



Artistic Staff Development Overview

Performing Arts Workshop (The Workshop) is a non-profit arts education organization dedicated to helping young people develop critical thinking, creative expression and basic learning skills through the arts. The professional teaching artist plays an essential role in giving life to that mission.

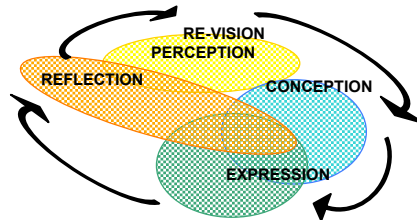
From pre-kindergarten child development centers to teens in the juvenile justice system, artists give young people ways to see themselves, their families and their communities through drama, dance, music or creative writing. The Workshop dedicates time and resources to train artists to help youth think critically and creatively. Besides direct teaching time, all artists are paid for training and support. During a school year this includes:

1) Artists Orientation

Artistic staff development also includes a 3-hour orientation at the start of the school year, in which new and returning artists are introduced or re-introduced to the Workshop's "culture" and procedures. The orientation covers such topics as: staff introductions, human resource issues, payroll procedure, residency process, curriculum overview requirement, Cohort and organizational structure, and required paperwork.

The Cycle of Artistic Inquiry (CAI) in Theory

At the heart of the Workshop's teaching methodology is the Cycle of Artistic Inquiry. The Cycle consists of stages of learning that show how critical and creative thinking evolves through *Perception*, *Conception*, *Expression*, *Reflection*, and *Re-Vision*.



As the diagram indicates, learning is a dynamic and non-linear process, applicable to all art forms. Seen as a cycle of action, the artist works within a framework to help young people think critically when solving problems in a specific art form. The Workshop expects all artists to engage students in the process of critical thinking during reflection and re-vision.

2) The CAI in Practice

New artists are paired with an Artist Mentor for an 8-session, on-site Internship, in which discussion and assessment follow the teaching and observation of weekly classes. Internship topics are divided into the following "teaching areas:"

1. The Lesson
2. Class Dynamics
3. Classroom Management
4. Aesthetics and Composition
5. Critical Thinking
6. Social Consciousness

Another way to view the Internship is the application of the CAI during a class in which critical thinking is an essential part of the lesson plan and its execution. To assist the artist in this effort, the Workshop periodically evaluates teaching artists.



3) Assessing Skill and Rigor

All artists receive two or more on-site Teaching Skill Assessments (TSA) per school year. The TSA is an evaluation tool that measures how rigorously the Method is applied in each of the six areas listed above. Each area has TSA values ranging from “far below” to “far above” expectations.

During a TSA site visit, Artist Mentors evaluate the artist teaching a class, followed by a meeting to examine and discuss TSA results in each of the six areas. The artist may be asked to self-evaluate in order to gain a deeper understanding of the TSA. If a TSA reveals “below expectation” in key areas, additional support will be provided, and may include independent artist-to-artist observations or a planed goal-defined Mentorship period.

3) Mentorship Support

Mentorships are designed to address the specific needs of an artist. An artist may be asked to diversify their teaching skills to include working with teens at a community site or to improve underperforming TSA ratings in a specific category, such as class management. Once need is determined, Mentorship goals are set within a specific time frame, lasting from two to five teaching sessions.

4) Professional Development Saturday Workshops

During a school year the artistic staff is required to attend two 5-hour Saturday workshops. The training workshops explore: understanding reflection, revision, aesthetics and composition, developing levels of dialogue, and using nuance (pin-pointing details) to highlight important creative moments, such as when a student selection possesses beauty and inventiveness.

The dynamic of the workshops involve:

- Interacting with a staff of professional artists, comprised of dancers, actors, musicians, and writers;
- Solving creative problems in small groups
- Presenting compositional work to the full artistic staff
- Participating in the teaching approach of others outside ones genre
- Examining and discussing ways to deepen rigor of class content and teaching practice

Saturday workshop themes are carried over into the monthly Cohort Meetings to be refined and adapted to the teaching of specific student populations.

5) Monthly Cohort Meeting

All staff artists are assigned to one of four Cohorts or group of artists, determined by the population of youth they serve. Each two-hour session is co-conducted by an Artist Mentor and Program Manager. The content of these two-hour sessions consists of:

- Administrative check-ins involving student reports and required paper work
- Group coaching that focus’s on specific teaching problems or obstacles
- Conducting mini-workshops around a successful or failed lesson plan
- Co-creating the content of the Saturday professional development workshops

7) End of Year Performance Review

The Workshop conducts an end-of-year evaluation of all staff artists. The annual Review includes:

- Residency and Internship outcomes
- TSA summary and promotion requirements
- Administrative performance feedback
- Artist outlook for next year
- Written organizational evaluation