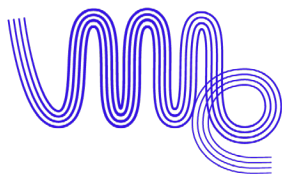


# THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF ARTS LEARNING:

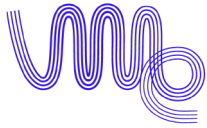
A Discussion Draft Created by Delegates at  
the 10th World Summit on Arts Education

October 11-15, 2021



**WAAE**  
World Alliance for  
Arts Education





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The World Alliance for Arts Education (WAAE) is a non-governmental not-for-profit organization. WAAE was founded in July 2006 in Lisbon, Portugal and formalized in a Memorandum of Understanding in Rovaniemi, Finland in November 2012. The WAAE is an Alliance between the International Drama/Theatre and Education Association (IDEA), the International Society for Education through Art (InSEA), the International Society for Music Education (ISME), and the World Dance Alliance (WDA).

UF's mission is to enable our students to lead and influence the next generation and beyond for economic, cultural and societal benefit. Teaching, research, and service span all of the university's academic disciplines and represent the university's commitment to lead and serve the state of Florida, the nation and the world by pursuing and disseminating new knowledge while building upon the experiences of the past.



Incorporated in 2005 to develop a nationwide infrastructure of arts education peers in across the United States, the State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education (SEADAE) consists of those persons at state education agencies whose responsibility is education in the arts. Our mission is to support the professional effectiveness of individual members and provide a collective voice for leadership on issues affecting arts education with a vision that all PreK-20 students gain artistic literacy and fluency through equitable access to quality, sequential, standards-based opportunities for learning in dance, music, theatre, visual art, and media arts.

Contributing to the development of thriving communities and a more just world, Creative Generation works to inspire, connect, and amplify the work of young creatives who catalyze social transformation and those who are committed to cultivating their creative capabilities. Founded in 2019, Creative Generation operates four signature programs: The Campaign for a Creative Generation, the Institute for Creative Social Transformation, The Academy for Creative Leadership, and an Incubator for Creative Impact.



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# Introduction

In 2019, the World Alliance for Arts Education’s Executive Forum authorized the 10th World Summit on Arts Education to be hosted in October 2020 by the University of Florida and the State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education (SEADAE). Due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, this event was postponed and moved to a virtual environment in October 2021.

During the 2021 Virtual World Summit, titled *Arts Impact: Context Matters*, over 200 delegates from twenty-six nations on all six continents gathered to network, share research, and examine the multiple and varied ways in which arts assessments are designed and implemented around the world. These energetic and candid discussions resulted in the set of fundamental commitments and the set of guiding principles that follow.

As a global arts education community, we seek to understand and share the impact of our work with learners in their study of, in, and through the arts and in the many contexts and ways that our students express themselves artistically. Assessments of arts learning - whether in the form of elders observing, teachers and students negotiating criteria, or the formal performances and judgments evident in admissions and auditions – and the discussions they stimulate provide arts educators insights into how students apply their arts learning, as well as what they know and are able to do as a result of their study. We want to understand what it takes to design, implement, analyze, and use our assessments in ways that accelerate development, build robust and inclusive practices, and publish the evidence of impact in arts learning on individuals and their communities.

The arts themselves, the methods and uses of assessment, as well as the skills we need to collaborate across communities and cultures continue to evolve. We honor and respect this evolution and emphasize that the shared understandings and guiding principles presented in this document are not fixed. Instead, they serve to frame our work to strengthen intentionality in arts assessment design, ensure fairness, and engage in the practices that enable us to answer these questions:

- *Who do we include as arts learners?*
- *How well are those learners progressing towards artistry?*
- *Why does that matter for the world in which we live?*

## The Genesis of the Principles

*The Guiding Principles for the Assessment of Arts Learning* are not a new idea; they have existed in the lived experiences and practices of arts educators for as long as arts education has been in practice. The principles are grounded in arts learning that originates in homes, schools, and communities. The arts and arts education have always been assessed at the intersection of teaching and learning, whether through caregivers teaching childhood songs and rhymes or in formal schooling. We recognize the deep histories of practitioners who have employed assessment strategies – in a diversity of methods – to advance the practice of arts education. We honor those practitioners who have built the foundation upon which these set of principles are produced and invite practitioners to use these principles as a point of discussion, as a way to affirm what they already know and do, and to contextualize these principles within their own practice.

# Why Assess Arts Learning?

The term assessment comes from the Latin verb *assidere*, meaning “to sit beside.” This meaning implies a collaborative relationship between the learner and the instructor. At its core, assessment should be a collaborative process focused on propelling the student toward attaining learning goals. The arts are particularly suited as a vehicle for educating the whole person and for allowing students to flourish. The arts celebrate the individuality of each person and as such allows for expression in a variety of forms. While assessment inherently is a judgment, whether an internal judgment such as an element of self-critique, or an external judgment produced by the assessment process, the focus should not be on judgment alone. Rather, the focus should be on how the assessment is framed, how the results are perceived and by whom, and the subsequent actions that follow based on assessment results. Assessment should incentivize the learner to create meaning and maximize expressive human potential alongside developing artistic capacity.

## Background

*The Guiding Principles for the Assessment of Arts Learning* are derived from the *International Principles of Assessment in Music Education* by Dr. Timothy Brophy and Martin Fautley published in the Selected papers – The Sixth International Symposium on Assessment in Music Education<sup>1</sup> and in the *Oxford Handbook on Policy and Practice in Music Education*<sup>2</sup>. The International Symposia on Assessment in Music Education (ISAME) have convened at various locations throughout the world biennially since 2007. At the 6th ISAME in 2017 at Birmingham City University, Birmingham, England, co-chairs Timothy S. Brophy and Martin Fautley presented the attendees with a set of proposed International Principles of Assessment in Music Education. Attendees discussed the principles in workgroups and the principles were finalized in their current form. These served as the starting point for the WAAE discussion and development of principles for assessment across all arts disciplines.

## Development

During the 10th World Summit on Arts Education, multiple discussions by various groups of delegates resulted in rich sets of qualitative data that were analyzed and interpreted daily by the conference leaders and rapporteur. These analyses were used to modify and update the concepts and ideas found below. A new working draft was developed each day and posted for the delegates to review and use as the springboard for further discussion. This led to the following set of shared understandings and guiding principles for the assessment of arts learning.

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1 Booth, N; Kuppan, G; Longtin, J; Nenadic, E. (2018). Assessing the international principles of assessment in music education. In T. Brophy & M. Haning (Eds.), *Context matters: Selected papers from the sixth International Symposium on Assessment in Music Education* (pp. 543-549). Chicago: GIA Publications.

2 Brophy, T. (2019). Assessment in music education: The state of the art. In T. Brophy (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook on assessment policy and practice in music education* (Vol. 2, pp. 903-931). New York: Oxford University Press.

# Framing the Guiding Principles

The delegates arrived at several shared understandings that emerged as common and pervasive elements that unified the discussions of the guiding principles. These framed the conversations and supported the development of the guiding principles.

- **Assessment is integral to arts learning.** As a process of gathering and sharing information about what students know and can do, assessment is an integral part of supporting learners, strengthening practice, and sharing the impact of the arts on learners.
- **Principles are guideposts.** In order to inform assessment practices across contexts and cultures, guiding principles for arts assessment must provide broad and flexible guidance, applicable in and across settings, clear to many participants, and respectful of the many cultures and traditions in which they might be used.
- **Arts as embodied practice.** Arts education is embodied practice that engages and evokes creative processes that are essential to the multi-dimensional nature of arts learning. Assessments used in arts learning should amplify the active and rich acts of teaching and learning inherent in arts education.
- **Expression.** The arts are a uniquely human experience that is expressed and communicated through a unique language that is not bounded by words, and arts assessment honors the many forms of expression unique to the arts. We acknowledge that while the principles are written and inherently verbal, they provide an important and accessible format for sharing across global constituencies.
- **Assessment as learning.** The assessment of arts learning is focused in three ways: for learning, of learning, and as learning. We acknowledge that in the arts, assessment is most beneficial as learning.
- **Change and adaptability.** As the arts evolve over time, assessment of arts learning changes and adapts in response to this evolution. These guiding principles provide a framework for arts assessment to respond and adapt to this evolution.
- **Inclusiveness.** The assessment of arts learning occurs formally and informally in different contexts. The principles are designed to be inclusive and used in productive rather than exclusionary ways.
- **Cultural responsiveness.** Arts educators honor the world's cultures, histories, and indigenous traditions as well as forms of creativity born from displacement and the trauma of colonization. These guiding principles seek to empower arts educators to create assessment environments which counteract the impact of these histories.
- **Transparency.** Assessment practices, process, and results should be transparently communicated to all stakeholders involved.
- **Transferability.** Arts learning provides skills and knowledge that transfer and adapt to multiple contexts in multiple ways within and outside of the arts and formal academia.
- **Critical reflection.** We acknowledge that assessment should engage arts learners in critical reflection - a process of identifying, questioning, and assessing our deeply held assumptions about our knowledge, the way we perceive events and issues, our beliefs, feelings, and actions - as a means of growth and liberation.

# THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF ARTS LEARNING

## Philosophical Foundations

The Guiding Principles of Assessment of Arts Learning are grounded in the beliefs that:

- All people are inherently artistic and creative.
- Arts learning occurs in homes, schools, and community settings; is delivered by educators of all types; and is assessed through diverse methodologies.
- Assessments are student-centered and inherently tied to student interests, aspirations, standards, or curricula, and implemented most effectively in the local context.
- Assessment of arts learning is best when it's ongoing, embedded within teaching and learning processes, and not episodic.
- Assessment of arts learning reflects the multidimensional nature of the arts.

## Principles of Justice

*Socially just assessments of arts learning are those that are bias-free and respond to individual characteristics and cultures of learners. For this set of principles, social justice in the assessment of arts learning emphasizes the importance of the need for arts educators to create assessment environments that balance power structures, mitigate cultural assumptions, and decolonize methodologies to honor cultural, historical, and indigenous arts traditions.*

- **Cultural Responsiveness** | Assessments of arts learning should reflect and honor the diverse cultures, histories, and indigenous traditions, and ways of knowing inherent in the arts learning experiences.
- **Authenticity** | Assessments of arts learning should be authentic and appropriate for the context in which it is administered.
- **Accessibility** | Assessments of arts learning, and its associated standards or curricula, should be made available to and appropriately adapted to the individual characteristics of all students.

# Principles of Fidelity

*The concept of fidelity generally refers to the extent to which an assessment is implemented as it was designed. Lack of fidelity can weaken conclusions and impact the interpretation and use of assessment results for the intended purpose of the assessment. The category of fidelity has to do with the elements of assessment for arts learning that relate to (a) representativeness, the degree to which assessments of arts learning meaningfully represent the arts disciplines for which they are intended, and (b) implementation, the administration of the assessment. For this set of principles, fidelity is achieved through artistry, process, intentionality, trustworthiness, and viability.*

- **Artistry** | Assessments of arts learning should reflect the variety of artistic expressions and value cultural production.
- **Process** | Assessments of arts learning should value the artistic, cultural, and creative processes and the contexts in which they are used.
- **Intentionality** | Assessments of arts learning should have a clear purpose, identify who is being assessed and who is conducting the assessment, and define clearly how the findings or evidence will be used and interpreted.
- **Trustworthiness** | Assessments of arts learning should incorporate broadly accepted norms of validity, reliability, and fairness, and focus on student learning.
- **Viability** | Assessments of arts learning should be clear, easy to understand, and implementable by all of those engaged in the practice.

# Principles of Sustainability

*In the assessment of arts learning, sustainability has to do with the elements of assessment that enable educators to maintain and strengthen their assessment practice over time. For this set of principles, arts assessments are sustained through shared language, connection, and value.*

- **Shared Language** | Assessments of arts learning should be discussed using commonly accepted definitions of assessment, measurement, and evaluation, and other appropriate terms.
- **Connection** | Assessments of arts learning should arise from the curriculum, the learner's experiences, and the artistic forms, histories, and cultures from and within which the assessments are developed and operationalized.
- **Value** | Assessments of arts learning should be valued as a way to improve student arts learning and guide future instruction.



