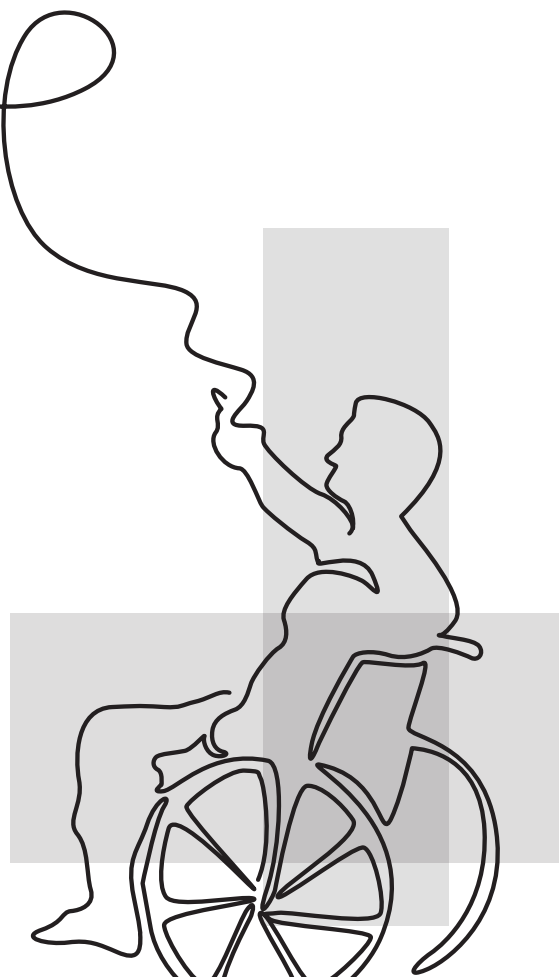
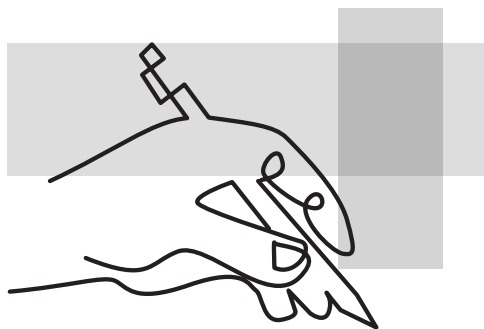


**The Contours of Inclusion:
Frameworks and Tools for Evaluating Arts in Education**

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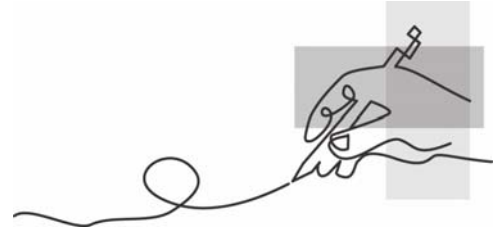
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The Contours of Inclusion: Frameworks and Tools for Evaluating Arts in Education



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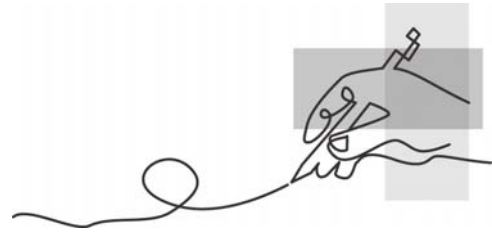
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Introduction

Don Glass, Ph.D.

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VSA arts



During a rich period of rethinking evaluation methodology in the 1970s, David Hamilton wrote that curriculum evaluation is a “dynamic human enterprise that changes in response to the object of study.”¹ As curriculum, classrooms, and circumstances change, approaches, methods, and strategies are adapted to capture a better understanding of teaching and learning in complex classroom settings. Evaluators and educators can then use this knowledge to make better judgments of the merit and worth of opportunities to learn, as well as inform curricular and instructional decision making.

VSA arts is an organization situated at the dynamic intersection of arts, education, and disability. In our education program work, we intentionally focus on the arts as a learning strategy, particularly in inclusive educational settings. For practitioners, this means exploring Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Differentiated Instruction (DI) as strategies to design curriculum and instructional opportunities that support all students. For evaluators of these inclusive settings, this means puzzling out how to understand the impact of these complex strategies in classrooms of students with diverse readiness, interests, and learning profiles. These are no simple tasks.

To explore this issue and address a gap in the research literature, *VSA arts* convened evaluators and practitioners for *The Contours of Inclusion: Arts Learning Outcomes and Evaluation Strategies*, a research symposium in Baltimore, Maryland, on November 7, 2007. The symposium presentations highlighted the growing body of evaluation and research from the general arts education field. They also featured specific work that relates to students with disabilities.

This publication is an edited collection of invited essays by symposium presenters and panelists. Similar to with the symposium presentations, contributors were asked to share evaluation strategies and data collection tools and explain the context of their development and use.

The leading essay is by Dr. Dennie Palmer Wolf of the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University. Her essay frames Traci Molloy and Aamir Rodriguez’s documentation of their arts residency partnership between the Studio Museum of Harlem and Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High School in the Bronx, New York. This documentation was developed out of an inquiry process that was part of the Center for Arts Education's Leadership in Practice program.

In her framing essay, Dr. Wolf begins by synthesizing insights drawn from special education (UDL), standards-based reform (equity and excellence), and arts education (imagination and innovation). She crafts these insights into a framework for collecting evidence around various dimensions of opportunity. Dr. Wolf then uses this framework to evaluate the educational opportunities that existed to support students in achieving learning outcomes from the Fannie Lou Hamer partnership. Dr. Wolf also provides an example of an observation tool that examines learning behaviors of various groupings of students. She concludes by advocating for a collaborative and reciprocal relationship between data gathering and capacity building for the participants in evaluation studies.

The second essay, by Dr. Robert Horowitz of Teachers College of Columbia University, explains the history and context to the development of a precise and valid tool for observing learning behaviors. This essay provides a unique “behind-the-scenes” story of how a data collection tool was developed specifically for arts education. This process is informative for evaluators and practitioners. Dr. Horowitz demonstrates the value of systematic qualitative observation of arts learning for designing increasingly valid observation categories and descriptors for program evaluation and classroom assessment. The resulting observation tools can then be used to generate quantitative statistical data. The tool featured in the essay has been used in studies on the program work of ArtsConnection in New York City.

The third essay is by Dr. Gail Burnaford of Florida Atlantic University. Dr. Burnaford argues for a “layered research” model that couples evaluation with teacher inquiry. Dr. Burnaford describes the inner layer as teacher-led action research. Data are collected using a documentation template from the Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education’s (CAPE) online Action Research Publication System (ARPS). She then shares the Effective Teaching (ET) survey that is used by the external evaluation team across sites. This essay provides a framework for understanding educational programs over multiple sites, which also uses data from the grounded inquiry and interests of teachers. In a sense, Dr. Burnaford is advocating for a collaborative, participatory form of evaluation that has aspects of professional development and capacity building at its core. Data is systematically collected across multiple sites, then managed and validated by program staff and external evaluators.

The final section is an edited transcript of the symposium's final panel discussion featuring Dr. Donna M. Mertens, a professor at Gallaudet University and former president of the American Evaluation Association (AEA). Dr. Mertens explains the importance of the AEA program evaluation standards by connecting the reasoning behind the prioritization of evaluation standards to the concerns of teachers and the populations of students that they serve. A copy of the *Standards for Program Evaluation* is included with her essay. This final essay reminds us of the wealth of knowledge, guidance, and opportunities available through a professional evaluation organization.

For *VSA arts*, these essays touch on many of the emerging issues in, and needs for, using evaluation in the arts education field. On the technical side, several of the essays examine the process of developing or using precise and valid data collection instruments specific to the qualities of arts education *and* particular to the classrooms and students whom we serve. The essays provide us with some useful theoretical frameworks for thinking about learning opportunities, categorizing students, observing and documenting learning behaviors, and gathering meaningful and useful data locally and across multiple program sites.

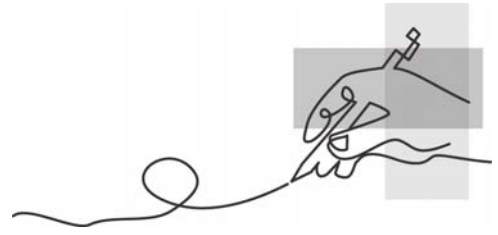
VSA arts invites you to join these senior evaluators in deepening and extending this work by developing your own data collection and analysis strategies that *include* data about students with disabilities. We also invite you to share your findings about the complexity of arts teaching and learning in inclusive settings with the arts education and evaluation fields. And finally, we would like to pose a few questions for consideration at future *VSA arts* symposia:

- What forms of data collection can be flexible and *universally designed* for *all* students?
- How can we *differentiate* data collection and analysis to understand teaching and learning for students with *specific* disabilities?
- How can we use evaluation strategies as professional development to better understand student learning and the effectiveness of the various instructional opportunities that we provide?



¹ Hamilton, D. (1976). *Curriculum evaluation*. London: Open Books Publishing.

Building and Evaluating “Freedom Machines”: When Is Arts Education a Setting for Equitable Learning?



Dennie Palmer Wolf, Ph.D.
Annenberg Institute for School Reform

Introduction: “Freedom Machines”

Ron Mace was an internationally recognized architect, product designer, and educator who went about his work and life using a wheelchair. Building on his experience, he evolved a design philosophy that challenged conventional thinking and provided the foundation for a more usable and inclusive world. Mace coined the term "universal design" to capture his idea that it was possible to design products, homes, and places of work, as well as the larger built environment, to be both pleasing and usable to the greatest extent possible by people of all ages, abilities, and life situations. The approach is responsible for the advent of ramps, showers with handles for rising and sitting, and soft-handled kitchen utensils that permit hands that are small, have arthritis, or have amputated fingers to cook. Bruce Hannah, a contemporary designer himself, refers to the designs and items that have resulted from this approach as “freedom machines.”¹

Beyond the specific inventions, there are three great legacies of the Universal Design movement. The first is an image of human capacity as a continuum of users, all of whom share a set of common needs and aspirations, but who require different supports to express or actualize their capacities. The second legacy is related: it is the realization that the search for universal designs uncovers ways in which many people can become more mobile, agile, or capable. Thus, the curb cuts that assist wheelchair users also make walking easier for people with canes, parents pushing strollers, and two-year olds who are becoming independent walkers. Finally, curb cuts change pedestrian life, as anyone walking down the street is in the company of elders, small children, and parents, as well as individuals who conduct their lives using a cane, a walker, or a wheelchair. In a world informed by Universal Design, they can all stroll, hurry, do their errands, greet friends, and look into windows.

Thus, in settings informed by the principles of Universal Design, it becomes clear that a disability occurs at the interface between an individual and a setting. This changes the notion of disability from a condition that a person *has* or *is* to a condition that a person experiences in a particular setting. Thus, millions of people would experience visual impairment in a world where prescription glasses

had not been invented—or were unaffordable. Correspondingly, with the invention of curb cuts and motorized wheelchairs, individuals who were once unable to travel outside the home are now pedestrians.

The purpose of this essay is to explore a proposal that has long been at the heart of *VSA arts*. The arts, just like universally designed tools or physical environments, may be very powerful “freedom machines” capable of changing many preconceived notions about who can do what. To examine this idea in greater depth, I want to use the example of the curriculum developed in partnership by the Studio Museum in Harlem and the Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High School. This could not be more apt: the museum’s core mission is to give voice to artists of the African Diaspora. The educators at Fannie Lou Hamer High School—like the activist for whom it is named—see education as a civil right. So their collaboration, like Ron Mace’s work on Universal Design, is also about “freedom machines.”

This exploration has several parts. The first section examines how the initial ideas for Universal Design in the physical environment have evolved into designs for learning, with a particular emphasis on what the arts have to add. The second portion looks at how these principles apply to one of the units developed in the partnership between Fannie Lou Hamer and the Studio Museum. A closing section presents some of the implications for evaluating arts programs designed to involve a wide spectrum of students. The point is to explore what the arts have to teach us about Universal Design in education, particularly in an era where high standards are, at last, becoming the rule for all students.

Building a Deeper Understanding of Universal Design for Learning²

In the years since the initial application of Universal Design to the built environment, educators and researchers have applied the concepts that Mace originated beyond the physical world. Additional understandings have come from the field of special education, from the equity and standards movement, and from arts education.

Insights from Special Education: Ensuring Opportunities to Understand

Research and development in Universal Design for learners with special needs have taught us a great deal about how education would need to change if teaching and learning were to become “barrier free.” Out of that work, a number of principles guiding Universal Design for Learning have emerged. For example, researchers at the Center for Applied Special Technologies argue for:

- **Multiple means of representation** to give learners various ways of acquiring information and knowledge;
- **Multiple means of expression** to provide learners alternatives for demonstrating what they know; and

- **Multiple means of engagement** to tap into learners' interests, offer appropriate challenges, and increase motivation.³

For example, as computer technology has evolved, it has turned the printed page into a flexible digital text that can be enlarged, illustrated, read aloud, translated on the spot, or enriched with embedded definitions and background information. What was once a single—and for some an exclusionary—display of meaning can now share meaning through multiple modes of representation. This has redefined the interaction between readers and texts, making it possible for more students to read, comprehend, and enjoy complex texts. Similarly, computer technology is making multiple means of expression possible: graphic organizers, time lines, and concept maps, allowing students to demonstrate their understanding using diverse forms of expression.⁴ Finally, the addition of illustrations, animations, game-like structures of tiered challenges, and live video feed connecting students globally have opened up new avenues of engagement for many students. As with other instances of successful Universal Design, these digital learning environments turn out to have helped other populations as well, such as reluctant readers and English-language learners. Beyond that, computerized and enriched texts have led the way in thinking about the kinds of wide-ranging reading skills that all of us need in a world defined by the rapid flow of information in multiple formats.

Insights from the Standards Movement: Ensuring Opportunities for Excellence

Access to information and supports for engagement are foundations for equal opportunity to learn. But they are not sufficient. Research and reform efforts that focused on issues of equity, both pre-dating and fueled by the standards movement, identified an additional set of essentials for high-powered learning. What that movement exposed is how frequently the “keys to the academic kingdom” are reserved for a few already high-achieving students. The large majority of young people rarely encounter the high expectations, discussions of quality, high-demand assignments, or access to multiple sites for learning that are absolutely necessary for proficient, as opposed to basic, levels of achievement. Thus, the work on standards and equity can be thought of as extending the list of dimensions of inclusive learning, adding the imperative that all students must have sustained and meaningful access to:

- **Clear and high standards made public** through examples, discussions of quality, focused response to student work, and tools such as rubrics;
- **Challenging assignments** that provide for practice and eventual mastery of high standards. This means all students being involved in the critical phases and processes of learning (e.g., drafting, research, editing, critique, etc.); and
- **Supports for reaching high standards** in a timely fashion (e.g., peer coaching, tutoring, after-school programs, summer sessions, learning the skills for asking for help, etc.).

Insights from Arts Education: Ensuring the Opportunity to Imagine

Recently the discussion of educational outcomes has begun to stress the importance of students developing their creativity and their ability to work with others to innovate. In a global economy, consistently and quickly affected by new technologies, it is clear that in order to thrive, young people will have to be able to apply understanding to new problems in new contexts in imaginative ways. This suggests that all students, not a small elite who have been designated as “gifted,” have the right to be addressed as authors and inventors, not just as future service workers and clerks. To be contributing adults, they will need the skills to come up with new ideas, strategies, products, partnerships, and ways of doing business.⁵ While much of this conversation tends to draw on science, technology, and business as its model, education in the arts and humanities may have a renewed role to play in this work.⁶

The work of writers and artists has a number of features that extend what we might want as principles informing the design of universal learning experiences. Most importantly, a number of these same principles inform the work of scientists, engineers, and entrepreneurs:⁷

- **Originality:** Artists and writers have as their job making visible, audible, and palpable what we would otherwise miss in the ordinary drill of daily life. To do so, they regularly use tools outside familiar language and logic to make their point: metaphors, symbols, allusions, connections, and exaggerations. By operating in a range of complementary ways, artists often provide the equivalent of glasses or rubber handles or ramps, placing within our reach what would ordinarily be beyond our powers.
- **Choices and Varieties of Excellence:** The arts are domains in which excellence has many forms. There are not so many “right” answers as there are multiple, effective, powerful, or stunning ones. Think of all the ways there are to create a portrait. Or to write a love song. But to realize a powerful solution or new version means making choices about what to say and how to say it.
- **Stretch:** The arts are about stretching beyond limits you once thought unattainable. (I know a musician who, in describing his experiences rehearsing with other skilled chamber musicians, claims, “They make me play better than I can.”) This apparent contradiction is about what happens at the intersection between high personal and interpersonal standards for performance. It is about imagining and pursuing a level of performance that goes beyond what is easily within your grasp.
- **Exchange and Response:** In schools, student work typically has no real audience and response is typically restricted to grading or correcting work, a process that focuses largely on accuracy, leaving aside originality, impact or voice. But in the arts, work is done for the purpose of reaching and affecting an audience. The questions are: How has what I have created reached and

affected those who experience it?” and “What does this teach me about my current work and its possible evolution?”

The basic proposition here is that when we assemble the insights from these three lines of work, we have an enlarged set of design principles that define learning environments in which many students could be fully productive. In these environments, three important and overlapping forms of access exist: access to understanding, excellence, and imagination. The argument is that all three are necessary for a very wide range of students, with different histories, experiences, physical capacities, and modes of processing information to perceive, understand, and create in powerful ways. Only when arts education lives up to these principles is it a “freedom machine.” Only then is it like a universally designed kitchen or car, putting feasts and travels within the reach of many learners. (See Table 1.)

Evaluating Arts Education for Understanding, Excellence, and Imagination

The Holocaust unit, featured on pages 16–23, was collaboratively developed by the Studio Museum in Harlem and the Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High School. In this unit, teachers, teaching artists and students in a humanities class read Elie Wiesel’s memoir *Night* and students, in the role of artists, developed collages using phrases from the text to express the core messages of the work. The unit is designed to serve all ninth- and tenth-grade students, a number of whom struggle to pass district and state tests of proficiency. Some students have had the uneven K–8 schooling that many urban students experience; others have been in and out of formal schooling due to immigration and/or many changes of address. Others experience cognitive and emotional challenges.

So suppose the school district called the question, recommending that given these students’ academic struggles, the school’s discretionary dollars should be spent on extra tutoring in literacy or mathematics. Suppose, in return, that the principal and teachers argued that the investment in arts learning was worth every penny since it provided high-quality conceptual learning for the full range of students at the high school?⁸ What evidence could they, an outside evaluator, or a team of observers from the district collect and examine to back this claim?

Often, in evaluations, researchers examine the outcomes for groups of students who do and do not receive a program or treatment. Although this approach can reveal whether or not a program had the expected effects, evaluation can do much more. It can also provide valuable information about how fully or well a program is being implemented and where it needs to be strengthened. In addition, it can help to build the capacity of the school or organization that is offering a program. But to accomplish these ends, an evaluation must go beyond the examination of outcomes to examining: 1) the opportunities that the program actually delivers (not just what it promises); 2) different episodes of learning; and 3) who is learning. (See Table 2.)

**Table 1: DIMENSIONS OF AN ENRICHED FRAMEWORK
FOR OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN**

Opportunity to Understand: Dimensions Derived from Universal Designs for Learning
<p>Multiple Modes of Representation: Use of different materials, symbol systems, and displays of information, to give learners various ways of acquiring information and knowledge.</p> <p>Multiple Modes of Expression: Students have the opportunity to use different materials, symbol systems, and displays in order to demonstrate their understanding.</p> <p>Multiple Forms of Engagement: Includes diverse approaches to tap into learners' interests, offer appropriate challenges, and increase their motivation, persistence, and investment.</p>
Opportunity for Excellence: Dimensions Derived from Equity and Standards Movement
<p>Clear and Widely Shared Information: Directions, timelines, assignments, expectations, and rubrics are shared, printed, and discussed in language that has meaning for students. Students see examples from adult and student work that make the standards concrete and compelling.</p> <p>Sustained Access to Key Tools, Spaces, and Interactions: Students have access to the tools, spaces, and interactions they need to accomplish good work. This access is sustained and adequate for accomplishing good work.</p> <p>Challenging Assignments: All students have access to the big ideas and critical processes for doing good work. Processes are within the command of what students have had the opportunity to learn or are explicitly taught so that everyone can master them. All students participate in the critical processes for learning: developing ideas, planning, discussion, critique, and reflection.</p> <p>Supports for Learning: Students are supported, not penalized, for their evolving understanding. There are opportunities to ask questions, get extra help, take different approaches, revise work, or extend the hours and materials originally planned.</p>
Opportunity to Imagine: Dimensions Derived from Arts Education
<p>Originality: The expectation is that students will produce original work, choosing materials, images, and modes of expression in order to shape and communicate their ideas, insights, points of view, and feelings. To do so, there are the time, materials, and interactions that make it possible to do original thinking and to execute the work. Students are addressed as authors and artists, and helped to experiment, learn from others' work, and select and refine their own works and performances.</p> <p>Choices and Varieties of Excellence: Students with diverse abilities and approaches can develop their own work to new levels and make contributions to the understanding and development of others' performances or work. Assignments and classroom interactions acknowledge the individuality of student messages, styles, and intents.</p> <p>Stretch: Teachers, teaching artists, and students agree to work to high standards, as individuals and as a collective. In addition, there is a mutual investment in the rising level of quality expected for final products or performances across a school year and over successive years. This is evident in critiques, discussions, and in the ways that student work is used to set new levels of expectation for individuals and for classes as a whole.</p> <p>Exchange and Response: Students have audiences for their work that go beyond the classroom. They have responses to their work that include learning about how their work affects other people. These opportunities might include a performance or exhibition for other students or their families that includes artists' statements, audience feedback, and discussions with audience members.</p>

Table 2: EVIDENCE OF OPPORTUNITY IN THE UNIT ON THE HOLOCAUST
(pp. 16–23)

Multiple Modes of Representation	Students learn about the Holocaust through literature, discussion, film, and other visual images. They also discuss nonverbal forms of communication such as visual symbols.
Multiple Modes of Expression	Students have multiple opportunities to develop and demonstrate their understanding of the Holocaust and its meaning, which occur throughout the course of the unit: classroom discussion, collage, artists' statements, and the text of what they say to the visitors they guide through that exhibition.
Multiple Forms of Engagement	The unit provides students with multiple and varied ways to engage with their own and others' work: informal studio interactions and classroom discussions, independent work sessions, and formal and more public events, such as the trip to the gallery.
Clear and Widely Shared Information about Expectations	Students began the unit looking at the work of adult artists who use text as a part of their visual art. Throughout, they continue to look at adult and student work that make the standards concrete and compelling. They have the timeline and assignments for the unit. The criteria for good work are printed and discussed.
Access to Tools, Techniques, Spaces, and Interactions	Students all have copies of <i>Night</i> by Elie Wiesel. They have ample time on computers to experiment with typefaces and generate their selections. The art materials (paint, gel medium, and brushes) are of high quality. Students visit other gallery spaces and speak with curators.
Challenging Assignments	All students are expected to create a powerful graphic collage that combines words or phrases from <i>Night</i> with symbolic imagery in monochromatic hues and to write an artist's statement explaining the choices they have made as artists. These assignments demand that students think and work in both factual and symbolic ways.
Supports for Learning	Students were supported, not penalized, for their evolving understanding. For example, to help them grasp the enormity and consequences of the Holocaust, teachers and artists help students to connect to experiences in their own families and cultural histories, like the cruelties of the Trujillo dictatorship.
Originality	The unit required multiple forms of imagination: 1) entry into a different historical period and place; 2) empathy for cultural and ethnic groups different from students' own; 3) entry into the world Wiesel creates in <i>Night</i> in order to select images at the core of that work; and 4) the creation of new symbols evoking the experience of the Holocaust.
Choice and Varieties of Excellence	Students with diverse abilities and approaches developed their own texts and images. They made individual choices about what to emphasize and how to communicate that message through the choices they made as readers, typographers, and visual artists. The resulting student work illustrates how seriously students took their responsibility for individual choices. (See the examples of student work.)
Stretch	Classroom teachers and the teaching artist worked with students to create carefully considered and deeply felt images. The unit proceeded in layers, each layer designed to increase students' knowledge of the choices and options that they have in generating their works.
Audience and Response	In addition to classroom-based response and critique, the unit also contained experiences with real-world audiences, such as an exhibition in the school's gallery space.

Look at Opportunities as Well as Outcomes

In a period in U.S. education where school quality and accountability have been defined solely in terms of outcomes (especially standardized test scores), the Holocaust unit reminds us of the importance of examining the underlying opportunities that students have to develop and achieve. Without that kind of inquiry, we have no way of understanding how a particular program or school contributes to students' success (or struggles), and consequently, no map for locating what should be improved, strengthened, or widely used in other classrooms and schools striving for more inclusive forms of education.

Therefore, an evaluator has to develop the tools and invest the time to find out, "What evidence is there that this program, or unit within this program, provides students with the different forms of opportunity that characterize a fully productive learning environment?" For example, in programs that use the arts as a major conduit for teaching and learning, with respect to the dimension of understanding, it would be important to capture if teachers and artists are using many media and approaches to work with the challenging concept of symbols. Those same observations should examine whether students have multiple opportunities, using different modes of expression, to demonstrate their growing understanding. With respect to the dimension of excellence, evaluators need to ask if there is clear evidence for challenge in the multiple assignments within the unit. In looking at access to imagination, an evaluator should ask whether or not students have the opportunity to envision new alternatives and to express their unique insights throughout the unit. Table 2 lists the kinds of evidence that an evaluator collected in looking at a similar unit on the Holocaust, where students were producing a poem, rather than a collage, using phrases taken from *Night*.⁹

Look at Different Episodes of Learning

The unit on the Holocaust involves students, teachers, and artists in many types of learning and interaction: reading, discussion, studio time, gallery visits, and as writing artists' statements for a show of their own work in the school's hallway galleries. Thus a full evaluation of this type of intensive teaching and learning requires looking closely at the learning that occurs during these different episodes:

1. Instances of formal instruction (e.g., classes with teachers and teaching artists, whether at school or in the museum's galleries);
2. Informal learning sparked by formal instruction (e.g., riding the subway back from the gallery, student collaborations during lunchtime as they finish their work for the unit); and
3. Culminating performances or exhibitions of student work (e.g., the opening event for the show of Holocaust collages).

A strong program, well delivered, is one in which there is evidence of student engagement and learning across these different settings. If students are coming in early or returning to class at lunch to work on their projects, and if they are importing what they have learned in class into their informal collaborations, then there is evidence of an effective program.

Look at the Experience of Different Groups of Students

Often educational evaluations operate at the level of schools or districts, commenting on the quality of instruction, climate or achievement at that level of analysis. But research regularly points out that the variation in the quality of teaching and learning is frequently greater within a single school than it is across schools. And frequently the variability of experience is as great within a single classroom as it is across classrooms. Until evaluations address that variability, they are unlikely to help educators design and conduct learning that is fully inclusive. Therefore, it is vital that evaluations examine the learning experiences of different groups of students within classrooms and schools. How much access to understanding, excellence, and imagination do currently high and low achieving students have? What about English-language learners, or students with learning disabilities?

Table 3: SAMPLE OF OBSERVATION OF THREE STUDENTS

Minute	Teacher	Struggling Student	Striving Student	Thriving Student
0-2	Explains assignment to select words and phrases.	Listens, fiddles.	Takes out book; hunts for paper.	Takes out book, turns to page, skims, offers examples of words, asks if they count.
2-4	Moves among individual students.	Flips through pages Teacher notices, comes by, and talks through definition of hope, despair.	Makes list of words, quickly gets about 12-15.	Heads 2 columns: <i>Hope</i> , <i>Despair</i> . Makes list of words that express these emotions.
4-6	Returns to struggling student. Speaks to whole class: It does not have to be long, more important to get feeling & ideas.	Finds several words with Teacher.	Keeps going onto second side of paper.	Reads over list, circling some that appear to be choices.
6-8	Speaking to struggling student: Got a lot, might choose the best for saying what you want.	Continues to build a list of words, and then reads it over several times, erases some items. Reads the list again, goes back to the book.	Continues.	If we can't find all we want, can we go to another part of the book?
The observation continues.				

Table 3 presents a sample of evaluation work from a similar project in which three students were selected for observation, each currently performing at different levels (struggling, striving, and thriving).¹⁰ They were observed during a period when they were rereading Elie Wiesel's *Night* to select words and phrases for their compositions. Looking at the first eight minutes of the observation session begins to show how each of the students, independent of his or her current level of achievement, is addressed as a thoughtful individual with the potential for creative work. Where records show consistently different patterns of activity, learning strategies, or the ability to generate original ideas: these are the places to go to work.

Look in Ways That Build Capacity¹¹

The work that teachers, artists, and students are doing in this and similar programs is demanding. Any evaluation process that presumes to measure or judge this work has an equal responsibility to build and support the capacity of all who are involved. This does not mean endorsing what happens blindly. Instead, it means using the luxury of an evaluation to establish a shared conversation about what is excellent, what is “at promise,” and what needs to improve. This has several implications: the questions pursued in the evaluation should be formulated between all the partners at the outset. Teachers, teaching artists, and students should be co-researchers, not just objects in the process.¹² Any episode of evaluation work should be designed to be useful to all the participants. For example, student interviews, while more time-consuming than surveys, can provide young people with the chance to formulate their thoughts, to share their work, and to learn to speak with adults about their experiences. In the same spirit, it is vital to talk with teachers and teaching artists about what the initial data appear to show, involving them in the interpretation, and asking for their insights into successes and frontiers for improving the work. In every sense, like the classrooms described earlier, an evaluation should be an opportunity to learn and to imagine how to overcome current barriers. To be worth the investment, an evaluation has to contribute to our understanding of the circumstances under which arts education lives up to, or falls short of, its promise as a “freedom machine.”



Acknowledgments

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¹ http://www.pbs.org/pov/pov2004/freedommachines/special_universal_04.html

² This is a term developed by the Center for Applied Special Technologies.

³ <http://www.cast.org>

⁴ M. Eagleton, "Making Text Come to Life on the Computer: Toward an Understanding of Hypermedia Literacy," *Reading Online* 6(1); L. O'Neill, "Digital Literature: How Technology and Literature-Based Instruction Can Support Literacy Development," *Cable in the Classroom* 12(11): 6–9; D.H. Rose and B. Dalton, "Using Technology to Individualize Reading Instruction," in C.C. Block et al., *Improving Comprehension Instruction: Rethinking Research, Theory, and Classroom Practice* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2002), 257–274.

⁵ R. Murnane and H. Levy, *Teaching the New Basic Skills: Principles for Educating Children to Thrive in a Changing Economy*. (New York: Free Press, 1996); National Center for Education and the Economy (for the National Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce), *Tough Times or Tough Choices* (Washington, D.C., 2007); D. Pink, *A Whole New Kind of Mind: Moving from the Technological Age to the Conceptual Age* (New York: Penguin, 2005).

⁶ M. Nussbaum, "Teaching Humanity," *Newsweek* (international edition) August 21–28, 2006. Accessed August 30, 2007, from <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/14322948/>.

⁷ The dimension of imagination is at the center of the work of a number of innovative educational programs or sets of schools. For example, the school highlighted here, Fannie Lou Hamer, is a partnership school that has been supported by the Center for Arts Education in New York City. Lincoln Center Institute places imagination and inquiry at the center of their work with K–12 schools. The Envision Schools in California have a similar mission, using art and technology.

⁸ This discussion is based on several tools, the Teaching and Learning Review and the Framework for Special Education, developed by the Annenberg Institute for School Reform (<http://www.annenberginstitute.org>).

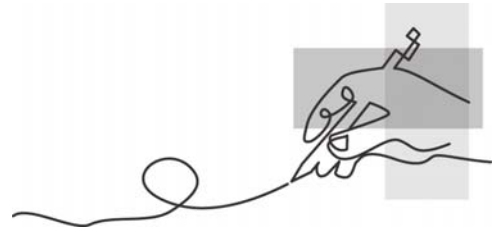
⁹ These observations are taken from another school in which similarly inclusive teaching using the arts also focused on a study of *Night*. In this case the students' final product was a collage poem about hope or despair, composed of phrases taken from the text.

¹⁰ These observations, like those in Table 2, are taken from another school in which similarly inclusive teaching using the arts also focused on a study of *Night*. In this case the students' final product was a collage poem about hope or despair, composed of phrases taken from the text.

¹¹ D. Wolf, J. Bransom, and K. Denson, *More Than Measuring* (2007), <http://www.bigthought.org>.

¹² See the essay in this series by Gail Burnaford in this collection.

Case Example Documentation



Traci Molloy

The Studio Museum of Harlem

Aamir Rodriguez

Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High School

History of the Collaboration

For the past seven years, Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High School (FLH) and The Studio Museum in Harlem (SMH) have been working together with support from the Alternative School Consortium for Cultural Literacy, the Center for Arts Education, and Project Arts to integrate the arts into the curriculum as a way to reach learners. The collaboration has transformed teaching practice as well as impacted student learning and overall school culture. Each year, a teaching artist works collaboratively with the ninth- and tenth-grade humanities team to develop two hands-on art projects that reflect aspects of their curriculum. There are six core humanities educators who teach twelve courses, two per instructor. Students in the classes range from 14 to 18 years of age. There is one self-contained classroom for students with special needs. Although there is a wide range of skills within the self-contained setting, the average instructional level in reading and writing is sixth grade.

The partnership has allowed ninth- and tenth-grade students to have access to art instruction, from which they have traditionally been excluded. It provides direct support for students who would not otherwise receive arts instruction until the eleventh grade, and makes it possible for FLH youth to reach benchmarks outlined by the New York City Department of Education's *Blueprint for Arts Teaching and Learning*.¹ The curriculum incorporates basic art making techniques, vocabulary, art history, and visual literacy exercises.

The Studio Museum in Harlem has also become a valuable resource for classroom teachers. Every ninth- and tenth-grade humanities student visits the museum yearly with the teaching artist and an accompanying humanities teacher. For many students, this is the first museum experience. The museum is committed to enhancing school curricula and encouraging innovative teaching practice, which includes increasing the level of interaction with works of art and engaging students in visual thinking strategies that increase aesthetic literacy and critical thinking skills.

The Unit of Study: The Holocaust

During the Holocaust Unit, students used memoir as a tool for analyzing universal themes associated with human rights violations. Central to this study were investigations of how imagery and theme develop meaning within the text. Students studied two memoirs: *Night* by Elie Wiesel and *Maus* by Art Spiegelman. Students were asked to write a thematic literature paper that analyzed themes of hope and despair in both works. The broader understandings for the unit were: (1) Imagery is a tool that authors use to create empathy; (2) Imagery helps develop and strengthen the themes present in a literary work; (3) Every human being has certain natural rights; and (4) A human rights violation occurs when a person is denied his or her natural rights.

Students worked with teaching artist Traci Molloy to create mixed-media monochromatic paintings/collages that incorporated text from *Night*, a quote they would later use in their papers. The objectives for the hands-on art component involved:

- furthering students' understanding of the Holocaust by visually interpreting a passage from *Night*;
- working on new art skills, including typography, collage, and monochromatic painting;
- viewing and discussing artwork made during the Holocaust, as well as work made by artists who combine text with a limited background palette; and
- building on previous art concepts that dealt with symbolic imagery/color, focal point, and compositional design.

After completing the mixed media collage, students were asked to write a one-page artist's statement to accompany their artwork. In the written reflection, students explained their aesthetic choices, outlining their rationale for the monochromatic color, type (both font size and style), layout, and imagery. The statements were hung in partnership with each art piece in an all ninth- and tenth-grade gallery exhibition that showcased their Holocaust knowledge. Design ideas and exhibition layout were based on field trips to the Studio Museum in Harlem, as well as a field trip to the Museum of Jewish Heritage.

CURRICULUM MAP

Big Ideas:

- Artists observe and construct meanings about their environment.
- The world is a source of inspiration for the artist.
- Artwork can communicate a social/political agenda.
- Artwork can challenge and provoke a viewer.
- Art and social history/literature are intertwined, not separate.

NYC <i>Blueprint</i>	Residency Timeline			
Art Making	Sketch symbolic design	Paint background and explain rationale for hidden and/or revealed words	Collage making connection between the passage from <i>Night</i> text and graphic image	Exhibition of student work and statements
Arts Literacy	Discuss examples of paintings with text backgrounds (Ed Ruscha, Tim Rollins +K.O.S., and Kwang Young Chun)	Typography and graphic design vocabulary Symbolic color		
Making Connections	Read and highlight main theme/concepts from <i>Night</i>			
Community Resources				Field trip to the Jewish Museum or the Holocaust Museum, NYC

Student Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the humanities unit, students were able to:

- Explain how imagery can develop or strengthen a theme within a text;
- Deconstruct imagery within a text and explain its connection to the book's theme or broader themes;
- Construct their own imagery associated with a text;
- Explain rights to which a human being is entitled; and
- Explain what constitutes a human rights violation and give several examples.

By the end of the art unit, students were able to:

- Develop a mixed-media collage that integrated text with symbolic color/imagery;
- Demonstrate knowledge of monochromatic color by utilizing various tints and shades;
- Demonstrate a basic knowledge of typography, particularly the significance of font and size selection;
- Translate literary comprehension into visual imagery/comprehension; and
- Write an artist's statement that clearly reflected their compositional, aesthetic, and symbolic choices, as well as knowledge of new art vocabulary terms.

Instructional Strategies:

The teaching artist also collaborated with classroom teachers to differentiate the instruction for students with learning disabilities. The unit was designed so that it could be executed in a wide range of settings with minimal adaptation. The following strategies were used by classroom instructors:

- Rather than asking students to immediately interpret a quote in visual form, students were asked to first use their literacy skills to analyze the quote and then brainstormed imagery associated with key words in the text. This helped motivate students who have processing and/or output issues.
- Students were given additional time when needed to develop their ideas in a meaningful way.
- To assist students with selecting appropriate type settings, students were given assistive technology (laptops) to work with, which allowed them to experiment with different fonts and text sizes, as well as make numerous copies of their final text for the collage.
- Students with limited motor skills were assisted in cutting out their words, or were given the option to tear out their text if appropriate to the context of the piece.
- For students who had trouble conceptualizing their final text composition, a photo was taken of the desired layout so they could then clear off their painting and use the photo as a visual reference, instead of having to reconstruct it from memory.

Example of Student Success: Jeremiah



Student Artist's Statement for Holocaust Painting

The quote [that I based] my painting on was, "You are in Auschwitz and Auschwitz is not a convalescent home. It is a concentration camp. Here you have to work. If not, you will go straight to the furnace. To the crematory. Work or the crematory—the choice is in your hands."²

I painted the picture of the devil's eye in my painting. My picture is open for interpretation because I was trying to say that the Auschwitz is like devils home. The colors I chose were white; black and red. I picked these colors to show that in the Auschwitz there is no hope.

The quotes I chose for my painting are "choice," "straight to the furnace," "it is a concentration camp," "not a convalescent," and "Auschwitz." I chose these words to explain that the Holocaust was a time of life or death or torment until the Jews meet death. The words that I chose are supposed to create sadness and fear.

I made the words choice and it's a concentration camp in to a [piece] of the devils eye to say that the Auschwitz is like the devils domain and to show that there is no hope of ever surviving. I chose the color dark red to say that in Auschwitz you will be shot even if you do smallest job wrong. These are your choices: work or die.

—Jeremiah

Teachers' Summary of Student Learning Evidence

Jeremiah was having a hard time experiencing empathy for Holocaust victims and other victims of human rights abuses. He was also having difficulty identifying why certain behaviors constituted abuse of human rights. During the art project, he selected a quote about victims' experiences at the Auschwitz death camp. It was through his exploration of the imagery associated with his quote that Jeremiah began to grasp the magnitude of the events he was studying, and developed a keen sense of empathy for those he read about. The project helped put a human face on the themes that had previously seemed far removed from his world. At the end of the art unit, he could discuss human rights violations with an appropriate sense of why the Holocaust constituted an egregious human rights violation.

Example of Student Success: Carmen



Student Artist's Statement for Holocaust Painting

The quote that I based my painting on was, "Drive out your despair, and you will keep away from yourselves. Hell is not for eternity. And now, a prayer or rather, a piece of advice: let there be comradeship among you. We are all brothers and we are all suffering the same fate. The same smoke floats over all our heads. Help one another. It is the only way to survive."³ The thing I painted [was] two hands touching each other and a heart between the two hands. I also painted stars in the sky and one big Star of David in the middle of my picture.

The words I used were "keep death away," "eternity," and "comradeship among you." I chose these words because they are powerful words and they connect to my picture. They connect to my painting because I colored it with dark colors, dark blue and black. I had the hands pushing the words "keep death away" up and away. I did this because if death comes all the way the Jews would die.

The colors I use were white, black, and blue. The feeling of my color like blue is unhappy, because I wanted a dark color and I was talking about the Holocaust and that was sad what people went through.

—Carmen

Teachers' Summary of Student Learning Evidence

Carmen immediately empathized with victims but had a hard time putting what she had learned into context: where did these events fit in to the broader spectrum of human behavior? She chose to defend her Holocaust project and artwork during her tenth-grade portfolio defense and promotion panel, and it was there that she made an important connection to her own heritage. She stated that Hitler's behavior and the group mentality of the Nazis paralleled Trujillo's reign of terror within her own native land, the Dominican Republic. She applied what she learned and realized that despotic governments and totalitarian leaders often create conditions that result in human rights violations.



Acknowledgments

The Studio Museum in Harlem is the nexus for artists of African descent locally, nationally, and internationally, as well as for work that has been inspired and influenced by black culture. Since opening in a rented loft at Fifth Avenue and 125th Street in 1968, The Studio Museum in Harlem has earned recognition for its catalytic role in promoting the works of artists of African descent. A wide variety of education and public programs have brought the African American experience alive for the public by means of lectures, dialogues, panel discussions, and performances, as well as interpretive programs both on-site and off-site for students and teachers. The exhibitions program has also expanded the scope of art historical literature through the production of scholarly catalogues, brochures, and pamphlets.

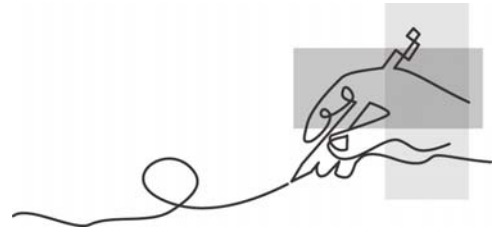
Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High School (FLH) is a small alternative high school that began in the South Bronx in 1994. With an enrollment of approximately 460 students and an average class size of 22 students, Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High School is dedicated to educating students with a diverse range of learning needs. FLH places great emphasis on oral reports and student portfolios of written work. The curriculum is project-based, and the school operates on the notion that it is better for students to learn a few subjects in-depth than to be exposed to a smattering of knowledge on many topics. The school's block schedule and separation into two divisions (one for ninth- and tenth-grade students and one for eleventh- and twelfth-graders) allows for concentrated learning time, a model ideal for arts practice.

¹ <http://schools.nyc.gov/offices/teachlearn/arts/blueprint.html>

² Elie Wiesel, *Night* (New York: Bantam), 1982.

³ Ibid.

What You See Is What You Get: The Development of an Observational Strategy



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During the 2005–2006 school year, ArtsConnection of New York City launched its DELLTA (Developing English Language Literacy Through the Arts) program. As one part of our DELLTA¹ program evaluation, our research team set about developing an observational strategy that would build upon our prior work while also providing rich and accurate data from DELLTA’s artist residencies.²

We began with five criteria for instrument development. The instrument needed to be unobtrusive, practical, authentic, valid, and reliable.

- **Unobtrusive**—Our presence (as researchers) in the classroom should have as little impact as possible on the artists’ and teachers’ ability to teach and the children’s ability to learn.
- **Practical**—The instrument should be relatively easy to use by experienced researchers in varied classroom contexts. Data should be gathered, coded, aggregated, and analyzed as efficiently as possible.
- **Authentic**—Observational data should reflect authentic artistic and academic experiences.
- **Valid**—The assessment criteria in the instrument should accurately reflect the intended and operational instructional content of the artists and teachers.
- **Reliable**—The instrument should yield accurate and consistent data when used by different researchers in different schools and classrooms.

While these criteria are certainly not mutually exclusive, our efforts to make the instrument practical and unobtrusive had the potential for reducing its reliability. Our data would be more accurate if multiple raters assessed individual children, for instance, but then we would not be able to use it in numerous diverse and authentic classroom settings. Therefore, we attempted to strike a reasonable balance between potentially competing criteria.

To develop the ArtsConnection DELLTA assessment, we needed to choose a set of observable indicators that reflected DELLTA instructional content and was consistent with our prior and current research on ArtsConnection’s programs. And because ArtsConnection’s DELLTA program was implemented in both elementary and middle schools, and included dance and theater artists, we wanted to develop four assessment instruments to reflect each possible instructional and grade level possibility. However, we also wished—as much as possible—to use the same variables in each of the instruments so that we could

analyze data across different classroom settings.

To start, we gathered a potential set of observable student indicators. We used three sources:

- Criteria within ArtsConnection-developed Observation Sheets³;
- Our prior research on aspects of student development within cognitive, social, and personal domains; and
- Our ongoing qualitative research within ArtsConnection residencies.

ArtsConnection's Observation Sheets are part of their professional development process within inquiry-based arts partnerships. They help artists and teachers learn to focus on their students' observable behaviors in dance and theater. Behavioral indicators adapted from the Observation Sheets included *physical control, coordination and agility*, and *spatial awareness* (for dance), and *physical awareness, physical expression, and commitment* (for theater).

We selected additional behavioral indicators by comparing our qualitative data with our prior research on cognitive, social, and personal development. In the *Learning In and Through the Arts* study at Teachers College, we identified a model of cognitive skills, social competencies, and personal dispositions that operated within arts learning that were also operational within other academic subjects and life experiences, and might serve as the mechanism of transfer between the arts and other areas.⁴ Subsequently, in our research and evaluation of ArtsConnection partnerships, we developed a series of rating scales to assess aspects of the cognitive-social-personal model.⁵ Indicators selected from this model included *elaboration, motivation, ability to focus, perseverance/task persistence, and ownership of learning*.

We also chose several indicators that reflected DELLTA program goals or areas of student development that we had observed, such as *acquisition of English language skills* and *gives constructive feedback to other students*.

The student behavioral indicators were matched with a set of pedagogical indicators reflecting superior instruction or collaboration by artists and/or teachers. These were also based upon our prior and ongoing research, and included areas such as *provides opportunity for verbal expression, effective collaboration between artist and teacher, and teacher support and buy-in*.

Four observation instruments were set up as four spreadsheet worksheets (for dance and theater, and for elementary and middle school). We named the instrument the Classroom Assessment for Learning and Teaching (CALT), distributed it to a team of four field researchers, and began to use it within a diverse group of DELLTA residencies. (See Tables 1 and 2.)

Each Excel worksheet had three columns (or fields) to submit data. In the first data field, the researchers estimated the percentage of students who demonstrated a behavior that indicated achievement within a certain indicator. Estimates could range from 0 to 10, representing 0% to 100%. In our study, researchers estimated the maximum achievement during any one moment in a class, although the protocol could also be used at specified intervals or to assess different classroom tasks. If the artist or teacher did not provide a classroom opportunity for achievement within a particular indicator, then that spreadsheet cell was left blank.

Researchers also noted if they observed the presence of the pedagogical indicators. We decided to make these dichotomous variables—that is, the researchers simply checked off whether or not they observed the artists or teachers demonstrate these behaviors.

In the second data field, researchers input text that described the behaviors representing each indicator. The researchers were encouraged to be as detailed as possible, and to describe individual children's behaviors rather than submit generalities about the entire class's behavior. These slices of qualitative data were essential for our analysis. We purposely did not select specific behaviors in advance to represent successful achievement within our indicators. Instead, we hoped to develop a body of qualitative data that described each indicator. This would help us refine the instrumentation in the future, and help us understand how the field researchers were responding to the observation instrument and the classroom experience. Equally as important, we expected that the qualitative data would help us describe to program participants the aspects of the teaching and learning experiences that were most successful, and those aspects that were not as effective. The third data field was labeled "notes" and provided researchers with the opportunity to additionally annotate their statistical estimations and their qualitative data.

In spring 2007, four researchers used the new instruments in a varied group of ArtsConnection dance and theater residencies in several schools in Brooklyn, Queens, and Manhattan, New York City. The instruments were used for 24 elementary school classroom observations and 6 middle school observations. Field researchers took detailed notes during each observation of an artist residency within a participating classroom. Later, they filled in the spreadsheet/protocol for each class they observed and submitted it to "ArtsResearch Central" via e-mail.

Table 1: CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING—THEATER

Student Indicators—Elementary School Theater	Achievement	Behavioral Indicators	Notes
1. Physical awareness			
2. Physical expression			
3. Vocal expression			
4. Commitment			
5. Observation			
7. Creative expressiveness in theater			
8. Imagination/problem solving			
9. Verbal or written expression of ideas or feelings			
10. Application of vocabulary from arts classes			
11. Acquisition of English language skills			
12. Elaboration			
13. Cooperative learning skills/collaboration			
14. Motivation			
15. Perseverance/task persistence			
16. Ability to focus			
17. Ownership of learning			
18. Self-confidence/risk taking			
19. Demonstrates good audience skills			
20. Gives constructive feedback to other students			
Teaching Indicators (Check)			
1. Provides opportunities for verbal expression			
2. Provides opportunities for expression in theater			
3. Provides opportunities for application of vocabulary			
4. Makes explicit connections between theater and English skills			
5. Makes other academic or cultural connections			
6. Provides opportunities for editing, elaboration, or improvisation			
7. Fosters broader understanding of theater			
8. Supports effective collaboration between artist and teacher			
9. Teacher support and buy-in			
10. Promotes teacher comfort and confidence with using theater			
11. Fosters sense of ownership			
School:		Researcher:	
Teacher:		Date of observation:	
Artist:		Number of students observed:	

Table 2: CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING—DANCE

Student Indicators—Elementary School Dance	Achievement	Behavioral Indicators	Notes
1. Physical control			
2. Coordination and agility			
3. Spatial awareness			
4. Observation and recall			
5. Rhythm			
6. Movement qualities			
7. Improvisation			
8. Creative expressiveness in dance			
9. Verbal or written expression of ideas or feelings			
10. Application of vocabulary from arts classes			
11. Acquisition of English language skills			
12. Elaboration			
13. Cooperative learning skills/collaboration			
14. Motivation			
15. Perseverance/task persistence			
16. Ability to focus			
17. Ownership of learning			
18. Self-confidence/risk taking			
19. Demonstrates good audience skills			
Teaching Indicators (Check)			
1. Provides opportunities for verbal expression			
2. Provides opportunities for expression in dance			
3. Provides opportunities for application of vocabulary			
4. Makes explicit connections between dance activities and English skills			
5. Makes other academic or cultural connections			
6. Provides opportunities for editing, elaboration or improvisation			
7. Fosters broader understanding of dance			
8. Supports effective collaboration between artist and teacher			
9. Promotes teacher support and buy-in			
10. Facilitates teacher comfort and confidence with using dance			
11. Fosters sense of ownership			
School:		Researcher:	
Teacher:		Date of observation:	
Artist:		Number of students observed:	

Analysis Process

The spreadsheet and Internet-based data collection method expedited the analysis process. A master spreadsheet was developed by aggregating the spreadsheet submissions from each researcher. Overall mean scores and standard deviations, for all researcher estimates, were calculated for each indicator. We also obtained scores for *opportunity*. This score indicated the percentage of observable opportunities for each indicator, because the researchers left cells blank if the class they observed did not provide an opportunity for estimating achievement for an indicator. We did not use estimates for an indicator if an *opportunity* score was less than 35%.

We obtained overall statistics, as well as scores for individual artists, schools, and researchers. We compared scores from different researchers to obtain initial estimates of inter-rater reliability.

By using the sorting features of the spreadsheet application, we were able to extract all of the qualitative data coded according to each behavioral indicator. Then we could examine all descriptions of children's behaviors for each indicator, and analyze by looking for patterns and the most salient behaviors. With a little experimentation, the spreadsheet proved to be effective for qualitative analysis and served some of the elementary functions of qualitative analysis software.⁶

Results

Results in the following tables show the average estimates for each student indicator. The indicators are placed in rank order of highest to lowest scores, to demonstrate the most salient indicators.

For example, the strongest score in theater was in student *motivation*, with an average of 83.85% of observed students (across all classes and observations) demonstrating behaviors indicating *motivation* within ArtsConnection DELTA residencies. The second highest score was in *cooperative learning/collaboration*, with an average of 78.57% of students demonstrating this skill. It is interesting to note, however, that the standard deviation is much lower for *motivation* than for *cooperative learning* (8.7% compared with 23.4%), indicating more agreement among raters on the *motivation* variable.

Other high-scoring indicators in theater included *ability to focus* (78.18%; SD = 14.0), *perseverance/task persistence* (77.78%; SD = 9.7), and *commitment* (73.85%; SD = 13.3).

Table 3: CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING—THEATER

Student Indicators— Theater	Mean	SD
Motivation	83.85%	8.7
Cooperative Learning/Collaboration	78.57%	23.4
Ability to Focus	78.18%	14.0
Perseverance/Task Persistence	77.78%	9.7
Commitment	73.85%	13.3
Imagination/Problem Solving	73.33%	15.8
Ownership of Learning	71.11%	13.6
Observation	68.18%	14.0
Physical Awareness	66.92%	13.8
Vocal Expression	66.36%	21.6
Physical Expression	65.83%	16.8
Creative Expressiveness in Theater	62.50%	18.6
Self-Confidence/Risk Taking	60.00%	25.5
Acquisition of English Language Skills	56.00%	24.1
Elaboration	50.00%	19.1

In Table 4, the strongest score in dance residencies was also in the area of *motivation* (89.00%; SD = 8.8). Other high-scoring indicators in theater included *improvisation* (82.50%; SD = 10.4), *ability to focus* (82.00%; SD = 11.4), *ownership of learning* (81.11%; SD = 12.7),⁷ and *observation and recall* (80.00%; SD = 10.0).

By combining CALT scores from both the dance and theater residencies, we were able to identify the highest scoring indicators across arts disciplines, schools, and artists. *Motivation* was the most significant overall indicator, followed by *ability to focus*, *perseverance/task persistence*, *cooperative learning/collaboration*, and *ownership of learning*. These results indicate that our observers found that these were areas where ArtsConnection was strongest in supporting student growth through their arts residencies.

Table 4: CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING—DANCE

Student Indicators— Dance	Mean	SD
Motivation	89.00%	8.8
Improvisation	82.50%	10.4
Ability to Focus	82.00%	11.4
Ownership of Learning	81.11%	12.7
Observation and Recall	80.00%	10.0
Creative Expressiveness in Dance	80.00%	10.0
Perseverance/Task Persistence	80.00%	10.5
Self-Confidence/Risk Taking	80.00%	21.6
Spatial Awareness	77.00%	10.6
Rhythm	73.00%	14.9
Physical Control	71.00%	13.7
Verbal or Written Expression of Ideas or Feelings	67.78%	19.2
Cooperative Learning/Collaboration	67.50%	18.3
Coordination and Agility	66.00%	15.1
Movement Qualities	64.29%	23.7
Acquisition of English Language Skills	43.33%	15.1

Strongest Indicators across Art Forms, Schools, and Artists

1. Motivation
2. Ability to Focus
3. Perseverance/Task Persistence
4. Cooperative Learning Skills/Collaboration
5. Ownership of Learning

Results from teacher surveys supported these findings. A series of rating scales was administered to participating teachers, reflecting learning in three of these five areas.⁸ Teachers responded very positively, indicating their perceptions that these were areas of student growth supported by the arts residencies.

Teachers reported that students were more motivated to succeed because of the arts residencies. Almost all teachers responded positively to each item, with a majority strongly agreeing that “children accomplished more than expected, because they were challenged.”⁹

Table 5: TEACHER REPORT—MOTIVATION

Motivation	SA	A	N	D	SD
Children accomplished more than expected, because they were challenged.	54%	43%	4%	0%	0%
Otherwise difficult students tried harder in the arts classes.	64%	29%	7%	0%	0%

SA = strongly agree A = agree N = not sure D = disagree SD = strongly disagree

Teachers reported that students developed cooperative learning skills through the residencies. A large majority of teachers “strongly agreed” that “students working in groups demonstrated good coordination, allowing each other to speak and try each other’s ideas” and that they “realized they could work together on group arts projects in spite of their differences” and “put aside differences to reach a common goal.”

Table 6: TEACHER REPORT—COOPERATIVE LEARNING

Cooperative Learning	SA	A	N	D	SD
Children in group work understood that they were not out there all alone, and that everyone could contribute.	82%	14%	4%	0%	0%
Students working in groups demonstrated good coordination, allowing each other turns to speak and try out each other’s ideas.	68%	32%	0%	0%	0%
The children realized they could work together on group arts projects in spite of their differences.	75%	25%	0%	0%	0%
In groups, students could put aside their differences to reach a common goal.	64%	29%	4%	4%	0%

SA = strongly agree A = agree N = not sure D = disagree SD = strongly disagree

Teachers reported that students were learning to take charge of the learning process. A large majority of teachers “strongly agreed” that students’ “work belonged to them, not to the teacher or artist” and that their work “reflected their personal experiences.”

Table 7: TEACHER REPORT—OWNERSHIP OF LEARNING

Ownership of Learning	SA	A	N	D	SD
Students' work in dance or theater reflected their personal experiences.	64%	29%	4%	4%	0%
Students felt that they decided what was in their own artwork (in dance or theater).	48%	41%	7%	4%	0%
Students felt that their work belonged to them, not to the teacher or artist.	71%	18%	7%	4%	0%

SA = strongly agree A = agree N = not sure D = disagree SD = strongly disagree

Final Thoughts

Our team found several benefits to our use of the Classroom Assessment for Learning and Teaching (CALT) observational strategy:

- It helped focus our observations and note-taking on specific aspects of students' behaviors related to program goals and evaluation objectives. The data collection process was streamlined, our researchers' energies were focused, and we were able to gather and analyze a reasonably large amount of data with sufficient efficiency.
- This, in turn, helped us talk with ArtsConnection more effectively about what we were learning, and the aspects of classroom implementation that were most likely to lead to success. ArtsConnection could compare our results with their own internal assessments and observational strategies, make judgments about their own effectiveness, and better communicate their accomplishments to their own constituencies and stakeholders.
- The CALT data provided additional corroboration for findings derived from descriptive observation, teacher rating scales, and teacher interviews. This year we are applying the CALT strategy throughout more residencies, to determine if student behaviors change over time. The CALT data are building blocks in an overall evaluation design that includes matched teacher assessments (via rating scales), student assessment data, and coded qualitative data.

We also found that the CALT observation strategy posed several challenges:

- It is generally easier to use the CALT format to assess concrete skills in the arts than for abstract concepts such as *ownership of learning*. Our use of similar strategies in other projects was sometimes easier when we assessed whether children were achieving tasks such as singing in tune or playing a musical instrument in rhythm. However, it was interesting to us that constructs such as *ownership of learning* still rose to the top of our ratings.
- We worked with a tight-knit group of researchers with years of experience working together on our definitions of cognitive, social, and personal development. Newer researchers would need more training to reliably use the observation system.
- One field researcher felt that the system was “reductionist” as it forced us to oversimplify complex constructs that are best left to rich, qualitative investigation. However, this seems to be a problem inherent to quantification, which seeks to represent verbal (and sometimes ambiguous) concepts with a scaled set of numbers. Both the limitations and benefits of quantification were evident to our team. But the paired qualitative data—input to the spreadsheet and then recoded—helped us interpret and understand the statistical data.

We hope that others can borrow some of the ideas presented here to develop observational strategies relevant to their own programs. An arts partnership evaluation can benefit from an assessment process that is strongly rooted in the program’s unique experience, and not simply based upon external, desirable criteria. At the very least, this process helped our researchers to better observe the distinctive aspects of the ArtsConnection DELTA program. It provoked more substantial conversations with the program’s participants, thereby improving instruction and helping us learn more about how to assess student learning.



Acknowledgments

Founded in 1979, ArtsConnection is New York City's most comprehensive arts in education organization. ArtsConnection believes that the arts are essential to education, and intrinsic to the social, cognitive, and personal development of every child. To realize this vision, ArtsConnection's faculty of 173 teaching artists work with classroom teachers at all grade levels (pre-K through 12) in creative collaborations that yield powerful arts learning experiences for children, teachers, and families. ArtsConnection continually refines its strategies to meet changing educational needs, bringing depth and diversity to artist residencies, performances, family and after-school programs in music, dance, theater and the visual arts. To maximize the success of its programs and build capacity for the arts in education, ArtsConnection also provides extensive professional development for teaching artists, classroom teachers, and arts specialists; as well as conducts research and evaluation to assess programs and share best practices with the field. These efforts have made ArtsConnection a full-service educational partner with the New York City Department of Education, providing more than 14,000 instructional hours in over 120 partner schools, reaching 30,000 participants annually.

¹ ArtsConnection has received funding from the U.S. Department of Education for the Developing English Language Literacy Through the Arts (DELLTA) project. DELLTA is a three-year project in five elementary schools (2005–2008) and a four-year project in three middle schools (2006–2010) that serves students who are designated English-language learners and their classmates. The methodologies are grounded in the processes of professional development and ongoing collaboration between teachers and artists that facilitate inquiry-based partnerships focused on the questions, "What is the nature of teaching and learning in dance and theater?" and "In what ways do they influence language acquisition in English-language learners?"

² Researchers contributing to this study included Elizabeth Beaubrun, Amy Kleiman, and Dr. Dan Serig.

³ ArtsConnection's Observation Sheets were developed as part of the Young Talent Program (YTP) with grants from the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education program at USED in the early 1990s. Categories for the Observation Sheets were developed by artists in collaboration with classroom teachers. ArtsConnection has used them for 15 years in the YTP and has adapted them for broader use in the DELLTA project. ArtsConnection artists have reported that they facilitate productive conversations with teachers because they are grounded in shared observation of student behavior in the arts. For a description of the development of the Observation Sheets, see S. Baum, S. Owen, and B. Oreck, "Talent Beyond Words: Identification of Potential Talent in Dance and Music in Elementary Students," *Gifted Child Quarterly* 40 (1996), 93–101.

⁴ E.B. Fiske, ed., *Champions of Change: The Impact of Arts on Learning*. Washington, D.C.: Arts Education Partnership and President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (1999).

J. Burton, R. Horowitz, and H. Abeles, "Learning In and Through the Arts: The Question of

Transfer,” *Studies in Art Education* 41(3), 228–257.

⁵ R. Horowitz and A. Kleiman, “The Relationship Between Arts Learning and Cognitive Skills, Social Competencies, and Personal Dispositions.” Paper presented at the meeting of the American Education Research Association, New Orleans (2002).

R. Horowitz, “Connections: The Arts and Cognitive, Social, and Personal Development,” in *Partnering Arts Education: A Working Model from ArtsConnection*, ed. B. Rich (32–48). New York: Dana Press (2005).

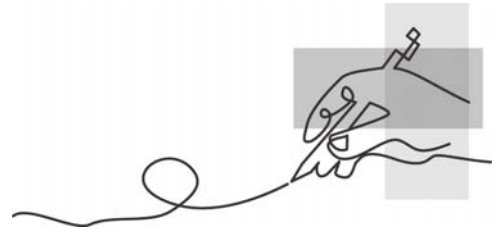
⁶ If you try this on your own, we suggest adding a number before each indicator in the first column. Then you can run a sort on that field and keep the data in the appropriate order. Once the qualitative data is sorted, you can paste the field into a word processing program and “convert table to text” to put the data in a more manageable format, similar to a report from a qualitative analysis package.

⁷ To us, *ownership of learning* denotes a sense of children taking charge of the learning process, with their work distinctly their own and not simply the products of a teacher-directed classroom experience.

⁸ The rating scale development process is described in this publication from the Dana Foundation: R. Horowitz, “Connections: The Arts and Cognitive, Social, and Personal Development,” in *Partnering Arts Education: A Working Model from ArtsConnection*, ed. B. Rich (32–48). New York: Dana Press (2005).

⁹ Rows in these tables might not total 100% due to rounding.

“Layered Research” and Classroom Practice: Linking Research and Evaluation in Inclusive Settings



Gail Burnaford, Ph.D.
Florida Atlantic University

Arts-based practices have long been used to engage students of all learning abilities in classrooms. Teachers, artists, and parents have often been quoted in the literature attesting to the value of arts education for young people. These anecdotal testimonials, while compelling and often convincing, are not equal to well-designed, outcomes-based research and evaluation in inclusive settings. Stories contribute to such evidence, but they are not in themselves sufficient.

The goal is to establish evaluation strategies to capture useful information about how young people do learn and can learn in inclusive settings. In other words, evaluation is intended to provide evidence of what works and what does not. In addition, evaluation should be designed to carefully articulate what works in certain contexts, with certain students, in order for others to learn from experiences with arts learning in classrooms. Evaluation is intended to provide judgments on conditions, teaching approaches, and interventions that engage learners and improve instruction.¹

Evaluation, similar to anecdotes, is also not sufficient to tell the story of arts-based learning and teaching in schools and classrooms. Designing standards-based curriculum around inquiry questions offers yet another layer of understanding to the process. *Research*—that is, a process that contributes knowledge to the field—adds to what we know about how and why an intervention works. Research, coupled with evaluation, offers rich portraits of arts-based teaching and learning that should be shared so that others can learn from, replicate (with careful attention to local context), and discuss in order to strengthen the quality of work in the field of arts education in inclusive settings.

Finally, building a framework for evaluation coupled with meaningful research suggests the need for inquiry across projects, across classrooms, and across levels and types of expertise. This process of engaging students, teachers, artists, administrators, evaluators, and researchers in inquiry can be termed *layered research*. Layered research requires curiosity and engagement in asking questions that are truly relevant to practitioners and yet also add knowledge to the field. Questions that are authentic and specific to individual classrooms can also contribute to larger evaluation questions. Data collected on one level can be useful in multiple layers of such a framework. Multiple researchers, engaged in cross-disciplinary projects, contribute to a larger arena of research and

evaluation issues and therefore can directly influence policy. The overarching questions are: *What is happening here?* and *What matters?*

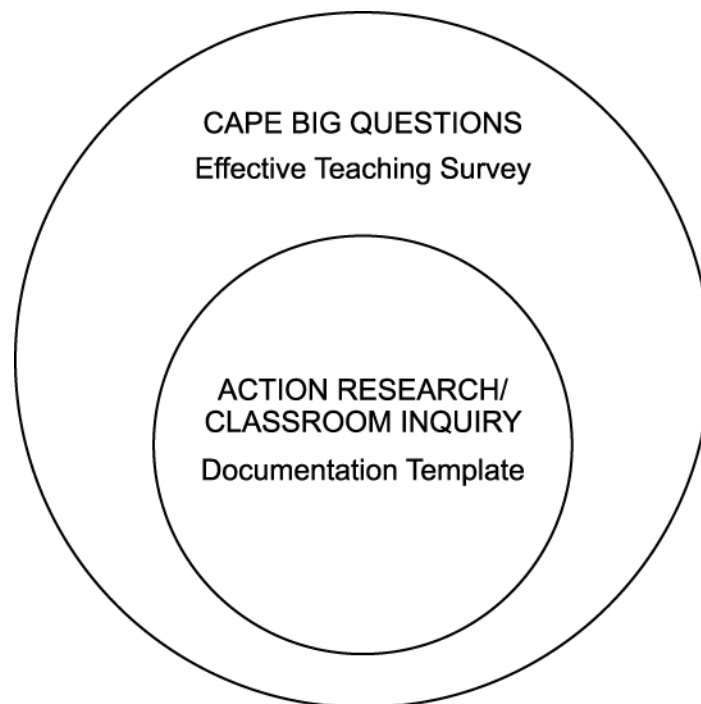


Figure 1: CAPE “LAYERED” RESEARCH MODEL

For the past five years, the Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE) has been exploring this concept of layered research in arts integration projects planned by teachers and artists in Chicago Public Schools.² CAPE partner classroom teachers and artists have utilized an electronic documentation template that has increasingly become a tool for sharing practice, presenting inquiry questions posed by students, teachers, and artists, and demonstrating teaching and learning approaches as evidence of classroom changes through the arts.

The CAPE methodology is about more than implementation. In other words, layered research within this arts organization is perceived as a process that addresses essential questions at the organization, school, classroom, student, and teacher levels. This approach requires consistent, careful, and systematic documentation. The electronic template facilitates this documentation and encourages dissemination of both processes and products in the network and beyond.

The CAPE research and evaluation is supported by long-term professional development at the school and network level. University researchers and doctoral students engage practitioners in large-scale questions that contribute to

knowledge in the field and judgments about what is working and not working in arts integration projects. Artists and teachers know that they will be engaged in inquiry in their own arts integration work and in the larger network. They know that they will be documenting their work and the work of students on the Web site. And, perhaps most importantly, they know that they will be active participants in evaluating the merit and worth of their projects, answering essential questions about the work, and contributing to the knowledge base in the field.

One project's documentation on a unit related to students with special needs is indicative of an artist/teacher collaborative inquiry that belongs to a larger network of inquiry inside CAPE. The documentation from Agassiz School features the video and visual art from a sixth-grade classroom of students with autism. This is an example of the process that all teachers and artists in veteran CAPE partnerships have been exploring.³ The categories embedded in the template (i.e., Content, Inquiry, The Story, Reflections and Findings, Resources, and Standards) allow creativity and decision making on the part of the artists and teachers, while simultaneously providing a consistency across units that are analyzed yearly by university-based researchers and evaluators.

Agassiz School Special Education teacher Dave Rench has worked with artist Jacqui Russell for three years, continually improving and investigating the project called *The Drama of Emotions*, with sixth-grade children with autism. Their inquiry questions were:

- Teacher Inquiry Question: Can students create a scenario (either orally or written) that provokes an emotion in a fictional character?
- Artist Inquiry Question: Will videotaping students as they develop a character help them to evaluate themselves and improve their ability to interpret and express emotions?

Before studying each target emotion, Rench and Russell administered a pre-test to students, reporting results on their documentation template. Rench explains further how this same pre-test was also used in two regular education classrooms, "Prior to our movie being shown at our school summer assembly, I asked two classroom teachers to test their students on five of the emotions we studied: nosy, lonely, queasy, remorseful, and yucky. Each teacher picked a student who typically was academically high, medium, and low. The students were given the same pre-test that I gave to my students."

Rench then reported the results of the arts integration intervention, "Five days later the students were given a post-test on the same five emotions. The results indicated that through the exposure of the bulletin board and the film, students were able to learn unfamiliar vocabulary." Several weeks after the project ended, Mr. Rench gave his students a writing assignment in which they were to use the target emotion words. He provided several sample sentences that individual

students with autism wrote, using the word “remorseful,” on the documentation template:

- I was feeling remorseful about arguing with Daddy.
- The crook wasn’t remorseful.
- I felt remorseful for cheating on the math test.

Throughout the unit, Rench and Russell collected these data and demonstrated their application on the documentation template:

- Student work—before, during, and after the project
- Bulletin board audience comments on student art and video work
- “Control group” (general education students’ writing)
- Teacher assessments
- Pre- and post-tests
- Teacher and artist reflections

How then is this layered research? How does this documentation contribute to evaluation? The Agassiz School project was a part of a strand of nine classrooms that were investigating a larger theme, titled “Going Public.” All nine classrooms, while engaged in different arts integration projects with different content areas and diverse artistic media, were interested in examining the impact of audiences, beyond their teachers, for students’ work. This notion of *going public* provided some cross-classroom documentation of processes with that general theme that researchers could investigate further.

In addition, the Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE) has three overarching research and evaluation questions that are being addressed in multiple grant-funded and independent projects across 109 schools. These questions are the basis for more project-specific questions that guide CAPE’s work as a research and evaluation-oriented arts organization:

- What are the effects of arts integration on teachers and students?
- Which strategies of integration lead to positive results in students?
- What are the transformative interactions within arts integration instruction that actually cause teachers to change their practices?

The last question is a network-wide investigation that represents the power of looking not just at students’ learning, but also at teachers’ teaching. Instruction is investigated through the Effective Teaching Survey (ET), which teachers and artists use as a self-reporting tool and researchers use as an observation tool to name and explore arts integration teaching across projects, grades, and content areas. (See Figure 2.) The ET survey is based on exemplary teaching standards from the Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence. It holds promise to describe practices that are not unique to any one classroom, but are perhaps more often utilized in classrooms where arts integration informs practice

and engages students of all abilities in content and arts learning.⁴

The classroom-based *Drama of Emotions* unit then contributes on three levels, or layers, to research and evaluation inside CAPE. The documentation contributes to the teacher and artist questions at the classroom level; it also contributes to the analysis at the strand level and the network level. The unit that was designed to address specific needs of children with autism at one school is not isolated and is not applicable solely to special needs, but is rather demonstrative of an ethos that is inclusive of and generative for all children, artists, and teachers in the network.

The documentation template, by its very name, suggests a repository that can just “be” for its own sake, as a display or exhibit of a unit enacted in a single classroom. Documentation can be (and often is) a one-off about an event that happens and then is over. Documentation that becomes evidence, however, has a longer shelf life. The CAPE/Agassiz Drama of Emotions unit documentation is part of a layered research framework. It has become evidence because it has a stated purpose, contributes to making a case, and answers a series of layered research and/or evaluation questions. It builds on other evidence from other classrooms and is intended to inform policy. Finally, the Drama of Emotions documentation represents inquiry over time because it is the work of a “deep artist and teacher team”⁵ that has worked on the same unit focused on the same standards for more than three years.

Such layered research, we have found, contributes to a greater appreciation for the work of researchers. The approach also seems to demystify evaluation for practitioners. Indeed, viewing evaluation as part of a larger framework of layered research can translate to “power instead of pain” for arts organizations and other nonprofits.⁶ Layered research, with intentional documentation of classroom arts work, creates ownership of the processes of evaluation and research as well as a genuine curiosity about the results of those processes and the implications for practice in arts-based learning and teaching. Layered research helps us to explore, describe, predict, explain, and influence. The collective wisdom gained from evidence-based evaluation and research contributes to stronger practices in classrooms that help all students to learn and grow.





EFFECTIVE TEACHING & STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

CAPE Veteran Partnerships 07-08: Effective Teaching Survey

To complete online at the beginning, middle and end of your CAPE unit

Name : _____ Role (circle one): Classroom Teacher Teaching Artist

School: _____ Grade Level: _____ Strand: _____

CAPE Unit Week #: _____ Today's date: _____

Circle the number that most accurately reflects the lesson.

1: Did not use in this lesson

3: Used, with some emphasis in the lesson

2: Used, but with little emphasis in the lesson

4: Used, with major emphasis in the lesson

WORKING TOGETHER	
1 2 3 4	1. Students taught students.
1 2 3 4	2. Students taught the teacher(s).
1 2 3 4	3. Students planned with each other.
1 2 3 4	4. Students developed <u>new</u> ideas in collaboration with others.
1 2 3 4	5. There was explicit evidence that parents were involved in lessons.
1 2 3 4	6. Students conferenced on their work with teacher.
INTEGRATING LANGUAGE AND LITERACY SKILLS	
1 2 3 4	7. Students wrote in class.
1 2 3 4	8. Students used movement (dance or drama) to relate to written text.
1 2 3 4	9. Students worked with visual images to represent written text.
1 2 3 4	10. Students used artistic vocabulary orally.
1 2 3 4	11. Students were assessed orally, through discussion or presentation.
1 2 3 4	12. Students were assessed in writing.
CONNECTING TO STUDENTS' LIVES	
1 2 3 4	13. Students participated in documenting their own learning.
1 2 3 4	14. Students developed the criteria for assessment.
1 2 3 4	15. At least one activity related explicitly to real world application.
1 2 3 4	16. Students developed products of real use to themselves or to others.
CHALLENGING ACTIVITIES	
1 2 3 4	17. Students brainstormed.
1 2 3 4	18. Students worked on their own inquiry questions.
1 2 3 4	19. Students changed or reframed an activity planned by the teacher.
1 2 3 4	20. Students made choices about their own work.
1 2 3 4	21. Students analyzed or critiqued their own work.
1 2 3 4	22. Students improvised.
1 2 3 4	23. Students had opportunities to explore innovative ideas and tools; to push the envelope on what they already know.
1 2 3 4	24. Students named at least two learning strategies that they were using.

Please do not copy without permission.

Developed by Gail Burnaford, Ph.D. in collaboration with CAPE Veteran Partnerships.

Adapted from Standards for Effective Pedagogy Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence www.crede.org and NCREL Criteria for Student Engagement

Figure 2: The Effective Teaching Survey

Acknowledgments

Thanks to Dave Rench, Jacqui Russell, and Agassiz School for their work on the documentation template for the Drama of Emotions unit. Thanks also to the Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education staff, and Amy Rasmussen, Executive Director, for their contributions to this article and access to the online documentation template at <http://www.capeweb.org>.

CAPE's internationally acclaimed methods of integrating the arts with core academic curriculum improves teaching and learning by increasing students' capacity for academic success, critical thinking, and creativity. As we move from an industrial economy to a global/information economy, young people need to be educated in ways that move them from being receivers of knowledge into becoming active learners able to negotiate and interpret information from multiple sources. These are the types of skills that students learn through the arts. Unfortunately, for low-income, minority children in Chicago, the importance of arts education is often overlooked. CAPE addresses this challenge by fostering partnerships between teachers in Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and professional teaching artists. These partnerships create and implement innovative curriculum that provides opportunities for students to creatively express their ideas, solve problems, think critically and work together in groups. In CAPE classrooms across the city, students are making critical links between the study of visual and performing arts and core academic content areas. CAPE focuses its work in Chicago's most challenged communities: 82% of students in CAPE schools come from low-income families, 50% are African American and 40% are Hispanic.

¹ J.L. Fitzpatrick, J.R. Sanders, and B.R. Worthen, *Program Evaluation: Alternative Approaches and Practical Guidelines*, 3rd ed. Boston: Pearson (2004).

² G. Burnaford, "Moving Toward a Culture of Evidence: Documentation and Action Research in the Practice of Arts Partnerships," *Arts Education Policy Review* 108(3), 35–40.

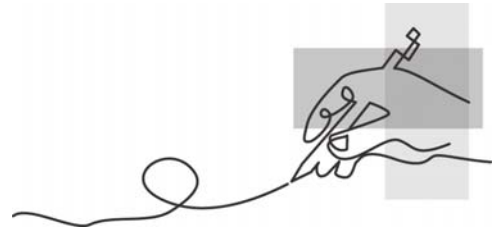
³ <http://www.capeweb.org/rexamples.html>; select the Agassiz School

⁴ <http://www.crede.org>

⁵ G. Burnaford, A. Aprill, and C Weiss, *Renaissance in the Classroom: Arts Integration and Meaningful Learning*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum (2001).

⁶ M. Festen and M. Philbin, *Level Best: How Small and Grassroots Nonprofits Can Tackle Evaluation and Talk Results*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass (2007), 3.

Using Program Evaluation Standards in Our Work



Donna M. Mertens, Ph.D.
Gallaudet University

The following is an edited transcript of Dr. Mertens' comments about her study group session for the final panel of the VSA arts Research Symposium in Baltimore, Maryland, on November 7, 2007:

To frame much of our discussion, we used the standards for good evaluation that the American Evaluation Association (AEA) has developed. These standards have been in existence for quite some time, but they have recently been revised. The revisions are a remarkable improvement, and a reflection of the understanding of the complexity of contexts in which evaluation takes place.

The first standard has always been *utility*. AEA put that first because if we do not use the information that we gather from an evaluation, then it is a waste of time and money. I doubt there is anyone here who wants to waste time or money. I do not think we would be here at this moment if we thought differently. The first question to ask is who will use the information and for what purposes. In order to answer who will use it, we need to know who our stakeholders are—that is the lingo of the evaluation community; anyone who has a stake in the program is called a stakeholder. They can be teachers, administrators, students, parents, donors, or funders. As we look broadly to that definition of the stakeholder community, there needs to be engagement of members of the community in the decisions about what needs to be evaluated and how to evaluate it, and how we are going to use that information. A lot of that discussion needs to happen up front. We can ask questions such as: So, if we were to find something like this, how would we use that information? Is it worth collecting that data?

We talked a lot about evaluation from the teacher's perspective—I think that was a function of who was in our discussion group. The passion that a teacher brings to the classroom, the desire to teach, the desire to reach out to the students and really make a difference in their lives, motivates us all to want to do quality evaluations. If evaluation is seen as something that is taking them away from that desire, then it is going to be burdensome; it is going to be something that gets done only perfunctorily or escaped if at all possible. The notion that once we have identified who is going to make use of that information and how they make use of that information has to include an understanding of the culture of the groups involved—and teachers have a culture. Teachers want to be educators. They did not sign up to be a project evaluator. And yet they can work in partnership with people who have a passion for evaluation like I do, and they say, "What kind of information could we collect that would be useful to us? How can

we collect it in a way that is not going to be overly burdensome to us?” That’s the second standard for a good evaluation—*feasibility*. It has to be something that fits in with the cultural pattern of life in the classroom, in the school, in the community. So if we have checklists or tests, or student performances, the data need to feed back into that instructional practice, even as they might be used to support the notion that arts integration can facilitate the development of academic skills.

The third category is *propriety*, meaning that things need to be done in an ethical manner with respect for the people who are involved. This brought up the question of cultural diversity and how we engage people from different cultural backgrounds. Whether we are talking about race, ethnicity, language, or disability, there is culture that surrounds all of those identities and spaces in life. How do we invite people who are representative of the dimensions of diversity that are relevant in that context in a respectful way to come in and talk with us about arts integration? We need to engage stakeholders in a respectful and ethical way to struggle with questions, such as, what does arts integration mean? What’s important for us as a community, whether we are talking about deaf people or blind people or people who are deaf and blind, or people with autism. These were the sensory dimensions that we were exploring, but it obviously is not limited to those dimensions, so how do we engage people? When do we invite people? How do we invite people? How do we provide support for people to be engaged in that process with us? These questions were a big part of our discussion.

The final category is *accuracy*. Accuracy is pretty much the technical knowledge of how we do research and evaluation, and in the majority of textbooks that is what takes up most of the space—that technical part. And yet, AEA deliberately put accuracy last because they said if it is not useful, if it is not feasible, if it is not done ethically, then we do not care if you have reliability of .99 and validity that you can document with a hundred different studies, it was still a waste of time.

We critically examined those issues of accuracy and how they play out in the populations we work with. Now the emphasis is on standardized tests—tests that were supposedly developed with reliability and validity. But, were they developed for the populations that we serve? That is a critical question that needs to be given voice. We need to say, fine, you’re asking us to provide evidence based on these standardized tests. We want to know where’s the reliability and validity for the populations that we work with? Are there rigorous methods of assessment that can document the effectiveness of our programs that are not standardized tests? Our conversation got very political in talking about the reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind law and suggestions for changes in the law that would allow educators to focus more of their energy on educating, use assessment as a tool to inform their teaching, and use assessment that is culturally and academically and socially appropriate to the populations that they are trying to assess. Our final discussion points included the importance of having multiple

measures, culturally appropriate measures, and engagement of community in the decisions about instrumentation, interpretation, and use of data.



Resources for Additional Reading

Mertens, D. M. *Research and Evaluation in Education and Psychology: Integrating Diversity with Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2004.

Mertens, D. M. "Transformative Research and Evaluation." New York: Guilford (forthcoming).

Mertens, D. M., and J. McLaughlin. *Research and Evaluation in Special Education*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2003.

Summary of the Program Evaluation Standards

The following are the AEA Program Evaluation Standards that Dr. Mertens refers to in her comments (<http://www.eval.org>):

UTILITY STANDARDS

The utility standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation will serve the information needs of intended users.

U1 Stakeholder Identification—Persons involved in or affected by the evaluation should be identified, so that their needs can be addressed.

U2 Evaluator Credibility—The persons conducting the evaluation should be both trustworthy and competent to perform the evaluation, so that the evaluation findings achieve maximum credibility and acceptance.

U3 Information Scope and Selection—Information collected should be broadly selected to address pertinent questions about the program and be responsive to the needs and interests of clients and other specified stakeholders.

U4 Values Identification—The perspectives, procedures, and rationale used to interpret the findings should be carefully described, so that the bases for value judgments are clear.

U5 Report Clarity—Evaluation reports should clearly describe the program being evaluated, including its context, and the purposes, procedures, and findings of the evaluation, so that essential information is provided and easily understood.

U6 Report Timeliness and Dissemination—Significant interim findings and evaluation reports should be disseminated to intended users, so that they can be used in a timely fashion.

U7 Evaluation Impact—Evaluations should be planned, conducted, and reported in ways that encourage follow-through by stakeholders, so that the likelihood that the evaluation will be used is increased.

FEASIBILITY STANDARDS

The feasibility standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation will be realistic, prudent, diplomatic, and frugal.

F1 Practical Procedures—The evaluation procedures should be practical, to keep disruption to a minimum while needed information is obtained.

F2 Political Viability—The evaluation should be planned and conducted with anticipation of the different positions of various interest groups, so that their cooperation may be obtained, and so that possible attempts by any of these groups to curtail evaluation operations or to bias or misapply the results can be averted or counteracted.

F3 Cost Effectiveness—The evaluation should be efficient and produce information of sufficient value, so that the resources expended can be justified.

PROPRIETY STANDARDS

The propriety standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation will be conducted legally, ethically, and with due regard for the welfare of those involved in the evaluation, as well as those affected by its results.

P1 Service Orientation—Evaluations should be designed to assist organizations to address and effectively serve the needs of the full range of targeted participants.

P2 Formal Agreements—Obligations of the formal parties to an evaluation (what is to be done, how, by whom, when) should be agreed to in writing, so that these parties are obligated to adhere to all conditions of the agreement or formally to renegotiate it.

P3 Rights of Human Subjects—Evaluations should be designed and conducted to respect and protect the rights and welfare of human subjects.

P4 Human Interactions—Evaluators should respect human dignity and worth in their interactions with other persons associated with an evaluation, so that participants are not threatened or harmed.

P5 Complete and Fair Assessment—The evaluation should be complete and fair in its examination and recording of strengths and weaknesses of the program being evaluated, so that strengths can be built upon and problem areas addressed.

P6 Disclosure of Findings—The formal parties to an evaluation should ensure that the full set of evaluation findings along with pertinent limitations are made accessible to the persons affected by the evaluation, and any others with expressed legal rights to receive the results.

P7 Conflict of Interest—Conflict of interest should be dealt with openly and honestly, so that it does not compromise the evaluation processes and results.

P8 Fiscal Responsibility—The evaluator's allocation and expenditure of resources should reflect sound accountability procedures and otherwise be prudent and ethically responsible, so that expenditures are accounted for and appropriate.

ACCURACY STANDARDS

The accuracy standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation will reveal and convey technically adequate information about the features that determine worth or merit of the program being evaluated.

A1 Program Documentation—The program being evaluated should be described and documented clearly and accurately, so that the program is clearly identified.

A2 Context Analysis—The context in which the program exists should be examined in enough detail, so that its likely influences on the program can be identified.

A3 Described Purposes and Procedures—The purposes and procedures of the evaluation should be monitored and described in enough detail, so that they can be identified and assessed.

A4 Defensible Information Sources—The sources of information used in a program evaluation should be described in enough detail, so that the adequacy of the information can be assessed.

A5 Valid Information—The information gathering procedures should be chosen or developed and then implemented so that they will assure that the interpretation arrived at is valid for the intended use.

A6 Reliable Information—The information gathering procedures should be chosen or developed and then implemented so that they will assure that the information obtained is sufficiently reliable for the intended use.

A7 Systematic Information—The information collected, processed, and reported in an evaluation should be systematically reviewed and any errors found should be corrected.

A8 Analysis of Quantitative Information—Quantitative information in an evaluation should be appropriately and systematically analyzed so that evaluation questions are effectively answered.

A9 Analysis of Qualitative Information—Qualitative information in an evaluation should be appropriately and systematically analyzed so that evaluation questions are effectively answered.

A10 Justified Conclusions—The conclusions reached in an evaluation should be explicitly justified, so that stakeholders can assess them.

A11 Impartial Reporting—Reporting procedures should guard against distortion caused by personal feelings and biases of any party to the evaluation, so that evaluation reports fairly reflect the evaluation findings.

A12 Meta-evaluation—The evaluation itself should be formatively and summatively evaluated against these and other pertinent standards, so that its conduct is appropriately guided and, on completion, stakeholders can closely examine its strengths and weaknesses.



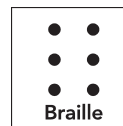
VSA arts is an international nonprofit organization founded in 1974 by Ambassador Jean Kennedy Smith to create a society where people with disabilities learn through, participate in, and enjoy the arts. *VSA arts* provides educators, parents, and artists with resources and the tools to support arts programming in schools and communities. *VSA arts* showcases the accomplishments of artists with disabilities and promotes increased access to the arts for people with disabilities. Each year millions of people participate in *VSA arts* programs through a nationwide network of affiliates and in 55 countries around the world. *VSA arts* is an affiliate of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

VSA arts is the creator of Start with the Arts[®], a comprehensive early childhood learning resource for classrooms that encourages the development of literacy and school readiness skills; Express Diversity![®], a program of instructional materials for increasing disability awareness through the arts; and the *VSA arts* Institute, professional development training for teachers, teaching artists, and arts administrators offering arts based teaching strategies to include students with disabilities.

To learn more about *VSA arts*, visit our Web site, www.vsarts.org.

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