



I am \_\_\_\_\_, a program evaluator from the Improve Group. As you know I am conducting research for Performing Arts Workshop about their Artists-in-Schools program for their federally funded Arts Residency Interventions in Special Education or ARISE project. Thank you for taking time for this focus group today. I will be asking you questions about how the Artists-in-Schools program is implemented and how it impacts general education and special education students.

Before we get started, I'd like to give you a little background about focus groups and why we are doing this focus group. Focus groups are intended to give us a sense of how a group of people feels about a certain subject. We often want confirmation that others feel this way, so I might follow up a question with something like "Do others feel this way" or "Is this important for other people to know about?" I want to hear from everyone, and so at times I may interject to help the conversation keep moving. I will be taking your comments and summarizing them to share with the Performing Arts Workshop staff and the federal Department of Education. You and your individual opinions won't be identified in any way. This focus group is being audio recorded to ensure the accuracy of my notes.

Please help yourself to food and beverages. If you need to get up to use the rest room, feel free. We expect the focus group to take 1-½ to 2 hours.

**Names of Attendees:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.



## Focus Group Questions

Our first few questions are about how the Artists-in-Schools program is implemented.

1. Did you receive training from Performing Arts Workshop in the last year? If yes, in what ways has it helped you develop and implement lesson plans in the 2007-08 school year?
2. Have you received two or more evaluation site visits by artistic staff (not related to this evaluation)? Did you find the evaluation valuable in helping you improve your teaching method? Why or why not?
3. How would you explain the Artists-in-Schools program to a teacher? (What if you were explaining it to a parent? Another artist? What does the program do? What is its purpose?)
4. What happens in your classroom during the residency? (Prompts: What do you do when you get to the school/classroom? What do the teachers do? What do the students do? What is the structure of the lesson plan?)
5. What kind of planning and reflection do you do with the teacher? Is it effective?
6. How did you develop your lesson plans? What resources did you use to develop your lesson plans? (i.e. Teachers from the school you worked at, Workshop staff or trainings, Workshop or other arts or education publications, etc.)?
7. What topics or skills do you emphasize in your lesson plans? What format are your lesson plans in?



8. What makes you feel welcome and or valued in the school? Are there factors that are off-putting? Has this changed during the current school year?
9. Have you seen any changes in the teacher or classroom environment as a result of the program? What changes have you seen? (Evidence that the performing arts are being integrated in the classroom?)
10. Do you frequently model your planned lessons during class? Why or how?

The next few questions are about how the Artist-in-Schools program impacts students.

11. What changes have you seen in students' understanding of the performing arts as a result of the Artists-in-Schools program? (Do they have improved artistic vocabularies? Do they know what [theater, creative movement, creative writing] is?)
12. What changes have you seen in students' ability to express themselves in the arts? (Are students using a variety of art forms to express themselves? Can they find meaning in work of other artists and students?)
13. What changes have you seen in students' classroom behavior?
14. Can you tell me about individual situations in which students were particularly affected by the Artists-in-Schools program? Situations in which the program did or didn't work with individual students?



15. How is the experience of teaching to special education students different from teaching students in general education? Are there special factors we should know about when working with Special Education students in the arts? (Can the arts have a different impact on special education students?)
  
16. Did the classroom teachers express interest in using the arts to teach reading, math, science or other subjects? Did you help the teachers develop tools to do so?
  
17. What would you say are the best ways to assess student learning in the arts? What do you do to assess student learning?
  
18. What would you want to convey to a broader audience of teaching artists?