



Visual and Performing Arts: Connecting to the Visual and Performing Arts in Our Communities

Visual and Performing Arts Domain:
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Focus Statement

Students experience a performance or exhibit of the arts in their communities. They then reflect on that experience in terms of the ways that the arts can support learning and development in themselves and in young children.

Curriculum Alignment Project (CAP) Student Learning Outcomes

The Curriculum Alignment Project's (CAP) lower division eight courses and student learning outcomes are mapped onto each instructional guide learning experience. See Appendix A for the specific student learning outcomes, objectives, and examples of course content and topics for the courses listed below.

- Child Growth and Development
- Child, Family and Community
- Introduction to Curriculum
- Principles and Practices of Teaching Young Children
- Teaching in a Diverse Society
- Practicum-Field Experience

Instructional Methodologies

- Brainstorming—large group
- Guided experience in the community
- Lecture
- Personal reflection
- Reflection paper
- Reflective discussion—large group



California Early Childhood Educator Competency Areas to Consider

The Faculty Initiative Project will be undertaking a comprehensive process in the future to map the content of the instructional guides to the California Department of Education, Child Development Division's California Early Childhood Educator Competencies. "The Competency Areas to Consider" below are listed in this instructional guide as a preliminary exploration of how particular competency areas might be addressed through these learning experiences.

- Child Development and Learning
- Culture, Diversity, and Equity
- Relationships, Interactions, and Guidance
- Family and Community Engagement
- Dual-Language Development
- Professionalism



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Before You Start

Students will be asked in this learning experience to attend a performing arts event or an exhibit of visual arts. For some, this will be a new experience. For others, it might be something they routinely do. You might even have performers and/or artists in your group of students. It will be important to uncover the range of these experiences in case you have to provide additional support in navigating the experience.

The focus here is on students experiencing live visual and performing arts.

This learning experience will unfold over time, as there is the preparation, the attendance at events, and the debriefing discussion and written reflection. It will be important to determine the time span needed and a way to ensure that students can bring something back from a performance to add to the discussion. These could be programs, guides, or brochures.

It is also important to recognize that there might be expenditures associated with these events that could be difficult for some students to manage. Suggestions are made for finding events that are free or low cost.

Information Delivery

Begin by asking students to read the introduction to the visual and performing arts foundations in the *California Preschool Learning Foundations, Volume 2* (PLF, V2). They can do this before coming to class, or class time can be devoted to this reading. For this learning experience, students will be focusing on the strand level: Visual Art, Dance, Drama, and Music. It is important that they have working definitions of these terms for this experience. The glossary on pages 28–30 provides definitions for the domain of visual and performing arts. The following definitions are taken from the publication and the glossary for this domain and are adapted to relate to adult experiences.



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Visual Arts: Products and processes of expression that use particular tools to create marks, colors, textures, and shapes of visual art.

Dance: Movement selected and organized for aesthetic purposes, or as a medium of expression.



Drama: Creating and acting out pretend characters in imaginary or staged contexts. In the preschool classroom drama is experiential, whereas theater is performance oriented.

Music: Sounds selected and organized for expressive purposes; these sounds have pitch, tempo, rhythm, and tone.

Active Learning

Getting it started

Begin by asking students about their relationship to the visual and performing arts in their communities.

- Are any of them involved in community theater, dance groups, or music groups?
- Do any of them paint; draw; do textile arts such as weaving or quilting; do photography, video, collage, or any other visual arts?

Keep in mind that students may engage in visual or performing arts other than those that are strands in this domain, since our involvement can shift to different expressive forms as we move into adulthood.



Slide 5

Next, ask them to brainstorm a list of community theater groups, music groups, dance groups, performance venues, or art galleries in their communities where they can see live performances or original art displayed.

Online Options

The results of the brainstorming in “Getting it started” could be posted online, and students could add to that as they expand their own lists.

Using chart paper, whiteboard, or electronic means, chart or list their involvement in the arts and the groups and places they know about. In large urban areas, there could be quite a lot of examples. Try to elicit as many genres as you can from classical to modern, and try to elicit events and venues that relate to students’ cultural communities. Remind them that you are only listing live performance or original art.

Keeping it going

Let students know that they will be asked to attend a performance or visit a gallery.

- First, ask them to develop a short list of performances they could attend or galleries that they could visit. They might need some guidance in learning where such things are listed, and you can direct them to newspapers, online community bulletin boards, online searches, or whatever is available in your particular community. They might need some time outside class with this assignment, depending on their familiarity with art venues in their community.



Make sure there are some listed that are free or low cost. For example, many art galleries have no entrance fee, and there are sometimes music and dance festivals that are in public spaces and at no cost.

- When they have their lists, ask them to choose one to attend or visit during a specified time period and submit their choice for your approval.
- Allow students a time frame for carrying this out that fits with your class needs and how available the events and places are.

Putting it together

Following their community experience, ask students to write a short reflection paper that includes the following information:



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- Event or place visited, date, and name of event or art show
- A short description of the event or show, such as who or what was in it and what they did
- Your own reflection on the experience:
 - What did you especially enjoy?
 - What was new?
 - Was anything disappointing?
- What did you learn about the importance of the arts for young children as they grow and learn?
- How can the arts support learning and development and strengthen community?

In responding to this, ask students to think especially about their own experiences of new ideas, concepts, connection to community, and emotional responses.

- Attach a program, ticket, brochure, guide, or whatever you have that describes (and documents) your experience.

Reflection

Using the questions that are suggested in “Putting it together” for a written assignment, lead a class discussion. Allow students to reflect on their experiences and hear what others did and what they experienced.