

Muse Machine Summer Institute

Documentation Guide

Documentation is an essential component of engaged, student-centered learning. Not only does it provide useful, authentic assessment data; it can also get students excited about what they are doing. As digital natives, many young people find the process of using a smartphone or other media device comfortable and natural. To get started, all you will need are one or more smartphones, digital cameras, or other recording devices and a computer for downloading and storing files.

Before you begin, brainstorm about what you will be looking for—evidence of learning, standards being met, student engagement, creativity, etc. Discuss how this might be documented. Consider how the process can involve students in understanding their own learning and create process portfolios of their work.

- **Plan to document early.** Don't wait until the project is completed or even substantially underway, but document as soon as you have activities, even during the planning phase.
- **Use video, audio, and photography as appropriate.** Still photography can be useful in documenting the range of a student's visual work. Video and audio can be more appropriate for performance but can also be used to capture work process and student interviews.
- **Focus primarily on students, not teachers or artists.** Try to capture student learning, engagement, interest, group work, conversations, questions.
- **Document the entire process of learning,** from idea generation to the final culminating experience. Each part of a lesson or project is important, even in-process work that you might otherwise discard.
- **Ask questions.** Engage students in conversation about their work and capture it on video. What are they working on? Why do they care about it? How will they know when their work is complete? How will they judge their own work? For additional ideas, refer to the Student Interview Guide, page 3.
- **Involve the students in the documentation.** Ask them to use smartphones to interview each other or to record their thinking about their work. They can also use the Interview Guide.
- **Look for evidence of standards being met.** Refer to Ohio's Learning Standards, both in Fine Arts and other content areas: <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Learning-in-Ohio/OLS-Graphic-Sections/Learning-Standards>

- **Continuously review and reflect on your documentation.** Discuss it with others. What are you learning? What could you improve? How could documentation be improved?
- **Add context where needed.** Include a separate narrative (written or video) to explain what students are working on, how their work meets standards, etc.
- **Save the documentation.** Store digital files on a secure drive where they can be retrieved, shared, and used for assessment.
- **Share the documentation.** Use it to communicate evidence of learning to colleagues, parents, community members, and other stakeholders. Multimedia documentation can easily be included in a PowerPoint presentation.

Documentation with Young Learners

Even with small learners, the documentation process can be effective. These young students are often very natural in talking about their projects and comfortable in being recorded. They are also capable of talking about sophisticated concepts such as intentionality and standards of quality. While the guiding questions you ask should use language that they understand, you may use the same kinds of questions in the Interview Guide (see next page).

Further Reading

Making Learning Visible, Harvard Project Zero

<http://www.makinglearningvisibleresources.org>

Project-Based Learning, Edutopia

<https://www.edutopia.org/project-based-learning>

Teaching for Understanding, Harvard Project Zero

<http://www.pz.harvard.edu/projects/teaching-for-understanding>

Understanding by Design

<http://www.ascd.org/research-a-topic/understanding-by-design-resources.aspx>

Student Interview Guide

- What are you working on (or have you been working on) in this lesson?
- What have you enjoyed or liked in this lesson? Why?
- What have you learned? What do you know about, or know how to do, that you didn't know before the lesson?
- Why is knowing this or knowing how to do this important? How do you think it might help you?
- How will you know when your work is complete? How will you be able to judge your own work?