

Workshop 1

Principles of Artful Teaching

The Art of Teaching the Arts examines how seven “principles of artful teaching” influence the curricular and instructional choices that high school arts teachers make. Each program in the workshop includes examples of teaching in dance, music, theatre, and visual art.

This program begins with teachers sharing passionate insights about why they teach the arts to young people. Then short classroom segments illustrate how arts teachers meet the needs and imaginations of their students by using the seven principles:

- Developing students as artists
- Addressing the diverse needs of students
- Choosing instructional approaches
- Creating rich learning environments
- Fostering genuine communication
- Making the most of community resources
- Nurturing independent thinkers

Subsequent programs will examine each principle in depth.

Learning Goals

The goals of this workshop session are for you to:

- Describe principles of good teaching that apply across the arts
- Consider similarities among teachers, actors, dancers, musicians, and visual artists
- Identify teaching goals that you and fellow arts teachers share, and that you would like to work toward in the rest of this workshop

Workshop Session (On Site)

Getting Ready (15 minutes)

What makes teaching both an art and a science? What do good teachers in all disciplines know and do that has sustained, substantial, positive influence on students?

As you begin this series of eight workshop sessions, reflect on your current teaching practices. Make notes in your journal and then discuss and compare how you:

- Develop students as artists
- Address the diverse needs of students
- Choose instructional approaches
- Create rich learning environments
- Foster genuine communication
- Make the most of community resources
- Nurture independent thinkers

Keep your initial journal entries to compare with your developing ideas about artful teaching practice.

Watching the Program (60 minutes)

In this program, you will see teachers applying the principles of artful teaching in dance, music, theatre, and visual art classes. As you watch each of the seven teaching segments, consider how the teaching shown—regardless of discipline—relates to your own teaching.

Fill in the *Viewing and Discussion Sheet* found at the end of this chapter as you watch. This will help you prepare for the activities that follow. The information sheets provide helpful background on the schools, arts programs, and individual classes featured in each segment.

Activities and Discussion (45 minutes)

Part I: What All Good Arts Teaching Has in Common (25 minutes)

In this workshop, you are joined by colleagues who teach art forms other than yours. What broad goals for students do you and your colleagues share? What teaching ideas and approaches do you have in common? The following activities are aimed at helping you identify the common teaching goals that you would most like to work toward in this workshop.

Where, in the program you have just seen, did a teacher who was *not* in your discipline inspire you the most, or remind you of a goal or a value that you hold important in your own teaching?

Look at the notes you made on the *Viewing and Discussion Sheet* while watching the program. Take turns describing for the group the teaching moment that most resonated with your own practice.

Workshop Session (On Site), cont'd.

As a group, try to name five or six broad teaching goals that you all hold in common. Compare your list to the seven "artful principles" above. Where do the lists agree? Where do they differ? Decide as a group which artful principles are most important to you.

Part II: The Improvisational Act of Teaching and Learning (20 minutes)

Read the following passage about the similarities between teachers and jazz musicians:

Master teachers—teachers who teach all students well—make decisions about what to teach and how to teach it based on an ongoing conversation involving their students, the course content, and themselves, with the ever-present goal of improving learning and the educational experience. Master teachers understand that each day is an improvisational concert, a musical conversation with their students.

Good improvisational jazz musicians don't know until the music starts where the night will take them. What they play and how they play it depends on the other musicians with whom they perform, their moods, the atmosphere, and the audience. Such musicians are not seeking consistency or replicability; they are striving for magic in the moment. They create something unique by listening carefully to one another; by anticipating their fellow musicians, and their instruments; and by surprise. A welcome element of the unknown keeps them exploring new territory, discovering new possibilities making new music. Good jazz musicians are tireless learners. If they stop listening to others, stop seeking new paths, stop inviting surprise into their musical conversations, they lose their mastery. Mastery in teaching follows the same path.

Excerpted from "Jazz at the Improv" by Corinne Mantle-Bromley, *Kappa Delta Pi Record* 41(1). © 2004. Kappa Delta Pi, International Honor Society in Education. Used with permission.

Discuss how useful the comparison between jazz musicians and teachers is to you. Are there important differences as well? Would you amend the comparison in any important way?

Then, propose and discuss similar correlations between teachers and actors; teachers and dancers; teachers and visual artists.

Between Sessions (On Your Own)

Homework

Read the following passages about five characteristics of art and artists that can be applied to teaching. Then, in your journal, rate yourself twice on each characteristic, once as an artist, and once as a teacher. For example, for the characteristic of creativity, first rate your creativity as an artist—i.e., a practitioner of visual art, dance, music, or theatre—from 1 to 5 (1 being the lowest and 5 the highest). Then rate your creativity as a teacher. When you are done, look over your ratings. Which area would you most like to work on and improve as a teacher? Why?

Teaching As Art

Artists are fully engaged and committed to purpose. In the case of teachers, the engagement and commitment are to learning. To facilitate student learning artistically you must be a student yourself, fully engaged and committed to learning, actively seeking new ways to understand your discipline and how your students learn, gaining insights and nuances from the material, from the students' interpretations, and from connecting students and material.

Artfulness embodies art and science. For teachers this means drawing on the intrinsic link between art and science to enhance learning outcomes. Painters', sculptors', and printmakers' success depends on a full understanding of the chemical properties of the materials they use. Teaching becomes artistic when we understand in a detailed and scientific way how it affects learning.

Art requires creativity. Artful teaching is not craft; it is more than the skillful application of teaching techniques. The artful teacher is always trying new materials and new approaches to fit the needs and interests of the specific learner at hand, never feeling that the "perfect material" or the "perfect approach" has been found. The teacher's world is dynamic, filled with uncertainty and challenge, and teaching strategies are guided by a compass, not a road map. Artful teachers have the ability to be spontaneous and to improvise: to seize the moment and make it into something larger and more compelling.

Artists grow and stay inspired through play, experimentation, and practice. When unexpected things occur they are embraced by artists as valuable opportunities to learn, the specks of irritant or dust that lead to pearls. Likewise, teachers must draw on their ability to always remain learners. In serious and intense academic environments, it's hard to be "playful," but the notion of having fun is a way of taking ourselves less seriously, and from that perspective we often see and understand things more clearly. This orientation can give us the space we need to experiment and to fail.

Finally, there is *between artists and their material a special relationship*. With teachers, the materials are our students and the special relationship is the need we have to create communities of learners. We can develop these strong relationships with and between students in the content materials through which we seek to engage them. We can nurture it by setting and keeping a reasonable pace. We can further promote it by setting the tone, which involves everything from the configuration of the classroom space to the way people are included in the unfolding action.

As its core, artful teaching focuses on learning—learning for teachers and learning for our students. It means being involved in a dance in which we may lead in the beginning, but then we let our partners provide movement and energy and direction. The artful teaching is helping self and students become artful learners, and there are as many paths to do this as there are teachers who are trying. Artful teaching lies in liberating the gifts that students and teachers bring to the classroom.

Adapted from Weimer, Maryellen, "Teaching As Art" in *The Teaching Professor*, Vol. 12, No. 3, March 1998.

Reference: Bickford, Deborah J., and Van Vleck, James. "Reflections on artful teaching." *Journal of Management Education*, Vol. 21, No. 4, 448-72 (1997).



Viewing and Discussion Sheet

Program 1: Principles of Artful Teaching

Your Arts Discipline: _____

Program Segments	In the spaces below, note <i>teaching moments</i> that relate to your own teaching – especially if they occur in art forms other than yours.
<p>Developing Students as Artists</p> <p>MUSIC teacher Carmen Laboy works with a beginning band ensemble and an advanced jazz band.</p>	
<p>Addressing the Diverse Needs of Students</p> <p>VISUAL ART teacher Jan Wilson coaches individual students and adapts assignments to their different learning styles.</p>	
<p>Choosing Instructional Approaches</p> <p>THEATRE teacher John Fredricksen works with pairs of students who are writing and reading scenes from original plays.</p>	
<p>Creating Rich Learning Environments</p> <p>DANCE teacher Michael O’Banion models constructive criticism as he helps students learn to partner with each other.</p>	
<p>Fostering Genuine Communication</p> <p>THEATRE teacher John Fredricksen and his colleagues help students learn to communicate across disciplines.</p>	
<p>Making the Most of Community Resources</p> <p>VISUAL ART teacher Jan Wilson takes students to a nearby sculpture park.</p>	
<p>Nurturing Independent Thinkers</p> <p>DANCE teacher Michael O’Banion uses feedback to improve students’ performance as they learn a new technique.</p>	

The Art of **TEACHING** the Arts

Program 1: Principles of Artful Teaching

Developing Students as Artists

SEGMENT 1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Carmen Laboy - MUSIC

20 years teaching

About the School

Christopher Columbus H.S.
Bronx, NY

Type:
Urban/Comprehensive

Grades:
9-12

Students:
4,000
Low/Middle socio-economic status

Arts Requirement:

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

About the Instrumental Music Program

Faculty:
1 full-time

Students:
175

Facilities:
Above Average in the Area
• Band room
• Instrument room
• Multipurpose auditorium

Required Courses:
None

Elective Courses:
Beginner Band, Intermediate Band, Concert Band, Jazz Band, and Pep Band

About the Featured Classes

Beginner Band:

Students who have never had an opportunity to play an instrument before learn how to play an instrument of their choosing and participate in an ensemble.

Preparations/Prerequisites:

Students must be interested in learning to play a band instrument. They must be committed and have passing grades in other classes.

Student Motivation:
High

Student Level:
Novice

Typical Subsequent Course:
Intermediate Band

In the Teacher's Words

How would you describe your role as a teacher?

I believe that what I should do as a teacher is bring out the best from each student. I'm not only here to teach about music. I'm here to teach about different aspects of life.

Sometimes that means sitting down and listening when a student has gotten a bad grade, or if something has happened to them personally. You have to make the time.

How do you help students pick the instrument they want to study?

I get some of my students from the advanced bands to come in and play a little part of a song so the beginners can see, this is a student just like me. It's my peer. It's not the teacher that's playing the instrument. It's a student -- maybe I can get to be like him or her.

Jazz Band:

Students learn traditional Big Band and Latin jazz music, which is especially challenging rhythmically.

Professional jazz musicians who live in the neighborhood come in regularly as guest artists to play alongside the students, offering tips and coaching.

Preparations/Prerequisites:

Students have been in Concert Band and are particularly gifted since there is only one instrument per part in Jazz Band.

Student Motivation:
High

Student Level:
Advanced



Program 1: Principles of Artful Teaching Addressing the Diverse Needs of Students Making the Most of Community Resources

SEGMENTS 2 AND 6 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Jan Wilson - VISUAL ART

27 years teaching

About the School

Nottingham High School

Hamilton, NJ

Type:

Suburban/Comprehensive

Grades:

9-12

Students:

1,450

Very mixed socio-economic status

Arts Requirement:

New Jersey has a 5-credit (one full year) graduation requirement in Visual Art, Music, Dance, or Theatre

About the Visual Art Program

Faculty:

2 full-time

Students:

220

Facilities:

Below Average in Area

- 1 full-time art studio
- 1 shared studio space

Required Courses:

Art Fundamentals or Advanced Fundamentals (first-year students working at an accelerated pace)

Elective Courses:

Drawing & Painting I, Advanced Drawing & Painting II, Sculpture & Ceramics, Mixed Media, Commercial Design & Illustration, and Honors Studio

About the Featured Classes

Art Fundamentals:

In this introductory course, students in grades 9-12 produce original works of art and study the work of others to see how the elements and principles of visual art can be and have been used throughout history and across cultures as means of expression. [Segment 2]

Typical Subsequent Courses:

Drawing & Painting I, Sculpture & Ceramics, or Mixed Media

Student Motivation:

Mixed. Some students already have a love of art and need this course as a foundation for further study; others take it to fulfill a graduation requirement; and others take it because their guidance counselor suggested it.

In the Teacher's Words

How do you adjust your instruction to meet the varying development of students in the Art Fundamentals class?

The beauty of an art studio is that each student works at his/her own pace. Individual goals are set for some students that allow them to work at their level of ability. If there is a student with learning challenges, we first examine the IEP in order to support the learning environment. That could be as simple as allowing a student to take the work to a resource room for additional guidance after class, additional time, test-taking support, or in some cases, simplifying an assignment or redesigning it to work on a discrete skill.

Sculpture Garden Project:

Students from the Sculpture class and the Advanced Architecture class worked cooperatively to design the garden. They established an ongoing relationship with Grounds For Sculpture, a local foundation featuring over 200 contemporary sculptures on beautiful landscaped grounds. Last year's students and this year's mix of students are installing the garden and beginning to create work for it. [Segment 6]

Preparations/Prerequisites:

Each of these students is taking Sculpture, has taken Sculpture, or is enrolled in the Honors program.

Student Motivation:

High

Student Level:

Intermediate/Advanced

Program 1: Principles of Artful Teaching
Choosing Instructional Approaches
Fostering Genuine Communication

SEGMENTS 3 AND 5 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

John Fredricksen - THEATRE
27 years teaching

About the School

Mamaroneck High School
 Mamaroneck, NY

Type:
 Suburban/Comprehensive

Grades:
 9-12

Students:
 1,400
 Middle/High socio-economic status

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

About the Performing Arts Program

Faculty:
 3

Students:
 245

Facilities:
 Well Above Average in Area

- 220-seat proscenium theatre
- Control Booth
- Lighting board + lighting instruments
- Sound mixer
- 2 classrooms - including a music room
- Office for our official business

Required Courses:
 The Performing Arts Curriculum Experience (PACE)

PACE 1 – Introduction to the performing arts (theatre, dance, and music), full-year course, mostly filled with freshmen

PACE 2 – Beginning technique in theatre, dance, and music, full-year course, mostly filled with sophomores

PACE 3 – Advanced performing arts (theatre, dance, and music), full-year course, mostly filled with juniors

PACE 4 – Theatre, dance or music concentration, full-year course, seniors only

About the Featured Classes

The Performing Arts Curriculum Experience (PACE):

Students elect to take this curricular program, which offers them four progressive years of study in theatre, dance, and music as well as extra-curricular performance and production projects. Students study across the performing arts out of a belief that performers learn better when they learn all of the performing arts. For example, actors learn better if they are experienced in dance (learn to use their body) and music (learn to use their voice) and vice versa.

In Segment 3, students learn the fundamentals of playwriting.

In Segment 5, students explore the technical aspects of performing arts production.

Student Motivation:

High. Most students have seen past productions or have been in productions in middle school and wish to learn more, improve, and have fun.

Student Level:

Novice to Advanced

In the Teacher's Words

Can you describe the PACE experience, in particular the educational approach and sequential nature of the program?

Much of the work that we do would be considered "child-centered." Most of our in-class and after-school projects are devoted to original work. Students choreograph the dances, write the plays, and compose the songs.

The curriculum was developed in a sequential manner matching the growing maturity level of the students. Freshman do short in-class projects while seniors work on projects over weeks. We rely a great deal on older students mentoring younger ones. Building a sense of community within and across grade levels is a particular goal.



Program 1: Principles of Artful Teaching Creating Rich Learning Environments Nurturing Independent Thinkers

SEGMENTS 4 AND 7 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Michael O'Banion - DANCE

20 years teaching

About the School

Denver School of the Arts

Denver, CO

Type:

Urban/Arts-focused

Grades:

6-12

Students:

900

Very mixed socio-economic status

Majors:

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

About the Dance Program

Faculty:

2 full-time + resident and guest artists

Students:

115

Facilities:

Above Average in the Area

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

Required Courses:

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

Elective Courses:

Tap, Hip Hop, and Pointe

Audition:

Technique Master Class, individual choreography showings, and interview

About the Featured Class

Intermediate Dance:

Students, mostly eighth- and ninth-graders, learn the fundamentals of partnering, including weight-sharing, lifting, and contact improvisation.

All dance majors take this course and are expected to integrate the lessons into their movement vocabulary and choreographic process.

In Segment 4, students explore the concept of partnering.

In Segment 7, students receive informal feedback.

Preparations/Prerequisites:

Beginning Level Dance or equivalent

Student Motivation:

High. This is a required course with a performance outcome and must be completed before moving to the Advanced Level.

In the Teacher's Words

How does partnering class fit into the language of dance?

The students go through a series of partnering classes, where they learn how to deal with body weight and how to share weight, so that the duet form becomes part of their vocabulary. Duet forms speak to personal relationships of one on one. Group choreography speaks more about the tribe or the group or society. The solo is much more personal. We try to get those three forms very strongly under the students' belts so that they understand when to use each one. That way they're making choices. They're not feeling that those groupings are dictated out of some abstract, intangible place.

Additional Resources

On the Web

General Sites

The Art of Teaching

<http://radicalacademy.com/adlerteaching2.htm>

Mortimer J. Adler's insights into the nature of teaching

The Seven Deadly Comments that Get in the Way of Learning About Teaching

<http://trc.ucdavis.edu/trc/ta/TAdevel/svinicki.pdf>

A rebuttal to a litany of arguments about why we can't or shouldn't bother to learn about teaching

The Gallery of Teaching and Learning

<http://gallery.carnegiefoundation.org/index.htm>

Web-based examples of ways that teachers can make ideas, insights, and new understandings available so that others can build on them

Teaching as Scholarship

<http://www.nyu.edu/cte/Scholars.html>

Exercises for thinking about how you teach

National Dance Organizations

National Dance Association

<http://www.aahperd.org/nda/template.cfm>

National Dance Education Organization

<http://www.ndeo.org/>

National Music Organizations

MENC: The National Association for Music Education

<http://www.menc.org/>

American School Band Directors Association

<http://home.comcast.net/~asbda/>

American String Teachers Association

<http://www.astaweb.com/>

National Association of Teachers of Singing

<http://www.nats.org/welcome.html>

National Theatre Organizations

American Alliance for Theatre and Education

<http://www.aate.com/>

Educational Theatre Association

<http://www.edta.org/>

National Visual Art Organizations

National Art Education Association

<http://www.naea-reston.org/>

Magnet Schools of America

<http://www.magnet.edu/themes/arts.htm>

School and Teacher Sites

Christopher Columbus High School

<http://www.columbushs.org/index2.html>

Web site for band teacher Carmen Laboy's school

Nottingham High School

<http://www.hamilton.k12.nj.us/secondary/north1/>

Web site for visual art teacher Jan Wilson's school

Grounds for Sculpture

<http://www.groundsforsculpture.org/>

The sculpture park where Jan Wilson takes her students

Mamaroneck High School Performing Arts Curriculum Experience (PACE)

<http://www.mamkschools.org/mhs/>

Select: *Special Programs*, then *Performing Arts and TV Studio*

Web site for the Mamaroneck High School department that includes John Fredricksen's theatre program

Denver School of the Arts—Dance Major

<http://dsa.dpsk12.org/>

Select: *Majors*, then *Performing Arts Department*

Web page for the dance program that Michael O'Banion chairs

Additional Resources, cont'd.

In Print

Dee, Peter. *Voices From the High School*. Walter H. Baker Co., 1982. ISBN: 9992892447

------. *-and stuff-* Baker's Plays, 1985. ASIN: B0006ELRNY

------. *Voices 2000*. Baker's Plays, 1994. ASIN: B0006F5SPG

The books from which John Fredricksen chooses lines of dialogue to help his students start writing their scenes

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

Describes different approaches to the teaching of the arts and the virtues each possesses when well taught

Jensen, Eric. *Arts With the Brain in Mind*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2001. ISBN: 0871205149

Presents the case, based on what is known about the brain and learning, for making arts a core part of the basic curriculum

Nagel, Greta. *The Tao of Teaching: The Special Meaning of the Tao Te Ching As Related to the Art of Teaching*. Plume Books, 1998. ISBN: 0452280958

Applications of the ancient Chinese wisdom of the Tao Te Ching to a contemporary public-school setting

Rose, Karel, & Kincheloe, Joe L. *Art, Culture, and Education: Artful Teaching in a Fractured Landscape*. Peter Lang Publishing, 2003. ISBN: 0820457450

Offers helpful parallels between the work of educators and artists, including similar motivations, and opportunities to convince, inspire, and persuade others to action

Sarason, Seymour Bernard, & Greene, Maxine. *Teaching as a Performing Art*. Teachers College Press, 1999. ISBN: 0807738905

From a perspective that views teachers as actors, uses the traditions of stage performance to inspire connections between teachers and students

Simpson, Douglas, Aycok, Judy, & Jackson, Michael. *John Dewey and the Art of Teaching: Toward Reflective and Imaginative Practice*. SAGE Publications, 2004. ISBN: 1412909031

An accessible introduction to the art of teaching as seen through the eyes of John Dewey

Notes
