

Teacher Support Plan - James Castaldo (*name changed*)

Instructional area of improvement identified by teacher: Mr. Castaldo (Mr. C) would like to improve his means of assessing students in the elementary grades, specifically first and second grade.

Data to Support Goal: The district's arts coordinator stresses that assessment methods should utilize a means of self-assessment, specifically that of an assessment instrument. Mr. C feels his current rubric in the primary grades does not capture student's understanding of what he would like assessed. An informal discussion with students in the different primary grade classes by myself yielded very few students who could explain what the rubric was meant to measure. Most students viewed it as simply a grade on how "good" their art looked. Mr. C agrees with this evaluation.

Refined Goal: Mr. C would like to create a rubric that students in the primary grades can complete that will help them self-assess their artwork according to specific categories, yet is not too abstract to comprehend at their young ages.

Inquiry Process:

January 27th

Mr. C and I met after school to discuss his perceived strengths and weaknesses in the area of arts instruction. We shared ideas and beliefs about best methods of arts instruction and common goals of the visual arts curriculum. We discussed the difficulties of creating more rigorous arts instruction, especially in the primary grades. Mr. C is a new teacher and would like to bring about a more meaningful art experience for the students, but has questions as to how assess their understanding.

Next Steps: Mr. C will brainstorm specific areas related to assessment in the primary grades.

February 6th

Mr. C shared with me his refined goal of self-assessment in the primary grades. We reviewed some of his larger desired student outcomes of wanting the children to focus on craft, procedure, and meaning.

Next Steps: Mr. C agreed to have me informally observe his art classes over the next few weeks in order to further understand his methods and style, the way students react to art class, and what is feasible in the timeframe allotted.

February 10th, 13th, 18th, & 20th

I observed one 1st, two 2nd, one 3rd, and one 6th grade class. Mr. C taught a variety of lessons utilizing art history and various artistic methods. The informal observations allowed for a better understanding of Mr. C's process and students' understanding during his classes.

Next Steps: Meeting with Mr. C to discuss further goals of self-assessment.

February 25th

Mr. C and I met to discuss my observations in the class. I shared with him the following thoughts related to assessment:

- Students are overwhelmingly engaged with the content and the production of the art. They feel strongly about crafting a “good-looking” piece of artwork.
- Students use art-specific vocabulary very well.
- Students seem to lack a deeper connection to how visual arts can be expressive of themselves and be used as a means to communicate deeper statements.
- Students do not seem to reflect on their choices in the art making process and seem puzzled when explaining why they chose certain methods.

Mr. C shared some thoughts:

- He would like to push the format of the current rubric to involve a deeper understanding, but doesn’t want to lose out on the ability to assess the production process. He believes art is 50% craft and 50% meaning.
- He is concerned with time restraints of a more involved assessment process since art classes are once a week.
- He wants to keep in mind a connection to the artists who inspire the lesson.

Next Steps: I encouraged Mr. C to think about what specific outcomes he would like to see with the younger students and supported the idea of more writing in the rubric. We both agreed to look into the new visual arts standards being planned nationally to understand what should be assessed. I planned to research current best practices in arts assessment.

March 4th

Mr. C and I met after school to discuss self-assessment. Methods of utilizing self-critique were discussed as prior critiques in class were mixed. We discussed the challenges of peer-critique at the younger age groups and devised ways to model critiquing using student-friendly language. We also discussed the new standards and their focus on a spiraling curriculum, use of cross-curricular instruction and reflection.

Next Steps: We would look into examples of rubrics being used by other educators and educational practitioners.

March 6th

Mr. C and I met after school to discuss specific models of rubrics. We both had researched what is currently being used around the country. We keyed in on the idea of self-assessment through metacognitive approaches. According to research primarily from Harvard’s Project Zero, arts assessment is best done through self-assessment that allows the student to self-monitor their progress. This approach raises metacognitive engagement among students, increases motivation, and enables a learning process that allows students to direct their own learning. This appears

especially important in the arts because of its susceptibility to wide-ranging standards of excellence. The approaches to self-assessment using self-directed goals and various forms of self-reflection became our new framework for the rubric. Mr. C was very receptive to this idea and I encouraged him to take time to experiment with the best form of rubric.

During the discussion, a concern grew out of what students would be able to accomplish with respect to writing. We both were uncertain and decided a meeting with primary grade teachers would help us better understand primary students' capabilities.

Next Steps: An observation period for Mr. C to visit a class was not feasible due to scheduling conflicts, but he gladly agreed to a lunchtime meeting with fellow grade teachers. I facilitated a meeting with two teachers during Mr. C's lunchtime to discuss rubrics and children's writing capabilities.

March 18th

Mr. C and I met during lunch with Ms. Holovak and Ms. Shortlidge. We discussed the writing ability of children at this stage in the year. Explicit modeling of rubric categories and what constitutes a 1-4 rating were heavily encouraged by the teachers. They agreed that students should be able to write at least 3-4 sentences independently, and reflect upon their feelings in a basic way. I encouraged Mr. C to push the students and to assign the rubric as homework if needed so that they might have more time to reflect on their work. Chunking the assessment topics so that only one topic was assessed per project was discussed as a way to introduce the students to the rubric at an easier pace.

Next Steps: We would create two rubrics reflecting what we both found relevant in the literature along with the advice given by the classroom teachers. Both of these rubrics would then be revised by Mr. C according to his assessment criteria. Either one or both of these rubrics would then be field-tested throughout the rest of the school year.

March 20th

Mr. C and I met during his prep period and throughout the week to revise rubrics to fit Mr. C's needs. Mr. C added a formative assessment goal to the rubrics. Upon further consideration, Mr. C decided to expand the usage of the rubrics to the upper elementary years utilizing the language of Rubric 1 while using the format of Rubric 2 for the primary grades. Since Rubric 1 contains a bit more abstract wording, we jointly agreed upon finding its strengths first, before possibly using it with first and second graders.

Next Steps: Mr. C planned on using the rubrics in his upcoming projects.

April 1st

I joined Mr. C in class to help unveil the new rubric to two 2nd grade classes and a one 4th grade classroom. I modeled making personal goals respective to the art project with the students, and together we assisted the students in devising their first self-monitored goal.

Next Steps: Further usage of rubrics in classes with ongoing support and eventual evaluation as summarized below.

Inquiry Outcomes:

Two rubrics were collaborated on and designed to assist students in deeper reflection of the purpose of visual arts, craft, and cognitive self-assessment. The rubrics, jointly formed and revisable according to Mr. C's needs, take into account:

- self-reflection as defined by Project Zero's Arts Propel program (Gardner, 1989)
- best practices in self-assessment (Andrade, Hefferen, & Palma, 2014; Bingham, Holbrook, & Meyers, 2010)
- domains of learning from Studio Habits (Hetland, et al., 2006)
- new visual arts standards
- grade level teacher input

Mr. C prefers the format of Rubric 2 for the elementary grades and is introducing one assessment category (craftsmanship, innovation, expression, etc.) per project for the remainder of the year. He is using Rubric 1 in the upper elementary grades. Both rubrics will include a process for students to self-monitor their cognitive process through goal-making and goal-planning. Mr. C will evaluate both rubrics throughout the remainder of the year adjusting each as necessary and determining which one allows for the best self-assessment as measured by the evaluation below.

Evaluation:

At the end of the year, class discussions will take place with Mr. C and myself to evaluate:

- the level of artistic and cognitive awareness by each student as determined by student discussion.
- if a student is able to identify meaning in their work as determined by rubrics and class discussion.
- if they are able to understand the cognitive process of determining goals and methods for their art as determined by their rubrics.

We will also discuss the best methods for unveiling rubrics to students in the future.

Ongoing Support:

I will continue to help Mr. C model goal-setting with students with periodic visits to his class. Mr. C will inform me of any unseen obstacles in using the rubrics during the remainder of the school year.

Elementary Visual Art Rubric 1

Name: _____ Class: _____

Project: _____

	Met Expectations	Almost There	Not Yet
Craftsmanship: using specific skills or tools and materials to make artwork look good.	I can see that my mask is symmetrical		
<u>Completed Before Art</u> What craftsmanship skill are you working on in this project? How is _____ (i.e. symmetry) going to make your art look good?			
<u>Completed After Art</u> Were you able to complete your goal with the _____ to make your art look nice? What would you like to improve on if you did this again?			

Elementary Visual Art Rubric 1

Name: _____ Class: _____

Project: _____

	Met Expectations	Almost There	Not Yet
Use of Time and Persistence: Learn to accept artistic problems, focus on new methods to work & persevere at art tasks	I can identify a problem in my artwork and think of a way to get through it.		
<u>Completed Before Art</u> What do you think might be hard in this project? How can you overcome that?			
<u>Completed After Art</u> What ended up being hard in this project? Do you feel you worked hard to overcome it?			

Elementary Visual Art Rubric 1

Name: _____ Class: _____

Project: _____

	Met Expectations	Almost There	Not Yet
Creativity & Imagination: Learning to picture mentally what cannot be directly observed and imagine possible next steps in making a piece of art	I can come up with a new idea to complete my artwork and make a plan to achieve it		
<u>Completed Before Art</u> What ideas are you going to use in your artwork? How do you plan on doing this?			
<u>Completed After Art</u> Does your artwork use the ideas you had planned? If not, why did your plan change while making the piece?			

Elementary Visual Art Rubric 1

Name: _____ Class: _____

Project: _____

	Met Expectations	Almost There	Not Yet
Express: Learning to create works that convey an idea, a feeling, or a personal meaning as related to the content area	I can make my artwork mean something to me and other people because I did something purposeful with my art.		
<u>Completed Before Art</u> What ideas, feelings, knowledge or meaning are you planning on communicating to others with this piece of artwork?			
<u>Completed After Art</u> How does this artwork communicate what you wanted it to?			

Elementary Visual Art Rubric 1

Name: _____ Class: _____

Project: _____

	Met Expectations	Almost There	Not Yet
Understand Art World: Learning about art history & how it influences the way we see our own artwork.	I can see how other great artists have influenced my own artwork.		

Completed Before Art

What did you learn by looking at today's masterpiece from _____?

Completed After Art

How did the masterpiece from _____ help you design your own artwork?

Elementary Visual Art Rubric 1

Name: _____ Class: _____

Project: _____

Met Expectations

Almost There

Not Yet

Completed After Art

Name something that you might change in your artwork? Why?

Completed After Art

Turn to a friend and give two positive suggestions and one way they might improve. Write it below

Reflect & Critique:
Learn to think & talk w/ others about an aspect of one's work or working process. Learn to judge own work/ working process & work of others in relation to field standards

I can make express what I like and what I'd improve about my artwork and a freind's artwork

Elementary Visual Art Rubric 2

Name: _____ Class: _____

Project: _____

<p>Craftsmanship: learning to use tools, materials to make artwork look good.</p>	<p>I can create a building that uses symmetry and at least 5 geometric shapes in a neat piece of art</p>			
<p>Creativity & Imagination: Learning to picture mentally what cannot be directly observed and imagine possible next steps in making a piece of art</p>	<p>I can come up with a new idea to complete my artwork and make a plan to achieve it</p>			
<p>Express: Learning to create works that convey an idea, a feeling, or a personal meaning as related to the content area</p>	<p>I can make my artwork mean something to me and other people because I did something purposeful with my art.</p>			
<p>Use of Time and Persistence: Learn to accept artistic problems, focus on new methods to work & persevere at art tasks</p>	<p>I can identify a problem in my artwork and think of a way to get through it.</p>			
<p>Project Requirements:</p>				

Student Journal-

My goal for this art project is to make my artwork communicate to others...

OR

My goal for this art project is to improve upon my (specific skill or attribute)...

I can do this by...

Did I accomplish my goal? **Yes or No.**

If you circled yes, how did you accomplish it?

If you circled no, ask a friend or the teacher how you can accomplish it next time.

References

- Andrade, H., Hefferen, J., & Palma, M. (2014). Formative assessments in the visual arts. *Art Education*, 67(1), 34-40.
- Bingham, G., Holbrook, T., & Meyers, L. E. (2010). Using self-assessments in elementary classrooms. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 91(5), 59-61.
- Gardner, H. (1989). Zero-based arts education: An introduction to ARTS PROPEL. *Studies in Art Education*, 30(2), 71-83.
- Winner, E., Hetland, L., Veenema, S., Sheridan, K., Palmer, P., Locher, I., & Leontiev, D. (2006). New directions in aesthetics, creativity, and the arts. In Hetland, L., (Ed.) *Studio thinking: How visual arts teaching can promote disciplined habits of mind* (189-205). New York, NY: Teachers College Press

Reflection

The Inquiry Project that I engaged in with my teacher was a valuable opportunity to practice many practical skills that have been discussed and debated about in my UPenn classes. From the initial point of approaching Mike, to the end result of jointly developing an improved instructional method for him, I encountered many new understandings of my role as a future leader and my ability to navigate the delicate and often precarious process of improving a teacher's practice.

The first part of this project that proved challenging was creating a sense of mutual trust. Any change in practice was dependent on Mike feeling at ease making errors in practice or judgment around me. I believed, prematurely, that trust was inherent in our relationship based on our previous interactions. While it may have been, the moment I began to observe his teaching, barriers began forming. I noticed this developing during my initial visits to his classroom and realized I needed to partake in building that trust with him. I stressed to Mike the collaborative nature of the project and made conscientious decisions to change any language that might impart feelings of evaluation. I also spent considerable time simply giving him assistance in the classroom with the younger students and meeting him at lunch in his room, trying to instill a sense that I was there for support and help.

While fostering reciprocated trust was an important primer for engaging into honest inquiry of Mike's practice, it was also important that I reserve the ability to imbue instructional knowledge with authority. The tension between co-worker and administrator strikes a delicate balance that I was cognizant of throughout the whole process. To navigate this, I began to see myself more as an instructional coach whose job was to help Mike derive his own solution to the issue of assessment. After a few visits with Mike, it became clear to me, that while a new method of self-assessment was one outcome of our project, the other successful outcome would be having Mike examine and reflect on his own practice in order to improve. It was this goal that I wanted him to learn more than anything else. (In fact, it was this goal, that I, too was partaking in my own fashion.) The ability to inquiry into one's own practice and adjust is paramount in any profession, and I was there to help him do that.

Part of assisting in this goal was examining and reflecting on the current literature in the academic world. Too often as teachers make improvements, they do so on a hunch or through cursory internet searches. I believe the success of any self-assessment instrument created had to be sufficiently supported, primarily through academic literature, and then through practice that is eventually evaluated. Mike was very amenable to this. I realize this many teachers might not take this time, but the capability of the research to assist in devising a plan was not lost on me. The joint literature review is ultimately what led to our breakthrough in devising a method of assessment. It was a turning point in our inquiry that was aided by the growing trust between us. This method will undoubtedly inform my future leadership practice.

This experience furthered my understanding of my role as an instructional leader, and how my daily interactions with Mike could facilitate or prevent his ability to safely inquire into improving his instruction. Additionally, I grew more skilled in compromising as a principal. There were a number of things that, personally, I would have done slightly differently as an art teacher. Ultimately, the rubric was a collaboration of our beliefs. Throughout this project I realized that as a future leader, I do not - nor can I - dictate exactly how teachers should teach. I have to trust the expertise of my staff. Rather, I have to inspire self-learning, exactly how I have done in my own classroom. I feel I have been successful in inspiring Mike to learn, and Mike, in turn, has inspired me and taught me new things about arts instruction.