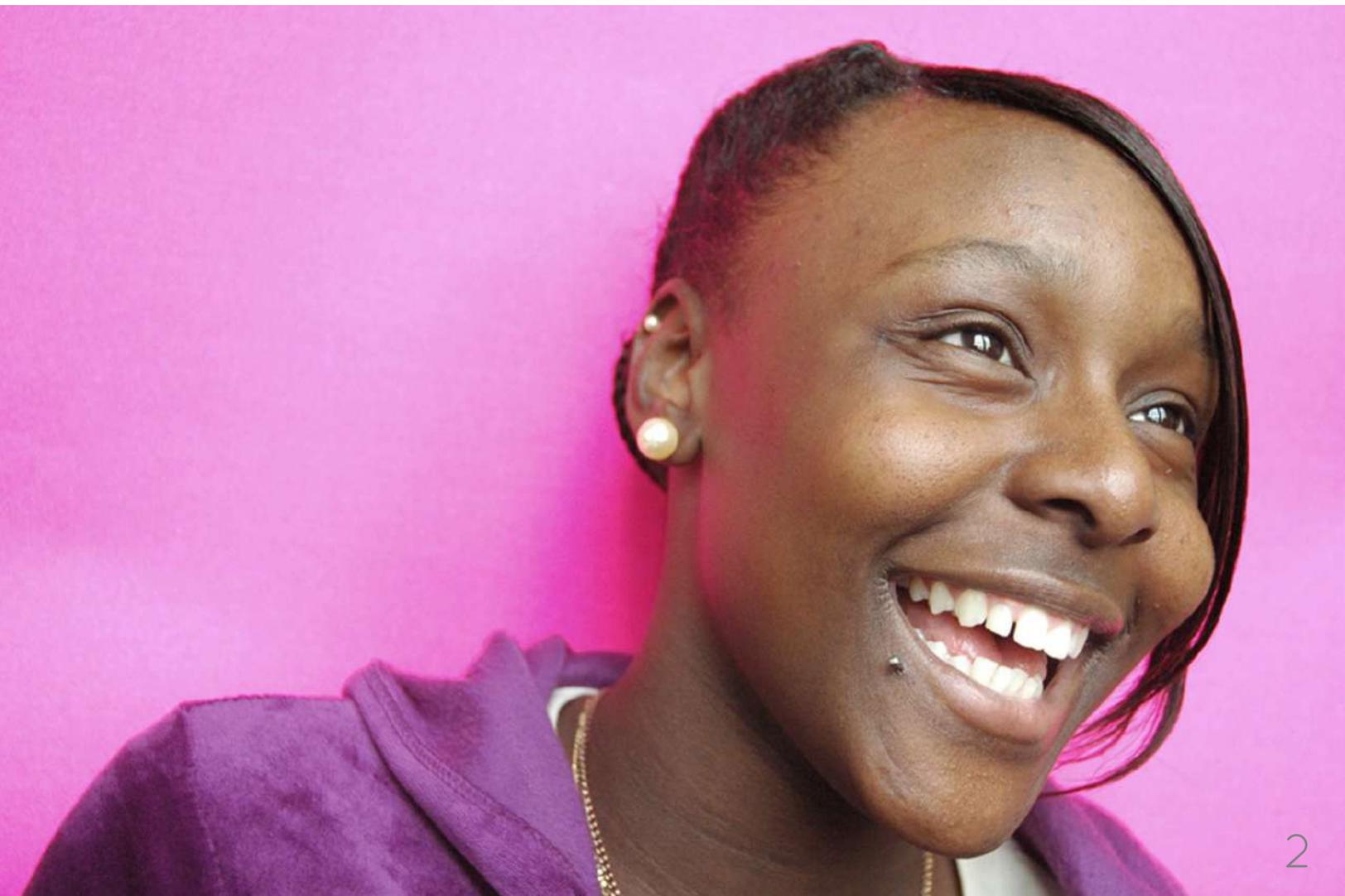
Executive Summary

This report reviews data gathered and interpreted by CWP during the 2016-17 academic year (Fall 2016-Spring 2017). During this period, we worked with over 2,600 New York City public school students and trained 55 teaching artists.

This analysis shares results from areas that demonstrate promising results, as well as reviewing our challenges and areas for improvement. We reflect on our progress to date primarily for the purpose of improving our program (including but not limited to: curricular and training design, staff requirements, and model refinement) as well as to inform others of the observations made and actions taken during this phase of CWP's work.

This report was assembled by Leigh Wells, Deputy Director of Programs and Operations. External analysis of student assessment data was provided by psychometrician, Dr. Carl Scott. Additional consultation was provided by Gillian Adler, MPH, CHES.

Program Impact Highlights

Collaborative Arts Residencies

- Based on pre- to post-program student survey results, the greatest gains were in literacy, writing revision, and creativity with gains as large as 35% in writing revision skills.
- Surveys of students demonstrated an overall positive change of 7% in intended attitude outcomes (critical thinking, creative thinking, literacy, emotional intelligence, and community) and writing revision skills.
- Classroom teachers observed significant increases in their students demonstrating skills related to CWP outcomes, especially literacy, community, and emotional intelligence.
- At the start of the 2016-17 academic year, 77% of classroom teachers indicated they had been "very satisfied" with previous CWP residencies. At the end of the 2016-17 academic year, 89% of teachers indicated they were "very satisfied."

Teaching Artist Project (TAP)

- 89% of TAP alumni survey participants reported they were highly prepared to enter the field of arts education.
- TAP trainees indicated large knowledge gains in the areas of Curriculum & Lesson Plan Design, Creative Process, Teaching Practice, and familiarity with Academic Standards such as Common Core.
- 70% of TAP Cohort Elective Seminar attendees rated their workshops as "critical" to their profession, followed by the remaining 30% who rated the workshop as "relevant & helpful."

Evaluation Process Challenges

Collaborative Arts Residencies

- This year, we looked at grade level as a predictor (in addition to residency length, which continues to be a positive predictor). We found that grade level was usually a negative predictor of changes in attitude outcomes, meaning the amount of positive change decreased as grade level increased. This was not true for skills-based assessment where higher grade levels showed greater increases in writing revision skills than in the younger grade levels. Outside research will be needed to validate the observation that as students age, they observe a smaller rate of change in their own attitudes.

Teaching Artist Project (TAP)

- We are looking for ways to supplement our TAP Trainee self-assessments with additional skills-based assessments. Some of this data could come from existing observation-based assessment.
- Anecdotally, we know that TAP is highly successful in workforce development, but we do not have tracking methods in place to gather this data.

We have learned much from the process and outcomes of our 2016-17 academic year analysis and are eager to build on these lessons to guide our ongoing monitoring and evaluation efforts. It is evident that we must continue exploring additional and refining existing mechanisms for students' skill development as well as put in place more formalized assessment for TAP programs. We are actively working toward funding support for evaluation and bringing a program evaluator on board.

Purpose of the Report

Over the last twenty years, CWP has continued to refine its programmatic vision, goals, performance, and evaluation.

Collaborative Arts Residencies
For the 2016-17 academic year, CWP staff targeted five attitude outcomes or objectives and designed a questionnaire of 27 items to measure the students progress towards meeting the intended outcomes.

- **Outcome 1: Community.** Students take on roles within their classroom communities with the express interest in improving the community through their work. Students are aware of the communities they inhabit and are sensitive to the needs of and differences between people of different backgrounds.
- **Outcome 2: Emotional Intelligence.** Students articulate emotions, read and recognize the emotions of others, and use emotions in their learning process.
- **Outcome 3: Literacy.** Students become stronger readers and writers through creative expression.
- **Outcome 4: Critical Thinking.** Students examine their work and the work of others and use analysis and reflection as part of their creative and learning processes.
- **Outcome 5: Creative Thinking.** Students use their imagination through artistic creations, explore new ideas, experience innovative problem solving, and revise their work with new perspectives.

To assess our students' progress in each of these key metrics we utilized pre- and post-surveys of students and classroom teachers as well as classroom observations by peers and program managers. In addition to measuring the attitude outcomes above, CWP also measures growth of writing revision skills over the course of residencies using the criteria below:

- **Authentic Voice.** Writer's unique perspective is clear. The writer uses individual point of view. Writer's culture, community, and/or identity is expressed.
- **Risk-Taking.** The writer makes clear choices/uses specific details. The writer expresses emotion. The writer makes bold choices.
- **Expansive Language.** The writer uses strong vocabulary words. The writer uses poetic devices & writing tools such as metaphor, simile, sensory detail, alliteration, plot, character development, etc.. Writer uses complex sentence structures.

Teaching Artist Project

CWP staff along with TAP Cohort member organization staff and trainees identified key areas of experience or expertise needed for working in the field of Arts Education.

- **Outcome 1: Curriculum & Lesson Plan Design.** Trainees are able to craft a residency arc. Lesson and curriculum designs demonstrate an understanding of layering and scaffolding.
- **Outcome 2: Creative Process.** Trainees are able to articulate their creative process in the classroom. Trainees demonstrate teaching practice including planning with their creative process at the center.
- **Outcome 3: Teaching practice.** Trainees scaffold and layer ideas in the classroom. Trainees teach to multiple intelligences in the classroom. Trainees use inquiry and reflection in the classroom.
- **Outcome 4: Familiarity with academic standards.** Trainees are familiar with Common Core and Blueprints for the Arts and are able to integrate their knowledge of the standards into their lesson planning and curriculum design.

To assess TAP trainees' level of comfort in each of these areas we utilized pre- and post-surveys. CWP also conducts lesson plan feedback sessions, classroom observations, and post- surveys Mentor Teaching Artists.

Mission

Community-Word Project (CWP) is a New York City based 501(c)(3) arts-in-education organization that inspires children in underserved communities to read, interpret and respond to their world and to become active citizens through collaborative arts residencies and teacher training programs.

Background

Community-Word Project was officially founded in 1997 with the help of an Echoing Green Fellowship. Twenty years later, CWP has inspired over 20,000 New York City kids to be agents of change for themselves and their communities and trained more than 750 teaching artists through the Teaching Artist Project.

Collaborative Arts Residencies

2016-17 Snapshot

2,671
Students Served

109
Classrooms

44
Schools & Libraries

45
Teaching Artists on Staff

29
Anthologies

25
Murals

29
Culminating Events

Students Served

Caucasion
12%

Latinx/Hispanic
42%

African-American
33%

Asian
12%

Writing Revision Skills

Pre- to Post Program Improvement %

40

30

20

10

0

25% ↑ (3rd)
22% ↑ (4th)
27% ↑ (5th)
27% ↑ (6th-7th)
36% ↑ (9th-10th)

Grade level
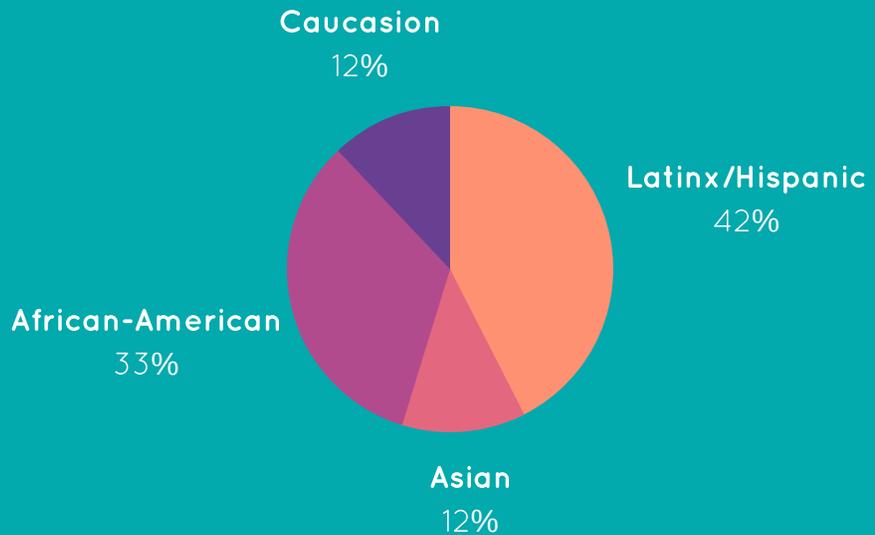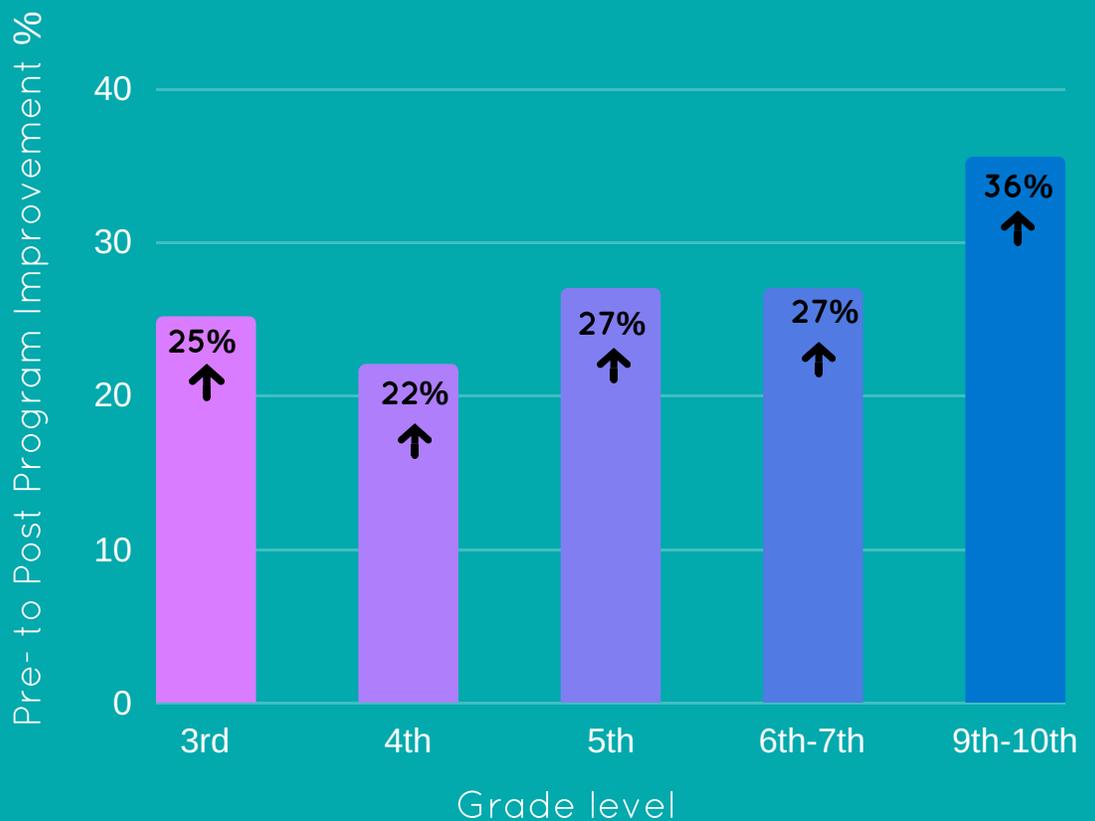
"Community-Word Project made me realize how bad I wanted to be a writer. They helped me unlock my full potential by coming up with writing topics that I could relate to." -Isabelle, 10th Grade

"My experience with Community-Word Project was pure fun and made me a better writer. CWP gave me confidence with public speaking, because they gave tremendous support in my work."
-Sonnie, 9th Grade

Teaching Artist Project

2016-17 Snapshot

55
Teaching Artists Trained

89%
report they were highly prepared to enter field of arts education.
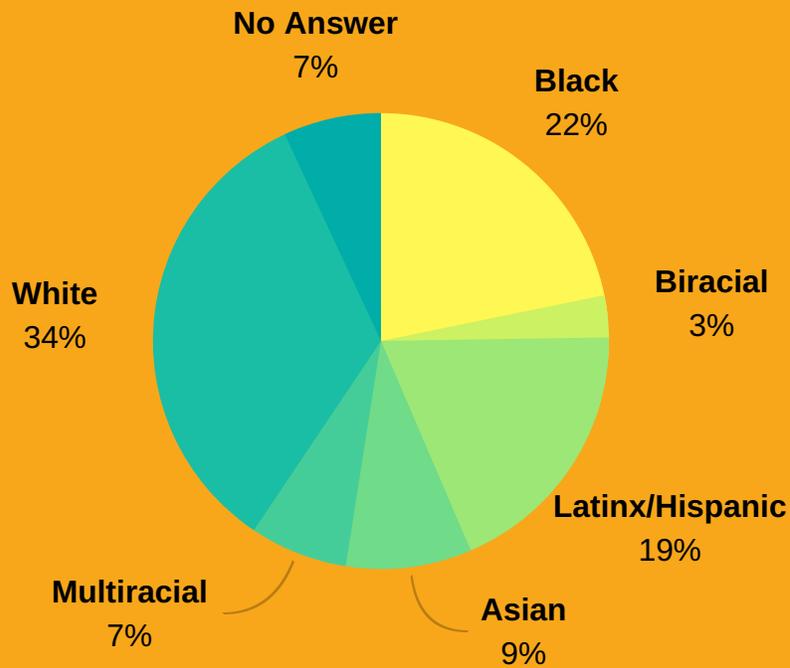
94%
say TAP was critical to their teaching

Pie chart:
- No Answer 7%
- Black 22%
- Biracial 3%
- Latinx/Hispanic 19%
- Asian 9%
- Multiracial 7%
- White 34%

Bar chart — Respondents (Pre TAP / Post TAP):
- Familiarity with academic standards
- Creative Process
- Curriculum & Lesson Plan Design
- Teaching Practice

Legend: Pre TAP, Post TAP
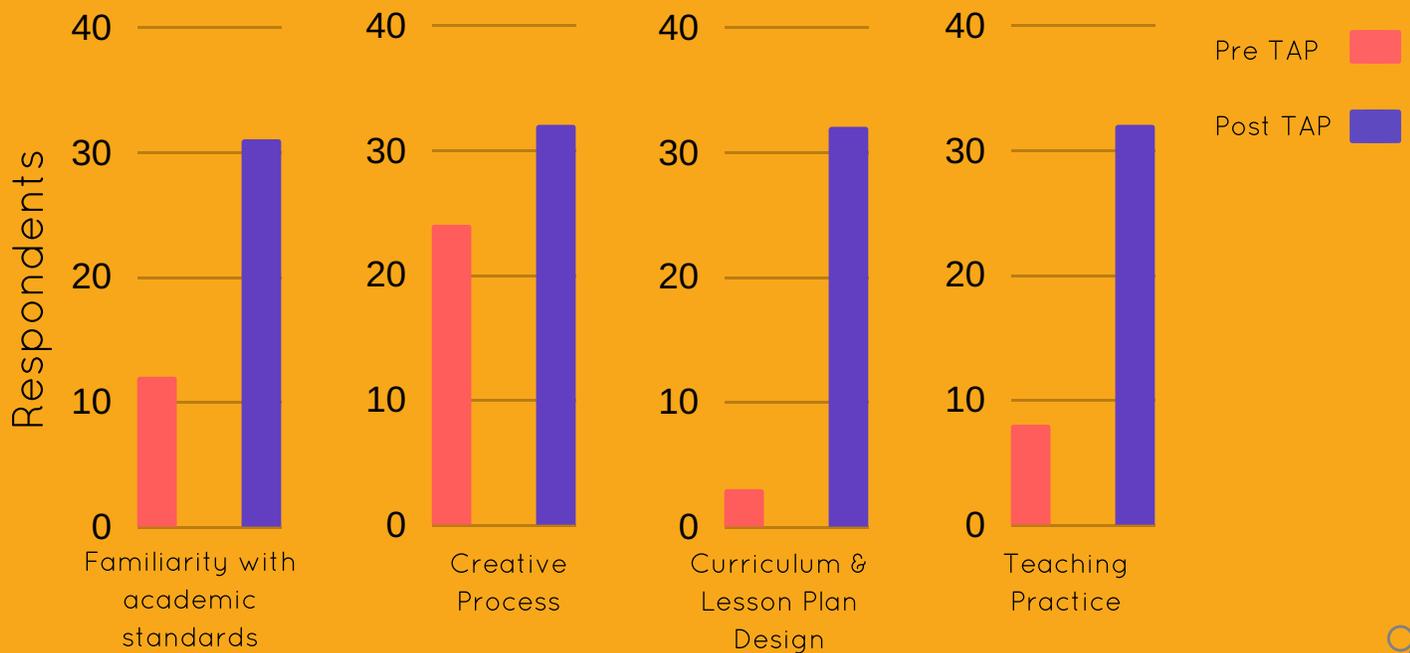
Teaching Artist Project Cohort
2016-17 Snapshot

12

Member Organizations

13

Cohort-developed and presented Elective Seminars

750

More than 750 Teaching Artists served by Cohort Programming

17

Additional Internships for TAP Trainees

Teaching Artist Elective Seminar Feedback

1%

2%

30%

67%

- ● Critical
- ● Relevant & Helpful
- ● Somewhat Relevant & Helpful
- ● Not Relevant
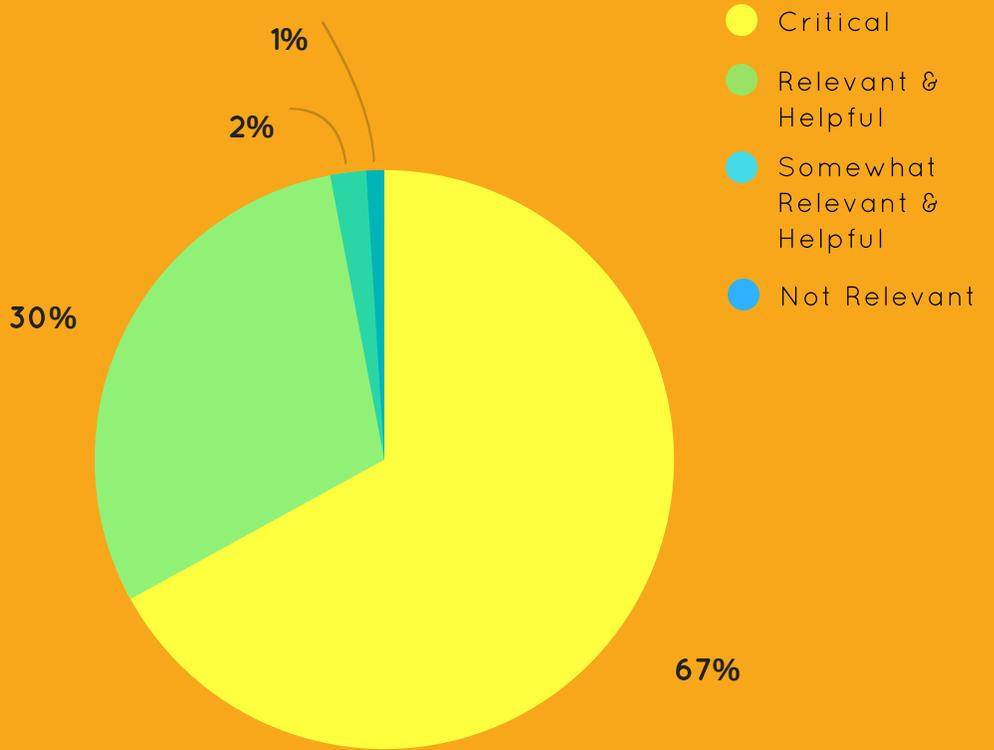
2016-17 TAP Cohort Member Organizations

Arts for All
Brooklyn Arts Council
Carnegie Hall
The Center for Arts Education
City Lore
Community-Word Project
DreamYard Project
Marquis Studios
National Dance Institute
Opening Act
Teachers & Writers Collaborative
Wingspan Arts

TEACHING
ARTIST
PROJECT

"When I joined TAP, I was already working with students in my former middle school as a para-professional, which had its similarities to the work of a Teaching Artist, but still differed greatly. Through TAP, I learned a lot about the educational system. With art lacking in the schools and many corners of the world, there is a great need for TAP. As a former student and now a Teaching Artist, I see the value of working with others - such as other teachers within the schools - to form a greater team, aligning our interests to help students become the best they can be through arts education."

 - Badu Boakye, 2017 TAP Graduate

"I've found the TAP Cohort to be a group of arts educators who are dedicated to providing the best learning experiences and environments possible. I'm impressed by their dedication, their thoughtfulness, and their openness. They pose challenging questions for themselves and create a wonderful space to explore those questions. I think everyone walks out of a TAP Cohort experience feeling challenged, refreshed and inspired!"

-Phil Alexander, Brooklyn Arts Council

Evaluation Goals, Methodology, & Findings

Examining the breadth and depth of our program allows us to strive to provide excellent programming.

- We review the efficacy of our inputs and activities - the quality of our facilitation, the training of our Teaching Artists (TAs) and TAP trainees, and generation of teaching paths and lesson plans which combine the tools of the collaborating artists,
- We measure our outputs - the TAs and TAP trainees we train and the students we teach.
- We analyze our program outcomes by implementing pre- and post-surveys for students, classroom teachers, and TAP trainees.

Program Evaluation Design and Metrics

Collaborative Arts Residencies

Student Surveys
In recent years, the number of CWP Collaborative Arts Residencies have grown rapidly. As the number of programs has increased, CWP staff has worked to modify its student survey to better align with our program outcomes.

Classroom Teacher Surveys
Of school partner staff, Classroom Teachers have the most contact and direct knowledge of CWP TAs and their efficacy. Pre- and post-program surveys measure classroom teachers observations of changes in CWP student outcomes (literacy, community, emotional intelligence, creative thinking, and critical thinking).

Student Writing Assessment
Program staff collected a writing sample from students at the beginning and at the end of the program. Students responded to a writing prompt that was an image. The image differed between the pretest and posttest essay. Two different judges rated each piece of creative writing on a seven-point scale, 0-6, after participating in a norming session with CWP administrators. Students revised their pre-program and post-program essays. These revised pieces of writing were also rated by judges.

Each judge was "blind" to the rating of the other judge. Further, the judges did not know the student's name, school, teacher, or whether the essay had been written at the pretest or at the posttest. These ratings had acceptable inter-rater reliability. Analyses used the mean of the two ratings of the pre-program and post-program writing scores, for both the original and revised versions.

Teaching Artist Project

Trainee Surveys

The number of trainees in the TAP program has increased rapidly in recent years. CWP staff continue to adapt the program and its outcomes based on the needs of the organization, the Arts Education Field, and of the participants in the program. Trainees complete pre- and post-program as well as session-based surveys that gauge their interest levels, comfort levels, skills and knowledge base, the reason for participating in training, and their art form.

Mentor Teaching Artist Surveys

Beyond TAP facilitators, mentor teaching artists working with trainees in the classroom have the most contact and direct knowledge of TAP trainees and their efficacy. Post-program surveys assess the mentor teaching artists observations in regard to trainee outcomes, especially those specific to teaching practice in the classroom.

Data Collection | Collaborative Arts Residencies

In the table below, we summarize ways in which we collect data and highlight the advantages and challenges of each method.

Table A: Summary of Data Collection Methods | Collaborative Arts Residencies

Method	Overall Purpose	Advantage	Challenges
Peer, Program Manager, and Residency Mentor (pilot) Classroom Observations (Qualitative & Quantitative)	To gather information on progress in real time and to provide immediate feedback to Teaching Artists	Offer immediate feedback and support strategies for Teaching Artists	Travel and record keeping of information collected. Lack of larger analysis of quantitative data across observations.
Student Pre- and Post-Program Surveys (Qualitative and Quantitative)	To gather self-assessment reports from student's experiences.	Though an imperfect tool, self-assessment provides valuable information regarding students perception of themselves and their skill levels which can inform program development	Imperfect tool as it relies on self-reporting, Modifications to tool for wide age range, Tool does not currently include participants in grades K-2
Classroom Teacher Pre and Post-Program Surveys (Qualitative)	To gather information on Classroom Teachers' opinions and reflections on growth in student outcomes and overall program efficacy for their student population	Complements potential gaps in students' self-reporting of learning & attitude shifts; aggregate valuable feedback on program efficacy from veteran educators and valued partners in the classroom.	Response rate
Student Writing Assessment (Quantitative)	To observe the change in writing revision abilities pre- to post-program.	Skill-based measurement	Room for additional clarity in writing rating rubric, labor intensive process, additional time needed for rater norming
School Administrator Surveys (Qualitative and Quantitative)	To gather information regarding program efficacy, arts education needs, and interest in program continuation from school leadership	Feedback from school administrators lets us know the efficacy of our programming in the school through a larger, school-wide lens. It also lets us know how we 're doing with program communication	Response rate

Student Writing Assessment

Method

CWP students revise their writing using specific literary devices and techniques during residency programs. This creative-process skill transfers to strong academic writing. To measure improvement in student writing and revision skills, writing samples were collected pre- and post-program.

CWP Writing Revision Assessment

Writing Rating

Pre-Program		Post-Program	
Original 1	Revised 1	Original 2	Revised 2
49.8	58.2	50.4	63.9
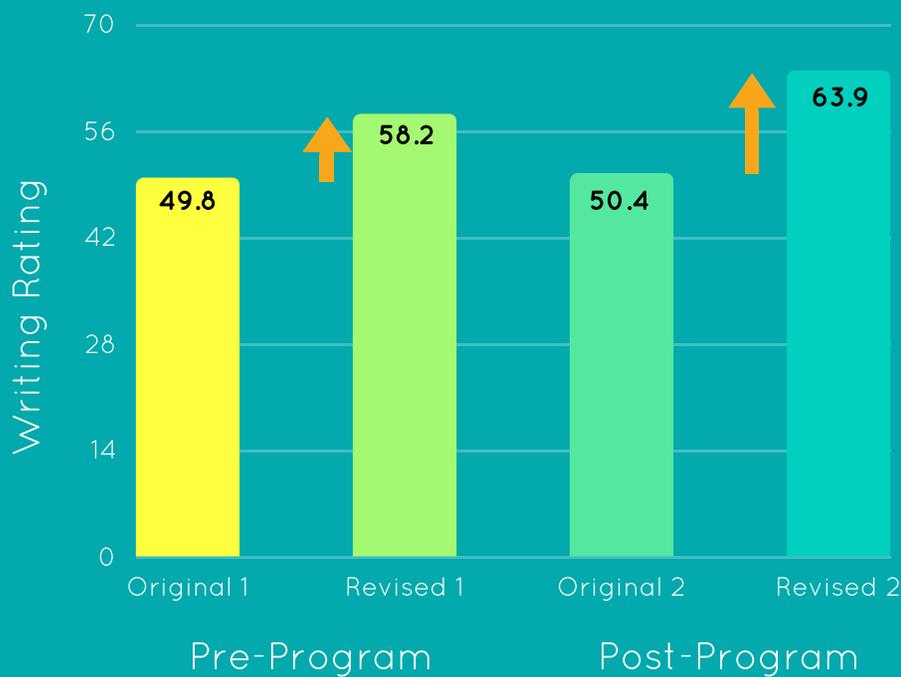
"Students showed a medium-sized gain in revising their pretest essay, and showed a large gain in revising their posttest essay. Their original-to-revised essay at the posttest was twice as large as at the pretest. The essay performance was up slightly over last year's performance."

Dr. Carl W. Scott, Psychometrician

Data Collection | Teaching Artist Project

In the table below, we summarize ways in which we collect data and highlight the advantages and challenges of each method.

Table A: Summary of Data Collection Methods | Collaborative Arts Residencies

Method	Overall Purpose	Advantage	Challenges
Program Facilitator and/or Director Classroom Observation (Qualitative & Quantitative)	To gather information on progress in real time and to provide immediate feedback to trainees	Offer immediate feedback and support strategies for trainees	Room for stronger alignment of observation rubric, training materials, and pedagogy; travel and record-keeping of information collected. Lack of analysis of quantitative data.
Trainee Pre- and Post-Program Surveys (Qualitative and Quantitative)	To gather self-assessment reports from student's experiences.	Though an imperfect tool, self-assessment provides valuable information regarding students perception of themselves and their skill levels which can inform program development	Room for stronger alignment with program outcomes, imperfect tool as it relies on self-reporting
Mentor Teaching Artist Post-Program Surveys (Qualitative)	To gather information on Mentor Teaching Artists' opinions and reflections on trainee teaching efficacy	Complements potential gaps in trainees' self-reporting of learning and attitude shifts; aggregate valuable feedback on program efficacy from veteran educators and valued partners in the classroom.	Establish norms for rating for Mentor Teaching Artists

Data Analysis & Findings | Collaborative Arts Residencies

Comparison of Pre- to Post-Program Change

The major question is whether the students in CWP improved from pre- to post-program. Table C gives the pre- and post-program assessment means, comparison of means (paired t test), and the effect sizes for this year's students, along with the effect size from last year. The results indicated that there were very small gains (Cohen's d) on the attitude measures, with a larger gain for Literacy. Note that this year's gains were smaller than last year's, meaning that students in 2017 are doing a better job on average to reaching their intended outcomes that in 2016. While the sample sizes in 2016 and 2017 were different, statistically there was still a weighted gain in literacy skills in 2017 compared to 2016.

Writing ratings produced a detailed and interesting picture of changes in writing proficiency. As in the past, comparing the original writing at the pretest with the original writing at the posttest showed essentially zero change overall. However, students' revising skills had improved: they showed a small gain from their revised writing at the pretest to their revised writing at the post-test. Students showed a medium-sized gain in revising their pretest writing, and showed a large gain in revising their post-test writing. Their original-to-revised writing at the post-test was twice as large as at the pre-test. The writing proficiency performance was up slightly over last year's performance.

Table C Pretest to Posttest Changes in Attitude Outcomes & Writing Revision

Measure	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	2017 Percent improved	Cohen's 2017 d		Cohen's 2016 d
Leadership	60.5	60.8	0.5	.02		.21
Emotional Intelligence	61.0	60.7	-0.5	-.01		.12
Critical Thinking	60.9	61.0	0.2	.01		.17
Literacy	62.2	64.6	3.9	.14		.27
Creativity	64.7	65.7	1.5	.05		.19
Orig. Writing Rating	49.8	50.4	1.2	.04		-.01
Revis. Writing Rating	58.2	63.9	9.8	.29		.20
Pre: Orig. → Revis.	8.4		16.9	.56		.64
Post: Orig. → Revis.		13.5	26.7	1.15		.99
Mean Outcome Change			6.69	.25		.31

- Students in 2017 were 4 percent more literate.
- Students in 2017 were 1.5 percent more creative minded.
- Students in 2017 made much better edits of their post-test writing (26%) as in their pre-test essay (13%).
- The gain in revising writing skills post-program was twice as large as the pre-program.

Notes: N = 504 students. A measure of effect size, such as d, provides an objective indication of the magnitude or importance of a finding. Here, Cohen's d (standardized difference) is the size of the pre- to-posttest difference in standard deviation units. A positive value of d is an increase from pre-test to post-test (a negative d would be a decrease). d's can be compared across samples and across measures. By convention, a d of .2 is a small increase, and a negative d is a loss. (Also, by convention, a d of .5 is medium, and a d of .8 is large.)

Data Analysis & Findings | Collaborative Arts Residencies
Continued

Comparison of Pre- to Post-Program Change by Grade Level

The sample of students in CWP was diverse: 53% of the students were in elementary grades, 27% were in middle school, and 20% were high school students. The analysis examined outcomes by grade because educational interventions lasting 10-25 weeks typically have greater impacts on younger students. Table D gives the pretest-to-posttest changes by grade level, where middle and high school students were grouped together. Younger grades showed larger, average changes, especially in their attitudes. As noted on page 4, grade level was usually a negative predictor of changes in attitude outcomes, meaning the amount of positive change decreased as grade level increased. This was not true for skills-based assessment where higher grade levels showed greater increases in writing revision skills than in the younger grade levels. Outside research will be needed to validate the observation that as students age, they observe a smaller rate of change in their own attitudes.

Table D Pre-test to Post-test Changes in Attitude Outcomes & Writing Revision by Grade

Grade	3rd	4th	5th	6th-7th	9th-10th	ALL
Outcome						
Leadership	9.18	6.63	-0.81	-3.24	-5.49	0.5
Emotional Intelligence	2.73	4.76	-4.29	-0.55	-3.84	-0.50
Critical Thinking	7.59	5.44	-2.00	-1.59	-5.60	0.20
Literacy	10.00	9.09	2.68	0.92	0.20	3.90
Creativity	8.11	13.39	2.45	-5.23	-4.85	1.50
Pre-Post Original	3.82	6.16	14.38	-1.35	-13.48	1.20
Pre-Post Revised	19.81	10.31	16.55	6.32	1.63	9.8
Pre Original > Revised	8.43	17.45	24.46	18.14	15.72	16.9
Post Original > Revised	25.15	22.05	26.83	27.29	35.54	26.7
Mean Outcome Change	10.54	10.59	8.92	4.52	2.20	6.69
N	79	90	97	139	99	504

> Overall, students on average showed a 7% change in intended outcomes, especially for revision of post-test writing.

Impact Highlights by Grade Level

- **3rd Graders** demonstrated an average improvement in writing revision skills of 25% and a 9% improvement in the Literacy outcome.
- **4th Graders** demonstrated an average improvement in writing revision skills of 22%, a 7% improvement in the Literacy outcome, and a 13% change in the creative thinking outcome.
- **5th Graders** demonstrated an average improvement in writing revision skills of 27% and a 3% improvement in the Literacy outcome.
- **6th & 7th Graders** demonstrated an average improvement in writing revision skills of 27% and a 1% improvement in the Literacy outcome.
- **9th & 10th Graders** demonstrated an average improvement in writing revision skills of 36%.

Data Analysis & Findings | Collaborative Arts Residencies
Continued

Residency Length Analyses

In 2016-17, CWP programs ranged from 10-25 weeks. The outcomes should reflect the amount of programming or the strength of the "dose," to use a medical analogy. This analysis examined the amount of pretest-to-posttest change by residency length.

Table E shows the effect sizes (d) for the pre-post changes for the attitude outcome measures and writing revision ratings and for the mean of the attitude outcome and writing revision ratings, separated for the residency lengths pooled into three groups. A larger value indicated that a greater change occurred between pre-test and post-test. With one exception, the longest residencies showed the most positive changes in attitudes and writing revision, and the greatest gains in revised writing. The one exception was the writing rating change for the post-original to revised writing; this change was large for every residency group. Overall, the longest residencies displayed medium-sized growth from pre-test to post-test, and the average increase was almost 20% higher than in the previous year.

Table E   Pre-to-Post Changes by Residency Length

Residency Length (weeks)	10-12	15	18-25	ALL
Outcome	*d*	*d*	*d*	*d*
Leadership	-.05	.19	.15	.02
Emotional Intelligence	.02	-.10	.00	-.01
Critical Thinking	-.05	-.08	.06	.01
Literacy	.04	.20	.27	.14
Creativity	-.09	.08	.22	.05
Pre-Post Original	.52	-.04	-.06	.04
Pre-Post Revised	-.52	.48	.54	.29
Pre Original > Revised	.48	-.16	.19	.56
Post Original > Revised	1.49	.65	.90	1.15
Mean Outcome Change	.25	.14	.25	.25
N	116	248	140	504

> Residency length was usally a positive predictor, meaning the amount of positive change increased in longer residencies.

Looking Ahead

As we celebrate 20 years and embark upon the next 20, we seek to improve our evaluation practices beyond their current capabilities.

In FY 18, we plan to:
- Focus attention on improving the clarity of our end-of-semester classroom teacher and school administrator surveys. Revised surveys will be piloted in the fall of 2018.
- Update and refine logic models and theories of change across CWP programs.
- Better link and understand the relationship between our stated outcomes and long-term impact.
- Identify additional ways to assess our programs' impact on students' skill and attitudes development and to work with partners on this enhanced evaluation.
- Improve our student surveys to support students' comprehension of questions, especially for younger grade levels.
- Identify additional support for data analysis and record-keeping.
- Identify ways to track TAP's workforce readiness data across current trainees and program alumni.

Our plans for the future include:
- Conducting a full-scale social science research literature review to confirm assessment tool best practices for each of our student outcomes across programs: critical thinking, creative thinking, literacy, emotional intelligence, and a sense of community
- Creating a social science-informed theory of change for each program which explains the psychological and sociological mechanisms by which the arts enhance student educational experience, especially in areas of reading, writing and speaking
- Developing an evaluation logic model which tracks our resources against outcomes to enhance our continuum and sequential learning models for sustained student learning and ongoing job support and professional development for the teaching artists and youth professionals who serve them
- Establishing a comprehensive organizational evaluation plan and protocols which provide empirical evidence for areas of need for school communities and areas of expansion and innovation for our programs to respond to their ever-changing circumstances
- Sharing our results with the arts in education field through evaluation dissemination reports and white papers that highlight the effect our multiple collaboration models have on student literacy development

"Our work with CWP helped with our Quality Review. It was used as evidence to prove we were doing what we said we were going to do."

-Terry Grey, Principal
BHSWCA