



Visual and Performing Arts: Connecting to Our Early Experiences with the Visual and Performing Arts

Focus Statement

Students reflect on their own early experiences with the visual and performing arts and then interview other students to explore their experiences. They then are led in a reflective discussion regarding what they have learned from this experience and what it might mean for their work.

Curriculum Alignment Project (CAP) Student Learning Outcomes

The Curriculum Alignment Project's (CAP) lower division eight courses and student learning outcomes are mapped onto each instructional guide learning experience. See Appendix A for the specific student learning outcomes, objectives, and examples of course content and topics for the courses listed below.

- Child Growth and Development
- Child, Family and Community
- Introduction to Curriculum
- Principles and Practices of Teaching Young Children
- Teaching in a Diverse Society
- Practicum-Field Experience

Instructional Methodologies

- Conversation grid—peer interviews
- Lecture
- Reflective discussion—large group
- Reflective questions

California Early Childhood Educator Competency Areas to Consider

The Faculty Initiative Project will be undertaking a comprehensive process in the future to map the content of the instructional guides to the California Department of Education, Child Development Division's *California Early Childhood Educator Competencies*. "The Competency Areas to Consider"



below are listed in this instructional guide as a preliminary exploration of how particular competency areas might be addressed through these learning experiences.

- Child Development and Learning
- Culture, Diversity, and Equity
- Family and Community Engagement
- Dual-Language Development
- Professionalism



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Visual and Performing Arts Domain:
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Performing Arts

Before You Start

This learning experience will ask students to reflect on their own early and current relationships to the visual and performing arts. They will do this by recalling their own experiences and then interviewing other students to discover the experiences that others have had. Keep in mind that students' experiences might be limited with one or another of the visual and performing arts or their experiences might have left them feeling uncomfortable in these arts. The discussions with peers is important in exploring and understanding that, in any group, there might have been different emphases on the arts in our lives and that much of our experience is shaped by family and cultural traditions, habits or preferences. Students might even discover that these terms carry different meanings for different students.

Note that, because we are focusing on the strands in the visual and performing arts domain, video and film are not included here. If you feel it is important, they could be included as visual forms of expression of drama, music, or dance.

A handout of a conversation grid is provided with this learning experience. An electronic version of this handout will be available when this instructional guide is online at www.wested.org/facultyinitiative.

Information Delivery

Begin by reviewing the glossary for this domain, which is on pages 28–30 of the *California Preschool Learning Foundations, Volume 2* (PLF V2). Whether or not students are already familiar with the content of this domain, the glossary will provide a way to come to common understanding of the strands in this domain.

Strict definitions are not helpful for this learning experience, but some common understanding will support students in their conversations and discussions. Use the following definitions if they are helpful. Music and visual arts are not defined in the glossary. These definitions are taken from the publication and the glossary for this domain and are adapted to relate to adult experiences.



Slides 2-3

Visual Arts: Products and processes of expression that use particular tools to create marks, colors, textures, and shapes of visual art.

Dance: Movement selected and organized for aesthetic purposes, or as a medium of expression.



Drama: Creating and acting out pretend characters in imaginary or staged contexts. In the preschool classroom drama is experiential, whereas theater is performance oriented.

Music: Sounds selected and organized for expressive purposes; these sounds have pitch, tempo, rhythm, and tone.

Make sure students understand that, in the early years, the value of these arts is related to process, not product (PLF, V2, p. 1). As they explore their own experiences, however, these could relate to either process or product or performance, since they will be discussing a range of their own experiences over time.

Active Learning



Slide 4

Getting it started

Let students know that they will be reviewing their own experiences with the four strands of the visual and performing arts domain. They will each do this individually for themselves and then will have conversations with their peers in the classroom to explore how others have experienced these arts. How they are organized to do this will depend on class size and time available. Each student could do all four strands, or the strands could be distributed to pairs or small numbers of students. Students could interview only other students with different strands or only students with the same strand.

Each student will have one or more conversation grids. These are available as a handout for this learning experience and there is one for each strand. Each grid has three questions as column headings. Each student is to use the first row to write their own experiences.

Online Options

Students could complete their own experiences on the conversation grid online and then interview others in class.

Give students about 10 minutes to do this. They will need a little time to remember their experiences, but remind them that they should keep their responses brief.

Keeping it going

After they have recorded their own responses, they are to find and interview other students in the class to get their responses. Students are to ask each other the three questions that head the handout columns and briefly write in the other student's responses. Since these will be already written, they won't need as much time with others as they did with themselves. How many others each student interviews will depend on the time available. You will probably want to have them doing interviews for at least 30 minutes. This will give them time to gather enough information for further reflection. You could also extend the time available and encourage students to discuss any outstanding differences or similarities with other students.

**Putting It Together with Reflective Questions**

When students have interviewed at least two or three others, bring them together for a discussion of the following questions:



Slides 5-6

- What similar experiences or preferences in your families or communities did you discover?
- What different experiences or preferences in your families or communities did you discover?
- Did you discover similarities or differences in how you experience the visual and performing arts now?
- What does this suggest in regards to working with the visual and performing arts with young children?
- How might you apply what you have learned here to your current or future work with young children?

Online Options

The questions for discussion could be used as an online assignment to be handed in for review. It would be important, however, to bring these results to class for a discussion or to set up an online discussion to review the results.

Students can be prompted to consider what children bring to this domain. Encourage students to think about what differences there might be in children's experiences with the visual and performing arts in the preschool setting and in their family and cultural contexts.



Handout for Connecting to Our Early Experiences with the Visual and Performing Arts

Fill out this conversation grid first for yourself and then find three or four others to interview. This will be followed by a class discussion of results.

Note: there is one conversation grid for each strand.

Visual and Performing Arts Strand: Visual Art			
	How did you experience visual arts when you were growing up? For example, did you draw, paint, or sculpt or visit art exhibits?	Do you remember specific events or experiences with visual arts in your family, at school, or in your community? Do you remember any that particularly touched you or were important to you? This could include creating visual art, acquiring a piece of art, or going to an art show in your community.	How do you experience visual arts now?
Self			
Person 1			
Person 2			
Person 3			
Person 4			
Person 5			

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Handout 1 – Handout for Connecting to Our Early Experiences with the Visual and Performing Arts



Visual and Performing Arts Strand: Music			
	How did you experience music when you were growing up? For example, do you remember singing, playing instruments, or listening to music?	Do you remember specific events or experiences with music in your family, at school, or in your community? Do you remember any that particularly touched you or were important to you? For example, this might include singing solo or in a choral group; playing in a band; listening together; or attending community events such as theater, movies, or festivals.	How do you experience music now?
Self			
Person 1			
Person 2			
Person 3			
Person 4			
Person 5			



Visual and Performing Arts Strand: Drama			
	How did you experience drama when you were growing up? For example, did you engage in pretend play, perform in plays, or attend drama events in your community?	Do you remember specific events or experiences with drama in your family, at school, or in your community? Do you remember any that particularly touched you or were important to you? For example, this could include performing at or attending drama events.	How do you experience drama events now?
Self			
Person 1			
Person 2			
Person 3			
Person 4			
Person 5			



Visual and Performing Arts Strand: Dance			
	How did you experience dance when you were growing up? For example, did you dance to music as a child or adult; take dance lessons; observe or participate in family or culturally traditional dances; see dance in the community, in film, or on stage?	Do you remember specific events or experiences with dance in your family, at school, or in your community? Do you remember any that particularly touched you or were important to you? For example, this could include dancing in a group or at community events such as dances or festivals.	How do you experience dance now?
Self			
Person 1			
Person 2			
Person 3			
Person 4			
Person 5			