

# The Forest, the Tree, and the Leaves

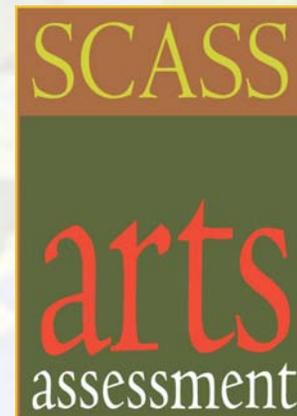


Thinking about Standards,  
Performance, Rubrics, and Grades

# SCASS Arts Training Series

Presented by the

- **Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)**
- **State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (SCASS), a project of CCSSO;**
- **SCASS Arts Education Assessment Consortium (SCASS Arts)**



# The Forest, the Tree, and the Leaves

**A sincere thank you to  
our colleagues at the  
SCASS Health  
Education  
Assessment Project  
(HEAP) for generously  
providing *The Forest,  
the Tree, and the  
Leaves* for adaptation.**



# Training Objectives

- Explore the purpose of grades.
- Examine what teachers have been doing with grades.
- Describe new ways to think about and provide feedback to students.

# The Forest



**State Accountability System**

# The Tree

- Arts education standards
- An arts-literate person



# Arts Literacy

Arts literacy is the capacity of an individual to obtain, interpret, and understand basic skills and knowledge in the arts and the competence to use such information in ways which are life-enhancing.



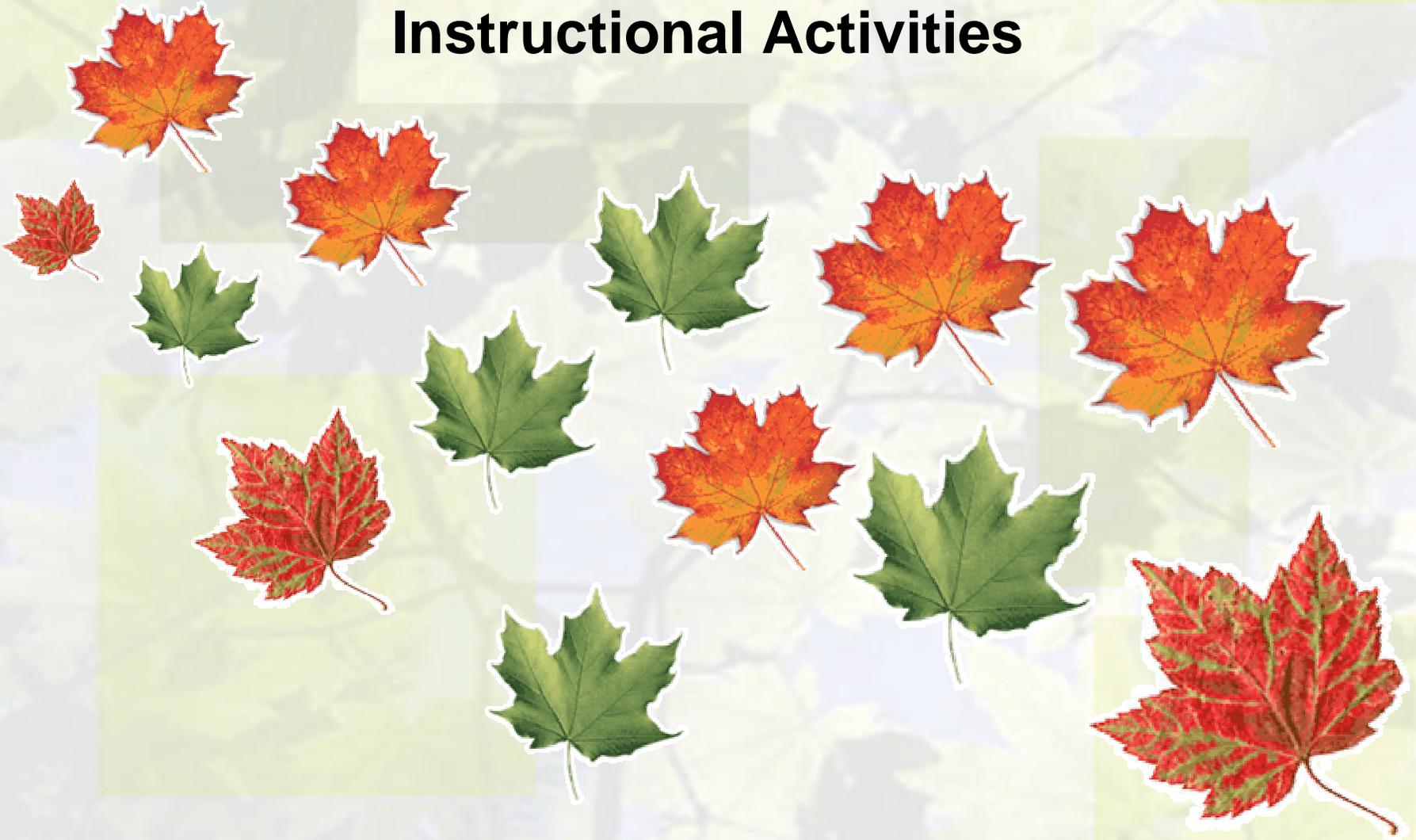
# Arts Education Standards

By the time students have completed secondary school, they should know and be able to:

- communicate at a basic level in the four arts disciplines (dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts).
- communicate proficiently in at least one art form, including the ability to define and solve artistic problems with insight, reason, and technical proficiency.
- develop and present basic analyses of works of art.
- have an informed acquaintance with exemplary works of art from a variety of cultures and historical periods.
- relate various types of arts knowledge and skills within and across the arts disciplines.

# The Leaves

## Instructional Activities



# A New Lens

**Standards-based arts Instruction is  
skills-and performance-based.**



# What Is a Performance-based Task?

- Performance-based tasks are assessment tasks.
- They require students to perform or construct a product that demonstrates their knowledge and skills.

# Performance-based Tasks

- Can be short answers, extended responses, or performance tasks
- Align with developing student portfolios



# Examples of Projects

- Dance composition
- Musical performance
- Theatrical improvisation
- Critique of a painting for classmates
- What else?



# How Do You “Grade” Performance Tasks?

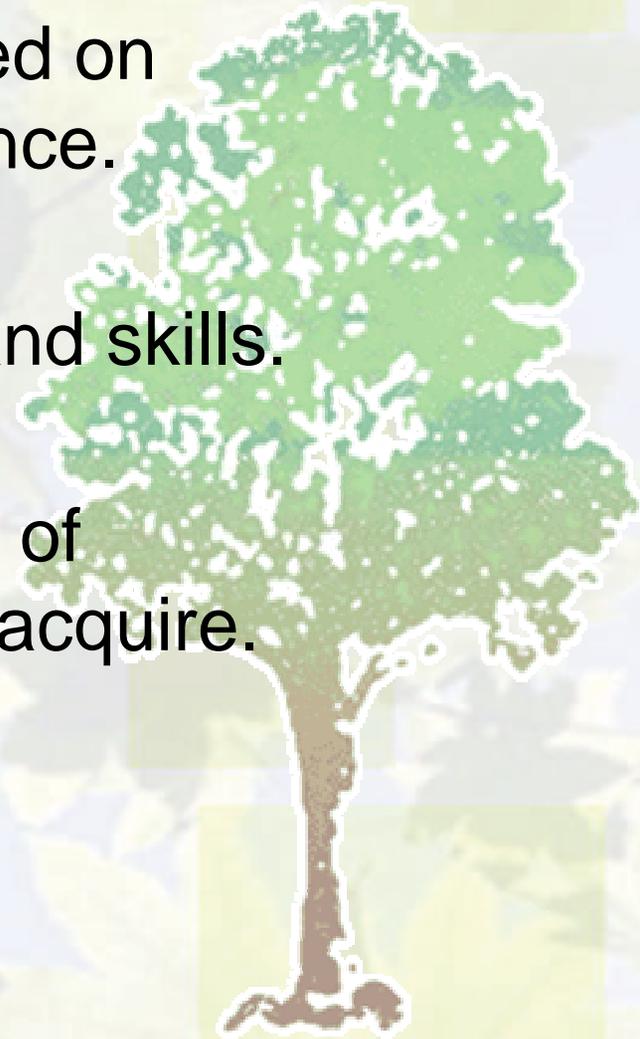
**Use Rubrics!**

# What Is a Rubric?

A set of criteria for directing student performance and for scoring performance-based tasks

# Tree Rubrics (Holistic)

- Provide overall judgment, based on the whole, about the performance.
- Holistic rubrics score content and skills.
- Help teachers assess the level of knowledge and skills students acquire.
- Indicate level of learning (four-point scale).



# Leaves Rubrics (Analytic)

- Can be personalized to a specific prompt or product
- Provide detailed criteria at every score point



# Advantages of Rubrics

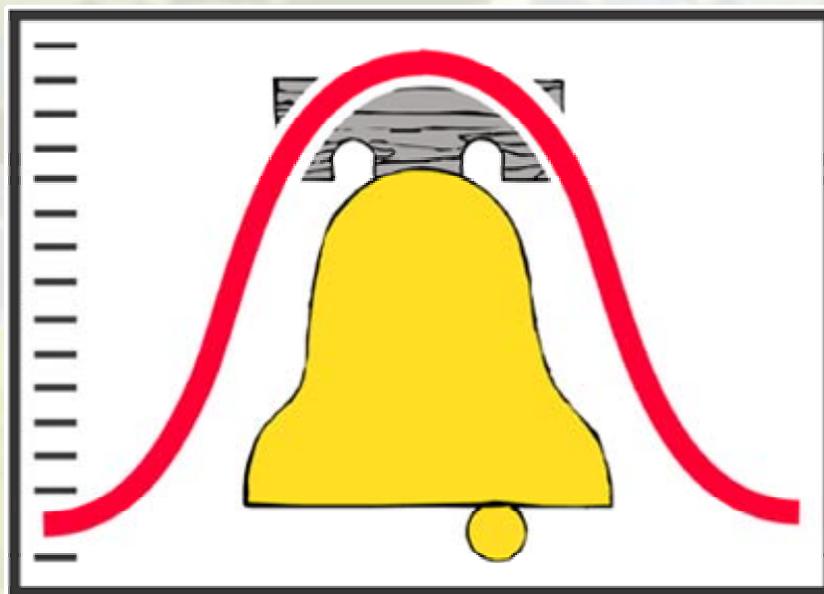
- Help students know what to expect
- Provide detailed feedback
- Help students see improvement over time
- Offer guidance for continuous improvement
- Align teaching and learning to standards

# Disadvantages of Rubrics

- Time-consuming to score
- Don't translate to letter grades or norm-referenced grades

# Norm-referenced Grading

- Assigns grades based on a bell curve.



- Set of scores is forced into a normal distribution, partitioned into groups, and assigned grades.

# Criterion-referenced Grading

- Links to a defined set of goals
- Targets a specific level of learning

# Small Group Discussion

- What can grades be based on?
- What purposes do grades serve?

# Purposes of Grades

- Administrative
- Instructional planning
- Guidance
- Feedback about student achievement
- Motivation

# Thinking about Grading and Reporting

- Formal training in grading and reporting
- District reporting policies
- Alignment between performance-based assessment in the classroom and district's systems

# Dilemmas

- Scoring criteria may not match district's purpose or format for reporting.
- Without alignment, teachers are on their own to work out dilemmas.

# Considerations

- Base grades on standards, criteria, and levels of achievement.
- Individualize feedback and help students monitor their progress so *no child is left behind*.
- Move from subjective grading to criteria-referenced scoring.

# Researchers Agree

- Grading and reporting are not essential to learning.
- No single method of grading and reporting serves all purposes well.
- Grading and reporting will always involve some degree of subjectivity.
- Grades have value as rewards, no value as punishment.
- Grading and reporting should be done in reference to learning criteria, never “on the curve.”

# Learning Criteria

- **Product** criteria
- **Process** criteria
- **Progress** criteria

# Product Criteria

Communicates summative evaluation

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# **Process Criteria**

**Reflects process of learning**

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**Communicates summative evaluation**

# **Process Criteria**

**Reflects process of learning**

# **Progress Criteria**

**Indicates learning gained over the scoring period**

# Dilemma

- If we intertwine product, process, and progress criteria into one grade, it is difficult to interpret the grade's meaning.
- Therefore, most researchers recommend using product criteria only.
- BUT, using product criteria can dampen the motivation of students with less ability who work hard.

# Grading Outside of Academics: Non-academic Factors

- Effort: participation, work completion
- Behavior: conduct, teamwork
- Attendance: absenteeism, tardiness

# Pros for Grading Non-academic Factors

- Supports youth development
- Fosters development of personal responsibility and self-management
- Separate marks for non-achievement factors and assessment of skills and knowledge

# Key Questions

- What do the grades you give to students mean?
- What can you do to develop a grading system that will communicate what you want to communicate?

# References

- *Transforming Classroom Grading*, Robert J. Marzano, 2000
- *Communicating Student Learning*, ASCD Yearbook, 1996

# **We're Here to Help**



***State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (SCASS)***

***Arts Education Assessment Consortium***

***Council of Chief State School Officers***

***www.ccsso.org***

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