ArtsSmarts Inquiry Template:
A Guide for Artists and Educators

About ArtsSmarts

ArtsSmarts is an incorporated non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives and learning capacity of young people in urban, rural and remote regions of Canada, by encouraging and supporting the engagement of artists, teachers, and students in collaborative artistic activities that are linked to educational outcomes. Founded in 1998 by The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation on the premise that engaging young people in artistic activity is critical to their evolution as creative thinkers, ArtsSmarts demonstrates the effectiveness of integrating the arts into the school curriculum as a way of making learning more relevant and meaningful to students. Arts-infused teaching strategies capture the imagination and build the confidence of disengaged young people, and create an enthusiastic atmosphere of active learning among students, teachers, and artists.

ArtsSmarts inspires collaboration among arts, education and community agencies, and invests strategically in creative learning partnerships at the local, regional, provincial and national levels to build capacity for arts and education. These partnerships in turn come together to form the pan-Canadian network that generates research opportunities, allows for exchange of ideas and expertise, and spreads knowledge and innovative approaches across sectors, hierarchies and disciplines.

About ArtsSmarts' Researcher-in-Residence

With the support of the Canadian Council on Learning, ArtsSmarts engaged **Saad Chahine** as Researcher-in-Residence to increase ArtsSmarts' research capacity and develop a research agenda. Saad Chahine is currently a Ph.D. candidate in Developmental and Educational Psychology in the department of Human Development and Applied Psychology at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto (OISE/UT). The focus of his research relates to concepts of validity and how interpretations are supported by qualitative and quantitative evidence.

Dr. Lorna Earl is ArtsSmarts' Researcher-in-Residence Supervisor. She is a Director of Aporia Consulting Ltd. and a retired Associate Professor from the department of Theory and Policy Studies at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto (OISE). She was the first Director of Assessment for the Ontario Education Quality and Accountability Office, and has been a researcher and research director in school districts for over 20 years. She has concentrated her efforts on issues related to evaluation of large-scale reform and assessment (large-scale and classroom) in many venues around the world and has been involved in consultation, research and staff development with teachers' organizations, ministries of education, school districts and charitable foundations.

About the ArtsSmarts Inquiry Template

The ArtsSmarts Inquiry Template (AIT) is a project planning and qualitative data gathering tool. It is based on a template originally designed by Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education and customized for ArtsSmarts by the Durham District School Board, with input from three ArtsSmarts Partner pilot sites (ArtsSmarts Saskatchewan, Durham District School Board, and Riverside School Board), and with financial support from the Ontario Ministry of Education. For more information on ArtsSmarts' research and results, please refer to the ArtsSmarts website.

In conjunction with ArtsSmarts' quantitative research instruments, the AIT is designed to provide ArtsSmarts with a means to gather local data about projects over time and then share that information at a national level through a knowledge mobilization strategy that includes in-person learning symposia and virtual discussion boards and podcasts, as well as virtual interaction between projects.

The AIT is designed to be an in-depth collaboration between artists, teachers, and students. This resonates with the formation of the ArtsSmarts model under which it operates. Your role as artist and educator in an ArtsSmarts project is critical: by providing information about how you are progressing over the course of the project, you will be informing yourself and others on the impact of arts-infused learning. This information, and the analysis of results collected, will assist you in your work as an artist and educator; at the same time, you will become an active contributor to a larger learning community with other artists, teachers and students. We hope that ultimately that through this network we can engage all young Canadians in learning.

Part 1: Before Beginning the Project

Table 1: Students and Environment

Basic information about your project:

Teacher(s)	
Teacher partner(s)	
Artist partner(s)	
School	
Subject(s) taught	
Grade(s)	
Length of project	
Project description	
Artist description	
Reflection questions: *What is unique about your class?* *Why did you decide to participate in an ArtsSmarts project?*	

Table 2: Essential Question and Sub-Questions

List the questions you will be investigating.

The Essential Question is your overall guide and acts as an umbrella for all the Sub-Questions, which ought to be ones about which you can collect information. For example, one of the sample teacher sub-questions in the table below is: What does art add to language? The teacher in this case will be collecting illustrations to poems as evidence of this process in order to respond to this question:

Essential Question	*e.g. Do writers have a social responsibility? And if so, what can they do to initiate change?*
Teacher sub-question	*e.g. How can social responsibility be reflected using the arts?*
Teacher sub-question	*e.g. Do you have an artistic side? If so, describe/define it.*
Teacher sub-question	*e.g. What does art add to language?*
Artist sub-question	*e.g. Are teenagers aware of their environment? And if so, are they more aware than previous generations?*
Artist sub-question	*e.g. Does art have a place in English literature class?*
Artist sub-question	*e.g. Why do students consider poetry more difficult to write than, say, an essay?*
Student sub-question	*e.g. Do you have to be an artist to appreciate art?*

Table 3: Information Gathering

Identifying the information (data) that you will gather is critical to the project.

We suggest that when you complete this table that you ask yourself: *Am I collecting information that will help me answer my sub-questions in Table 2?* Then make appropriate changes to either your questions or the data you are collecting.

The completion of this template is **ITERATIVE**, that is, it will be beneficial to go back and forth as you think, change, and adapt just about every part until you have well-defined sub-questions and information gathering approaches.

The table provides a variety of ways to gather information. Please do not collect everything; rather, be particular and select information that relates to your sub-questions and helps you answer your inquiry about art-infused learning:

Anecdotal notes	*i.e. observed behaviour relating to motivation and enthusiasm*
Journal writing	*e.g. weekly entries, used to solidify behaviours in class (likes/dislikes)*
Opinion writing	*i.e. displaying empathy and compassion toward another person's adversity*
Comparison of writing before and after the artist's involvement	*e.g. rough copy vs. final copy*
Comparison of writing an opinion piece before a guest speaker and after they had an opportunity to identify with them on a human level	*e.g. drawing connections between oral language and written word to formulate opinion*
Monologues	*i.e. development and delivery of a monologue that conveys their hero's thoughts, feelings, and attitudes*
Classroom assessment	*e.g. assignment marks*
Large-scale assessment	*e.g. test score comparison*
Course work	*e.g. curriculum unit test following the project*
Surveys	
Interviews	
Attendance observation	*e.g. comparison of attendance prior to, during and following the project*
Behaviour observation	

Part 2: Links to Engagement Model and to Provincial Curriculum

Table 4: ArtsSmarts Engagement Model[1]
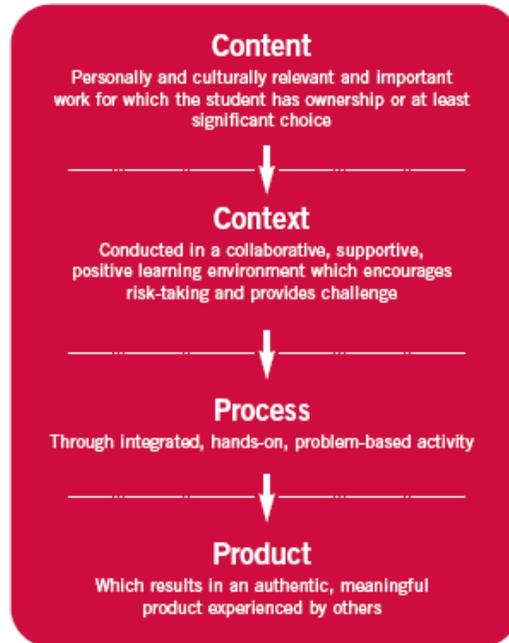
Consider the following questions as you plan and implement your project:

How will you make the project personally and/or culturally relevant to students?	
How will students be able to express their own ideas in their own voice?	
How will students be engaged in making their own decisions and choices?	
What strategies will you use to create a collaborative, supportive, and positive learning environment which encourages risk-taking and provides challenge?	
What hands-on, authentic activities will the students experience?	
Will students create a product that is shared with others?	

Table 5: Curriculum Connections

This is the last part to be completed before or at the very beginning of your project:

Curriculum connections	*describe cross-curriculum connection*
(In some cases, you may want to include connections to school, school board and/or Ministry priorities e.g. character education, equity, anti-bullying, cultural identity, etc.)	*describe cross-curriculum connection*
	describe cross-curriculum connection
	describe cross-curriculum connection
	describe cross-curriculum connection

ArtsSmarts is not an add-on program; it is intended to be a part of your classroom practice. It is critical to the ArtsSmarts model that the projects you are implementing and investigating in your classroom are a part of the provincial curriculum. Please refer to your own provincial curriculum resources for guidance.

Part 3: After the Project

Table 6: Explore Your Information

This table should be completed during the project or towards the end. It describes how you went about exploring the information you have gathered (see Table 3, Information Gathering). Some basic questions and reflections to ask include:

What did you do to make sense of your information?	*e.g. look at similarities/differences, compare groups/individuals, etc.*
Who was involved in the analysis of the information?	
Did the information you collected answer your general or specific questions? If no, describe why it didn't and what you would do differently.	

Table 7: Tell Your Story

Please describe your project and how you went about doing it. You can tell your story in any way you want.

We encourage you to include upload visual images that show the key stages of the project from start to end, quotes from students, parents comments, etc. At all steps of this template, you can add as much information as you need to give as complete a picture as possible.

Sometimes projects end up with a product that cannot be captured in a Word document, so feel free to make a video, or a CD to tell your story. Please attach these additional materials, label them as part of the project and send it to us along with the Word document:

Tell your story:

Table 8: Final Reflections and Reporting

Here are some guiding questions to help you complete this table:

Have you answered your essential questions? Please explain.	
What do the findings mean to you, your students, and the artist (if possible)?	
What changes did you encounter in your instructional strategy the subject area(s) after ArtsSmarts?	
What changes did you encounter in student attitude toward learning about the concept/the subject area(s)?	
How well did your project meet the curriculum outcomes?	
What additional questions were raised that you would like to explore in the future?	