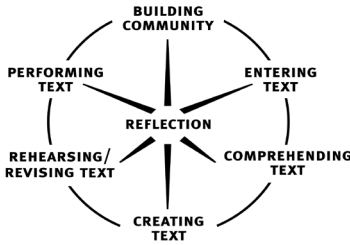


The Performance Cycle



The Performance Cycle links arts-learning and academic performance in in-school and after-school settings. Students establish personal bonds between their lives and interests and core texts. With guidance from teachers and/or professional artists, students craft a final performance. Through these performances, students solidify and demonstrate their deep understanding of topics and texts and their relationship to their own lives.

Building Community activities seek to create an environment in which learning can readily take place. They provide the foundation for academic work. Participants are introduced to one another, to techniques they will use throughout their work and to questions, themes and core text around which the unit is built. At its most effective, a learning community is one whose members have

- A shared purpose
- Supportive relationships among people of varying levels of expertise, and
- A repertoire of routines and activities and a store of materials to which everyone contributes and with which everyone grows.

Entering Text establishes connections between the academic content and participants' own lives. These activities focus attention, engage and motivate participants, and introduce content through multiple art forms including visual art, dance, music, and theatre. In this generative environment, questions are posed that encourage students to develop receptivity to learning about topics and trying out new skills. By creating connections between topics, texts and students' interests and lived experience, students increase their "learning horizons"—the breadth of topics that they find interesting, relevant and worthy of their attention.

Comprehending Text activities focus on reading, writing, and communication skills. Participants use the entire range of cognitive processes. They interact with text through both intensive and extensive reading; they read both deeply and widely. For example, students read to themselves or with peers, hear the text read out loud, work in partners to discuss the text, consult ancillary materials. Activities focus on main events, vocabulary, themes, images, and the texture of the central texts. Students perform lines or scenes using performance techniques previously introduced. Repeated purposeful engagement with text helps to increase focus and stamina.

Creating Text activities incorporate writing, in which participants respond to essential questions and themes with their own interpretations and personal responses. Student writing may include playwriting, poetry, personal narrative, analytical essay, monologue, or short stories, and work in a variety of other art forms such as dance, original music, visual art, or video. These activities are designed to explore spaces around a text, for example by examining possibilities of what might happen after a text ends, between scenes, in the minds of characters, or in the lives of similar characters in similar times and places. The texts that students create are then often combined with portions of the core text to create the final performance.

Rehearsing and Revising Text activities provide opportunities to modify, improve and practice participants' performance. Through revision, they give and receive feedback on their own and one another's work. This feedback—from peers, teachers and artists—allows for continuous assessment and improvement. Attention to revision is a key element of furthering students' literacy skills. At this stage, participants address three main concerns: 1) the quality of student understanding and comfort with the original text; 2) the quality of student creative responses; and 3) students' comfort with giving a public performance.

By **Performing Text** students demonstrate what they have learned to peers, teachers, family, and friends in the community in a relatively high-stakes yet supportive environment. The performance is an original work that combines selections from the original text with student work. Guest artists may contribute to making the performance a high-quality event.

At the center of Performance Cycle is **Reflection**, the embedded metacognitive process of “thinking-about-thinking” that enables students to evaluate and increase the quality of their participation and performance. Reflection involves not only considering one's own thinking and learning processes but also how a classroom or group is functioning. From five-minute activities to entire days of classroom work, reflection through debriefing is essential to ArtsLiteracy work. Reflection ensures that teachers, artists, and students consistently engage in discussion about their work as a way to highlight successes and areas for improvement, as well as to make visible what everyone in the community is learning. In the best of circumstances, mentor teachers are available to help teachers, artists and students reflect.

For more information about the Performance Cycle visit www.artslit.org or see the book ***A Reason to Read: Linking Literacy and the Arts***.

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