02A

FOCUS AREA 2: PREPARE FOR QUALITY INSTRUCTION
Component 2A: Seek Understanding

COMPONENT GOAL: Teaching Artists garner the necessary knowledge and understanding to customize quality instruction for students, communities, and schools.

Characteristics of Practice

COMPONENT	CHARACTERISTICS OF PRACTICE
Understand the School	Teaching Artists develop an understanding of the school's resources, practices, and unique needs as they develop programs. This may include awareness regarding: • Resources available within the school community • Referral processes when students disclose experiences that suggest they are in need of further support or monitoring • Organizations working in the same schools and communities who may be available to assist and/or collaborate as opportunities arise
Understand the Community	Teaching Artists seek deeper knowledge of students, families, and communities as they develop programs by: • Grounding curriculum in what communities and students value • Building on existing expertise, ideas, and knowledge • Preparing for differentiated learning based on individual students in the class • Designing intentional groupings of students to reinforce peer to peer learning
Understand the Students	Teaching Artists solicit regular and open communication about student needs and desires, including: • Linguistic needs • Individual Education Programs (IEPs) • Ability levels • Challenges facing individuals and communities • Inter-student dynamics • Specific learning needs • Shared measures of student learning and program success

Improving Practice in this Component

The following questions, organized by element, are designed to help organizations and program managers improve and sharpen current practices in this element as well as engage in professional conversations with colleagues and organizational decision-makers.

ELEMENTS	GUIDING QUESTIONS
Understand the School	• How do we talk about the organization's professional practice, processes, and artistic work with school administrators? • How is a Teaching Artist different from and similar to a classroom teacher? • What are the assets and challenges of the school? • How can I best collaborate with the classroom teacher? • What is my plan if the classroom teacher has a different approach to classroom management than I do? • What procedure should I follow if a student discloses a problem or issue to me? • What other organizations are working in the school? Are there opportunities to collaborate? • Is there a school security officer? • What do visitors experience when visiting a school? • What are relevant areas of focus in the school's Continuous Improvement Work Plan (CIWP)?
Understand the Community	• What are the best points in the program to connect with families? • What are families' and students' language preferences? • How do families access information best/easiest? • To what extent are my interactions with students a function of their cultural backgrounds? Gender? Cognitive abilities? What difference, if any, do these factors make? • How do I meet the needs of families whose cultures are different than my own, including customs, language, and norms? • What arts expertise already exists in the community? How can I work to connect to this expertise? • How can I become part of the school community? • How do I build trust with students and families? • What is the history and context of the neighborhood? • Do students have to walk though a "Safe Passage" area to get to and from school?

Improving Practice in this Component *(continued)*

ELEMENTS	GUIDING QUESTIONS
Understand the Students	• What are some strategies or methods for understanding who the students are in advance of our first session together? • What arts experiences have students had? • What does "a day-in-the-life" of a student at the school look like? • What supports are available to students in and outside of school? • Do the students have experience in collaborating and working together?

Demonstrating Growth in this Component

Teaching Artists have multiple opportunities to gather tools as evidence and demonstrate practice in this component. The following provides examples, rather than an exhaustive listing, of how Teaching Artists can showcase their teaching practice.

PROFESSIONAL CONVERSATIONS

Evidence of this component can be found during pre-observation conversations, as The Teaching Artist and program manager engage in conversation about how they gather and share data and information on the school, community, and students.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Teaching Artists have multiple opportunities to gather tools as evidence of practice in this component. The supporting documents below can serve as artifacts and evidence of practice, and can be shared during professional conversations, uploaded to *artlook,*® or gathered during an observation. The following provides examples, rather than an exhaustive listing, of how Teaching Artists can showcase their practice.

• School needs assessment in the arts
• Creative Schools Certification rating and school partnership information
• Log of conversations with various stakeholders
• Parent and student survey data
• Family-targeted surveys
• Data about family program attendance, and family member presence in the building
• Community profiles that include socioeconomic demographics and any "insider information" about the community (e.g. interview with a community activist or director of community center, park district center, or house of worship)