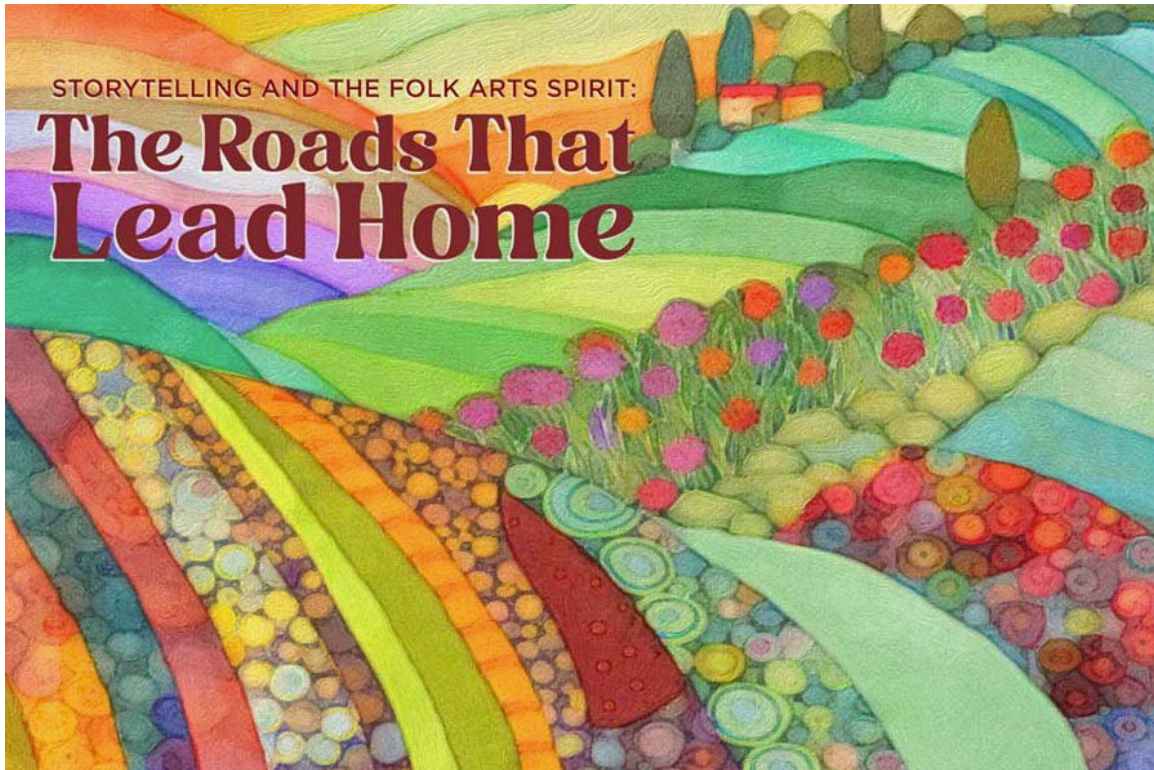


# Final Evaluation Report



## **2025 Summer Institute for Educators Storytelling & the Folk Arts Spirit: The Roads That Lead Home**

Prepared for Muse Machine by  
Michael Sikes, PhD  
Evaluation Consultant

Institute photography by Sarah Babcock

# Table of Contents

<b>Muse Machine .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The Institute.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<i>About Folk Arts and Schools .....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Organizational Bios.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<b>Overview of the Institute.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<i>Institute Guiding Questions and Learning Goals.....</i>	<i>7</i>
Guiding/Essential Questions.....	7
Daily Learning Goals and Outcomes.....	8
<i>Curriculum Connections .....</i>	<i>8</i>
<b>Evaluating the Institute.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<i>Planning and Implementation.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Results.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Satisfaction .....</i>	<i>10</i>
Setting and Logistics .....	11
Impact.....	13
<i>Professional Learning.....</i>	<i>13</i>
Ratings of Specific Days and Sessions.....	14
Qualitative Survey Responses.....	22
<i>Additional Data Sources.....</i>	<i>23</i>
Pre-Institute Workshop at Springfield Museum of Art .....	23
Afternoon Reflections.....	25
Lesson Plans and Artifacts .....	26
Focus Group.....	26
<b>Conclusions.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Recommendations .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Participant Demographics .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Appendices .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<i>Appendix A: Artist Bios.....</i>	<i>35</i>
<i>Appendix B: Setting and Logistics.....</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>Appendix C: Qualitative Survey Responses.....</i>	<i>39</i>
<i>Appendix D: Focus Group Responses.....</i>	<i>45</i>
<i>Appendix E: Documentation.....</i>	<i>i</i>

# Muse Machine

- Muse Machine is a nationally recognized arts education organization in Dayton, Ohio. It annually serves 60,000 students and their teachers in 8 counties in central and southwestern Ohio and Kentucky.
- Many of the schools served by Muse have diverse demographics, students from lower SES families, and some with limited English proficiency.
- The mission of Muse is to change the lives of young people through the arts.
- To help attain this mission, Muse Machine conducts an annual four-day institute with teachers from participating schools. The Summer Institute was designed as a multi-year partnership with participating teachers and their schools.

# The Institute

The 2025 Summer Institute for Educators, *Storytelling & the Folk Arts Spirit: The Roads That Lead Home*, along with Muse-sponsored, pre- and post-institute curriculum workshops, addressed key enduring understandings related to relevant contemporary issues:

1. The arts can express and mirror a full range of human experience through the use of expressive language, music, drama, and visual symbolism.
2. The arts can teach us to remain courageous and resilient in the face of conflict and disagreement.
3. The arts can both reflect and challenge how we understand events and unlock deeper understanding through adaptation and exploration.
4. The arts and humanities are deeply interdisciplinary and can provide teachers with numerous access points to their subject matter.
5. Studying arts and humanities can help students to understand the world around them and how individuals operate within communities.

The 2025 institute took place on July 14-17, 2025, at The Foundry Theater in Yellow Springs, OH.



## About Folk Arts and Schools

The songs, dances, stories and artworks we pass down not only keep ancestral knowledge alive, they also provide context and foster understanding about where we belong today. In both these contexts, folk arts, along with arts in general, offer rich resources for learning about a wide variety of subjects and ideas.

In part through the support of the National Endowment for the Arts and the various state and local arts agencies, schools and school districts have historically used folk arts to engage students, parents, and communities. These art forms have also proved to be catalytic in the professional learning of teachers. The 2025 summer institute provided a significant opportunity for the folk arts to propel professional learning in the rich environment of curriculum design, documentation, reflective practice, and innovation.

## Organizational Bios

The 2025 summer institute featured the following artist-educators and presenters:

### Teaching Artists

- **Omope Carter Daboiku** (Mama O), storyteller, wordsmith and multimedia artist.
- **Rick Good**, banjo player, guitarist, singer/songwriter, and performer of traditional music.

- **Chris Westhoff**, Managing Director of Mad River Theater Works, Development Coordinator of the Antioch School, and Director of Foundry Theater.
- **Beth Wright**, dance/movement teaching artist and Program Manager for Muse Machine Preschool & Elementary Program.

### Guest Presenters

- **Neenah Ellis**, Executive Director, Eichelberger Center for Community Voices.
- **Yetunde Rodriguez**, Nigerian American Printmaker, Multi-media Artist and Art Educator.
- **Dr. Catherine Roma**, Professor of Music, Emerita, Wilmington College.

For detailed biographic information, refer to [Appendix A: Artist/Presenter Bios](#)

Muse Machine staff and consultants involved in the planning and execution of the 2025 summer institute and extended activities include:

- **Becky Davis**, curriculum consultant
- **Emily Gray**, director of secondary school programs
- **Ruth Reveal**, executive director
- **Dr. Michael Sikes**, program evaluator

## Overview of the Institute

The most important goal of the summer institute is to build a professional learning community in which teachers feel cared for and are brave learners. The institute focuses on creating a learner-centered environment where teachers share their unique voices with their peers as they work toward a strong foundation in creative knowledge and the skills needed to further their professional success as creative teachers. Over the years, its most successful summer institutes featured learner-centered educational practices:

**INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGIES.** Muse welcomes diverse learners, including those who have no formal training in the arts or are not subject matter experts. Activities are grounded in collaboration, community building, personal exploration and sharing. These pedagogies are the same ones that Muse expects to see in the classrooms as teachers find relevant ways to elevate student voice in learning and the life of the school.

**FOCUS ON EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING.** Experiential Learning involves having a learning experience and then reflecting on it. It is designed purposefully by a teacher or artist and may take place in either formal or informal situations and in a variety of contexts, including classrooms or community settings. Teachers and artists can be taught how to use experiential learning through professional development that often includes

modeling experiential learning, for example, during the summer institute. See Appendix D, [Documentation](#), for more information on experiential learning.

**TIME TO CONNECT.** Staff, artists and presenters work with teachers individually, in small groups, and with larger class activities to help promote the dynamic, interactive, learning community that is at the heart of the summer institute.

**ACTIVITIES THAT HAVE A PURPOSE.** Learning experiences challenge the teachers in new ways that have a lasting impact, enhance their work with students and advance the overall theme of the institute and create a bridge to innovative and relevant curriculum and instructional practices.



## Institute Guiding Questions and Learning Goals

### Guiding/Essential Questions

1. What are folk arts? How are they different from fine arts?
2. Is there a shared spirit across folk arts disciplines? How can this spirit help us to connect with young people?
3. What experiences create our definitions of “home” and “belonging”?

4. How can folk music, dance, and storytelling practices help us to communicate our beliefs about home and belonging?
5. How can folk arts be used as tools for education and cultural exchange?
6. How do folk arts reflect shared human experiences across cultures and build community?

## Daily Learning Goals and Outcomes

- Participants will explore the “folk arts spirit” of creating art in community for the purpose of uplifting individual and collective experience.
- Participants will experience first-hand how folk arts reflect both the personal experiences of the artist and reinforce shared cultural understandings.
- Participants will discover how folk arts are rooted in and reflect a deep understanding of place and belonging.
- Participants will increase their understanding of the various forms and traditions of American balladry.
- Participants will practice simple breathing and singing exercises to become more confident and joyful singers.
- Participants will learn how to use rhyme, rhythm, and meter to structure a narrative.
- Participants will experience dance, body percussion, and creative movement as techniques for storytelling and community building.
- Participants will be introduced to the ways folk artists learn, remember, and transmit songs, dances, and stories.

## Curriculum Connections

The Muse summer institute uses an approach that combines experiential learning, integrated instruction, and Understanding by Design, along with the extraordinary artistic and teaching talents of each year’s world-class SI faculty. The 2025 institute included the exploration of significant themes such as the relationship of art to social issues; sharing personal stories and creating artworks from them; guided reflection; the development of techniques for arts-based student engagement; and classroom integration.

# Evaluating the Institute

Several questions guided the evaluation of the institute:

- Was the institute planned and implemented effectively?

- Did participants perceive the institute as useful and satisfactory?
- Did participants acquire the knowledge and skills being taught in the institute?
- Did these educators apply their learning in their subsequent work in their schools?
- In what ways did their classrooms and schools change as a result?

The following processes were used to evaluate the institute:

- Surveys of participants, including daily formative assessments and a comprehensive survey following the institute
- A focus group of participants in fall 2025
- Critical review and analysis of planning documents, session handouts, daily surveys, lesson plans, and other artifacts
- Reporting via multiple formats and to various audiences

The evaluation focuses on two aspects of the institute:

- **Planning and Implementation:** The extent to which the institute was planned and delivered so as to achieve success.
- **Results:** Various outcomes of the institute in terms of satisfaction, learning, application of learning and changes to schools.

In this report, results are summarized in several ways: Many survey items are of the scaled or Likert type, offering options from 1 (“Strongly Disagree”) to 5 (“Strongly Agree”). The results of these items are reported as percentage of respondents who selected either “Agree” or “Strongly Agree.” Other items are multiple choice and are reported as percentages who selected each option. A third type of item collects open-ended responses. Such results are categorized and reported as lists of categories with examples. For such items, the full text of responses is included in the Appendices.

## Planning and Implementation

*“Everything [Muse staff] plan and follow through is so amazing and ... I always learn so much in myself and my career.”*

—Participant, writing in Daily Check-in

Extensive documentation shows that the institute was the focus of a continuous process of planning, implementation and follow-up. In addition, photographic documentation and participant narratives affirm that the institute was implemented substantially as planned.

[View Documentation](#)

## Results

The evaluation of the 2025 institute indicates attainment of the following results:

1. **Satisfaction.** Participants were largely satisfied with their experiences and found value in them. This is an important finding because satisfaction is a necessary precursor to learning. Moreover, participants identified conditions of the institute that generally facilitated their learning, while a few pointed to areas for potential improvement in the future.
2. **Professional Learning.** Participants acquired targeted understandings, knowledge and skills from the summer institute.
3. **Application of Learning.** Participants described ways they planned to apply their learning in their schools or were already doing so.



The following sections support these conclusions.

## Satisfaction

In professional learning, participant satisfaction is critical to success. Both quantitative and qualitative data suggest that participants were highly satisfied with their experience.

The following section explores satisfaction through responses to several scaled items. *Reminder:* Most of the tables in this and following sections report agreement with specific statements on a scale of 1 (“Strongly Disagree”) to 5 (“Strongly Agree”). The tables report the combined percentage of “Agree” and “Strongly Agree.”

**Communication.** A majority of respondents were clearly satisfied with most or all of the communications, as well as the length of the sessions:

Percent “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”	
Before the institute, Muse provided the information I needed to feel prepared.	97%
During the institute, Muse staff members and artists were willing to answer my questions.	97%
The sessions were about the right length (e.g., neither too brief nor too long).	91%

**Accessibility.** Please rate your agreement with each of these statements using a scale of 1 to 5 (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree).

Percent “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”	
The program staff were welcoming.	97%
This program was offered at a time that was convenient for me.	100%
The program space was safe.	100%
The program space was easy to access.	97%

Most participants found little to criticize in the setting or logistics, as indicated by the following survey response summary:

*Were there any aspects of the institute setting or logistics that contributed positively to your learning?*

Response Option	%
Yes	94%
No	6%

It is important to understand that the Institute is frequently held at Muse Machine studio in downtown Dayton. The decision to locate the 2026 institute in Yellow Springs was based on localizing the study of folk arts to a small town with a rich history and introducing teachers to a new artistic resource (Foundry Theatre) and a postsecondary option (Antioch College).

## Setting and Logistics

### Positive Contributions of Setting, Summary

Participants provided the following kinds of comments in response to the prompt requesting details:

Proximity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close to home</li> <li>• It was so nice to have (1) a nice drive that wasn’t too long for me to reflect on week’s events and (2) a creative space that felt like a blank canvas for new ideas and inspiration.</li> </ul>

### **Different learning environment**

- I loved that it was at a different venue.
- It was set in a beautiful, old theater that had great bones & good vibes for all the participants to feel inspired.
- It was nice to be in a creative space different than our usual Muse space. It was also a great way to feel connected to the Yellow Springs community.

### **Enhancement of Learning**

- I liked how we were assigned in groups, worked within our groups and then came together at share with all the groups.
- It was nice to be in a smaller town to learn about folk music. It was cool to have the local radio station being represented and it was nice to learn in an environment where arts take place.

Click [here](#) to view complete list of responses.

*Were there any aspects of the institute setting or logistics that interfered with your learning?*

<b>Response Option</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	28
No	7

Elaborations to this question reflected several issues, especially the location in Yellow Springs. (However, the frequent qualifications in the responses suggest that the point was of no great concern).

- Sharing the larger space during breakout sessions got a bit loud a few times, so two groups sharing the space was a bit difficult. But note, this only happened maybe twice.
- Sometimes the temps would be wonky or water would leak. Not a big deal though.
- No...but I will say that the location was very inconvenient this year. I don't mind not holding it at the Muse building if the location is going to enhance the experience or add to it, but the space in Yellow Springs didn't really add much. It was a cool building; I liked the breakout rooms being well located...but the traveling distance was difficult.

Refer to [Appendix B: Setting and Logistics](#), for full data.

## Impact

In addition to satisfaction, a majority of respondents confirmed several dimensions of positive impact and would recommend the institute, as the following tables suggest:

*Please rate your agreement with each of these statements.*

Percent “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”	
Overall, the institute’s learning goals were realized.	94%
I felt a strong personal connection to institute content.	97%
I felt a strong professional connection to institute content.	88%

On a scale from 1 to 10, participants were asked, *How likely is it that you would recommend Muse Machine’s Summer Institute for Educators to a friend or colleague?*

Detractors (0-6)		Passive (7-8)		Promoters (9-10)		Net Promoter Score
0	0%	3	8.8%	31	91.2%	91

## Professional Learning

*“One important feature of this workshop is that it would be fairly easy to replicate in a classroom....[I]t was completely accessible, both for accomplished artists and for people with little to no traditional artistic ability. That’s really important for teachers who seek to inspire creativity in all their students.”*

—2025 Institute Participant

Professional learning is the all-important development of understanding, critical knowledge and skills required by today’s educators to meet the challenges of teaching in schools with diverse populations, disadvantaged learners, demanding course content including the Common Core standards and the widely recognized need for higher-order thinking skills to do well in 21<sup>st</sup>-century economy and society.

**The data in this section is divided into the following categories:**

- Ratings of Specific Days and Sessions
- Qualitative Survey Responses

## Ratings of Specific Days and Sessions

As reflected in the previous section of this report, participants were quite positive about the content of the various sessions. The following tables summarize responses to the follow-up survey, specifically to items referring to sessions on the various days.

### The Monday Sessions

#### *Mapping Our Home: A Storytelling Exercise*

Facilitator: Chris Westhoff

Percent “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”	
The teaching artist was knowledgeable and professional.	100%
This experience was valuable to me as a teacher.	100%
The activities in this session clearly connected to the daily learning goals.	100%

#### *Songs That Tell a Story*

Facilitator: Rick Good

Percent “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”	
The teaching artist was knowledgeable and professional.	100%
This experience was valuable to me as a teacher.	100%
The activities in this session clearly connected to the day’s learning goals.	100%

#### *What Story Do You Carry?*

Facilitator: Omope Carter Daboiku

Percent “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”	
The teaching artist was knowledgeable and professional.	93%
This experience was valuable to me as a teacher.	89%
The activities in this session clearly connected to the day’s learning goals.	86%

***Circles, Lines, and Play Party Dances***

Facilitator: Beth Wright

<b>Percent “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”</b>	
The teaching artist was knowledgeable and professional.	100%
This experience was valuable to me as a teacher.	93%
The activities in this session clearly connected to the daily learning goals.	96%

**The Tuesday Sessions**

***Global Unified Expression***

Facilitator: Omope Carter Daboiku

<b>Percent “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”</b>	
The teaching artist was knowledgeable and professional.	91%
This experience was valuable to me as a teacher.	87%
The activities in this session clearly connected to the daily learning goals.	87%

***Body Percussion Basics***

Facilitator: Beth Wright

<b>Percent “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”</b>	
The teaching artist was knowledgeable and professional.	97%
This experience was valuable to me as a teacher.	97%
The activities in this session clearly connected to the daily learning goals.	97%

***Folk Arts in the Classroom Discussion***

Facilitator: Chris Westhoff

<b>Percent “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”</b>	
The teaching artist was knowledgeable and professional.	100%
This experience was valuable to me as a teacher.	96%
The activities in this session clearly connected to the daily learning goals.	100%

### ***Lesson Plan Creation Time***

#### *Independent Study*

<b>Percent “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”</b>	
The amount of time given to me to write a lesson plan was adequate.	85%
This experience was valuable to me as a teacher.	81%

### **The Wednesday Sessions**

#### *Folk Singing as Community Building*

Facilitator: Dr. Catherine Roma

<b>Percent “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”</b>	
The teaching artist was knowledgeable and professional.	100%
This experience was valuable to me as a teacher.	90%
The activities in this session clearly connected to the daily learning goals.	93%

#### ***Collaborative Paper Quilts***

Facilitator: Yetunde Rodriguez

<b>Percent “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”</b>	
The teaching artist was knowledgeable and professional.	100%
This experience was valuable to me as a teacher.	93%
The activities in this session clearly connected to the daily learning goals.	97%

#### ***Lesson Activation Circles***

Breakout Groups by Subject Area and/or Grade Band

<b>Percent “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”</b>	
I was able to make clear connections between the institute’s content and a specific learning standard.	97%
The discussions were professionally rewarding.	97%
The amount of time given for lesson plan sharing was appropriate.	96%

## The Thursday Sessions

### A Conversation with Neenah Ellis

Percent “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”	
The presenter was knowledgeable and professional.	100%
The presenter made clear connections to the history and cultural role of folk arts in the Miami Valley.	100%
The presenter made clear connections to resources available in Dayton to support classroom arts integration.	97%
This experience was valuable to me as a teacher.	89%

### Breakout Group Work & Culminating Share

Percent “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”	
The teaching artist was supportive and professional during our group work time.	86%
Each presentation reflected a strong understanding of Institute themes.	96%
I was enriched by the collaborative nature of developing and sharing my group’s presentation.	100%
I will facilitate a similar process in my school or classroom.	70%

The following are responses to the prompt, *Please elaborate on any answers*. In all instances, teaching artists’ names are replaced with [name].

### Positive Comments

The following comments are representative of the typically favorable responses to Summer Institute sessions.

- My group was respectful of everyone’s need and ideas. [Name] was a great group leader, and I loved my group this year!
- That was probably the most fun I had at the end of a PD ever (Not including NY). I learned so much from [name] (facilitator) and my group as a non-performer and a new teacher
- The performance is a high point of the institute and this year was no different. I enjoyed feeling supported and included in my group
- Always love the group work and what everyone creates!

- I loved all of the activities and brought the ballad exercise into my classroom with great success.
- Overall..., [this teaching artist] has a wealth of knowledge, a unique perspective, and I feel lucky to have worked with [them].
- I do love how the group seriously rallied after the most uncomfortable moment—and maybe that was the point? I’ve been very moved by this artist at several events. I sincerely hope [negative experience] this was a fluke because [name] has so many important things to share.
- I felt like we got more out of our time with the other artists when they rotated in (which was AWESOME and I loved it!)
- I love summer institute.

**Critical Comments**

The sessions of one teaching artist drew strongly critical reaction from several participants.

- On the final day there was a moment where [name] strongly scolded our group...[which] felt unprofessional and unnecessary.
- Thursday’s breakout session was definitely one of the most uncomfortable things I’ve done in a while. I am aware that others in our group have already touched on this with staff.
- I struggled this year with our teaching artist. The fact that we were lectured and had group members in tears on Thursday was not a good feeling for the institute. And this year, I don’t know how connected I felt to our group’s teaching artist.
- Our teaching artist tried to control our collaboration and even made participants feel attacked. Long lectures about various topics took away from our collaboration time, and we were lectured about why our ideas and process were not successful. Additionally, we were told that if we were given a grade, we would pass but many of us would be disappointed in the actual grade we would have received. [They] told us that we created a piece but we didn’t really get the assignment. I left the institute daily feeling unsure, frustrated, and upset.

**Classroom Applications**

To what extent will you use knowledge gained in the Institute in your classroom?

	Count	%
To no extent	0	0%
To little extent	0	0%
To some extent	18	60%

To a large extent	11	37%
To a very large extent	1	3%

Please describe ways that you envision using knowledge gained in the Institute in your classroom.

- Connecting to our “roots” is valuable
- I will use the lessons of dance, quilting, storytelling, and ballads in my classroom
- See below. Still considering binder content and other resources for a smaller unit in the spring.
- I particularly love the summer institute for the number of short, fun activities I can put in my back pocket for when the plans I'm given fall short of keeping my students engaged.
- The use of a ballad connection to the American Dream unit will be my lesson plan. I also can see using many of the other activities, storytelling, the neighborhood map, the paper quilting, the idea of collaborative community building, to enrich my classroom.
- I want to use the Dayton stuff, the folk stuff and the group things we did and incorporate them in tech somehow—still trying to figure that out.
- Even though I won't be teaching this year, I will be helping our MS/HS drama director in some way. I don't know what that will look like yet, but I could, for example, imagine using body percussion activities as warm-up activities with the drama club kids.
- I will use song lyrics to teach historical information
- As a communications teacher I plan to talk about how we communicate through song and stories. I think students would enjoy an activity such as rewriting the lyrics to the school fight song.
- I will use each student's ideas to create the classroom mission statement
- In my AP Art History class, I will discuss Appalachian art and culture. I will also incorporate my knowledge and experience of African pattern and its significance.
- Folk art is a genre of art that I have not thought of using before. I'm excited to explore its use in my classroom more.
- I envision using the heart map to get to know my students. I also see using songs and asking my students to describe the stories told through song. I can use movement in my class.
- Importance of folk music and use of body percussion in lessons.

## Lesson Planning

Please select all that apply.

	Count	%
I have several ideas for a lesson(s).	13	43%
I am enhancing an existing lesson or unit using institute concepts.	17	57%
I am drafting a new lesson or unit using institute concepts.	11	37%

**Please briefly explain the lesson(s) or unit(s) you are drafting or enhancing.**

- I drafted a new unit on home and used some of the exercises from the institute.
- At the beginning of the year, I do varied activities to help create our classroom community. I will use the bedroom idea and the community singing.
- I am going to discuss ballads with my students, do an activity with ballads in music class, and then have a small group of interested students write their own ballad.
- I have extended my geographical teaching as a Social Studies instructor with many themes we discussed.
- I will share my experience with my classroom teachers
- Students will write ballads to tell the story of voting rights amendments.
- Composers' stories/home/meaning behind the music. Improvisation in Jazz ensemble. Working to connect soloing to your personal ideas, memories, and ideas of home.
- I will definitely use many of the movement pieces to break up long sitting sessions. The activity can be used in MANY of the rooms I find myself in.
- Students will create a ballad to enrich their understanding of a series of poems in their textbook that focus on the American Dream.
- I don't have any actual things drafted or existing, but I have some ideas that I am trying to formulate.
- I have a unit based on a long-ago Muse workshop with Ping Chong Theater Company, that I called "My Story, Our Story." I'm thinking about adding a visual art component based on Yetunde Rodriguez's workshop, and maybe [Name]'s "mapping our home" activity.
- Energy Bus!
- We will analyze songs of historical periods such as the American Revolution and Civil War
- My lesson would be using an old song (the school's fight song) but having students update the lyrics to tell the story of their school and culture as it stands today.
- The Way Home as an SEL activity to get to know the students early in the school year
- Mapping
- I'm drafting an idea of how to allow my art students share sketches of their home. I'm adding knowledge to my lessons about African and folk arts.

- My juniors study American literature and folk heroes are a topic I have not spent much time on because of a new text book. After the summer institute, I think I know how I can insert a lesson covering some folk art/literature while aligning it with the school’s text.
- Folk music ties to local context in IB music. Body percussion in middle school band

**Binder Resources**

	Yes	No	Maybe/Unsure
I will use the readings and/or workshop materials in my school or classroom.	48%	0%	52%
I will use the Dayton Metro Library suggested reading lists in my teaching and/or work.	23%	3%	73%
I plan to share these resources with other educators.	67%	0%	33%

**Special Topics**

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The program demonstrates...

Percent “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”	
...the positive contribution artists make to my community.	100%
...the important value the arts play in my life.	100%
...the important way the arts improve my community’s health and wellbeing.	100%
...how arts bring people together in meaningful ways.	100%

**Global Perceptions**

To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your experience at the Summer Institute for Educators?

Percent “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”	
The institute inspired me to think in new and different ways.	97%

The institute gave me a personal appreciation for the importance of future investments in local arts programs.	100%
While in this program I felt my levels of stress go down.	80%
While in this program I did not feel alone.	97%
This program brought me joy.	97%

### Critical Reflection

To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your experience at the Summer Institute for Educators?

As a result of this program I have changed the way I look at myself.	67%
This program has challenged some of my firmly held ideas.	53%
As a result of this program I have changed my normal way of doing things.	43%
During this program I discovered faults in what I had previously believed to be right.	47%

Which of the following best describes your relationship to the arts? Select all that apply.

<b>Percent “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”</b>	
I am an artist/creative by profession	23%
I am an artist/creative by hobby	57%
I am a passive participant in the arts (e.g., audience member)	63%
I am an active participant in the arts (e.g., engaged in an arts program or workshop)	44%
I am an arts program implementation partner (e.g., a teacher who has an art program in my class or school).	57%

### Qualitative Survey Responses

[Comprehensive data from the surveys is presented in Appendix C.](#)

## Additional Data Sources

### Pre-Institute Workshop at Springfield Museum of Art

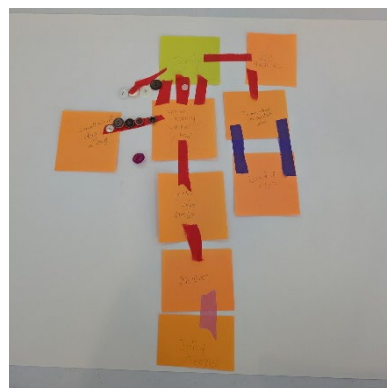
Springfield Museum of Art hosted Visual Thinking Strategies with Amy Korpieski on July 10, 2025. The activities, which included participation in Visual Thinking Strategies (MOMA) and several Making Thinking Visible routines from Project Zero, were designed to immerse educators in narrative art, introduce the museum as a local resource, and start conversations about “home” and “folk art” as Institute themes. A pre-post survey suggested positive results.



*Amy Korpieski with educators*

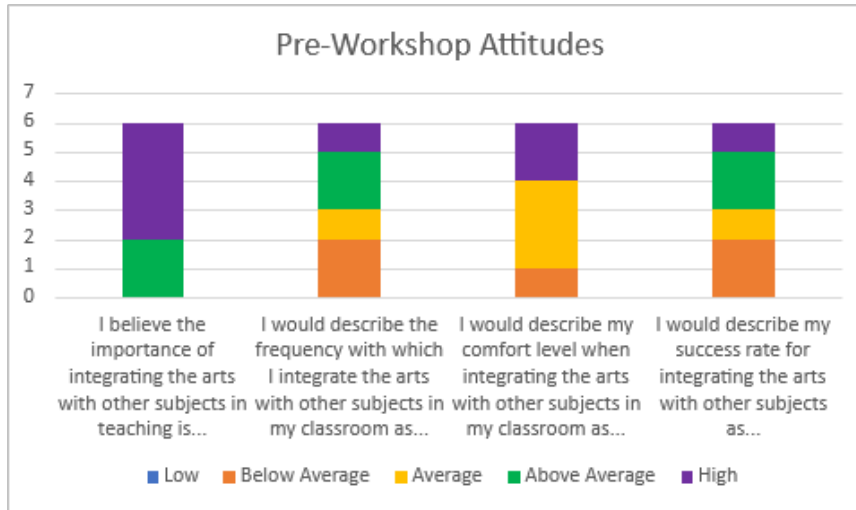


*Chalk Talk*



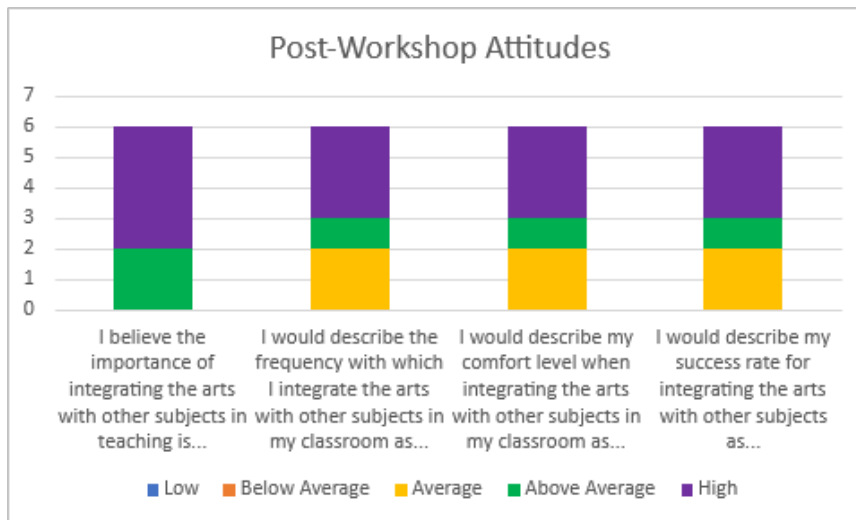
*Concept mapping*

## Pre-Workshop Survey Responses



	Low	Below Average	Average	Above Average	High
I believe the importance of integrating the arts with other subjects in teaching is...				2	4
I would describe the frequency with which I integrate the arts with other subjects in my classroom as...		2	1	2	1
I would describe my comfort level when integrating the arts with other subjects in my classroom as...		1	3		2
I would describe my success rate for integrating the arts with other subjects as...		2	1	2	1

## Post-Workshop Survey Responses



	Low	Below Average	Average	Above Average	High
I believe the importance of integrating the arts with other subjects in teaching is...				2	4
I would describe the frequency with which I integrate the arts with other subjects in my classroom as...			2	1	3
I would describe my comfort level when integrating the arts with other subjects in my classroom as...			2	1	3
I would describe my success rate for integrating the arts with other subjects as...			2	1	3

Qualitative responses also confirmed the positive experiences of participants:

- This was a great workshop with excellent visual thinking strategies that my students desperately need! I also purchased the Making Thinking Visible book as well to learn more.
- The workshop was great. The “making thinking visible” activities would be valuable to me as a teacher, and I very much appreciated the opportunity to experience Aminah Robinson’s amazing art.
- I truly enjoyed the PreWorkshop and Aminah’s art. This was my first time at SMOA and I look forward to seeing more art exhibits in the future.
- Today was a joyous mixture of artwork and community and learning!
- I thoroughly enjoyed the presentation to include the content, the presenters delivery, and of course the venue! I am really looking forward to the connected experiences to come!

## Afternoon Reflections

Daily reflections sessions invited participants to share ideas on their learning in progress. The sessions were audio recorded. The following are examples of concepts or topics the participants discussed:

- How to apply learning to their classrooms
- Varying instructional techniques
- “How cool would it be if...”
- How to reach diverse learners
- A basic question is: What is home? What is my culture?
- Changes in definition of culture
- Changes in students’ life circumstances
- Heat maps as a replacement for concept of “home”
- Students’ sense of identity, knowing who they are
- Writing ballads about current events
- Teachers are often put off from curricula integration because of need to write entire lesson plan, but they can actually take on only a small piece

These examples demonstrate that participants were grappling with important concepts and understandings relevant to their work as educators.

## Lesson Plans and Artifacts

Analysis of a sample of lesson plans developed by SI participants revealed a number of common characteristics:

- Identification of significant, achievable, and assessable learning outcomes, including enduring understandings
- Clear connections among lesson components
- Effective use of authentic assessment, including documentation and teacher-student collaborative development of scoring rubrics

See examples in [Documentation, Appendix B](#).

## Focus Group

A focus group was conducted with a sample of participants in December. This procedure was selected to provide additional rich data, to further triangulate the findings, and to gauge how teachers were using their learning. The focus group was conducted by consultant Lori Gerstein Ramsey, Ed.D.

The following questions guided the focus group:

- How confident do you feel in applying your learning from the 2025 summer institute in your classroom, and why?
- In what ways could your experience with this learning be deepened?
- In what ways could Muse strengthen the connection between institute content and your curriculum?
- Are you noticing any evidence of student learning? Do you have documentation that you could share?
- How have you applied learnings from the Institute to foster belonging in your classroom/school/community?

The focus group yielded several key themes, which are generally corroborated in other data:

**The arts have significant power for engaging students and connecting them to school and more general learning. The folk arts may be particularly powerful in these effects.**

- The summer institute provided a deep dive into the very foundation of storytelling. The creative approach offered, in July, gave educators a way to build lesson plans to engage students.
- I think the biggest takeaway I had was the whole concept of how everybody has a story to tell, and being able to use that as a tool in lots of different ways, helping students look at research as a tool, looking at telling their own stories in their journals, having them look at other people’s stories.

**The medium of the focus group offers a promising opportunity for educators to share knowledge and begin to form a professional learning community.**

- Our goal really is to take these things and to bring them to our classroom. And if we’re not constantly focused on how everybody is doing that, then I think we’re straying from the mission.
- The Institute is fantastic, but having more than 4 days would be fantastic! I also greatly appreciated the opportunity to work with the other teaching artists this year in the round-robin format, it gave us so many more voices to find ways to strengthen our understanding of the concepts.

**The summer institute has had significant impact in the professional practice of educators and their impact on students:**

- The approach shared during the summer institute is the engine that keeps the motivation moving forward.
- Muse fuels me—both my curriculum and how I interact with students.
- I have been working on finding ways to highlight individual gifts of each ensemble member. I am more aware of the journeys that each student has walked before walking into the rehearsal room, the styles of music that they are familiar with, and the unique pieces each student brings to the table. I feel like simply being reminded of that (rather than being too goal-oriented and busy to take time to foster student identity) is a gift that the Summer Institute has given me as an educator.

Full text of the focus group responses is included as [Appendix D](#).

## Conclusions

The cumulative data and analyses support the following conclusions:

- **The institute was planned and implemented effectively.** Documentary evidence supports the conclusion that extensive, thoughtful planning and skillful implementation led to a successful event, a finding supported by participant responses to surveys and the focus group.

- **Participants perceived the institute as useful and satisfactory.** Overall satisfaction with the institute, as in previous years, was high. As noted earlier, while satisfaction is not an outcome in itself, it is an important precursor and thus an indicator of the essential outcome, that of learning.
- Almost all of the sessions rated highly on these three dimensions: (1) the knowledge and professionalism of the teaching artists, (2) the value of the experience to the participants as teachers, and (3) the clarity of connection between the session’s activities and the daily learning goals.
- Discernable signs of engagement, via photographic documentation of group work, attest to considerable buy-in and engagement on the part of participants, another indicator of learning.
- **Participants acquired the knowledge and skills being taught in the institute, and they applied their learning in their subsequent work in their schools.** The topic and content selected for the 2025 institute proved appropriate in their potential to connect students with their community, its culture, and its narratives. Participants’ understanding of these linkages are important in that they can lay a solid groundwork for designing learning that reflects and incorporates students’ *funds of knowledge* (the knowledge, cultural assets, and strengths inherent in a community ) in their learning.
- The participants’ lesson plans available at the time of this report demonstrated effective use of lesson design and learning assessment.
- Several participants provided critical feedback regarding the breakout group led by one teaching artist. The criticism concerned specific decisions or approaches of the teaching artist and not the content of the sessions or any aspect of the overall institute. An analysis of the lesson planning for the sessions does not reveal any evidence that would have predicted these approaches or the negative responses to them. Another participant of one of these sessions contradicted some of the criticisms; thus, they do not represent a universal viewpoint of the session participants.
- Notwithstanding these caveats, Muse leaders regard such situations as an essential part of program improvement and a learning opportunity, not only for Muse but for any future teaching artists who find themselves in a situation that may test their judgment. The Recommendations, below, present ideas for such a proactive approach.
- **The classrooms and schools have begun to change as a result of the summer institute.** Data from the focus group provides preliminary evidence of transformations in teaching approaches and in the underlying knowledge of professional practice.

For artifactual evidence that further substantiates these findings, refer to the [Documentation](#) file.

# Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the preceding data and analyses:

- Muse should strengthen artist onboarding to reflect Muse philosophy and values. Moreover, Muse should consider implementing a process of reflective practice and self-evaluation for teaching artists. Such an approach would not be punitive but instead would empower teaching artists to monitor and evaluate their own work. Such learning might be guided by the following types of questions to be posed by the teaching artists themselves:
  - Are my instruction and its underlying assumptions characterized by inclusion, tolerance, and cultural validity?
  - When I encounter conflict, do I seek to use it to bridge viewpoints and foster greater mutual understanding?
  - Is my teaching always guided by cognitive humility—the understanding that my own knowledge has limitations and boundaries?
  - Do I view any culture, including my own and those of others, to be a rich source of strength and knowledge?
- Teaching artists would be encouraged to video record their sessions and review them, possibly with colleagues or mentors, in order to explore and answer these questions and others.
- Future institutes should continue to include afternoon reflection sessions. These sessions should include strategies for documenting the shared ideas so that they are available during the institute for further consideration. Possible strategies could include using flip charts for in-process note taking; however, an alternative approach would be assigning a transcriber to capture essential ideas and distributing printed copies to participants for inclusion in their resources.
- A participant of one of the sessions suggested that a Muse staff member should attend each breakout session. This seems like a useful idea, especially if it is seen as part of the development of a culture of learning through observation and documentation.
- Muse should provide technical assistance to SI participants for implementation of their lesson ideas. In some cases, preliminary ideas might undergo considerable modification as they are applied in the classroom.
- Muse should continue to work with participants in supporting their development and application of appropriate, authentic assessment tools and processes, with a concentration on multimedia tools that might reflect the nature of the 2025 SI content and strongly resonate with students.

- The possible long-term effects of the 2025 SI on fostering belonging in classrooms, schools, or communities, a concept explored in the focus group, seems worth further investigation. Muse or its sponsors might consider conducting research on the emergence of such effects.

## Participant Demographics

A total of 64 area teachers and school administrators registered for the institute. Of those registered, 46 attended one or more days. 43 participants attended for three or four days. Several teachers were juggling personal schedules and other professional requirements. The survey results below represent 34 participants or 74% of those in attendance.

Demographic data for all 46 attendees, collected at the time of registration, appears in a new rightmost column when available.

### Participation Rate, by Day

Answer Choices	Count-Survey	%	Count-Attended
Monday	30	93.75%	45
Tuesday	31	96.88%	44
Wednesday	31	96.88%	42
Thursday	31	96.88%	41

### Participant Gender

Answer Choices	Count-Survey	%	Count-Attended
Male	2	6.7%	3
Female	27	90%	43
Non-binary	0	0%	0
Prefer not to say	1	3.3%	0
Other	0	0%	0

### Participant Age

Answer Choices	Count-Survey	%	Count-Attended
Under 25	1	3%	3
25-34	2	7%	6
35-44	8	27%	13
45-54	10	33%	11
55-64	7	23%	8
65+	2	7%	2
Rather not say	0	0%	3

### Ethnicity

(Which of the following best describes your ethnic background or race? Select all that apply.)

Answer Choices	Count-Survey	%	Count-Attended
African	0	0%	0
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	3.3%	1
Asian	1	3.3%	0
Black or African American	0	0%	5
Hispanic or Latino	0	0%	0
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0	0%	0
White/Caucasian	24	80%	35
Bi-racial	0	0%	0
Multi-Racial	0	0%	1
Prefer not to say	2	6.7%	3
Other	0	0%	1

**Which of the following descriptors best describes your primary role as an educator?**

Answer Choices	Count-Survey	%
Educator, Preschool and Elementary School	5	16.7%
Educator, Middle School	8	26.7%
Educator, High School	8	26.7%
School Administrator	0	0%
Other (please specify)	9	30%

**Other**

- Private Dance Studio PreK-K Programming Director
- Paraprofessional (teacher’s aide) with special needs students
- Multiple grade educator
- Educator, K-8
- Recently retired middle school educator
- Paraprofessional in junior high and high school
- Teacher grades 6-12
- Music educator 6-12

**Which of the following descriptors best describe the subjects you teach? (Choose all that apply.)**

Answer Choices	Count-Survey	%
Arts (drama, band, choir, general music, fine art, etc.)	11	38%
English Language Arts	14	48%
Foreign Language	0	0%
Math	8	28%
Science	6	21%
Social Studies/History	10	34%
Other (please specify)	6	21%

**Other**

- Careers and Technology

- I teach a multi-disciplinary gifted program, for which I pull kids out of their regular classes one day each week.
- Career Tech / Arts and Communications
- I have officially left the classroom.

**Which of the following descriptors best fits your school?**

Answer Choices	Count-Survey	%
Magnet Public School	1	4%
Traditional Public School	16	67%
Public Charter School	1	4%
Nonpublic Charter School	0	0%
Private, Parochial School (religious-related nonpublic school)	0	0%
Private, Independent School (private nonprofit school)	0	0%
Private, Proprietary School (private school run for profit)	1	4%
Other (please specify)	5	21%

**Other**

- Prevention—SEL
- I'm a building sub. I teach all the things.
- Technology
- Multi-disciplinary gifted
- Career tech, communications
- Career technical education

**Do you work with a Title I school?**

Answer Choices	Count-Survey	%	Count-Attended
Yes	17	57%	20
No	9	30%	12
I'm not sure	4	13%	8

Teachers were invited to design and implement lesson plans based on Institute content, attend an initial session on assessment and documentation with Muse’s curriculum consultant, and be observed teaching the lesson, for graduate credit through the University of Dayton. A small cohort elected to register for the course and taught a wide range of Institute-inspired lessons in math, music, American government, ELA and social justice.

**University of Dayton Course Demographics**

Number of interested teachers (attended session #1)	10
Schools represented at session #1	10
Number of teachers who registered for the course	6
Percentage to complete course	100%
Schools represented in official course roster	6

**Subjects and Grades Represented**

Subjects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music/ELA grades 1-3</li> <li>• Pre-Algebra grade 8</li> <li>• Peace and Justice grade 10</li> <li>• Special Education Resource Room grades 9-12</li> <li>• AP Literature and Composition grade 11</li> <li>• ELA 11, American Government grade 11</li> </ul>
Grades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1-3</li> <li>• 8, 9</li> <li>• 12</li> </ul>

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Artist Bios



Born in north-central Appalachia, **Omope Carter Daboiku** (Mama O) is a storyteller, wordsmith and multimedia artist. Designated a master teaching artist in 1990 by the Ohio Arts Council, Mama O has performed across the US and on four continents, including a tour in Turkey for the U.S. Department of State and lectures in Germany on quilting as cottage industry. An award-winning community producer for WYSO radio (91.3 FM), she is published in several regional journals and anthologies; samples of her digital and oral storytelling are on YouTube. She began working with Muse Machine in 2020, conducting creative writing workshops about place, identity and culture that become staged readings.



**Rick Good** is an accomplished banjo player, guitarist, singer/songwriter, and performer of traditional music. His career has spanned five decades. A founding member of The Hotmud Family (1970-1983) and a partner with Sharon Leahy in Rhythm in Shoes (1987-2010), Rick's work often took him into the Dayton Public Schools where he has shared his music with three generations of Miami Valley students. Rick was named an Ohio Heritage Fellow in 2010, for his "... lasting positive impact on the excellence, vitality and public appreciation of the folk and traditional arts."



**Chris Westhoff** is the Managing Director of Mad River Theater Works, the Development Coordinator of the Antioch School and the Director of the Foundry Theater on the campus of Antioch College. He has a liberal arts degree from Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts, where he focused on literature, documentary arts, media production and music performance. He has worked in museums as an art handler, in schools as an educator, with construction and carpentry crews, and in many theaters across the country both as a performer and manager.



**Beth Wright** is a teaching artist with the Muse Machine Preschool & Elementary Program where she conducts artist residencies for students using movement, rhythm, choreography and improvisation. For nine seasons she was a member of the Dayton favorite Rhythm in Shoes and enjoyed performing for audiences and teaching young dancers through senior citizens nationwide. Wright has also performed in collaboration with Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, Crosspulse, The Tap Factor, and Hammerstep. She has served as adjunct faculty at Sinclair Community College, Stivers School for the Arts, and Pittsburgh's Civic Light Opera Academy. Wright teaches dance through several area dance studios and conducts dance-based programs at Dayton Metro Libraries in the summer.

### Guest Presenters



**Neenah Ellis** has been a radio producer most of her life. She began her career at a small commercial station in northern Indiana and later worked as a producer for National Public Radio in Washington, DC. She came to WYSO (91.3 FM) in 2009 and served as General Manager until she became the Executive Director of The Eichelberger Center for Community Voices where she works with her colleagues to train and support local producers and has a chance to be a radio producer again. She is also the author of a New York Times best-seller called "If I Live to Be 100: Lessons from the Centenarians."



**Yetunde Rodriguez** is a Nigerian-American Printmaker, Multi-media Artist and Art Educator. Yetunde's work celebrates her love of color, pattern, texture and detail. These aspects of her work pay homage to her Nigerian culture and heritage, while being firmly planted in the privilege of her American life. Yetunde's most notable work includes lending her dynamic shapes to the exterior banding of the Gem City Market facade. She was Dayton Metro Library Northwest branch 2018 Artist in Residence. She has also exhibited nationwide and facilitated workshops locally and nationwide. She makes her home on the west side of Dayton.



For over 40 years, **Dr. Catherine Roma** has created vibrant choral communities that reach across barriers of race, religion, class, sexual orientation and age. Roma founded her first women’s choir in 1974 (Madison, WI), founded Anna Crusis Women’s Choir in Philadelphia (1975), and founded and directed MUSE, Cincinnati’s Women’s Choir, for 30 years (1983-2013). Catherine is Professor of Music, Emerita at Wilmington College. Through her association with Wilmington College and their dedication to prison education, Roma founded UMOJA Men’s Chorus at Warren Correctional Institution. Roma served as minister of music at St. John’s Unitarian Universalist Church for 29 years and retired from the Martin Luther King Chorale, a community chorus she co-founded and co- directed for 22 years. Since retirement, Roma has founded UBUNTU Men’s Chorus, Madison Correctional, Hope Thru Harmony Women’s Choir, Dayton Correctional, and the 100-voice World House Choir in Yellow Springs, Ohio. Roma calls all of her choirs “choral communities” because she believes choral communities inspire, motivate, educate, and heal an ailing world.

[Return to Introduction](#)

## Appendix B: Setting and Logistics

### Contribution of Location

*Were there any aspects of the institute setting or logistics that contributed positively to your learning? Please provide details.*

- Close to home
- I loved that it was at a different venue.
- Across the street from pretty outdoor area, got to work outside some.
- Would have preferred the group to have met in a circle
- It was set in a beautiful, old theater that had great bones & good vibes for all the participants to feel inspired.
- Loved the open space. Had decent acoustics and was easy to hear the speakers.
- Relatable theme
- Everything was easy to see and hear. Yellow Springs was cool and a little inspiring.
- I enjoyed the difference in venue. I appreciated the picnic tables and outdoor area as well.
- It was a bit longer drive for us, but I LOVED the Yellow Springs setting. 100% worth it (plus an excuse to explore the village).

- It was nice to be in a creative space different than our usual Muse space. It was also a great way to feel connected to the Yellow Springs community.
- The whole entire setting really set the vibe and was a really nice space for the amount of people and activities.
- It was fun to have a change of venue in general, and the Foundry Theater was a really cool space for inspiring creativity.
- Everyone was extremely helpful!
- I liked how we were assigned in groups, worked with in our groups and then came together at share with all the groups.
- I enjoyed being on location at the Foundry Theater and in Yellow Springs.
- Reading is a huge push in Ohio education. Key details in a story are a focus grades K through 12. The creative approach that we experienced through this 4-day work study will enhance my reading lessons throughout the school year.
- It was so nice to have (1) a nice drive that wasn't too long for me to reflect on week's events and (2) a creative space that felt like a blank canvas for new ideas and inspiration.
- It was a very nice setting, loved the theater and the surrounding area.
- Clear directions were given and I appreciate the fact that transportation was provided for the pre- institute (I didn't need it because my car was repaired right before).
- I liked having the large open space, didn't feel cramped within the large group of people.
- The workshop in its entirety contribute positively to my learning! The interaction with other advisors, collaborating with like minded people who support creative thinking, the curriculum was inspiring, and I felt rejuvenated after every day. The theme of home made me reflect on my personal life, and professional. I will utilize some activities and ideas in my classroom. I also found the knowledge shared from the facilitators to be useful and exciting.
- A colleague, who also attended summer institute, and I enjoyed spending a night at bed and breakfast so we could explore and have dinner in Yellow Springs. It was a fun and educational addition.
- It was nice to be in a smaller town to learn about folk music. It was cool to have the local radio station being represented and it was nice to learn in an environment where arts take place.

*Were there any aspects of the institute setting or logistics that interfered with your learning? Please provide details.*

- Kind of far drive, which made it harder to get myself to go.

- I took the no electronics out literally but during the longer presentations I needed something to do with my hands. I normally cross stitch but my patterns are all electronic. Maybe something related to the presentations or theme we can do with our hands. Even coloring would help.
- Sharing the larger space during breakout sessions got a bit loud a few times, so two groups sharing the space was a bit difficult. But note, this only happened maybe twice.
- Hot, no/little air, acoustics
- Sometimes the temps would be wonky or water would leak. Not a big deal though.
- Only that some spaces were too small and/or stuffy for everyone to be together.
- No...but I will say that the location was very inconvenient this year. I don't mind not holding it at the Muse building if the location is going to enhance the experience or add to it, but the space in Yellow Springs didn't really add much. It was a cool building, I liked the breakout rooms being well located...but the traveling distance was difficult.
- There were no settings or logistics that interfered with my learning.
- Parking.
- However, it was very hot in certain areas of the venue.
- The AC was not effective at the beginning of the week.

[Return to Setting and Logistics Summary](#)

## Appendix C: Qualitative Survey Responses

### Knowledge and Skills of the Artist/Educator

- [Name] was a very talented, generous instructor.
- First time meeting [Name] and his work and what he contributed to on opening day and throughout the week was so amazing.
- [Name] has a breadth of knowledge that all in attendance benefited from.
- I just want to sit and listen to everything she has to share!
- [Name] brought incredible energy and was able to ease many people who were a little concerned about dancing.
- [Name] is an engaging storyteller and I love hearing her speak.
- So much fun!
- [Name] did a good job of engaging all participants
- After this session, I was incredibly appreciative of the fact that Muse Machine truly sought out local influential artists for the sessions.
- I would love to spend more time with [Name].
- This was incredible! The story telling aspect and the production she created were amazing! I love the idea of how she presented the information and her story.

- I love the idea of storytelling/public radio programming as folk art. [Name]'s story was fascinating and inspiring, and it was really interesting to see how her childhood experiences in Chicago eventually led her to Yellow Springs and WYSO, with lots of cool connections along the way.
- I was glad to hear about WYSO and NPR resources especially when they are under attack.
- I loved all of the activities and brought the ballad exercise into my classroom with great success. On the final day there was a moment where [name] strongly scolded our group that felt unprofessional and unnecessary. Overall, though, she has a wealth of knowledge, a unique perspective, and I feel lucky to have worked with her.
- Thursday's breakout session was definitely one of the most uncomfortable things I've done in awhile. I am aware that others in our group have already touched on this with staff. I do love how the group seriously rallied after the most uncomfortable moment - and maybe that was the point? I've been very moved by this artist at several events. I sincerely hope this was a fluke because she has so many important things to share.
- My group was respectful of everyone's need and ideas. Rick was a great group leader, and I loved my group this year!
- The performance is a high point of the institute and this year was no different. I enjoyed feeling supported and included in my group

### **Group Collaboration and Activities**

- This session was helpful because it helped bring the group together.
- The circle work during this section was very memorable.
- Loved the conversations that stem from this session!
- My position requires lesson planning infrequently. I appreciated having the time to connect/reconnect with other participants and Muse staff.
- It was valuable to be able to share with colleagues
- I liked being paired with other ELA/Middle School teachers.
- Love singing personally, again, not sure there is such a clear connection to daily learning goals. Great community builder though, and makes me sad my students don't have music options in our building.
- I was out of my element for this, but it made no difference. We had a ball creating our table's masterpiece and it was super fun to learn why various people picked their pieces and the vast differences in the way we all saw things.
- I loved seeing the final work with everyone's paper quilts together!
- I loved hearing some of the ideas from other middle school educators and I felt seen as someone who has to step into sometimes less-than-fleshed-out plans.
- Excellent sharing of ideas!
- Anytime we can glean information from our colleagues is immensely important
- Always love the group work and what everyone creates!

- I found it very profound that we have so many beautiful resources in our own cities. I will use the community singing style in my classes as well as using body percussion to help retain information and help when they need brain breaks.

### **Development of New Skills or Competencies**

- I definitely learned several new things/ways to think about things.
- I love that she said not every story has to connect to you personally for it to have value.
- I have heard [the teaching artist's] name at lot last year and OMG (not sure If I should say that on a survey) but I learned so much from her and about her that it was really life changing. I hope to learn from her in the future.
- Loved this! Moving in community
- [Name] incorporates movement into all learning aspects.
- I am just not sure this could be easily used in my population, but Beth was great at getting us moving and building community
- I loved how she encouraged us all even us nonperformers. I can't wait to learn more from her in the future (hopefully).
- Sessions that get us up and moving are SO helpful—and so much fun!
- [Name] brought a new perspective to us and broadened our understanding.
- I learned a lot and this helped me gain knowledge where I was previously deficient
- Took me a minute to get past not reading what was on the page, but I soon figured out it didn't matter a whit. That wasn't the point. The connection was the point and her guest just made that even more important.
- I really appreciate singing sessions that are welcoming, even to people like me who aren't confident singers!
- Very enjoyable session. I learned a lot about the history of radio, folk genre, and the area. She was so quiet though!
- That was probably the most fun I had at the end of a PD ever (Not including NY). I learned so much from [Name] (facilitator) and my group as a non-performer and a new teacher
- Connecting to our "roots" is valuable

### **Use of Learning in Lesson Plan Development or Classroom Instruction**

- [Name] was a great presenter with a wealth of knowledge. I am using the ballad structure for my lesson plan, so this really stuck with me as an educator.
- [Name]'s talks gave me ideas to add to intervention blocks. Bravo!!
- I think I can take what I learned from this activity and use it in my ELA class.
- Definitely using several of her ideas in class.
- I've had the privilege of working with [Name] before. This was a building-up of additional body percussion techniques which will be used in Mathematics and SEL sessions in my school.

- I have used body percussion in my class this year and the kids have loved it!
- I can see where this might be used in the classroom, but personally it could be a challenge to me, and would probably take a great deal of instructional time to do so in a structured way for students to take something from it. [Name] did a great job and I am confident this will apply to many other school settings.
- I can see incorporating body percussion into lessons on poetry, in which kids could do (individual or group) oral presentations of poems they've studied and/or their own original poetry.
- These could be fun for a brain break or just to get students moving physically after sitting at a desk for long periods of time.
- I loved hearing what my fellow ELA teachers were thinking about implementing, and just being able to chat with colleagues is always a win!
- I have never [written] a lesson plan, so that time was great and when we got to discuss them that was even more helpful
- Would love a bit more time for lesson planning. Or perhaps an "office hours" with the leadership team to spend a small amount of time reviewing lesson/answering questions?
- Community building suggestions/lessons are much appreciated. They can be used especially at the beginning of the school year and throughout
- I loved this activity! I can see how it can translate into ELA by creating thematic art, a paper quilt for a character in a text, or for community building in the classroom.
- One important feature of this workshop is that it would be fairly easy to replicate in a classroom. And, like the singing workshop, it was completely accessible, both for accomplished artists and for people with little to no traditional artistic ability. That's really important for teachers who seek to inspire creativity in all their students.
- I've made quilts with students before and it is a nice way to summarize learning and express oneself.
- I would love more time with this breakout group. There were so many ideas and ways to expand the lesson plan/ideas into other units. This time was fruitful for the time we were given, and I'd love more time spent here.
- I am going to discuss ballads with my students, do an activity with ballads in music class, and then have a small group of interested students write their own ballad.
- Using folk music as brain breaks—I don't get the opportunity to spend much time with my students. I am incorporating the story listening when I can.
- Teaching students to collaborate in an environment where they feel comfortable and supported.
- I will use the lessons of dance, quilting, storytelling, and ballads in my classroom
- See below. Still considering binder content and other resources for a smaller unit in the spring.
- I particularly love the summer institute for the number of short, fun activities I can put in my back pocket for when the plans I'm given fall short of keeping my students engaged.

- The use of a ballad connection to the American Dream unit will be my lesson plan. I also can see using many of the other activities, story telling, the neighbor hood map, the paper quilting, the idea of collaborative community building, to enrich my classroom.
- I want to use the Dayton stuff, the folk stuff and the group things we did and incorporate them in tech somehow still trying to figure that out.
- Even though I won't be teaching this year, I will be helping our ms/hs drama director in some way. I don't know what that will look like yet, but I could, for example, imagine using body percussion activities as warm-up activities with the drama club kids.
- I will use song lyrics to teach historical information
- As a communications teacher I plan to talk about how we communicate through song and stories. I think students would enjoy an activity such as rewriting the lyrics to the school fight song.
- I will use each students ideas to create the classroom mission statement
- In my AP Art History class, I will discuss Appalachian art and culture. I will also incorporate my knowledge and experience of African pattern and it's significance.
- Folk art is a genre of art that I have not thought of using before. I'm excited to explore its use in my classroom more.
- I envision using the heart map to get to know my students. I also see using songs and asking my students to describe the stories told through song. I can use movement in my class.
- Importance of folk music and use of body percussion in lessons.
- I drafted a new unit on home and used some of the exercises from the institute.
- At the beginning of the year I do varied activities to help create our classroom community. I will use the bedroom idea and the community singing.
- I am going to discuss ballads with my students, do an activity with ballads in music class, and then have a small group of interested students write their own ballad.
- I have extended my geographical teaching as a Social Studies instructor with many themes we discussed.
- I will share my experience with my classroom teachers
- Students will write ballads to tell the story of voting rights amendments.
- Composers' stories/home/meaning behind the music. Improvisation in Jazz ensemble. Working to connect soloing to your personal ideas, memories, and ideas of home.
- I will definitely use many of the movement pieces to break up long sitting sessions. Chris's map activity can be used in MANY of the rooms I find myself in.
- Students will create a ballad to enrich their understanding of a series of poems in their text book that focus on the American Dream.
- I don't have any actual things drafted or existing, but I have some ideas that I am trying to formulate.
- I have a unit based on a long-ago Muse workshop with Ping Chong Theater Company, that I called "My Story, Our Story." I'm thinking about adding a visual art

component based on Yetunde Rodriguez's workshop, and maybe [names] "mapping our home" activity.

- Energy Bus!
- We will analyze songs of historical periods such as the American Revolution and Civil War
- My lesson would be using an old song (the school's fight song) but having students update the lyrics to tell the story of their school and culture as it stands today.
- The Way Home as an SEL activity to get to know the students early in the school year
- Mapping
- I'm drafting an idea of how to allow my art students share sketches of their home. I'm adding knowledge to my lessons about African and folk arts.
- My juniors study American literature and folk heroes are a topic I have not spent much time on because of a new textbook. After the summer institute, I think I know how I can insert a lesson covering some folk art/literature while aligning it with the school's text.
- Folk music ties to local context in IB music. Body percussion in middle school band

### **Disappointment with Presenter or Session**

- I found this session particularly difficult to sit through. Though I do feel this teaching artist is very knowledgeable and has great ability to connect with people, I found some comments to be unprofessional and somewhat offensive. It was difficult to listen to for an extended amount of time after.
- I wish this had been integrated more often to show connections with the other teaching artists' content. It would help teachers gain confidence in using this in their classrooms and help to break up the longer sessions.
- Problem with focusing on the assignment in our group. Could have used more direction from facilitator. I felt that our facilitator was scolding us rather than guiding the group back to the topic—there were a couple of people who wanted one concept that wasn't really the goal.
- I found myself very disconnected with this presentation and wasn't sure how to connect it to our other learning
- I was just having a hard time connecting this to the classroom and personally don't love activities like this.
- It just didn't go as well as usual. This particular group was more interested in reminding me which part would be a struggle, then talking amongst themselves about other things happening in their buildings/programs. I know this is not typically the case, but I did not gain much from this session this time.
- The only thing that was the audience was rather rude and talking during the presentation.
- I love summer institute - I struggled this year with our teaching artist. The fact that we were lectured and had group members in tears on Thursday was not a good feeling for the institute. And this year, I don't know how connected I felt to our

group's teaching artist...I felt like we got more out of our time with the other artists when they rotated in (which was AWESOME and I loved it!)

### **General Appreciation**

- This was one of my favorite parts of the Institute!
- Just wow! I loved this!
- Loved this presentation!
- I think that was great (i felt like a fish in water as a new teacher) so that was great.
- REALLY LOVED THIS ASPECT!!!!
- I loved this so much! For funsies, I was talking about the institute with my therapist and she mentioned she had a college friend who used to work at "a little radio station in Yellow Springs. WY-something" back in the day. Her friend was Luke Dennis :)
- This was fantastic!

[Return to Qualitative Summary](#)

## **Appendix D: Focus Group Responses**

A focus group of voluntary participants was conducted in December 2025. The following is the full text of the responses, categorized by interviewer questions. The responses have been edited for clarity and to reduce redundancy. For the most part, identifiers of individuals (e.g., individual names, gender-specific pronouns) have been redacted.

### **How confident do you feel in applying your learning from the 2025 Summer Institute in your classroom and why?**

- Reading is a main focus for the school district where I teach. The summer institute provided a deep dive into the very foundation of storytelling. The creative approach offered, in July, gave educators a way to build lesson plans to engage students. I feel confident in seeing a method of following state standards while actually being able to add creativity and even fun for students.
- I feel very confident in applying my experiences. To me, the institute focused so much on homing in on our lived experiences and finding ways to share it. I've really been trying to work on that crossover with my classes this year!
- I think the biggest takeaway I had was the whole concept of how everybody has a story to tell, and being able to use that as a tool in lots of different ways, helping students look at research as a tool, looking at telling their own stories in their journals, having them look at other people's stories. What are those stories trying to tell us? Like keeping that as kind of a common ground for people, made a lot of the more complicated text so far this year already seem a little bit more approachable, and made students more likely to talk about and write more because it's just a story,

like it's not necessarily something that is so abstract or so complicated that they can't dive in.

- I really appreciated the different approaches to telling a story through dance, through music, through writing, through art, and kind of to remind us [that] the students all learn in different ways and that one approach may help one student, but another approach speaks to a different student. I used several things in my classroom. I use the body percussion. I also do this thing where I composed to the music that they know, directions and singing a story, [which] I've been doing for years. But it kind of reminded me how that really helps some students just to listen to instructions in a song or in a repetitive way, makes those things a little bit more accessible to some students who normally wouldn't listen.
- I'm six through 12. I [teach] every morning at the middle school and then in the afternoon I go to the high school. But I used some of the story type techniques, mostly with middle school; I taught a lesson for the Muse, and I used Middle School and specifically sixth grade because they were my newest kids.
- I don't need any more confidence. I'm as confident as I'm going to be. But, you know, I think even for people like me, who've been teaching for a really long time, it's always good to have these kinds of reminders. And that's what I took away from the institute. It wasn't like I needed confidence, but I did need to be reminded of different techniques, [which] maybe I used in the past, and I bring it back or just to approach in a different way. And I think the Summer Institute is really good for that, because they really—this one in particular, seemed to take that storytelling from all different angles. And I really appreciated that, because I'm pretty ADHD and sometimes can have the attention span of a middle schooler. And I really felt like they kind of catered to that, [to a] lot of different ideas and approaches.
- I was a little worried about summer institute and how I would relate it to where I'm teaching. I teach in a predominantly African American community. In fact, I almost didn't go just because I [felt] I'm going to struggle, and I'm conceptual, and so just the idea of folk music—. But then I felt like because I have history and my heritage—my dad is from Pennsylvania and my parents square danced, so I was super comfortable with most of the institute. And when I take it out of being literal and just focus on ways in which to bring content to people, it's about the kids writing and making sure that they're able to get their thoughts on paper and using their own words. And when I bring stuff from the institute about storytelling or how to tell the story or explain themselves, using some of the aspects from summer institute, I feel like this year, they have been able to comment and be more thorough in explaining it, because I did lots of little exercises with them at the beginning of the year. So, I'm very confident.
- I would feel pretty confident in applying many various parts of the summer institute. The textile art presentation had a lot of practical applications. For exam review of novels, I could try to have students make a tapestry of themes, possibly weaving themes together that appear in multiple anchor texts, etc. The genre of folk ballads itself, etc., could enhance the high school English Language Arts curriculum. I don't

do this as much, but even simply playing music that coincides with the setting of various novels while we are doing work for that novel (the way [name] played his banjo for us during our written reflection time) could be something that could enhance the classroom experience as well.

- This was my first year teaching and also my first summer institute, and technology is a great thing. But including what I learned and gained from a summer Institute with our students is kind of hard, but I have done some of the movements at times and am also trying to incorporate music in a lesson or with a lesson I have tried. It doesn't always translate as well as, say, if I taught art or math.

### **In what ways could your experience with this learning be deepened?**

- The only way I feel my experience would be deepened would be to add one more day where each of us wrote our own story, and then turn it into a ballad.
- I always love the opportunity to explore things more—the Institute is fantastic, but having more than 4 days would be fantastic! I also greatly appreciated the opportunity to work with the other teaching artists this year in the round-robin format, it gave us so many more voices to find ways to strengthen our understanding of the concepts.
- I've always wondered, especially with a project like this, that if there would be some sort of activity that we could revisit, even if it's one of the—I'm not even sure how I would like go about even trying to scaffold it, but just the idea of—if it was a folk tale lesson or something that we could work with our students and then send an email and show collected works there, and then have some sort of collective display about all of the different things that people were trying. But it would all need to be somewhat connected to, are we all telling a folk tale about where we're from, or a personal folk tale? But if there were a way to unite that in a way that, as we were leaving Institute with the idea that by December or January we all try something like this and send it together, and then we could have, like on the website, something where students could go and museum walk through people's works, or they could read stories, or they could listen, look at lyrics, or things that students themselves have created to make a forum for that type of storytelling. I think [that] would be really powerful and be accommodated every time we do something. Because we did a funk workshop as well, and I thought the album covers would be a really neat one. What would your school album cover look like? And what if we each submitted something from our classes, that makes a bigger, broader community but still holds true to what we were learning and what we were practicing and being able to then produce something that we can share with other people and seeing reactions to it.
- Since we do ATTS and Summer Institute and we have to create lessons for both of them, I always feel like my ATTS lesson is always so much more thorough and very deep than the lessons that I create from summer institute, and I think that's because we kind of live together for six days, and so at lunch, we're kind of having conversations about it, and a number of us are very familiar with each other, and so

the conversation lends it that way. I feel like if we got a group of people together before summer institute and we get the idea [that] this is where we're going, these are the kinds of things like, we get a little review, and then we come up with like examples. I feel like every year for Summer Institute, it's new and different people. So if some of us can kind of scaffold for them that this is what we're looking at and in this content area and this grade band, you can lend itself to that, because that's kind of the conversation that we have in New York. As much as it is a plan or an idea to work from to integrate what we're doing for four days into their classroom or their building or what have you, we kind of give them the skeleton that they can then add the muscles and all of that, It will make it a little bit easier.

- ...Integrating those words and modeling [them] within the institute, like the essential question for today or the essential question for this week and then using and, and, and infusing that within the work that we're doing. And then maybe we have a day like this that we get together and we can talk about [our] artwork. And we do have that for ATTS. But I feel like we get a little disconnected from the summer institute folks, and for four days we're in group chats, and we're like, I need a shirt, and who has this color? And then it kind of goes to the wayside.
- After the institute, Emily sent out an email [asking] who would like to present their lesson? And I presented my lesson, and so did Liz. And after school, I felt that was one of the best ones that I've attended. I mean, just listening to the lesson plan that Liz did, and the math one, I mean, they're not lessons that I would do, because it's not my job, but I got a ton out of that experience, just listening to how other people used their experience. And I almost wish we had more of those. For example, the one we had, the earliest one with the [in-school kickoff artist] mentalist. I mean, that was very cool but our goal really is to take these things and to bring them to our classroom. And if we're not constantly focused on how everybody is doing that, then I think we're straying from the mission.

**In what ways could Muse strengthen the connection between institute content and your curriculum?**

- Great question! Districts seem to struggle with curriculum choices, especially in the ELA area. Districts seem to purchase, then change curriculum every three years. How does that strengthen any long-term education plan for young students? Starting over interrupts leveled learning and stops the current flow, demanding a shift that students feel anxious navigating. How does the frequent change help educators feel connected? It does the opposite. If executive administrators might consider taking a summer institute, then model for educators in the classroom for more than 5-15 minutes, progress could be made through their actual getting their "boots on the ground."
- I personally can't think of much here—I'm the odd duck, I'm already chilling in the arts zone so it is fairly connected already.

- Well, I think that Muse did do a really good job on that, because they had us in these kinds of alike groups. And I feel like they purposefully separated the people who were in music. Because sometimes, we'll get together and a lot of the music teachers will just hang, and I thought it was really interesting the groupings that we had, because I did learn a ton of things from the other people in our group, like just different perspectives.
- English teachers really kind of, we cap out because we can pretty much relate everything, because we're language arts [which] is a really great way to universally kind of adopt, so I think we kind of sit in a unique position where we can pretty much pull and use and work. And I agree with Krista, like listening to other people talk about math lessons and her music lessons, even though that's not how I would teach in my classroom, because I'm English, it really is just so beneficial to hear how other people interpret what we're all listening to, because that's just like a classroom. And we definitely get to be the students for a while and put on that kind of mentality. And it really does help me open up and remember [that] all of the students in my classroom are all different learners. They all have different interests. Some of them love English. Some of them hate English. Some of them are really thinking about Christmas break, they all have those kinds of perspectives. And being able to be in that position is very humbling and also just very eye opening and refreshing, because it gives you those little pockets of interest for other people. And that's so beneficial. And like Angela said, just being able to talk to people and listen to people just to have that open dialog and scheduling, because if it's not on the schedule, it usually goes by the wayside, or we get busy, and it's not that we don't want to follow up, we just don't get the chance. I think that those are things that could be done to help us be more active and reactive to what's going on with the lessons.
- I really loved that use of the word interpret, because I missed the first day because I had it written down wrong, and I so I came in on the second day of the Institute, and so we were already into our group projects, and I just had a completely different interpretation, because I missed some of the information. And I think it is really interesting to see how other people pull from the lesson as adults. And I think that that strengthens the content. And I did, I did really enjoy that, and I liked being in those groups that were not necessarily with other musicians. So, a little mix and match is nice as well.
- One thing that I thought was really missing from this summer institute was just we didn't know our groups. Our group had a lot of struggles over the summer. The [artist educator] that was in charge of our group really didn't create a very collaborative atmosphere. It was actually a very difficult atmosphere. And we didn't really get to know each other very well. We didn't know each other's strengths. We didn't know what we were really interested in. It made for a very—the women were fantastic, and we ended up being able to bond together and still create and have a good time. But it didn't really reflect what a traditional summer institute really is, because usually that first day is kind of like a you kind of get to know each other, you

kind of introduce yourselves. You know who you're like, what kind of teachers they're like, whatever the disciplines are, what their backgrounds are. We didn't get to do any of that. But then when we started sharing, the [person] that was kind of running ours kept redirecting us to what [they] wanted us to do and kept shutting people down. And it kept getting it just kind of kept getting deflated, and it felt hard for people to really get involved. And people started shutting down. And we have we the afternoon check-ins where you write like comments on and a couple of the times people were actually very, I guess uncomfortable would be a decent word. They were uncomfortable with the way our sessions went. And they mentioned that so that we could try to get some extra help, or some more time, and then [the artist educator] would come back and lecture us about other things that really weren't with our group. And it just it became very, very difficult. And I feel like that, that whole process, if that were to happen again, maybe to have some other kind of strategies in place to kind of help groups if those kinds of things happen. Yeah, overall, there were still things. A lot of lot of learning took place. We saw, like I said, we were still able to bond as a group. It just, it was, it was a difficult couple of sessions.

- I was in [the same group as participant who made comment above] and I had the complete opposite feeling about our group lead. The first group circle [they were] trying to get a feel of everyone and their background, but when we got to the fifth person, who had all the ideas already created about the flood everyone due to emotions just agreed to go with that idea before the rest of the group got to even share their ideas or information about themselves—me included. The leader tried to steer us in a way that was about home but it was a lost cause at that point. Our lead tried to help but the group was so laser focused on the idea. Also, I 100% disagree that our leader was trying to steer the group in [their] image/trait. [They] couldn't even steer the group in any way because the group was very focused on that one idea. But everyone had their own experiences, so I can't say other people's feelings were wrong. I just didn't feel like they did about the group lead—I learned a lot from all the group leaders, especially mine.
- When we came back together as a large group to discuss the practical ways in which we could apply each day's activities/presentations, [this] was helpful, but I gained so much more from the one breakout session we had with teachers in our grade/subject area. Perhaps it could be because I had Liz, Sarah, and other rock star Muse educators in that room with me, but I would have liked to have done those "takeaway brainstorm" discussions with them more instead of the whole group.
- Would it be worth having the teachers in the previously mentioned smaller groups be given a challenge vs. discuss their particular lesson? I know that not every 11<sup>th</sup> grade ELA teacher covers the same anchor texts, but it could be interesting to have the teachers in the summer institute who teach the same courses/grades share the novels, texts, etc. they teach, find a shared anchor text, and come up with a way to infuse the summer institute into that particular unit. It may not be the lesson they formally submit to UD for coursework, but I think it could be good practice to be

given the challenge and come up with a way to apply the learning to their specific unit. Plus, it would be good for us teachers to see that Muse's lessons really can add depth to almost any unit.

- I think my experience could be deepened by doing the activities or researching more on the various things I took as value and trying to apply them at my school and in my own personal life. I took a lot of what we did to heart.

**Have you noticed any evidence of student learning? Please discuss any documentation that you have used.**

- One of my 1<sup>st</sup> graders memorized a ballad, then realized it was storytelling. It helped her finally understand there really is a beginning, middle and ending to a story. The Ohio standard concerning Ask and Answer details about a story just read is a crucial foundation for ALL grades, K-12.
- I did have my students try to draw a map of their musical home base, in a variation on our opening day activity. I have attached two samples—it was an interesting activity and sparked some great discussion amongst our students. Instead of having them draw their home, I had them think about their personal taste in music, how they listened to music, and their thoughts on music, and then had them make a visual map.
- That's hilarious, because today in sixth grade—and I didn't even know you were going to ask this question—I did this whole body percussion thing, because I had 10 days where some kids were getting their instruments but not all the kids had their instruments yet. Once the kids got their instruments, I haven't used it since. But today, my sixth graders learned eighth notes, so we talked about the movements that we did for half notes and for quarter notes earlier. And then [I asked] what would be a good movement for eighth notes? I had a bunch of kids making stuff up today. I do feel like I was able to bring that back and use it. And I want to say I'm sorry about [a different] group, because I had a completely different experience with my group, and I like the fact that they had all these different people, but maybe some of the leaders were harder to deal with than others.
- With my particular lesson, it took place in a religion class. I will soon see the fruits of that lesson when I see how many of those students decide to take the Mission Dayton course offered their senior year. I taught my lesson in an 11<sup>th</sup> grade class, and students who wish to put their social justice knowledge into practical, active applications will take Mission Dayton, a 12<sup>th</sup> grade, summer course where students live and serve various communities and charities in Dayton's West Side.

**How have you applied learning from the Institute to foster belonging in your classroom/school/community?**

- “Tell me the beginning, middle and ending part of the story just read” is part of my daily ELA lesson plans. The approach shared during the summer institute is the engine that keeps the motivation moving forward.
- In my choirs, I’m really trying to work on getting my students to be in touch with their own stories to help make them achieve an overall better musical performance. I’m trying to share that nugget of learning and I’m happy with how it’s going so far!
- Always? Muse fuels me—both my curriculum and how I interact with students. I’m not in a classroom this school year. So, though I am not working on curriculum development, I am still interacting with students in the various ways I am involved at the high school. When working with our musical ensemble students, for example, I often try to make their experience uniform. This year, I have been working on finding ways to highlight individual gifts of each ensemble member. I am more aware of the journeys that each student has walked before walking into the rehearsal room, the styles of music that they are familiar with, and the unique pieces each student brings to the table. I feel like simply being reminded of that (rather than being too goal-oriented and busy to take time to foster student identity) is a gift that the Summer Institute has given me as an educator. So far, it has been so fruitful for me as a music director, and I hope that that shows in our production come March.

**In addition to being in a slightly different form with different group leaders, this summer institute was off site, away from the Muse Machine studio. Did that add to or detracted from the experience, and in what ways?**

- I thought the off-site was a beautiful addition. It was like all of us were walking into a space unsure of what we were doing. Instead of, we know where everything is.
- We all were exploring and experiencing that for the first time together. And then I don’t really think the content was difficult, but when you think of folk music, it’s not today, right? It’s not what is right now. There’s no Tiktok folk music thing going on. So because we were in a space that was kind of not today—it wasn’t renovated, and it had all the things, like, one room, the air conditioner didn’t even work. And we had to [feel], Okay, we’re going to be in here, so let’s just do our movement right now while the air conditioning is working, and then we’ll have to deal with it when we write out our stuff. So, it lent itself, in my opinion, to the content very well. But also some of our buildings and some of our experiences with kids is very much like that. So, we chose to overcome instead of [complaining].
- Well, of course, I know the Muse Machine studio, but this was my first summer institute. I didn’t mind it being off site. I didn’t even know that that wasn’t a normal thing. The only thing that I put on my comment sheet was, lower the air conditioning. But I thought the facilities were great for the different things that we did.

- We actually took the opportunity to explore Yellow Springs as a part of our one of the four day teachers. I also brought a teacher with me, and she's been to several of the Muse Machine summer institutes and had gone on ATTs for the first time this past year. We spent the night at a hotel or a bed and breakfast and met a really lovely guy. We toured around Yellow Springs. We tried to do more things that were associated with the folk art atmosphere. That's a good place to do it. I grew up where we would go to Yellow Springs, but [my colleague] hadn't been to Yellow Springs, at least not in the recent past. Because we were off site, we were able to do a little bit more of that because it was a little less expensive and we can incorporate and stay on track and not have to travel all the way back [home] about 30 minutes away. So it just kind of offered a unique way of doing that. And I thought that that was really nice because it was off site. Cool.
- I also think that if we weren't off site, I don't know if, for example, the WYSO [a public radio station in Yellow Springs] would have come because she's in Yellow Springs. And I found that to be a really valuable speaker. And I thought that was super interesting and topical, since, you know, NPR lost their funding that day that she was there speaking, and so I think it's all, you know, local color is important, and it's also relevant. So, I really liked it there.
- I think the extension that they added so that it wasn't just four days of summer institute, but the lady with the choir on Mondays and the gentleman [who] was getting started and doing all that stuff, and then the WYSO lady, it wasn't just about folk music in these four days, but about how to utilize these things that they've included within the tapestry of folk music that can go beyond just those four days from Summer Institute.

**Are there any other kinds of evidence of student learning that you've experienced—documentation, artwork, writing, any sort of documentation as part of their cycle of growth?**

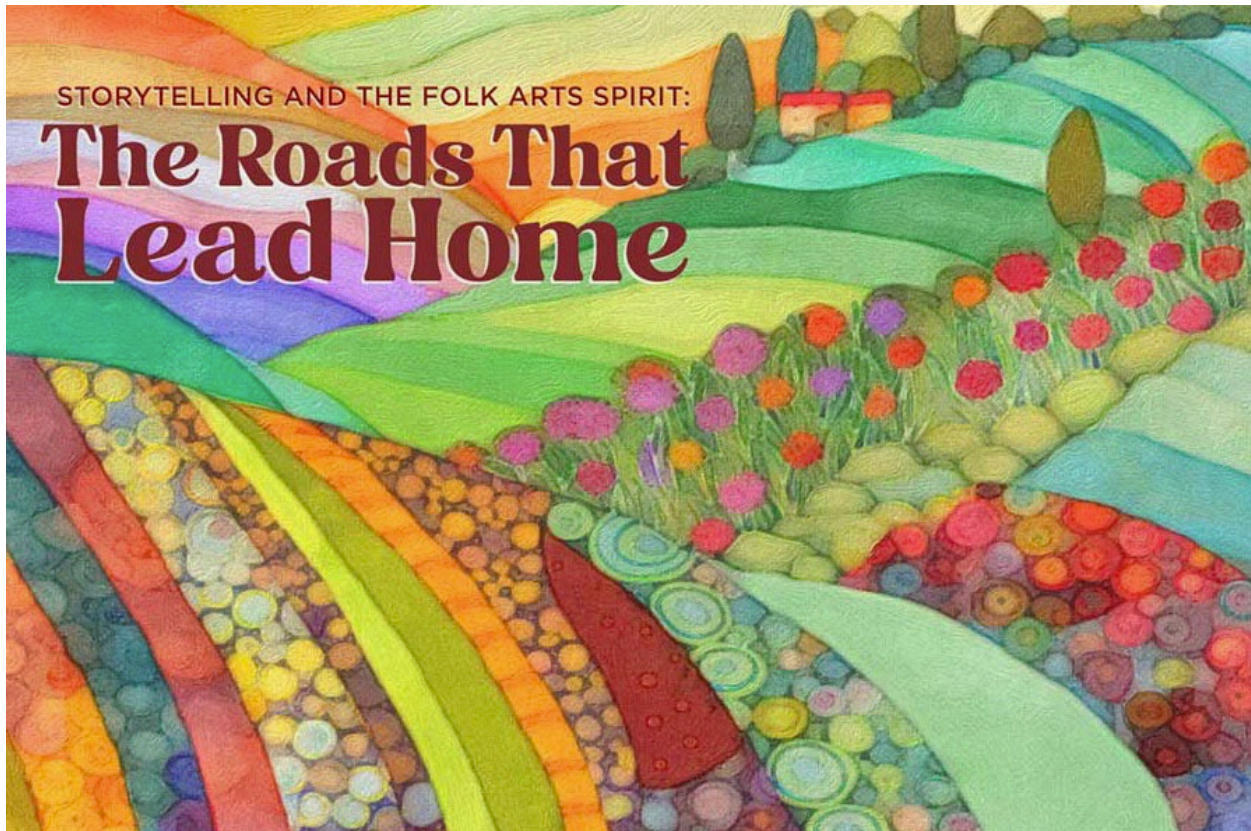
- I definitely used it. We started with *To Kill a Mockingbird*. We did an anticipation guide, where they had to have about five or six statements that they have to agree and disagree with, and they had to pick two and talk about [them]. And then when we finished the piece, on the other half of the worksheet, there's another checkout—do you still agree or disagree with the same comments? And what I asked them to do is continue the conversation, and it was just really cool to hear how they approached that. And they wrote in their journals on two different occasions, and we're still talking about the same issues. But it was [about], how did they enter the conversation, how did they enter this part, how this book was a historical book. And they were able to tell their side of it, they looked at it [as] they were telling their own story about it. I hadn't even thought about that until you had mentioned that, like documentation wise. They got to go back and kind of revisit that. And I took it as another time for them to tell a story, but now it's directed based on research that

you did reading the book, and how did your story or your impression of things change.

- As far as summer institute, it's kind of hard with what I have to do. Lesson wise, I communicate with Deron Bell and the Deron Bell band, and so music and trying to incorporate it with technology, of working with Deron [on] different things, not quite folk music, but music in general.

[Return to Focus Group Heading](#)

# **2025 Summer Institute for Educators**



## **Appendix E: Documentation**

# Contents

- Scaffolding..... ii**
- Before the Institute..... iii**
  - Planning Document Samples..... iii
  - Participant Preparation..... iv
- During the Institute ..... viii**
  - The Institute Binder..... viii
  - Learning Standards Documents..... ix
  - Understanding by Design Primer..... x
  - Teaching Artist Workshop Plans, Excerpts..... xi
  - Muse Machine’s Lesson Plan Template..... xiv
  - The Muse Machine Experiential Learning Guide ..... xv
  - Afternoon Reflections..... xvi*
    - Reflection Session Notes ..... xvi
- Evaluating the Institute..... xviii**
- Following the Institute ..... xxii**
  - Lesson Plans..... xxii*
- Summary..... xxiii**

# Scaffolding

A process of support for ensuring the efficacy of learning. In the 2025 Institute, scaffolding took place before, during, and after the four days of workshops.

“In education, **scaffolding** refers to a variety of instructional techniques used to move students progressively toward stronger understanding and, ultimately, greater independence in the learning process.”

—The Glossary of Education Reform

# Before the Institute

Muse supported extensive ongoing planning with institute presenters, including continual online meetings from October through July.

## Planning Document Samples

### *2025 Summer Institute for Educators*

*Storytelling and the Folk Arts Spirit: The Roads That Lead Home*

#### Basic Info

**Primary audience:** Middle and high school educators teaching a variety of subjects, but mostly humanities and arts

**Secondary audience:** Elementary educators

**Tertiary audience:** Teaching artists and other guests

**Format:** In-person over 4 days on site at The Foundry in Yellow Springs, OH

**Dates:** 3rd week of July 2025 (July 14-17)

#### Learning Outcomes

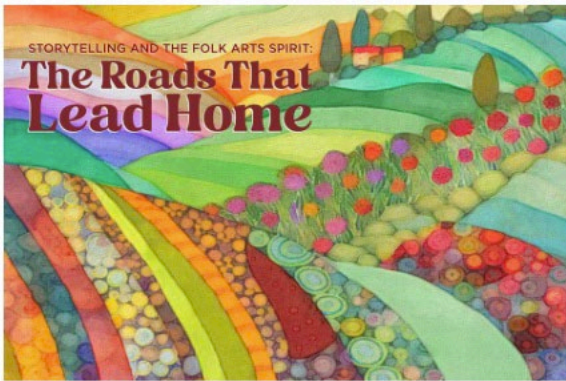

1. Participants will explore the “folk arts spirit” of creating art in community for the purpose of uplifting individual and collective experience.
2. Participants will experience first hand how folk arts reflect both the personal experiences of the artist and reinforce shared cultural understandings.
3. Participants will discover how folk arts are rooted in and reflect a deep understanding of place and belonging.
4. Participants will increase their understanding of the various forms and traditions of American balladry.
5. Participants will practice simple breathing and singing exercises to become more confident and joyful singers.
6. Participants will learn how to use rhyme, rhythm, and meter to structure a narrative.
7. Participants will experience dance, body percussion, and creative movement as techniques for storytelling and community building.
8. Participants will be introduced to the ways folk artists learn, remember, and transmit songs, dances, and stories.

## Participant Preparation

Muse employs a continuous series of communications to help participants prepare for their learning. These include detailed summer institute announcements and preliminary experiences including readings and introductory workshops.

### April 2025 Muse Minute

A brief message from Muse Machine! [View this email in your browser](#)



STORYTELLING AND THE FOLK ARTS SPIRIT:  
**The Roads That Lead Home**


Muse Machine Summer Institute for Educators 2025  
**Storytelling and the Folk Arts Spirit**  
**The Roads That Lead Home**  
July 14-17, 2025  
The Foundry Theater at Antioch College  
920 Corry St., Yellow Springs, OH 45387

The songs, dances, stories and artworks we pass down not only keep ancestral knowledge alive – they provide context and foster understanding about where we belong today. Join extraordinary artists to explore the Miami Valley's rich cultural heritage and discover ways to help students build their own empathy, identity and sense of belonging. Teacher attendees can earn 25 seat hours and/or three graduate credits.

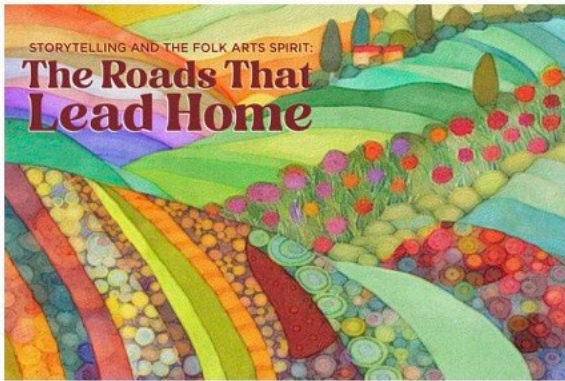
[Click here for more info and free registration!](#)

### May 2025 Muse for Educators Newsletter

A brief message from Muse Machine! [View this email in your browser](#)



#### Next Week's Club Advisor Meeting




STORYTELLING AND THE FOLK ARTS SPIRIT:  
**The Roads That Lead Home**

**Summer Institute 2025 Preview Workshop**  
Tuesday, May 13  
4:00-6:00 p.m.  
Muse Studio (126 N. Main St., Dayton)

There is joyful learning in store for teachers this summer at the Muse Summer Institute! Explore how the folk arts spirit of communal song, dance, and storytelling can create meaningful learning experiences in your classroom. Join us for this preview workshop next Tuesday and kick off your summer of creative professional learning.

#### About the Artists



**Chris Westhoff** is the Managing Director of Mad River Theater Works, the Development Coordinator of the Antioch School and the Director of the Foundry Theater on the campus of Antioch College. He has worked in museums as an art handler, in schools as an educator, with construction and carpentry crews, and in many theaters across the country both as a performer and manager.

## May 2025 Club Advisor Meeting Reminder

A brief message from Muse Machine! [View this email in your browser](#)



### Tonight! Club Advisor Meeting



STORYTELLING AND THE FOLK ARTS SPIRIT:  
**The Roads That Lead Home**

**Summer Institute 2025 Preview Workshop**  
Tuesday, May 13  
4:00-6:00 p.m.  
Muse Studio (126 N. Main St., Dayton)

There is joyful learning in store for teachers this summer at the Muse Summer Institute! Explore how the folk arts spirit of communal song, dance, and storytelling can create meaningful learning experiences in your classroom. Join us for a preview workshop and kick off your summer of creative professional learning.

**About the Artists**



**Chris Westhoff** is the Managing Director of Mad River Theater Works, the Development Coordinator of the Antioch School and the Director of the Foundry Theater on the campus of Antioch College. He has worked in museums as an art handler, in schools as an educator, with construction and carpentry crews, and in many theaters across the country both as a performer and manager.




**Beth Wright** is a teaching artist with the Muse Machine Preschool & Elementary Program, where she conducts artist residencies for students using movement, rhythm, choreography and improvisation. For nine seasons, she was a member of the Dayton favorite Rhythm in Shoes and enjoyed performing for audiences and teaching young dancers through senior citizens nationwide. Wright has also performed in collaboration with DCDC, Crosspulse, The Tap Factor, and Hammerstep.

[READ MORE ABOUT THE INSTITUTE](#)

## June 2025 Muse for Educators Newsletter

A brief message from Muse Machine! [View this email in your browser](#)



July is just around the corner and the Summer Institute for Educators is only weeks away! We're diving into the many forms of folk art and how they might be used to infuse authentic and memorable experiences into any classroom.

### Hello, Beth!

Some of you already know the energetic powerhouse Beth Wright as a dancer, teaching artist, manager of preschool and elementary programs — and one of the outstanding artists at this year's institute!




*"Children exhibit instinctive responses to music and dancing. The world has become so busy that we may have forgotten how fabulous dancing makes us feel. I am so excited to share my love of moving through space with you and to help you remember that moving our bodies is natural, fun and grounding. I am eager to share some of the folk dances and rhythms that have brought me so much joy.*

*Dance more dances, have more fun, release your worries and spread more love!"*

### Hello, Foundry!

In addition to a collection of fresh artist faces, this institute will occur at the Foundry Theater. Located on the beautiful Antioch College campus, we think the atmosphere alone will top off your creative batteries! The entire experience is free. Seat hours and UD credit hours are available. Find complete info and registration via the link below...



**Storytelling and the Folk Arts Spirit:  
The Roads That Lead Home**  
Monday, July 14 – Thursday, July 17, 2025, 9:00am-3:30pm The Foundry Theater at Antioch College, 920 Corry St, Yellow Springs OH 45387 Free to all teachers and administrators (preK-12, any subject)

# BEST LOVED AMERICAN FOLK SONGS

*[FOLK SONG: U. S. A.]*

COLLECTED, ADAPTED AND ARRANGED BY

John A. Lomax & Alan Lomax

MUSIC ARRANGEMENTS BY

Charles Seeger & Ruth Crawford Seeger



*Publishers* GROSSET & DUNLAP *New York*

## Pre-Institute Workshop at Springfield Museum of Art

Springfield Museum of Art hosted Visual Thinking Strategies with Amy Korpieski on July 10, 2025. A pre-post survey suggested positive results.

### Outline of Pre-Institute Workshop, Excerpt

**Title** "The Roads That Lead Home: Storytelling and the Folk Arts Spirit"

**Featuring** Aminah Robinson: Journeys Home, A Visual Memoir

**Presenter** Amy Korpieski, Museum Educator, Springfield Museum of Art

**For** Muse Machine Summer Institute, Thursday, July 10 2-4 pm

**Location** Springfield Museum of Art, 107 Cliff Park Rd, Springfield OH 45504

#### Outcomes

Educators will:

- be immersed in narrative through visual art
- participate in, and practice doing, Visual Thinking Strategies (MOMA)
- experience and learn several Making Thinking Visible thinking routines from Project Zero
- become familiar with SMOA as a resource for classroom and personal learning and inspiration
- rejuvenate themselves through art

#### Outline


Activity	Description	Time
Terrace Room  Introduction circle  Slide on the wall with: Guiding quotation Processes of thinking Images of source material	Circle with Raggonon <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce Robinson's term, Rag-gon-non</li> <li>• Individuals chose a body posture from a story from their day</li> <li>• Create a circle raggonon in a progressive movement experience, led by Amy, where all the postures connect</li> <li>• Clap to the center, prepare for galleries</li> </ul>	2-2:15 pm
Gallery  <i>See, Think, Wonder</i> <i>Visual Thinking Strategies</i> (Questioning, Documenting)	At the piece for her father, the group experiences <i>See Think Wonder</i> which leads into a <i>Visual Thinking Strategies</i> facilitated conversation  A second <i>Visual Thinking Strategies</i> conversation at the piece for her mother, with a scribe	2:15-2:35 pm

# During the Institute


A variety of tools provided support and scaffolding for learning.

## The Institute Binder

The binder served as a complete guide to the four days of workshops.



**Storytelling & the Folk Arts Spirit**



# The Roads That Lead Home

“May these songs bring you closer to the fire that  
burns on the hearth of the people.”  
-Alan Lomax

**Essential Questions**

1. What are folk arts? How are they different from fine arts?
2. Is there a shared spirit across folk arts disciplines? How can this spirit help us to connect with young people?
3. What experiences create our definitions of “home” and “belonging”?
4. How can folk music, dance, and storytelling practices help us to communicate our beliefs about home and belonging?
5. How can folk arts be used as tools for education and cultural exchange?
6. How do folk arts reflect shared human experiences across cultures and build community?

## Learning Standards Documents

An Ohio Learning Standards map was prepared for participants to help ensure alignment of lessons with the Standards.

### ***Ohio Learning Standards Map, Summer Institute 2025***

The following Ohio Learning Standards have been identified as connected to the work of the Institute. We offer them as a starting point for participants' lesson planning. While we have chosen to highlight mainly standards for grades 6-12, teachers in the elementary grades can and should make relevant connections to the curriculum in their grade band.

#### **English Language Arts Learning Standards – K-12**

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards: Reading

- **Anchor Standard 1.** Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- **Anchor Standard 2.** Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; provide a summary or thorough analysis of the text, including the appropriate components.
- **Anchor Standard 4.** Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific language choices shape meaning, mood, or tone of the text.
- **Anchor Standard 6.** Assess how point of view, perspective, or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.
- **Anchor Standard 7.** Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards: Writing

- **Anchor Standard 4.** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- **Anchor Standard 5.** Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
- **Anchor Standard 6.** Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.
- **Anchor Standard 8.** Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information, while avoiding plagiarism.

## Understanding by Design Primer

Understanding by Design (UbD), a model developed by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe, anchors lessons in enduring understandings and essential questions and emphasizes authentic assessment techniques. Muse uses UbD for all lesson planning in the summer institute.

Bowen, R. S. (2017). Understanding by Design. Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching. Retrieved Sep. 11, 2022, from <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/understanding-by-design/>.

### Understanding by Design – For Muse Machine Summer Institute for Educators Graduate Workshop

**Understanding by Design** is a book written by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe that offers a framework for designing courses and content units called “Backward Design.” Instructors typically approach course design in a “forward design” manner, meaning they consider the learning activities (how to teach the content), develop assessments around their learning activities, then attempt to draw connections to the learning goals of the course. In contrast, the backward design approach has instructors consider the learning goals of the course first. These learning goals embody the knowledge and skills instructors want their students to have learned when they leave the course. Once the learning goals have been established, the second stage involves consideration of assessment. The backward design framework suggests that instructors should consider these overarching learning goals and how students will be assessed prior to consideration of how to teach the content. For this reason, backward design is considered a much more intentional approach to course design than traditional methods of design.

This teaching guide will explain the benefits of incorporating backward design. Then it will elaborate on the three stages that backward design encompasses. Finally, an overview of a backward design template is provided with links to blank template pages for convenience.

#### The Benefits of Using Backward Design

*“Our lessons, units, and courses should be logically inferred from the results sought, not derived from the methods, books, and activities with which we are most comfortable. Curriculum should lay out the most effective ways of achieving specific results... in short, the best designs derive backward from the learnings sought.”*

In *Understanding by Design*, Wiggins and McTighe argue that backward design is focused primarily on student learning and understanding. When teachers are designing lessons, units, or courses, they often focus on the activities and instruction rather than the outputs of the instruction. Therefore, it can be stated that teachers often focus more on teaching rather than learning. This perspective can lead to the misconception that learning is the activity when, in fact, learning is derived from a careful consideration of the meaning of the activity.

As previously stated, backward design is beneficial to instructors because it innately encourages intentionality during the design process. It continually encourages the instructor to establish the purpose of doing something before implementing it into the curriculum. Therefore, backward design is an effective way of providing guidance for instruction and designing lessons, units, and courses. Once the learning goals, or desired results, have been identified, instructors will have an easier time developing assessments and instruction around grounded learning outcomes.

The incorporation of backward design also lends itself to transparent and explicit instruction. If the teacher has explicitly defined the learning goals of the course, then they have a better idea of

# Teaching Artist Workshop Plans, Excerpts

## Example 1: The Art & Humanity of Storytelling

OC Daboiku, Wordsmith & Storyteller  
Ohio Arts Council, 12/5/18

---

### THE ART & HUMANITY OF STORYTELLING

#### **What is a Story?**

Within the Oral Tradition, a story is a compilation of characters, settings, and a central plot with a strategically placed dilemma and solution that informs the listener about social mores and historical events.

#### **How do the Elements of a Story Develop?**

A story's elements are a reflection of the natural elements perceived in the story-keeper's environment.

- a) **geography** – mountains or plains, water or inland, desert or forest
- b) **astronomy** – latitude/longitude determines sky vision
- c) **sociology** – family relations, blood or non-kin; organizational interaction/roles/mores
- d) **political science** – societal structures, spiritual and governmental hierarchy
- e) **anthropology** – artifacts: clothing, building materials and styles; food gathering/preservation, occupations, etc.
- f) **zoology** – animal names, sounds, characteristics

#### **Why a Story?**

Traditionally, stories explain phenomena, often of a higher nature or they exist to orient oneself with the universe/creation, community, family, region, and environment. Stories also help humans make sense of the world around them and are often composed with layers of philosophical thought. Maturity of the listener is judged by the person's ability to sit and listen without interrupting, the depth of understanding of the story's intent, and the ability to repeat as told with one's own personal flourishes.

## Example 2: Mapping Our Home - A Memory-Jogging, Storytelling Exercise



Summer Institute 2025

<p><b>Workshop Title:</b></p> <p><i>Mapping Our Home - A Memory-Jogging, Storytelling Exercise</i></p>
<p><b>Brief Description:</b></p> <p>By connecting the simple visual aid of making a map, memory and story will be jogged to enhance our ability to tell and understand each other's story. With an emphasis placed on 'home' we will discover what we include and leave out in our remembrances and sharing.</p>
<p><b>Total Length of Workshop:</b> 60 minutes + 15 minutes for sharing and reflection</p> <p><b>Materials:</b> a large pad of paper (2'x3') - one sheet for each participant. 3-4 large point sharpie markers of different bold colors.</p>
<p><b>Deliverables / Objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* 'dig up' memories, stories and places from our past</li><li>* reflect on these through a sharing aided by the visual aspects of drawing a map *</li></ul> <p>increase our sense of empathy and expand our definition of 'home', by listening to others</p>
<p><b>Warm Up:</b> 5 minutes</p> <p>A group memory prompting activity that asks these central questions about home with quick stream of consciousness answers encouraged.</p> <p>First - how will we define home? Both as place and feeling - "Home is where your story begins" (cheap wall art from a Hobby Lobby) -</p> <p>Close your eyes and imagine taking a walk from your home out into your block or neighborhood. What places or things stand out? Do you turn right or left? What do you see? Who is around? What might you hear? What do you smell?</p> <p>Open your eyes. As you think about where you just 'were' consider "Where were you going?" What might have happened along the way? Are there things that you wondered while 'inside' the memory? What do you wonder now, from afar?</p>

### Example 3: What is Home: A Collaborative Paper Quilt



Summer Institute 2025

Workshop Title: What is Home? A Collaborative Paper Quilt
Brief Description: Participants will create a collaborative paper 'quilt' piecing together shapes that symbolize their idea of 'home.'
Total Length of Workshop: 2 hours
Deliverables / Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1 Paper Quilt per group of 5-8 participants</li><li>• Each participant will reflect on their concept of home summarized in a single geometric shape</li><li>• Participants collaborate within their groups to create a cohesive composition</li></ul>
Summer Institute Learning Outcomes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Participants will explore the "folk arts spirit" of creating art in community for the purpose of uplifting individual and collective experience.</li><li>2. Participants will experience firsthand how folk arts reflect both the personal experiences of the artist and reinforce shared cultural understandings.</li><li>3. Participants will discover how folk arts are rooted in and reflect a deep understanding of place and belonging.</li><li>4. Participants will be introduced to the ways folk artists learn, remember, and transmit songs, dances, and stories.</li></ol>
Materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Construction paper in a variety of colors, enough for 2 per person</li><li>• Pencils and erasers</li><li>• Scissors</li><li>• Glue</li><li>• Acrylic markers</li><li>• Large poster board (1 per group + extras)</li></ul>
Room Setup: <p>Enough tables for 5-8 participants to gather around a poster board with chairs</p>

# Muse Machine's Lesson Plan Template



Muse Machine  
Lesson Plan Template

Muse Machine  
Lesson Plan Template – Summer Institute 2025

Teacher Name:	School:	Date:
Inspiration:		
Title:		
Subject Area & Grade Level:		

## I. [OVERVIEW OF THE LESSON](#)

**Summary:**

**Standards:**

**Objectives/Outcomes:**

**Teaching Approach(es):**

**Assessment Tool(s):**

## II. [LESSON PREPARATION](#)

*Teacher Needs*

- ❖ Teacher Context & Research:
- ❖ Helpful Hints:

*Student Needs*

- ❖ Prior Knowledge:
- ❖ Student Voice:
- ❖ Vocabulary:

## III. [EVIDENCE OF OUTCOMES](#)

## IV. [ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS](#)

# The Muse Machine Experiential Learning Guide

## Experiential Learning

### Muse Machine SUMMER 2025

“Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself.” – John Dewey

**Why Muse Pedagogy Matters:** *Our work with schools, teachers and students is grounded in theory, research, best practice and joyful learning. At the center of this work is a pedagogy that is arts-based and experiential and allows for the application of learning in a wide range of subject areas. This pedagogy also positions art-making as a core function of learning and life. Through our work we honor every learner’s prior knowledge and experience as foundational in the pursuit of new knowledge that naturally builds over time with practice and reflection. As a result, learners naturally reflect on their learning process and understand its meaning in their cognitive development and their lives.*

## Introduction

During its 2016 Summer Institute for Educators, Muse Machine honed its approach to professional development, which employed experiential teaching and learning. Results of subsequent institute evaluations and many comments of participants and teaching artists suggest that the approach was effective and appreciated. The 2025 Summer Institute builds on this success, again employing experiential learning throughout its four days. This resource guide provides an overview of this technique.

## What is Experiential Learning?

Experiential Learning is learning through experience. More precisely, it involves having a learning experience and then *reflecting on it*. Reflection is a key part of the process, as it:

- deepens the learning experience;
- helps to foster meaning; and
- promotes greater retention and transfer.

Experiential learning is an intentional process, designed purposefully by a teacher or artist, and may take place in either formal or informal situations and in a variety of contexts, including classrooms or community settings. Teachers and artists can be taught how to use experiential learning through professional development that often includes modeling experiential learning—for example, during the summer institute.

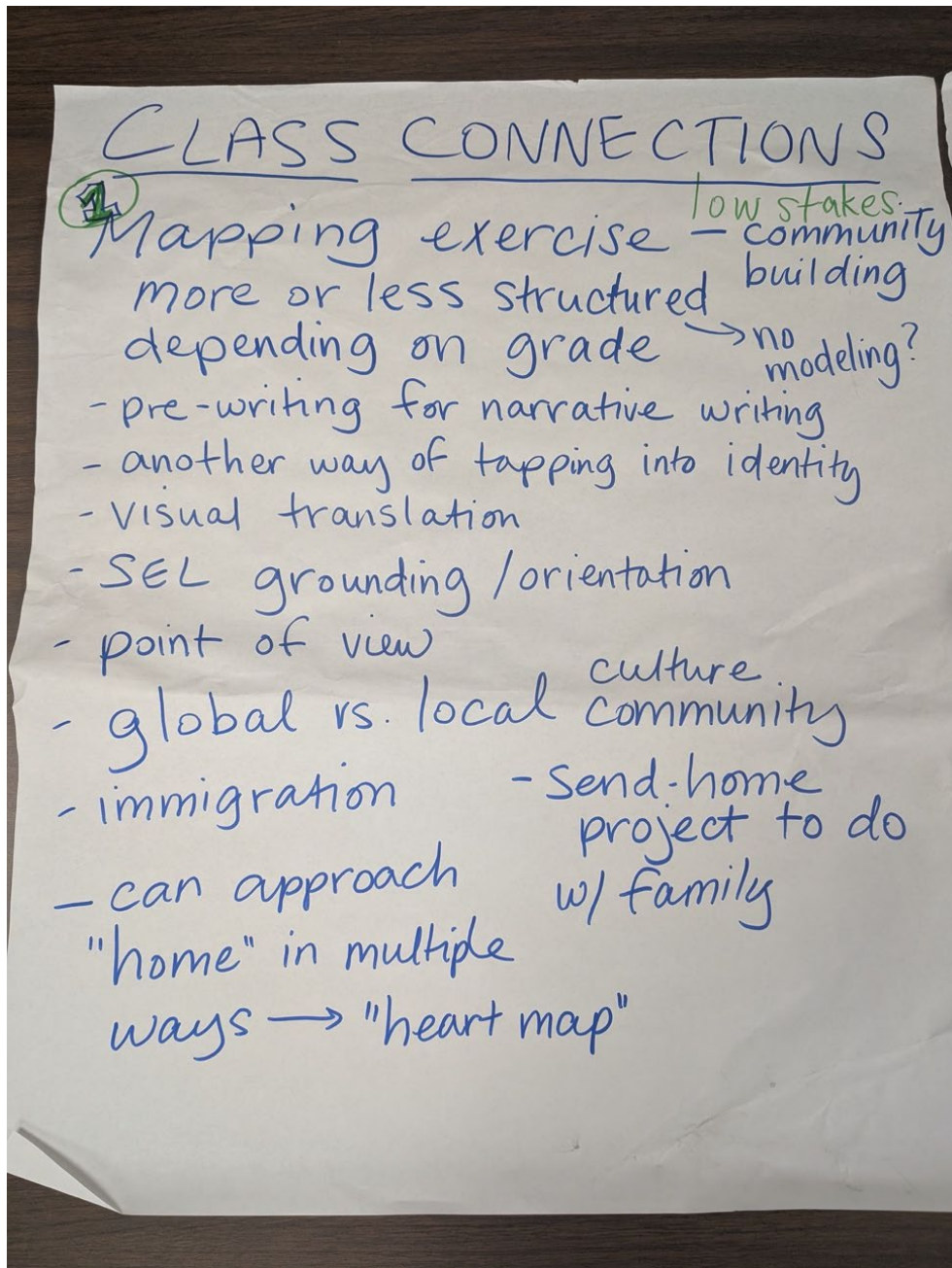
## Philosophy, Purpose, and History

Experiential learning has a long history, going back to the time of Aristotle. It gained prominence in the last century with the work of American philosopher William James (ca. 1910). Early

## Afternoon Reflections

Daily reflections sessions invited participants to share ideas on their learning in progress. The sessions were audio recorded and transcribed.

### Reflection Session Notes



# CHARACTERISTICS

- concise storytelling
- imagery over detail
- rhyme scheme
- use of dialogue
- repetition

## RHYTHM

- $2/4, 4/4$  - whimsical, humorous
- $3/4$  - sad, romantic
- $6/8$  - energetic, grand

# Evaluating the Institute

Evaluation of the institute was guided by a comprehensive plan (the Evaluation Matrix), and implemented via several tools, including the Documentation Guide, the Daily Check-in, the Post-Institute Survey, and a focus group of participants.

## The Daily Check-In, a Formative Evaluation Tool

**Muse machine** Summer Institute for Educators 2025  
Daily Check-In

Name (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

How is your institute experience today?  
(Please circle where you are on each spectrum below)

Content: what we're learning

← Overwhelmed / Off the mark ————— On target / Ready for more →

Process: how we're learning

← Not engaging ————— Highly engaging →

Best things, Most helpful, etc. +	Challenges, Concerns, etc. -
staying on schedule	Content of songs

Suggestions, comments, questions:  
great first day!  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Overall rating of today's institute sessions (circle one)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



## Summer Institute Documentation Guide

Documentation is an essential component of engaged, learner-centered professional development. Not only does it provide useful, authentic assessment data; it can also get learners excited about what they are doing. Most people today find the process of using a smartphone or other media device comfortable and natural; moreover, most modern cameras have a video recording function. 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, participant engagement, creativity, etc. Discuss how this might be documented. Consider how the process can involve learners 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 **the** phase.
- **Use video, audio, and photography as appropriate.** Still photography can be useful in documenting the range of a learner's visual work. Video and audio can be more appropriate for performance but can also be used to capture work process and participant interviews.
- **Focus primarily on learners, not facilitators or teaching artists.** Try to capture participant 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.



*Storytelling & the Folk Arts Spirit: The Roads That Lead Home*  
*July 15-18, 2025, Evaluation Matrix*

Component	Key Questions/Outcomes	Data Sources	Personnel/Timeline
Formative Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the program implemented substantially as planned?</li> <li>• Are participants satisfied with their experiences?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation, video documentation</li> <li>• Review of session plans, records, logs</li> <li>• Survey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluator observes SI and monitors implementation based on data from Muse</li> <li>• Evaluator designs survey; Muse administers</li> </ul>
Short-Term Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants will explore the “folk arts spirit” of creating art in community for the purpose of uplifting individual and collective experience.</li> <li>• Participants will experience first-hand how folk arts reflect both the personal experiences of the artist and reinforce shared cultural understandings.</li> <li>• Participants will discover how folk arts are rooted in and reflect a deep understanding of place and belonging.</li> <li>• Participants will increase their understanding of the various forms and traditions of American balladry.</li> <li>• Participants will practice simple breathing and singing exercises to become more confident and joyful singers.</li> <li>• Participants will learn how to use rhyme, rhythm, and meter to structure a narrative.</li> <li>• Participants will experience dance, body percussion, and creative movement as techniques for storytelling and community building.</li> <li>• Participants will be introduced to the ways folk artists learn, remember, and transmit songs, dances, and stories.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation</li> <li>• Video documentation</li> <li>• Participant reflections and journals</li> <li>• Analysis of curricula and lesson plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluator designs instruments for data collection</li> <li>• Muse staff and artists collect data, including lesson plans</li> <li>• Evaluator analyzes</li> </ul>
Intermediate Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children, youth and/or adults demonstrate skills and deepen their knowledge and/or understanding of the arts</li> <li>• State and local entities, along with the broader community, demonstrate a commitment to increasing access to arts learning for children, youth or adults</li> <li>• The nature of teaching and learning in the arts is better understood through credible research and scholarship</li> <li>• Teachers infuse SI content into their lessons and teaching.</li> <li>• Students meet relevant Ohio Department of Education (ODE) and Common Core Standards in English Language Arts (ELA), literacy, history, social and cultural studies and music.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of curricula and lesson plans</li> <li>• Participant reflections and journals</li> <li>• Student assessment data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluator designs instruments for data collection</li> <li>• Muse staff collect data/ lesson plans</li> <li>• Evaluator analyzes</li> </ul>

# Post-Institute Survey



Summer Institute 2025: Storytelling and the Folk Arts Spirit - The Roads That Lead Home

## 1. PART ONE: GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

**Thank you for taking our summer institute survey! Your feedback is invaluable and helps us support you during the upcoming school year. It also helps us imagine and create future institutes. Please refer to your institute agenda and binder, as needed.**

**This information is vitally important to our funders who invest in and support Muse Machine's teacher professional development activities. The survey should only take 20 minutes to complete. We look forward to hearing your thoughts.**

### \* 1. Days Attended the Institute

Please check all that apply, assuming at least a half day of participation.

- Monday
- Tuesday
- Wednesday
- Thursday

### \* 2. How likely is it that you would recommend Muse Machine's Summer Institute for Educators to a friend or colleague?

Not at all likely Extremely likely

0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

### \* 3. Communication

Please rate your agreement with each of these statements using a scale of 1 to 5 (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree).

	1-Strongly disagree	2-Disagree	3-Neutral	4-Agree	5-Strongly agree
Before the institute, Muse provided the information I needed to feel prepared.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
During the institute, Muse staff members and artists were willing to answer my questions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The sessions were about the right length (e.g., neither too brief nor too long).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

# Following the Institute

Muse staff and artists provide onsite, in-classroom support for learning. This support includes:

- Conducting observations of classroom sessions
- Providing ongoing support to teachers in lesson planning and implementation and collecting student work samples that provide powerful evidence of student learning.
- A sharing session in the fall in which teachers may share the outcomes of lesson plans inspired by the Institute

## Lesson Plans

As recommended in previous evaluations, Muse has continued working with participants to increase the number and variety of lesson plans in 2025. This effort includes an enhanced focus on developing effective assessment tools aligned with institute content and Ohio Content Standards. The 2026 summer institute has led to the development and teaching of several exemplary lesson plans. The two that are presented below are included for conciseness and variety. Others may be accessed at the Muse website.

1. **Building Words and Stories by Julie Merrill, 9-12 Language Arts Foundations**
2. **Graphing My Home: A Review of Four-Quadrant Graphing by Angela Streby, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Pre-Algebra**

# Summary

The core of the Institute was a suite of well-crafted, meaningful learning experiences led by world-class arts educators.



Interactive sessions carefully modeled targeted learning objectives and engaged learners. These sessions tapped multiple learning modalities...



...and involved participants in meaningful work, both individually and in groups.



Participants assimilated new knowledge and skills, including higher-level thinking and essential understandings that they could transfer to their classrooms.

