

# Workshop 7

## Identifying What Students Are Learning

This workshop session investigates ways to evaluate student learning in and through the arts. In the program, you'll see teachers using arts-based performance tasks to assess student understanding.

### Learning Goals

The goals of this workshop are for you to:

- Explore ways the arts can be used to assess student understanding
- Examine performance tasks and determine the skills and knowledge needed by students to be successful

### Featured Classroom Examples

- Students demonstrate their understanding of the laws of motion by teaching younger children.
- Seventh-graders discuss the research that went into a satisfying production of *Fiddler on the Roof*.
- Sixth-graders create a museum exhibit.
- A science class engages in a debate about whether or not a frog should be allowed to join a ballet company.

# Workshop Session (On-Site)

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## Get Ready

**Review your own assessment practices.** (10 minutes)

Choose an area in your curriculum to think about. Make a list of typical types of student assessment you perform.

**As a group, discuss:**

- How do you typically gauge what it is that your students are learning?
- How might using the arts as a form of assessment give new insight into student understanding and achievement?

## Watch the Workshop Program (60 minutes)

Consider the following questions as you watch the program—they will appear as discussion prompts on the screen. If you are part of a professional development group, consider stopping the video to discuss each question with your colleagues.

- How can engagement in the arts provide effective opportunities for student assessment?
- How can you assess student understanding in multiple content areas through an arts process?
- How can an arts-based performance task effectively evaluate student understanding?
- How can you use non-arts activities to assess learning in the arts?

## Activities and Discussion

**Activity: Identify what students are learning in different performance tasks.**

**Analyze performance tasks.** (20 minutes)

Student engagement in the arts most always culminates in a performance or exhibit. Such tasks provide evidence that students are able to use the knowledge and skills they have learned in context—while making art.

Print and distribute the four Sample Performance Tasks found at the end of this chapter. *Fold them so that participants cannot see the criteria on the lower half of the page.* Ask the participants not to look at the back of the folded page until instructed to do so. In pairs or small groups, examine the components of the performance task: goal, role, audience, situation, and product. Then discuss the following question:

- What skills and knowledge are needed by the students to successfully complete the performance task?

**Develop criteria for judging students' performance.** (30 minutes)

Then ask the pairs or small groups to develop three lists of criteria they think are appropriate for evaluating students' understanding and accomplishment. There should be criteria for the creating, performing, and responding stages of the performance task. After they are finished, they can turn the paper over and see the criteria identified by the teacher who developed the sample culminating assessment.

# Between Sessions (On Your Own)

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## Additional Resources

### Web Resources

Assessing Student Work With Project-Based Learning  
<http://pblmm.k12.ca.us/PBLGuide/AssessPBL.html>

A list of roles that assessment plays in the classroom and what makes assessment “authentic”

Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning  
<http://www.aahe.org/assessment/principl.htm>

Nine principles to guide the assessment of student learning

### Print Resources

Arter, Judith A., & McTighe, Jay. *Scoring Rubrics in the Classroom: Using Performance Criteria for Assessing and Improving Student Performance*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Corwin Press, 2000. ISBN: 0-76197-575-6

This book offers a practical approach to assessing challenging but necessary performance tasks like creative writing, “real-world” research projects, and cooperative group activities.

Hayes Jacobs, Heidi. *Mapping the Big Picture: Integrating Curriculum and Assessment K-12*. Alexandria, Va.: Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development, 1997. ISBN: 0-87120-286-7

Heidi Hayes Jacobs discusses the importance of asking “essential questions” and of designing assessments that reflect what teachers know about the students in their care.

## Sample Performance Task #1

### for an Integrated Dance & Language Arts Unit on MYTHOLOGY: DAEDALUS AND ICARUS

**Goal:**

To understand the link between Greek folk dance and Greek mythology

**Student Roles:**

Dancers retelling the Daedalus and Icarus myth

**Audience:**

Peers

**Situation:**

Students dance the oldest Greek dance known, the Geranos, and then compare it to their participation in a current Pan-Hellenic dance of celebration, the Kalamatianos.

**Product:**

A folk dance directly inspired by the legend of Daedalus and Icarus

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**Criteria for Assessment:**

*Creating*

Elements of the dance illustrate aspects of the legend conveying how the emotion of fear is faced and overcome.

*Performing*

Individuals contribute fully and uniquely to the ensemble effort. The dances are performed correctly and in unison.

*Responding*

Appropriate vocabulary is used with understanding. Explanations of the deeper meanings of the myths can be identified (such as cause and effect, overcoming fear, pride).

## Sample Performance Task #2

### for an Integrated Music & Language Arts Unit on MYTHOLOGY: DAEDALUS AND ICARUS

**Goal:**

To understand how cause and effect are represented in the legend of Daedalus and Icarus

**Student Roles:**

Composers creating programmatic music for the myth

**Audience:**

Peers

**Situation:**

Students create music to represent events, ideas, and relationships that define and support character traits, motivations, and actions.

**Product:**

A musical composition evoking causes and effects occurring in the myth

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**Criteria for Assessment:**

*Creating*

The compositions exemplify supporting evidence for cause and effect relationships in the myth.

*Performing*

Individuals contribute fully and uniquely to the ensemble effort. Programmatic choices are thoughtfully motivated and supported.

*Responding*

Appropriate vocabulary is used with understanding. Explanations and examples of causes and effects present in the myth can be supported in discussion.

### Sample Performance Task #3

#### for an Integrated Theatre & Language Arts Unit on MYTHOLOGY: DAEDALUS AND ICARUS

**Goal:**

To understand how cause and effect are represented in the “Daedalus and Icarus” myth

**Student Roles:**

Actors role-playing characters from the myth

**Audience:**

Peers

**Situation:**

Students create scenes to represent events, ideas, and relationships that define and support character traits, motivations, and actions.

**Product:**

Improvised scenes exploring causes and effects occurring in the myth

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**Criteria for Assessment:**

*Creating*

The improvised scenes present the “voices” that influence the characters’ decision-making process, illustrating the cause and effect relationships in the myth.

*Performing*

Individuals contribute fully and uniquely to the ensemble effort. Characterization is motivated and maintained.

*Responding*

Appropriate vocabulary is used with understanding. Explanations and examples of causes and effects present in the myth can be supported in discussion.

## Sample Performance Task #4

### for an Integrated Visual Art & Language Arts Unit on MYTHOLOGY: DAEDALUS AND ICARUS

**Goal:**

To engage in dialogue about one's own artwork compared to the work of others in relation to the Daedalus and Icarus legend

**Role:**

Curators of an exhibit

**Audience:**

Peers

**Situation:**

Students create masks to represent the characters in the Daedalus and Icarus myth, and then arrange and label an exhibition of their work.

**Product:**

An exhibit of masks

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**Criteria for Assessment:**

*Creating*

The work done on the mask is focused on a single trait drawn from a character in the myth. Materials and techniques are suited to the idea.

*Performing*

The exhibit of the masks is well crafted and arranged in a logical plan. Masks are hung securely and appropriate information cards are placed in such a way that each is visually connected to the mask it talks about.

*Responding*

Appropriate vocabulary is used with understanding when talking about the artwork and the exhibit. Labels provide some insight into the relationship between the mask and the myth.

# Notes

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