



## IMPLEMENT: Experience

If we want classroom teachers to engage deeply with arts integration as learners, the PD experiences we design must intrigue them, challenge them and foster their intellectual and artistic growth as adult learners.

### DEFINITION: What is Experience in an arts integration PD experience?

A central premise of this framework is that professional development is most effective when it includes opportunities for participants to learn through experience. These experiences give participants an active path to the learning targets (See Learning Targets), generate complex and enduring understandings, and provide the raw material for reflection (See Reflection) and application of new ideas (See Planning). What types of experience are essential for inspiring and empowering professional development? In *Experience and Education* (1938), John Dewey writes that an experience has the most potential to foster future learning when it “arouses curiosity, strengthens initiative, and sets up desires and purposes that are sufficiently intense to carry a person over dead places in the future.” He elaborates, “every experience is a moving force. Its value can be judged only on the ground of what it moves toward and into” (p. 14).

#### CHECKLIST REVIEW

- ✓ What types of experiences will provide teachers with personal insight into arts integration?
- ✓ What experiences will foster participants’ confidence in art making?
- ✓ What kinds of experiences will serve as adaptable models upon which teachers can elaborate in their own classrooms?

Each of Dewey’s descriptors of constructive experiences can be further expanded:

Experiences arouse curiosity when . . .

- the content being explored is open-ended, surprising, mysterious, ambiguous or controversial.
- they involve primary sources or real-world encounters.

Experiences strengthen initiative when they . . .

- require active investigation and response.
- balance broader context with opportunities to build depth of understanding.
- incorporate movement and multisensory learning.
- offer opportunities for individual choice, interests, creativity and self-expression.
- build on one another and result in a growing sense of understanding.
- contain authentic connections between the art and integrated-curriculum content.
- provide sufficient scaffolding for participants to strengthen their sense of competency.

Experiences set up desires and purposes when they . . .

- are relevant to the lives of the participants
- are place based, topical, and responsive to the needs and expectations that teachers experience in their classrooms.

- are followed by opportunities to reflect and plan for implementation and resources to extend the learning.

There are three main categories of experience that are essential components of arts-integrated professional development and that we will focus on in this section:

- Experience as learners in arts-integrated content
- Experience making art and/or responding to art
- Experience observing arts-integrated classrooms in action, and assessing examples of student work from arts-integrated learning

### **PURPOSE: Why is Experience important to an arts integration PD experience?**

The depth and effectiveness of our teaching is closely tied to our own experience and self-awareness as learners. Incorporating powerful learning experiences, and the chance to reflect (See Reflection) on those experiences, into professional development helps teachers to envision and internalize new pedagogical approaches (Girvan, Conneely & Tangney, 2016).

Few classroom teachers experienced arts integration during their own schooling, and many teachers have limited experience in making art themselves. For these reasons, professional development in arts integration that includes opportunities for teachers to participate in engaging arts-integrated learning experiences, to develop their confidence as artists through hands-on art making, and to experience examples of arts-integrated classrooms and student work, can provide classroom teachers with foundational understandings for implementing arts integration.

### **IN PRACTICE: How might Experience be applied to an arts integration PD experience?**

#### **Participating as learners in arts-integrated content**

Teachers can benefit from the opportunity to use art to gather information and to synthesize new learning from other disciplines. At the same time, in-depth exploration of other disciplines (i.e. science, social studies, language arts) can feed the artistic process.

Artistic expression benefits from genuine encounters with the world, including experiences that rouse the senses that reach beyond the walls of the classroom, that take advantage of local experts and community resources, and that make room for choice and personal interest in the learning process. Compelling topics, like the issue of invasive species in Hawaii, present challenging, real-world ambiguity and room for real debate, encouraging learners to form their own opinions based on evidence and to take an active role in looking for solutions.

If we want classroom teachers to engage deeply with arts integration as learners, the PD experiences we design must intrigue them, challenge them and foster their intellectual and artistic growth as adult learners. These goals cannot be met only through simulation activities in which we ask teachers to pretend to be elementary, middle or high school students; although these sorts of simulation activities may help teachers connect the learning to specific strategies that are developmentally appropriate for classroom students.

#### **Making art and responding to art**

Classroom teachers' experiences with art making and performance need to feel safe, encouraging and informative. Professional development that includes exploration of a diverse range of artistic traditions and contemporary forms increases the ways in which teachers can implement an arts integrated approach and engage their students. Incorporating opportunities for open-ended response, for forming inferences, and for making connections, increases teachers' autonomy and sense of ownership. Although only a portion of contemporary art has a basis in representational drawing, many teachers are hesitant to try art because they feel they "aren't good at drawing." Professional development can communicate the idea that art is a big tent, in which there are an infinite number of ways to express oneself through drama, music, dance and the visual arts.

PD experiences can give teachers the opportunity to experiment with materials, instruments and forms, and can also provide technical instruction to help develop competency and confidence.

Technical instruction might include:

- Demonstrations that illustrate the range, scope and technical properties of materials and tools.
- Introduction to particular techniques, strategies and concepts.
- Structures that focus the artistic impulse within a manageable set of constraints.

Experiences that allow classroom teachers to make artistic choices in-tune with their own emotional directives and to talk about their aesthetic decision making, help forge a personal connection with artistic process.

Exhibition and performance are essential components of the artistic experience and allow for communication, as well as opportunities to learn from the work of others. They help to bolster a sense of belonging to the larger artistic community.

Observing and responding to a work of art increases understanding, appreciation and personal connections to an art work. Introducing protocols such as Visual Thinking Skills (VTS) or Observe, Describe, Interpret, Connect (ODIC) (See the 'Read a Work of Art as you would a Book' project) can enrich classroom teachers' appreciation of how such protocols can enhance critical and creative thinking skills. (See Resources for additional protocols.)

### **Observing arts-integrated classrooms in action and assessing examples of student work**

To help classroom teachers connect their own arts-integrated experience as learners with the possibilities, constraints and developmental context of their classrooms, it is helpful to give them an opportunity to observe actual arts-integrated lessons with students and to explore samples of student work.

Watching students in action, either through direct observation in a classroom or through observation of a video, gives teachers the opportunity to unpack the fast-moving and nuanced dynamics of a lesson as it unfolds. Such observation allows participants to examine student engagement, to envision the logistics of an arts-integrated lesson, and to analyze the interactions between the art form and the non-art subject.

Student work offers a window into student thinking and is a valuable tool for teachers in evaluating which aspects of a lesson were successful and which were not, and for discussing the characteristics of "good

work” (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson & Orphanos, 2009). A number of questions can be explored through samples of student work (Prospect Archives and Center for Educational Research, 2011). Here are a few:

What evidence does the work contain of . . .

- the student’s aesthetic sensibilities?
- the student’s understanding of the science/social studies/ELA content?
- the student’s interests and strengths?
- the student’s use of the artistic medium?
- connections between the artistic process and the non-art subject?

Taking time to explore student work during PD experiences, will help classroom teachers better assess and fine-tune their efforts when they implement arts integration in their classrooms (See Assessment).

### **Arts Discipline Example**

#### **DANCE**

The workshop is a one-hour PD experience devised specifically for 2nd grade teachers who will be receiving a creative movement residency. The teaching artist focuses on: a) introducing the vocabulary of dance, and b) applying the strategy Move and Freeze to help make Science content concrete.

The teaching artist asks teachers to begin to move while they are still sitting. She asks them to explore movement with head, shoulders, elbows, and a variety of combinations of upper-body parts. Each time the teachers move in brief intervals of 8-second motion, the teaching artist prompts them to “freeze” before adding a variation or new prompt.

The teaching artist then prompts them to move with a twist, curved shapes, and straight zig-zags. She directs them to a poster and introduces the idea of “Body.” The teaching artist continues engaging the participants, while they sit in their seats, frequently using the words “Freeze,” until she has introduced all of the elements.

Next, she engages participants in brainstorming a word wall based on an image of marine life. They develop verbs describing what they imagine, such as bubbling, swishing, stalking, and skittering. The teaching artist prompts the teachers to stand in personal space to interpret the words by incorporating the elements they just learned. Finally, the teaching artists prompts the teachers to move through space, moving in the manner of the word, and freezing on cue.

#### **DRAMA**

This 3-hour PD workshop for elementary level teachers is designed to have them participate in a full lesson, using various Snapshot strategies to explore a complete picture book text. The lesson example is focused on lower elementary students.

Using the book “Rockabye Crocodile” by Jose Aruego, the teaching artist first guides classroom teachers to create individual Snapshots based on key vocabulary, such as kindhearted, selfish, sneak, plunge, seize, and stumble. After reading the first part of the story, classroom teachers create Sculpted Snapshots of the main characters in the story working with their partners.

The group then reads the next part of the story and, again working in pairs, creates Pair Snapshots with their partners that express key moments of interaction between the characters. The teaching artist guides partners to reflect on and revise their Snapshots.

The partners then take turns sharing their art work with the rest of the group, to engage with an O.D.I. +1 process (Observe, Describe, Interpret plus Reflect/Respond/Wonder; See Resources) of responding to each other's work.

After reading the next part of the story, pairs or trios of classroom teachers engage in the Add-on Snapshot strategy to express their prediction for the end of the story. As they create, the partners discuss possibilities in order to explore more than one option. Partners then share their art work with the group, describing their prediction for the story's end. The group reads the rest of the story.

## MUSIC

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.

## VISUAL ARTS

During this intensive, three-day course on thematic units that integrates Science and Visual Art, teachers participate first as learners within a model unit.

They begin by engaging in a series of drawing and watercolor exercises, through which they develop some artistic skills they will use to gather and synthesize information throughout the unit. For example, the teaching artist provides guidance to help participants better synch the movement of their eyes and hands as they draw, and provides pointers on how to artistically capture birds in motion.

Teachers head into the field for an immersive experience with researchers, investigating the roles that native and introduced birds play as seed disperse within Hawaiian ecosystems. As the researchers gather birds from mist nets in the forest, take morphological measurements, and band birds, the classroom teachers document the experience in images and writing in their field journals.

Teachers have the opportunity to explore a number of questions, ranging from the nature of how science is carried out, to what role humans should play in managing the dynamic relationship of native and introduced species in Hawai'i. Through artist demonstrations, guided practice, and artmaking, the teachers strengthen their understanding of artistic principles and techniques, and grow more confident as artists.

