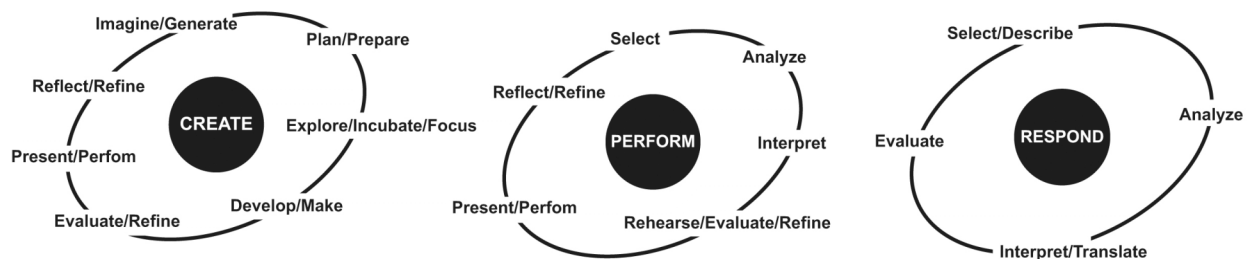


## Introduction to the Learning Processes

Adapted from *Engaging Students in the Arts: Creating, Performing and Responding*, Perpich Center for Arts Education, 2004.

By 1995 arts teachers from across the state had identified learning goals (content standards) in the arts for all Minnesota students K-12. Those teachers also made a commitment to adopt authentic assessment activities for all students in all arts areas—dance, literary arts, media arts, music, theater, and visual arts—by using performance assessment to determine if students were meeting the standards and at what level of achievement.

When the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in the Arts (1997) identified the Learning Processes—create, perform and respond—Minnesota arts educators adopted them as a foundation for constructing classroom-level activities that offered opportunities for authentic, embedded assessment of student learning against a standard. These Learning Processes, which had been identified in the work of arts educators at the national level were further refined by Minnesota arts teachers in the Quality Teaching Networks (QTN). QTN teachers defined and described the components of each process.



Students should not be required to complete a Learning Process in a linear, lock-step fashion. In the lesson design process, teachers should build in opportunities for students to loop back to revisit and reflect on earlier artistic choices or ideas.

Designing classroom level learning activities component by component around a Learning Process, reminds teachers to scaffold the incremental steps of learning that support a student in reaching the standard benchmark and achieving more complex knowledge and skill requirements. This scaffolding provides a window to observe what the student knows and can do throughout the process of creating, performing or responding to art. The observable evidence of learning allows the teacher to intervene at appropriate times to remediate or extend student learning.

Using a Learning Process as a lesson or unit design tool:

- Puts the student in the center of the learning process and motivates them to actively engage in acquiring arts knowledge and skills
- Provides multiple entry points for student engagement and allows students to make learning meaningful and personally relevant
- Taps students' prior knowledge and competence while giving them embedded opportunities for reflection
- Supports appropriate levels of depth and rigor depending on the level of student development in the design of learning and assessment activities

- Identifies points during the learning process to increase support or challenge and extend student learning
- Requires students to use arts knowledge and skills in ways they are used in the world beyond school
- Provides points at which to give students feedback about their progress toward the learning goals (formative assessment)
- Provides opportunities to monitor student progress throughout the learning activity before completion of final product or performance

The Learning Processes, when used in conjunction with national or state content standards, support teachers in developing authentic arts learning activities that appropriately balance the emphasis between process and product/performance. QTN teachers have used the Learning Processes to design learning activities and found them to be effective with students at all grade levels.

The adoption of the Learning Processes as a lesson design tools requires a huge shift in how some Minnesota arts educators work in their classrooms. The focus on the Learning Processes supports teachers in developing student-centered, classroom-level learning activities with opportunities for embedded, individual student assessment. Assessment becomes part of the natural flow of classroom teaching and learning activities.

While the Learning Processes are a wonderful lesson or unit design tools for teachers, students who complete the learning activities built around them will authentically generate observable evidence of achievement required by the Minnesota arts content standards in creation, performance or interpretation (respond).

