

Guidelines for Developing the VAPA Portfolio

As part of the process of the educational reform movement in the United States, teachers and students have approached the assessment of learning in a more “authentic” manner. The Academy of Visual and Performing Arts at Albert Einstein High School is committed to this assessment philosophy. Instead of a traditional summative assessment such as a written multiple choice examination or a question and answer session authentic assessment is formative and not contrived. It takes place over time, and students play a seminal role in assessing their own learning.

This non-traditional and pervasive assessment approach is used to assess the student’s understanding of the core subject theory and practice. The responsibility of the Academy of VAPA student is two-fold, to develop a process product portfolio throughout tenure in the program and to prepare an oral understanding of the core question...

“How has my participation in the Academy of VAPA enhanced or altered my perception and approach toward my future goals?”

I. Guidelines for the VAPA Portfolio

The process-product portfolio is an instrument of learning rather than a “showpiece” of one’s final accomplishments. It is an aid **throughout the learning process** and what noted psychologist Howard Gardner called a “silent mentor” (Torff, B. *Multiple Intelligences and Assessment: A Collection of Articles*. Arlington Heights, IL: Skylight, 1997, p.187). As the student proceeds through the program, the portfolio will be reviewed frequently; constant reflection and monitoring of one’s own learning will take place. The portfolio can become its own reward and serve as a tangible record of one’s growth as an artist.

A three-ring binder is suggested as the physical means for the portfolio’s organization. (Electronic portfolios are an option. This decision will be made by the student in conjunction with ones advisor early in the process)

In answering the core question and preparing the portfolio, the student should collect and develop relevant materials, keep a journal or record reflecting on the course content **DURING** the course. **EVERY CREDIT earned at the Academy of VAPA will be included in the portfolio.** The following courses compromise the topics of major importance.

MUSIC

Choral Music: Concert Choir A&B, General Chorus A&B, Chamber Chorus A&B, Women’s Chorus A&B.

Instrumental Music: Beginning Band A&B, Advanced Band A&B, Concert Band A&B, Jazz Ensemble A&B, Honor’s Jazz Ensemble A&B, Concert Orchestra A&B, Orchestra A&B.

General Music: Guitar 1A&B/2A&B, Piano 1A&B/2 A&B, Music Perspectives A&B, Music and its Technology A&B, Music Theory and Composition A&B.

Theater and Dance

Theater: Intro to Dramatics, Theater 1 A&B, Theater 2 A&B, Musical Theater, Advanced Acting & Play Directing

Dance: Dance as a Fine Art 1&2, Advanced Studio Dance A&B

Visual Art

Visual Art: Art and Culture A/B, Art History A/B, Ceramics/Sculpture 1A/B, 2A/B or 3A/B, Photography 1 A/B, 2 A/B, Photography Advanced Studio, Digital Art A/B, Drawing and Design A/B, Painting, Advanced Studio Art A/B, Studio Art 1A/B or 3A/B

During **EACH** of the selected courses listed, students will present their portfolio to the teacher of that course and discuss the pertinent materials. The Academy student should be prepared to submit the materials at **ANYTIME** requested by the teacher. The purpose of the conference is to help students prepare the portfolio for their senior oral presentation.

The following ideas, suggestions, and examples will be beneficial for developing the portfolio:

A. Reflections (comprised of both on-campus and off-campus experiences)

1. Keep a journal. Make written reflections of daily classes, assignments, rehearsals, library and internet research endeavors, and so on. The journal may include personal reactions and questions as well as memorable anecdotes and comments on objective test items that provoke a response. The journal is for the student's use and will not necessarily be seen by the teacher.
2. Synthesize journal entries/experiences. For example, after a week's Journaling, try to select those experiences that have impacted you and make connections between/among them.
3. Contextualize reflections. Try to apply ideas to ones own life as a student and to ones future in the field. What happened? Why? What were the results? Was it positive?
4. Include questions that you might have during course work and documentation of the journey towards closure of further refinement and focus.
5. DEMONSTRATE HOW YOU HAVE TAKEN THE COURSE WORK AND MADE IT PART OF YOUR LIFE AND FUTURE ENDEAVORS.

B. Other materials might include:

1. Video/audio tapes of concerts, dance recitals, art show with comments as appropriate.
2. School projects.
3. Other relevant sources/experiences outside of VAPA.
4. Computer/technological information materials.
5. Relevant projects and papers form various course work such as rehearsal critiques; inventory of performance skills learned/taught from private lessons.

C. SYNTHESIS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Create a portion of the portfolio which summarizes and addresses the **CORE QUESTION!!!!!!!!!!**

The following points from Allan DeFina's publication entitled *Portfolio Assessment: Getting Started* (New York: Scholastic, 1992, pp.13-16) have been paraphrased to apply to the endeavor. The ideas should provide some valuable insight for the VAPA student entering into this assessment process as part of the participation in the Academy of VAPA at Albert Einstein High School.

1. Portfolios are systematic, purposeful, and meaningful collections of students' work
2. Process-product portfolios reflect the learning process and are compiled throughout the learning process.
3. Students can learn not only to select the pieces to be placed into their portfolios, but can also learn to establish their own criteria (and will be expected to do so.)
4. In all cases process-product portfolios should reflect the students' actual day-to-day learning experiences.
5. Portfolios should be ongoing so that they show the students' efforts, progress, achievement, and synthesis over a period of time.

6. Portfolios may contain several divisions, compartments, or subfolders.
7. Selected works in portfolios may be in a variety of media and may be multidimensional.

II. Guidelines for Final Presentation

The Senior oral examination is the final formal assessment of the student's understanding of the course material. The half hour exam will include a 15 minute lecture-demonstration in which the student presents a summation of the topics, ideas, and issues presented in the VAPA classes with emphasis on the areas that have had the greatest impact on the students life and future participation in the arts. The following areas should be considered for the inclusion in the presentation:

1. A personal philosophy based upon a sound rationale for the inclusion of ones core program in the life of the individual and society as a whole. (For example: Why is it pertinent that individuals study music, dance, theater, and visual arts? What are their importance in a society? Can and should exposure of the visual and performing arts be included in all schools and exposed to all students?)
2. The historical and philosophical perspectives and the aesthetic experience. (Historical proof that music, dance, theater and visual arts have always been an essential part of society throughout.)
3. Current developments and major personalities in the field as well as published materials associated with the aforementioned.
4. Repertoire lists and Concert/Dance Recital/Art Show/Musical & Theater productions programs that student has participated.

The presentation should be 15 minutes in length. You will be stopped after 15 minutes. The use of audiovisual equipment, handouts, or use of technology that will enhance the presentation is expected. The presenting student must make arrangements for all equipment used in the presentation.

The topics can range from narrow topic from the student's study or a more general approach. Examples of general topics are as follows:

- Participation in the Academy of VAPA has impacted me as an artist in these ways. Why? How?
- Being part of the Academy of VAPA has influenced and changed the way I live my life and has helped me specifically to continue my goal in becoming a professional in the visual and performing arts. Why? How?

The remainder of the oral examination is comprised of the committee's questions about the presentation and additional questions regarding core classes taken in the Academy of VAPA.

EVALUATION: The successful presentation demonstrates the students ability to act as educator. (Think of the presentation as a teaching recital) Therefore, the presentation must be engaging. Creativity is encouraged!!!! The oral examination will be evaluated on content (i.e. factual accuracy and topic coverage), communication (i.e. organizational skills and delivery) and ability to field questions by the committee after the 15 min. presentation.