

Arts Discipline Examples

MUSIC

CONTEXT

A teaching artist is preparing a three-hour professional development experience for classroom teachers based on creating original lyrics to songs. The workshop will be followed by a songwriting residency spread throughout the semester. He intends to guide the classroom teachers through the process so that they will be familiar with what will happen in their classrooms, with the eventual goal of having teachers use the strategy independently with their students. The professional development workshop is a means of introducing his work, providing training, and learning more about the school environment he will be working in. Building relationships with teachers is critical to success. He asks a number of questions with those purposes in mind. He discusses these questions with the coordinating staff during initial planning meetings and with teachers before the workshop begins.

1. *What are the demographics of the school? (Grade levels, languages spoken, special education and inclusion practices.)*
2. *Which staff will be part of the residency? (Educational aides, resource teaches, and arts specialists all might participate.)*
3. *What has the school done for arts and music experiences in the past? What is their experience with teaching artists? What have they found helpful in successful residencies or artistic experiences in the past?*
4. *What do teachers know about their students' abilities and experience with music? The teaching artist doesn't expect teachers to provide an accurate assessment of students' musical abilities or knowledge, but knowing what teachers think is important.*
5. *In particular, do students sing regularly in classrooms, or only in music class? If there is little tradition or occurrence of singing in class, lyric writing will be more difficult. The teaching artist will need to spend more time on how to sing successfully with children and less on the creative and arts integration aspects of the project.*

ESTABLISHING PURPOSE

A teaching artist leads a two-hour PD experience on connecting arithmetic patterns and multiplication processes with music and movement. Students will learn to create choreography that demonstrates their understanding of concepts through musical and kinesthetic modalities. The PD experience gives teachers a preview of an upcoming ten-day residency and allows teacher to explore tools and strategies that they can learn and implement independently. The teaching artist outlines the purpose of the PD experience and the underlying rationale for the approach.

1. Patterns are the building blocks of mathematics.
2. We hear patterns in music, we feel patterns in dance.
3. We can make connections between music, dance, and math.

4. We can demonstrate our understanding by building choreography that illuminates the patterns in math and the correlating patterns in music.

The rationale for the workshop includes the following.

1. The approach teaches what in math is called *generalized learning*, representing mathematical thinking in multiple areas. This involves higher order thinking skills
2. The approach encourages deep engagement for children.
3. The approach involves students in creativity.

These rationales and purposes are referred to throughout the workshop and reinforced in the course of learning activities and in final reflections. In particular, the argument for music and movement in this area is carefully built because it's not an obvious connection for classroom teachers. The success of the workshop will depend on classroom teachers grasping the importance and efficacy of the approach.

LEARNING TARGETS

In preparation for an 8-week residency integrating music with reading comprehension, classroom teachers learn the musical elements used in a “sound story” to represent their comprehension of a text. The teachers’ learning targets mimic the targets their students will be aiming for in the classroom. The teaching artist includes learning targets for the art form as well as for the area of connected curriculum (reading comprehension strategies, such as inference, sensory details, and synthesis.) Only the art form learning targets are included here.

Enduring Understanding: Sound has color.

Essential Questions: How can sound demonstrate our understanding of text and story?

Objectives: Teachers will...

- KNOW sound has different qualities, and that these qualities have names.
- KNOW that bodies can make sound through voice and percussion.
- KNOW developmental norms for children and learning in music.
- BE ABLE TO use their voices and bodies to create a variety of sounds and rhythms.
- BE ABLE TO give feedback to young performers about the expressive qualities of their soundscapes.
- APPRECIATE connections between creating a sound story and students’ comprehension of text.
- APPRECIATE aspects of the creative process: collaboration, imagination, revision, performance.

ARTS CONTENT FOCUS

A teaching artist leads a two-hour PD experience in preparation for a four-week residency on making musical instruments from recycled materials. The residency consists of three major components:

1. making the instruments and the science related to their construction.
2. creating a musical composition with the instruments that tells a story.
3. performing the composition.

The teaching artist leads classroom teachers through an abbreviated process that mirrors the work that students will engage in. In order for teachers and students to successfully complete the third component, performing their work, they will need to know the following art content and terms.

Signal – Tells when to start, stop or change the music

Steady Beat - Regular pulse found in most music

Dynamics- How loud or quiet sounds are

Tempo - The speed of the music

Ostinato - A repeated rhythm pattern

Polyrhythm – More than one rhythm played at the same time

Ensemble - A group of players or singers

Melody - A line of single notes that goes up, down or stays the same

Unison - At the same time, together

Pitch - How high or low a note sounds

EXPERIENCE

In a 1-hour workshop on the topic of writing verses for 12-bar blues, the teaching artist leads classroom teachers in composing an original verse using the AAB structure. The teaching artist first demonstrates a classic blues verse using B.B. King's "Every Day I Have the Blues." Next, the teaching artist instructs the classroom teachers on the structure present in the exemplar (AAB). The teaching artist also explores the central elements of lyric writing, including meaning, rhythm, and rhyme. Classroom teachers work in small groups to write an original verse, which follows the rhyme pattern and fits the rhythm of the music. Teachers rehearse their verses and each group performs for the whole group with accompaniment.

FACILITATION

In a collaborative residency where a teaching artist and classroom teacher are co-teaching the students, the classroom teacher facilitates a singing games activity she has learned during an earlier PD experience with the teaching artist. In previous weeks, the teacher has observed the teaching artist leading similar model lessons. The teaching artist now observes the teacher's work. The residency includes meeting time so that the teaching artist may confer with the classroom teacher about successes or challenges with the strategies. Each conversation is based on what the teaching artist has observed, but, more importantly, on the classroom teacher's reflection on their own

experience. The teacher may discuss their own confidence level, unexpected reactions from the children, the sequence of the activity, the creative contributions from students, or any number of other reactions to their own leadership. It's important that these sessions are not seen as negative or as critique designed to focus on what didn't work. Instead, the discussions focus on the teacher's experience. These reflective conversations will guide the teaching artist in choosing which aspects of facilitation to emphasize during each successive model lesson. The intended result is a residency that builds a high level of teacher confidence and ability, leading to long-term, successful implementation of the strategies by the classroom teacher.

REFLECTION

In a 3-hour PD experience introducing the use of Boomwhackers (tuned plastic tubes), each classroom teacher conducts a group of peers in a rhythm circle. Following their experience conducting, they engage in small group discussions to reflect on their experience with leading the activity. Some of these reflections are subsequently shared in the large group. After conducting with the instruments, teachers use the approach to explore arithmetic concepts, including fractions and percentage. Some of the reflection prompts are repeated in regard to a second activity, and teachers discuss and share in a similar fashion.

The small groups respond to some of these prompts:

- What did you find easy about conducting the group?
- What did you find challenging?
- What might you try differently next time? Why might that improve the outcome?
- How would you need to adapt this activity for the students you work with? For language learners or special education students?
- How will you assess student's progress and learning?
- What additional practice do you need to feel confident conducting the ensemble?
- What is the benefit of this approach?

ASSESSMENT

In a full-day PD experience a teaching artist leads classroom teachers through the process of creating original verses to a blues song about the American Revolutionary War. Teachers discuss their knowledge of the subject, which is augmented by a short handout about the history of the conflict. The teaching artist also identifies and explores the central elements of lyric writing: rhythm, rhyme, meaning, and repetition. Teachers then work in small groups to create the original verses. They rehearse and perform their verses for each other.

At the completion of the verse sharing, the teaching artist uses a rubric for teachers to assess their work. The rubric includes assessment in the art form, collaboration, and the curricular area. This rubric can be used with or adapted for students later.

Classroom teachers discuss their own work within the context of the rubric and then talk about how the rubric might be employed with students.

PLANNING

At the end of a weeklong music summer institute, a teaching artist guides participants through lesson planning. The goal is for participants to be prepared to implement strategies with their students. The teaching artist uses a backwards design process by beginning with the end in mind and then progressing through the steps necessary to get there.

1. The teaching artist first asks classroom teachers to articulate two learning targets (or standards), one in music and one in math.
2. The teaching artist also guides teachers to create an essential question to deepen the learning target.
3. Once all of the classroom teachers have accomplished that step, the teaching artist asks them to describe the assessment(s) that they plan to use to know how well students are reaching their goal.
4. After the classroom teachers have described their assessment(s), the teaching artist asks them to scaffold a series of 2-3 strategies they learned during the institute to obtain the learning objective.

Throughout the planning process the teaching artist may ask teachers to discuss their ideas with each other in pairs or small groups and may also stop for brief large group discussions for teachers to share their steps. This allows the teaching artist to assess teachers' progress, to provide feedback or reflection, and for teachers to learn from each other.

Once classroom teachers have created a plan to implement what they have learned, they may share in small or large groups what their first steps will be or what their timeline is, to encourage a specific commitment to action.

EVALUATION

At the completion of a 1-hour PD experience intended to prepare classroom teachers for a Music and Math residency, the teaching artist requests feedback using a "plus/delta" chart. A "plus/delta" chart is a simple tool to solicit a wide range of feedback from the classroom teachers. A chart with a line drawn down the middle has two categories: Plus (what worked?) and Delta (what could be improved?). The teaching artist offers some areas that would be useful to address such as:

1. Pace of the workshop
2. Handout quality
3. Use of technology
4. Thoroughness of instruction in strategies.
5. Sequence of learning activities.
6. Relevance to standards

Any other thoughts are also welcome.

Participants in the PD experience take a few minutes to write their feedback onto post-it notes and then place the post-its onto the larger chart. Afterward, the teaching artist organizes and reflects on the feedback and considers how to adjust design and instruction for the next workshop in a process of continual improvement.