

VSA arts of Minnesota **TEACHING ARTIST ROSTER**  
**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY**  
August 6, 2009 1:00pm – 3:00pm

## NOTES

### ***Hands-on Activity: Creative Movement***

*Presented by Perrin Boyd, Masters of Arts in Teaching, Theatre Artist*

1. Participants did a simple warm-up developing characters through walking about the room in any direction, such as walking around the room leading with one's nose, knees, feet, head or sticking out chest, adding a facial expression, etc.

#### **Observations/reflection**

Did you feel different walking different ways?

*Yes.*

When you are sticking out your chest what kind of person do you feel like, how does it make you feel?

*Confidence, strength, pride.*

What we do is we lead with what is most important to us at the time. We all walk differently through out the different parts of the day. If you watch people, they are leading with what is most important. A person who lifts weights might want others to see them as a strong person and will walk (with muscles showing), so that others will notice their muscles. If a person wants others to notice their body, the person will walk (with exaggerate hip and chest) to gain attention. Although, it's not always what a person wants but may be what is how a person is feeling or important to them at the time.

When you walked with you head leading, how did you feel?

*Self absorbed, blind, floating, feeling lighter, mad, in a hurry, stubborn.*

If someone is plowing ahead more than likely they are not noticing anything around them. They maybe walking (at a fast pace) because they are trying to get there. What's important is in your mind, for example a mom in the morning getting the kids ready is thinking about the goal of getting them on the bus on time. At the end of the day you might walk to the car differently if you are overwhelmed, as opposed to when you were first arriving you might have been nervous about who else was here. We can tell a lot about people just by the way that they are walking. When you create character you just exaggerate that feeling.

*I think that every single character I created had something to do with the music. It was such a happy, light music that the character that I took on was more of a pleasant type of inclination. I like it because when it was upbeat like that we were crossing; there was a chance to interact with people, possibility for eye contact.*

I have tried it with slower music, but then everyone is in slow motion space. It does make a difference; we were moving around, crossing paths all about the room. Being able to see what others are doing gives you an opportunity to "try-on something", that looks interesting what he or she is doing, I might try that, too.

Mention “dare to not walk in a circle” otherwise people will end up walking counter-clockwise, if you don’t ask them not to. People will also be less creative because they tend to imitate the person in front of them.

2. The activity that followed focused on team building. Without words, participants balanced a thin dowel (in most cases using one finger each) and tried creative ways to move it about the room without it dropping. Note: for some students with disabilities, this is very difficult. Simple modifications or adaptations include using their palm, holding it, or taping it. The most important goal is that each pair communicates however necessary to keep the stick up, not where it is. After practicing with one stick another stick was added, and then more people were added.

### **Observations/reflection**

Why did we just drop the stick?

*We are not listening to each other or one person moved too fast so the other wasn't able to keep up.*

How could she say “no, I don’t want to do that” without words?

*Just don't move. Partners are talking to each other through the stick, so if one person is not leading the other, then they will not go anywhere.*

It’s important that students realize that they have a choice; for some people if doesn’t feel safe, and they do not have to do it. Take into consideration that some people can’t move that way so don’t push them there. Although encourage everyone to try new things or to be more inventive.

What did you discover as you included more people and included more sticks?

*We got to make more interesting shapes. Definitely teamwork, almost like dancing. I noticed that when one person turned everybody had to turn at some point; it's the ripple effect, we are all connected*

Did you find your focus was different?

*There was group focus. There is also the parallel-independent focus between the person on your right and the person on your left. You need be able to pay attention to both at the same time.*

3. Small groups gathered for the final activity to create a short scene based on a poem, prop or picture. It could depict exactly what the thing is for example, the prop (dust pan) could be used in a scene as a dust pan. Other wise the prop (dust pan) could be represent an imaginary object such as a snow plow.

### **Observations/reflection**

Group 1: Scene based on prop (picnic basket) which included four people sitting down to have a picnic, each person mirrored the motion of the leader one at a time, from drinking out of a glass to throwing a ball.

Did we follow what they were doing?

*It was very clear; partly because of the facial expressions, and characters were very obvious with their movements especially with gesturing the different imaginary objects that they were holding.*

Group 2: Scene based on a picture (people reading a newspaper) which included two people in the background holding up a wide scarf and two characters in the front pretending to battle.

Could you follow what was going on?

*Very imaginative; two characters in the back were reading the newspaper while what they were reading about happened in the front.*

Group 3: Scene based on a prop (a construction hat covered with silver foil) which included one person wearing the hat, then it evolved into a second person trying to hit the hat as if it was a ball and a third person catching the hat.

This was not as easy to follow because the group wasn't ready to perform.

Sharing is an option; some students may not be comfortable sharing. What's most important is the creation piece that is important. Students should use creativity while working with someone else. It also helps to build their confidence, for example after three weeks of working together they might feel more comfortable to be able to perform in front of their peers.

## ***Academic Standards in the Arts in Action***

*Nyssa Brown, Music Education Coordinator, Perpich Center for Arts Education*

### **The Perpich Center for Arts Education**

The Perpich Center for Arts Education is a state level arts agency that strengthens the arts education community, and improves access to high quality arts experiences to students statewide. It serves educators and students throughout Minnesota – in urban, suburban and rural areas. By helping educators and community leaders create innovative, student-focused arts curricula and experiences, the Center provides students the opportunity to develop and integrate their artistic and academic abilities to their highest potential.

### **Minnesota State Academic Standards**

Staff from The Perpich Center for Arts Education have been involved in the work of the Minnesota Department of Education's Arts Academic Standards Revision Committee. [Minnesota State Academic Standards](#) are an important landmark for arts education, but additional laws and rules clarify the practical application of standards implementation in school districts. They define important learning goals for students at the primary, intermediate, middle and high school levels. These standards, established by legislation in 2003, were developed and refined by arts educators from across the state. While specific to dance, media arts, music, theater, and visual arts, the standards were created to demonstrate the common elements across the arts areas. The standards define what students should know and be able to do in each of the arts areas.

Standards make the arts learning goals clear for students and their families, teachers, and the community at large.

These additional laws and rules have given momentum to Perpich Center efforts to provide teachers, schools and districts with processes and resources to productively use the standards for the benefit of all Minnesota students K-12.

- Several state statutes pertain to the new arts standards. In Minnesota, public elementary and middle schools must offer at **least three** and **require at least two** of the following four arts areas: dance, music, theater and visual arts. Public high schools must **offer at least three** and **require at least one** of the following five arts areas: dance, media arts, music, theater or visual arts.
- There is no formal assessment and no state required tests in the Arts. A school, school district, or charter school must determine locally if a student has met the required academic standards in the arts.
- Districts may use state or locally developed arts standards.
- State graduation requirements call for students to earn one credit in the arts. In addition, a career or technical education course may fulfill an arts credit in order to graduate. A course credit is equivalent to a student's successful completion of an academic year of study or a student's mastery of the applicable subject matter, as determined by the local school district.

The revision of the existing Minnesota Arts Standards is well on its way to completion. The Commissioner formally accepted the draft document in June. The Committee has developed a final draft revision of the arts standards, which is currently proceeding through the administrative rulemaking process. [Visit PCAE's website to download a draft of the new standards.](http://education.state.mn.us/mdeprod/groups/Standards/documents/Publication/013271.pdf) The new Minnesota Arts Standards are scheduled for the 2010-2011 school year. The Perpich Center is working on plans for the implementation of these new standards for all Minnesota schools, teachers and students. (<http://education.state.mn.us/mdeprod/groups/Standards/documents/Publication/013271.pdf>)

### **Understanding the Language**

The Minnesota Academic Standards in Arts are organized into four general *grade bands*:

- Primary (K-3)
- Intermediate (4-5)
- Middle (6-8)
- High School (9-12)

The standards are organized by grade band into four *strands* that foster the development of students' artistic literacy.

- Artistic Foundations (*new*--skills and the knowledge in order to do the following)
- Artistic Process: Create or Make
- Artistic Process: Perform or Present
- Artistic Process: Respond or Critique

Each strand has *one or more standards* that can be implemented in the arts area(s). These specific statements begin with the following and are the same across all areas:

- Demonstrate (knowledge or understanding)...
- Create or make (technical skill)...
- Perform or present (context)...
- Respond to or Critique (compare and contrast)...

*Benchmarks* are the academic knowledge and skills used to implement state academic standards. These are more specific statements and are different in each arts area(s) may begin with the following:

- Identify...
- Describe...
- Understand...
- Analyze...

Students are expected to master the standards in the selected arts area(s) by the end of the last grade level in the band. For example, students are expected to master grade 6-8 standards by the end of eighth grade.

### **Observations/reflection of Perrin's activity**

What do you think the students would have learned?

*Communication through facial expressions, body movements; teamwork when having to develop and perform the skit; scaffolding from the warm-up to being partners and then into groups of four in 30 minutes; opportunity to be a respectful audience member; creative with materials; problem solving;*

As seen and described by an observer, participants were leading with different parts of their body addressing:

Art Area: Theater: Grades 4-5

Strand 1: Artistic Foundations

Standard 2: Demonstrated knowledge and use of the technical skills of the art form integrating technology when applicable.

Benchmark 1: Demonstrate skills such as improvising, creating character and selecting costumes for dramatizations and creating or arranging environments using scenery, costumes, lights or props for classroom dramatizations.

In addition, participants were asked to reflect, "what was it like? what does it mean when you...? describe how you feel when..." addressing:

Art Area: Theater: Grades 4-5

Strand 1: Artistic Foundations

Standard 3: Demonstrate understanding of the personal, social, cultural and historical contexts that influence the arts areas.

Benchmark 2: Describe how theater communicates meaning.

Suggestions from participants

*It may be the building blocks or lead to:*

Art Area: Theater: Grades 4-5

Strand 4: Artistic Process: Respond/Critique

Standard 1: Respond to or critique a variety of creations and performances using the artistic foundations.

Benchmark 1: Justify personal interpretations and reactions to a variety of works in theater.

*It could have been addressed in prior years.*

Art Area: Theater: Grades K-3

Strand 3: Artistic Process: Perform/Present

Standard 1: Perform/Present in a variety of contexts in the art area using the artistic foundations.

Benchmark 2: Reflect on a performance based on the feedback of others.

As seen and described by an observer, participants were using a poem, prop or picture to address:

Art Area: Theater: Grades 4-5

Strand 2: Artistic Process: Create/Make

Standard 1: Create or Make in a variety of contexts in the art area using the artistic foundations.

Benchmark 1: Create a scene or sequence of scenes based on life experience or interpret and adapt the plot, characters and language of an existing piece of literature using movement, voice, costume, and props.

How could “Benchmark 2: Revise a scene or sequence of scenes based on feedback of others and self-reflection” been addressed?

Remember, the standard doesn't recommend how to get the students to this destination -- that is determined by the curriculum. Teachers can choose whatever curriculum, teaching materials and methods he or she finds appropriate to help the students meet the standards. Standards are the WHAT of education while curriculum and instruction are the HOW.

### **Assessment**

Every student has an opportunity to demonstrate each one of the benchmarks. It is never a group assessment. Teachers have their own system tracking every student through assessment. Before students master a standard, they need to practice. In Perrin's activity there was no intention of a formal assessment on participants, but she did several informal assessments by asking for self-reflection and constantly paying attention to what is going on—that is what good teaching is.

Advice on what classroom teachers are looking for in a teaching artist:

- Artistry is the most important. Do you have a firm knowledge base in the art form?

- You love the kids. Are you excited to share what you know with kids?
- Collaborative spirit. Can you work with me on the design of the project?
- Can you help me understand what it is that you are going to teach and how does it abide to the curriculum and standards?