



cultivating
the arts



FUNDING
PROVIDED BY



Government
of
Saskatchewan

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 throughout the project. This record will provide the evidence to help answer any research or 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.

How is documentation different from a final report?

The Artists in Schools program uses a Documentation and Reporting Template (PowerPoint) to guide the completion of a final report. You can include some of your documentary material on the template, but you will probably have to be selective. The documentary material you gather will likely be more than you can include on this template as your summary and final report. Documentation is the collection of data, whereas the final report is a synthesis and summary of the project.

Why is each project's documentation process different?

The research and 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 research/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 research 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. (The PowerPoint template has slides for this.) 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 research question, sub-questions and inquiry questions. Consider the research 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. The student inquiry questions relate more to the focus of student learning. Students and artist may have some questions of their own. The questions will likely change somewhat as the project progresses. Below is an example of a table you might use.

Main Research Question	
Sub-question	
Sub-question	
Sub-question	
Student Inquiry Question	
Student Inquiry Question	
Student Inquiry Question	
Student-generated Question	
Student-generated Question	
Artist Question	
Artist Question	

Documenting Process and Product

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 (PowerPoint template).

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 research and sub-questions? What were your conclusions?	
What will you now do to act on the information you gathered?	
What does the documentary information tell you about the student inquiry questions?	
How were students involved in the reflection on the student inquiry questions, and what do they have to say about their own learning?	
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 the Arts Board.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

Jody Greenman-Barber

Program Consultant
Community Engagement
Saskatchewan Arts Board
(306) 787-4659 (Regina) or 1-800-667-7526
jgreenmanbarber@saskartsboard.ca

Lindsay Knight

Program Consultant
Aboriginal Arts & Community Engagement
Saskatchewan Arts Board
(306) 964-1165 (Saskatoon) or 1-800-667-7526
lknight@saskartsboard.ca

For programs serving Aboriginal communities and/or related to Aboriginal art, skills or knowledge