



## Artful Learning Communities II: Assessing Learning, Transforming Practice, Promoting Achievement

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Metis Associates has been evaluating the Artful Learning Communities II (ALC II) project since 2011. ALC II is a three-year project that continues and expands the work of ALC I, which was implemented from 2008 to 2011. ALC II was designed to meet two goals: 1) to improve arts specialists' content knowledge of the arts and their capacity to implement a system of balanced assessment in order to support data-based decision-making; and 2) to increase student achievement in the arts through enhanced teacher instruction and assessment practices. Over the course of 2011-2014, ALC II served over 90 arts specialists and 24 peer coaches from elementary, middle, and high schools from across New York City.

Evaluation activities have included observations of professional development, pre/post surveys and focus groups with participating arts specialists and coaches, and analysis of arts specialists' action plan rubrics. Additionally, Metis has examined changes in the arts achievement of students of participating specialists.

ALC II Findings to date indicate:

- By the end of Year 3, arts specialists indicate that they use formative assessments in their instruction at least one time per week, including:
  - Teacher descriptive feedback (88%)
  - Student peer feedback (87%)
  - Student self-reflection (84%)

*Every meeting has given me inspiration and reflection. This is ESSENTIAL work for a music teacher,*

- Ninety-eight percent (98%) of arts specialists indicate that they are comfortable using formative assessment thanks to their participation in the project, and 100% report that they are able to provide evidence of student achievement through the assessment process.

- Additionally, nearly all participating arts specialists (98%) perceive that they are better teachers because of their

involvement in ALC II, and 98% perceive that their students are achieving more because of their participation in the project.

- Arts specialists completed action plans for improving student achievement in specific areas at the beginning of the project (winter 2011) and again in spring 2014. The action plans were scored using a 20-item rubric designed to assess specialists' arts content and assessment knowledge. Results showed that 87% of specialists increased their overall scores from pre to post. Furthermore, specialists' mean score at post was significantly higher at post than at pre, using a matched samples *t*-test.
- Overwhelmingly, specialists reported that they engaged in greater collaboration with their colleagues through the project, and many reported that their work in formative assessment brought greater visibility to the school's arts programs. In some cases, the arts specialist's rooms were highlighted during Quality Review visits due to their innovative use of performance assessment and peer feedback.

*Being a faculty of one (the only arts instructor) within my school, participating in ALC II has been a life line...it is the only way I am able to get together with other arts professionals to help me further my teaching skills.*