



# ARTISTS IN SCHOOLS

## PROJECT TOOLS

### PROJECT DOCUMENTATION

#### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

##### What is project documentation?

Project documentation is a systematic keeping of records throughout the course of a project. Think of it as keeping a project scrapbook for collecting and organizing different kinds of data and evidence. The information and records kept comprise the evidence for making decisions, reflecting on the project and planning for the future.

##### Why document the project?

Documenting a project from beginning to end will provide a comprehensive record of the processes that participants went through during the project. This record will provide the evidence to help answer any inquiry questions posed for the project. It will also give the evidence needed to share the project story with others and convey the project's true impact.

##### Why is each project's documentation process different?

The inquiry questions in *Artists in Schools* programs are intended to guide grant recipients' own planning, decision-making and changes in practice that result from the projects. It is important that recipients keep their own records in a way that is designed especially for that project. The documentation process as developed by each grant recipient should record the kind of information that is needed to address community needs and project inquiry questions.

##### What kinds of "evidence" should be included?

This will vary from project to project, but common data/evidence includes photographs, video, journal writing, surveys or questionnaires, press clippings and minutes of meetings (such as planning meetings). The artistic works (both process and product) are important evidence since they reflect the students' experience with artists and learning themes. Records of reflective thinking (student, teacher, artist, etc.) can be included at any point in the project. This might also include looking at the inquiry question(s) on a regular basis to see if they are still the right questions or if they need refinement. Remember that records of "process" are very important.

## DOCUMENTATION TOOLS

**The list of tools below is by no means complete, but it gives some ideas for what can be used to plan and gather information.**

### Before Beginning the Project

Make a record of the original ideas about the project, who applied for the grant, why, etc. Your application is a source of this information. These early records are important because the project will likely grow and change during its course, and you will want to compare early ideas with how the project develops over time.

Record your inquiry question and any possible sub-questions. Consider the inquiry question your “essential question”: the question that best reflects what you would like to explore as a result of receiving this grant. This essential question is like an umbrella for other questions. You can have as many sub-questions as you want.

Main Inquiry Question	
Sub-question	
Sub-question	
Sub-question	

### Documenting Participation

Document student participation and interactions with the artist at all stages of the project, both process and product. Some suggestions are:

- Photographs
- Video
- Journal writing
- Feedback forms
- Records of discussion
- Focus groups

## Reflection After the Project

The documentation you have kept should now allow you to answer questions such as the following. This reflection may be incorporated into your final report to SK Arts.

What did you do to make sense of and reflect on your information?	
Who was involved in the analysis of the information?	
Did the information gathered help you answer your inquiry and sub-questions? What were your conclusions?	
What will you now do to act on the information you gathered?	
What new questions do you now have?	
What are your final reflections?	

## Tell Your Story

“Telling your story” is a way of sharing the project through narrative, visuals, scrapbook, installation, performance, etc. The story of the project can be shared in many different forms using the documentary material collected as a basis. The point is to help others understand what you believe is the true impact of the project. Artists may want to contribute comments about what they learned as well. The story, however you choose to tell it, may become part of your final report to SK Arts.

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