ARTS TALENT ID

A Framework for the Identification of Students Talented in the Arts

Joanne Haroutounian, Ph.D.

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Arts Talent ID offers specialists in the fields of gifted education and the arts an effective and pragmatic way to identify students who display potential talent in the arts (the visual arts, music, dance/movement, theater/drama). The identification framework includes an overview of recommended arts identification procedures and their comparison with normal gifted/talented identification procedures. It also offers criteria for identification that recognize arts-specific talent characteristics based on analysis of identification and performance/portfolio assessment instruments used by arts specialists and gifted/arts programs across the country (refer to the Appendix). Forms used in the identification process are constructed across similar categories and are formatted for ease of use by classroom teachers, gifted/arts specialists, and outside adjudicators. The *Arts Talent ID* framework provides a comprehensive arts identification procedure that can be pragmatically implemented in any school—from general classroom observations to specialized audition/portfolio assessments.

The framework criteria are organized in categories that reflect the artistic learning process, or "artistic ways of knowing," explained fully in this guide. This organization provides a cohesive way to recognize common talent characteristics across art forms that can be highlighted in school curricula that include the arts. *Think Like an Artist: Lessons for Experiencing the Artistic Creative Process*, available separately, contains lessons within each arts area, lessons across the arts, and lessons integrating the arts and academics that will assist teachers in recognizing the spark of talent in students who show special ability.

The purpose of *Arts Talent ID* is to provide a way to encourage the identification of students talented in the arts in a single resource. This identification framework provides valid arts talent criteria as a basis, recognizes the importance of learning through the artistic process, and offers a clear-cut procedure that is user-friendly to those in the gifted field, as well as those in individual arts fields.

Implementation:

A complete set of forms that will enable you to implement the Arts Identification program outlined in this manual is available to download from the Royal Fireworks Press website. The forms are available for use only in the school or school district that purchases this manual. No other reproduction of the forms is authorized.

CHAPTER ONE
Arts Talent Identification

Rationale for the Identification of Students Talented in the Arts

The identification of students who show potential talent in the arts presents a challenge for those in both gifted and arts areas. Many states mandate the identification and development of students who show demonstrated or potential talent in the performing and visual arts; however, there are minimal gifted/talented identification procedures available that include talent criteria specific to each art form.

Gifted specialists often use identification instruments and rating scales designed for general gifted/talented identification that do not contain arts-specific criteria that delineate artistic aptitude, ability, and creativity in each arts area. These generalized arts rating scales lump the musician with the visual artist and the dancer using criteria that are not specific to each art form. Effective identification criteria must reflect characteristics recognized as valid by arts specialists and use language that is comfortable for the general classroom teacher as well.

A drawback to the identification of talent in the arts lies in the very real dilemma of the demise of arts programs and arts specialist teachers in many school systems across the country. This often leaves the imposing task of arts talent identification to general classroom teachers who may have minimal knowledge of what to look for or assess in relation to talent in the arts.

The identification procedures outlined in this framework recognize this rampant problem and pose ways to bring the arts into the classroom as a starting point (Artistic Ways of Knowing curriculum). The process builds on this initial observation by non-specialists, leading to arts-specific assessment for performance and portfolio products prior to acceptance into gifted/arts programming at the upper elementary or secondary level.

Research of arts identification instruments prior to the development of *Arts Talent ID* revealed a general disparity of formats in identification forms from one arts area to the next, even at the local level. Rating scales commonly utilized by gifted specialists that include the arts often use more generalized characteristics rather than arts-specific criteria deemed pertinent by specialists in arts areas (Haroutounian, 1995a, 1995b, 2002, 2008). The criteria developed in the *Arts Talent ID* identification and assessment forms were found on a majority of the analyzed forms used for arts identification and performance/portfolio assessment in specialized arts schools and gifted/arts programs. (Refer to the Appendix for a data resource list.)

Why should you include the arts in your gifted identification procedures?

- The identification of students with potential or demonstrated talent in the arts has been included in federally legislated definitions of giftedness and talent since 1972 (Marland, 1972; U.S. Department of Education, 1993).

- Many states mandate the identification and development of students who show potential talent in the performing and visual arts.

- Students talented in the arts require differentiation of curriculum (Consortium of National Arts Education Associations, 1994, 1995).

- Gifted programming in the arts highlights creative options that may not be available in performance-oriented arts classes.

- Identification procedures can unveil hidden arts talents not recognized in academic classrooms.

- The process of recognizing arts talent through the curricular use of the artistic process brings the arts into the classroom for *all* students.

The comparison chart on the next page provides an overview of recommendations for identification procedures for artistically gifted and talented students in comparison to the normal G/T identification procedures from a review of research and literature across the arts and gifted fields.

Comparison of Identification Procedures

Academically Gifted and Talented	Artistically Gifted and Talented
Nomination: • Observational checklists and rating scales	Nomination: • Observational checklists and rating scales should contain valid criteria in individual arts areas based on research and gifted/arts literature. Avoid generalized arts rating scales (Haroutounian, 1995a, 1995b, 2002). • Recognize developing potential as well as demonstrated talent, utilizing artists or teachers who have expertise in the recognition of developing artistic talent (ArtsConnection, 1992; Clark & Zimmerman, 1992; Haroutounian, 2002, 2009a; Khatena, 1982; Oreck, 2005).
• Nomination from multiple sources	• Nomination from multiple sources: Collect data concerning student abilities and background in the school, home, and community. Arts activities and instruction often extend beyond the school (Bloom, 1985; Haroutounian, 1995a, 1995b, 2000c, 2002; Kay, 2008; Richert, 1985).
• Identification procedures at fixed grade levels	• Provide flexibility for identification of emerging artistic talent at different ages, dependent on the child's physical and emotional development (Bloom, 1985; Davidson & Scripp, 1994; Sloboda & Howe, 1991a, 1991b; Warburton, 2006).
• Identification of underserved populations	• Recognize multiple talent areas and genres within each arts discipline (Haroutounian, 1995b, 2002; Uszler, 1990). • Include the identification of artistic talent in underserved populations (ArtsConnection, 1992; Clark & Zimmerman, 1992; Frasier, Garcia, & Passow, 1995; Johnsen, 2004; Kay & Subotnick, 1994).
Achievement: • Grades • Tests: IQ, achievement	Achievement: • Include the assessment of student behavior and performance in the process of developing artistic work (ArtsConnection, 1992; Clark & Zimmerman, 1992; Haroutounian, 1995b, 2002, 2009a; Landy, 2006; Oreck, 2004; Warburton, 2002; Worley, 2008). • Assess student behavior and performance while engaged in artistic activities that involve perceptual discrimination and metaperception (Bamberger, 1995; Gordon, 1987; Haroutounian, 1995b, 2002; Taylor, 2006; Webster, 1990, 1992). • Avoid the use of standardized testing of intelligence or achievement as a basis for artistic talent identification (Abeel, Callahan, & Hunsacker, 1994; Clark & Zimmerman, 1992; Gardner, 1990). • Include specific testing in arts areas where available that offers objective data for identification (Clark, 1989; Clark & Zimmerman, 1992; Gordon, 1987; Haroutounian, 1995a, 1995b, 2002, 2009a).
Creativity: • Tests: Torrance • Performance assessment of creative problem solving	Creativity: • Avoid the use of general creativity testing as a basis for artistic talent identification (Clark & Zimmerman, 1992; Haroutounian, 2002). • Assessment of artistic performance/product should include creative experimentation (such as improvisation, artworks) and creative interpretation (the development of a musical, dance, or dramatic performance; listening and critiquing) (Clark & Zimmerman, 1992; Haroutounian, 2002, 2009a; Landy, 2006; Landy, Luck, Conner, & McMullian, 2003; Taylor, 2006). • Use balanced forms that reflect arts-specific talent criteria for performance or portfolio assessment during the process of developing artistic works. Avoid screening with a singular audition (Haroutounian, 2002; Oreck, Owen, & Baum, 2003; Schonmann, 1997; Warburton, 2006).

Effective Arts Talent Identification

The identification of students talented in the arts requires a multi-staged and multifaceted procedure similar to that used for academically gifted students, with expanded parameters that include information beyond that obtained in school. This procedure includes the development of a student profile, optional testing, observation, and assessment of developing artistic performances or products (Abeel, Callahan, & Hunsaker, 1994; Clark & Zimmerman, 1992; Haroutounian, 1995a, 1995b, 2002, 2008; Richardson, 1990). The emphasis in arts talent identification is on providing flexibility to include developing potential as well as demonstrated abilities, especially when there is minimal arts training within the school.

The Student Profile

Initial student profile data are collected from school teachers and specialists, peers, parents, and the student. Research indicates that input beyond the school setting is vital in the arts because the role of the family, community arts program instructors, and private arts teachers is significant in the development of artistic talent (Bloom, 1985; Haroutounian, 2002, 2009b; Sloboda & Howe, 1991a, 1991b). Forms that include rating scales completed by parents and community arts program instructors assist in establishing talent information beyond the school environment, often unveiling hidden talents not exhibited in classroom activities. Students may be actively engaged in church choirs, community theater, or dance lessons that are unknown to the school.

Nomination from multiple sources beyond the school also encourages recognition of students with multiple talent areas and talents in different genres within each arts discipline. Students may have a rock band in the basement, enjoy street dancing, or engage in ethnic arts not available in school curricula.

Arts Talent ID includes the following forms to develop this initial student profile:

- *Teacher Nomination Form*
- *Parent Information & Nomination Form*: Includes a rating scale with parallel construction to the Potential Talent Observation Rating Scales, with vocabulary adapted for parental use
- *Student Self-Nomination Form:* Attached to the parent form
- *Peer Nomination Form*
- *Community Nomination Form*: To be completed by private arts teachers or community arts program instructors

Observational Rating Scales

Identification should include observation of students in the process of working through arts in an arts or general classroom. Observation should be done over a period of time to view developing work and should include observation of tasks involving analysis (listening, observing) and critique in arts activities to better assess talents beyond an arts performance/product. Observation is best in a normal classroom setting, preferably with students working in small groups on tasks requiring artistic decision making.

Observational checklists and rating scales should contain criteria deemed valid and pertinent in individual arts areas based on research and gifted/arts literature. Avoid generalized arts rating scales (Haroutounian, 1995a, 2002, 2008). Ideally, observation should be done by artists or teachers who have expertise in the recognition of developing artistic talent (ArtsConnection, 1992; Clark & Zimmerman, 1992; Haroutounian, 2002, 2009a, 2009b; Khatena, 1982; Oreck, 2005). However, initial observation can be done by classroom teachers with some training in the techniques of identifying potential talent in the arts. Artists and teachers from the community brought into the identification/ assessment process should be acquainted with the purpose of talent identification, which includes the recognition of potential or emerging talent as well as demonstrated, trained talent.

Arts Talent ID includes the following behavior rating scales and overview grid to assist in the observation of potential talent in each arts area:

- *Grid: Potential Talent Criteria in the Arts*: contains an overview of the 16 talent criteria found in the Observation Rating Scales across the arts

- *Indicators of Potential Talent in the Visual Arts Observation Rating Scale*

- *Indicators of Potential Talent in Music Observation Rating Scale*

- *Indicators of Potential Talent in Dance/Movement Observation Rating Scale*

- *Indicators of Potential Talent in Theater/Drama Observation Rating Scale*

Appropriate Testing

The use of testing for identification in the arts is problematic at best. Many identification procedures misuse standardized intelligence and academic achievement measures as measures of creativity and aptitude in the arts (Abeel, Callahan, & Hunsaker, 1994; Clark & Zimmerman, 1992; Haroutounian, 2002). Even the use of creativity testing is questionable as a procedure for artistic talent identification (Clark & Zimmerman, 1992; Gardner, 1990). There are arts-specific tests available in the fields of music and art; however, researchers are in agreement that these tests should not be used as the sole determinant of identification; instead, they should be paired with additional observation and performance/product assessment (Clark & Zimmerman, 1992; Haroutounian, 1995a, 1995b, 2002; Richardson, 1990). These types of assessments may reveal students with potential talent not yet developed or demonstrated through artistic performance or product in the classroom.

> **Visual Arts:** In the visual arts, standardized tests measure preferences for design, drawing ability, and aesthetic judgment (Graves, 1978; Horn, 1953; Meier, 1963); however, reviews by arts specialists show limited use of these measures (Clark & Zimmerman, 1984; Eisner, 1972). Art tests specifically designed for talent identification use a work sample technique. Two tests worth noting are Clark's Drawing Abilities Test (Clark, 1989) and Hurwitz's eight art-centered tasks (Hurwitz, 1983). You may find these helpful to include if you are seeking specific arts testing in the visual arts as part of the identification process. Both of these tests require judging by artists or teachers who have experience assessing children's drawings.

Clark's Drawing Abilities Test (Clark, 1989) essentially assesses two-dimensional drawing talents. For example, students draw a house, a person running, a fantasy scene from memory, and a drawing from a visual prompt. Each drawing takes 15 minutes using a pencil or colored pencil. Criteria for scoring the drawings includes lineation (arrangement of lines, line fluency, contours, shading, tones, and contrasts), representation of subject (perspectives, scale, body proportion, visual representation of motion), and organization (overall composition, balance, details, style, inter-figural relationships).

Hurwitz's art-centered tasks (Hurwitz, 1983) include drawing tasks that focus on observational ability (drawing a seated person), color sensitivity (painting based on a phrase/word), the ability to fuse drawing and imagination (telling a story through drawings), emotional expressiveness (two figures showing emotion), memory (drawing from recall), imaginative re-creation (draw from a "mind picture"), handling of space (drawing objects in space), and sensitivity of media (use of a pencil to show texture). Judges score drawings on a scale of 1 to 4 for each task, ranging from below average to exceptional.

Music: In the field of music, standardized tests are available to measure music aptitude (aural discrimination of pitch and rhythm) from kindergarten to college level (Bentley, 1966; Gordon, 1965, 1979, 1982). Music aptitude tests should *not* be used as the sole determination of musical talent because they essentially measure listening discrimination, not performance or creative capabilities in music. Analysis of musical talent identification procedures shows minimal use of music aptitude testing (Haroutounian, 1995b, 2002). However, these tests are useful in uncovering students who may have potential musical talent but do not demonstrate this talent in performance.

The level of music aptitude testing should reflect measurement of high music aptitude for the age of students involved in the identification process. Here are some useful music aptitude tests and their suggested grades for use:

K – 3   Primary Measures of Music Audiation (Gordon, 1979): Measures normal music aptitude for these grades

1 – 4   Intermediate Measures of Music Audiation (Gordon, 1982): Measures high music aptitude for these grades; recommended for use for talent identification in these grades

4 – 12   Musical Aptitude Profile (Gordon, 1965): Comprehensive music aptitude testing

9 – Adult   Advanced Measures of Music Audiation (Gordon, 1989)

Webster's Measure of Creative Thinking in Music (1989) assesses students' musical/cognitive talent characteristics in the process of creatively solving musical problems. Scores indicate factors of originality, flexibility, extensiveness, and musical syntax.

Performance/Portfolio Assessment

There is no question that the identification of students talented in the arts requires assessment of developing artistic performances and/or products. This can be done in

multiple stages, with the initial observation done in an arts or general classroom through the completion of the identification rating scales described previously. Assigning tasks that focus on small groups working on artistic decision making assists in this identification (Haroutounian, 2002). The next stage requires specialized assessment by artists or teachers who have expertise in recognizing potential talent in the specialists' arts area (ArtsConnection, 1992; Haroutounian, 1995a, 1995b, 2002; Khatena, 1982; Warburton, 2006).

Assessment of student performances or products for entry into a specialized gifted/arts program at the secondary level normally requires an audition process. Arts specialists recommend using a balanced assessment form that includes quantitative ratings of specific talent characteristics and room for qualitative comments (Boyle & Radocy, 1987). Student self-assessment through a brief follow-up interview helps determine the student's critiquing ability and personal commitment (Haroutounian, 2002; Warburton, 2006).

Arts Talent ID includes the following performance/portfolio assessment forms and grid of talent criteria in each arts area:

- *Grid: Performance/Portfolio Assessment Criteria*
- *Portfolio Assessment Form: Visual Arts*
- *Performance Assessment Form: Music*
- *Performance Assessment Form: Dance/Movement*
- *Performance Assessment Form: Theater/Drama*

Talent Development for Students in the Arts: Obstacles and Pragmatic Solutions

Obstacles: Diminishing Arts and Gifted Services Presence in Schools

The National Assessment of Educational Progress 2008 arts report card assessed 7,900 eighth-grade students' achievement in music and the visual arts, with results as "mediocre." Testing did not include dance and theater because there was not enough systematic instruction in those disciplines. According to the report, 57% of the students tested attended schools where music was offered, and 47% attended schools where the visual arts were taught, meaning that about half of the schools offered arts instruction in these two areas (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2009). The report shows a decline in student exposure to the arts in the past decade, with schools focused on reading and math to mesh with required testing for the federal No Child Left Behind act (Dillon, 2009; Gallagher, 2004).

The arts have a long history of being on the proverbial chopping block from year to year. However, comprehensive arts education in most K-12 schools has now reached record bare-bones status, with major cuts in education funding nationwide as a result of the economic downturn over the past few years (Tamer, 2009).

We can couple these sobering statistics with those released in the 2012-2013 State of the States report concerning the diminished presence of gifted education across the country. The only federal program for gifted students was eliminated in 2011, leaving

no federal support for the needs of talented students in any area. At the state level, 32 states mandate some level of gifted education services, but only four completely fund this obligation. The report also describes a patchwork of services, with most G/T students confined to the regular classroom taught by teachers not trained for their special needs (National Association for Gifted Children, 2013).

The lack of arts programs in general combined with diminishing services to gifted education in general poses the very real conundrum of why we should identify students talented in the arts if we have no specialized services or differentiated curricula to offer them. The future of gifted/arts programming relies on active discussions between gifted and arts specialists, sitting across the table from one another to develop creative solutions to these problems.

Pragmatic Solutions: Gifted Programs

Arts Integration: A starting point for arts identification can begin with the integration of the arts in the gifted classroom, with an emphasis on arts activities that employ the process of "artistic ways of knowing." Emphasizing the experience of working through the artistic process is an excellent starting place for arts differentiation within the classroom. It is imperative that these activities realize the substantive value of working and "knowing" through the arts and not use the arts peripherally or as a teaching gimmick (Reimer & Smith, 1992; Warburton, 2006). This arts curriculum can include differentiation that highlights specific characteristics of potential talent in different arts areas (Clark & Zimmerman, 1994; Haroutounian, 1995a, 2000b, 2002; Tamer, 2009).

Outside Resources: The solution to finding ways to provide challenging curricular options for artistically talented students can be as easy as opening the school doors and working with community arts organizations that share your desire to nurture artistically talented students (Haroutounian, 2000a, 2000c, 2009b; Colwell, 2006; Kay, 2008). Community children's theater groups, private music teacher organizations, visual arts programs, and dance studios offer specialized training by professionals in each field. Independent study options can offer golden opportunities for students to create differentiated curricular choices reflecting advanced study with artists in the community for school credit.

Advocacy from arts organizations can build funding that can provide scholarships for students not able to pay organizational or lesson fees for these services. Many nonprofit organizations already provide these scholarships, which can bring specialized long-term training to those who cannot afford lessons (Haroutounian, 2000a).

Many schools whose budget cuts have diminished or eliminated arts programs are discovering private organizations that can come into the school for lessons or after-school programming, with options that can be geared for students talented in the arts. It is imperative that these programs are taught by professional artists or teachers, with funding in place to provide lessons for disadvantaged youth.

The ideal solution to guarantee quality arts education for gifted students is to advocate for the arts as a basic component of the school curriculum to secure ongoing talent development.

CHAPTER TWO
Artistic Ways of Knowing

There is no singular definition of artistic talent. For example, within the field of music, the talent characteristics of a potential singer differ from those of a composer, a pianist, a rock guitarist, a conductor, or a critic. The future sculptor may not shine in a drawing class. Talent characteristics and criteria become more complex as we compare the skills unique to each arts area.

However, if we strip away the technical particulars in each field, we arrive at the underpinnings of artistic talent, which explains the way students who are fully engaged in the arts perceive and create through these experiences. These specific "artistic ways of knowing" (Haroutounian, 1995a, 2002, 2003) describe the perceptual and cognitive processes inherent in working through the arts. An understanding of these processes can serve as a starting point to devise curricula that can help *every* student learn to think as an artist.

Differentiation to a higher level of challenging tasks can highlight potential talent in the arts for identification purposes. The following Artistic Ways of Knowing encapsulate ideas about the processes of perception, interpretation, and performance/production discussed in the literature and research across the fields of the visual arts, music, dance, and theater.

Artistic Ways of Knowing

Perceptual Awareness and Discrimination: To perceive and differentiate through the senses with acute awareness

Differentiate to a higher level of complexity in the perception of sounds, images, motions, and concentration

Metaperception: To manipulate perceptions and emotions internally while making interpretive decisions

Differentiate through tasks that require more subtle, abstract decision making, with multiple choices for interpretation

Creative Interpretation: To rework and refine interpretive decisions using the elements of perceptual discrimination and metaperception

Differentiate by expanding exploratory experiences, encouraging the reworking and refinement of interpretive ideas

Dynamic of Behavior and Performance/Product: To communicate a creative interpretation aesthetically through reaction to an art performance (music, dance, theater) or an artistic product (the visual arts)

Differentiate through student-guided rehearsals toward a performance, repeated performances, or the reworking of an artwork or a written product for further refinement

Critiquing: To evaluate oneself and others with artistic discrimination

Differentiate by fine-tuning discrimination through vocabulary, level of artistic work critiqued, and detailed communication of perceptions

Perceptual Awareness and Discrimination

Artistic knowing begins with fine-tuned sensory awareness. Eisner (1986) describes the importance of a qualitative awareness of the world by developing "critical abilities to differentiate, to distinguish, to recognize and to make distinctions between many qualities that constitute our world" (p. 8). Eisner's term *connoisseurship* describes the highest point on a continuum of perceptual awareness and discrimination (p. 9).

This perceptual awareness lies at the heart of talent development in every arts discipline. Young visual artists perceive the world with acuity, aware of dimensions of space, colors, and textures that go unnoticed by those who simply look (Chetelat, 1981; Clark & Zimmerman, 1984, 1994; Eisner, 1972; Hurwitz & Day, 2007). In music, students develop detailed aural discrimination of rhythm patterns, melodic shapes, and tonal colors (Bamberger, 1995; Gordon, 1987; Reimer, 1970, 1992; Reimer & Wright, 1992; Sloboda, 1985, 2005). In dance, students become increasingly aware of intricate movements of the body as they move through space (Adshead, 1981; Warburton, 2006). Theater/drama students gain skill through internalizing emotion and imagination, with sensitive interpersonal awareness of the interactions with fellow players (Courtney, 1990; McCaslin, 1984; Taylor, 2006).

Metaperception

Perceptual discrimination is the entry point of artistic awareness. However, artistic knowing emanates from the molding of senses and emotion from this awareness through a unique perceptual/cognitive process. This process is described in different terms, dependent on perspective. The field of aesthetic education describes it as aesthetic knowing (Goodlad, 1992; Moody, 1990) or thinking with an aesthetic sense (Baskin & Harris, 1983; Costa, 1991). In the arts it is described as qualitative intelligence (Eisner, 1972), visual thinking (Arnheim, 1969), qualitative responsiveness or "knowing within" (Reimer, 1970, 1992), and virtualization (Courtney, 1990).

The term *metaperception* can be used to describe the inner manipulation and monitoring of senses and emotions that takes place through the artistic interpretive process (Haroutounian, 1995a, 1995b, 2002, 2003). Metaperception is the artistic parallel to metacognition, a term used to describe mental monitoring in cognitive thinking and problem solving. The term is useful because it is understandable to both artists and educators.

You can note metaperceptive involvement at the simplest level—a young child literally plays with a nursery tune, spontaneously singing the song in a number of sing-song ways. At its most sophisticated, the professional musician practices a short passage for several hours, experimenting with melodic shape, balance, and tonal colors and touches to produce an expressive intent prior to a concert. The young child in dance pays attention to the movement of her arm to touch an imaginary star. The professional

modern dancer extends her arm with attention to shape, space, and relaxed movement to interpret the feeling of hope to the audience. Each is working through metaperceptive involvement in interpretive decision making.

Creative Interpretation

As a student works metaperceptively through an arts medium, the expressive reworking of ideas becomes an artistic interpretive process resulting in a unique creative interpretation. Students in the arts are adept at both finding and solving problems within their art form (Csikszentmihalyi & Getzels, 1973; Haroutounian, 2002; Kay, 1999, 2008).

For example, a music student may repeat a phrase with different dynamic scopes to decide how to project a dramatic arrival point. A dancer determines the scope of movement to depict the flow of a gentle breeze. A young actor continually reworks a monologue to develop the characterization of someone learning of a death in the family. A creative interpretation may be a carefully polished musical performance, a spontaneous drama improvisation, or an inventive textile artwork. It describes the *process* of communicating personal ideas through a particular arts medium to others. A creative interpretation results when the final performance or product communicates a uniquely personalized statement. In music, Renshaw (1992) describes creative interpretation as "the ability of each child to make the music his own, thereby putting his own distinctive stamp on a musical performance" (p. 22).

Creative interpretation is not confined to performance. Students who critique an art piece, react to music, or interpretively evaluate a peer performance/product also work through creative interpretation. Students who are limited in demonstrating talent through performance/product may exhibit outstanding talent in their aesthetic sensitivity to art forms (Boardman, 1989; Elliot, 2006; Haroutounian, 2002; Richardson, 1990; Warburton, 2006).

Creativity is an integral element in gifted identification (Clark, 2013; Gagné, 1991; Piirto, 1994, 2004; Renzulli & Reis, 1991; Tannenbaum, 1991), with talent development emphasizing the need to nurture invention of thought (Davis, 1986; Davis & Rimm, 1989; Perkins, 1990). The arts are a perfect way to blend the invention of thought with perceptive and expressive manipulation of ideas. The more students rework and refine work through the arts, the more they realize the cyclical artistic-interpretive process.

Dynamic of Behavior and Performance/Product

We all have experienced the shivers down our spine from an outstanding performance in music, dance, or theater. The musician, dancer, or actor communicates an interpretation to an audience through a performance. The audience experiences the performance, sharing in an interpretive process. The mutual aesthetic experience of audience and performer creates the *dynamic of performance*. We also have experienced being drawn to a painting or sculpture with ever-evolving senses to find details and relate to them personally. This aesthetic dynamic between the artwork and viewer also describes this phenomenological experience.

The performing arts literature describes this aesthetic as the phenomenon of formed and performed art (Nadel & Miller, 1978), concurrent process (Kahlick, 1990), conscious and unconscious expectation (Meyer, 1956), and closure between the experiencer and the performance being experienced (Clifton, 1992). In theater and drama, Courtney (1990) describes a cyclical process between the actor and the audience: as the actor becomes more aware of what the audience is perceiving, the audience more closely connects with the actor's interpretation.

Those who aesthetically react to performance or art through a vivid critique or who exhibit astute artistic sensitivity may not be the outstanding performer in the band or the best dancer or actor on stage. However, these aesthetic behaviors in reaction to art depict the talents of the future critic or outstanding teacher, director, or choreographer. Recognition and development of these hidden talents lie comfortably within gifted differentiation.

Critiquing

The cyclical artistic process requires self-assessment of one's developing work in an arts medium, as well as the astute critique of artworks. This critique involves examination beyond performance/product through perception and reflection to add depth to the artistic process. The importance of understanding beyond "doing" or production is widely recommended across the arts literature (Gardner, 1994; Taylor, 2006; Warburton, 2006; Winner, Davidson, & Scripp, 1992; Winner & Martino, 2000). Affording opportunities for students to reflect and critique their own work fosters the development of artistic reasoning (Haroutounian, 1995a, 1995b, 2002; Moody, 1990; Winner, Davidson, & Scripp, 1992).

Think Like an Artist:
Lessons for Experiencing the Artistic Creative Process

Think Like an Artist: Lessons for Experiencing the Artistic Creative Process, available separately, applies the artistic process to Sparkler Lessons that include objectives, step-by-step activities, guiding questions, and talent spark indicators. The lessons are within each arts area and across the arts and include some integrated arts/academic lessons. The goal of the book is to bring creative arts experiences to students to expand their learning in both depth and breadth. It can also help teachers identify students who show potential talent through more differentiated arts experiences. In addition, it links the curriculum to the identification process found in *Arts Talent ID*.

Artistic Ways of Knowing

Perceptual Awareness and Discrimination

To perceive and differentiate through the senses
with acute awareness

*Differentiate to a higher level of complexity in the
perception of sounds, images, motions, and concentration*

Metaperception

To manipulate perceptions and emotions internally while making interpretive decisions

*Differentiate through tasks that require more subtle, abstract
decision making, with multiple choices for interpretation*

Creative Interpretation

To rework and refine interpretive decisions using the elements
of perceptual discrimination and metaperception

*Differentiate by expanding exploratory experiences,
encouraging the reworking and refinement of interpretive ideas*

Dynamic of Behavior and Performance/Product

To communicate a creative interpretation aesthetically through reaction
to an art performance (music, dance, theater) or an artistic product (the visual arts)

*Differentiate through student-guided rehearsals toward a performance, repeated
performances, or the reworking of an artwork or a written product for further refinement*

Critiquing

To evaluate oneself and others with artistic discrimination

*Differentiate by fine-tuning discrimination through vocabulary,
level of artistic work critiqued, and detailed communication of perceptions*

Developed by Joanne Haroutounian, 1995