

Faculty Spotlight

UWO
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
OSHKOSH



Dr. Li-Hsuan Hsu, Associate Professor, Art Education

Could you tell us about your research interests?

My research interest focuses on the intersection of arts and leadership. Leadership has not been a widely studied topic in the field of art education, which inspires me to discover the potential and impact of leadership in and through the art. Art provides pathways for individuals to discover their authentic selves; therefore, as an art educator, I am passionate about conceptualizing how these self-discoveries can lead to the development of individuals' leadership qualities and transformational growth.

What research projects are you currently working on? What would you like your next project to be?

I am the Principal Investigator (PI) of ArtsCore, a partnership between the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh (UWO), the Paine Art Center and Gardens, and regional public school districts, including Oshkosh and Appleton Areas School District. This partnership is designed to support pre-service teachers at UWO and early career teachers in Oshkosh and Appleton Areas School District to enhance their confidence, competence, and resiliency in and through the art. I am currently working with our leadership team to collect both qualitative and quantitative data to discover: 1) What are key factors to maximizing confidence and competence in teaching in and through the arts? and 2) How does ArtsCore's programmatic design and cross-organizational leadership increase teacher retention at the K-12 level? Ultimately, this research project will synthesize strategies for creating arts-integrated professional development programs, discover successful factors for cross-organizational leadership, and important factors that contribute to teacher retention. This external funded grant will conclude in 2025; therefore, the next item on my research agenda is to work collectively with ArtsCore's leadership teams and all partners to develop a data-driven summative report to contextualize the impact of our 10-year grant activities.

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What challenges have you faced in your career to date? What have you learned from those experiences?

The nature of ArtsCore's grant demands collaboration and partnership across organizations. As the PI, taking the lead to shape strategic planning collectively with leaders with different positions from various organizations is not an easy task. ArtsCore's programs serve a wide range of participants from high school students, pre-service teachers, K-12 early career and experienced teachers across content areas, and K-12 instructional coaches. Offering quality programs aligned with visions from all organizations requires interconnected network, creative thinking, and openness to constantly look for better solutions. Those challenging experiences have allowed me to develop skills to develop and evaluate art education programs at both micro and macro levels. More importantly, they are the key elements contributing to my leadership skills over the course of time. The effective interconnected leadership network across organizations also allows me to expand the possibilities we can offer for teachers in our region.

Can you share your experiences applying for and receiving extramural funding?

UW Oshkosh is awarded ArtsCore grant by Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies. To apply for a renewal for a new phase, which is about 2-3 years, we are expected to submit full application to lay out project outcomes, objectives, programmatic strategies, and budget plans. I have applied for two Department of Education federal grants and one for National Endowments for the Art. Although they were not funded, developing grant proposals has been a great learning experience and the feedback received from reviewers helped me identify areas for improvement. I consider the grant writing as one of my most valuable experiences as an Assistant Professor at UWO.

What advice would you give other UW Oshkosh faculty applying for grants?

Identifying collaborators in the application process is valuable. Both Department of Education grants I applied to require an extensive amount of information as the funding was over a million dollars for a 4-year project. In the writing process, I have reached out to collaborators both at UWO and other institutions to brainstorm, to write, and to review together. Collaborations inspire great ideas and I believe it forms potentials for future research. Additionally, utilizing support from the Office of Sponsored Program has been extremely helpful to identify funding opportunities, review RFPs, and finalize submissions.