

Background and Rationale: Learning Processes & Lesson Design

Developing incremental, intentional instruction strategies that are aligned with the goals to scaffold and support student learning improves student achievement.

The Learning Processes—create, perform and respond—were identified and used in the 1997 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in the arts. The findings of this national assessment have implications for arts teachers as well as school systems as a whole and include:

- Student learning and achievement in the arts can be assessed
- Instruction in creating, performing and responding to art improves a student’s capacity to “do” art, which means the arts aren’t just for those students who are naturally talented.

In simple words—students can learn to create, perform or respond to art and what they learn can be measured.

K-12 educators in the Minnesota Arts Quality Teaching Networks worked in all arts areas including creative writing, dance, media, music, theater and visual arts to further define the Learning Processes by identifying and describing the components of each process so that the processes themselves can be used as lesson or unit design tools. When used as design tools, the learning processes support teachers in developing student-centered classrooms in which students do the authentic work of creating, performing or responding to the arts. This occurs because the teacher designs the student learning by using the **incremental steps** of each component of the process and focusing on developing the **intentional instruction** that supports the student’s accomplishment of those incremental steps. Instead of lesson planning or revision in which the teacher asks, “What do I want to teach?” the focus is on the students and the question is, “How will I support my students in accomplishing this component of the learning process?”

The interaction between developing classroom level learning goals and designing student-centered lessons or units (see **Content Standards & Classroom Level Learning Goals**) that **support and scaffold student learning** to meet benchmark requirements is a fluid process that requires the teacher to move between the two— the classroom learning goals based on standard benchmarks and the Learning Process— to plan learning activities.