# venicearts

**2013-14 ART MENTORING PROGRAM (VENICE) EXECUTIVE DATA SUMMARY**

## INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes data from student surveys administered at the end of the 23-week 2013-14 academic year to youth, ages 10 to18. It does not include data from Art Discovery (ages 7-9), our Open Studio, labs, or offsite programs. Note that this data is complimented by qualitative data developed during formal staff classroom observations, as well as by data from focus groups, held with youth as one part of our Strategic Plan process. The latter will be shared when our new Strategic Plan is posted.

Surveys were structured to evaluate students' perception of knowledge and skill acquisition at the beginning to advanced levels, according to Learning Objectives developed for each class that support the five Learning Pillars of Venice Arts' curriculum: Creativity, Storytelling, Artistic Knowledge, Technical Skills, and Media Literacy. Learning Objectives also align with the Los Angeles Unified School District's Media Arts Standards and the State of California's Visual and Performance Arts Content Standards. In addition, surveys evaluate for youth perception of creativity, sense of community, and mentoring at Venice Arts.

## METHODS

Using an online tool, participants completed a survey using a 5-point Likert Scale: 1-No learning, 2-A little bit, 3-Some, 4-Quite a bit, 5-A lot, or unknown/not sure. Data analyses were conducted by our Grants Manager.

In addition to providing data in aggregate, we also tabulate results by workshop and provide detailed data on the successes and challenges of each class to the teaching teams. This data guides educator and syllabi development.

While not included in this data summary, youth also provide direct feedback to their artist-mentors at the end of each of two workshop cycles, and staff perform formal classroom observations, meeting with teaching teams to share those observations and develop educator/mentor knowledge and skills. Additionally, staff compile data on awards, scholarships, and related recognitions received by youth each year. In 2014, there were 27 such recognitions.

## SAMPLE

Ninety youth completed surveys, representing 77.6% of unduplicated participants. Fifty-two percent (52%??) had participated at Venice Arts for 2 or more years.

## KEY FINDINGS

Data show that our programs continue to positively impact youths' knowledge and skill development across our five Learning Pillars, while also indicating areas for growth:

1. **Creativity:** 88% learned how to creatively express their ideas and feelings and 80% learned how to use writing to add meaning to their creative works.

2. **Storytelling:** 88% learned how to write and plan a story and 83% how to tell a story through photography, film, or other media.

3. **Artistic Knowledge:** 88% developed their artistic knowledge and visual literacy through presenting their work, viewing the work of others, and participating in critique; 82% increased their understanding of the elements of design, including composition, light, shadow, and style, as relevant to their medium; and 68% learned about historic and/or contemporary artists relevant to their projects and personal practice.

4. **Technical Skills:** 81% felt that they had mastered the majority of the technical skills required for their medium.

5. **Media Literacy:** 83% learned how media/photography & visual communication affect people and society.

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Additionally, in measures of youths' experience at Venice Arts, 92% of respondents indicated that they felt supported and respected by their artist-mentors.

As can be seen in Table A, below, which compares data from 2012-13 to data from 2013-14, in some areas there has been a decrease in youths' perceptions of learning or skill development that is quite surprising—for example, learning how to creatively express their ideas and feelings, or learning how to write and plan a story. In other areas, such as using writing to add meaning to creative works, there was no change. While in technical skill development and media literacy there was significant, positive change. We believe that improvements in the latter are directly related to a concerted staff effort to: (a) improve training for artists on how to empahsizing content and creativity, while more effectively building technical skills and, related, by the development of a "Badge" program—with the Office of the Mayor of Los Angeles, supported by the MacArthur Foundation and Mozilla—that now requires youth to master cameras in manual mode and earn a Manual Masters bade, before graduating to the next level; and, (b) assure that media literacy is a clear component of every class syllabus.
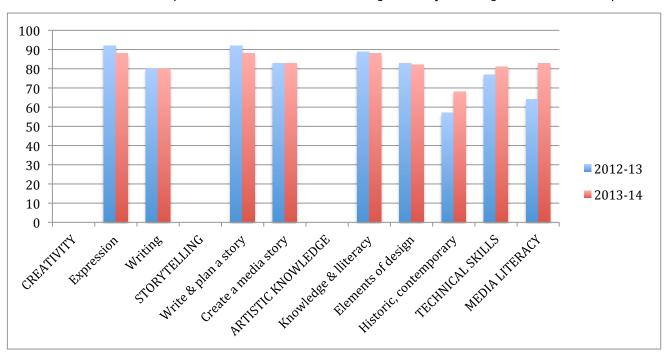
**Table A**: Year-to-Year Comparison (2012-13 to 2013-14) Organized by Learning Pillar (shown in caps).



**Artist Development Goals**

As an outcome of the 2012-13 assessment, we identified a number of goals related to the development of our curriculum, teaching artists, and artist-mentors which, by implication, would positively impact the creativity and learning of our youth participants. These goals, progress toward their achievment, and any additional activities planned, are outlined below.

1.  Improve skills in syllabus development, including identifying realistic and age-appropriate learning objectives and creating sequenced lessons that support project-based learning.

The development and implementation of Digital Badges across all levels of the AMP has served to codify and standardize technical, aesthetic, and conceptual skills that students learn through workshop participation and demonstrate in their projects. With these itemized skill outcomes in mind, Teaching Artists have improved their syllabi and lesson plans in closer alignment with Venice Arts' expectations and mission. Increased 1:1 support in syllabus development has also resulted in stronger, clearer, and logically sequenced lessons.

2. Improve, and fully integrate, a regular process of critique—of youths' works, as well as historic and contemporary works—into every classroom.

We believe that critique is core to building visual literacy, youths' facility with media-related langauge, arts knowledge, and a personal sense of aesthetics. While we have always emphasized the key role that regular critique plays in the classroom, we felt that our Lead Artists needed to improve their skills at integrating critique, as regular part of their classroom process, in an interactive and engaging way.

We were able to augment training in this area with classroom observations and 1:1 meetings noted, above. As an outcome, we can report report improvements in artists' abilities to integrate regular, interactive critique into their classrooms—in every medium and for every age—as well as the regular viewing and discussion of historic and contemporary works. We intend to continue to development in these areas, and hope to see even greater improvements in 2014-15.

3. Further support Lead Artists' ability to manage their classrooms, including creating "community" in the class and fostering child-centered learning.

Data from direct classroom observations, and discussions with artist-mentors, indicate that Lead Artists are improving in this area. As example, they are more actively integrating community building activities with arts learning, and all are using team building exercises in their first few classes. Most also meet before and after classes with their artist-mentors to debrief and plan.

We are hoping to improve Lead Aritsts' abilities to structure their classrooms in such a way as to better accommodate students at varying levels (common in an out-of-school-day arts program). We have reviewed a number of ways in which they might structure their classes to maximize individual attention—for example, assigning one artist-mentor to work with a group of three children with similar needs and interests.

4. Further support Lead Artists' ability to work effectively with their Artist-Mentors, including assuring that Artist-Mentors are fully engaged in capacities appropriate to their interests and abilities.

We integrated a regular discussion of the importance of working as a team, and strategies for artist team building, into our faculty orientation. We introduced monthly faculty check-in meetings and engaged both Lead Artists and Artist-Mentors in discussions about class strengths and weaknesses, including a discussion of their assessment of their team. We also check-in regularly, on a 1:1 basis, with our Lead Artists (at least monthly) to offer support and suggests ways in which to better lead and engage artist-mentors in the class.