

Beverly Taylor Sorenson Arts Learning Program: Year 3 Implementation Evaluation 2010-2011 *Findings Brief – November 2011*



This document provides a brief update of the Year 3 evaluation of the Beverly Taylor Sorenson Arts Learning Program (BTSALP) conducted by the Utah Education Policy Center at the University of Utah.

What is the model?

The BTSALP model includes four primary areas of focus, as illustrated in Figure 1.

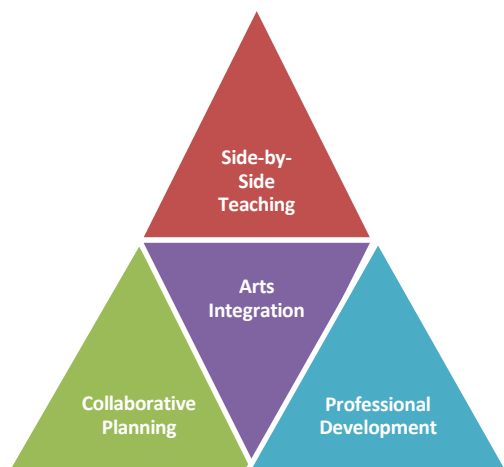


Figure 1. BTSALP Model Program Components

- **Integration of Arts** into core subject areas is a strategy for improving the social, emotional, academic, and arts education of students in elementary schools.
- **Collaborative Planning** time occurs as arts specialists and classroom teachers work together to design lessons that intentionally integrate the art core standards with other core subject matter.
- **Side-by-Side Teaching** occurs when the arts specialists and classroom teachers blend their expertise to conduct lessons together to improve students' engagement and mastery of subject matter.
- **Professional Development** is designed to provide mentoring and on-site visits in which Professional Development Partners (PDPs) observe classrooms and offer feedback about lessons, provide additional resources, and attend planning meetings.

Whom does it serve?

Fifty-two schools participated in the BTSALP in Year 3. These schools represented 21 districts (including charter schools) across the state.

The BTSALP served **34,970** students (kindergarten through sixth-grade) in Year 3, by providing arts integrated lessons that sought to increase exposure to the Utah state core curriculum through participation in four art forms.

The art forms were represented by specialists in **drama (8%), dance (18%), music (24%), and visual arts (50%)**.

How was it evaluated?

The purpose of the multi-year evaluation is to:

- (1) *Document the implementation of the statewide initiative to determine if schools are implementing the program as intended*
- (2) *Identify key school outcomes (including student achievement)*
- (3) *Provide policy and practice recommendations generated from the findings.*

The BTSALP evaluation is a longitudinal, mixed method study that includes systematic analysis of interviews, focus groups, surveys, activity logs, and student achievement data. The 2010-11 academic year was the third year of BTSALP implementation and evaluation. The full technical report is available upon request.

How was the BTSALP model implemented in Year 3?

Now in its third year of implementation, the BTSALP is becoming more established in the schools and consistent patterns of implementation and outcomes have developed. Notably, higher levels of BTSALP implementation were positively associated with improved student outcomes. These implementation highlights for the four model components are described below.

Arts integration:

- Specialists reported a total of **18,538** arts integrated lessons, with an increase in the subject areas of language arts, mathematics, and science
- The percentage of teachers and administrators reporting opportunities for students to learn other core subject areas (language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies) through the arts “almost always” has increased steadily each year

Side-by-side teaching:

- Arts specialists reported a total of **13,754** hours in side-by-side teaching
- Specialists reported increases in classroom teacher involvement with side-by-side teaching and that this co-teaching method has facilitated opportunities for collaboration and supporting student achievement

Collaborative planning:

- Arts specialists reported a total of **1,463** hours planning with classroom teachers
- Collaborative planning promoted frequent and focused communication among teachers and, in some cases, there were reports of increased use of curriculum maps to guide planning of arts integrated lessons around core content.

Professional development:

- Average number of hours PDPs spent on mentoring surpassed program expectations
- PDPs reported a total of **1,351** hours in support of art specialists, including classroom observations, attendance at art team meetings, and other professional development and technical assistance activities.

There was a positive, statistically significant relationship between language arts, mathematics, and science CRT scores and levels of implementation of the BTSALP model.

What were the benefits?

As noted above, we found higher student achievement on the CRTs in schools with higher levels of implementation.

Stakeholders also reported the following **benefits for students:**

- Increased student engagement
- Increased enthusiasm for the arts
- Positive changes in students’ behavior
- Increased participation in class activities
- Willingness to try new things
- Improved rates of student attendance
- Increases in student confidence and positive gains in social-emotional development

- Parents and teachers pointed to BTSALP as encouraging and promoting:
 - Valuable life skills such as collaboration and public speaking
 - Increased opportunities to develop relationships with peers, respect for one another’s work, and increased opportunities to participate in performances

“Certainly the bringing together of the school community and the parent community is one of the best examples of success. Our school bulges at the seams with support from parents, grandparents and others who come to celebrate their child’s learning through the arts. The arts unite us in one large community of learning. It’s beautiful.”

Stakeholders reported the following **benefits for the school and community:**

- Strengthening of the school community
- Increased parent and community engagement
- Increased parent attendance at arts-related events
- Improved teacher collaboration and morale
- Expanding partnerships with community artists and arts organizations

Stakeholders reported the following **overall benefits related to program implementation:**

- Positive changes in school climate and culture
- Improvement in teacher morale
- Feelings of school community within the building
- Improved physical appearance of the building
- Community and parent involvement and engagement in the school
- Arts specialists contribute to mentoring, promoting high expectations for students

While the impact of the BTSALP on school and student outcomes was positive overall, there were varied and nuanced results depending on school site and context.



For more information on UEPC research, evaluation, policy analysis, and policy development services contact the UEPC at 801-581-4207 or 801-581-5177 or visit us at <http://uepc.ed.utah.edu>.