



The Role of Art in Evaluation

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About this presentation

- This presentation was prepared for the Minnesota Evaluation Studies Institute Conference, March 10, 2010. Click [here](#) for more information.
- It is exciting for us at the Improve Group to share our experiences of using art in evaluation. This presentation describes ways we have used art in evaluation, and analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of different methods.
- Specific examples have been removed from the web-based version to protect the identity and characteristics of the respondent and the intellectual property behind the tools. [Contact us](#) for more information about using art in your evaluation work.

Agenda



- Why art?
- A taxonomy of art in evaluation
- Examples
- Problems of art in evaluation
- Suggestions for further study
- Resources

Why art?



”It is upon this capacity of man to receive another man's expression of feeling and experience those feelings himself, that the activity of art is based.”

- Leo Tolstoy, *What is Art?*
- Those experiences of shared feelings can be used for deeper answers to evaluation questions.

Why art?



- ❑ When the subject of the evaluation is creative, art can be an appropriate tool
- ❑ When things are hard to quantify, they are sometimes also hard to describe
- ❑ Images allow you to share complex ideas without a complex vocabulary

Why art?



- ❑ Art can explore the universal (across cultural boundaries) or help you understand the cultural boundaries
- ❑ Metaphors embedded in art can help describe an idea, situation or experience
- ❑ Evaluation participants can use art to both document a situation and contribute to analysis

A taxonomy for art in evaluation



- What is a taxonomy?
 - ▣ The study of the general principles of scientific classification - Merriam-Webster

 - ▣ Taxonomies include:
 - Objects being classified
 - The characteristics of those objects
 - The relationships between different objects

Proposed taxonomy



- **Objects:** different methods of using art in evaluation
- **Characteristics:** when these methods are appropriate, what the strengths and weaknesses are

Proposed taxonomy

Art is a product of the intervention

A song, performance, painting, etc. is produced during the intervention

An additional tool is needed to evaluate the product, such as a rubric

Art provides data about the intervention

An image or other artwork is used to describe a feeling, action, or knowledge

Art is used to diagram change over time

Art is used to overcome a barrier

Tools include art to help respondents understand the question

Respondents use icons to answer questions

Art is a product of intervention



- **Characteristics:**
 - ▣ **Art is used to demonstrate subject-related knowledge, mastery of concepts, or attitudes**
 - ▣ **A supporting tool, such as a rubric, is used to answer evaluation questions and help reviewers compare ratings; quantitative or qualitative questions can be asked**
 - ▣ **Often, the art is created by one individual or group and evaluated by another, but the creators could evaluate their own work**

Art provides data for intervention



- **Characteristics:**
 - ▣ **Art is used to document (i.e., a photograph or depiction of a person, place, thing or event) OR art is used as a metaphor**
 - ▣ **Usually answers qualitative questions like “what is your community like?”**
 - ▣ **Can be analyzed by the individual themselves or by a rater; a rubric could be used to quantify answers**

Art addresses barriers



- **Characteristics:**
 - **Either questions or answers incorporate images (circle the picture that shows how you feel; what part of this picture is most important to you?)**
 - **Children, individuals with low literacy or with a different language from the evaluator can respond to images**
 - **Usually used for quantitative questions**
 - **Often, the evaluator is selecting images to get a point across, and the respondent reacts to those images**

Art as a product

Example:
Perpich
Center for
Arts
Education's
Quality
Teaching in
the Arts
(QTA)

Background

- ❑ Federally funded through US DoE Professional Development in the Arts (PDAE) grant
- ❑ Teachers work on integrating state standards into their work, curriculum alignment, lesson plans and assessment
- ❑ Emphasizes the need for assessment to understand teacher effectiveness

QTA- evaluation

□ **Program goals**

1. Teachers receive sustained and intensive professional development
2. Teachers understand the Minnesota Academic Standards in the Arts and know how to use them in their classrooms
3. Teachers can productively collect and examine significant evidence of student learning in and through the arts
4. Teachers understand how to describe levels of quality in student work
5. Teachers can apply a scoring rubric to collections of student work meeting an entire arts standard and can use the rubric for specific classroom arts learning activities

QTA - evaluation



- Both process and outcome evaluation questions were addressed
 - ▣ Observations, surveys and focus groups were used to answer process questions
 - ▣ A pre-post test survey, panel assessment review, focus groups and interviews were used to answer outcome questions
- The outcome evaluation essentially evaluated an evaluative process!

Panel process



- ❑ In the panel process, student portfolios are presented to a panel
- ❑ The panel uses a rubric to evaluate student work
- ❑ After each panel member applies the rubric, a discussion helps to build consensus

Panel process

- We learned that a rubric was more readily adopted in some art forms

Arts Area	% using tests and quizzes for evidence of student learning	% using portfolios or collections of work for evidence of student learning
Music	93	21
Visual arts	47	87

Panel process - tools used

□ Instructions given to the panel:

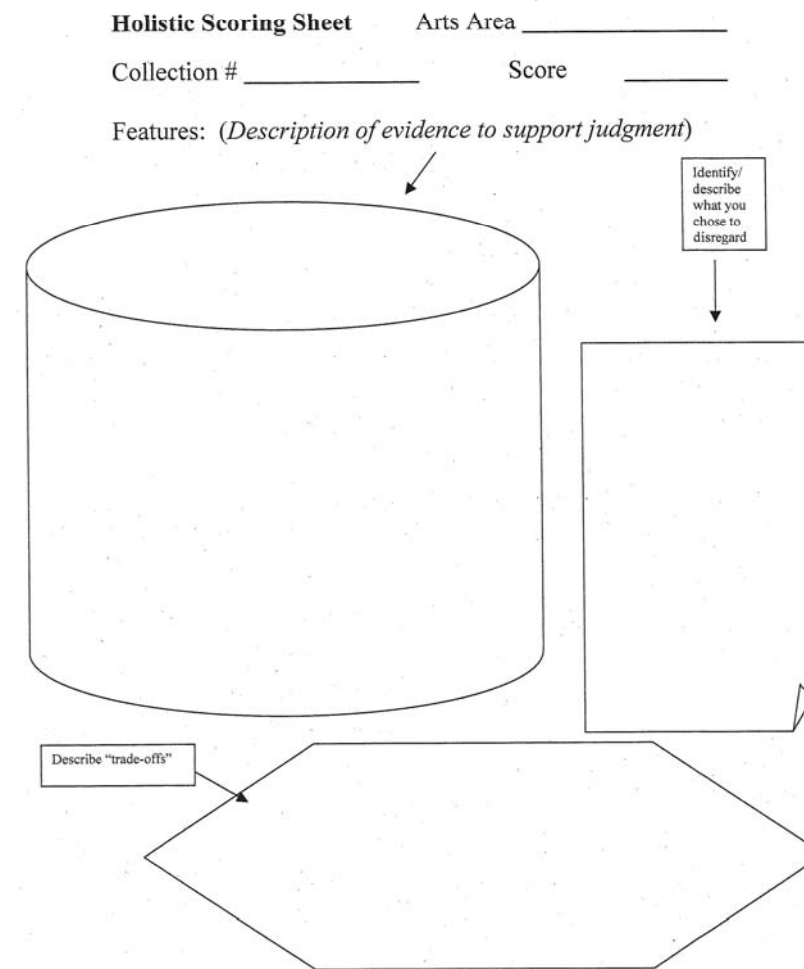
PCAF Quality Teaching in the Arts / www.mnartseducation.org
 School or District Level Assessment and Evaluation • Perpich Center for Arts Education

Evaluation of Student Achievement Protocol Guide

1. Describe the work (suggested time: 8 minutes)	Evaluation team members (at least 4 teachers with grade level and arts area expertise) observe the student work <i>without discussion or comment and independently describe what they think is important and significant in the work</i> on the front side of the Holistic Score Sheet.
2. Review against the standard benchmarks (suggested time: 5 minutes)	Going line by line of the standard benchmark, team members discuss and come to agreement about whether there is evidence of that benchmark in the student work
3. Identify trade-offs and disregards (suggested time: 5 minutes)	Team members discuss and agree on any trade-offs or disregards in the student work
4. Apply the rubric (suggested time: 10 minutes)	Going descriptor by descriptor within each dimension, team members discuss and reach consensus about the level of achievement in the student work for one descriptor at a time
5. Review descriptions and identify important "left-overs" (suggested time: 5 minutes)	Each team member returns to his/her description and determines if there is some significant aspect of the student work that is "left-over"—that wasn't discussed in the course of reviewing the work against the benchmarks or applying the rubric. Discuss to determine if these significant "left-overs" influence the evaluation.
6. Observers' reports (suggested time: 3 minutes)	Observers (2 observers are necessary, more is helpful) watch and report on at least these three questions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Were all participants listened to and heard? 2. Was discussion rich, deep and an authentic sharing of expertise? 3. Was an honest consensus reached or did individuals dominate?
7. Teacher response (suggested time: 3 minutes)	The teacher, if s/he wishes, may respond by sharing his/her curriculum and assessment map, asking for clarification about comments, asking for more specific feedback about aspects of the student work or generally speaking to his/her evaluation of the evidence of learning.

Panel process - tools used

- Tool used to record responses:



Activity 1: Art is a product



- Using the following sample of student artwork, what sort of evaluation questions would you have? What process would you use to answer those questions?

Art used to describe

Example:
Performing
Arts
Workshop's
*Artist
Residencies
in Special
Education*

Background

- Federally funded through US DoE Arts Education Model Development and Dissemination (AEMDD) grant
- Creative movement and theater residencies in 3-5 grade classrooms in San Francisco
- Focuses on students in Special Education

ARISE Project - evaluation

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- **Program goals**
 1. Improve teaching methods, identify curricular and pedagogical best practices and problem solving
 2. Improve student understanding of artistic processes and values
 3. Develop and improve pro-social behavior through the affective dimensions of performing art
 4. Use the performing arts to positively impact academic performance
 5. Improve student critical thinking in and through the arts
 6. Increase access to general education for students in Special Day Classes through behavior improvement
 7. Increase sustainability of the performing arts by institutionalizing performing arts education in school settings

ARISE Project - evaluation

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- Quasi-experimental and mixed methods study
- Surveys of teachers, artists and students
- Focus groups with teachers and artists
- Records review – state tests and attendance data
- Action Research projects

- All instruments revised from previous evaluation of Artists-in-Schools program
- Special Consideration for revised student survey
 - Wanted students of varying abilities to be able to contribute to the evaluation

Development of student survey

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- Designed with assistance of key informants
- Multiple question types address multiple modalities/access
 - ▣ Illustration is one component
- Illustrated response minimizes impetus to “please the teacher” – no implied right answer
- Previous survey for students in grades 2-5
 - ▣ From a prior Artists-in-Schools evaluation
 - ▣ Scale questions and short answers

Literature review

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- **Participant-produced drawings as a qualitative research method**
 - Drawings can gather rich information that is not as easily be expressed verbally or in writing.
 - The process of drawing a picture on a given topic may change how participants answer a question; without the drawing, they may have answered the question differently.
 - Participants often describe their drawings afterward, either verbally or in writing to help researchers code their responses.
 - Few studies have compared drawings over time. These studies were looking for consistency in the diagnostic tool; not for change over time due to an intervention.

How literature informed tool



- ❑ Wanted to encourage inter-rater reliability
- ❑ Started with qualitative description of what illustrations encompassed; developed scales after dozens of illustrations were analyzed
- ❑ Used a pre-post model to show change and differences between treatment and comparison groups
- ❑ Final survey included scale (with icons), short answer and illustration questions

Illustration analysis

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- Reviewed 100 randomly selected surveys to identify the most common elements depicted
- Reviewed the list of elements with Performing Arts Workshop and eliminated those that we felt were not related to the evaluation
- Categorized remaining elements by theme and added items that we hoped to see in post-test surveys

Illustration findings

- More treatment-group students drew two or more people performing at the end of the ARISE program than did comparison-group students, indicating that treatment students are more likely to view performing as a group activity.
- Treatment-group students were more likely to include a teacher or audience member in their drawing at post-test than comparison-group students. This suggests that they may have been considering their experiences in the ARISE program when creating their drawing and that they see ARISE work as creating art.
- Treatment-group students were more likely to use multiple body shapes in their drawings during the post-test than their comparison-group peers, indicating that this was a performance concept that stuck with them.

Revisions to survey process

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- In later years, we gave teachers a time limit for students to complete their picture (to equalize level of detail)
- We have eliminated some rubric items to simplify tool
- Have tested for inter-rater reliability and decided to do more cooperative rating

Questions and discussion

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- Any questions?
- What are some questions you might ask that could be answered through art?

Activity 2: Art is used to describe



- In what sort of interventions might you use art as a descriptive method?
- How would you pose questions to generate rich answers?
- How would you interpret responses?

Art used to overcome a barrier

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Example:
City House

- **City House organization**
 - ▣ Works with social service agencies in the Twin Cities metro area
 - ▣ Provides spiritual direction in one-on-one sessions, group direction, and organized retreats
 - ▣ Is volunteer-driven

- **Mission: "connecting the mainstream and margins for mutual spiritual growth and transformation"**

Background

City House - evaluation

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- Observe and record change rather than a focus on accomplishing goals
- Research questions
 - ▣ What kinds of growth or change do participants experience?
 - ▣ Do some kinds of change seem to come earlier than other kinds of change?
 - ▣ How do participants feel about spiritual indicators?
 - ▣ How is participant experience different across different sites?
 - ▣ Are program models representative of spiritual development and its connection to behavior changes?

City House - evaluation

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- Art used in:
 - ▣ Diaries – for longer-term participants
 - ▣ Collages – for shorter-term participants
- Focus groups also incorporate some participatory methods that chart/diagram responses
- Partner organization data reports on participant outcomes in agency programs

Development of tools

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□ Parameters

- ▣ Allow all participants to express themselves regardless of literacy level
- ▣ Encourage participatory evaluation
- ▣ Limit survey fatigue and the impetus to “choose the right answer” to “please” the administrator

□ Process

- ▣ Refine program theory
- ▣ Draft, pilot and revise instruments

Diaries and collages - analysis

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□ Examples:

- What are the most common spiritual or internal positive changes that participants make at the beginning of their City House experience? Behavior changes? How do these differ from those made by participants who have been involved longer?
- What percent of participants show spiritual or internal indicators as items on which they want to work?
- Are those participants who report making many positive spiritual changes also more likely to report “bigger” behavior improvements?

Revisions

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- **Piloting is critical!**
- **After the pilot phase, we made adjustments:**
 - ▣ **Changed and added indicator images**
 - ▣ **Logistical issues**
 - ▣ **Layout revisions**
 - ▣ **Process revisions**

Questions?

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- Any questions?
- What are some questions you might ask or concepts you would create icons for?

Activity 3: Art overcomes barriers



- What are some evaluation questions that could benefit from icons or images?
- What icons could you use for either the questions or for response categories?

Benefits

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- Allows participation of populations with lower literacy levels
- Helps participants **SHOW** feelings and perspectives
- Makes the survey process more novel and enjoyable
- Allows participants to define their own outcomes
- Lessens respondent tendency to look for the “right” answer

Limitations

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- ❑ Takes more time for design, data collection and analysis
- ❑ Best fit with smaller-scale evaluations
- ❑ Best fit with mixed-method evaluations
- ❑ Interpretation can be subjective
- ❑ Client input to analysis and selection of pictures is necessary

Needs in the field



- ❑ A more developed taxonomy that is integrated with other evaluation methods could increase evaluator's "toolkit" for varying situations
- ❑ Cognitive testing could examine more fully how respondents react to different methods
- ❑ Cross-cultural applications could help inform discussions about what is universal vs. culturally-specific

Links and Resources

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- Improve Group projects using art:
 - ▣ Perpich Center for Performing Arts (<http://www.mcae.k12.mn.us/>)
 - ▣ Performing Arts Workshop (www.performingartsworkshop.org)
 - ▣ City House (www.city-house.org)
- An article exploring diaries:
 - ▣ “*Participatory Internal Learning for Grassroots NGOs in Micro-credit, Livelihoods and Environmental Regeneration*” by Helzi Noponen (Development; June 1999, Vol. 42 Issue 2, p27)

Coming resources



- The Improve Group is developing a downloadable tool for collages or diaries (available 09/10)

- Contact:

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