

BEST PRACTICES

THE ARTS IN ONTARIO CLASSROOMS

Why Teachers and Artists should work together

- Artists inspire students of all grades by sharing their passion and their unique lenses into the world as well as their professional practices.
- Teachers deliver the curriculum expectations by creating a space that promotes creative and critical thinking, student respect for one another, collaborative work habits, and cooperation with the teacher and all invited guests.



- Teachers are able to learn more about their arts disciplines and deepen their own artistic practices and skills.
- Artists work at an artistic level of expertise beyond what many teachers can reach within their own personal arts practices.



- Artists in the classroom can engage and motivate students to experiment, try new arts activities and skills, and deepen artistic work they are already doing.
- Teachers can learn new strategies and techniques for engaging their students in artistic processes and products.



- Teachers are able to observe their students working with another professional and gain a wide variety of insights into their learning styles and artistic interests and abilities as well as their behaviours.
- Artists respond to the students as they present themselves during their time together and may see students in ways that the teacher has never done before.



- Artists and teachers both look at what they do and how they do it from different perspectives when they work together.
- Teachers and artists both learn more about the students as artists and as learners by providing space for the voices of the children and/or adolescents, in conversation and in their artistic work in the classroom.



Suggestions for Artists in Classrooms

A crucial aspect of artists facilitating workshops in the classroom is the collaborative relationship between the artist and the teacher. Foster and engage in open communication throughout the experience: pre-planning, during sessions, and in a debrief after sessions finish.

#1 Before the Workshop: Pre-Planning Sessions

Artists and teachers should meet to clarify workshop goals, discuss ideas for workshops, and plan details before workshops begin. Some details to discuss might include:

A - Scheduling of workshop

- When is recess, lunch, break?
- How long will the workshops be?
- Is the scope of the workshops appropriate for the agreed amount of time?
- What will be the procedure if sessions need to be rescheduled?

B - Practical concerns:

- Is the workshop in person or virtual? Is the workshop taking place in the classroom, in the school gym, or virtually when students are at home?
- If virtual, what platform is being used? It is recommended that artists and teachers have their planning meeting on the online platform that will be used for workshops in order to test out the technology.
- What are the current safety and/or health protocols?
- What materials and space are available?
- Is there a budget for materials?
- Will classroom materials and/or found materials be used?
- What supports do artists and teachers need from each other during workshops? (e.g. help distribute materials, organize students into smaller groups for activities, monitor chat if virtual etc.)

C - Classroom context:

- What are students working on?
- What is their prior experience with the art form?
- How can student voice and choice be centered?
- What are the classroom routines and protocols?
- Are there strategies for engagement that are used in class (in person or online)?
- Is there anything artists should know in order to plan and facilitate a successful workshop?



#2 During Sessions

- Your most important responsibility is to provide the students with an inspiring, creative experience. The process is equally, if not more important, than the products that result from the workshops.
- Seek support from the teacher for classroom management and/or behavioural issues.
- Check in regularly with the teacher to see if the workshops are working well. Sometimes a revised approach may be necessary. This is where the artist and teacher can work together to navigate challenges, meet learner needs, and reach artistic goals.

#3 Debrief/After Sessions

- Debrief with the teacher and listen to what they have to say about their experiences for your professional development.
- If possible, debrief with the students and listen to what they have to say about their experiences. Alternatively, invite the teacher to share feedback from the students.

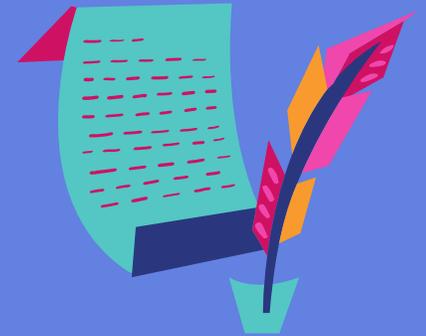


Suggestions for Teachers working with Artists

Before inviting an artist into your classroom, prepare your students for artistic workshops. Establish a creative space and a community connection with your students, ensuring that they are experienced with working together in creative ways. Be sure to apply your knowledge of your students to prepare them for working with someone new. It is critically important that teachers decide how the artist visit fits into their curriculum planning. The artist is not responsible for delivering curriculum or providing an opportunity for summative assessment. They are there to enrich and develop the skills of the students and, possibly, your own artistic capabilities.

Before the Workshop: Pre-Planning Sessions

- Connect with the artist to understand the focus of their work and to prepare them with any non-confidential information relevant to their time in your classroom.
- Focus on clarifying workshop goals, discussing ideas for the workshop, and planning details such as: scheduling workshop, practical concerns, and classroom context.



During Sessions

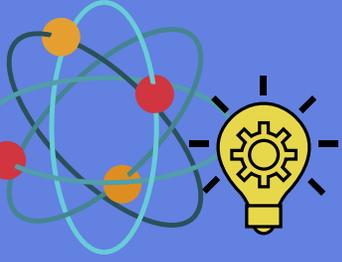
- Your most important responsibility is to be present and actively engaged alongside the students. (This is not a prep nor a marking opportunity.)
- Be attentive to classroom management needs and responsive to requests for support from the artist.
- Observing your students work with an artist is an ideal opportunity to learn about each of them in new ways and to see them through the eyes of someone else. (Assessment for/as learning, formative assessment).



Debrief/After Sessions

- Debrief with the artist and listen to what s/he/they have to say about their experiences.
- Debrief with the students and listen to what they have to say about their experiences.
- Whenever possible, ask your students for their ideas about what they would like to do as a follow-up.
- Find ways to link the artist experience with your upcoming curriculum planning or what you were already doing.





Sustainable Education means STEAM!



Awareness and social change to achieve sustainability means ARTISTS working with and as SCIENTISTS, ENGINEERS, and MATHEMATICIANS in every community and in every country. Most artists already work with technology within their art forms.

Dance, Drama, Media/Visual Arts, and Music stand alongside Science, Technology, Engineering and Math as fields essential to communicating about how we make decisions, what we value, and why.

Education for sustainability sees the arts as imperative to innovative, creative thinking about how we can apply our knowledge in new ways.



Artists need to work in every community with people of all ages because change in behaviours to achieve sustainability begins with the creative application of knowledge and understanding to find unique new solutions to problems we face.

All subjects need to be taught creatively and embrace critical thinking. The way we teach our STEM subjects must also be both creative and reflective.

Learning to live in community with others and the natural world is essential to ensure that we work collectively and collaboratively, both locally and globally.



We must include the arts in our schools to ensure that a habit of creativity is developed in our students and that their critical thinking skills become second nature. Teachers and artists can work together to do this.