



IMPLEMENT: Assessment

Addressing assessment in a PD experience supports classroom teachers in their planning, instruction and assessment because all of these components of teaching are connected in a cyclical relationship.

DEFINITION: What is Assessment in an arts integration PD experience?

Educators use assessment as evidence of students learning. In the arts, assessment is often an articulation of the “qualities of quality” (Seidel, Tishman, Winner, Hetland & Palmer, 2009). A teaching artist helps classroom teachers recognize excellence in the arts through aesthetic criteria. The purpose of formative assessment is assessment for learning, in other words, classroom teachers find out how their students are doing with the targeted knowledge, skills, and dispositions (see Learning Targets) in order to provide immediate feedback, coaching, and correction (see Facilitation). Formative assessment need not be scored or graded. Rather, the focus is on practicing the new skill or applying the new knowledge (Stiggins, Arter, Chappuis & Chappuis, 2009). In the arts, formative learning activities might include games, risks, trials, errors, and revisions. In the performing arts, the most common form of formative assessment is rehearsal; performers work through a piece of music, a dramatic scene or a dance, in order to discover what still needs to be done to increase the quality of artistic expression. Formative assessment is part and parcel of instruction – one cannot occur without the other.

CHECKLIST REVIEW

- ✓ How will you introduce and guide participants to understand student achievement in and through the art form?
- ✓ What will classroom teachers do to practice assessing student artwork?
- ✓ What will classroom teachers do to practice designing assessment tools?

The purpose of summative assessment is assessment of learning. At the culmination of an arts integrated unit, students often share a final composition that incorporates a range of new knowledge, skills, and dispositions developed over time. Students might frame and hang their paintings in a classroom gallery, or the classroom might transform into a stage as small groups perform dance compositions for an audience of their peers. These final products and performances can be assessed to determine how well students met the target learning goals of the instruction, or how well students have met the standards (Taylor, 2009). In the arts, we also celebrate these accomplishments through performance or exhibition.

Peer-assessment and self-assessment are also useful as teaching and learning tools. When peers assess, they have an opportunity to apply the language of the arts by giving feedback to others. Social constructivist theory (Vygotsky, 1978) supports peer-assessment as students observe and apply skills they learn from each other. In self-assessment, individuals or groups must reflect on their own work to identify strengths and areas that need improvement. In both peer-assessment and self-assessment, the educator provides the language and structure, but allows students to develop their own ideas about how to strive for quality.

PURPOSE: Why is Assessment important to an arts integration PD experience?

Understanding how to and what to assess in the arts is often a concern for classroom teachers. They may be well versed on how to assess student learning in math, reading, and writing, especially when there is a tangible product with criteria that can be easily measured. In the arts, however, some classroom teachers struggle to collect meaningful evidence and find artistic, creative, or aesthetic expression quite difficult to measure (Chase & Ferguson, 2014). Classroom teachers are often tempted to acknowledge and reward students for following directions, or for participating during arts integrated lessons, but assessments such as these do not inform the quality of the student artwork or depth of understanding. What's more, classroom teachers are often learning the language of the arts themselves (See Arts Content), so it can be a challenge for them to use that language to give feedback to students in the moment.

IN PRACTICE: How might Assessment be applied to an arts integration PD experience?

Looking at student work is a powerful way for classroom teachers to begin assessment (See Experience). For example, with a set of drawings from second grade students, classroom teachers might start by simply describing the qualities of each, move on to ranking the qualities, and then finally discuss feedback or additional instruction each student might need to continue growth. Classroom teachers might look at video of students engaged in the drama strategy Snapshot and focus on one individual student to look at specific criteria: use of space, emotional expression, and full body freeze. The teaching artist could also provide classroom teachers with a rubric for the specific arts strategy they learned during a professional development experience and ask them to return to their classrooms to practice applying that rubric to student performances. Looking at student work helps to establish classroom teachers' expectations for what students can really do in an art form, but also helps them apply the elements of art as they begin to coach students for excellence.

Simulations that require in-the-moment feedback are another way to support classroom teachers' assessment skills during the PD experience (see Facilitation). For example, a classroom teacher might provide a creative movement prompt and describe what her learners are doing with the element of "body" as they move through space: "I see arms that are stretching." The classroom teacher then provides a "freeze" cue and prompts a specific revision: "I'd like to see a larger variety of body parts and shapes. Try adding shoulders and elbows." The classroom teacher might then briefly model the creative use of shoulders and elbows before prompting her students to move again. These formative assessments can be more difficult than classroom teachers imagine, especially when they require quick determination of what is missing and what needs to be added. Simulated verbal coaching such as this supports classroom teachers as they develop both facilitation and assessment skills.

Written reflection and discussion are also valuable for assessing students' understanding (See Reflection). Sometimes classroom teachers want to know what their students enjoyed about their learning experiences ("Did you have fun?") but open-ended questions that provoke explanation are more apt to provide information for assessment. A teaching artist might support classroom teachers by providing them a list of art-specific questions related to the learning targets of the professional development experience. For example:

- How did you use your body to demonstrate the conflict of the story?
- What is one new technique you used with your pastels, and how did that help you create the texture you wanted?
- Which of the B.E.S.T. elements do you use with the most variety, and which one do you want to use with more variety?

- Explain how your rhythm reflects your character.

Capturing evidence of student learning can be challenging, especially in the performing arts, and the teaching artist can support classroom teachers by providing them with ways to that might be most appropriate for the art form. For example, classroom teachers can record short audio clips with a smart phone or tablet to be played back for students who are learning rhythm patterns. For students making tableaux, a classroom teacher might take photographs of the students' images, print them out, and ask students to write a description or explanation in a caption. Technology can be a useful tool for assessment, and providing classroom teachers with examples, or opportunities to use the technology can help them build comfort about using it in their own classrooms.

Multiple forms of assessment support multiple learning targets. In arts integration, classroom teachers often want to capture evidence of student learning in both the art form and in other content area(s). This can be challenging to accomplish with a single assessment task, so the teaching artist might encourage combining multiple forms of assessment through a "Say-Do-Write" framework (see Resources). Classroom teachers can learn what students are thinking from instructional conversations, collecting evidence of what their students say. When classroom teachers examine a performance assessment through which students apply what they have learned, teachers come to see what their students can do. Finally, evidence that students write may get to the core of new understandings they are constructing. Combined, these three types of evidence support assessment of multiple learning targets. A teaching artist can provide this structure, along with examples of each type, to support authentic assessment by the classroom teachers.

Arts Discipline Examples

DANCE

In a 3-hour PD workshop based on making dances from history, the teaching artist addresses assessment toward the end of the workshop. After creating their own Shape-Move-Shape compositions, classroom teachers watch a 1-minute video of 5th grade students engaged in the same strategy. The teaching artist plays the video three times with the following prompts:

1. Watch the video. Look at the class as a whole but look for one student whose performance attracts or interests you. (Discuss initial reactions with a partner.)
2. Watch again, this time with careful attention to the student you have selected. Describe this student's movement in terms of two criteria: body and space. Which body parts are they moving? What kinds of shapes are they making? How do they use levels and pathways? (Discuss with a partner.)
3. Watch the same student once more. This time, consider what additional instruction, prompting, or coaching might support this student's growth. (Discuss with a partner.)

DRAMA

As part of a multi-session PD course, participating classroom teachers explore literature through still image strategies (Snapshot, Tableau) and then practice facilitating the strategies. On the second day of the course, the classroom teachers help develop a rubric by describing, in writing, what students look like and how they behave when creating still images. Co-constructing the rubric helps classroom teachers clearly visualize, in detail, how to guide quality with the art form.

MUSIC

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.

VISUAL ARTS

Teachers in a three-day PD course focused on Micronesia explore Palauan folktales and the traditional, wooden storyboards that depict these tales. They create their own versions of storyboards in a printmaking activity. They then look at examples of storyboards students created as a way of visualizing the main events of a folktale that was read aloud in class. The teachers discuss these samples of student work in small groups and assess them based on the following criteria:

- How did the student incorporate traditional storyboard design motifs?
- How does the student artwork reflect key events from the story?
- What creative choices are evident in the artwork?

Video Examples

Online only