



Arts Education: Looking for Quality Workshop Outline/Facilitators Agenda

Context

This outline is based on a series of workshops developed and delivered by Los Angeles County’s *Arts for All* collaborative in the summer and fall of 2011. The workshops were meant to address a chorus of questions coming from the field – particularly from school district leaders and funders – asking, “What does quality arts education look like?” They were designed to familiarize participants with the four lenses described in Project Zero’s *Qualities of Quality* report, and to allow them to practice using the lenses as a tool to assess and discuss arts education experiences.

This outline combines the strongest elements of the sessions, which were delivered to multiple audiences and evolved over time. It is meant as a guide only, as the structure and content should be adjusted depending on the intended audience.

“Scripted” sections are italicized, highlighting language that we found useful and resonant with our participants.

Feedback and questions are welcome at artsforall@arts.lacounty.gov.

Desired Outcomes

Participants will increase their capacities to

- make informed observations of arts education settings and experiences
- assess and support the offerings of arts education service providers and school district programs.

Learning Environment

Participants sit in groups of four, preferably around tables. Seats are arranged so that all participants can view a screen or video monitor. A large, empty lens graphic from *Qualities of Quality* (see page 46 of the report) is posted on a wall where it is visible to all. Blank chart paper is set up at the front of the room.



Materials

PowerPoint (optional)

Blank sheets of paper*

Pencils/Pens*

Observation worksheets *

Excerpts from QoQ report (pages 30-33, 34-37, 38-41 and 42-45 from *Qualities of Quality*)*

Video of arts instruction

Large lens graphic on chart paper

Chart paper

Markers

* Pre-set on participant tables

Facilitators' Agenda

Time	Content/Strategies	Tech & Supplies
15 minutes	<p>Deepening our Understanding of Quality Arts Education</p> <p>Set the context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self introduction (if needed) - Background on genesis of workshop <p>Go over agenda and outcomes.</p> <p>Guide participants to visualize vibrant, high-quality arts learning (or educational experience, if an arts ed reference is not available) they have observed or experienced. <i>It can be in any setting, but it should be an actual space with real students, real teachers and real materials. Push yourself as you're in that space, to actually try to really walk around and look at what's happening. See as many different kinds of details as possible.</i></p> <p>Write down what they see taking place.</p>	<p>PowerPoint with outcomes, agenda</p> <p>Blank sheets of paper and table boxes with pens and pencils</p>



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	<p>Circle 2-3 most important elements. <i>What had top-level value in that particular setting, on that particular day, with those particular kids?</i></p> <p>Brief pair share. <i>Don't go into too much detail about the context of your visualization – really focus in on those most 2-3 most important elements that you saw, and describe them with as much detail as possible.</i></p> <p>Discussion <i>How many of you found that you described the same elements as your partner?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - [show of hands] <i>Was anyone surprised by what their partner shared?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - [show of hands] <i>What surprised you?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - [group discussion – get some examples] </p> <p><i>There was a lot of overlap, and areas of divergence. Divergence is indicative of different contexts, purposes, art forms, values. Overlap indicates shared values. When you see something that others don't, and then begin to share those differences, you can begin to notice new things, articulate them, and value them.</i></p> <p><i>If we were to gather together everything that everyone wrote down and look for those areas of overlap, we would begin to see four broad themes emerge.</i></p>	
35 minutes	<p>Introduction to Qualities of Quality and Review of the 4 Lenses</p> <p>Provide overview of the 4 Lenses and set participants to task <i>The conversations you just had are a snippet of conversations being had all around the country in 2009, when Project Zero, a research center at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, embarked on a research initiative funded by the Wallace Foundation. The research initiative sought to define what constitutes excellence in arts education. A big piece of the initiative</i></p>	Excerpts from QoQ report – each participant has 1 excerpt, with each group of 4 covering all 4 lenses



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	<p><i>involved in-depth interviews with arts educators from across the country, asking what they thought constituted excellence in arts education.</i></p> <p><i>Project Zero then issued a report called Qualities of Quality captures the results of those interviews and identified four discrete lenses of quality arts education.</i></p> <p><i>Now, lenses are not the same as categories. When you think of the word lens, what comes to mind? Glasses? Lenses are all about SEEING. When you put on a pair of glasses, be they sunglasses or bifocals or trifocals, what you are looking at stays the same, but you perceive it differently. Different things come into focus. By using the word lenses, Project Zero was really trying to address issues of perspective. They describe HOW we look at experiences. All of the lenses are present in any given learning experience, but when you apply them, different things start to come into focus.</i></p> <p><i>There are four lenses of quality arts education: student learning; community dynamics; pedagogy; and environment.</i></p> <p><i>Please note that while all of the lenses are equal, student learning is at the center.</i></p> <p><i>If you were to walk into a classroom looking through the student learning lens, you would be focused on what the students are doing – the kinds of projects and tasks they’re involved in and the character of their engagement.</i></p> <p><i>If you were to look through the community dynamics lens, you would examine the social dimension of the relationships in the classroom, including those among the students, between students and teachers, and among teachers and other adults, such as teaching artists, who are present.</i></p> <p><i>The pedagogy lens is all about the teacher. How does the teacher conceive of and practice their craft? How do they view the student-teacher relationship, and design and implement instruction?</i></p>	<p>Note sheets</p>



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	<p><i>The environment lens focuses on the physical space of the classroom, available materials and resources, and how much time students are given to engage in arts learning.</i></p> <p><i>Each lens provides a way to focus on observable elements of quality in arts learning experiences. Now we are going to give you a few minutes to get acquainted with the lenses through a jigsaw exercise. Each of you has an excerpt of the Qualities of Quality report in front of you, describing one particular lens. Each person at your table has a summary of a different lens. Please take a few minutes to reach the summary of your lens. You are responsible for learning about your lens, and reporting back to the others at your table. As you read, highlight key words or phrases that stand out to you. We have note sheets available if you prefer to jot ideas down. We also invite you to make note of any examples from your own experience that exemplify this particular lens. If, when you are finished reading, there are any questions or areas of confusion, please make note of those as well.</i></p> <p><i>Any questions before you begin reading?</i></p> <p>Participants read summaries of the Elements of Quality <i>When everyone at your table has finished reading and noting questions, please go around the table and each share a summary of your particular lens, as well as any connections to your experience and questions.</i></p> <p><i>We want to be everyone at the table gets through his/her summary, so you will each have about 5 minutes to share. We will signal when it's time for you to move on to the next lens.</i></p> <p>Participants share</p>	
10 minutes	<p>Clarify each lens re certain elements, and respond to questions.</p> <p><i>Before we move on to the next portion of the workshop, we want to check to make sure you have a good grasp of each lens. Let's start with student learning. Here are the main elements of the student learning lens. Does anyone have any questions about these elements? [repeat for each]</i></p>	



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	<p>Student Learning Engagement Experimentation, exploration, and inquiry</p> <p>Pedagogy Authenticity Modeling, artistic processes, inquiry, and habits Intentionality, flexibility, and transparency</p> <p>Community Dynamics Respect and trust among all participants</p> <p>Environment Functional and aesthetic space and materials</p> <p>Connect to Prior Knowledge <i>Now, take a moment to revisit what you wrote down after your visualization, and in particular take a look at those 2-3 elements you identified as the most important, see whether you can connect them back to one of the four lenses.</i></p> <p><i>Was everyone able to connect back to the lenses?</i></p> <p><i>Would someone like to share their element and how they connected it back to one of the lenses?</i></p> <p><i>Did anyone find that all or two-thirds of their most important elements fell under the same lens? Example?</i> [Suss out examples – ask for more details on the volunteer’s arts background] <i>Some – and I would actually argue most – people have a bit of a “lens bias” based on their own particular background and their values. Recognizing that there are four different lenses of quality arts education becomes extremely important in these moments, because understanding “lens bias” can help us get past some communications troubles we sometimes have in arts education.</i></p>	



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	<p><i>For example, if a teaching artist who tends to view quality through the lens of community dynamics is working with a principal who is focused on pedagogy, they may have very different ideas of what is going on in the classroom. Sometimes people in these circumstances that the other person doesn't "get" what they are trying to do or trying to say. By becoming more aware of our own lens bias and learning how to observe arts learning experiences through other lenses, we increase our ability to have meaningful conversations with our partners.</i></p>	
15 minutes	BREAK	
40 minutes	<p>Identifying Quality in Arts Learning Experiences</p> <p>Guiding question: <i>How can the 4 Lenses help us identify quality in arts learning experiences?</i></p> <p>Frame observation activity: <i>We are going to view a video sample of arts teaching and learning to strengthen our grasp of elements of quality as seen through the 4 lenses. It is not meant to be a model, but a slice of classroom reality – as if we've dropped in for an observation. [If there are cuts in the video]: There are a few cuts within the video, however, so please try not to get too hung up on what happened in between the moments you see, and focus instead on what you can observe.</i></p> <p>Screen the video excerpt.</p> <p><i>We are going to go through a series of questions with you. First, we are going to ask you what you saw and heard. In answering the first question please refrain from making any judgment or opinion statements – just simply name specific things that you saw and heard. The later questions will allow us to get into deeper discussion and assessment of what you saw.</i></p> <p>(Observe) What did you see? What did you hear? What lens does that observation connect to? Note: if anyone raises what they DIDN'T see, ask them to rephrase as a question and hold for the next step in the protocol</p>	<p>Video</p> <p>PowerPoint</p> <p>Lens graphic on wall</p> <p>Markers</p> <p>Lens graphic handout</p>



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	<p>After a few minutes of this, circle back to the vague answers (i.e. “engagement”) and ask whoever said it to reframe as a specific, observable action.</p> <p>Screen video again, this time focusing on whichever lens they read about during the jigsaw activity, AND making note of SPECIFIC EVIDENCE.</p> <p><i>What did you see? What did you hear?</i> <i>What lens does that observation connect to?</i></p> <p>Make sure people are correctly identifying lenses. If there’s confusion, ask the room – where should this go? Sometimes it goes in more than one space.</p> <p>(Question) <i>Based on what you saw and heard, what questions were raised for you?</i> [If a prompt is needed here, ask if they thought anything was missing, and can frame that as a question]</p> <p>(Speculate) <i>What prior experiences may have enabled students to engage in this work?</i> [Coax as needed: what did they learn about ahead of time? What kinds of activities may they have done? What needed to happen in the classroom, with the teacher, and with the community to allow this experience to take place? Ask participants to GUESS and be sure to explain what specific observations their guess is grounded in] Participants think and engage in brief table share before discussing as whole group.</p> <p>Clarify context by providing information about learning experience, such as grade level of students.</p> <p>Explanation – why we asked them to guess and didn’t give them information ahead of time. Issues of judgment – exercise meant to get people to really SEE what is happening in the</p>	



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	classroom and hone their skills of observation and description.	
20 minutes	REFLECTION <i>Turn to someone at a different table, and discuss:</i> <i>How has your understanding of quality in arts education been informed by your work with the 4 Lenses?</i> [If there's time – whole group share out]	
10 minutes	Closing thoughts/final questions/next steps	

