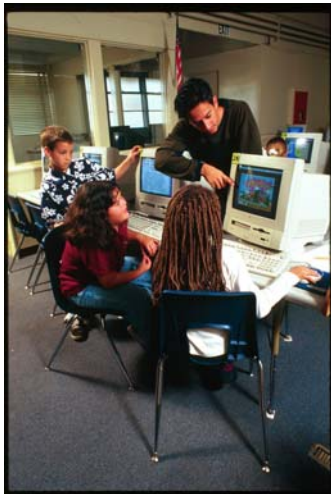


## The Art of Enhancing Teacher Satisfaction: How ArtsBridge Works With Teachers

By addressing the many factors contributing to high morale among teachers, such as the establishment of clear, shared goals; enhanced content and pedagogical skills; better communication; and the development of greater clarity and certainty around practice, **high-quality professional development has the potential to impact profoundly student achievement** (Nigro, 1984; Wentworth, 1990; Rosenholtz, 1991; Lumsden, 1998; Anderson, 2000). Although direct causal linkages between teacher morale and student achievement continue to be explored in the academic literature, a growing body of evidence points to myriad important reciprocal impacts. A number of scholars (Plihal, 1981; White and Stevens, 1988; Lumsden, 1998) have identified **high teacher morale as contributing to higher levels of student achievement and as a fundamental component of effective schools** (DuFour, 1985; Zigarelli, 1996).

With the advent of the reform movement in education, postsecondary institutions have traditionally offered professional development services for K-12 teachers, although many of these projects have met with mixed degrees of success. Too often professional support activities are sporadic, one-sided, cost prohibitive, and require teachers to be out of the classroom for prolonged periods. Understanding these trends, **ArtsBridge offers a unique means of support for teachers, incorporating recognized best practices for professional development** (McRobbie, 2000). These practices provide **reinforcement of content knowledge and address the needs of the educator as a working professional, and have met with tremendous success in the field**, according to recent research undertaken by ArtsBridge staff. For example:



- In its support of teachers, ArtsBridge strongly believes in the importance of **studying the arts as a stand-alone discipline, one that has important reciprocal benefits with other subject areas**, such as language arts, mathematics, the humanities, and the sciences, and one that promotes the development of vital social and life skills.
- Artsbridge promotes high standards for the arts and the intellectual development of host teachers by providing **ongoing opportunities for immersion in subject matter** in collaboration with top students and faculty at participating university campuses. This immersion **allows for a significant degree of risk taking, designed redundancy, and increased mastery of content and delivery**.
- ArtsBridge offers **collaborative and cohesive support for teachers** in the classroom that builds on a broader vision of professional development incorporating needs emerging from individual classrooms.

**Restoring arts education to our nation's schools is a collaborative effort** that must be undertaken by many parties, including postsecondary institutions, primary and secondary schools, public and private agencies that provide support for artists and arts educators, artists, arts providers, and supporters of arts education. ArtsBridge is pleased to serve as a partner in this effort and is committed to **raising awareness of the importance of arts curricula in our schools and providing unique access to professional support activities for teachers**.

**A**s an arts education partnership that is highly dependent upon collaborative relationships between its university campus programs and their local public schools, ArtsBridge uses the opinions and perspectives of its host teachers to help assess its progress. **We have discovered through our research that teachers have a profound impact on ArtsBridge scholars and their career decisions. Moreover, ArtsBridge scholars leave lasting impressions upon their hosts, laying an important foundation for our future work with public schools** in California and beyond. Our ongoing study of ArtsBridge host teachers shows that programming impacts primary and secondary teachers quite differently. In a recent study, **94 percent of elementary school teachers participating in ArtsBridge reported that they had no formal training or experience in teaching the arts.** As a result, ArtsBridge scholars in primary settings were able to present **new and exciting arts curricula to pupils**, as well as raise the awareness of these teachers to value arts education or reinforce in their teaching the importance of arts education. In the secondary school setting, ArtsBridge contributes **highly focused content to arts specialists** that builds upon existing arts curricula. We have gathered commentary from teachers that we believe speaks to the powerful impact of ArtsBridge scholars upon their host teachers:

“I feel that the arts—music in particular—are so valuable and important. (I invited ArtsBridge scholars to the classroom) because I wasn’t able to do it on my own.” **Elementary School Teacher, Buena Park, California**

“UCI ArtsBridge is an extremely enriching program for my students and fills a gap left by my district’s dearth of arts instruction.” – **Elementary School Teacher, Santa Ana, California**

“(The ArtsBridge scholar) revealed a fine balance between showing her gentle, heartfelt, and genuine aspects, as well as an amazing classroom management quality. (My) fifth graders were able to feel successful and stimulated with challenging activities. She should expand herself by becoming an educator!” – **Elementary School Teacher, Los Angeles, California**

“One thing that struck me about (my scholar) was her natural teaching ability. She knew her material and was prepared with grade level appropriate activity for the students. (She) had good classroom management techniques. The students were happy to have her in the classroom and cheered when they knew it was a music day!” – **Elementary School Teacher, Richmond, California**

“My students looked forward to seeing the ArtsBridge scholar come in every week. The students are more involved in mastering their instruments and perceive themselves to be important because they get to work with an ArtsBridge scholar. I have been able to hear the difference in performance levels of my students and my ultimate goal for them is to make connections to the University through the ArtsBridge scholars.” – **Middle School Teacher, Riverside, California**

“I felt fortunate that (the ArtsBridge scholars) would come here and add to my curriculum and provide me with skills that I did not have. I’ve never done a lot of improvisational comedy, for instance and the scholars had years of experience. They came in and set up a program, taught fundamentals and left me with a complete notebook of lesson plans...they left me with (materials) so I can carry it on after they were gone.” – **High School Teacher and Department Chair, Performing and Fine Arts, Irvine, California**

“(The Scholar) has extended many concepts that have been introduced to the students previously. Her lessons added credibility to my lessons; she has inspired students with her enthusiasm and talents in Theatre Arts.” – **High School Teacher, Davis, California**

*ArtsBridge Research Notes* contain brief summaries of the impact of the ArtsBridge program on participants: university students, faculty, K-12 schoolchildren, and teachers. For others in the series, or for additional information, see our website. The contents of these Research Notes were developed under a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), U.S. Department of Education. However, these contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.