

TEACHING & LEARNING SUPPORTS

Structures for Artistic Thinking

Juilliard Creative Classroom activities challenge students to work and think like musicians as they listen, compose, and perform. Developing these musical dispositions requires attention, time, and targeted support. To aid this growth, teachers and students in every performing arts classroom may incorporate our Music Thinking Habits[i]into their work.

Juilliard's Music Thinking Habits are protocols designed for use within the activities on Juilliard Creative Classroom. As with any good habit, these require time and repetition in order to become internalized and effective. While these tools should be used regularly, they should not be used in a rigid way that would stifle a learning environment. Furthermore, these protocols should ultimately fade once students have successfully embodied the habit.

Each habit is meant to be simple, memorable, and useable. Introduce them to students through repeated modeling, and coach students as they become stronger in their observation and processing skills.

MAKE-REFLECT-CONNECT

The primary purpose of our Core Works is to invite students into meaningful encounters with high-quality pieces of music. To fully *encounter* one of these works, students must have strong skills of perception. Through the Juilliard Approach, we develop these perceptual capacities through hands-on experimentation and invitations to **make** creative work. After this experience, students are guided to **reflect** on both their product and process. Finally, students are supported to **connect** their own process to the Core Work and its creator.

This Thinking Habit outlines the multi-part process students are asked to undergo in many of Juilliard Creative Classroom's activities. The structure engenders the habit of students looking closely at their own experiences and transferring their learning by making meaningful connections. Here's the habit of thinking that students should undergo when using **Make-Reflect-Connect**:

- **Make** something in music
- **Reflect** on your process and what you learned
- **Connect** your learning and thinking to a Juilliard Creative Classroom Core Work

It takes time to develop the skills to look within and to then extend beyond oneself. But with time and explicit scaffolding, this thinking can be internalized and habituated. Here are some helpful questions you can ask and ultimately expect students to ask themselves:

During the **Reflect** stage:

- *What did you notice about your creative choices?*
- *How was your imagination used during your work?*
- *How did you connect to others as you collaborated?*
- *How did your creative work allow you to be personally expressive? If not, what could have been different to make that happen?*
- *How can your creative work help you to see the world in a different way (as a bit more colorful, wild, silly, mysterious, unexpected, etc.)?*

During the **Connect** process:

- *How does this piece affect you? How does it make you feel, think, and wonder?*
- *How did the concepts you explored in class become enhanced when you watched or heard the piece?*
- *How does this piece relate to your own creative process?*
- *How does this piece expand your imagination or understanding of your own work?*
- *How can this piece inspire you to revise your own work?*

This Thinking Habit can also be used when observing/hearing work by other students, in which a student creates something and then relates that to another student or other group of students.

Examples of **Make–Reflect–Connect** at work:

- **Make** – A student creates his/her own short motive and then experiments with development techniques to evoke a specific character or feeling.
- **Reflect** – Through journaling or class discussion, the student considers why s/he enjoyed particular compositional techniques and what other experimental
- **Make** – Students learn a melody from Overture to *The Magic Flute* and make a class arrangement to experiment with different ways for the group to share the musical material.
- **Reflect** – The students discuss the different ways that passing a melody and varied groupings felt, as a performer, and what kinds of

strategies could be used for subsequent composing.

- **Connect** – The student listens to Sean Shepherd’s “An Excursion” and is able to track his 3-note motive and developments. The student hears new development strategies and considers why a composer might use a small motive as generative material for an entire piece.

effects they may create for listeners.

- **Connect** – The students compare their choices and patterns to the way Mozart passes the melody around the orchestra and creates a variety of effects through his orchestration.

- **Make** – Students learn to perform a phrase from Bach’s Cello Suite and create their own expressive interpretations.
- **Reflect** – The students each consider their own musical preferences and expressive points of view.
- **Connect** – Finally, the students listen to multiple performances of the Bach and compare their own creative experiences to each performer’s interpretation.

WHAT IF/HOW ELSE

For Creating

As students work to come up with ideas for composing, improvising, or interpreting, they often fall into a rut, becoming frustrated by what they consider to be their creative limitations. This habit helps students gain a clear perspective of where they are in the creative process and prompts them to try new strategies for developing their ideas.

1. Take a close look at what you’ve done and describe it.

2. Ask yourself:

What if...? and How else...?

3. Once you have a new strategy, take notice of what you did, and add it to your list of tools.

As students think about how they could add to or reimagine their work, they can complete the questions in a variety of ways, for example:

What if I try...? What if it were...?

How else could I try...? How else could I think about...?

YOUR PART/MY PART

For Performing

In ensemble settings, young musicians frequently fixate only on their own part, neglecting the rest of an ensemble. Strong musicians have refined the ability to constantly keep track of their own parts, while appropriately balancing and responding to others.

Listen to other musicians and think:

1. *What's happening in **your** part?*
2. *How does this relate to **my** part?*
3. *How can I adjust my part to fit better?*

“Your part” can be applied to one-on-one collaborations and also to larger groups with multiple parts. Additionally, students in the same section can apply this Music Thinking Habit when considering issues of intonation, balance, and blend.

HEAR-THINK-WONDER

For Listening

Getting students to notice and articulate what they hear can be difficult or become derailed by natural impulses to impose a narrative. This Music Thinking Habit encourages students to begin with a concrete description of music they hear and then progress to activating their curiosity through inquiry.

1. *What do you hear?*
2. *What do you think about?*
3. *What do you wonder?*

Encourage students to give as much musical detail as possible to support their observations. As they explain their thinking, guide students to consider the relationships of the elements they hear and to formulate multiple interpretations. During this process keep students grounded in the music by asking: *What do you hear that makes you say that?* In the third step, resist the temptation to answer every question. Instead, use those lingering inquiries to drive instruction and motivate students' own research and discovery.

[i] Music Thinking Habits are adapted from the work of Harvard Project Zero: Visible Thinking; and Ron Ritchhart, Mark Church, and Karin Morrison: *Making Thinking Visible: How to Promote Engagement, Understanding, and Independence for All Learners*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2011.