

## **Planning for Successful Workshop & Residency Experiences**

*Included in this document are important pieces of information that will help ensure your students have a well-organized, engaging, educational WITNESS Workshop experience with a WITNESS Teaching Artist.*

*One of first elements to a successful experience is commitment on the part of each constituent involved in the process from the school level, teaching artist, and VocalEssence. Here is additional information on how this commitment works in relationship to **Planning and Communication**:*

### **What is the purpose of the pre-workshop planning meeting? What exactly are we planning?**

- Workshop subject matter
- What lessons will be the focus of the workshop activity—what teachers will prepare in advance of the Teaching Artist’s arrival—And prescribed pre-workshop activities
- Outline and articulate learning goals for each day of workshop
- classroom management: what is the school’s policy on managing student behavior? In general, it is the duty of the classroom teacher to monitor student behavior and intervene if any issues arise; it is not the job of the guest teaching artist to manage student behavior.

### **Should all participating teachers from a school be involved in the planning process? Why?**

- Yes... definitely. This helps to avoid confusion around expectations and goals of the workshops. It also helps each teacher to build a rapport with the teaching artist, so they have the ability to work together in the moment to turn obstacles into opportunities for success.
- Planning meetings will be scheduled during a common prep time during the school day, or before/after school when all participating classroom teachers and specialists can be involved.
- This is also a great opportunity to invite your principal to stop by and greet the Teaching Artist; this will also help your principal see the WITNESS Program, and to know how involved their faculty are in the process.

### **How important is it for Teachers to follow through on the Pre-Workshop Activities?**

- It is critical to the spirit of the program that students are engaged in thoughtful activities prior to the Teaching Artist’s arrival. It has not been as successful when the Teaching Artist arrives to a classroom, and the students have not been adequately prepared to know who they are, why they are there as a guest artist, or why students are learning about the subject matter being presented in the workshops.

**How important is it for Teaching Artists to follow through on agreed upon goals and workshop outline?**

- Very important. At VocalEssence, staff and Teaching Artists strive to be accountable for delivering on the expectations that were established during the planning process.

**Do WITNESS workshops and residencies *have to focus only on the WITNESS theme?***

- Yes. The WITNESS School Program components (Curriculum, Young People's Concert attendance and Teaching Artist Workshops/Residencies) all function in tandem with one another for the purpose of enriching student learning through a variety of experiences. The focus of the workshops is to be solely that of the annual WITNESS program theme (The Harlem Renaissance for 2017-2018). If your school is interested in engaging the Teaching Artist in additional workshops related to other subject matter, those workshops can be scheduled directly with the Teaching Artist, at a rate negotiated between the Artist and School.

**What is the procedure for changing focus of workshops?**

- Teaching Artist will communicate the proposed change **well in advance** of the first workshop day. If a change is requested by the school teachers, that needs to be communicated to the Teaching Artist well in advance of the first workshop day to allow adequate preparation time.

**Besides the lesson plans, what other topics should be covered in the planning process?**

- Checking in to the school (special entry instructions, visitor name badge, etc.)
- Work space/classroom set-up and tour of facilities
- Materials needed from school for specific workshop activities (i.e. use of audio/video equipment, use of a white board or flip chart)
- Materials the Teaching Artist will bring (i.e. audio/visual materials, flip charts, handouts for students, instruments or other supplies)
- Upon confirming the planning meeting date, liaison Rob Graham will send via e-mail a checklist that can be used by teachers and Teaching Artists during the planning meeting, to ensure all bases are covered, and no important items get forgotten.

**What is the Teacher's role during the workshop and residency experiences?**

- To be active participants in the process alongside the students (i.e. no grading papers or checking e-mail during the workshop)
- To model engaged and enthusiastic participation
- To observe and mitigate any student interruptions to the flow of the workshop or to the Teaching Artists' leadership

### **So, teachers should be in the room for the entire workshop experience?**

- Absolutely!
- #1 Teaching Artists are not functioning in the role of certified teachers
- #2 It is the classroom teacher's responsibility to take the lead on issues related to management, disruption and non-participation of students.
- Teachers know school policies related to management and can follow that protocol when seeking to turn obstacles into successes. These policies can, and should be discussed during the planning meeting.

### **What is ideal method and level of communication between school teachers and WITNESS Teaching Artists?**

- VocalEssence Education Manager Rob Graham is primarily responsible for serving as the liaison between the Teaching Artist and the primary contact person, and to facilitate communication related to the scheduling of the planning meeting and the Workshops/residency. Once the dates have been set and confirmed by all participating teachers and the Teaching Artist, further direct communication between the classroom teachers and the Teaching Artist can happen directly without Rob being involved (via phone, e-mail, or setting up additional in-person meeting times). However, you are always welcome to CC Rob on e-mails related to planning, so he can be aware of all program-related activity happening at each school.

### **Elements of a successful WITNESS Workshop or Residency**

- **Commitment:** One of first elements to a successful experience is commitment by all participating teachers, administrators, and the WITNESS Teaching Artists. VocalEssence will empower schools with as many resources necessary to ensure an engaging, well-organized, successful WITNESS experience for participating students.
- **Enthusiasm:** By exhibiting enthusiasm about the WITNESS program, the annual theme and all program activities, teachers will inspire students to dive into learning and maintain a high level of engagement in all aspects of the program. This will be matched by the high level of enthusiasm and excitement by the visiting WITNESS Teaching Artists.
- **Organization and Preparation:** During the scheduling process, it will be important that the planning meeting is scheduled at a time when all participating teachers can be present. Following the planning session, teachers will complete lesson plans and activities from the WITNESS Teacher Resource Guide to jumpstart student learning and to adequately prepare them for more experiential learning during their time with the visiting Teaching Artist. In preparation for attending the Young People's Concert, teachers will supply each student with a copy of the "What to Expect at the Young People's Concert" handout on pp. 12-13 of the Teacher Resource Guide. It will be important to reinforce student behavioral expectations and concert etiquette guidelines, as well as a reminder of what potential consequences may be enforced by the school for poor behavior at the Young People's Concert.