

UC Berkeley

Recent Works

Title

School-Wide Transformation Toward Arts-Centered Integrated Instruction and Learning:
Bringing School Leadership Into Focus

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/180798fq>

Authors

Green, Thomas R.

Teja, Zuhra

Publication Date

2017-09-01



Berkeley Graduate School
of Education
PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

School-Wide Transformation Toward Arts-Centered Integrated Instruction and Learning: Bringing School Leadership Into Focus

Thomas R. Green, Ed.D., University of California, Berkeley
Zuhra Teja, Research Associate, University of California, Berkeley

A Study Identifying Key Leadership Characteristics of Principals Facilitating
School-Wide Transformation Toward Arts-Centered Integrated Instruction
and Learning Through the Principal Leadership Network of the
Alameda County Office of Education

Funded by the Clarence E. Heller Foundation

University of California, Berkeley
Principal Leadership Institute
September 2017

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research report describes a study examining the role of principal leadership in making a successful school-wide transformation from a traditional to an arts-centered integrated approach to classroom teaching and learning. Although research has long touted the benefits of fusing arts with core academics, the integral role of the school principal has been overlooked. This research project, carried out by the Principal Leadership Institute at the University of California at Berkeley and funded by the Heller Foundation, examines the role of the principal in leading a successful transformation from traditional teaching practice to arts-centered practice.

This research study involved 12 principals and 16 teachers from Demonstration Schools participating in the Integrated Learning Specialist Program (ILSP) of the Alameda County Office of Education (ACOE). The goal of the ILSP program is to promote equitable access to the arts through school-wide arts-centered integrated learning, which is achieved by investing in principal and teacher leadership capacity. This project examines the role of principal leadership in providing equitable access to arts-centered integrated education, in support of social justice. The objectives of the research study are: (a) to specify the innovative leadership characteristics that generate effective learning and teaching through arts-centered integrated practices, (b) to explore the benefits and challenges of making a transformation from traditional to arts-centered integrated teaching practice, and (c) to identify implications for training and support of educational leaders to create school-wide transformation from traditional to arts-centered integrated instructional practice.

Principals and teachers were interviewed for their perspective on the transformational process from traditional to arts-centered integrated programming. Staff were interviewed at the start of the school year (Time 1) and near completion of the school year (Time 2), thus providing a comprehensive perspective on the transformational process. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. Responses were coded, using the Leadership Connection Rubric—a researched-based leadership development rubric that is aligned to both the California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (CPSEL) and the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards.

Based on the Leadership Connection Rubric frame, staff identified the following principal leadership characteristics as central to the transformation from traditional teaching practice to arts-centered integrated practice:

1. Creativity, Flexibility, and Resilience—described as a trio of leadership qualities necessary for an efficacious learning community
2. Resource Management—the ability for principals to align school and district resources with school goals of equal access and optimal learning
3. Shared Vision—school-wide focus on justice, equity, and art integration

The benefits and challenges associated with the transformational process were also examined. Generally, the benefits included the following: (a) increase in critical thinking, (b) increase in student engagement, (c) principal motivation, (d) student motivation and happiness, (e) teacher motivation, (f) positive and cohesive staff culture, (g) increase in teacher and student confidence, (h) decrease in problem behaviors, (i) increase in parent satisfaction. The challenges included: (a) slow results, (b) difficulties changing teacher mindsets, (c) difficulties changing student mindsets, (d) finding synergy, (e) time constraints, (f) maintaining sustainability and growth, (g) resource constraints, (h) disruptive change in leadership, (i) remaining focused, (j) politics and bureaucracy, and (k) staff division between those who do and those who do not buy in to arts-centered integration.

Finally, staff were interviewed about the types of resources, training, and support required in order to achieve the goal of school-wide arts-centered integrated practice. Staff indicated the following requirements: (a) principal leadership collaboration, (b) school-based shared leadership and collaboration, (c) advocacy and investment from the district, (d) site visits to other Demonstrations Schools (e) mentoring, (f) professional development courses, (g) time, and (h) funding.

The findings from this study of the role of principal leadership in making a successful transformation from traditional pedagogical practice to arts-centered integrated practice have several implications that, overall, point to the need for investment in leadership.

“[The arts] help us explore our own and others’ thoughts and feelings, critique ourselves and our worlds, express our voices, and influence our social contexts by using nonviolent means.” (Walker, 1999)

Researchers have long since achieved consensus on the value of an arts integrated curriculum, confirming that teaching and learning that infuses the arts provides an inspiring learning environment for diverse learners (Duma, 2014; Lorimer, 2011; Scripp & Paradis, 2014; Spilka & Long, 2009). For the purposes of this report, Arts Integration will be defined as “a dynamic process of merging art with (an)other discipline(s) in an attempt to open up a space of inclusiveness in teaching, learning, and experiencing” (LaJevic, 2013). Studies have illustrated the range of benefits associated with arts integrated approaches to teaching and learning, including the development of abstract and critical thinking (Jackson & Davis, 2000), better attendance records (Barry, 2010; Ingram & Meath, 2007), increased student engagement (Duma, 2014), and improvements in student achievement (e.g., Ruppert, 2006; Winner & Hetland, 2001). Findings of extant studies provide a compelling argument for a continued commitment to arts integrated approaches to education.

Unfortunately, despite the compelling research in support of arts-integrated programming, barriers to implementation persist. Charland (2011) attributes resistance to a combination of personnel and contextual factors. At the core of the resistance are teachers and administrators persisting with old habits of mind that perpetuate a traditional teacher-centered



school culture. The resistance is not targeted at the arts per se, but originates from firmly held beliefs being challenged and a fear of change that stems from a deep commitment to competing responsibilities.

Implementation of an arts integrated approach to instruction is further hindered by resource constraints. At the federal and state level, resources have not been allocated for arts integrated programming, despite favorable findings from studies produced by government agencies (Agee, 2015). The problem is further complicated by the fact that although the arts is considered core curriculum in the state of California, there is limited institutional support for it in California's public education system. Schools inspired by the benefits of arts-centered approaches to instruction are, therefore, reliant on individual local agencies and non-government non-profit agencies for professional development and implementation support.

Fiscal constraints are not exclusive to the arts; budget constraints are associated with a wide range of programming. Lack of funding is a chronic and pervasive problem at a federal and state level, and one that is unlikely to ever be resolved. It is, therefore, helpful to consider what factors, despite on-going financial impediments, are most critical to successful implementation of arts-integrated programming; and, what factors are most influential in combating resistance to instructional change.

Charland (2011) argues that openness to instructional change depends on relationships; specifically, relationships among education stakeholders must be nurtured in order to inspire transformation from traditional to progressive arts-centered instructional practice. This argument places principals—not politicians—at the helm of school-wide reform in instructional practice. A plethora of research dating back to the 1980's has illustrated the influence of principal leadership practices on student learning (Andrews & Soder, 1987; Duke, 1982; Hallinger &

Heck, 1998; Shatzer, Caldarella, Hallam, & Brown, 2014). Considerable research has also focused on the vital role of principal leadership in school reform in the quest for promoting student learning (e.g., Beyer & Ruhl-Smith, 1999; Good, 2008; Schechter & Shaked, 2017) and generous attention has been devoted to the principal's role in improving classroom instructional practices (Blase & Blase, 2000; LeSourd & Grady, 1988; May & Supovitz, 2011). However, to the best of our knowledge, research on the role of principal leadership in promoting arts-integrated approaches to instruction, have received sparse attention. In fact, a review of the literature, via the ERIC database, turned up only one example of a successful program that situated the principal at the epicenter of sustainable arts programming—the Principal Arts Leadership (PAL) program of ArtsEd Washington (Bach & DeSoto, 2009).

This study examines the role of principal leadership in making the transformation from conventional teaching practice to arts-centered integrated instruction in low-income school communities. This study is inspired in part by a position paper commissioned by the California Department of Education, stating:

Administrators at all levels—state, county, district, and school—are key players in building and sustaining creative schools; therefore, it is critical that they be prepared to do so. However, they are sorely lacking in preparation for administering successful arts programming. Administrative services credentials may be obtained through completion of an administrator preparation program, or by achieving a passing score on the California Preliminary Administrative Credential Examination. No coursework aligned to the arts is included in these preparation programs, no arts-related material is covered on the examination, and none of the innovative and creative strategies necessary to build a creative school

community are addressed in either pathway to administrative credentialing.”

(Agee, 2015)

The present study examines the role of principals in successfully initiating and sustaining arts-centered integrated learning programming and practices, that come out of the pedagogies and approaches of the Integrated Learning Specialist Program (ILSP), a project of the Alameda County Office of Education. The purpose of the study is to contribute to the paucity of research on the role of principal leadership in providing equitable access to arts-centered integrated education, in support of social justice. The objectives of the research study are: (a) to specify the innovative leadership characteristics that generate effective learning and teaching through arts-centered integrated practices, (b) to identify implications for training and support of educational leaders to create school-wide transformations from traditional to arts-centered integrated instructional practice.

Method

Description of the Principal Leadership Network

The Alameda County Office of Education has developed an Integrated Learning Framework that guides district policies regarding classroom practice. At its core is arts-centered learning, which “provides multiple creative ways to build complex and flexible understandings...and makes sense to use it to integrate academic concepts and information (Marshall, 2014, p.3). The Principal Leadership Network, a program of the Alameda County Office of Education (ACOE) and funded in part by the Heller Foundation, uses the core courses and the systems and frameworks from the Integrated Learning Specialist Program (ILSP) to promote school-wide, arts-centered integrated learning by investing in principal and teacher leadership. This is accomplished via the Principal Leadership Network (PLN)—a partnership of the Alameda County Office of Education, which views principals as central to the sustainability of ILSP’s teacher professional development. The Principal Leadership Institute at UC Berkeley—a program that prepares, inducts, and supports equity-focused school leaders to improve the quality of education for historically underserved students in California’s public schools—was funded by the Heller Foundation to study the relationship between arts-centered integrated pedagogy and leadership practices that effect school-wide transformation and change.

The ILSP program requires the principal’s commitment to participation in 90 hours of ILSP coursework with their classroom teachers. Three courses, 30 hours in length each, are



offered. Course A covers strategies and resources for arts integration, Course B covers ongoing assessment strategies and applications, and Course C covers the collaborative design of an arts centered integrated curriculum.

Participating principals were invited to attend Principal Leadership Network meetings that occur quarterly for a 12-18 month period between January 2016 and June 2017, facilitated by ACOE and PLI personnel. The aim of the PLN meetings was twofold: a) to engage in dialogue about effective leadership practices in public education that promote the adoption of art-centered integrated learning frameworks, and b) to understand how those leadership and arts-centered integrated practices facilitate other positive educational outcomes and school-wide transformation. The PLN provides an opportunity for peer support and coaching among participating principals who recognize each other as resources.

The goals of the present research study were to: (a) determine the role of principal leadership in facilitating a transformation from traditional teacher-directed classroom practice to arts-centered integrated learning approaches to learning and instruction and (b) identify the support required to successfully implement ILSP programming.

Participants

A total of 14 principals were invited to participate in the study. Of these, 12 participated in data collection at Time 1 (Fall 2016) and 10 participated in data collection at Time 2 (Spring 2017). A total of 16 teacher interviews were also conducted. In all, 28 staff interviews were conducted. Each site principal selected one or two teachers to be interviewed from a pool of teachers implementing arts-integrated teaching practice. A total of 16 teachers were interviewed at Time 1 and 8 teachers were interviewed at Time 2. Data analysis is based on interviews at the 12 schools that participated in Time 1 and/or Time 2. Of the 12 principals, 4 principals were in

early stages of implementation (< 2 years of implementation), whereas 8 were in more established stages of implementation.

Procedure

Principal permission was provided to conduct the research. The researchers provided an



initial letter to principals in schools that have adopted the ILSP vision (Integrated Learning Demonstration Schools), describing the objectives, procedures, and implications of the study, and stating assurances of confidentiality. School principals identified one or two teacher participants. Participating principals and teachers signed consent

forms to indicate voluntary participation in the study.

Data sources included two 30- to 45-minute individual interviews with principals, and two 10- to 25-minute interviews with teachers: one at the start of the school year (Time 1) and one near the completion of the school year (Time 2). Interviews were conducted by the primary investigator and the graduate student researcher. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

Interviews. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with principals and teachers. Interview protocols for teachers and principals consisted of questions about the role of principal leadership, support required, and benefits and challenges of implementing arts-centered integrated practices. Interviews were piloted in 7 schools prior to Time 1, and modifications were made to the interview protocols in preparation for the major study.

The purpose of conducting interviews at Time 1 and Time 2 was to derive a

comprehensive year-long perspective from principals and teachers about the transformation from traditional to arts-integrated programming. Sample questions included: *What principal leadership characteristics have generated effective learning and teaching of an arts-centered integrated curriculum? Describe your long-term goals with respect to arts-centered integrated programming – What support do you require to achieve these goals?* Similar interviews were conducted at Time 1 and Time 2 in order to enable an analysis of changes in perspectives over time that may be a function of the transformational process.

Overview of Analyses

Results are presented in three sections. The first reports results on the principal leadership characteristics identified as being central to the transformation from traditional teaching practice to arts-centered integrated practice; the second section reports on the benefits and challenges associated with the transformational process; and, the final section reports on what resources are required in order to effectively make the transformation.

In qualitative research, interview data is reduced from its raw form into smaller units and displayed in an accessible way (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Responses at Time 1 and Time 2 were coded and analyzed using nVivo software. Content was analyzed in chronological order; Time 1 responses were coded and analyzed first, and Time 2 responses were coded and analyzed next, thus allowing for tracking of repeat responses and identification of novel responses at Time 2. Data was then categorized into groups: principal responses at Time 1, teacher responses at Time 1, principal responses at Time 2, teacher responses at Time 2. Finally, data analysis was performed to calculate the frequency of responses across participants across time.

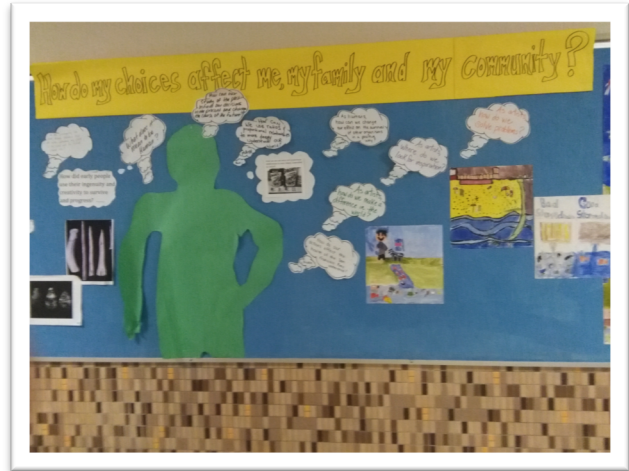
Coding scheme. Based on Miles and Huberman (1994), coding required deriving a combination of prespecified and unspecified codes. The coding schemes are selected such that

multiple researchers may derive similar results, maximizing interrater reliability. Details of how prespecified and unspecified coding approaches were employed are presented below.

Pre-specified coding. With regard to the question, *What principal leadership characteristics have generated effective learning and teaching of an arts-integrated curriculum?*, the Leadership Connection Rubric (Tredway, Cheung, Nguyen, Stephens, Leader-Picone, Hernandez, 2015) served as a coding guide to analyze responses. The Leadership Connection Rubric is a researched based leadership development rubric that is aligned to the California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (CPSEL) and the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards. It was developed in response to the lack of focus on equity and social justice in existing leadership standards in the field. Specifically, equity was often isolated as one leadership attribute or one standard. In the Leadership Connection Rubric, equity and social justice are woven through each element as an essential component of all leadership responsibilities and dispositions. It consists of a set of leadership characteristics at three levels of practice: (1) Element, (2) Descriptors of practice, and (3) Indicators of practice. The Elements were derived from previous research that, taken together, may be summarized as the seven “essential building blocks of effective leadership” (Tredway et al., 2015, p. 3). The Elements are unpacked in the Descriptors of Practice, which are further explicated in the Indicators of Practice. As this study is being led by the Principal Leadership Institute and supported by the Alameda County Office of Education in Northern California, the Leadership Connection Rubric is ideally suited to serve as a coding guide.

The researchers reviewed the content of the principal and teacher responses to this question, and assigned the relevant code at either level 1 (Element), 2 (Descriptor of Practice), or 3 (Indicator of Practice), depending on the specificity of the response. Content that specifically

targets indicators of practice, e.g., core values, vision, and resiliency (in Element 1), are coded accordingly; content that specifically targets descriptors of practice, e.g., flexibility, professional imprint, and demeanor (in Element 1), are coded accordingly; and, content that target the basic building blocks of effective leadership, e.g., presence and attitude, equity and advocacy, and organization and systems, are coded at the basic level of the Element.



Frequency of responses was based on the number of principals and the number of teachers who made reference to the Elements, Descriptors, and Indicators, as opposed to the frequency of responses within each element. The rubric elements, descriptors, and indicators served as the parameters for comparison.

Unspecified coding. Responses for the remaining questions in the interview protocol were coded via an iterative process with no prespecified codes. In other words, codes were suggested by the data. Words and phrases that were similar were assigned to the same category. Each interview question had its own distinct set of categories. Interview questions that relied on unspecified coding in the responses, included:

What are the challenges associated with the transformational process from traditional to comprehensive arts-centered integrated programming across content areas?

What are the benefits associated with the transformational process from traditional to comprehensive arts-centered integrated programming across content areas?

[If you] intend to continue on next year with an arts-integrated program, describe your long-term goals with respect to arts-integrated programming.

[If you] intend to continue on next year with an arts-integrated program, what support do you require to achieve these goals?

[If you] do not intend to continue on next year with an arts-integrated program, why not?

What do you interpret the PLN to be for you?

Describe change in practice over the course of the year.

Describe how the rubric contributes to implementation of arts-based integrated instruction.

Results

Principal Leadership Characteristics

From the rubric, three indicators of practice emerged as priority principal leadership characteristics in response to the question: *What principal leadership characteristics have generated effective learning and teaching of an arts-centered integrated curriculum?* Overall, those interviewed prioritized, in order: 1) Creativity, Flexibility, and Resilience; 2) Resource Management; and, 3) Vision.

Creativity, flexibility, and resilience. Of the 28 staff who were interviewed, 16 described various aspects of Creativity, Flexibility, and Resilience as central to successful school-wide transformations toward arts-integrated practice. With respect to creativity, principals highlighted the importance of providing teachers with the space for “innovation” and “out-of-the-box thinking”, which requires being open to teachers’ ideas and being flexible in their own thinking.

What is the out of the box thinking that could happen with scheduling? And how could I support that?

[Providing] the opportunity to experiment, the opportunity to try new things, the space to do so. For me, it’s essential; for our teachers, they need to have that feeling, too. If that’s something that’s not present, [for example] NCLB...there’s not much wiggle room. So to really have the opportunity to try, to expand, to wiggle around here and there, I think that’s essential...

Teachers agreed that a leader supportive of their ideas and their creative pedagogical approaches was highly valued:

We’ve had a lot of ownership in terms of our curriculum, and the ability to get creative, but don’t know if that’s common in all schools. I would hope so. So we’re definitely able to explore and be creative.

He’s always supporting any ideas that we have about meetings or let’s try this and do this in school.

Resilience was also named several times by principals and teachers. The focus of attention in the

rubric is “organizational resiliency”, the premise of which is being open to alternative ways of interfacing with individuals and with the systems within the organization. This type of flexibility results in “organizational resiliency”. Consider the following statements made by teachers, regarding the interface between students and school schedules and the interface between district reading requirements and creative teaching practice:

So we schedule our kids based on an artistic ability [combined with] one thing they have chosen...So we take what they like to do and group them. So they're not just in strength class...I've taken their highest engagement...We found a way in the master schedule to build it [according] to what their liking is.

If we're looking at increasing students' reading levels, he'll say, “ok, I want to increase students reading levels, but I understand that you'll probably want to do it more creatively”, so he leaves that space open. So he shares the district requirements, standards, requirements, and then he leaves that space open for teachers to interpret that and take ownership and create whatever we feel that still fits within those paradigms.

Resource management. A second priority leadership characteristic was Resource Management, which is the ability to (a) “ensure that fiscal, human, time, and material resource decisions are known, reviewed, supported, monitored, and result in the academic achievement of all students”, and (b) “create and maintain systems that allow for periodic, collaborative review of resource alignment with school goals”. At a basic level, resource management is about “identifying how to align the resources necessary to support optimal learning of all students” and “articulat[ing] different types of school and district resources and how those resources can be re-aligned to mitigate dynamic inequality”.

Time for collaborating, time for even looking at what other teachers are doing.

Yeah, I guess we just need time. And I don't, I worry about saying that, because I know there's no time, because I'm trying to get something that I'm doing in, and it's just like, there's no time, there's no time!

What comes to the forefront, for example, if we want to do this work, we need to make sure not only just having the time, but they need the resources, so I also need to be the person out there making sure they have the resources to do it, as well.

So I've ordered carts and we're going to have each grade level having a tool cart and an art supply cart and bringing it right into the classrooms...So if the vision is for us to have this arts-integration curriculum, then teachers need to have those resources. So that's where I'm at. I want to make sure they have all that they need.

Where is the master schedule supporting this creative work? Where is the staffing supporting this creative work? Where is the professional development supporting this move to integrated learning?

Vision. School personnel (principals and teachers) at nine of the ten schools described the importance of communicating a vision that represents the core values of the school. Of the 28 staff, 6 principals and 6 teachers stated that vision was a priority leadership characteristic. Several principals emphasized the importance of creating a shared vision that the school community espouses:

...clearly articulate and then rally people around this kind of a vision...

...there's got to be some type of mantra or something that we could hold onto, and I don't have that yet, and I have to get that from them.

I think the biggest thing is really, how can we, with our staff, create this common vision of what we want this to look like, and then support everywhere that's necessary to kind of keep this work going?

The above statements illustrate agreement with the importance of supporting “the entire school community to work in concert with the vision as a single focus” (p. 13), as outlined in the rubric.

Another important aspect of Vision is a “shared vision based on common core beliefs” (p. 13). Several principals and teachers expressed core beliefs that pivot around justice, equity, and art integration:

She has bought into the arts integration. She didn't even need to be convinced. She believes in it. So that helps.

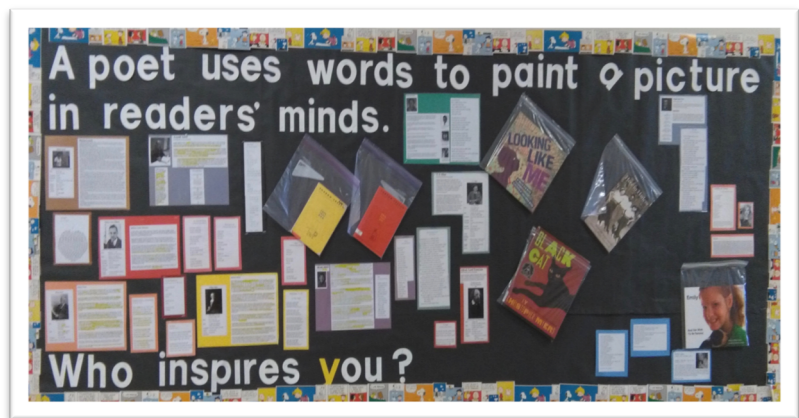
Having a leadership team that's definitely in tune, or comes from, a social justice lens, and not a deficit model.

I think if you're unable to project a vision of this is what the school should look like, and this is what the teaching and the learning should look like, then you can't address those systemic inequities.

The moral arc is long but it bends towards justice, and I hold that deeply.

Of the seven Elements, Element 1—Presence and Attitude—was most frequently referenced by both principals and teachers. According to the Rubric, Element 1 is an essential personal and professional leadership characteristic, defined as the ability to “communicate a compelling presence and a steadfast belief in the power of the possible.” Within Element 1, the following Indicators of Practice were emphasized by principals and teachers: (a) Core Values related to the purpose of education, (b) creating a Vision around core beliefs, (c) Brokering micro-political structures in an effort to achieve school goals, and (d) Stance and Tone of humility and professionalism, making adjustments in communication style, as required.

Teachers referenced Elements 4 (Curriculum and Instruction) and 6 (Change and Coherence) in equal proportion to Element 1, whereas principals gave Elements 4 and 6 minimal attention in their interviews.



Specifically, according to teachers, the principal's knowledge and expectations relevant to curriculum and instruction and the principal's ability to engage all constituents in transformation efforts are as salient for school-wide transformation efforts as the principal's presence and attitude. Among principals, however, Element 5 (Organization and Systems) was referenced in approximately equal proportion to Element 1; whereas among teachers, Element 5 was

referenced considerably less than Element 1. Moreover, for principals, Element 4 (Curriculum and Instruction) was given the least attention. Specifically, principals identified the ability to align, monitor, and improve policies, systems, procedures, and resources, required for student learning, to be most salient.

The above findings suggest that, with the exception of Element 1 (Presence and Attitude), the basic building blocks of principal leadership are prioritized somewhat differently for teachers than they are for principals. While both principals and teachers prioritized the foundational element required for positive relationships--Presence and Attitude, principals focused equal attention on the ability to navigate the school at the macro-level of the organization, and teachers prioritized the ability of principals to provide specific support in curriculum, instruction, and engagement of constituents through the change efforts.

Benefits and Challenges of the Transformational Process

Principals and teachers were interviewed about the benefits and challenges associated with the transformational process from traditional to an arts-centered integration approach to teaching. Table 1 lists and illustrates the benefits of transformation toward arts-centered integrated practice, and may be classified into several themes: (a) increase in critical thinking, (b) increase in student engagement, (c) principal motivation, (d) student motivation and happiness, (e) teacher motivation, (f) positive and cohesive staff culture, (g) increase in teacher and student confidence, (h) decrease in problem behaviors, (i) increase in parent satisfaction.

Table 1

Benefits of School-Wide Transformation Toward Arts-Centered Integrated Practice

Benefits	Examples
Increase in activating critical thinking skills	<i>Just that whole concept of a question, how it opens up the mind, different than a statement. So teachers look at their practice and it's not so much, I have to be this—the old saying, sage on a stage—but to be this person who's asking questions. And that's part of Common Core, too, moving into this sort of facilitator role. But I think the arts give a visual representation of exploration for students, but also for the teachers.</i> <i>I think it really allows students to express themselves differently. To be open to thinking in ways that they hadn't really been taught before, hadn't really known were possible before, or maybe didn't feel that they were appropriate before, right?</i>
Increase in student engagement	<i>So typical students that weren't always engaged—because we have 30% English language learners, we have almost 20% of students that...have special needs—now they're engaged in the curriculum. I can see they're conversing during lunchtime about curriculum and about ideas and thoughts! Seeing kids being excited about that! Coming and showing me products. Kids emailing me...about asking questions.</i> <i>Students are engaged, and students realize, "I get to represent my learning in a different way".</i> <i>So I think what would be nice later on down the road is that students would then use the artist in them—whatever that art is—to then find their own voice. I think that's the jump. Right now kids are here, and if you go through, most kids are working. But then if you ask them to speak, if you ask them to give their opinion, if you ask them to express themselves in some formalized way, it starts to get stuck. So my vision is that this, the arts integration work, will lead them to be able to say, oh, there are a variety of ways to have a voice or make a change or comment.</i> <i>Our fourth grade teacher, I forget what book they were reading, but the student did some type of drawing that it was like the building the student lived in or something like that, and whereas before they had a difficult time with their comprehension, they're able to give you details and character, setting, based on what they created. So, they're not able to sit there and write it down in a summary or answer comprehension questions, but the learning is happening because they're able to sit here and say, oh, look, this is where they had these situations, and the plot.</i>

	<i>I guess the dialogue that I'm hearing between students and between student and teacher, asking for evidence, like what do you see that makes you say that, and what makes you say that? That happens a lot more often.</i>
Increase in student confidence and satisfaction	<i>Our kids have a confidence in themselves they didn't have before.</i> <i>We had a really big event in the spring... And it was amazing to see the transformative impact that these cultural arts had on our students' self-esteem, on their confidence, on their belief in themselves, on their public speaking and presentation skills.</i> <i>So just from that standpoint, creating this audacious hope in this community, creating a belief that I'm just as good as a kid that goes to [X school], I'm just as good as a kid that goes to [Y school], I'm just as smart. Yeah, I have some more challenges that I need to overcome, but the opportunities are here, and if I reach out and I grab them... That's transformative. And I think that's what this partnership can really support and will really support, here. And if you don't believe it, you won't achieve it, but if you do, you have a chance. And that's really the space that we're working in here.</i> <i>Parents say their kids are happy about coming to school.</i>
Decrease in problem behaviors	<i>The arts program has knocked discipline down totally. We dropped 60% our first year, and we sustained it, and now we're dropping even lower. At this time, I can tell you right now, at this time last year we had like 70-something days of suspension. This year we only have 50.</i> <i>But we have some of the highest attendance rates that we ever had in the school's history. So I think that it is connected to the arts integration work.</i> <i>A decline in disciplinary problems now that this is school-wide implementation.</i> <i>I would say reduction in chronic absenteeism, reduction in suspensions, and reduction in referrals, in secondary referrals for students who are usually high-profile students.</i>

Increase in teacher engagement, satisfaction, and confidence	<i>Teachers feel engaged and empowered to be a part of something that feels more meaningful for their students and therefore also for them... And by engaged I mean, they care, and they feel cared for in it. And they feel valued and like their voice is in the work.</i> <i>When there's a teacher shortage, 100% of the teachers want to come back.</i> <i>Our teachers are starting to get a confidence in themselves they didn't have before.</i>
Change in teacher mindsets	<i>I've seen changes in classroom organization and structure...One of the more inflexible teachers around instructional change...maybe felt like she was so much of an expert that there wasn't much else to do. And I think just watching her re-engage and re-energize, that's a beautiful thing and that's an important impact.</i> <i>I got to see an eighth-grade math teacher undergo that transformation in his practice. Excellent teacher...doing it the same way he'd been doing it for the last ten years...but then for whatever reason, he saw the light. And not only did it make all the difference in the world in his students, but the change in his demeanor was profound! He was smiling, he was bouncing, he was no longer sleepwalking through his day.</i>
Increase in principal motivation	<i>It even makes me want to do more! To go out and to get the support for teachers and for students, and building more resources. I'm like, this works! It inspires me, actually. It really inspires me as a leader. It keeps my morale up.</i>
Increase in parental engagement	<i>Parents are saying [to their kids], what happened in school today, that [the kids] really have something to share.</i> <i>I think the parents feel more proud of where their children go to school now than I saw 4 or 5 years ago. They want to come to things that are outside of the school hours.</i> <i>I think the conversations that we're having with families are much richer. That we've, we're working towards creating this environment where the dialogue is really open and direct and not passive. And that's been a direct result of the transformation efforts we've been focused on.</i>

Increase in staff cohesion	<i>Just like the students, we learn from each other. I don't have all the answers and all the knowledge. We learn together. And I'm a learner, too. So that's exciting. As a leader, we're able to learn together.</i> <i>The culture was very closed; it's now very open.</i> <i>Incredible collaboration amongst the staff.</i>
Streamlined staff recruitment	<i>Probably the primary benefit is that we were able to bring in people that want to collaborate with each other and want to focus on student learning and the development of effective lessons. We were able to bring in people with an already-developed social justice lens, with a deeper understanding of culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogies. And we were able to bring in more people that have linguistic and cultural, racial backgrounds that are common with our families.</i>
Promotes reflection	<i>We started our reflection and restoration room. It's a therapeutic arts-based room, and students were coming in there and they were starting to use art to discuss their feelings. You walk in now, there's art on the walls...positive messages everywhere...they know it's a place where they're supposed to reflect on their behavior, and that the use of art is a way for them to express themselves.</i>
Increase in enrollment	<i>[There was] declining enrollment. At one point they were going to close this school, and now they're beating down the doors, and I'm getting students nearly everyday.</i>

Table 2 lists and illustrates the challenges of school-wide transformation toward arts-centered integrated practice and may be classified into the following themes: (a) results are slow, (b) changing teacher mindsets, (c) changing student mindsets, (d) finding staff synergy (e) time (f) sustainability and growth, (g) resource constraints, (h) disruptive leadership changes, (i) remaining focused, (j) politics and bureaucracy, and (k) staff division.

Table 2

Challenges of School-Wide Transformation Toward Arts-Centered Integrated Practice

Challenges	Examples
Results are slow	<i>So what's been conventional, we've seen results, but we also know that those results could be better. We could have a traditional, conventional system that produces better results than we're getting.</i>
Changing teacher mindsets	<i>Adult mindsets and adult willingness to be uncomfortable. The social justice elements were for half [the staff] I think an incredible awakening. But for others I think you have to come face to face with your mindset around social justice. It's not just a buzzword...there's a mindset that entails, and not everyone's ready for that...And I think people are wrestling with that.</i> <i>I have all these people going to trainings, and demanding that you do it upon hiring, and I haven't figured out how is it more than just a bunch of classes.</i> <i>But I think that that transition from, no, it's not just a fun activity—this is how we want to use this avenue to help students actually learns—is not clear...because it's so touchy-feely, it's really not always concrete.</i> <i>I think there's always a challenge of getting the buy-in from content teachers around what does integrated learning look like.</i> <i>Some people come in with their baggage or their toolbox of teaching tricks, and they don't want to let go of those.</i> <i>Teachers hold on to whatever classroom organization they found worked for dear life even if it hasn't worked for years!</i> <i>Because I'm so stuck in the way of: "math is, we're going to take notes and then we're going to practice." So math can sometimes be a challenge.</i>
Changing student mindsets	<i>They're used to coming into class, sitting at a desk, and just working at a desk all day. Teacher as dictator, talking at them. They're not used to being up, moving around in class, doing art projects, expressing their art in nonlinear ways.</i> <i>I notice that a challenge is students might not be calm, focused, or balanced...So I think behavior and student movement, keeping the students, keeping expectations of the ways that they're supposed to move, is the most challenging.</i>

Finding staff synergy	<i>How do they collaborate in a way where all the voices are heard, [considering] different styles of teaching and different belief systems between adults...</i> <i>Shared understanding.</i>
Time	<i>I think it's keeping the focus amidst other things that come at you, and really kind of holding the priority.</i> <i>So time for teachers to really dig into what they want to do and look at what they're already doing and figure out how they would sort of transition or implement what they're doing in a different way. I feel like that really needs a thoughtful approach and time. Teachers are always so short of time.</i> <i>The difficulty has been finding the time for that collaboration to happen.</i>
Sustainability and growth	<i>Keeping it sustainable. And it's not a "done"... I think that sometimes—and I've definitely had this experience and I've evolved from it—but you've established this system, now it's done, everything's good. And that's actually not ever like that. Systems evolve and you have to revisit them and monitor them and continue dialogue about it, and then they have to change. So change is constant, and being able to move through... issues that come up and changes that happen in the organization... So there needs to be a system in monitoring it...</i> <i>I think it's just always asking us what's next, next, as a professional learning community. How can we continue this? How can we make it better? How can we continue to challenge our students? Not just stay, because you get comfortable doing something, and then you're always like, what's the next step? How can I make it better for students?</i>
Resource constraints	<i>Providing the opportunity for everyone to get the training...there's rules...if I'm using district money.</i> <i>Resources...We do try to repurpose and reuse things, but when you have integrated learning where kids are doing hands-on...How do we continue to financially support the things?...Funding has been a challenge.</i>
Disruptive leadership changes	<i>Change in leadership. We have our new superintendent...so the constant changes there.</i>

Remaining focused	<i>There's a lot of distractors out there. So I guess the biggest challenge would be keeping everybody focused while all these distractors, the excuses are happening, to stay unfocused or get off-track.</i>
Politics and bureaucracy	<i>I've had so many obstacles here, including threatening me, firing me...because I was breaking a mold.</i>
Staff division	<i>A lot of negative energy floating around about that, about people who didn't want to come through that change, who didn't want to be a part of it. So that transition was really, I remember the feeling of tension in the lunchroom a lot, between the people who believed in this and wanted to go forward with it, and the people who thought this was a waste of time.</i>

Overall, principals and teachers indicated that the greatest benefit was an increase in student engagement. However, benefits were noted in multiple dimensions of school life and across multiple stakeholders—students, teachers, principals, parents, and the wider community. Challenges were particularly salient in the area of change. The resistance to change and the attachment to conventional pedagogical techniques was pronounced in the interviews and a potential source of conflict or struggle in schools. Principals and teachers described the challenges as constraining and delaying the transformational process, rather than destructive to arts-centered integrated programming. This was apparent in several responses which either (a) embedded solutions to the challenges (b) were viewed as an opportunity for continued growth, or (c) illustrated the rewards of persistence.

My challenge is, how do we make it all one body of work so it doesn't seem like, ok, so we're working on A, but then we're also working on B, and we're working on C. For me, the Principal Leadership Network has given me the opportunity to visit other sites, to see how they're blending it all together; like we're focusing on academics, supporting that with the arts.

We started off really small. We had two teachers who had gone through the coursework with

ACOE, and the challenge with that is how do we introduce this to teachers, so that they demonstrate interest, and...want to participate? So two of our teachers...had done some the coursework, so they would model lessons for our staff at the staff meetings as to how to integrate the arts into the content areas...and then the year after that, we had about 11 teachers that went through the work with ACOE.

When there's resistance among staff who feel like they've got this way and it's comfortable and why do this other stuff, that can sort of hold a school back.

The section that follows presents principal and teacher perspectives on the resources and support required in order to address the challenges and continue the work of the ILSP.

Resources and Support

In response to questions about resources, training, and support required to achieve the goals of an arts-centered integrated program, principals and teachers provided a wide range of responses, that can be classified into several themes, described in Table 3: (a) Principal Leadership Collaboration, (b) School-Based Shared Leadership and Collaboration, (c) Advocacy and Investment from the district, (d) Site visits to Integrated Learning Demonstration Schools (e) Mentoring, (f) Professional Development Courses, (g) Time, and (h) Funding. The table below presents example responses for each of these themes:

Table 3

Required Resources, Training, and Support

Theme	Examples
Principal Leadership Collaboration	<i>I went to a training...with some other principals, and just our time talking in the car we never have—was really valuable. Because like I said, learning is social...I'm isolated and I'm by myself and the only time that I'm with others is either when I am leading the staff development or I'm part of a huge management team. And so, for me, it's somebody to share the learning with, somebody to debrief with, somebody to exchange ideas with, and someone to help me evaluate.</i> <i>I think this idea of having the community of the principals who are doing this work, the Principal Leadership Group [Network]...I think that's a fundamental piece because it's looking at networking and coordinating with other leaders who have done this work, and...understand how they've taken up the work and addressed the challenges that come up.</i> <i>I really appreciate the Principal Leadership Network. I think that's extremely important to have that opportunity and time to talk to other principals in the work. And to build on, to share ideas, to share struggles and successes.</i>
School-Based Shared Leadership and Collaboration	<i>Meeting is important...Within my staff, the conversations we have about the power of integrated arts. That's all very important.</i> <i>I would probably need to have a group of people at the school who were interested in part of that movement, so it wasn't singularly my responsibility as the principal on board with moving to an integrated learning approach. Are the other administrators on board? Is this something we can do in collaboration with other leaders at the school?</i>
Advocacy and Investment from the District	<i>A trusting superintendent...an openness from the district office to the work that we're doing and understanding of the value of integrated learning through the arts.</i>

Site visits to ILSP Schools	<i>I'm particularly interested in schools that are like ours and getting to see schools that are up against similar challenges and kind of dynamics as ours. Who like us has already done it, and how did they do it? What was that experience like? I learn really well from case studies, and try and understand how, what did you do, did you try this one thing first, did you try multiple things, who was on the team, how did you engage them, what were the pitfalls, what were the wins. That's helpful for me.</i> <i>I think it's important to go out and to visibly see other schools.</i>
Mentoring	<i>I think I need someone to sit with me and help me figure out how to go from vision to practical structures.</i> <i>It wasn't that I needed training, but I needed people to be able to support the staff [in] recognizing that arts are important—to help them develop ways so that they could see that art was making an impact.</i> <i>Time for one-on-one coaching.</i> <i>I think that definitely [I need] the continued support of arts integration coaches, but I think that the coaches probably need to also be versed in some of the guidelines in education that we don't have control over, right? So that they can help teachers think outside the box.</i>
Professional Development Courses/Training	<i>I went to the week-long course...What I don't like as an instructional leader is for my teachers to have a professional learning experience and to start implementing a strategy or set of pedagogies or a unit that I know nothing about. Because I can't be as supportive as I might be if I have limited understanding of the process and the outcomes of what they trying to do...It was what I needed to do as a learner. I probably will go through course B and course C...at a less feverish pace. I would like to continue on with the course, just so again I have at least a surface level if not a deep understanding of what's happening. And I would argue that by participating in that and then by coaching and observing teachers, I probably will reach more than a surface-level understanding...If I don't do those things I will never push beyond a surface-level understanding of what arts integration means and how it's transformation for students.</i> <i>Over the summer, we took week-long courses, and that just kind of bolstered the community vibe of "we're all professionals, we're all learners, we're always growing and always improving".</i>

I almost feel like there should be separate coursework for administrators. Like there should be work around what do you do to help guide people through this process? My assistant principal is [an] artist. He incorporated that when he taught, but as an administrator he didn't completely appreciate the process that was happening through the coursework, because...he couldn't really understand how is this going to get me from here to there with teachers I have to support?...So, as administrators, we need help with that. How do I think about that in my budget? I still don't know exactly how much budget I should use to buy art products, and what are the best ones? There's a lot of side things you need to know to be supportive of teachers.

I really want to get my teachers trained through the ILSP process, all of them. That's the biggest support I need.

Time

...We need time to plan, we need time to meet with teachers so we can all be on the same page. It's difficult for us to sit here and send out an email to everyone and say, ok, this is what we're going to try; go out and try it. So to really have the time to meet with the staff so that they can see what it looks like, the type of support that we want to lend. To also give feedback, so that's the biggest support that we could possibly receive from the district—Time.

I think...time management. I think it's really hard to tell when you should step in and when you should close your door. And I think especially when it comes to turnaround schools, it's very difficult to manage your time, because there are always these things that are going on that seem like they require your immediate attention. So I think that [help with] time management, specifically prioritization.

Funding

I would like more years of the grant...Every school should have a partner like this...

Long-term I would hope to see every teacher, every class, really digging deeply into the critical literacy aspect of what the integrated arts program offers—I think money's always helpful.

Well, right now we are seeking the board's approval and funding...So it's funding from the district to allow that to happen.

They say that money doesn't solve all problems, but it's nice to be able to have that support and resources.

Support provided through the Principal Leadership Network and the Alameda County Office of Education was of particular benefit to principals, providing validation, providing opportunities for reflection, building community, and providing momentum for the transformation toward arts-centered integrated practice. These benefits are expressed in the following responses to the question, *What has the role of the Principal Leadership Network been this last year in supporting you in the arts-centered integrated curriculum?*

It's really inspired me and motivated me to sort of push myself out of a comfort zone...and then to really inspire me to look for opportunities for me to put my work out there. So just last week, a project [one of the teachers and I] had been working on together and we just presented it again yesterday to the board. And I also was inspired to pull together...teachers [for a group] around Making Learning Visible through Harvard's Project Zero. And then also I was invited to teach at San Francisco State this semester, so I've been teaching a class on arts integration.

If it wasn't for this partnership, I think I would probably feel more isolated than I already do...I wouldn't know that there's other people doing this type of work. And I think...the largest role, is in subtle ways [having] permission to think of things differently, flip things on their head, ask bigger questions, ask smaller questions...

It's validated the direction I've taken our school...It's provided the research, it's provided the meat of what I need to continue this practice...It's honed my vision.

I think the work at the PLN has just been very helpful in allowing and providing time for reflection.

[It's] a community where you can see alternatives that are positive, and you can walk away feeling much more refreshed...much more refreshed than when you walk in. It's having a coach...it's like a shot in the arm of, ok, now I can go forward, and I know that I have somebody who understands when I am faced with a dilemma that they...will listen and they know when to give advice and they know when it's just time to listen.

For me, the PLN has really given me ideas of how to make this work possible, how to make this work visible.

Implications and Future Directions

The aim of this study was to examine the role of principal leadership in the school-wide transformation from traditional pedagogical practice to arts-centered integrated practice. Findings, based on principal and teacher interviews, have several implications. First, findings support the understanding that Arts-Centered Integrated Instruction and Learning transformational initiatives require investment in principal and teacher leadership. Second, findings inform principals of those leadership qualities that are essential for generating effective learning and teaching of an arts-centered integrated program. Third, results have practical implications for the support required to maximize the benefits and mitigate the challenges of school-wide change. Fourth, findings support the need for building a community among like-minded leaders invested in arts-centered integrated programming. Overall, findings illustrate the successful establishment of the Principal Leadership Network to promote and support school-wide, arts-centered integrated learning and the worthwhile investment in principal and teacher leadership support and training to make this work possible.



Future directions to expand the benefits and address the challenges are worthy of consideration. The development of leadership qualities that influence school communities to support change may be explored via opportunities for professional development targeted at principals. Continued site-specific mentoring may address issues associated with resource

prioritization and time management, that raise sustainability concerns. Finally, the continuation of the Principal Leadership Network is likely to inspire continued commitment and validation of this important transformational work toward arts-centered integrated teaching and learning.

References

- CREATE CA (2015). *A blueprint for creative schools*. Retrieved from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/documents/bfcsreport.pdf>
- Andrews, R. L., & Soder, R. (1987). Principal Leadership and Student Achievement. *Educational Leadership*, 44(6), 9–11.
- Bach & DeSoto. (2009). *Anchoring arts education: Principals' arts leadership, An evaluation of ArtsEd Washington's elementary school program*. Retrieved from http://artsedwashington.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/Anchoring_Arts_Education_PAL_full_report.pdf
- Barry, N. H. (2010). *Oklahoma A+ Schools: What the research tells us 2002-2007*. (Vol. 3). Edmond, OK: Oklahoma A+ Schools/University of Central Oklahoma.
- Beyer, B. M., & Ruhl-Smith, C. (1999). The principal's role in school restructuring and reform: An examination of self-perceived leadership styles. *Journal of Leadership Studies*, 5(2), 116–128. <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/107179199900500210>
- Blase, J., & Blase, J. (2000). Effective instructional leadership: Teachers' perspectives on how principals promote teaching and learning in schools. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 38, 130–141.
- Charland, W. (2011). Art Integration as school culture change: A cultural ecosystem approach to faculty development. *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, 12(8), Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ937069.pdf>
- Duke, D. L. (1982). Leadership functions and instructional effectiveness. *NASSP Bulletin*, 66(456), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/019263658206645601>

- Duma, A. (2014). A view into a decade of arts integration. *Journal for Learning Through the Arts*, 10(1). Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1050588.pdf>
- Good, T. L. (2008). In the midst of comprehensive school reform: Principals' perspectives. *Teachers College Record*, 110, 2341–2360.
- Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. H. (1998). Exploring the principal's contribution to school effectiveness: 1980-1995. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 9, 157–191.
- Ingram, D., & Meath, M. (2007). *Arts for Academic Achievement: A Compilation of Evaluation Findings from 2004-2006*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, College of Education and Human Development, Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement.
- LaJevic, L. (2013). Arts integration: What is really happening in the elementary classroom? *Journal for Learning Through the Arts*, 9(1). Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1018332>
- LeSourd, S. J., & Grady, M. L. (1988). Principal leadership for instructional goal attainment. *The Clearing House*, 62(2), 61-64.
- Lorimer, M. R. (2011). Arts-infused learning in middle level classrooms. *Journal for Learning Through the Arts*, 7(1), 14.
- Marshall, J. (2014, September). *Transforming Education Through Art Centered Integrated Learning*. San Francisco, CA: San Francisco State University.
- May, H., & Supovitz, J. A. (2011). The scope of principal efforts to improve instruction. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 47, 332–352.
- <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0013161X10383411>

- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Ruppert, S. (2006). *Critical Evidence: How the Arts Benefit Student Achievement*. Published by the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies in collaboration with the Arts Education Partnership.
- Schechter, C., & Shaked, H. (2017). Leaving fingerprints: principals' considerations while implementing education reforms. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 55, 242–260.
- Scripp, L., & Paradis, L. (2014). Embracing the burden of proof: New strategies for determining predictive links between arts integration teacher professional development, student arts learning, and student academic achievement outcomes. *Journal for Learning Through the Arts*, 10(1). Retrieved from <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/9ch5t8cw#page-1>
- Shatzer, R. H., Caldarella, P., Hallam, P. R., & Brown, B. L. (2014). Comparing the effects of instructional and transformational leadership on student achievement: implications for practice. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 42, 445–459.
- Spilka, G., & Long, M. (2009). Building local capacity to bring arts education to all children: lessons learned from the first half of the Ford Foundation's national demonstration. *Penn GSE Perspectives on Urban Education*, 6(2), 4–13.
- Tredway, L., Cheung, R., Nguyen, V., Stephens, D., Leader-Picone, L., Hernandez, J. (2015). *Leadership Connection Rubric: Supporting Equity in the Schools We Need* (2nd ed.) Berkeley, CA: Leadership Connection.
- Walker, T. (1999, July 1). Give voice to troubled music. *The Denver Post*, p.7B.

Winner, E. & Hetland, L. (2004). Cognitive transfer from arts education to non-arts outcomes:

Research evidence and policy implications. In E. Eisner and M. Day (Eds.), *Handbook on Research and Policy in Art Education*. Mahwah, NJ: National Art Education Association.

Berkeley Graduate School
of Education

PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

510-643-7458

pli@berkeley.edu

<http://principals.berkeley.edu>