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## KID smART: Working to Increase Capacity

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# KID smART: Working to Increase Capacity

An internship report submitted to the graduate faculty  
of the University of New Orleans  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in Arts Administration

by

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## **Abstract**

This internship report is based on my work with the organization KID smART from June of 2011 through November of 2012. I had the opportunity to work in several departments, including programming, development, and administrative support, as well as directly with students in New Orleans public schools. From this unique point of view, I observed how an effective organization approaches the complex education system and works towards change in a challenging environment. My observations attempt to describe the evolution of this dynamic agency, its procedures for regulation and evaluation, and what role it plays in the community. My recommendations are based on perceived gaps in an otherwise highly functional organization that has a positive impact on its stakeholders' quality of life.

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## **Chapter 1: Organization Profile**

KID smART is a non-profit organization based in New Orleans, Louisiana, whose mission is to “[U]se the arts to engage children in learning about themselves and the world in which they live.”<sup>1</sup> KID smART defines arts integration as the “linking of the arts and existing curriculum,”<sup>2</sup> which consists of visual and performing artists co-teaching lessons in the classroom. The merging of the arts and academic curriculum is designed to add new a dimension to the learning process and to reach students in ways that traditional teaching methods do not. For example, Kindergarteners in an arts-integrated class might learn more fully the life cycle of a plant by exploring the stages through theatrical movements that transition them from “seed” to “full-grown flower.”

KID smART’s work in arts integration is rooted in the position, espoused by many arts and education professionals, that exposing all school-age children to the visual and performing arts has a tremendous positive impact on development, as well as self-confidence, responsibility, respect and compassion for others, self-understanding, discipline and emotional control, language and communication skills, problem solving and critical thinking, curiosity, engagement in learning, and enthusiasm at school. There have been several major studies to reinforce the veracity of this position, most notably *Champions of Change: The Impact of Arts on Human Development* (1999), and *Doing Well And Doing Good by Doing Art: A 12-Year Longitudinal Study of Arts Education – Effects on the Achievements and Values of Young Adults*, conducted by UCLA

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<sup>1</sup> “What We Do” KID smART. Accessed October 1, 2012. [http://kidsmart.org/what\\_we\\_do.html](http://kidsmart.org/what_we_do.html)

<sup>2</sup> “What We Do” KID smART. Accessed October 1, 2012 [http://kidsmart.org/what\\_we\\_do.html](http://kidsmart.org/what_we_do.html)

Professor Emeritus in Education James Catterall. Catterall observed that children who were engaged in the arts showed more positive academic development than a control group, noting also that students who were highly involved in instrumental music during their middle and high schools years showed significantly higher levels of mathematics proficiency, and the same was true for theater involvement and reading proficiency. KID smART's model pairs classroom learning with professional development sessions, partnerships with cultural institutions, and artist residencies to promote a specific type of educational reform, in which "the arts are both an end and a means" to increase learning in all academic and artistic areas.<sup>3</sup> A newly-developed visual representation of the organization's programming can be found in the Appendix A.

## History

The organization was founded by visual artists Allison Stewart and Campbell Hutchinson in 1991, who envisioned a supplemental Saturday program that would increase access to the visual arts for underserved students in the New Orleans area. The artists' first class had only twenty students and existed in just one school. For the next eight years, Allison and Campbell ran "KID smART" as a Saturday volunteer program for underserved youth, with the goal of becoming formally incorporated as a 501(c)3 once a suitable director could be found.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> "What We Do", KID smART. Accessed October 1, 2012 [http://kidsmart.org/what\\_we\\_do.html](http://kidsmart.org/what_we_do.html)

<sup>4</sup> *History*, KID smART. June 2012.

Impressed by her background in education and the arts, Allison and Campbell chose to hire Echo Olander as KID smART's Executive Director in 1999. The organization known as KID smART became legally incorporated, and continued with the Saturday arts instruction at Fischer Elementary. The following year, the organization added weekend programming at Guste Elementary in Central City, thereby doubling its reach to fifty students. In 2000-2001, KID smART pilot-tested the Teaching Artist Residency program, which would eventually become their signature Artist In Classroom (AIC) program. By embedding the artist within the school during instruction time, this new program enabled KID smART to reach a much larger population of 250 students and spend more time in the classroom.<sup>5</sup>

During academic years 2002-2005, the organization expanded its residency program to bring more disciplines into a greater number of schools. They introduced and integrated theatre, dance, and 'circus arts' were introduced and integrated into the curriculum in nine schools in 2005, reaching over 1700 students. Community collaborations also developed, with several neighborhood organizations including the St. John the Baptist Community Center's Youth Program.<sup>6</sup> KID smART also expanded their menu of services during 2004-2005 with after-school programs in a variety of disciplines, including music. At this time the organization began to create systems for evaluating their success and improving their delivery of the highest quality arts programming available to underserved youth in Orleans and Jefferson Parishes.

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<sup>5</sup> *History*, KID smART. June 2012

<sup>6</sup> *History*, KID smART. June 2012

Hurricane Katrina brought changes to the organization as it did to most in New Orleans, but KID smART adapted quickly to the change and seized the opportunity to make an even larger impact on education. Faced with a majority of their target population living in Houston, the organization decided to move there, arranging for artists to work with displaced students and present public art projects about issues that were affecting them. KID smART also planned for the future, envisioning a major component of their services as a teacher training program that would prepare teachers for planning and working with artists in the classroom<sup>7</sup> once the organization returned to New Orleans the following year.

Despite the after-effects of the storm, KID smART served the highest numbers of students to date at around 3,400 with 4,000 hours of contact time at fifteen sites in the New Orleans area during the 2006-2007 academic year . The organization also piloted their teacher training program, called AXIS, for Arts E(X)periences in Schools, in this academic year.<sup>8</sup>

Today, KID smART has expanded their scope to work to sixteen different schools in Orleans and Jefferson Parishes, directly impacting 2,658 students in the 2010 academic year.<sup>9</sup> The organization now offers a wide range of programming initiatives, including professional development and collaborations with cultural partners in New

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<sup>7</sup> *History*, KID smART. June 2012

<sup>8</sup> *History*, KID smART. June 2012

<sup>9</sup> "Our Impact". KID smART. Accessed October 1, 2012 [http://www.kidsmart.org/our\\_impact.html](http://www.kidsmart.org/our_impact.html).



Orleans, such as the Ogden Museum of Southern Art and the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra.<sup>10</sup>

### Management and Staffing

KID smART, as a 501(c)3 organization, relies on a board of directors for governance and stewardship. The seventeen-member board is chaired by (founder) Campbell Hutchinson, and is comprised of well-known professionals in the fields of law, education, fine arts, and finance (see Appendix B). There is also a ten-member Advisory Council that does not vote but attends board meetings and sometimes chairs committees. KID smART's Board of Directors splits into several committees for the majority of their work to support the organization, including Finance, which approves the annual budget; Marketing, which strategizes about external communications; and Fundraising, which assists in providing fundraising resources and forming relationships.

The Executive Director of KID smART, Echo Olander, has been the organization's director since 1999 and is actively involved in every aspect of its administration. She has a BA in English from Newcomb College and extensive experience consulting for non-profit organizations, including the Mississippi Arts Commission, the New York State Council on the Arts, the Arts Council of New Orleans, and the Louisiana Department of Education.<sup>11</sup> She assists the Board with directing the

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<sup>10</sup> "Our Impact", KID smART. Accessed October 1, 2012 [http://www.kidsmart.org/our\\_impact.html](http://www.kidsmart.org/our_impact.html).

<sup>11</sup> "Staff", KID smART. Accessed October 1, 2012 <http://kidsmart.org/staff.html>

vision and growth of KID smART and directs day-to-day operations so that they are in line with the mission.

Elise Gallinot has been the Program Director for the organization since 2008 and has been instrumental in developing KID smART's unique model. Her educational background includes a BA in Anthropology from the University of Georgia in Athens, and an MA in Arts Administration from the University of New Orleans. Elise has also worked in non-profit arts education organizations, trained as a Montessori teacher, and served as a fellow at the Harvard School of Education. Elise plans sessions for AXIS, directs the hiring of Teaching Artists, maps curriculum, and designs new programs, such as the Model School Initiative.

Linda Irwin, KID smART's Director of Development, is responsible for fundraising for the entire organization. Although KID smART's model includes charging fees for services to individual schools for artist residencies and arts integration service, there are organizational and other programming expenses that must be covered by donations and grants. Linda's background as the Executive Director of Youth Alternatives of New Orleans, Inc. and in mission-driven organizational fundraising makes her an excellent leader in this department. Linda is also plans and produces the organization's annual fundraising event, Cocktails for KID smART, as well as an annual campaign and all grant writing.

Shannel Platenburg is the Office Manager for KID smART and oversees all administrative and bookkeeping duties for the organization, in addition to website maintenance and communications. She also provides logistical support for off-site programming, such as AXIS sessions and other presentations.

KID smART also currently employs three former Teaching Artists as Arts Coaches. Aminisha Ferdinand, Sean Glazebrook, and Heather Muntzer manage the communications, scheduling, and training of KID smART Teaching Artist staff, lead the Professional Development sessions, and co-teach in schools. Managing a roster of fourteen Teaching Artists and helping them to continue their education is not an easy feat, but the recent hire of Sean and Heather helped with the workload and freed up Echo and Elise's respective schedules.

A roster of ten Teaching Artists rounds out the organization's staff, although these artists work primarily in the schools themselves, meeting twice a month for development sessions, planning workshops, and collaborative learning experiences.

## Funding

KID smART's operating budget for the 2012 fiscal year shows a surplus of \$925.00. This demonstrates that the organization's leadership creates a budget using accurate projections of what costs would be, managed to avoid major unforeseen costs, and sets realistic fundraising goals.

On the revenue side of the budget, fundraising numbers show a total of \$257,200, 32% of which was generated by the organization's annual black-tie fundraiser, Cocktails for KID smART, 52% by fund development, and 15% through the organization's annual appeal. Programming also resulted in revenue for the organization, with \$110,000 in school contracts, \$92,975 in government grants, \$105,000 in revenue through third party projects, and \$19,000 in grants specifically for the AIC and AXIS programs.

KID smART has received support from a number of family and private foundations, such as the Payton's Play It Forward Foundation, the Goldring Family Foundation, the PeyBack Foundation, the Helis Foundation, the RosaMary Foundation, the Emeril Lagasse Foundation, the Ruth U. Fertel Foundation, the Mary Freeman Wisdom Foundation, the James R. Moffett Family Foundation, and many others. Corporate sponsors include IBERIABANK, Whitney Bank, Advantage Capital Management, Jones Walker, and Martex Tanks & Terminals. KID smART also enjoys donations from a roster of about thirty different individual givers, many of whom also serve on the organization's Board of Directors.

The organization's largest expense is personnel, which consists of salaries for administration employees and hourly rates paid to artists. Together, payroll expenses equaled \$479,157 this fiscal year (2012). Fund development was a net positive, generating \$138,214 in revenue. KID smART's programming, including AIC, AXIS, third party projects, in-house projects, and the Imagination, Creativity, and Innovation Initiative (ICI), was a net negative, costing \$85,113 (although it generated \$420,475 in contracts and grants). Administration, which includes most operational expenses, was also a negative and totaled \$52,176 in costs.

KID smART's overall financial situation seems to be healthy. They are not operating at a deficit, and have effective budgeting practices in place. The organization earns enough revenue to pay for its programming and overhead with a small amount to spare, and have not had to dip into investment accounts or other assets. Although they receive compensation for their services through several programs, contracts with school are generally made on a year-to-year basis, making budgeting simple but long-term planning more difficult.

## Programming

The KID smART Model grew organically from a simple goal of two artists into a multifaceted system that uses arts integration to enact a positive change in education and promote the arts as essential to learning. The organization's program structure consists of artists in long-term residencies in schools, called the Artist in Classroom, or AIC program, professional development sessions called Arts E(X)periences In Schools (AXIS), advocacy and research, the Institute for Creativity and Innovation, the Model Schools Initiative, and after-school and community-based programs.

The organization is currently developing additional programs, including units of instruction called Know What It Means, which focus on aspects of local culture and traditions. Folklore in the Classroom is another curriculum-writing initiative produced as a collaboration between KID smART, nonprofit Local Learning Network, and the American Folklore Society Education Section, culminating in a teacher workshop and lesson plans available to teachers online. The Teacher Leader program is also in development and slated for piloting during the 2013-2014 academic year. KID smART's experience in schools has resulted in an awareness that teacher buy-in is essential to the long-term success of their programming. Teacher Leader is an attempt to increase the participation and leadership of co-teachers in KID smART schools, who will increase communication with faculty and enact change on a personal level.

As the cornerstone of KID smART's programming, the Artists in the Classroom program comprises the majority of the organization's time and effort. This program involves professional Teaching Artists and classroom teachers working together to

create lessons based on the integration of Common Core Standards and the artist's discipline. These residencies are intended to be a long-term presence in schools, transforming them into communities of integrated learning. Synthesis of science and theater, or visual art and math, for example, are targeted to increase learning in three major areas: artistic discipline, social and emotional growth, and academic curriculum. Effectiveness of these lessons is measured at three points during a semester, using skill sheets to track each student's growth in the three areas of learning, surveying of classroom teachers, and surveying of students.

Another component of the organization's programming is professional development. To accomplish their goals of creating a new kind of learning environment, KID smART must work on both sides of the equation with Teaching Artists and classroom teachers to create the kind of environment that is conducive to effective arts integration. The Arts Experiences in Schools (AXIS) program is lead by the Teaching Artist staff. AXIS is designed to be an introduction to the concept of arts integration, an opportunity to experience it in practice, and ideas for how to bring cultural resources into the classroom. AXIS Sessions meet bimonthly at a different cultural partners in New Orleans. Teachers at schools in which there is a KID smART presence (heretofore "KID smART schools") , regardless of grade or subject matter, can attend these professional development sessions and receive a stipend for their time. Each year, participating teachers break into small learning groups to explore innovative ways to improve teaching practice and student learning through arts integration, such as "Poetry in Motion," "Emotional Literacy," and "Visual Art + Math."

Although AXIS training is not mandatory for co-teachers working with artists in the classroom, KID smART strongly encourages their participation in the program in order to become better co-teachers and integrators of a variety of disciplines and curricula. After teachers complete their first year of the AXIS program, further Arts Coaching is implemented, which consists of in-class observations and one-on-one feedback sessions to reinforce the practice of arts integration.

Teaching Artists also participate in professional development sessions held by KID smART's Arts Coaches Aminisha Ferdinand, Heather Muntzer, and Sean Glazebrook. Delivered to the Teaching Artists an average of three times a year in the organization's offices, professional development sessions serve as an outlet for sharing successes and challenges in teaching practice, continuing education in co-teaching, lesson planning, and classroom management. These informal meetings serve to create a community of Teaching Artists who feel comfortable sharing information and ideas with each other and KID smART staff. These sessions also develop participants into better teachers as a group.

For teachers and administrators who are interested in learning about integrating the arts in their schools but are unsure about the KID smART process, there are Full-Faculty Professional Development Sessions. Delivered to interested faculty members in the schools themselves, these sessions introduce the KID smART philosophy, programming, and experience, and provide an opportunity for the school to contract with the organization in the future.



KID smART maintains a partnership with the Louisiana Division of the Arts, a part of the Louisiana Office of Cultural Development, called the “Imagination, Creativity, and Innovation Initiative” (ICI). This initiative, according to the official description of the program according to the Lieutenant Governor’s office, uses “the process of creating, performing, and responding to art [...] to increase attendance by students and staff, lower rates of retention [in grade], raise self-esteem, decrease discipline problems, encourage greater parent participation and grow a sense of community” (See Appendix C). KID smART administers this initiative in eight schools statewide. The initiative establishes residencies by professional theater artists, who integrate the theater arts into students’ English Language Arts curriculum and produce plays within the schools.

KID smART also supplies teachers for various after-school and community-based programs, such as Volunteers of America and the University of New Orleans summer camp. These partnerships usually focus less on arts integration, and more on arts instruction, because of the lack of emphasis on specific academic curriculum standards. The Model Schools Initiative, a new addition to KID smART’s program repertoire, strives to achieve three main goals in three of their participating schools (ARISE Academy, Martin Behrman Elementary, and Langston Hughes Academy), over the academic years 2013 - 2015:

- To increase student levels of academic achievement, deepen their learning, build their critical thinking and problem-solving skills, foster creativity and imagination, and enhance their social and emotional growth.

- To increase teacher efficiency through their use of arts-integrated instructional practice.
- To strengthen positive school culture through increasing engagement in joyful learning at all levels of the school.

This program is a more intensive version of the KID smART school; arts-integrated instruction will be implemented in every class across the curriculum for four different grade levels beginning in academic year 2013, and contact time with Teaching Artists will be increased. In addition, future plans for sustainable arts integration maintenance and growth will be developed through a dialogue with school teachers and administrators, KID smART staff, and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, a longtime partner of the organization in the areas of evaluation practice, research, and curriculum mapping. The impact of the Model Schools Initiative will be discussed in a later chapter.

Another project that is currently in development is the Teacher Leader program, to be offered to teachers participating in the AIC and AXIS programs in the 2013 academic year. Teacher Leaders will strive to increase the impact of programming in KID smART by doing advanced work in arts integration, coaching other teachers in the practice, and leading in the reinforcement of its principles in school culture.

## Goals

According to KID smART's planning documents, arts integration programming is designed to meet several goals for different stakeholder groups, including students, classroom teachers, and the community at large. These goals include:

1. To increase the arts proficiencies of children through broad and deep exposure to various art forms that involve children both in doing art and experiencing art;
2. To increase the connections between academic content and the different ways children learn, deepening knowledge in ways that lead to more complex critical thinking skills;
3. To enhance development of social and communications skills that foster success in complex and global 21st century life and work settings;
4. To facilitate the on-going emotional recovery of children and families from trauma associated with Hurricane Katrina's devastation of the region;
5. To increase the capacities of Classroom Teachers to use arts integration strategies to teach a wide range of academic content;
6. To tie arts integration strategies to national benchmarks and standards;
7. To increase the number of children who remain in school over time;
8. To act as a catalyst for transformative change in schools' cultures, curricula and pedagogies;
9. To participate as a leader in and advocate for: systems that support arts integration as a strategy in school reform initiatives; projects that build the capacity of arts integration initiatives in the wider community, region and state; and partnerships that assure maximum return on arts funding.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> KID smART Strategic Plan, 2008-2012. KID smART, June 2008.

The Artist in Classroom program addresses the Goals 1-4, 6, and 7 by placing professional teaching artists into classrooms to co-teach arts integrated lessons across the curriculum. Lessons are scaffolded with specific goals in the arts discipline, social and emotional growth, and non-arts or curriculum content. Visual, performing, and new media artists join forces with classroom teachers to increase students' arts proficiencies, increase connections with curriculum, develop critical thinking skills, foster social and emotional growth, as well as improve communication and social skills.

AXIS and KID smART Full-Faculty Professional Development sessions are designed to prepare classroom teachers for arts integration, co-teaching with a professional artist, and to increase their range of approaches, understanding, and skills for incorporating arts as a teaching strategy on their own. These programs address Goals 6-9, as they increase capacity in teachers and schools while maintaining the highest standards in education and compliance with national standards.

The Model Schools Initiative (MSI) is also designed to accomplish KID smART's goal of being a catalyst for transformative change, and a leader and advocate for systems that support school reform, build capacity of arts education programs, and result in a maximum return on investment. Using several school sites and multiple years of data and evaluation, the MSI aims to demonstrate through data that KID smART's model results in a paradigm shift in school culture as well as increasing arts proficiency, deepening curriculum knowledge, enhancing social-emotional growth, and communication skills. By committing to arts integration and professional development

across the entire curriculum and spanning four grades, schools increase their capacity and maximize the impact of dollars spent on programming.

Community-based programs, such as the after-school visual art enrichment that I provided through KID smART's partnership with Volunteers Of America, addressed the goals of increasing students' art proficiency, social-emotional growth, communication, and critical thinking skills. Although all residency plans were based in state arts benchmarks, it was not curriculum-specific, and therefore did not directly address all of Goal 2. Other special projects, such as the development of the Know What It Means curriculum, is intended to supplement the resources of teaching artists and classroom teachers, as well as raising revenue for the organization and furthering the reputation of KID smART as a leading arts integration resource.

## **Chapter 2: Internship Description**

I began my internship with KID smART in June 2011, and joined the five-member staff of Echo, Elise, Linda, Shannel and Aminisha in the office at the rear of the St. John the Baptist Community Center on Clio Street. The office has an open floor plan, which works well for the small staff. My first day began with a staff meeting, which oriented me to the office operations. Staff members take turns “hosting” the bi-monthly meetings, which means serving as the moderator for any discussions and kicking the meeting off. Starting with the host, everyone shares their current projects, upcoming deadlines, and any office-related “meta issues” that need to be discussed. This way, all staff members are aware of what is going on in the organization, different departments are on the same page about deadlines and major projects, and the organization works much better as a unit.

## Administration

At the start of the internship, I assisted Shannel with minor administrative duties, such as moving old files into storage and making way for new files, which I also put in order according to KID smART's existing system. In addition, I created promotional flyers, helped with mailings, created identification badges for Teaching Artists, and updated inventories for library books, art supplies, audiovisual equipment, and other teaching resources. This assistance allowed Shannel to concentrate on priority issues such as reconciling the budget, creating financial statements, and payroll.

## Programming

My first major assignment in the Programming Department was to gather data in the field for the New Orleans Parents' Guide, which is a free publication available to all, but aimed at parents or guardians of school-age children in New Orleans. The Parents' Guide provides profiles about each school and available resources for students in the Orleans Parish/Recovery School District (RSD). It was my duty to contact school administrators for their answers to a survey to determine the number of arts teachers, arts classes, and any other artistic or creative activities that were available at their schools. I had been advised that school administrators were sometimes hard to communicate with, so I collected the survey data in a variety of ways: electronically, over the phone, and finally in person.

I observed that many principals and administrators were sometimes so completely overwhelmed with calls and emails requiring responses that they only had time for the top priorities. The Parents' Guide was not a critical issue for them, even though it could be a potentially valuable resource for schools and parents alike. It was interesting to see the landscape of arts opportunities in the schools that responded—there was a much greater variation between schools than I had imagined. Some schools offered exciting and diverse creative classes and others offered the minimum of core subjects and nothing else (See Appendix D).



My next large project was also data collection, this time for a grant through the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts called *Any Given Child*. This grant included a strategic planning session with the Kennedy Center's staff, Orleans Parish School Board and Recovery School District, existing local arts education nonprofits, and city leadership to set specific goals for the arts and education. I researched detailed demographic information about Orleans Parish students for every academic year since 2008-2009, inventoried all nonprofits arts organizations that the Kennedy Center would consider a resource, and compiled information about arts teachers in schools. Since this project overlapped with the Parents' Guide, I could combine my efforts.

Working again for the Programming Department, I arranged for the travel, transportation, and lodging of staff, AXIS teachers, and Louisiana Department of Education representatives to attend a conference in Oklahoma City on the A+ Schools program. I also made similar arrangements for teachers attending the ICI Summer Institute, and acquired several skills, including how to secure group discounts for hotels and rental cars, and the logistical difficulties of arranging flights from many destinations to arrive at a certain time and place.

I also began to enter hardcopy surveys from students, teachers, and professional development attendees into our online survey database, Fluid Surveys, to better interpret the data. Elise and Echo developed the surveys as part of a method of triangulating data that would most accurately represent the impact of KID smART's programming in the classroom (using teacher and student surveys as well as more

objective evaluations from Teaching Artists and standardized test scores). Entering surveys was tedious, but I learned a lot about the necessity of evaluation in demonstrating the positive impact of programming and how it can be implemented. KID smART collects surveys from almost every program they operate (some third party projects discourage the formal collection of data by the organization) so there is always a stack of surveys sitting on the counter that need to be put into the system quickly and accurately.

It also became my responsibility to help interpret the data being collected for use in the Development department for grant reporting, in Programming for evaluating effectiveness of programs, and for other reports as necessary. The largest project to which I contributed involved compiling and analyzing Teaching Artists' Skill Sheets, which rate every student they teach on all goals in the discipline, social-emotional growth, and non-arts (curriculum) content. Each student is observed at three times during the semester and rated on a scale from 1-2, with 0.5 increments. I calculated numbers of students who demonstrated basic proficiency (a score of 1.5 and above), mastery (a score of 2.0), and the individual student growth over time. These numbers will be used in grant reporting and annual evaluation.

After several months of working with KID smART in the office, Elise asked me to fill an after-school Teaching Artist position until they found another qualified person. Aminisha and Elise helped me develop my lesson plans for the week I would be teaching kindergarteners through fourth graders at Eisenhower Elementary on the West

Bank. I designed my first Residency Plan based on introducing students to the basic elements of art, principles of design, and a variety of media and fun projects. I discovered that I was much better at teaching than I thought I would be, and I enjoyed working in the school as much as working in the office. With continued coaching on “scaffolding” my lesson plans, providing classroom management and discipline, and leading students to think more creatively and enjoy learning, I became an effective after-school art teacher. After classroom observations, KID smART hired me on a permanent basis for that semester, and again in the spring with the addition of another school residency. The residency was also non-curriculum-based, which meant that any data collected could not objectively be compared with data from the AIC program. Being a Teaching Artist also helped me to understand the positive impact that KID smART has on artists as well as teachers and students.

I planned my lessons based on the Louisiana Arts Standards and Benchmarks for Visual Arts, with the aid of Arts Coach Heather Muntzer, who helped me practice classroom management strategies, passing out materials, and how to reinforce correct techniques as well as encouraging imagination in my students. By connecting my lessons to learning outcomes in the areas defined by said benchmarks as Creative Expression, Aesthetic Perception, Historical or Cultural Perception, and Critical Analysis, I was able to supplement the visual arts instruction that most students did not receive on a regular basis, and some not at all. I introduced students to a variety of media, paired with learning in the principles of art and elements of design. For example, one of my first lessons paired learning about the color wheel, primary, secondary, and

complementary colors with introduction to basic watercolor techniques. Students also learned about warm versus cool colors, and how primary colors can be mixed to create secondaries. Assessment was performed by students identifying and mixing colors on their own.

It was illuminating to experience KID smART from the other side of the organization – as a Teaching Artist, I was able to see how their model worked in the schools. I observed that many of my students behaved better more consistently in class, treated each other with more respect, and were more excited about learning new things, especially after a year at Eisenhower Elementary. KID smART did not require me to conduct student evaluations or surveys, due to the residency being funded and administered through a partnership with Volunteers of America. However, I would have liked to demonstrate an improvement in arts learning and social/emotional growth, and wish I had put the proper permissions and forethought into place to at least gain a better insight into the effectiveness of my teaching practice and the impact of the programming on students.

I did learn a lot about the school system during my residencies. I encountered substandard building conditions, verbally abusive teachers, and overwhelmed children struggling to keep up with grade level expectations in an anxiety-ridden environment. However, I also experienced ‘joyful learning’ as well as joyful teaching. Providing arts education to children who have had little to no experience in drawing, painting, or modeling and seeing them grow their imagination and become more self-aware is

unforgettable. I was able to connect with one particular third grade student, who was very withdrawn and visibly uncomfortable at the beginning of my residency. She even refused to participate in our first class, and never volunteered to answer questions, give her opinion, or pass out materials. As the semester progressed, she gradually began to become more engaged in the classroom, watching me closely as I modeled a technique or described a work.

Our breakthrough moment came when she executed an extremely good self-portrait with charcoal, and I gave her honest and eager praise. I told her that it was the best work she'd done in class so far, and I could tell that she worked really hard, because it showed in her attention to shape and detail. She finally agreed to let me show her work to the class as a whole, who were also quick to admire her work. Since that day, she became more comfortable with me and her classmates, and even stayed late to help me clean up. The student and I had frequent conversations after most had been picked up by their parents; she told me that her mother worked two jobs, and so was almost always late to pick her up from school, but she didn't mind because she got to help me. We had several discussions in which I encouraged her to keep practicing drawing and other art forms we learned, so that she could go to art school if she wanted to. We also talked about various artistic careers and what it means to be an artist. I tried my best to instill in her the belief that she could be an artist, and I hope that she is still receiving some kind of arts instruction.

She would also frequently ask me to help her with homework, and especially on days when her mother couldn't pick her up until 6:00, we would work through her English and math assignments. I noticed that she had a startling paucity of vocabulary and struggled with reading comprehension. Even math problems were difficult for her, because she could not always understand the question. Although it has been suggested by proponents of 'teaching the whole child' that incorporating the arts into education as a way of engaging students who may not be as motivated to participate in language arts or mathematics, I had not witnessed this theory until my interaction with this student. She became noticeably more sociable, focused on learning, and generally more self-confident, and although the work I did in my residency with her cannot be said to be the cause of this new positivity, there did appear to me to be a correlation between positive arts experiences in schools and her improved outlook.

The most interesting part of experiencing the school system, whether through research projects or after-school classes, was observing the wide range in infrastructure, organization, extracurricular opportunities, and sense of culture or community among schools. At this time I had no idea how much the schools depended on their SPS scores for their district and state rankings, and how much this in turn affected their funding and retention of their charter. I was unaware of the rankings of the schools in which I was working, but I ranked them mentally according to my own system based on my experience, including the ease or difficulty of our communications, number of art teachers or art opportunities available, and the accessibility of the administration. I later learned that in many cases, the schools I had the hardest time communicating with

were the ones who had some of the lowest SPS scores, highest teacher turnover, or other indicators of a lower-performing school.

## Development

I also assisted Linda in the Development Department. My first assignment was preparing for KID smART's annual fundraiser, "Cocktails for KID smART." Held annually in October at a private home, this event serves as the major gifts fundraiser. Preparing for this event involved designing signage, conducting an alcohol inventory, making gift bags, and transporting materials from the office to the event location. The event was considered a great success, as it exceeded goals in fundraising and attendance.



## **Chapter 3: SWOT Analysis**

As a non-profit organization, it is imperative that all KID smART's programs and initiatives must further the mission of "engaging children through the arts in learning about themselves and the world in which they live." Strategic planning in 2008 resulted in specific goals that were agreed upon by staff, board, and other stakeholders to ensure that all activities would be rooted in the mission. I will evaluate the organization's success based on these goals as well as adherence to the mission itself.

## Strengths

### Emphasis on Excellence in Programming

One of the organization's greatest strengths is excellence in programs: the KID smART staff works with experts in their fields to determine the most up-to-date methods in teaching practice. The Harvard Graduate School of Education's Project Zero initiative has provided consulting, speakers for professional development sessions, and resources for furthering their education. By making sure all co-teaching lesson plans are tied to proficiency in art form, curriculum, development benchmarks, and state and federal mandates, KID smART's classroom activities represent a comprehensive approach to arts integration.

KID smART's reach by the numbers has been impressive, but without a qualitative component to analysis there can be no thorough evaluation. The organization sends results annually from surveys, interviews, and skill sheets to independent evaluator Debra L. Vaughn, who analyzes the data and provides a report. For the 2010-2011 year, Vaughn evaluated KID smART on their three stated goals: improve student learning in and through the arts, improve teacher effectiveness through arts integration, and develop a professional learning community among teaching artists, classroom teachers, and arts coaches to challenge and support them in teaching the whole child (see Appendix F).

Teachers reported observations of the real impact of arts integration on their students, in the areas of cognition (61% reported "some impact"; 34% reported

“tremendous impact”), student attitudes and dispositions (38% reported “some”; 59% reported “tremendous”), psychomotor skills and behaviors (59% reported “some; 31 reported “tremendous”), and participation and attendance (59% saw “some”, 33 % saw “tremendous). Younger students self-reported “new learning” in the areas of the arts (38%), academic (45%), social/emotional (47%), and miscellaneous (12%). Older students self-reported new learning in the same areas; 33% in the arts, 52% in academics, 10% in social/emotional areas, and 4% in miscellaneous information.<sup>13</sup>

93% of teachers reported that using KID smART’s arts integration methods have improved their teaching practice in areas as diverse as classroom management style, differentiating instruction to reach all students, and using creativity as a positive force for making other learning discoveries. In terms of developing a professional learning community, teacher respondents have indicated that they had a high level of satisfaction with the program, in addition to being introduced a wealth of local cultural resources (such as NOMA, New Orleans Ballet Association, and the Ogden Museum of Southern Art) and developing a core of like-minded teachers within their schools who support and help each other, providing moral support, aid in lesson planning, brainstorming other ways to integrate the arts into their classrooms, and recruiting additional teachers.

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<sup>13</sup> Vaughn, Debra L. KID smART 2011 Evaluation Report

## Investment in Staff

Program staff have a wealth of experience and education in their backgrounds as well. Programming Director Elise Gallinot has a BA in Anthropology, an MA in Arts Administration, was a Graduate Fellow at Harvard Graduate School of Education. Arts Integration Coach Aminisha Ferdinand has a BFA in Theater Performance as well as an MA in Educational Theater. Sean Glazebrook, Arts Coach, has a BFA in Theatre and History, is certified in Shakespearean Performance from the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts, and has completed the Kennedy Center's Artists as Educators program. Heather Muntzer, the other Arts Coach, has also completed the Artists as Educators program, and holds a BFA from California College for the Arts with a minor in Art Education. She is currently working towards her M.Ed. from Mills College.

Of the seventeen-member roster of Teaching Artists who work both in the classroom and in after-school programs, 82% hold undergraduate degrees in their field, 29% hold advanced degrees in education specifically (41% hold advanced degrees), and 100% have had experience working directly with students in their discipline. Data from similar organization in the New Orleans area for was unavailable for comparison.

KID smART views itself as a collective of learners as well as teachers. Arts integration practice is constantly changing, requiring regular attendance at conferences and institutes, and KID smART programming staff (including builds these events into their schedules. Regular evaluation of activities by a multifaceted approach ensures that

programming is achieving its goals and meeting the needs of the present and future participants.

## Leadership & Administration

Under the leadership of Echo Olander, the only Executive Director in the organization's thirteen-year history, KID smART has grown sustainably from a singular vision into a leader in arts integration. The organization itself functions in a very professional, organized, open, and friendly manner. Since the office is small, lines of communication are rarely obstructed; face to face meetings are easy to schedule and usually all departments are aware of major deadlines and any additional assistance required. This synchronization is important due to the small staff, time limitations, and wide range of organizational activities.

Systems of inventory keep track of teaching resources, art supplies, and audiovisual equipment, preventing waste and loss of valuable and costly items. A shared network ensures that all staff have access to needed information. Financial files, programming records, legal requirements, grants paperwork, evaluation, and other documents are organized according to fiscal year. Most files are kept outside the office due to space limitations, and every year the previous fiscal year's documents are moved to storage to make room for new paperwork, files, and surveys. Documents older than five years are discarded; those containing sensitive or potentially sensitive information are destroyed.

## 'Homegrown' in New Orleans

From its humble beginnings in one classroom on Saturdays, KID smART was designed and implemented to benefit the underserved children of New Orleans. The organization's mission does not specify a geographic area of operations, but the organization's founders and directors have long envisioned a public school system for the New Orleans community that teaches the whole child, nurturing growth in creative problem solving and critical thinking skills, interpersonal communication, and engagement in the world around them. Their vision also includes teachers who possess a wider range of skills and tools to understand and assess their students, who are open-minded in thinking about their pedagogy, and who are committed to fostering creativity in their students and making learning fun.

Making this learning and development relevant to both students and teachers involves giving context for the arts disciplines that are taught. KID smART's mission fundamentally uses the arts as a means of engaging children to gain knowledge about themselves and their world. Therefore, incorporating the world that surrounds them in reality is integral. Working music, visual arts, drama, storytelling, and other rich traditions of New Orleans into co-planned lessons or professional development sessions not only conveys vital information, but increases the recipient's resources to draw from when approaching real-life situations. Arts Coach Heather Muntzer wrote the *Know What It Means* unit plans, created to formalize some New Orleans-specific subject matter, such as food and architecture. Used by teachers and Teaching Artists to

supplement their arts integrated curriculum, the unit plans fill gaps in learning between the fine arts and core academics.

KID smART is also moving towards an emphasis on increasing the cultural capital of the New Orleans area. Building this capacity by supporting professional artists, increasing student access to the visual arts, and training educators in using the arts also results in people who are deeply attached to the community and are more likely to work towards long-term change and empowering others through education. Investing in the culture and people that make New Orleans such a diverse and vibrant city is an organizational strength that will only make the community stronger.



## Reach

The organization's impact in the 2010-2011 school year alone included direct contact with 2,658 students, co-teaching with 122 classroom teachers, and residencies in 12 public schools, resulting in 3,598 hours of instruction. The organization's impact was not limited to these classrooms, as 41 teachers participated in the AXIS program, 75 Jefferson Parish teachers, and 69 teachers from other parishes in Louisiana participated in two different arts integration summer institutes. Through after-school and community-based projects, KID smART reached an additional 870 students. In addition, KID smART employed fourteen teaching artists to work in year-round residencies and professional development sessions. These achievements represent KID smART's furthest reach to date.

## Website & Use of Technology

Staff makes excellent use of technology, employing Google Apps such as email, calendars, and docs. Teaching Artists upload residency plans, skill sheets, and observations into Dropbox, where the Arts Coaches also post templates for lessons, planning resources, and information about upcoming events. This helps ensure that everyone has around the clock access to the information they need, and no one can be a victim of missing emails or incompatible file types.

KID smART uses the managed email service Constant Contact for communicating with a list of almost 4,000 email contacts. The service allows this valuable information to be kept in a safe place, without becoming cumbersome to use. Fluid Surveys is the online survey software of choice for the organization, although the majority of surveys conducted are given in paper form and then entered online for easier compilation and analysis.

The most exciting use of technology is the use of the microblogging platform Tumblr to document classroom learning. Originally, Teaching Artists tried to capture photos while teaching, matching them up with goals and objectives a later time in a blog or social network format. With the creation of Tumblr, artists can create individual pages for each residency, updating them in real time with an image and a few lines of notes and explanation. Ultimately this has led to an increased level of documentation of specific activities as well as an increased awareness of KID smART's work. An example

can be found in the appendix, which contains a screenshot of Heather Muntzer's work in visual arts integration at Fischer Elementary (See Appendix G).

KID smART's website is a strength for the organization. It is a vibrant yet clean site that provides much information in an well-ordered way. Video clips feature participants in various programs, making a personal connection to the site's content and purpose. Photos of students engaged in various creative activities add more visual interest, while contact information for all staff members is prominently displayed.

## Weaknesses

### Marketing & Communications

Currently Linda Irwin, the Development Director and department of one, is also responsible for most marketing and communications material that goes out of the office. Her responsibilities in fund development often overlap with communications, so the organization is fortunate to employ someone who can handle both. Unfortunately, it means that Linda must spend time on design and copy for other communications that are not strictly related to development. All graphic design is expertly crafted but not produced in-house, meaning there is a lag time between communications that could be eliminated if someone on staff had graphic design experience. The same holds true for web design and content – even minor website changes must be outsourced. The merging of development and communications responsibilities also means that the responsibility to update social media is given to all staff members, causing posts to be inconsistent in voice and interval.

## Communicating the Value of Programs

Most of the difficulty in carrying out school reform is in convincing administrators and teachers to make a change, and that such change will result in improvement. The improvement that matters most to teachers and administrators in New Orleans public schools currently is standardized test scores (iLEAP, LEAP, and SPS Scores). This is the measure by which schools are graded, and federal funding can be reduced or a school charter can be revoked as a result of poor performance.

Making arts integration a priority in this environment is a challenge for the organization. Much evidence collected of KID smART's positive impact is anecdotal or categorized as non-essential or non-cognitive learning, which does little to make the case for schools making the change to arts-integrated classrooms and teacher commitments. Collecting data, refining evaluation outcomes, and connecting them to improvement on high-stakes tests is essential to securing school contracts in the short-term. In the long-term, it is easier to convince teachers and principals of the value of the arts in the classroom, as children excel in areas that are not evaluated by standardized tests, especially social and emotional growth and communication or interpersonal skills.

Tracking students over a longer period than a year is also essential for evaluating the impact of arts integration programs, and without multiyear commitments from schools, this is extremely difficult. In a climate where data-driven programming is becoming more prevalently funded, and teacher turnover is so high, KID smART ideally needs numbers that demonstrate the real value of their programming in LEAP scores and other assessments that local, state, and national organizations and agencies

prioritize, which is not the most likely outcome of data collection. Failing this demonstration of a correlation between participation in a music-based AIC residency and higher mathematics tests scores, for example, the organization could use different methods to make their programmatic offerings more attractive to potential stakeholders. Marketing KID smART's model as the approach best suited to training students for 21st century careers, including learning communication skills, creativity, and critical thinking ability could reach more progressive schools in a new way. Additionally, in an environment where familial choice is the ultimate deciding factors in school attendance, schools or charter organizations could market a KID smART presence as an indicator of school culture that embraces the arts as well as retention, teacher satisfaction, and commitment to the needs of the future workforce. The Model Schools Initiative, depending on the outcome, may be this data source that will be of the most value to the organization and to schools.

## Opportunities

### Model Schools Initiative

The Model Schools Initiative (MSI), for which KID smART received funding from Baptist Community Ministries in 2012 to implement over the next three years, is a golden opportunity for the organization to extensively document their positive impact. Model Schools (ARISE, Behrman, and Langston Hughes) enjoy arts integration across the curriculum in four grades, increased supply budgets, hours of instruction, strategic planning and professional development sessions for teachers. The MSI is designed to increase the capacity of teachers to practice arts integration on their own without a co-teaching artist in the classroom. KID smART will also gain access to a wealth of data by tracking individual students and their progress over three years. Tracking will include interviews with students, teachers, parents, and principals; self-checks for teachers; classroom observations; SPS scores; and iLEAP and LEAP test scores (after an extensive approval process). Using similar methodology as the original Catterall research, this longitudinal study will allow the organization to construct a narrative of the arc of students and teachers fully immersed in the program.

This is a wonderful opportunity for KID smART to make a splash with in-depth data combined with personal stories and experiences. Such a resource can be used to procure funding to bring more schools up to MSI status or provide different levels of service. The opportunity to showcase the real impact of their programming will probably come at a very opportune time; as the A+ Schools Program ramps up, KID smART will

need to demonstrate that their programming is the most effective, perhaps the most cost-effective, and the highest-quality.



## Local Resources

New Orleans has a rich variety of cultural institutions with which KID smART has already collaborated through the AXIS program. These institutions include New Orleans Museum of Art, the Ogden Museum of Southern Art, and the Contemporary Art Center. Such institutions offer space for PD sessions and in exchange share an overview of their educational offerings with the teachers. These collaborations have resulted in more awareness of museum educational opportunities and more students experiencing high-quality institutions.

There is a great opportunity to expand this partnership to include Teaching Artists, who will share the knowledge of AXIS teachers about how to incorporate field trips into the classroom. Partnerships with those arts organizations that do not have an institution for visiting and exploring but who do have educational programs, such as the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra or the New Orleans Ballet Association, would allow for even more diversity in arts offerings in the classroom.

## Reaching Out to New Donors

KID smART's annual fundraising initiatives meet or exceed targets that cover operating and programmatic costs, but are intended to land gifts from major private donors, corporations, and foundations, following conventional fund development wisdom and previous years of success. However, there is new literature suggesting that small donations are the key to empowering donors and funding both operational expenses and project-based initiatives. Tony Poderis, independent fundraising consultant and frequent contributor to resource sites, argues that "micro-giving", the practice of donating small increments of money from a single donor to a specific recipient, and "impulse giving", which consists of donors making gifts instantaneously after becoming aware of an issue, represent important new strategies of fundraising in the age of the internet.<sup>14</sup> Both of these concepts complement each other and are exemplified by the fundraising platform Kickstarter, which has resulted in thousands of projects, some less than charitable in nature, being fully funded by small donations. The notion of giving value in exchange for donations is also inherent in the Kickstarter model.

Recent examples that Poderis cites in the case for cultivating micro/impulse giving initiatives include text-to-give donations that made a tremendous impact on fundraising for organizations assisting those impacted by the Hurricane Katrina, the 2005 tsunami, and 2010 Haiti earthquake. The increased communication ability of the

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<sup>14</sup> Poderis, Tony. "Micro-Giving & Impulse Giving Online: How the Smallest of Gifts Combined with an Impulse to Give Can Yield Real Results." Accessed 22 Oct. 2012. [http://www.raise-funds.com/?p=1196&upm\\_export=print](http://www.raise-funds.com/?p=1196&upm_export=print)

average individual has increased so much with the greater accessibility of the internet through computers, phones, and other handheld devices, that impulse-donating online has become as easy as impulse-shopping. Poderis suggests that developing a successful micro-giving program involves:

- Identification of multiple, enticing, well-defined opportunities
- Creation of strong, succinct cases for support and calls to action
- Development of a selection of active online and email media through which to present cases for support and calls for action
- User-friendly online mechanisms for receiving micro gifts, tracking goal progress, and reporting the successful application of micro-gifts

In addition to receiving funding, Poderis notes that organizations enjoy added benefits of a micro-giving platform, including more frequent repeat small-time givers, who feel an affinity for the work being done, and therefore may donate at a larger amount in the future. A greater awareness of and investment in KID smART's philosophy and model from the community could raise the organization's profile, increasing its impact locally. Identifying future donors is also key to creating a sustainable position, and a micro-giving platform would be a cost-effective way to build awareness and raise funds simultaneously.

## Threats

### Sustainability

KID smART's real threat is the sustainability of its programming. Due to the similarity of their model to that of an organization that has been in operation since 1962 (Young Audiences), and one that is setting up operations for the 2013-2014 school year (A+ Schools), they are not in the best position. Young Audiences is a local affiliate of a national organization, meaning that its staffing, financial structure, and programming benefit from a larger pool of resources. A+ Schools is also an affiliate – the original program was piloted in North Carolina, and replicated in Oklahoma and Arkansas. Recently underwritten by the George Rodrigue Foundation, the program seeks to impact New Orleans public schools through arts integration as well.

KID smART's staff also worry about the dependence on school contracts to cover costs of programming, realizing that year-to-year budgeting is not necessarily a sustainable practice considering the frequent fluctuations of charter schools. Meanwhile, all staff members are working at full capacity. Each employee handles a variety of responsibilities, works long hours each day inside the schools and in the office, and tries not to fall behind. The organization has an enormous impact on education with only six full-time staff members, but concerns about effectiveness after a certain point must eventually be addressed before resources are extended any further.

## Continued Economic Recession & Competition in New Orleans

As KID smART seeks to increase grants received from foundations every year, their need may outpace the rate of giving. In recession times, corporate giving programs as well as state budgets are slashed, making the competition for remaining funding even more intense. In New Orleans, the fight for available funds is especially cutthroat, considering the number of organizations involved. According to the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center's August 2011 Report, *New Orleans Index at Six*, an examination of the city's landscape six years after Hurricane Katrina, "The number of relatively large arts and culture nonprofits in New Orleans has grown from 81 in 2004 to 98 in 2008 despite a smaller population to support this growth. With 29 such nonprofits per 100,000 residents, New Orleans outpaces the nation more than 2 to 1."<sup>15</sup>

With competition for public and private funding at an all-time high, and the need for improvements in so many areas even seven years after the storm, KID smART must position itself as the highest-quality organization with the deepest impact in the field of arts integration in order to stay relevant and stay in business. Drawing upon local resources, such as the St. Claude Main Street Association, which could connect the organization with a network of professional visual artists and artist-run spaces, could increase KID smART's stakeholder base and yield additional opportunities for collaboration, volunteers, and more.

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<sup>15</sup> *New Orleans Index At 6*, Greater New Orleans Community Data Center. P. 2

## **Chapter 4: Best Practices**

Although understood not to be technically legal requirements, but rather expectations for ethical and responsible behavior, best practices ensure that an organization adheres to its mission and provides transparency and accountability for the way it spends money and conducts its affairs as a non-profit, tax-exempt organization. Best practices are particularly important for an entity working in education, due to the responsibility for positive student outcomes and maximizing valuable resources, especially in this very competitive climate.

## Management & Governance

KID smART strives to be the most effective organization possible in their activities, above all maintaining a healthy and safe environment for staff and participants. Best practices in management include creating policies and procedures for financial transactions, conducting annual audits, strict budgeting, and conducting thorough background checks on all employees and independent contractors.

## Programming

For comparison with KID smART's practices in programming, CreativeLearning.org was an excellent resource, which serves as a clearinghouse for best practices and ideas from a variety of arts education. The site is the result of a collaborative effort between three organizations: Big Thought, a nonprofit based in Dallas whose mission has been to "make imagination a part of everyday learning" since 1987; The Wallace Foundation, a national organization "dedicated to supporting and sharing effective ideas and practices that expand learning and enrichment opportunities for children;" and WolfBrown, a consulting service for nonprofits and public agencies that aids in managing growth, restructuring, and planning.

Using Big Thought's model, which has earned multiple awards including the Americans for the Arts 2009 Arts in Education Award, and the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities Coming Up Taller Award in 2004, the partnership created a "Cycle of Quality Improvement" available to the public. This best practices cycle, instead of being a list of requirements for success, allows organizations to jump in at the point where they fit best based on their stage of growth. The cycle is broken down into four "entry points": Engage, Define, Assess, and Advance.<sup>16</sup>

Best practices in engagement include involving a diverse group, having clear expectations, and honoring people's time. Including people with different backgrounds, areas of expertise, and job titles is just as important as having predetermined topics of

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<sup>16</sup> "Cycle of Quality Improvement", Creatingquality.org. Accessed 22 Oct. 2012



conversations. Rewarding people for their time is respectful, even if the rewards are more abstract (knowledge, experience, networking opportunity) or concrete (convenient scheduling, providing meals or snacks, and providing feedback or information that is useful to participants).

The most effective way of creating quality programming, “Define”, again taken from Big Thought’s model of arts integration, consists of learning from others. Using the Institute for Learning’s *Principles of Learning*, National Standards for Arts Education, and the *Framework for 21st Century Learning* created by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills as resources, arts education and integration organizations should be able to pull information they need into create desired outcomes. Establishing outcomes is the second part of the defining process, which can then be evaluated. Big Thought offers their model of the six dimensions of quality teaching and learning as an example.<sup>17</sup>

“Assess” is the next logical step in the cycle, and consists of three parts: deciding what to observe, training people to observe, and then using observation data. Big Thought’s evaluation model consists primarily of classroom observations, in which student and teacher interactions are objectively documented every two minutes, called time-sampling. CreatingQuality.org allows downloads of observation guidelines, training, and examples.

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<sup>17</sup> “Cycle of Quality Improvement”, Creatingquality.org. Accessed 23 Oct. 2012

“Advance” follows Assess, which consists of Coach Instructors, using findings to strategize, and advocating for opportunities. Coach Instructors function as leaders in schools who serve as models and active supporters of the arts to improve areas that are not meeting goals or could be improved. Using findings to strategize is located at an exciting intersection, where assessment and improvement can meet with community engagement. This can allow for stakeholders to become even more active in the organization’s work, once they voice their opinion and can be a part of the future direction of programming.

KID smART’s practices for maximum effectiveness follow those of Big Thought. Staff took undertook extensive research into effective models of arts integration programs, funded by the Louisiana Division of the Arts, to design programming that was best-suited to local schools, according to input from experts and community leaders. What determines success is a broad spectrum of skills and goals defined by national and state arts benchmarks, Common Core Curriculum, and developmental standards. The organization evaluates almost constantly, storing up a bank of data to interpret impact and assess effectiveness. However, KID smART does not evaluate using objective observation by those who are generally unfamiliar with the process or the intended outcomes of the lessons, which could be an improvement in methodology. The data that will be generated by the MSI will ultimately inform KID smART’s strategy, which will hopefully result in increased funding for similar programs and the expansion of the organization’s scope.

Big Thought's model is a convenient way of thinking about strategic growth as a continuing cycle. By incorporating this method of thinking, continuing to refine their already excellent standards for learning, and incorporating more objective observers to evaluate lessons, KID smART can ensure that they are using the best and most effective practices in programming.

KID smART does not require its Teaching Artists to have education degrees or teaching certificates in order to work in the classroom (though several of them do), but KID smART clearly communicates expectations for pedagogy and evaluates all Teaching Artists by observation and planning supervision. During my research into best practices, I found a Professional Code for Art Educators, adopted by the members of the National Art Education Association (NAEA) in 1986, which includes standards that are very similar to the information and instruction provided by KID smART program staff, with a few exceptions:

1. Demonstrating honesty and integrity in all professional endeavors
2. Promoting art as a basic discipline in the education of all students
3. Advocating art instruction by certified art educators
4. Fostering art instruction that includes the study of aesthetics, art criticism, art history, and art production
5. Respecting individual artistic expressions and encourages feelings of self-worth and self- confidence
6. Safeguarding against exploitation of art programs and students
7. Making every effort to provide a safe, hazard-free learning environment
8. Continuing personal and professional development
9. Seeking ways to advance the profession of art education through membership and participation in local, state, and professional associations
10. Contributing actively to the support, planning and programs of the professional organizations

11. Distinguishing between personal and organizational views when representing the art education profession <sup>18</sup>

The NAEA and KID smART both seek to create safe, supportive environments for the creation of art, in which teachers are respectful and honest, dedicated to furthering their own learning, and guard against the exploitation of arts students and programs. However, the NAEA naturally supports the teaching of the arts by certified professionals over those uncertified, which is not KID smART's policy and procedure, but possibly could be an area of improvement.

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<sup>18</sup> "Professional Code for Arts Educators", National Art Educators Association. Accessed 23 October 2012. <http://www.arteducators.org/about-us/professional-code-for-art-educators>

## **Chapter 5: Recommendations**

Based on my experience working with KID smART for the, I will make recommendations in the areas of marketing and communications, development, and programming. Conversations and exchanges with staff, though informal, were extremely helpful in determining perceived challenges and possible directions.

## Marketing and Communications

I recommend that the organization hire a full-time Director of Communications. This employee could relieve Linda of the majority of her strictly communications duties, freeing her to work on fund development. Hiring a person who is experienced in graphic design, web design, and marketing would be beneficial to the organization's community profile, improve efficiency in the office, and increase overall capacity. All forms of communication, from letters to legislators to social media updates, could come through one person, thereby creating content that is cohesive and speaks with one voice. KID smART's model is complex, involving several different initiatives that require specific messages. Tailoring these messages to target audiences and raising awareness are part of the skill set of PR and marketing or communications professionals, and the organization should seek someone who will be able to use innovative technologies and methods to reach new donors and new participants for KID smART's programming. This staff person could also oversee advocacy initiatives and create relationships with city council and school board members, state legislators, and national networks of arts education and integration proponents.

## Development

Reaching new donors and funders is always the goal of a good development department, but actively reaching new sectors of any population is difficult.

Incorporating new technologies like micro-gifting and impulse-gifting platforms are relatively inexpensive ways to reach new donors. The benefit of using web-based technology is that the potential donor does not have to be in the same geographic location as the recipient – they just have to be touched by the mission and desire to help.

Producing an event for smaller donors who are most likely to be young or emerging professionals, and who are typically highly involved in their communities, could be another potential success for KID smART. Such an event could include unique foods and beverages, music or other entertainment, and a fun and engaging art-making activity for young adults to enjoy while at the same time promoting and celebrating a worthy cause. Ticket prices could go for as high as \$40, especially if there was an open bar. Donated food, beverages, music, and art supplies could help the event net more for the organization. Reaching this population segment would raise awareness of KID smART in the community, offer a fun alternative for young professionals to get involved with arts education and integration, and would represent more diversity in fund development.

## Programming

KID smART's programs are diverse already, but there is room for the organization to grow in its support of parents and families. Without parental or familial engagement in a student's education, students are less likely to retain proficiency or interest in subject matter. Part of the MIS addresses this issue, intending to provide a greater amount of feedback to parents as well as to conduct interviews with parents and families to determine the impact of programming that is observable at home. Engaging students, parents, teachers, and administrators equally in the process ensures a more sustainable future for the organization, ultimately with a deeper focus and impact.

Planning for change in external systems, such as the notoriously corrupt and dysfunctional Orleans Parish School Board, state-run Recovery School District, or the thirty-some organizations that run the charter schools in New Orleans is a challenging yet essential activity. Creating lasting relationships with organizations that are in flux, despite turnover or drastic reform, and even school closings, can be accomplished by spending a greater amount of time embedded in these systems and working with high-level leadership. Increasing capacity for the organization's advocacy could help accomplish such an initiative and help KID smART weather the storms of change in Orleans and other parishes.

I would also recommend creating lasting relationships with institutions of higher learning in the New Orleans community. Institutions with prestigious education



departments, such as the University of New Orleans and Tulane University, could provide resources in teaching practice, as well as evaluation and consultation services. Whether the universities and colleges confer degrees in education or not, students and faculty could become involved in the areas of development, communications, and administration, increasing their ties to the community and encouraging them to become agents of school reform as well.

KID smART could increase their commitment to the highest quality programming possible by expanding programming to create more support for Teaching Artist professional development. Creating support or facilitation for Teaching Artists to become certified arts educators, or pursue degrees in education could have a positive impact on the organization and set KID smART apart from the competition. Such support, if it was effective, could improve pedagogy, expand skill sets, facilitate co-planning with classroom teachers, and increase understanding of school culture and community for Teaching Artists.

## Community Position

Competition for resources and partners is a reality for all nonprofits, and KID smART is certainly not excluded from this challenge. When comparing similar organizations in New Orleans, for example Young Audiences, to KID smART, there are some interesting conclusions worth noting. Young Audiences has a bigger budget, which is bolstered by its national network and resources. The organization also offers arts-integrated residencies with an emphasis on co-teaching and professional development, and have been in business for over forty years. KID smART, with programming that is very similar to that of Young Audiences but definitely not interchangeable, has acknowledged their capacity and sustainability issues. Although KID smART is a more “homegrown” initiative and evolved organically to meet the needs of students in public schools specifically in New Orleans, Young Audiences is in a more sustainable position.

With the added competition of A+ Schools in Louisiana, both organizations face the threat of an organization that is “free” to schools, addresses the need of arts in schools at least superficially, and are championed by a New Orleans favorite son, George Rodrigue, through the support of his foundation. This is a real threat to both organizations – by cutting the “cost” of arts integration and education, A+ Schools might drive more intensive, established programs out of business altogether.

In order to overcome this threat, KID smART and Young Audiences could unite under one roof (literally or figuratively, or both) and become the go-to alternative and gold standard for arts integration in New Orleans and Louisiana both. In reality, integrating two organizations that function differently at their most basic level— Young Audiences as a local affiliate of a national organization, and KID smART, which has been operating autonomously for over a decade, would be incredibly challenging. Although the idea would probably not appeal to the governance or leadership of either organization, perhaps it is the collaboration that no one wants to begin that will do most for arts integration and school reform in the end.

Implementing these recommendations would take a renewed focus not only on diversification, but also raising the profile of the organization in the community and on a national level. Finding grant opportunities specifically for sustainably increasing organizational capacity and additional operating costs is more difficult than finding project-based opportunities. However, locating new sources of cash is a necessity unless the organization can move funds from the programming side of the budget to the administrative, which would involve scaling back programming. The fact that the organization will be working at absolute maximum capacity during the next few academic years is unlikely to allow for the addition of another staff member unless revenue increases substantially.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusions**

In a school system facing enormous challenges, including low student performance, high dropout rates, and high teacher turnover, such as the Orleans Parish School System, the Recovery School District, and the numerous charter schools and organizations that make up the public education landscape in New Orleans, there is an increased emphasis on standardized test scores in order to evaluate progress and performance. While there is some disagreement over whether this is an accurate method of testing comprehension, standardized tests in mathematics and English language arts are the yardstick by which all schools are measured.

Unfortunately, measuring school progress by these standards alone leaves little time for teaching and evaluating in other areas, such as science, social studies, social and emotional learning, communication, and the arts. Leaving these essential parts of education out of curriculum entirely can result in students who are disengaged from the classroom, frustrated by their lack of communication skills, and unable to use their creativity and critical thinking skills to solve problems on their own. KID smART seeks to rectify these issues by filling the gap between information required for standardized tests and learning they consider essential for creating students well-equipped for the future. While these learning areas are more difficult to evaluate quantitatively, KID smART has collected data that demonstrates increased student engagement, retention of learning in both the arts and academic curriculum, as well as social and emotional

areas as a result of their programming. It remains to be seen if KID smART's newest addition, the Model Schools Initiative, can result in data that correlates learning in these areas to learning in mathematics and language as well.

KID smART staff strives at every level, whether through board meetings, programming meetings, one-on-ones with classroom teachers and working directly with students, to better their practice and increase their impact. Working within the education system adds many layers of complexity and red tape to the organization's operations, and the goal of enacting change by a process impacting individual students and teachers is somewhat daunting. However, because of their ability to fundraise, create frameworks for operations, and formally evaluate the outcomes of programming, KID smART is better adapted than individual families or students to work with the school systems in New Orleans to increase student access to the arts, improve teacher pedagogy, and advocate for change.

Working with KID smART for the past year and a half has been a formative experience for me. I had worked in schools with students before on a limited basis, but being able to examine the strengths and weaknesses of the public education system from a more intensive insider's point of view was much more illuminating. I encountered a wide variety of students, teachers, administrators, and school cultures, some who were open to the idea of the arts as an essential part of learning, and many who were dismissive of the idea. My internship renewed my passion for stimulating creativity and imagination in young students and teaching them how to a variety of visual art media to

express themselves was extremely powerful. I learned many valuable skills from my time in the classroom, including how to plan lessons, manage an unruly classroom of five year-olds or fifteen year-olds, manage a small supplies budget, and work with teachers and administrators to get the things I needed and to communicate the message of KID smART.

From my time spent in the office, I learned how a supplemental program functions in relation to the vast bureaucracy that is the New Orleans school systems, and approaches an abstract concept like education reform through the integration of the arts and curriculum. I also gained knowledge in the areas of evaluation and data collection, and how critical it is to have formal procedures in place for determining scope, impact, and effectiveness of programming. Ultimately, it was my experience in both the teaching side and administration side that led me to apply for and eventually accept a position in the Education Department at the Ogden Museum of Art, as well as to continue my relationship with KID smART in an office support role.

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## Appendix I KID smART Model Diagram, 2012





Appendix II  
KID smART Board List, FY13

**KID smART Board List, Fiscal Year 2013**

**Chairman**

R. Campbell Hutchinson

**Secretary/Treasurer**

Kathy Hebert

**Board of Directors**

Celeste Coco-Ewing  
Robin Benton Crutcher  
Jill Dupré  
Sandra Feingerts  
Eneid Francis  
Scott P. Howard  
Michelle Lavigne Martinez  
Erika McConduit  
Ann Rabin  
Taifa St. Julien  
Troy Scroggins, Jr.  
Michael Stone  
Jackie Sullivan  
Paul J. Tines  
R. Patrick Vance

**Board Intern**

Matthew A. Mantle

**Advisory Council**

Vivian Cahn  
Evelyne Clinton  
Clancy DuBos  
Donald C. Massey  
Marie O'Neill  
Lee Reid  
Barbara Sands  
LaVerne Saulny  
Nia Terezakis  
Sarah Usdin

**Emeritus Members**

Campbell Hutchinson  
Allison Stewart

**Executive Director**

Echo Olander

Appendix III  
ICI Press Release, 2011



JAY DARDENNE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

**State of Louisiana**  
OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR  
DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, RECREATION & TOURISM  
OFFICE OF CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT  
DIVISION OF THE ARTS

PAM BREAU  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**March 24, 2011**

Jacques Berry  
Office of the Lieutenant Governor  
[jberry@crt.la.gov](mailto:jberry@crt.la.gov)  
225.342.8601

**ARTS INTEGRATION IN SCHOOLS TO REFORM EDUCATION**  
*PILOT PROGRAM THROUGHOUT THE STATE*

Lt. Governor Jay Dardenne is announcing Forest Heights Academy of Excellence in Baton Rouge as the first school to complete year 1 of the Imagination, Creativity and Innovation pilot program. ICI is an initiative being piloted in eight schools throughout Louisiana. Participating schools are receiving support to integrate the arts into curriculum including a two-week artist residency which places a professional theater artist in the classroom to demonstrate teaching opportunities by integrating theater with English language arts.

"The artist gave my children and me tools to use in the classroom—body, voice, imagination, concentration and collaboration," Cassidy Dickinson, third-grade teacher at Forest Heights Academy of Excellence, said. "She also helped them identify the components of an imaginative narrative and encouraged them to use adjectives."

In ICI schools the process of creating, performing and responding to art is used to increase student achievement, increase attendance by students and staff, lower rates of retention, raise self-esteem, decrease discipline problems, encourage greater parent participation and grow a sense of community.

Schools were selected through a competitive process. The following schools are participating in the ICI pilot program:

Alice N. Boucher World Languages Academy, Lafayette  
Martin Behrman Elementary School, New Orleans  
Charles M. Burke Elementary School, Duson  
Capitol Elementary School, Baton Rouge  
Claiborne Fundamental Elementary School, Shreveport  
Forest Heights Academy of Excellence, Baton Rouge  
Langston Hughes Academy, New Orleans  
Natchitoches Magnet School, Natchitoches

## Appendix IV Parents' Guide Data, 2011

[illegible]

Appendix V  
KID smART 2010-2011 Evaluation Report

KID smART 2010-11 Evaluation Report  
Executive Summary

**S**tudents attending KID smART classes describe their classes as joyful and engaging. Based on the responses on the student surveys, students also recognize that they are learning arts and academic content; more students reported learning new things in an academic content area than the previous year. Older students acknowledged that, in addition to the arts, they are learning more about themselves and others.



Student at Kate Middleton creates an elephant float while studying French.

It is clear from the teacher surveys, focus groups, and principal interviews that **teachers appreciate the opportunity to transform their classrooms through arts integration.**

Teachers believe that arts integration has improved their instruction and the level of student learning and engagement. Principals see positive changes in teacher strategies and increased levels of student engagement. Teachers recognize that they are more successful teaching to the multiple intelligences their students bring to learning.



Clancy students learn about weather through theater.

**Teachers see the impact of KID smART in the classroom.** They reported an increase in their children's confidence and involvement in class as well as their comfort with self expression. Many teachers added that their students seem to have improved self-esteem when acting or participating in activities. Several mentioned that students who have a difficult time in traditional class settings are often the most outgoing and participatory in arts integrated settings.

Teachers indicated a high level of satisfaction with the program. In addition to the interaction and collaboration with teaching artists, teachers appreciate the time they shared learning and interacting with each other. Teachers also expressed appreciation for the additional resources provided through cultural partners.

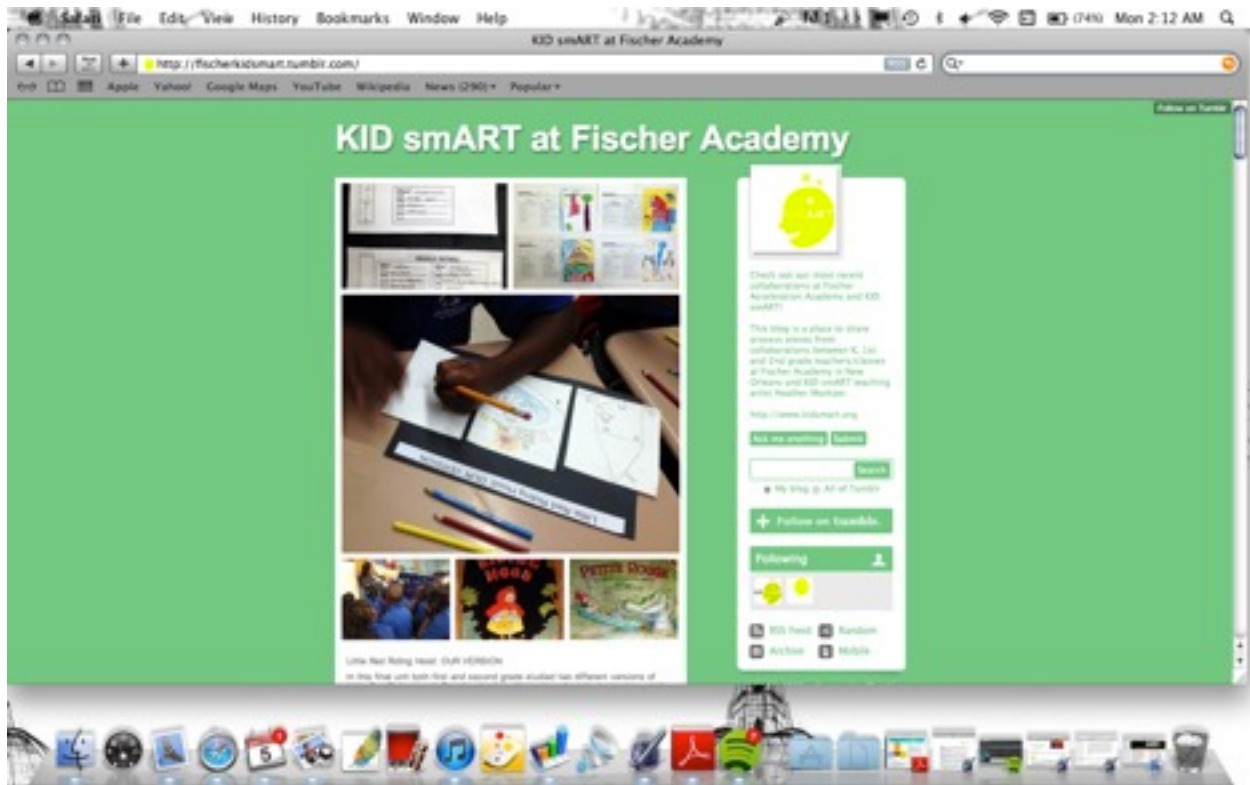


Education through Imagination.

- Debra L. Vaughan

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www.kidsmart.org

Appendix VI  
Screenshot from KID smART Program  
Fischer Elementary, 2012



### Vita

Suzanna Ritz was born in Greensboro, North Carolina in 1987. She obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Art History degree from Salem College in Winston-Salem, North Carolina in 2009. She became a member of the University of New Orleans Graduate Program in Arts Administration in 2010, serving as a graduate assistant at the UNO St. Claude Gallery.