

01B

FOCUS AREA 1: BUILD CAPACITY FOR QUALITY INSTRUCTION

Component 1B: Create a Healthy Classroom Culture

COMPONENT GOAL: Teaching Artists are capable of creating a classroom culture that supports quality teaching and learning.



Characteristics of Practice

COMPONENT

CHARACTERISTICS OF PRACTICE

Classroom Culture

Teaching Artists create a positive, strengths-based and distinctive classroom culture by:

- Challenging negative attitudes or practices
- Ensuring all students are honored in the program
- Helping prepare students for college, career, life, and ongoing artistic practice
- Reflecting a shared belief in the importance of learning and hard work
- Modeling the highest levels of civility, honesty, and respect
- Valuing student for their strengths, desires, self-determined needs
- Allowing students to play a role in planning instruction as appropriate
- Avoiding top down communication styles and acting in a strengths-based, sensitive manner
- Offering warm, caring, and developmentally appropriate feedback

Personal Self-Awareness

There is an inherent power to the Teaching Artist role when working with students. Awareness regarding how this power plays out in the classroom can help Teaching Artists check their own assumptions, understand their own privilege, and operate in a way that relies not on role power, but on the powers of teaching and artistic practices.

In particular, Teaching Artists cultivate personal self-awareness by:

- Developing and reflecting on a personal inventory of self (e.g. personal identity, motivations, needs, limitations, strengths, values, beliefs, emotions, habits, and implicit or explicit biases)
- Understanding their own cultural identity in the context of the cultural identities of students and communities and challenging their own assumptions
- Monitoring how they react when anxious, confused, traumatized, or uncomfortable
- Not confusing their position as a teacher with power of authorship over student experiences

Characteristics of Practice *(continued)*

COMPONENT	CHARACTERISTICS OF PRACTICE
Artistic Self-Awareness	<p>Artistic self-awareness is a part of personal self-awareness, but more closely tied to the Teaching Artists’ lived experience within the art form. Teaching Artists teach with artistic self-awareness by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bringing their own experience in the art form and the artistic community into the classroom for students to see, experience, and learn from • Leading with curiosity about and love for the art form • Demonstrating how personal and artistic self-awareness can inform and deepen the artistic process and improve artistic products • Embracing improvisation within the art form
Cultural Inclusion	<p>Teaching Artists provide culturally-relevant programs by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrating sensitive to language preferences • Taking extra steps to demonstrate accessibility and avoid projecting elitism, especially when grounded in Western traditions or “the Canon” • Communicating directly with families about how they can be better engaged • Understanding how to create safe spaces within the classroom • Understanding and being sensitive to potential abuses of power within the youth development space • Possessing knowledge and understanding of the community at hand
Professionalism	<p>Teaching Artists embody professionalism within their organizations as well as within school and community partnerships by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending every class session and seeking coverage for planned absences • Working with patience and with energy • Leading decision-making processes that are grounded in the organization’s mission, vision, and values • Complying with policies and practices of the organization and its partners • Enacting the highest standards of teaching, artistic, and personal integrity



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
Classroom Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is my classroom distinct and different than other classrooms? Why? • Do I understand the assets my students bring to this work? How can I build from those to engage them even more deeply in learning? • What is my role in preparing students for college, career, and life? • What are strategies for collaborating with students on planning instruction? • How do I address the needs of the whole classroom while honoring differences in individual students? • What kind of classroom culture do I expect? How is it similar or different from what the classroom teacher expects? From what the students expect? • What makes my class unique? • Is my feedback to students genuine, warm, and developmentally appropriate?
Personal Self-Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do I meet the needs of students and families whose cultures are different than my own, including customs, language, norms, etc.? • Have I done the work of understanding privilege and oppression, exploring the ways in which implicit or explicit biases may shape my point of view, and challenging other assumptions I may hold? • What are my preconceptions I bring about particular cultural identities, and how can I challenge or reframe them when appropriate? • What experience did I have in the arts as a student? How do my experiences align (or not) with the experiences of the students I am working with? • What strategies can I employ when I'm feeling outside of my comfort zone in the classroom? • How do I typically react when discomforted? Is this reaction helpful for classroom culture, or unhelpful? Can I plan to do better?

Improving Practice in this Component *(continued)*

ELEMENTS	GUIDING QUESTIONS
Artistic Self-Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What opportunities do I have to develop my artistic self? • What opportunities should be available but are not? • How will I share my love of the art form with students? • What artistic experiences of mine can I show and share with students?
Cultural Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do I assess the communication needs and expectations of different stakeholders? • How do I evaluate the purpose, relevance, and use of anchor works of art in the classroom? Are the works I use accessible and relevant to students?
Professionalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does my own integrity suggest for teaching and artistic practices? • What are some methods or systems I use to keep track of non-instructional records? • How am I empowered to be an ambassador of the organization’s mission, vision, and values in the classroom and school? • What are the policies and practices of the organization and how can I demonstrate alignment to them? • What strategies can I employ when fatigued to still work with patience and energy? • How can I best communicate with the organization throughout the program? • What are my expectations of the organization during the program? • Do I have colleagues to engage as a professional learning community to share challenges, successes, and learnings with?



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 Teaching Artists explain:

- how they exemplify personal, artistic, and professional self-awareness when approaching work with students
- how they have engaged in conversation with the program manager about cultural inclusion practices of the organization
- expectations around communication and support from the organization throughout the program

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.

- Student and family interest inventory
- Student strengths assessment
- Signed Teaching Artist/Employee organization handbook or contract
- Personal strengths assessment (e.g. Myers-Briggs, 360-degree feedback, etc.)
- Personal needs assessment
- Personal values identification
- Cultural competence self-assessment awareness checklist
- Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) questionnaire
- Personal timesheet