Workshop 8

Nurturing Independent Thinkers

Arts teachers find many different ways to help their students develop as artists—and as people. By using a variety of assessment strategies, teachers can help their students become mature, independent thinkers. Teachers can also find ways to refine their own teaching, based on a clear understanding of their students' progress and problems.

To nurture independent thinkers, assessments:

- Focus on thinking and judgement, not just on performance skills
- · Help students look at the work of others in useful ways
- Give students opportunities and tools to assess themselves
- · Give teachers insights to help them adjust their teaching

Learning Goals

The goals of this workshop session are for you to:

- · Identify qualities of effective assessment in the arts
- · Compare and contrast assessment practices across the disciplines of music, dance, theatre, and visual art
- Explore how assessment is used in the three stages of the artistic process—creating, performing, and responding

Workshop Session (On Site)

Getting Ready (15 minutes)

Discuss the following questions:

- How do you assess your students' progress and achievement?
- · How do you give your students feedback?
- · How do the students give each other feedback?

Watching the Program (60 minutes)

The information sheets found at the end of this chapter provide helpful background on the schools, arts programs, and individual classes featured in each segment.

Consider the following questions as you watch the program. You may stop the video after each segment to discuss the questions with your colleagues.

Music: William Taylor [Informal/Formal Assessment Techniques]

- · How did Will's assessment techniques help students improve their skills?
- · How do you assess individual performances within group work?

Dance: Michael O'Banion [Senior Solo Critique]

- What were the benefits of Michael's feedback to Monique and to her peers?
- How do you make criticism a reflective learning experience rather than a judgement?

Theatre: Joseph Mancuso and Andrea Arden [Student Evaluation Session]

- How did Daniel benefit from hearing—and giving—direct feedback?
- How do you use feedback from students to improve your teaching?

Visual Art: Jon Murray [Students Assessing Their Own Work]

- How does Jon develop the critical habits of his students throughout their high school years?
- · What do you do to help students become their own best critics?

Activities and Discussion (45 minutes)

For this last session, choose which of the following two activity options you think would be most effective as a conclusion. Be sure to leave time for the wrap-up discussion that follows.

Activity Option A: Qualities of Effective Assessments (30 minutes)

Effective assessments provide experiences that help students move toward independent thinking.

The worksheet titled *Criteria of Effective Assessments*, on the following page, shows four approaches to assessment that were seen in this program. Choose one of the approaches and decide which criteria of effective assessment—shown in the left column—it meets. At the bottom, add any other criteria you think are important for assessments.

Criteria of Effective Assessments

For each segment, decide which criteria were met by the assessments shown.

Criteria	Music Vocal music assessments	Dance Solo dance critique	Theatre Individual student evaluation	Visual Art Peer critiques and self-assessment					
Does the assessment approach:									
Provide multiple sources of information for a detailed view of students' progress?									
Occur on an ongoing basis for an accurate picture of student achievement?									
Focus attention on what is important?									
Deal with processes as much as final products?									
Reveal what students can do and what they're trying to do?									
Compare students' current work with their past performance?									
Promote self-evaluation and self-monitoring?									
Provide evidence of competence that can be used to get jobs, scholarships, and admission to college?									
Enable teachers to reflect on and improve their practice?									
Other important criteria:									

Think about an assessment approach of your own and add it to the blank column in the chart above. Which criteria does your assessment approach meet? How might you improve your assessment so that it better nurtures students' independent thinking?

Workshop Session (On Site), cont'd.

Activity Option B: Assessing Students Throughout the Artistic Process (30 minutes)

The National Association of Educational Progress *Arts Education Assessment Framework* specifies that meaningful arts assessments should be built around three arts processes: creating, performing, and responding.

- Creating refers to expressing ideas and feelings in the form of an original work of art, for example a dance, a piece of music, a dramatic improvisation, or a sculpture.
- Performing refers to performing an existing work, a process that calls upon the interpretive or re-creative skills of the student.
- Responding refers to observing, describing, analyzing, and evaluating works of art.

Assessment priorities often differ among the arts. In this activity, you will be asked to draw on the expertise of your colleagues from other arts disciplines to gain new perspective on assessing your students.

Draw the grid below on a whiteboard or chart paper. Chart the assessment practices you typically use in your discipline during each stage of the artistic process.

Then, as a group, discuss the similarities and differences among the four art forms in assessing student progress at each stage.

	Music Typical assessment techniques used	Dance Typical assessment techniques used	Theatre Typical assessment techniques used	Visual Art Typical assessment techniques used
Creating				
Performing				
Responding				

See how your group's notes compare to these general statements:

- *Visual art instruction* places a high value on first-hand, creative expression and response to visual media, but often gives lower priority to the replication of existing art.
- *Music education*, on the other hand, places great emphasis on the performance of existing music and on students' responses to performance, with less emphasis on the original musical compositions of students.
- Instruction in theatre and dance tends to see creating and performing as a combined act, and the response
 of the director, choreographer, actors, dancers, designers, and audience as integral to the development of
 a piece.

Looking at the grid, identify an area of assessment you would like to improve. Discuss with your colleagues how techniques from their practice might transfer to your arts discipline.

Workshop Session (On Site), cont'd.

Wrap-up Discussion (15 minutes)

At the beginning of this workshop, you talked with your colleagues and wrote in your journal about how teaching is an art.

- How would you assess your own artful teaching, and how has it changed over the years?
- What have you learned from seeing teaching practices in other arts disciplines, and discussing them with colleagues?
- How would you like your teaching to continue evolving?

Wrap Up (On Your Own)

Homework

Think about two students—one who exhibits independent thinking and another who has trouble critically evaluating his or her own work and progress. In your journal, describe each student. As you do so, think about what qualities the 'independent thinker' has that allows him or her to be self-reflective and critical. Think about the characteristics the less independent student exhibits, and what specific techniques or practices might help this student become more self-reflective and independent in his or her thinking.

Now look back at the journal you started at the beginning of this workshop, and think about how your attitude toward your own teaching has changed.



Music

SEGMENT 1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

William Taylor
13 years teaching

About the School

East High School

Denver, CO

Type:

Urban/Comprehensive

Grades:

9-12

Students:

1,900

Very mixed socio-economic status

Arts Requirement:

None

About the Music Program

Faculty:

2 full-time (1 vocal and 1 instrumental)

Students:

142

Facilities:

Above Average in the Area

- 2 classrooms (instrumental and vocal)
- School auditorium

Required Courses:

None

Elective Vocal Music Courses:

Beginning Choir, Men's Ensemble, Seraphim, Honor Choir, Angelaires, Beginning Music Theory, AP Music Theory, and Voice

About the Featured Classes

Honor Choir X:

This is an advanced-level mixed ensemble that performs a wide variety of music styles. The X connotes a high-level course that moves at a faster pace. As a result, students receive a higher grade point for these classes: A=5.2 instead of 4.0.

Typical Subsequent Course:

Angelaires

Audition Requirements:

Students must demonstrate music reading, vocal ability, aural skill, and part-singing ability. Rehearsal discipline, school attendance, and dedication to vocal music (particularly in other ensembles) are also examined.

Student Motivation:

High. Students are motivated by a love of singing.

In the Teacher's Words

How did you develop the idea to use a tape recorder as an assessment tool?

Over the years I have struggled to find an efficient way to assess students. Testing them individually took several class periods and left the class unattended. I finally figured out that testing several students at once with tape recorders was the most efficient for the class and for me as the teacher.

Men's Ensemble:

Beginning level ensemble for boys that focuses on voice training and rudimentary music reading skills.

Audition Requirements:

None. Students only need the ability to match pitch (hear a note and sing it back accurately).

Typical Subsequent Course:

Honor Choir

Student Motivation:

Mixed. Some students will become motivated to stay in the choir program.



Dance

SEGMENT 2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Michael O'Banion 20 years teaching

About the School

Denver School of the Arts

Denver, CO

Type:

Urban/Arts-focused

Grades:

6-12

Students:

900

Very mixed socio-economic status

Majors:

Creative Writing, Dance, Theatre, Instrumental Music, Stagecraft & Design, Video & Cinema Arts, Visual Arts, and Vocal Music

About the **Program**

Faculty:

2 full-time + resident and guest artists

Students:

115

Facilities:

Above Average in the Area

- 3 large dance studios
- 2 theaters (178 seats, 550 seats)
- Full light grid
- Dressing rooms

Required Courses:

Modern, Ballet, Jazz, African & Spanish, Improvisation, Composition, Repertory, Performance Technique, Partnering, and Senior Seminar

Elective Courses:

Tap, Hip Hop, and Pointe

Audition:

Technique Master Class, individual choreography showing, and interview

About the Featured Class

Senior Solo:

Students choreograph other advanced students as well as their own solos, and then the graduating class works as a team to create a full evening of dance in concert form as a culminating choreographic project.

Preparations/Prerequisites:

Eligible students are seniors with a B or better grade

Student Motivation:

High

Music Guidelines:

For the senior choreography project, students are not generally allowed to choose music with lyrics. However, if students can justify their choices then they are usually accepted. In Monique's case, her solo was a theatrical representation about a woman left alone and fearful. The music/lyrics reinforced the subject matter and her movement choices showed integrity and risk-taking in a thematic and dramatic context.

In the Teacher's Words

What is the significance of contractions in the dance vocabulary?

The term "contraction and release" in its inception was a fundamental of the Martha Graham technique. It has since become a universal term for the engaging of the abdominal muscles (center) as a dramatic physical movement. The contraction can be a motivating force for a dancer's change in movement. It also holds a metaphoric meaning in modern dance, where to contract is to pull energy inward, and to release is to send the energy outward. These two impulses are akin to recoiling from the world and re-entering the world.



Theatre

SEGMENT 3 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Joseph Mancuso Andrea Arden 20 years teaching 16 years teaching

About the School

Somerset County Vocational Technical High School

Bridgewater, NJ

Type:

Countywide performing arts program/ Vocational high school

Grades:

9-12

Students:

60 (24 Acting, 15 Musical Theatre, and 21 Dance) Very mixed socio-economic status

About the Performing Arts Program

Faculty:

2 full-time and 9 part-time

Students:

60

Audition:

Students throughout the county audition in March for acceptance in the following academic year. Acceptance is based on faculty assessment of two rounds of auditions.

Facilities:

Above Average in the Area

- 600-seat performance hall
- Performance studio
- Three offices
- · On-site and off-site storage
- 2 classroom spaces (under construction)
- Expanded offices (under construction)
- Dressing rooms (under construction)
- Student locker space (under construction)

Required Courses:

- Acting major: Acting, Voice and Movement, Speech, Theatre History, Technical Theatre, Theatre Fundamentals, and Musical Vocals
- Musical Theatre major: Acting, Ballet, Jazz, Voice, Theatre History, Technical Theatre, and Theatre Fundamentals
- Dance major: Ballet, Jazz, Modern, Composition, Choreography, Dance History, and Technical Theatre

About the Evaluation Session

Individual Feedback Session:

Every semester the acting faculty meets with each student to discuss the student's progress.

This session allows the faculty to provide individual feedback in a more detailed way than is possible during regular scheduled class time.

Students are also asked to give the faculty feedback on their teaching and the program in general. This feedback helps the teachers adjust their practice.

In the Teacher's Words

How did you develop the idea of an individual feedback session?

Joseph Mancuso: The process existed before my tenure and was developed by Sheila Buttermore, now head of the Dance program. In the session, the faculty reviews particular issues that might exist, and then we give the student a chance to talk back. We ask questions like, "Where's the program working for you?" "Where isn't it working for you?" "Is there something else you'd like to see in the program?"



Visual Art

SEGMENT 4 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Jon Murray
26 years teaching

About the School

Mamaroneck High School

Mamaroneck, NY

Type:

Suburban/Comprehensive

Grades:

9-12

Students:

1,400

Middle/High socio-economic status

Arts Requirement:

New York has a 1-credit art or music graduation requirement (180 minutes of instruction per week for one year)

About the Visual Art Program

Faculty:

5 full-time

Students:

425

Facilities:

About Average in the Area

- 5 specialized art studios
- 1 art gallery/exhibition space
- 1 office
- 1 photo room

Required Courses:

Art Foundation

Elective Courses:

Drawing & Painting, Advanced Drawing & Painting, Sculpture, Introduction to Clay, Advanced Clay, Advanced Placement (AP) Art Studio, Introduction to Illustration, Advanced Illustration, and Senior Art Experience

About the Featured Classes

Drawing & Painting:

Students develop drawing skills, a stronger sense of design, and insight into the behavior of color in this intermediate level studio class.

Preparations/Prerequisites:

Eligible students have taken Art Foundation

Student Level:

Intermediate, mostly tenth-graders

Typical Subsequent Courses:

Advanced Drawing & Painting, Illustration, and Ceramics

Student Motivation:

Moderate. Students have already completed one art class and decided to continue.

In the Teacher's Words

What plans do most AP Art Studio students have after completing the course?

Most AP art students go on to college. Roughly a fifth go right to art school. More than that will go to a liberal arts college and major in art. Some will minor in art. Some leave us as undecided and decide to major in art or transfer to an art school later on.

Advanced Placement Art Studio:

Advanced Placement Art Studio is a college-level studio experience for seniors who want to create an extensive portfolio for submission to the College Board in May, for AP credit.

Preparations/Prerequisites:

Students must be seniors and must survive a departmental portfolio review in January of their junior year. At this portfolio review, the entire art faculty considers each applicant and decides who is ready for college-level work in high school.

Student Motivation:

High. All have taken several art classes in high school. Some have had additional outside experiences: tutoring, summer programs, etc. For some, art is their main interest and they may not do as well in other subjects; for others, they're in AP Art because they're in "AP Everything Else" as well.

William Taylor's Honor Choir Performance Evaluation Sheet

Performance Evaluation

Student Name						
Name of Group						
1. What is the most appealing aspe	ct of thi	s group	o's perf	orman	ce?	
2. What is the least appealing aspe	ct of thi	s group	o's perf	ormano	ce?	
3. List two positive aspects of this g 1.	roup's p	erform	ance.			
2.						
4. List two or three areas in need o	f improv	ement	•			
2.						
5. Rate this group on the following ration (pitch tuning) Intonation (pitch tuning) Vowels (unity) Balance of parts Precision (rhythmic) Dynamics Communication	musical (1 1 1 1 1 1	2 2 2 2	3 3 3 3	1 (poo 4 4 4 4 4 4 4	5 5 5 5	(Outstanding
6. What lessons can be learned from	n this gr	oup th	at wou	ld impr	ove our	choir?

William Taylor's Singing Test Rubric for Men's Ensemble

Part-Singing Quiz Rubric

	5 pts.	4 pts.	3 pts.	2 pts.	1 pt.
Vocal Technique	Consistent tone quality and breath support.	Good tone quality more than ½ of the time	Good tone quality most of the time	Weak tone quality most of the time	Poor Tone quality
	Takes breaths in appropriate places	4-7 breaths in inappropriate places	1-3 breaths in inappropriate places	Weak breath many inappropriate breaths	Random breaths everywhere
Intonation	Accurate throughout in all of range	Mostly accurate, with a few errors	Mostly accurate with some obviously out of tune notes	Basic sense of intonation, yet with significant problems	Not accurate, mostly out of tune.
Accuracy	All notes correct	1-2 note errors	3-4 note errors	5-6 note errors	7 or more note errors
Total 15 points					

Created by William Taylor, East High School, Denver, Co. From *The Art of Teaching The Arts: A Workshop for High School Teachers* Page 1 of 2

Joseph Mancuso's Theatre Evaluation Summary

STUDENT:	
COURSE:	
INSTRUCTOR:	

GRADES	1 st QUARTER	2 nd QUARTER	3 rd QUARTER	4 th QUARTER
Preparation & Participation				
ARTISTIC SKILLS				
Process Evaluation				
Quizzes/Exams				
GRADE				
PROGRESS				

ATTENDANCE	1 st QUARTER	2 nd QUARTER	3 rd QUARTER	4 th QUARTER
Absent				
Late				
Classes Held				

INSTRUCTOR

DEFINITIONS OF ARTISTIC SKILLS CATEGORY

The Actor's Instrument is comprised of three parts: BODY, VOICE and EMOTIONAL LIFE (thinking/imagination/presence)

BODY:

ARTICULATION

The ability to allow emotional experience/connection to manifest physically in the body with precision and clarity

RANGE

The ability to physically express a wide range of physical and emotional ideas

VOICE:

CLARITY

Muscularity & control (diction), clarity, musicality, vocal dexterity for the expression of the inner life

ENERGY

Resonance (projection)

EMOTIONAL LIFE:

THINKING

Crafting the ability to articulate circumstances and intention, to know what an actor needs to do to arrive at a fully expressed emotional life (artistic cognizance), to begin to self-evaluate in the context of the quarter's work

IMAGINATION

Depth of response, emotional engagement, image dexterity, emotional freedom, able to shape and identify flow of dramatic action, able to identify that there *is* an emotional life.

PRESENCE

The ability to connect inner life to external choices, to hold center, to hold concentration, "making the invisible, visible," to show a sense of "serious fun" (work ethic), to be ready to take on more challenging work

ARTISTIC SKILLS grades are scaled as a percentage of the "Perfect Actor" who represents 100%						
capability. Acting II's are expected to have higher proficiency than Acting I's. The scale is as follows:						

pability. Acting it's are ex	rpecieu io nave	riigitei prolicietic	y iliali Acilly i S.	THE Scale is as	ioliows.
	F	D	С	В	Α
ACTING I	0%	5%	10%	15%	20%
ACTING II	0%	10%	20%	30%	40%

Joseph Mancuso's Theatre Evaluation Rubric

	Grade	out of 100	out of 100	out of 100	out of 100
	A 90 to 99	□ Dressed out / Materials at hand □ Homework completion □ Homework timeliness □ Volunteers to work □ Takes responsibility for oneself □ Very good enthusiasm shown □ Works with others very well	□ BODY: ARTICULATION □ BODY RANGE □ VOICE: CLARITY □ VOICE: ENERGY □ THINKING LIKE AN ACTOR'S □ ACTOR'S □ ACTOR'S □ ACTOR'S □ ACTOR'S □ ACTOR'S □ ACTOR'S	□ Takes artistic risks almost always □ Challenges self almost always □ Effort shown almost always □ Receptive to feedback almost always □ Incorporates notes into work very well	
SEMESTER:	B 80 to 89	at hand Homework completion Homework timeliness Often volunteers to work Often takes responsibility for oneself Good enthusiasm shown Works with others well		Takes artistic risks consistently Challenges self consistently Effort shown often Receptive to feedback consistently Incorporates notes into work well	GROWING
	c 70 to 79	Dressed out / Materials at hand Homework completion Homework timeliness Volunteers to work Occasionally takes responsibility for oneself Fair enthusiasm shown Works with others fairly	BODY: ARTICULATION BODY RANGE VOICE: CLARITY VOICE: ENERGY THINKING LIKE AN ACTOR ACTOR ACTOR IMAGINATION ACTOR'S PRESENCE	Takes artistic risks infrequently Challenges self infrequently Effort shown sometimes Sometimes receptive to feedback incorporates notes into work infrequently	AVERAGE (TOTAL GRADE) ELOPING DEVELOPING
COURSE:	D 60 to 69	Dressed out / Materials at hand Homework completion Homework timeliness Rarely volunteers to work Rarely takes responsibility for oneself Poor enthusiasm shown Works with others	BODY: ARTICULATION BODY RANGE VOICE: CLARITY VOICE: ENERGY THINKING LIKE AN ACTOR ACTOR: ACTOR: IMAGINATION ACTOR'S PRESENCE	Rarely takes artistic risks Rarely challenges self Effort shown rarely Rarely receptive to feedback Poorly incorporates notes into work	AVERAGI SLOWLY DEVELOPING
			0 0000 0 0		
	F 0 - 59	Dressed out / Materials at hand Homework completion Homework timeliness Does not volunteer to work Does not take responsibility for oneself Lacks enthusiasm Does not works with others	BODY: ARTICULATION BODY RANGE VOICE: CLARITY VOICE: ENERGY THINKING LIKE AN ACTOR ACTOR IMAGINATION ACTORS	Does not take artistic risks Does not challenge self No effort shown Not receptive to feedback Lacks incorporation of notes into work	S: UNSATISFACTORY
NAME:		8 иоітаяачэяЧ иоітачізітяаЧ %0£	ARTISTIC SKILLS 20%	PROCESS PROCESS	QUIZES & EXAMS 20% PROGRESS:

Created by Joseph Mancuso, Somerset County Vocational and Technical High School From The Art of Teaching the Arts: A Workshop for High School Teachers

Additional Resources

On the Web

General Sites

National Assessment of Educational Progress: The Arts

http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/arts/
Helpful resources for understanding how the US
Department of Education assesses arts learning

Highlights of the NAEP 1997 Arts Assessment Report Card (PDF)

http://aep-arts.org/naep/popular.pdf

PDF document highlighting a 1997 national "Report Card" on arts education at the eighth-grade level

Coalition of Essential Schools

http://www.essentialschools.org/ Select: *Resources*, then under *Classroom Practice* select *Assessment*

A wealth of information on alternative assessments, including portfolios, exhibitions, and rubrics

School and Teacher Sites

East High School

http://east.dpsk12.org/

Web site for music teacher William Taylor's school

Denver School of the Arts—Dance Major

http://dsa.dpsk12.org/

Select: Majors, then Performing Arts Department Web page for the dance program that Michael O'Banion chairs

Somerset County Vocational and Technical High School Performing Arts Dept.

http://www.scti.org/HighSchool/welcome_to_scvths.htm Select: *performing arts at scvths*

Information on the performing arts program where Joseph Mancuso teaches

Mamaroneck High School—Art Department

http://www.mamkschools.org/mhs/ Select: Departments and Class Web Pages, then Art Web page for the visual art department where Jon Murray teaches

In Print

Arter, Judith A., & McTighe, Jay. Scoring Rubrics in the Classroom: Using Performance Criteria for Assessing and Improving Student Performance. Corwin Press, 2000. ISBN: 0761975756

Practical approach to assessing challenging but necessary performance tasks like creative writing, "realworld" research projects, and cooperative group activities

Costa, Arthur L., & Kallick, Bena. *Assessment Strategies for Self-Directed Learning*. Corwin Press, 2003. ISBN: 0761938710

Strategies for designing diverse ways of gathering, organizing, and reporting evidence of self-directed learning

Eisner, Elliot W. *The Arts and the Creation of Mind*. Yale University Press, 2002. ISBN: 0300095236

Description of how various forms of thinking are evoked, developed, and refined through the arts

Johnson, David W., & Johnson, Roger T. Assessing Students in Groups: Promoting Group Responsibility and Individual Accountability. Corwin Press. 2003. ISBN: 0761939474

Practical guide explaining how to form productive groups and assess individual student performance during group work

Notes