Professional Development
for Arts Educators

A Comprehensive Approach For Transforming Urban Arts Education
By Cynthia Terry and Raymond Veon

Overview

Becoming A National Model For Urban Arts Education

Over the next three years, arts education in the Atlanta Public Schools will undergo a comprehensive transformation. Our goal is to become a national model for urban arts education.
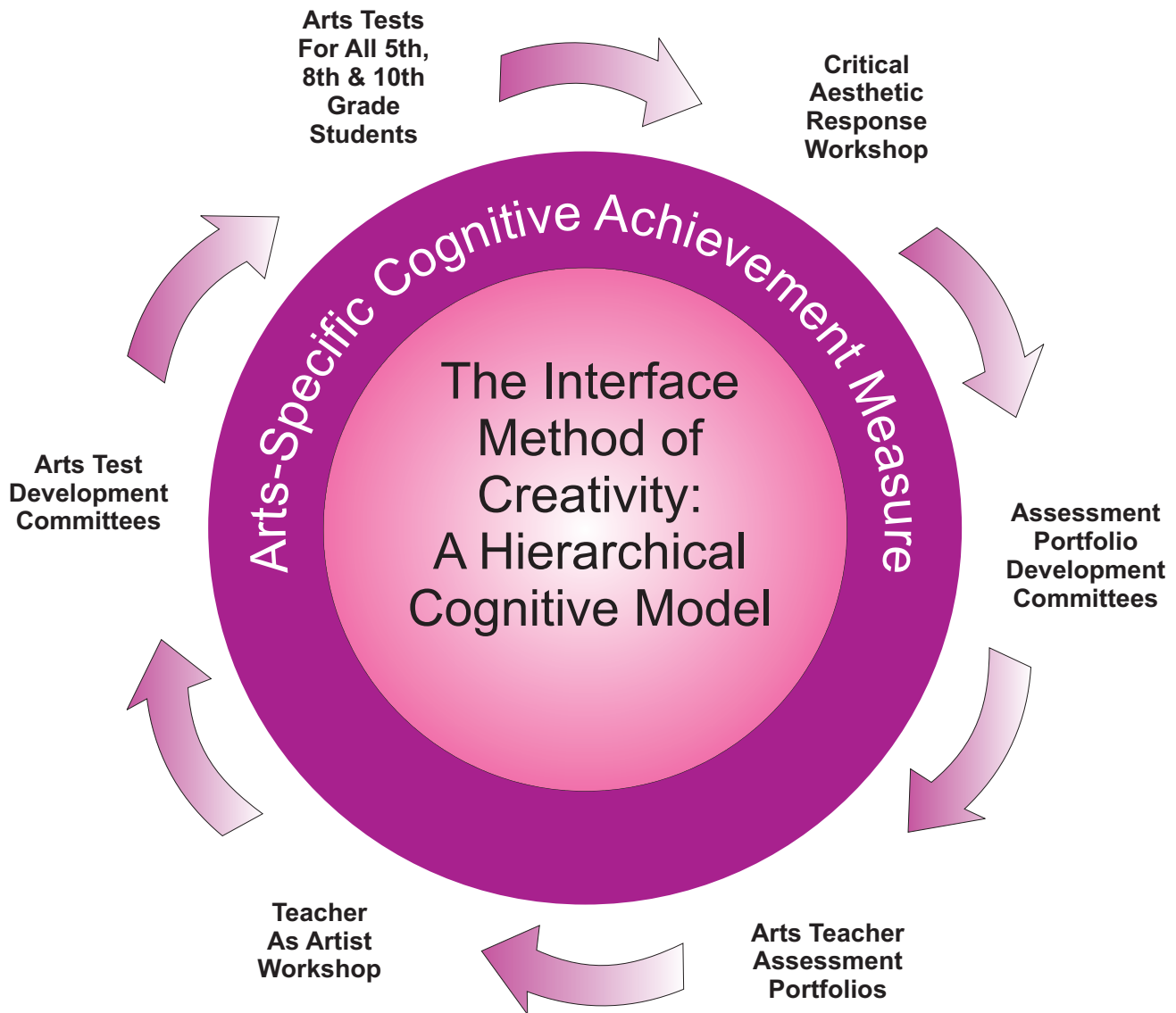
This transformation is made possible through a major grant from the United States Department of Education. The Professional Development for Arts Educators model that we have developed improves and expands the delivery of arts instruction by:

Developing student arts assessments in grades 5, 8, and 10;
Implementing new Portfolio Assessments specifically designed to improve best teaching practices in the arts; and
Engaging all fine arts teachers in 2 year-long professional development workshops.

Our model starts with a clear vision that defines the "elusive value" of the arts and creativity in terms of cognitive skills essential for success in our 21st century economy; it translates this value directly into what we want students to get out of the arts; and it provides a comprehensive overview of how arts instruction is delivered and supported in all APS schools. Our professional development model, aligned with rigorous national standards, will generate data about what our students are learning and the specific skills that our arts teachers need for improving instructional delivery. It is designed as an on-going, sustainable model that continuously improves arts instruction while adapting to new developments in education and the arts.

As a result of this data-driven initiative, our arts teachers will energize their own creativity; increase their knowledge of contemporary artistic practices, interdisciplinary connections, and critical aesthetic theory; and develop relationships with peers to help them reflect, grow and improve as professional arts educators, establishing a sense of community and support to increase student achievement. Students will be challenged to perform at the very height of scholastic creative achievement. As a national leader, our model will demonstrate how arts-driven education prepares leaders with the imaginative insight and creative skills for transforming and reinventing our future.

Arts-Specific Cognitive Achievement Measure

Arts Tests For All 5th, 8th & 10th Grade Students

Critical Aesthetic Response Workshop

The Interface Method of Creativity:
A Hierarchical Cognitive Model

Arts Test Development Committees

Assessment Portfolio Development Committees

Teacher As Artist Workshop

Arts Teacher Assessment Portfolios

A Model For Transformation

Taken together, the components of this project significantly alter the teaching-learning climate for arts education in APS, requiring intense examination, experimentation, and change over a three-year period. We will change the way students are assessed by requiring new ways of teaching based on a new cognitive model of creativity. Through workshops and Teacher Assessment Portfolios teachers are required to continuously analyze, evaluate, and adjust instruction as they prepare students for new district-wide arts assessments, embodying rigorous academic standards, in grades 5, 8, and 10.

How The Model Works

The data driving this model comes from two sources: assessments of student achievement in the arts, and specially-designed assessments of arts teacher performance.

The model is based on the historically-validated philosophical premise that the artistic process is, by its nature, interdisciplinary. From the Renaissance on, artists, writers, and musicians have drawn on other disciplines to solve artistic problems; the creative insights that result from this process have profoundly influenced how we see and interact with the world. Approaches that emphasize interdisciplinary learning over the artistic process fail to develop the full cognitive range that is the unique contribution of the arts to education. By engaging in authentic, arts-centered lessons, student learning will be interdisciplinary while strengthening the creative skills necessary for success in our 21st century economy.

Student Arts Testing

A separate student assessment tool for each arts subject will be developed for all 5th, 8th, and 10th grade students in the Atlanta Public Schools. These tools will have several components, all of which will be based on the National Standards for Arts Education and the Arts-Specific Cognitive Achievement Measure (ASCAM), an innovative, cognitively-based strategy for assessing student achievement in the arts. Committees of APS arts teachers in general music, visual art, band, chorus and orchestra will develop these assessment tools.

Assessment of Arts Teachers

To evaluate and improve the performance of arts teachers in the district, an ongoing Teacher Portfolio assessment process will be implemented. It will be based on the National Standards for Arts Education, ASCAM, and content-area standards derived from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards for music and visual art. This process will generate data regarding how arts instruction is delivered and supported in each school. The Portfolio process will develop reflective teaching by requiring each teacher to: write a High Expectations Plan; adopt a Best Practices Model specific to each content-area (general music, visual art, band, chorus and orchestra); use the student arts testing to align lesson objectives, instructional delivery, and student achievement; and require teachers to write reflectively about the ways that they are applying each of the Portfolio's standards. With continued use, the Teacher Portfolio process will provide a comprehensive picture of how arts instruction is implemented and supported in all APS schools and develop the reflective skills necessary for art teachers to improve both their instructional practices and student achievement.

Teacher Workshops

All APS art teachers are required to take two year-long workshops over the course of the next three years. These workshops are designed to cultivate long-term change and to develop the high- level instructional skills assessed by the Teacher Portfolio assessment process. These workshops are premised on the belief that the greater a teacher's artistic and aesthetic expertise, the greater the impact on instruction and student achievement. Consequently, one workshop will be devoted to the "Teacher as Artist" (TAA) and the other to "Critical Aesthetic Response" (CAR). Together, these monthly workshop sessions will focus on integrating student assessment and best practice models with critical reflection on instruction, providing deep insight into the cognitive skills, creative practices and arts learning that lead students to academic achievement and lifetime success.

The Teacher-as-Artist and Critical Aesthetic Response workshops are based on: continual teacher self- and peer-reflection; creative production; increased aesthetic comprehension and historical knowledge; and the acquisition of new, discipline-specific insights and skills, with an emphasis on contemporary arts. Workshop instructors will help teachers go beyond their comfort zones to engage in speculative thought and experimentation, making them aware of the high-level cognitive processes required for creative production and aesthetic analysis—and the ways that cultivating these processes impact academic achievement. For example, visual art teachers will connect their roles as aestheticians to Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS), a method of guiding aesthetic response that is directly linked to improvement in reading. By keeping reflective journals, teachers will develop the habit of continuous reflection on their teaching practice, forming deeper insights into their connected roles as artists, aestheticians, and teachers.
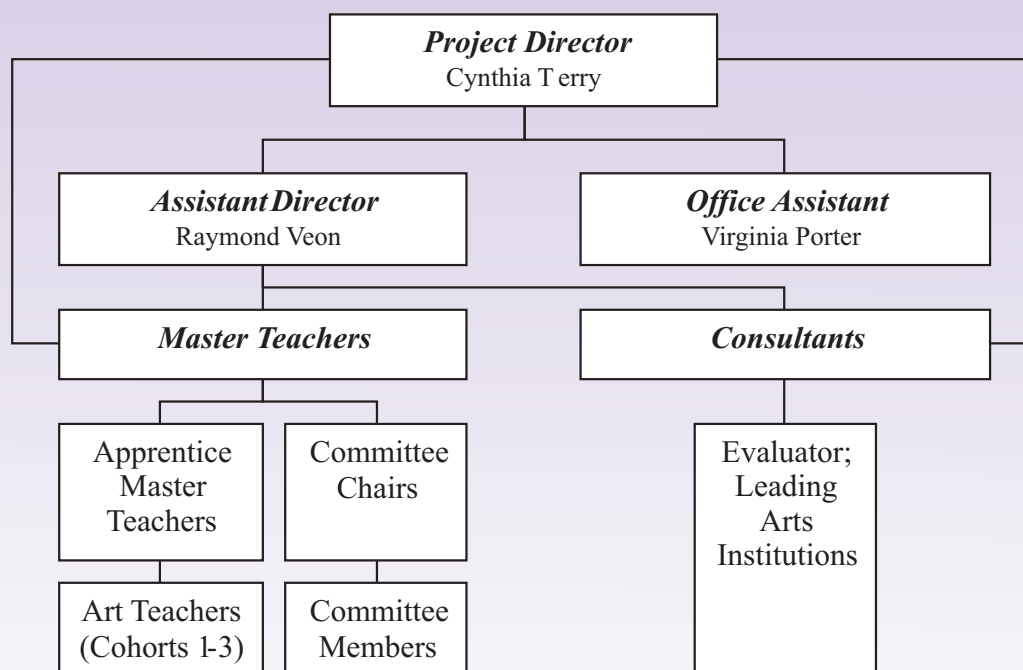
Our Objectives And Outcomes

Objectives	Outcomes
1.) Select and train a project team consisting of Master Teachers, Model Teachers, and committee members	1.) A core group of highly trained arts educators who successfully implement all components of this project
2.) Obtain data regarding student achievement in the arts	2.) By Year 3, all students in grades 5,8, & 10 will take arts assessment, with an over-all 10% increase in scores
3.) Improve the quality of arts instruction	3.) Arts teachers scores in all Portfolio dimensions will increase by 30% between Year 1 and Year 3; remedial assistance will be provided, if required, by Master Teachers
4.) Arts teachers will be trained in year-long Teacher-as-Artist (TAA) and Critical Aesthetic Response (CAR) workshops, with 1/3rd of all art teachers taking these workshops in Year 1, then 1/3rd in Year 2, and the final 1/3rd in Year 3.	4.) All arts teachers reconnected with their creativity and aesthetic insight in new ways, leading to deeper comprehension of the cognitive and learning skills uniquely developed by the arts—resulting in increased ability to improve and assess student achievement by critical reflection on instruction.
5.) To enhance arts standards by coordinating Georgia's Quality Core Curriculum in the arts with National Arts Education Standards, the Arts-Specific Cognitive Achievement Measure, and the Visual/Musical Thinking Strategies	5.) Fine arts teachers who can clearly articulate, teach, and assess the unique educational benefits provided by the arts based on current, comprehensive, and clearly understood arts standards, and who communicate these benefits to all stake-holders.
6.) To develop and implement an ongoing, data-driven professional development program that A.) extends beyond the grant period, and B.) produces highly-trained teachers and continuous improvement of arts instruction through student assessment.	6.) Fine arts teachers who can generate, analyze, and utilize arts assessment data to monitor and adjust their instructional delivery, thereby meeting the specific needs of their students and improving student achievement relative to the highest possible arts and academic standards.
7.) To improve overall student performance in both coursework and on standardized tests using additional learning modalities (the arts)	7.) As a result of implementing student arts assessment and improving instruction through the professional development workshops and Teacher Portfolio process, students will demonstrate improved academic achievement as reflected on report cards, the Georgia Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (GCRCT) and the Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHSGT).

Our Organizational Structure

Project Director
Cynthia Terry

Assistant Director
Raymond Veon

Office Assistant
Virginia Porter

Master Teachers

Consultants

Apprentice Master Teachers

Committee Chairs

Evaluator; Leading Arts Institutions

Art Teachers (Cohorts 1-3)

Committee Members

Project Director: Facilitate the planning and implementation of the project; handle the day-to-day operations of the project; serve as a liaison between all project personnel; be responsible for the allocation and expenditure of funds; monitor program participants.

Assistant Project Director: Responsible for the over-all conceptual design of the project; training the Project Team on ASCAM; developing instructional scope and sequence for project workshops; facilitating alignment of all project objectives, outcomes, and performance measures; serve as an equal partner in the planning and implementation of the project and in its day-to-day operation; assist Project Director in all areas; and writes Summative Assessment Summary detailing the project's impact.

Master Teachers: Lead and perform assessments in training sessions/workshops; provide remedial support to teachers as required; monitor committee meetings to ensure alignment of project components and adherence to rigorous standards; provide assistant director regular progress reports.

Apprentice Master Teachers: Responsible for co-leading project workshops; and assisting the Master Teacher in all areas of responsibilities.

Committee Chairs/Members: Committee Chairs are responsible for the scheduling, task assignments, benchmark achievement and application of rigorous standards in each committee. The Student Assessment Committee members are responsible for developing measurable student assessments tied to national arts standards and our cognitive skills model; Teacher Portfolio Committee members are responsible for developing detailed procedures, measures and standards for teacher assessment within each discipline.
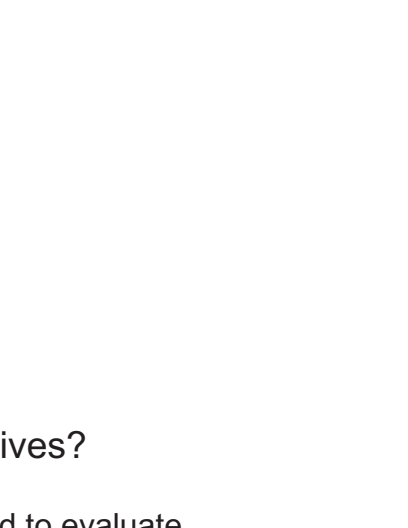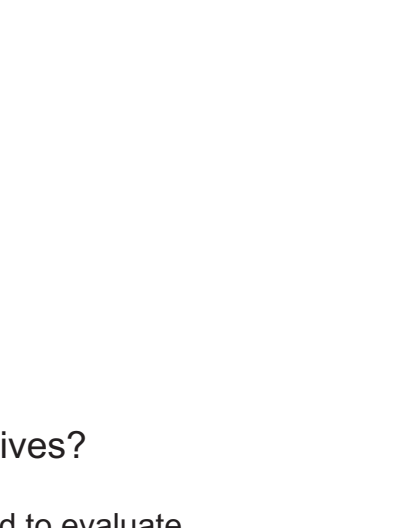
Assessing Our Initiative

How Will We Know If We Have Achieved Our Objectives?

Both qualitative and quantitative assessment will be employed to evaluate the success of our initiative. Qualitative assessments will be administered to staff in the form of surveys at the end of each funding year that will include workshop feedback forms and anecdotal reporting by the Project Team.

Quantitative data indicating the extent to which percentage growth toward achieving our stated outcomes will be generated by the Teacher Portfolio, student arts assessments, and comparative studies between cohorts as specified in the Objectives/Outcome Chart (see page 7). The types of data collected will be extracted from scores on: traditional test measures; and portfolios, video tape, written reports, reflections, and performance tasks that are tied to rubrics aligned with our objectives.

The project director and assistant director, in conjunction with the project team, will use a "Problem/Resolution Log" throughout the duration of the grant period. This log will list the resolutions to all problems encountered that relate to: logistics; communication; comprehension of concepts, materials, methods, and assignments given in the workshops or committees; implementation of student assessments and the Teacher Portfolio assessment process; the compilation, analysis, and reporting of data; and satisfaction on the part of participants and stakeholders with this professional development project. The problems and resolutions detailed within this log will help others successfully replicate this project.

Data will be analyzed relative to baseline results from initial student assessments and Teacher Portfolios, and comparatively by teacher/student cohort.

SUMMARY

Some programs claim that the arts enhance academic success without evaluating the quality of the art program itself. This model forms the basis for measuring the unique cognitive skills developed by the arts while assessing the quality of arts instruction--and provides the data necessary for continuous improvement.

Through ASCAM, our assessment measure, this project identifies the constellation of abilities that are nurtured in arts learning and that characterize the dialectical relationship between the arts and other subjects. These abilities promote ways of thinking that offer children generative and complex learning through the study of challenging art forms; they further enrich children's minds by interacting dynamically with other subjects, leading students to develop as productive thinkers and citizens.

Our model is both interdisciplinary in scope and arts-specific in its focus on the unique hierarchy of cognitive skills involved in advanced creativity and critical aesthetic response. In this model, creativity and aesthetic problem-solving are conceived as executive thought processes. As such, they are cognitive strategies that coordinate metacognitive procedures, higher-order thinking skills and affective responses over extended durations of learning and speculative inquiry. Interdisciplinary connections are utilized to solve open-ended problems through divergent thinking and multiple learning styles. The arts, in effect, create personally-valued contexts in which students apply both arts-specific and cross-curricular knowledge by using advanced cognitive skills. This requires making cross-curricular connections, a process of dynamic interaction between subjects that leads to deeper comprehension of interdisciplinary content and a need for additional mastery in all subjects. Thus, the outcomes specified in this project are directly aligned with the ability to learn, use and transform knowledge at the highest levels of cognitive performance, leading to improved academic achievement. The professional development plan that we have detailed in this overview is the mechanism for making this success happen.

Creativity:
An Executive-Level Cognitive Process

Creativity (n): an over-arching process that orchestrates how we learn, think, and respond and that generates new insights, original products, and transforms the ways that we structure the world. Specifically, it is an executive cognitive process that coordinates meta-cognitive strategies, higher-order thinking skills and affective responses over extended durations of open-ended imagination, speculative inquiry, and the rigorous forging of an idiosyncratic worldview.

Meta-Cognition (n): thought processes that enhance learning by monitoring why, how, and what we learn. These processes are based in self-reflection and include self-observation, self-assessment, and self-regulation. They develop essential intellectual habits, such as objectivity, intellectual courage, empathy, integrity, perseverance, fair-mindedness, and introspection. Metacognitive strategies also employ affective domain skills (see below). Together, these orchestrate higher-order thinking and basic reasoning skills.

Affective Domain Skills (n): These skills include the emotional and social skills necessary for persevering in the creative process and for success in life. The affective skills developed in the arts include: being open to experience (receiving), engaging in life (responding), cultivating values (valuing), managing oneself (organizing), and developing oneself (internalization). Examples of specific affective skills developed by the arts include: managing emotions, valuing the self, refining personal values, facilitating personal development, challenging the self, and committing beyond the self.
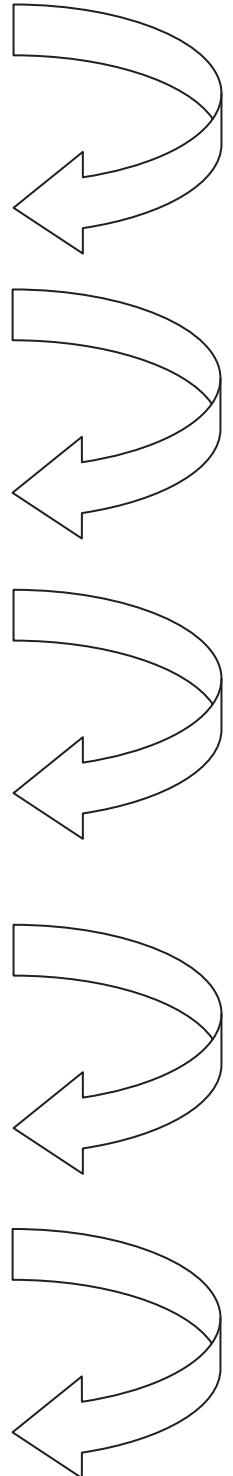
Higher-Order Thinking Skills (n): Higher-order thinking skills are complex combinations of basic reasoning skills and form more complex kinds of problem solving. They include: **Knowledge**, or those skills involved in gathering information; **Comprehension**, or those skills involved with confirming or understanding ; **Application**, or those skills involved with making use of knowledge; **Analysis**, or those skills involved with comparing/contrasting or taking apart; **Synthesis**, or those skills involved with putting ideas and information together; and **Evaluation**, or those skills involved with judging the outcome.
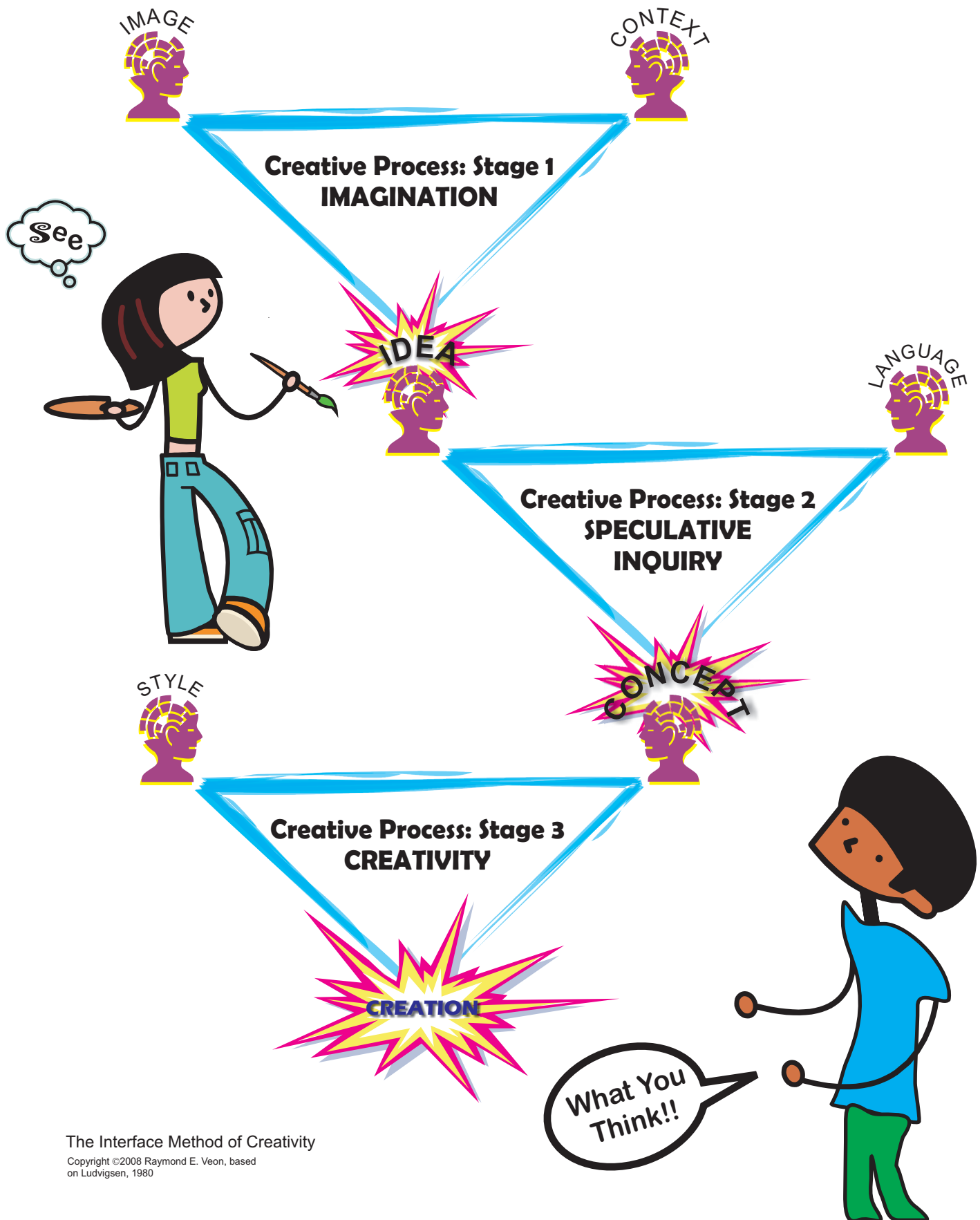
Basic Reasoning Skills (n): Basic reasoning skills are those processes that are fundamental to cognition of all forms. Basic reasoning skills include: Storage and information retrieval skills; matching skills; and categorization skills. Problem-solving aimed at finding an answer that will be judged by predetermined criteria is also a form of basic reasoning, as is constructing or reconstructing non-speculative information to achieve a predetermined goal. Elaboration, or inferring information that is not explicitly stated, is another form of basic reasoning.

Psychomotor Skills (n): Psychomotor skills include physical coordination; fine motor skills; kinesthetic, visual, auditory and tactile discrimination and coordinated abilities; locomotor movements, nonlocomotor movements, manipulative movements; simple, compound, and complex adaptive skills; expressive and interpretive movement.

The Creative Process

IMAGE

CONTEXT

Creative Process: Stage 1
IMAGINATION

See

IDEA

LANGUAGE

Creative Process: Stage 2
SPECULATIVE INQUIRY

CONCEPT

STYLE

Creative Process: Stage 3
CREATIVITY

CREATION

What You Think!!

The Interface Method of Creativity

Visual and Musical Thinking Strategies (VTS/MTS)

Visual Thinking Strategies is a school curriculum that

● Uses a **learner-centered method** to examine and find meaning in music and visual art

● Uses music and art to teach **thinking, communication** skills and arts literacy

● Measurably **increases observation** skills, evidential **reasoning**, and speculative abilities, and the ability to find multiple **solutions to complex problems**

● Uses **facilitated discussion** to practice respectful, democratic collaborative problem solving among students that transfers to other **classroom** interactions, **and beyond**

● Uses eager, thoughtful participation to nurture verbal **language skills**, and **writing assignments** to assist transfer from oral to written ability

● Uses the Web to develop **independence** and **computer skills** as well as to assist teacher preparation

● **Produces growth**, including **visual and musical literacy** and greatly enhanced verbal and thinking skills, in all students, from challenged and non-English language learners to high achievers

● Encourages visits to cultural venues, including the symphony and art museums, to underscore **connections to the arts** and to integrate a community resource into students' lives

●Meets state standards in art, music, language and social studies; **improves test scores** in reading and writing

Extensive replicated empirical studies (including longitudinal documentation) show that Visual Thinking Strategies experience assists with test preparation and helps raise test scores, especially in reading.

Our Professional Development Model will employ a variant of VTS called Musical Thinking Strategies.

Workshop Syllabi

Month	**Teacher As Artist** **Workshop Series "A"**		**Critical Aesthetic Response (CAR)** **Workshop Series "B"**	
	Visual Art	*Music* *Separate Workshops For General, Choral, and Instrumental Music using the*	*Visual Art*	*General Music* *Separate Workshops For General, Choral, and Instrumental Music using*
October	Engaging Your Creativity For Student Success; Best Practices I; Interface Model Stage 1	Engaging Your Creativity For Student Success; Best Practices I; Interface Model Stage 1	Deepening CAR via Interdisciplinary Connections; Interface Model Stage 1	Deepening CAR via Interdisciplinary Connections; Interface Model Stage 1
Nov.	Bloom's Taxonomy And The Creative Process; Best Practices II	Bloom's Taxonomy And The Creative Process; Best Practices II	Bloom's Taxonomy and Critical Aesthetic Response; Interface Model Stage 2	Bloom's Taxonomy and Critical Aesthetic Response; Interface Model Stage 2
Dec.	Metacognition & Creativity; Interface Model Stage 2; The Inter-disciplinary World Of Contemporary Art	Metacognition & The Creative Process; Inter-face Model Stage 2; The Interdisciplinary World Of Experimental Music	How CAR Develops Meta-Cognitive Skills; Visual Thinking Strategies I And Reading	How CAR Develops Meta-Cognitive Skills; Musical Thinking Strategies I And Reading
January	Integrating Creativity, Best Practices, and Critical Reflection' Assessing Creative Production I	Integrating Creativity, Best Practices, and Critical Reflection' Assessing Creative Production I	Assessing CAR I; Visual Thinking Strategies II; Non-Western Aesthetics I	Assessing CAR I; Musical Thinking Strategies II; Non-Western Aesthetics I
Feb.	New Media/New Insights; Assessing Divergent Thinking and Open-Ended Problem Solving; The Role of Speculative and Recursive Thinking; Interface Model Stage 3	New Media/New Insights; Assessing Divergent Thinking and Open-Ended Problem Solving; The Role of Speculative and Recursive Thinking; Interface Model Stage 3	Non-Western Aesthetics II; Visual Thinking Strategies III; Modification & Accommodation/ Disability; Interface Model Stage 3	Non-Western Aesthetics II; Musical Thinking Strategies III; Modification & Accommodation/ Disability; Interface Model Stage 3
March	Creativity: An Executive Thought Process; Speculative and Recursive Thinking in Creativity; ASCAM	Creativity: An Executive Thought Process; Speculative and Recursive Thinking in Creativity; ASCAM	Aesthetic Problem Solving: An Executive Thought Process; Visual Thinking Strategies IV; ASCAM	Aesthetic Problem Solving: An Executive Thought Process; Musical Thinking Strategies IV; ASCAM
April	Final Critique; Assessing Creative Production II	Final Critique; Assessing Creative Production II	Art Fair Projects Due; Assessing CAR II	Music Fair Projects Due; Assessing CAR II

All arts teachers will complete both series of workshops over the course of the three year grant period.

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Credits

The Professional Development For Arts Educators Grant was conceived and written by Mrs. Cynthia Terry, Fine Arts Director, and Mr. Raymond Veon, Art Instructor at M. Agnes Jones Elementary School