

Chapter Three

theatre
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Theatre

Creating/Performing and Responding in Theatre: A Close Look at the NAEP 1997 Theatre Assessment

The Content of the Theatre Assessment

Many students receive little exposure to theatre in school. Those students who do engage in theatre-related activities in school do so primarily by reading the texts of plays in literature classes, and attending occasional school performances.¹ According to the *Standards for Education in the Arts* and the *NAEP Arts Education Assessment Framework*, an in-depth familiarity with and understanding of plays, films, and other theatrical media based on reading and viewing are crucial aspects of a theatre education. But this is only part of what students must learn.

As expressed in these documents, theatre is a social art form, bringing together people and ideas in the

interactions of performers and audiences. This means that learning how to work with others to communicate ideas and feelings to audiences is central to the art of theatre. To teach students this art, theatre education must emphasize the "doing" of theatre: that is, Creating and Performing.²

Students who learn how to Create and Perform have a unique opportunity to combine emotion, physical activity, and intellect. Since students need to make many choices and judgments when, for example, designing a stage set or developing a character for a performance, analysis and problem solving are as much a part of Creating and Performing as they are of reading dramatic works and viewing performances.

The *Assessment Framework* outlined what students should be asked to do to demonstrate their abilities to Create, Perform, and Respond in theatre. Following the *Framework* closely, the NAEP theatre assessment was built around these three processes. (Given that Performing in theatre

is the concrete result of Creating, the arts framework and assessment treated them as a single combined category.) While Creating and Performing in the assessment, students showed their abilities to collaborate to create dramatizations, develop scenarios and characters for performance, and make design and technical choices to communicate locale and mood. While Responding as audiences, they judged and described the artistic choices found in performances. Students evaluated their own work and the work of others, making judgments about characters, environments, and actions. This included exploring the elements of film, such as composition, camera movement, and sound. Students also demonstrated their knowledge of the cultural and historical contexts of theatrical works by identifying and analyzing styles and genres of those works. Responding exercises included both constructed-response (written) questions and multiple-choice questions.



1 National Endowment for the Arts. (1988). *Toward civilization: A report on arts education*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
2 California Department of Education. (1993). *Prelude to performance assessment in the arts (Kindergarten through grade 12)*. Sacramento, CA: Author.

Creating the theatre assessment presented several interesting challenges. In educational settings, students and teachers of theatre can discuss and experiment with the range of choices students can make to communicate meaning to audiences, such as how to use voice and action to convey a character. This is not the case in a timed assessment. To give students as much of an opportunity as possible to demonstrate their theatre knowledge and skills, it was necessary to create context for the assessment exercises. This was done in two important ways. First, instructions for Creating/Performing tasks were carefully crafted to lead students through complex exercises step by step, and to give students as much information as possible about what they were being asked to demonstrate. In this way, the theatre assessment attempted to avoid asking students to Create and Perform in a conceptual vacuum. At the same time, instructions were designed not to “overteach” students, and hence damage assessment results. Second, both Creating/Performing and Responding exercises were built around a theme or particular play, film, or audio stimulus, so that students could focus on just a single work or issue. This gave students the opportunity to think more deeply about the assessment tasks, and ensured that students were not asked isolated questions about unrelated works.

An additional challenge relates to the relative lack of comprehen-

sive theatre programs in schools. Most students receive at least some in-school visual arts and music instruction, but this is not the case in theatre. To avoid testing students on content that they had not had an opportunity to learn, NAEP sampled students who had received theatre instruction in school. Specifically, schools offering at least 44 classroom hours of a theatre course per semester, and offering courses including more than the history or literature of theatre, were identified. Students attending these schools who had accumulated 30 hours of theatre classes by the end of the 1996-1997 school year were selected to take the theatre assessment. Readers should understand that the student results discussed in this chapter refer to this “targeted” theatre sample, not to the population of eighth graders as a whole.

It should be noted that a number of the schools initially contacted for the theatre assessment chose not to participate. Furthermore, within those schools a number of students eligible for the assessment declined to participate or were unavailable for the assessment on the day it was administered. As a result, school and student participation rates for the theater sample were below those typically obtained in NAEP and were substantially lower than the participation rates achieved in music and visual arts. Analyses presented in Appendix A suggest that the participating schools were reasonably similar to the full sample of schools on a






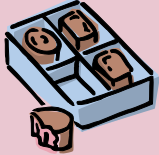

number of important demographic characteristics. However, because of these lower participation rates the possibility of nonresponse bias—patterns of results for the theatre sample that may have differed from those for a full sample—cannot be ruled out.

An overview of the grade 8 theatre assessment “blocks” (a group of exercises administered as separate units to be completed in a set time frame) is presented below in Figure 3.1. As shown in the figure, the assessment consisted of seven blocks. Four of those blocks featured Responding exercises. These were multiple choice and constructed-response questions asking students to analyze, describe, and identify different aspects of theatrical works and performances. In most cases, students wrote answers to constructed-response questions. In some cases, students drew responses, as when they were asked to design a costume.³ The four Responding blocks include stimulus works that represent different cultures, genres, and historical periods.

The remaining three blocks consisted of Creating/Performing exercises asking students to act in improvisations, and to do a cold reading of a script.

3 Questions asking students to describe and/or draw stage sets and costumes can be seen as Creating tasks. However, for ease of reference, the first four blocks of the theatre assessment will be referred to as Responding blocks, even though they contain exercises that combine Responding and Creating.

Figure 3.1**The Content Description of the NAEP Theatre Assessment**

Block Name		
<p>"Bug Pleasing" (Responding block)</p>	<p>Students listen to a short radio play called <i>Bug Pleasing</i>. They analyze the radio play, applying their knowledge of theatre elements such as character, set, and sound. In addition to writing responses, they are asked to draw costumes for a selected character in the radio play.</p>	
<p>"McCullers" (Responding block)</p>	<p>Students read a portion of Carson McCullers' play, <i>Member of the Wedding</i>. They analyze the script, applying their knowledge of theatre elements such as character, set, and lighting. They are asked to think like directors and make directorial choices for a selected character. In addition to writing responses, they are asked to draw a stage set for a production of the script.</p>	
<p>"1,000 Cranes" (Responding block)</p>	<p>Students listen to a short play called <i>1000 Cranes</i>, set in Japan. After analyzing the characters in the play, they are asked to write an alternative ending to the piece, and then to critique their own artistic choices.</p>	
<p>"Jezebel" (Responding block)</p>	<p>Students watch a short scene from the movie <i>Jezebel</i>, both without and with sound. They are asked to consider how characters use movements and gesture to convey meaning, and how sound adds to the scene. They also are asked to compare the composition of the film with that of a play. Students then view a small portion of the film <i>Meet Me In St. Louis</i>, and are asked about set, genre, character, and sound.</p>	
<p>"Camping" (Creating/Performing block)</p>	<p>Four students are assigned roles, and are asked to improvise a short scene about a strange noise they hear on a camping trip. After a brief preparation time, they are asked to perform their improvisation for a video camera. Students then answer a series of questions about the choices they made in their own performances.</p>	
<p>"Chocolate" (Creating/Performing block)</p>	<p>Two students are asked to do a cold reading of a short script about two siblings and a box of chocolate. After a brief preparation time, during which they read the script and rehearse quickly with one another, they are asked to perform their reading for a video camera. Students then answer a series of questions about the choices they made in their own performances.</p>	
<p>"Improv/Props" (Creating/Performing block)</p>	<p>Three students are given a short, non-linear script, and are asked to create a short scene using the script. After a brief preparation time, during which they read the script and rehearse quickly with one another, they are asked to perform their scene for a video camera. Students then answer a series of questions about the choices they made in their own performances.</p>	

SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1997 Arts Assessment.

Sample Responding and Creating/Performing Blocks and Exercises

In Parts 1 and 3 of this chapter, the different components of the theatre assessment will be examined to provide more detailed information about what students know and can do when they are asked to Create, Perform, and Respond in theatre. Part 1 includes Figures 3.2 to 3.5, which feature the four theatre Responding blocks. (Figures 3.3 to 3.5 are found

on the CD-ROM version of this report.) Part 3 includes Figures 3.6 to 3.8, which feature the three theatre Creating/Performing blocks. (Figures 3.6 to 3.8 are found on the CD-ROM version of this report.)

Each figure includes either the whole of a theatre block or selected exercises from a block. The figures demonstrate how exercises were organized and presented to students, how Creating exercises were combined with Performing and Responding exercises, and how well

students performed on the exercises. Many sample student responses will be shown, to give a detailed picture of the range of student abilities. Percentages of students choosing the correct answer for multiple-choice questions, or at the different levels in a constructed-response question scoring guide, are also featured. Parts 2 and 4 of this chapter examine overall summaries of Responding and Creating/Performing results, respectively, and their relationships to student-reported background variables.

Part One

Sample Questions from the Theatre Responding Blocks

Figure 3.2



Sample Questions and Student Responses from the “Bug Pleasing” Block are found on the CD-ROM version of this report.



As described in Figure 3.3, in this block students read a portion of Carson McCullers' play, *Member of the Wedding*. They analyze the script, applying their knowledge of theatre elements such as character, set, and lighting. They are also asked to make directorial choices for a selected character. In addition to writing responses, students draw a stage set for a production of the script.

Part of the initial directions students were given and the script from *Member of the Wedding* are shown at the right.

Figure 3.3

Sample Questions and Student Responses from the “McCullers” Block (This figure can also be found on the CD-ROM version of this report.)



The play is called *Member of the Wedding* and is by Carson McCullers. The play is set in the South during the 1940's. It is about a 13-year-old girl named Frankie who has been very upset about the fact that her older brother is about to get married and move away.

- (1) FRANKIE [still looking at her suitcase]: That's my suitcase I packed. If you think it's all over, that only shows how little you know. [T.T. comes in.] If I can't go with the bride and my brother as I was meant to leave this town, I'm going anyway. Somehow, anyhow, I'm leaving town. [Frankie rises up in her chair.] I can't stand this existence, this kitchen, this town any longer! I will hop a train and go to New York. Or hitch rides to Hollywood, and get a job there. If worse comes to worse, I can act in comedies. [She rises.] Or I could dress up like a boy and join the Merchant Marines and run away to sea. Somehow, anyhow, I'm running away.
- (2) BERENICE Now quiet down.

Member of the Wedding: Courtesy of the Bettman Archive



- (3) FRANKIE [grabbing the suitcase and running into the hall]: Please, Papa, don't try to capture me.
[Outside the wind starts to blow.]
- (4) JOHN HENRY [from the doorway]: Uncle Royal, Frankie's got your pistol in her suitcase.
[There is the sound of running footsteps and of the screen door slamming.]
- (5) BERENICE: Run, catch her.
[T.T. and Mr. Addams rush into the hall, followed by John Henry.]
- (6) MR. ADDAMS' VOICE: Frankie! Frankie! Frankie!
[Berenice is left alone in the kitchen. Outside the wind is getting stronger and the hall door is blown shut. There is a rumble of thunder, then a loud clap. Thunder and flashes of lightning continue. Berenice is seated in her chair when John Henry comes in.]
- (7) JOHN HENRY: Uncle Royal is going with my Daddy, and they are chasing her in our car. [There is a thunder clap.] The thunder scares me, Berenice.
- (8) BERENICE [taking him in her lap]: Ain't nothing going to hurt you.
- (9) JOHN HENRY: You think they're going to catch her?
- (10) BERENICE [putting her hand to her head]: Certainly. They'll be bringing her home directly. I've got such a headache. Maybe my eye socket and all these troubles.
- (11) JOHN HENRY [with his arms around Berenice]: I've got a headache, too. I'm sick, Berenice.
- (12) BERENICE: No you ain't. Run along, Candy.* I ain't got the patience to fool with you now.
[Suddenly the lights go out in the kitchen, plunging it in gloom. The sound of wind and storm continues and the yard is a dark storm-green.]
- (13) JOHN HENRY: Berenice!
- (14) BERENICE: Ain't nothing. Just the lights went out.
- (15) JOHN HENRY: I'm scared.
- (16) BERENICE: Stand still, I'll just light a candle. [Muttering] I always keep one around, for such like emergencies. [She opens a drawer.]
- (17) JOHN HENRY: What makes the lights go out so scary like this?
- (18) BERENICE: Just one of them things, Candy.
- (19) JOHN HENRY: I'm scared. Where's Honey? **
- (20) BERENICE: Who knows? I'm scared, too. With Honey crazy and loose like this—and Frankie run off with a suitcase and her papa's pistol. I feel like every nerve been picked out of me.
- (21) JOHN HENRY [holding out his seashell and stroking Berenice]: You want to listen to the ocean?
[The curtain falls.]

* "Candy" is John Henry.

** "Honey" is Berenice's nephew.

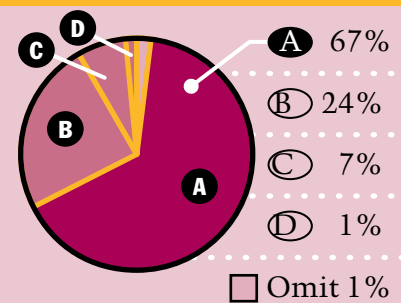
Sample Question 1 (Item 1 in Block)

Beginning with multiple choice questions that required students to scan the script was a means of creating context for the rest of the exercises. This question measures students' abilities to analyze a script for technical information relevant to creating an environment on stage. The question was scored either correct or incorrect. The correct answer is A.

Based on the script, which of the following objects are necessary for the scene?

- A Suitcase, chair, drawer, seashell
- B Car, screen door, candle, pistol
- C Car, suitcase, bride's dress, couch
- D Couch, lamp, table, umbrella

Percentage of Eighth Graders Answering Correctly: 67%



NOTE: The omit percentage reported includes student refusals, blank or multiple responses, and illegible or otherwise unscorable responses.

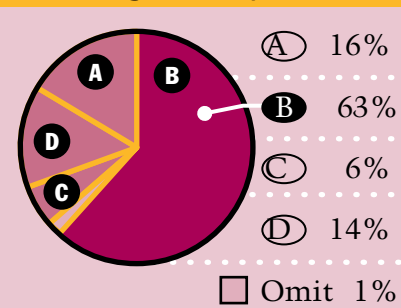
Sample Question 2 (Item 2 in Block)

This question measures students' abilities to analyze a script for technical information relevant to costuming. The question was scored either correct or incorrect. The correct answer is B.

Which of the following is NOT information that could be shown through the costumes in the play?

- A How wealthy the characters are
- B How much the characters like each other
- C What time period the play is set in
- D How hot or cold it is where the characters are

Percentage of Eighth Graders Answering Correctly: 63%



NOTE: The omit percentage reported includes student refusals, blank or multiple responses, and illegible or otherwise unscorable responses.



Sample Question 3 (Item 3 in Block)

This extended constructed-response item measures students' abilities to analyze a script for technical information relevant to lighting, and then to apply that analysis to creating an effect on stage. Responses were scored with a four-level scoring guide that allowed for two levels of partial credit. The sample student responses below represent a Partial score, an Essential score, and the highest score, Extensive.

Sample Student Response Receiving a Score of Partial

Identify two places in the script where special lighting is necessary. Write the line numbers of these places below.

Line #: 12

Line #: 14

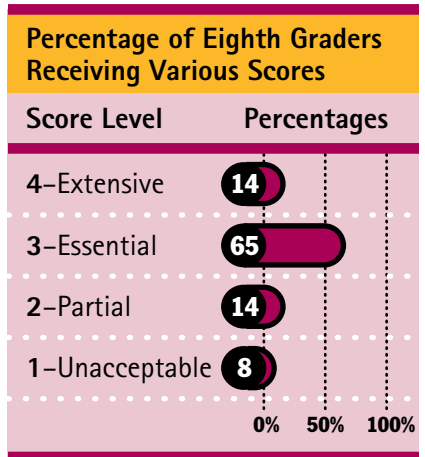
Describe the kind of light that is appropriate for each place you have identified.

12 would need something like thunderstorms

14 would have lights cut.

Explain specifically how one of the kinds of light you described would be created for a stage play.

Just make it dark. you do this
by turning off the lights.



NOTES: Percentages do not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Of the 8 percent of student responses in the lowest score level, 1 percent consists of omits and otherwise unscorable responses.

Partial. Students at level 2 showed an ability to accurately read the script but often proposed plans that were vaguely stated or problematic. "Turning off the lights" indicates a lack of knowledge about how to create specific lighting effects, and a lack of thought about how the actors will see on a dark stage.



Sample Student Response Receiving a Score of Essential

Identify two places in the script where special lighting is necessary. Write the line numbers of these places below.

Line #: 12

Line #: 6

Describe the kind of light that is appropriate for each place you have identified.

In 12 the lights go out suddenly,
In 6 the lights flash to make } bright
it look like a lightning } flash
storm.

Explain specifically how one of the kinds of light you described would be created for a stage play.

In twelve the lights should
be cut out quickly.

Sample Student Response Receiving a Score of Extensive

Identify two places in the script where special lighting is necessary. Write the line numbers of these places below.

Line #: 12

Line #: 6

Describe the kind of light that is appropriate for each place you have identified.

For line 12 the lights must be
dimmed almost to where it is
completely dark, but there needs to
be light for the actors to see. On
line 6 I would use a strobe light to represent
lightning

Explain specifically how one of the kinds of light you described would be created for a stage play.

On line 6 I would put two
strobe lights on each side of the
stage backstage and turn them
on and off during that specific
time.

Essential. Students at the Essential level gave responses that were somewhat more specific and that showed more understanding of how to create lighting effects. This student includes a general plan in the description area of the response, referring to flashing the lights to create a lightning effect for line 6 of the script.

Extensive. Students at the highest level gave responses that showed a good understanding of stage lighting and occasionally used theatre-specific vocabulary. This student shows a good grasp of technical theatre. The student suggests dimming lights for line 12 but, unlike lower-level responses, knows that the actors must be able to see on a dim stage. The student also knows where to locate strobe lights and how to use them to create a lightning effect.



Sample Question 4 (Item 5 in Block)

This extended constructed-response item measures students' abilities to make directorial choices. Students are asked to imagine that they are directing the scene in the script, and to focus on how they would utilize the script to direct the actress playing Frankie to use her body, face, and voice to convey her character. Responses were scored with a four-level scoring guide that allowed for two levels of partial credit. The sample student responses below represent a Partial score, an Essential score, and the highest score, Extensive.

Sample Student Response Receiving a Score of Partial

Now turn back to page 2 and reread lines 1-6 in the script. As you read, focus on the character of Frankie. Imagine that you are directing your own production of this scene.

Think about the character of Frankie. Based on Frankie's lines and the stage directions, what would you want the actress playing Frankie to communicate through her body, face, and voice?

Describe in detail how you would have the actress playing Frankie use her body, face, and voice to communicate what her character is like and how her character is feeling to an audience. Make specific references to the script to support and explain your ideas.

Body:

Thin and dark skinned.

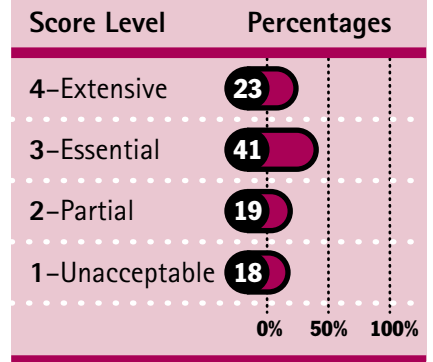
Face:

puzzled, thoughtful.

Voice:

High but very soft,

Percentage of Eighth Graders Receiving Various Scores



NOTES: Percentages do not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Of the 18 percent of student responses in the lowest score level, 3 percent consists of omits and otherwise unscorable responses.

Partial. While students at the Partial level were able to identify traits of Frankie's character, they often did not link those traits or feelings to the script in order to identify the motivation of the character. Further, the response "thin and dark skinned" suggests that the student does not understand what it means to direct the actress in terms of use of the body.



Sample Student Response Receiving a Score of Essential

Now turn back to page 2 and reread lines 1-6 in the script. As you read, focus on the character of Frankie. Imagine that you are directing your own production of this scene.

Think about the character of Frankie. Based on Frankie's lines and the stage directions, what would you want the actress playing Frankie to communicate through her body, face, and voice?

Describe in detail how you would have the actress playing Frankie use her body, face, and voice to communicate what her character is like and how her character is feeling to an audience. Make specific references to the script to support and explain your ideas.

Body:

The actress playing Frankie would be slim with long brown hair. She would be wearing a 3/4 dress and brown lace shoes.

Face:

Frankie's face would be stern because she knows what she is doing.

Voice:

Frankie's voice would be loud and stern she knows what she is doing so she must sound confident and certain.

Essential. Students at the Essential level gave responses that showed more perception of the relationship between Frankie's lines in the script and what the actress ought to do to convey those lines. However, their responses were fairly general. This student also does not understand what is meant by directing the actress to use her body to convey her character.



Sample Student Response Receiving a Score of Extensive

Now turn back to page 2 and reread lines 1-6 in the script. As you read, focus on the character of Frankie. Imagine that you are directing your own production of this scene.

Think about the character of Frankie. Based on Frankie's lines and the stage directions, what would you want the actress playing Frankie to communicate through her body, face, and voice?

Describe in detail how you would have the actress playing Frankie use her body, face, and voice to communicate what her character is like and how her character is feeling to an audience. Make specific references to the script to support and explain your ideas.

Body:

She must make bold gestures to indicate her superiority to all the other characters

Face:

an angry face as if she had taken the stern expression from an older man her lip pointed out and her chin wrinkled also her eyebrows knitted.

Voice:

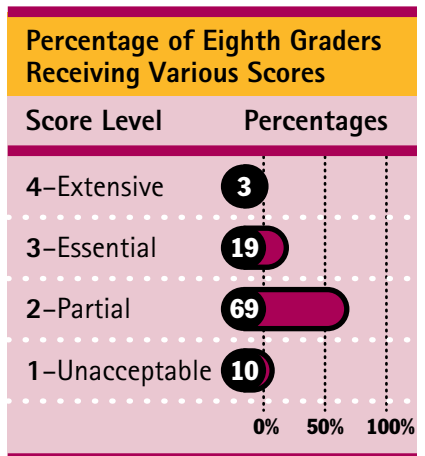
welling very bellowing like. And she attempts to sound like a gruff man.

Extensive. High-level responses such as this one demonstrate a relatively clear understanding of what it means to direct an actor to use his or her body, face, and voice. The student refers to bold gestures to show Frankie's sense of superiority and is quite specific about how the actress ought to use her face to convey anger. The quality of most responses suggested that students had had little exposure to directing.



Sample Question 5 (Item 7 in Block)

This extended constructed-response item measures students' abilities to make design choices to communicate mood and locale to an audience. Again, students are asked to imagine that they are directing the scene, but this time they are to determine how to create a set that will capture the scene's mood. Responses were scored with a four-level scoring guide that allowed for two levels of partial credit. The sample student responses below represent a Partial score, an Essential score, and the highest score, Extensive.



NOTES: Percentages do not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Of the 10 percent of student responses in the lowest score level, 2 percent consists of omits and otherwise unscorable responses.

Sample Student Response Receiving a Score of Partial

Imagine you were directing a production of the play. What mood would you want the set for this scene to communicate to the audience?

I would want to set a unhappy mood because Freddie would be mad, and everyone else sad, and scared.

Describe what you would want the set to look like in order to create this mood. Be specific about the details you would include, and explain how the set and details would contribute to the mood.

I would have Freddie's mom looking depressed, and laying her head on the table. Everybody else would be looking at the ground, with a sad or scared look on their face. John Henry would have this little scared or frightened look on his face.

Sample Student Response Receiving a Score of Essential

Imagine you were directing a production of the play. What mood would you want the set for this scene to communicate to the audience?

The scene is supposed to be very sad, morose, gloomy, Even a little spooky because of the storm.

Describe what you would want the set to look like in order to create this mood. Be specific about the details you would include, and explain how the set and details would contribute to the mood.

The lighting should be dim. The furniture is very old and dingy. Dark colors would be in the set - nothing bright.

Partial. Students at this level either listed set elements for a kitchen with little attention to mood, or if they understood the mood, as shown in this response, they did not demonstrate an understanding of set elements. This student confuses creating a stage set with positioning the actors on the stage.

Essential. As with many responses at the level, the mood is accurately identified and an accurate but general description of some set elements is offered.



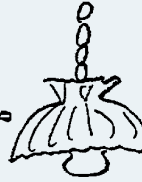
Sample Student Response Receiving a Score of Extensive

Imagine you were directing a production of the play. What mood would you want the set for this scene to communicate to the audience?

a somber almost scary
scene indicating the child
has left and there is worry

Describe what you would want the set to look like in order to create this mood. Be specific about the details you would include, and explain how the set and details would contribute to the mood.

dirty pots and dishes etc neglect
Wilted ^{in house} flowers - happy times forgotten
Simple house. Not elaborate
Flowered wall paper w/ small
flowers that are earthy hues.
⊗ Natural wood paneling beige
tile floors large tile a glass lamp
hanging above the table with
a checkered tablecloth. Leaky
roof metal pots used to catch
water. Water stains on ⊗ ceiling.
Cracked wall, Black telephone
w/ no stand. Dead tree outside
window.



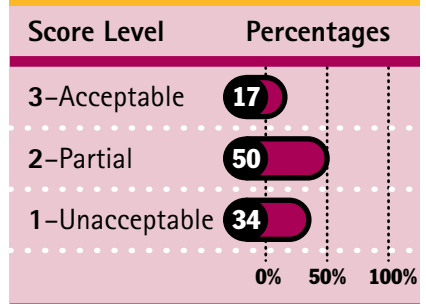
Extensive. This student shows an impressive grasp of both mood and how to convey it. The student supplies a thorough list of set elements that even includes a reference to what the audience would be able to see outside the kitchen window. Set choices like wilted flowers and dirty dishes are connected to subtle moods, such as past happy times and current neglect. A small percentage of students received an Extensive score, indicating that the question was challenging for eighth graders.



Sample Question 6 (Item 8 in Block)

After students wrote their set descriptions, they were asked to further demonstrate their stage-setting abilities by drawing a ground plan. Students were given specific directions to include and label off-stage areas and where the audience would sit. They were also instructed to include the elements called for in the script. They were supplied with graph paper to draw on. Responses were scored with a three-level scoring guide that allowed for partial credit. The sample student responses below represent an Unacceptable score, a Partial score, and the highest score, Acceptable.

Percentage of Eighth Graders Receiving Various Scores

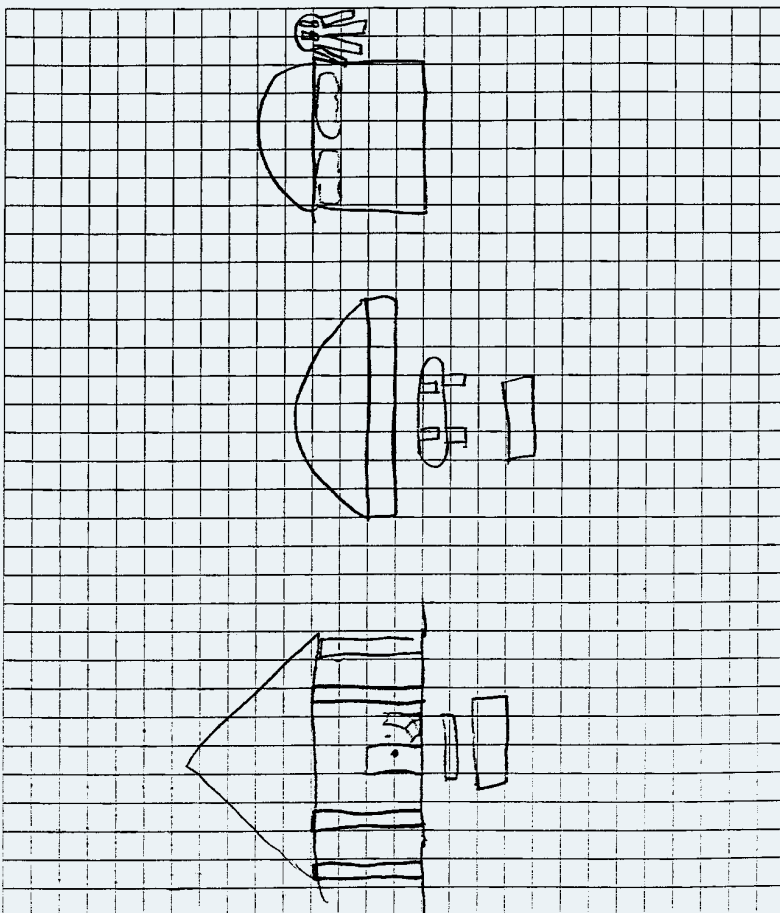


NOTES: Percentages do not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Of the 34 percent of student responses in the lowest score level, 9 percent consists of omits and otherwise unscorable responses.

Sample Student Response Receiving a Score of Unacceptable

Draw your ground plan for the set on this page.

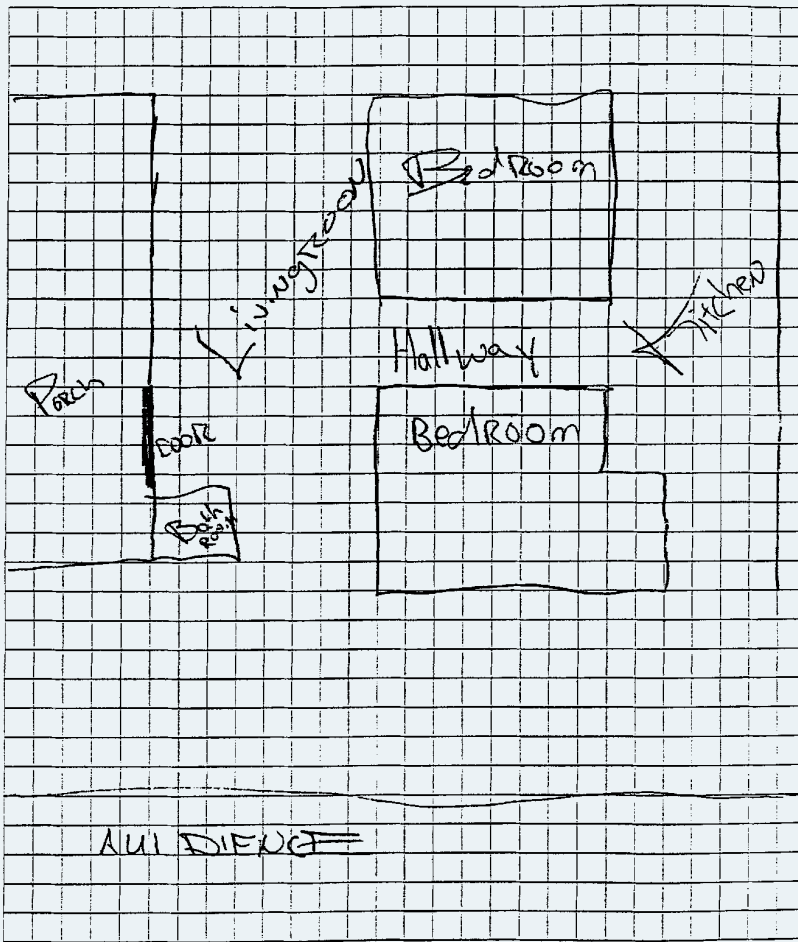


Unacceptable. Unacceptable responses such as this one indicated no understanding of a theatre space or of how to do a ground plan.



Sample Student Response Receiving a Score of Partial

Draw your ground plan for the set on this page.

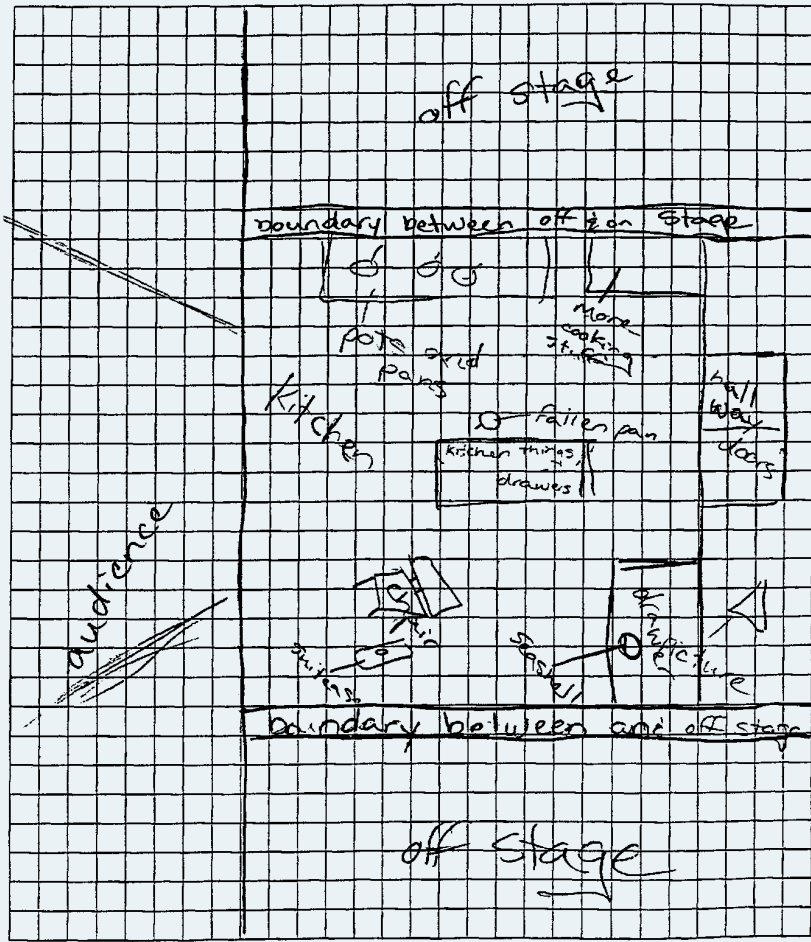


Partial. Students at this level indicated some understanding of a theatre space but made a number of characteristic errors. Although this student attempts to create a full set, he or she does not realize that walls have been indicated that would block the view of the audience.



Sample Student Response Receiving a Score of Acceptable

Draw your ground plan for the set on this page.



Acceptable. The students that received this score showed a solid understanding of how to create a stage set and draw a ground plan. This student has, as required, correctly marked the off-stage areas and the area for the audience. Furthermore, he or she has understood that the scene is set in the kitchen, and supplied set pieces suitable for that room. Finally, the student has been careful to arrange the set so that the audience's view of the stage area and the actors would be quite clear.



Figure 3.4



Sample Questions and Student Responses from the "1000 Cranes" Block are found on the CD-ROM version of this report.



Figure 3.5



Sample Questions and Student Responses from the "Jezebel" Block are found on the CD-ROM version of this report.



Part Two

The Theatre Responding Item Map and Student Profile

Reporting the Theatre Assessment Results

In this section, overall summaries of Responding results and their relationships to student-reported background variables are featured.

The overall summaries deal with Responding and Creating/Performing results separately. While the knowledge and skills students draw upon to Create, Perform, and Respond in theatre do overlap and inform one another, it is plausible that some students will Create and Perform but not Respond well, and vice versa. To do justice to differing abilities among students, results for Creating/Performing and Responding exercises are summarized separately.⁴

The Theatre Responding Scale

The theatre assessment measured students' Responding abilities with both short and extended constructed-response questions and multiple-choice questions. Item Response Theory (IRT) methods were used to produce a scale that summarizes the results from these questions.⁵ The scale ranges from 0 to 300. Item Response Theory (IRT) is a set of statistical models useful in summarizing student performance across a collection of test exercises requiring similar knowledge and skills. In the context of the theatre assessment, IRT methods were used to create a summarizing scale that relates the probability of students doing well or badly on the theatre assessment Responding exercises to their general Responding abilities (abilities to analyze, describe, and interpret theatrical works).

To give meaning to the levels of the Responding scale, it is useful to illustrate the kinds of questions that students at particular scale score

levels of performance can answer correctly. Figure 3.6 presents this illustration, called an "item map," for the Responding scale. An item map is a visual representation that compares questions with scale scores and indicates which kinds of questions students can likely answer correctly at each level on the scale. Constructed-response questions are shown in regular type and multiple-choice questions are shown on the item map in italics. The position of a constructed-response question on the item map represents the scale score attained by students who had at least a 65 percent probability of reaching a given score level on that question. The position of a multiple-choice question on the item map represents the scale score attained by students who had at least a 74 percent probability of correctly answering that question.

An example of how to interpret the item map may be helpful. On Figure 3.6, a four-option multiple-choice question about identifying objects necessary for a stage set based on a script maps at the 156

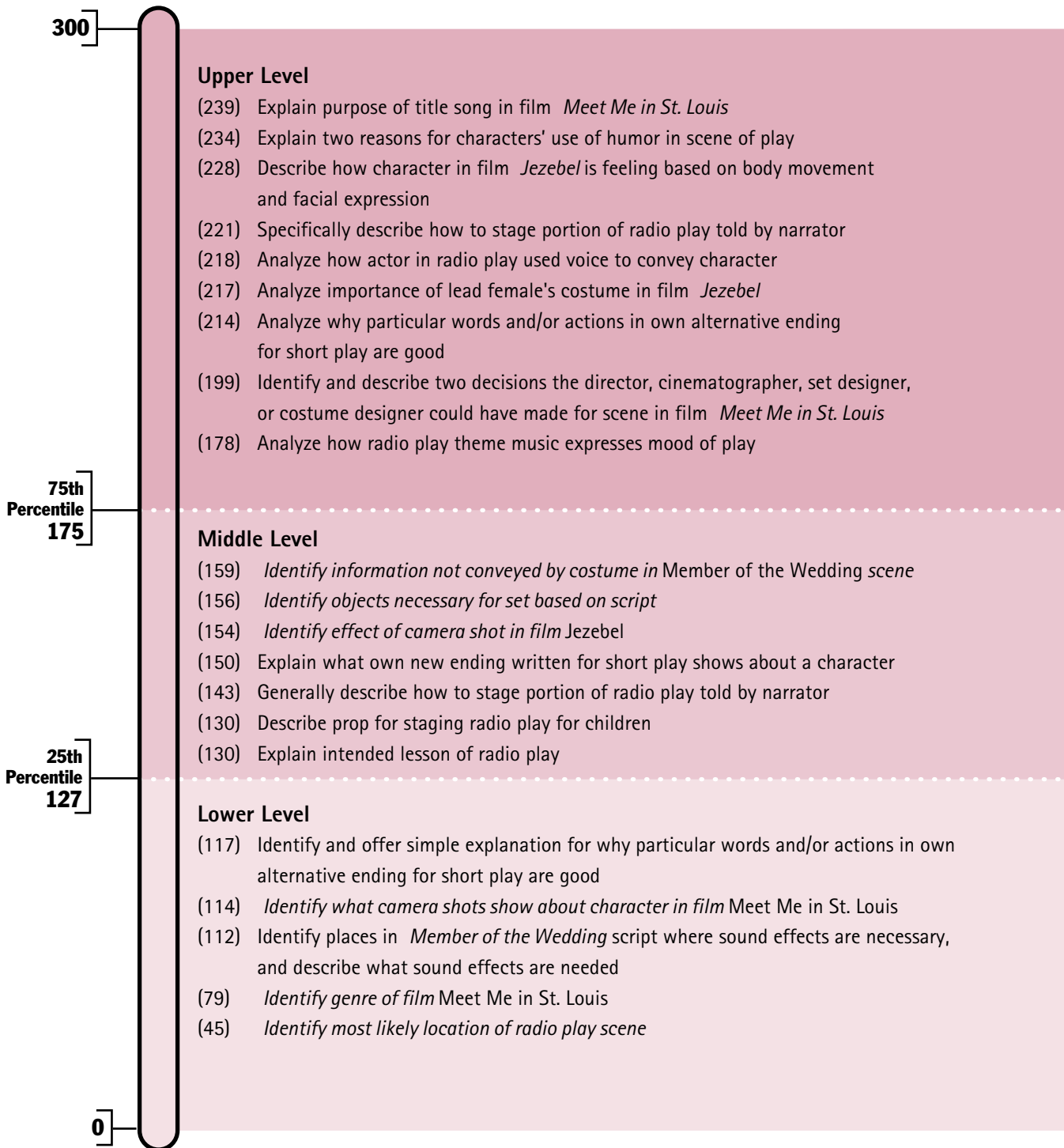


4 Furthermore, a measurement requirement for summarizing student responses to different exercises together is that those exercises measure the same or similar knowledge and skills. The range of theatre knowledge and skills is very wide. Knowledge and skills are also related in subtle and various ways in their applications to Creating/Performing and Responding. These factors diminish the possibility that the processes, in strict measurement terms, utilize knowledge and skills in ways similar enough to be summarized on a single scale.

5 A large number of these questions asked students to make creative choices for staging performances. While many of these exercises did fit on the Responding scale, some did not. Apparently, this group of questions was measuring knowledge and skills different from those being measured by other Responding exercises. This subset of exercises was therefore not included in the Responding scale, but in the overall summary of Creating/Performing results.

Figure 3.6

**Map of Selected Questions on the NAEP Theatre
Responding Scale: Grade 8**



NOTE: Italic type indicates a multiple-choice question. Regular type indicates a constructed-response question.
SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1997 Arts Assessment.

point on the scale. This means that students with theatre Responding scale scores at or above 156 were likely to answer this question correctly – that is, they have at least a 74 percent chance of doing so. Put slightly differently, this question was answered correctly by at least 74 of every 100 students scoring at or above the 156-scale score level. This does not mean that students at or above the 156 scale score always would have answered this question correctly, or that students below the 156 scale score always would have answered it incorrectly. Rather, the percentage of students who can successfully answer the question depends on their overall ability as measured on the theatre Responding scale.

As another example, consider the constructed-response question that maps at a scale score of 217 on Figure 3.6. This question asked students to analyze the importance of the lead female's costume for a scene in the film *Jezebel*. Scoring of responses to this question allowed for partial credit by using a three-level scoring guide. Mapping a question at the 217 scale score indicates that at least 65 percent

of the students performing at or above this point were likely to have achieved a score of 3 (“Acceptable”) on the question. Among students with lower scores, less than 65 percent were likely to have given acceptable responses to the question.

In Figure 3.6, there are two occasions when points on the Responding scale represent different scores achieved by students for the same question. For example, the exercise that maps at a scale score of 214 indicates that at least 65 percent of students performing at or above this point were likely to have been able to analyze the good qualities of words and/or actions in an alternative ending they wrote for a script. Hence, these students were likely to have achieved a score of 3 for this exercise. However, at the 117 point on the scale, a lower score of 2 for the same question is represented; i.e., at least 65 percent of the students performing at or above 117 on the Responding scale were likely to have been able to identify what was good about their alternative endings and offer a simple explanation as to why (versus an analysis).

The Theatre Responding Item Map

As explained above, the NAEP theatre scale, ranging from 0 to 300, summarizes the overall Responding score results of students. The following descriptions of students' Responding knowledge and skills in theatre are based on sets of questions that were answered successfully by students performing within three ranges on the scale. These ranges represent lower-, middle-, and upper-level performances based on percentiles.⁶ (These ranges are also visually represented on the item map in Figure 3.6.)

6 A percentile is a scale location below which a specified percentage of the population scored. For example, the 25th percentile as given in Figure 3.6 is 127. Twenty-five percent of students had scale scores lower than 127. Similarly, the 75th percentile as shown in Figure 3.6 is 175. Seventy-five percent of the students had scale scores lower than 175. Equivalently, 25 percent of the students had scale scores at or above 175.

Students in the Lower Range of the Responding Scale

Students who were in the lower range of the theatre Responding scale (points 0 to 127) were able to make simple inferences based on visual (film) and aural (audiotape) information about character and location. They showed sufficient knowledge to identify appropriate sound effects needed for the staging of a short script and displayed a rudimentary understanding of the purpose of the title song in the film *Meet Me in St. Louis*. They were also able to identify the genre of that film. They demonstrated an initial understanding of what was good about an alternative ending they were asked to write for a short play.

Students in the Middle Range of the Responding Scale

Students who were in the middle range of the theatre Responding scale (points 128 to 175) were able to make inferences based on scripts, film, and audiotape about props and costumes necessary for staging performances. They were able to explain the intended lesson of a radio play, describe in general terms how to stage a portion of that play told by a narrator, and show an initial understanding of how an actor in that play used his voice to convey character. They also demonstrated an ability to explain what an alternative ending they were asked to write for a short play

communicated about one of the characters. These students were able to identify the effect of a camera shot in the film *Jezebel*, and showed some understanding of how the characters in that film used action and facial expression to convey feeling.

Students in the Upper Range of the Responding Scale

Students who were in the upper range of the theatre Responding scale (points 176 to 300) were able to make complex inferences based on scripts, film, and audiotape about character, set, and costume. They demonstrated an ability to analyze and explain the suitability of the theme music for a radio play, how to stage a portion of that play told by a narrator, and how an actor in that play used his voice to convey character. They were able to analyze why particular words and/or actions in an alternative ending they were asked to write for a short play were good, and to explain the use of humor in that play. Students in the upper range could also analyze the importance of the lead female's costume in *Jezebel*, and how characters in that film used action and facial expression to convey feeling. Additionally, these students were able to explain what elements made a scene in another medium similar in mood to a scene from Carson McCuller's play *Member of the Wedding*.

Profile of Students' Theatre Experiences

Figure 3.7 provides some context for understanding the range of student performance represented on the item map and described above, by "profiling" students who fell into the lower, middle, and upper ranges on the theatre Responding scale.⁷ The profile represents these students in terms of their own descriptions of their theatre studies. As part of the NAEP 1997 Theatre Assessment, students were asked a series of questions about the nature and extent of their theatre instruction, as well as their theatre-related experiences outside of school. The results of these questions provide a picture of the sorts of activities students do when learning and engaging in theatre.

An examination of the profile reveals a common pattern: in-school activity is positively associated with student performance. A significantly larger percentage of students in the upper level of the Responding scale had acted in live theatre productions in school and had received classroom instruction in acting than the percentages of students in the middle and lower levels of the responding scale. Also, for both



7 The lower group comprised students whose scores fell into the lowest 25 percent of the population. The middle group comprised students whose scores fell into the middle 50 percent of the population. The upper group comprised students whose scores fell into the highest 25 percent of the population.

variables, the percentage of students in the middle level of the scale was significantly larger than the percentage of students in the lower level of the scale. Similarly, the percentages of students in the upper level of the scale involved with technical work in live theatre productions in school, and who had received classroom instruction in technical theatre, were significantly larger than the percentages of students in the lower level. Additionally, a significantly larger percentage of students in the middle level had received classroom instruction in

technical theatre than the percentage of students in the lower level who had received such instruction. Finally, the percentage of students in the upper level who had received classroom instruction in making films or video was significantly larger than the percentage of students in the lower level of the Responding scale.

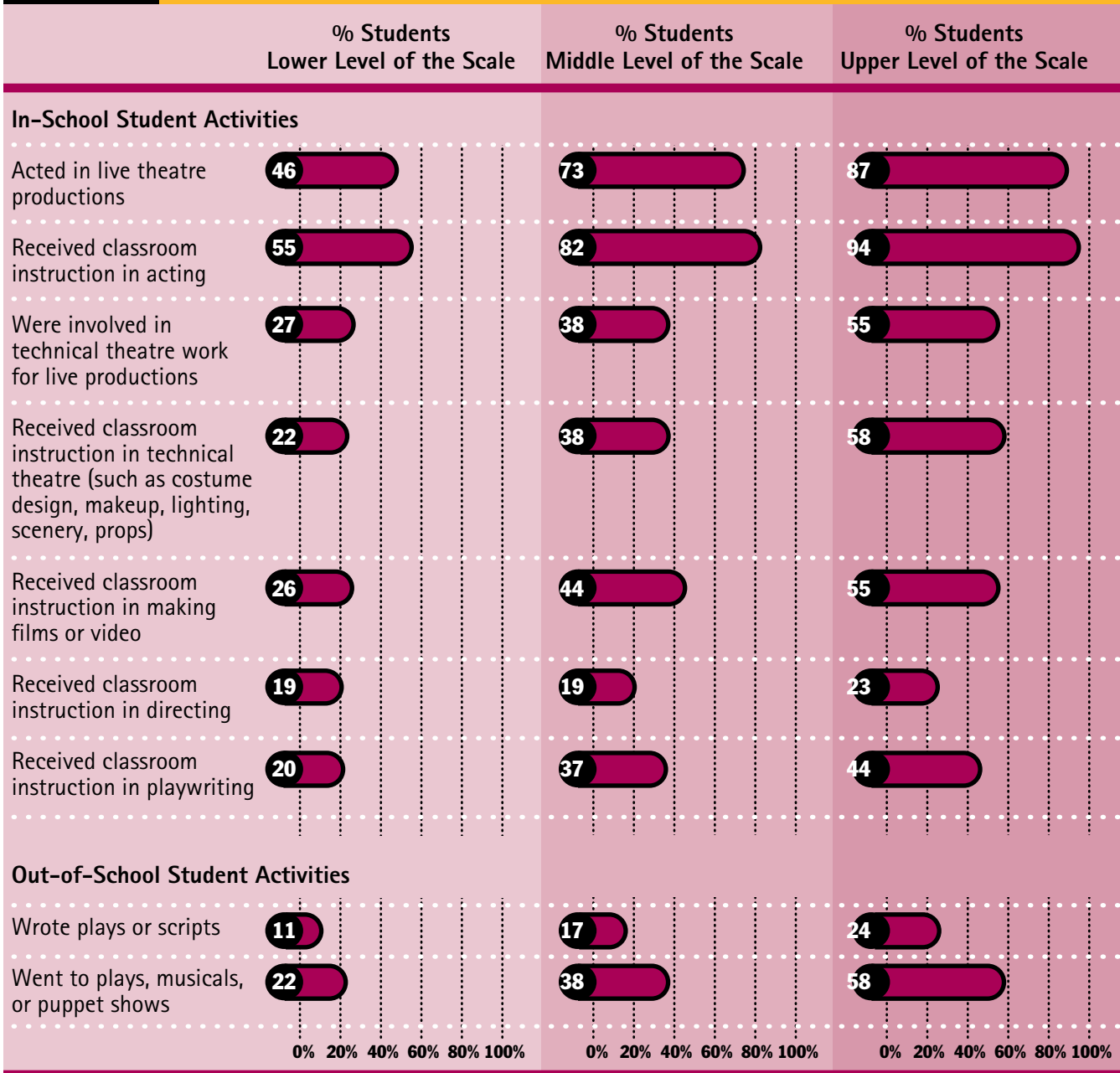
Interestingly, there were no significant differences among percentages of students in the lower, middle, and upper levels of the scale who had received classroom instruction in directing and playwriting. However, the percent-

age of students in the upper level who had written plays or scripts outside of school was significantly larger than that of students in the lower level of the scale. Finally, the percentage of students in the upper level who attended plays, musicals, or puppet shows on their own was significantly larger than the percentages of students in the lower and middle levels who attended these events on their own, as was the percentage of students in the middle level versus students in the lower level.



Figure 3.7

Theatre Responding Profile of Percentages of Students in Lower, Middle, and Upper Levels of the Responding Scale, by Selected In- and Out-of-School Activities



SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1997 Arts Assessment.



Relationships Between Student Theatre Creating/Performing and Responding Results

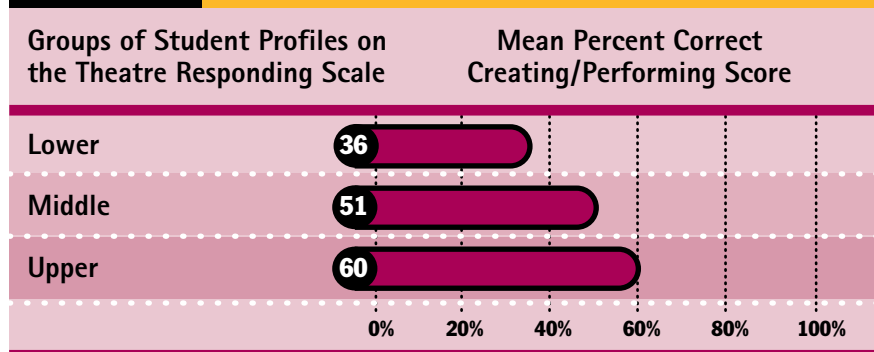
As previously explained, results for student Creating/Performing and Responding are not summarized together. However, to explore potential relationships between student results for the different processes, the average Creating/Performing scores for students in the low, middle, and high ranges of

the Responding scale are presented in Figure 3.8 below. As shown in the figure, there is a positive relationship between student performance on the Responding portion of the assessment and their Creating/Performing scores. Creating/Performing scores of students in the middle level of the Responding scale were significantly higher than scores of students on the lower level of the scale, and scores of students on the upper level of the Responding scale were significantly higher than

scores of students on the middle and lower levels of the scale. This is interesting in light of the view that knowledge and skills necessary for Responding to theatre overlap with those necessary for Creating and Performing in theatre.

More detailed conclusions are not within the scope of this Report Card. Further research would be necessary to determine precisely how Creating/Performing and Responding abilities are related.

Figure 3.8 Creating/Performing Mean for Lower, Middle, and Upper Responding Score Groups



SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1997 Arts Assessment.



Part Three

Sample Tasks from the Theatre Creating/Performing Blocks

Students engaging in the Creating/Performing tasks were videotaped at the time of the assessment administration to allow for later scoring. To obtain permission to videotape grade 8 students, it was necessary to have parents of students sign release forms that affirmed that the videotapes would not be used for any purposes other than scoring. So as not to violate confidentiality, Educational Testing Service (ETS) hired a group of grade 8 students with backgrounds similar to those of the students in the special theatre sample. These students were carefully directed to capture the abilities of the students seen in the assessment.⁸ Their performances were videotaped and can be viewed on the CD-ROM version of this *Report Card*. The descriptions of performances appearing on the CD-ROM refer exclusively to the students hired by ETS.

Their performances reflect both the weak and the strong Creating/Performing work seen in

the assessment. As every attempt was made to replicate the nature of the performances seen in the assessment, explanations for scores should be understood to be generalizable to the students who took the assessment. Sometimes only portions of weaker performances are shown; readers should assume that these portions represent longer performances that did not change in quality. Samples of students' written self-evaluations of their performances are also shown on the CD. Since these were written by students videotaped during the assessment, they are not associated with the performances discussed in this report.

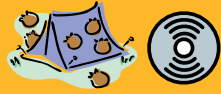
Students' performances for each task were measured with a number of scoring guides. Given the potential confusion resulting from describing the scores assigned to different students (each task included at least two students) for different scoring guides, tables are utilized to present scores students received and explanations for why those scores were assigned. The tables also describe

what each scoring guide in a task was intended to measure.

One scoring guide in each task was intended to capture students' abilities to portray character. During the scoring of theatre Creating/Performing, there was a great deal of discussion with regard to the difficulty of defining "character." Trainers and raters needed to be reminded that the assessment was designed to focus on broad characters as they are created in improvisational performance and exercises. It would be very difficult to assess the often subtle characters called for in theatre in any standardized way. Readers are asked to keep in mind the challenge in making judgments about character when encountering scores assigned to students.

⁸ The students were hired and directed by a member of the Theatre Assessment Development Committee, a theatre teacher of secondary school students. This teacher is also the theatre consultant to the NAEP theatre assessment project and was responsible for the development of many exercises and all scoring guides appearing in the theatre assessment.

Figure 3.9



Sample Questions and Student Responses from the “Camping” Block are found on the CD-ROM version of this report.



Figure 3.10



Sample Questions and Student Responses from the “Chocolate” Block are found on the CD-ROM version of this report.



Figure 3.11



Sample Questions and Student Responses from the “Improv/Props” Block are found on the CD-ROM version of this report.



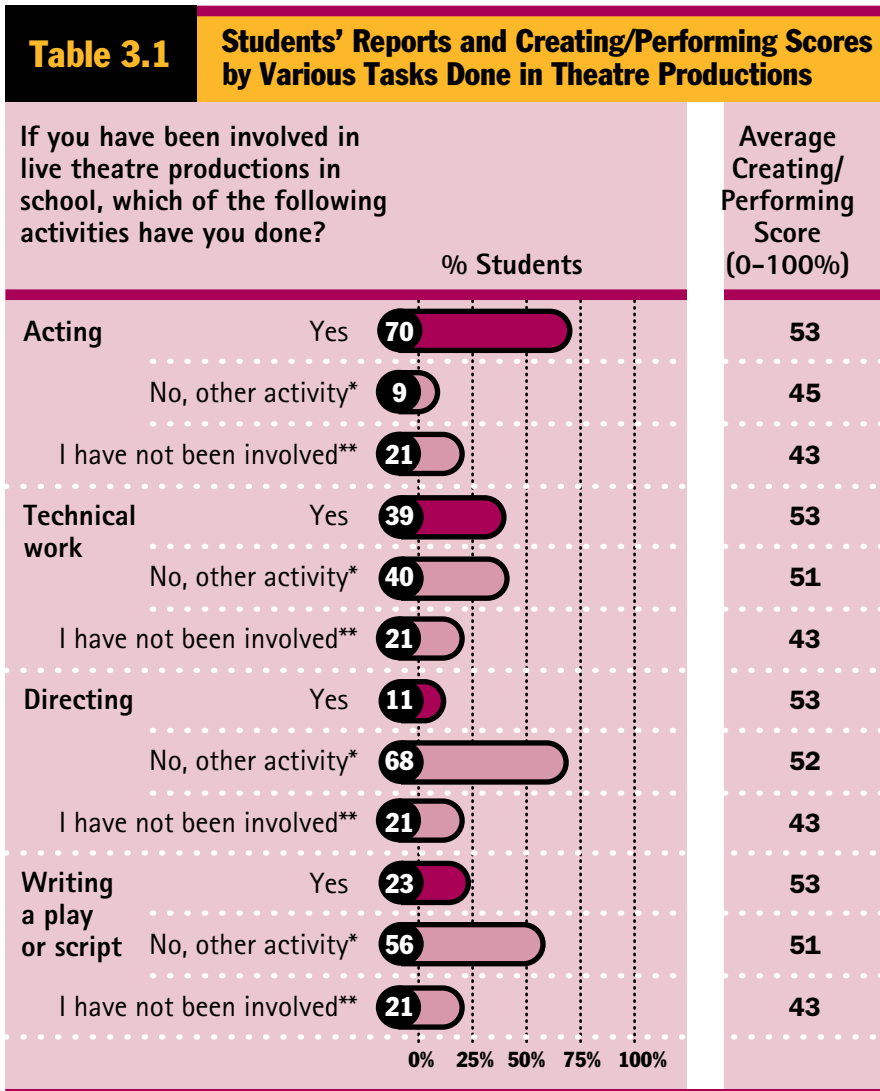
Part Four

Summarizing Theatre Creating/Performing Results

In this section, theatre Creating/Performing results are discussed in terms of total (or "aggregate") scores.⁹ These scores represent averages based on student performances on each Creating/Performing task. The relationships of these average scores to opportunity-to-learn variables are presented in Tables 3.1 to 3.5. As shown in the tables, there is often a positive relationship between these opportunity-to-learn variables and student Creating/Performing results. Students reporting greater opportunities to participate in and learn about theatre exhibited higher average Creating/Performing scores than students reporting fewer opportunities.

Activities in Live Productions at School

Table 3.1 features results on student involvement in live productions at school. Results are presented for four specific theatre activities: acting, technical work, directing and writing a play or script. For each activity the table presents percentages and average Creating/Performing scores for three groups of students: (1) students



NOTES: *The percentage and score in this row are representative of that portion of the sample that did not respond "Yes" to this activity, but did indicate involvement in one or more of the other activities in Table 3.1. For this series of background questions, respondents were to indicate only those statements that were applicable.

**The percentage and score in this row are representative of that portion of the sample that did not respond "Yes" to any of the activities in Table 3.1.

SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1997 Arts Assessment.



⁹ Creating/Performing tasks are not summarized using a standard NAEP scale. A measurement requirement for scaling assessment results is that there be a sufficient number of students taking a given group of exercises and a sufficient number of exercises of a given type to be scaled. This was not the case for the Creating/Performing exercises. Although they consumed far more assessment time than written exercises, there were fewer exercises to group together into a scale. Moreover, given complex administrative procedures associated with these blocks (such as videotaping responses and having students work in groups), each student took only one Creating/Performing task.

who engaged in that activity, (2) students who did not engage in that activity but did engage in one of the other activities listed, and (3) students who did not engage in any of the listed activities. As shown in the table, 70 percent of students had done acting in live productions in school. Thirty-nine percent of students had done technical work

and 23 percent had written a play or script in such productions. Relatively few students (11 percent) had directed.

Involvement in live productions had a positive relationship to average Creating/Performing scores. For each of the four activities, students who reported engaging in the activity had higher average Creating/Performing

scores than did students who had not engaged in any of the activities. Furthermore, for all activities except acting, students who engaged in at least one of the other activities also had higher Creating/Performing scores than students who had not been involved.

Classroom Instruction in Theatre

Table 3.2 features results on classroom instruction students had received in theatre. Results are presented for five specific activities. For each activity, the table presents percentages and average Creating/Performing scores for three groups of students: (1) students who had instruction in that activity, (2) students who did not have instruction in that activity but did have instruction in one of the other activities listed, and (3) students who did not have instruction in any of the listed activities.

As presented in Table 3.2, 78 percent of students indicated that they had received classroom instruction in acting. Approximately 40 percent had received instruction in making a film or video and/or in technical theatre. Fewer students (20 percent) had received instruction in directing.

Classroom instruction in theatre had a positive relationship to Average Creating/Performing scores. For

each of the five activities, students who reported instruction in the activity had higher average Creating/Performing scores than did students who had not received instruction in any of the activities. Furthermore, for all activities except acting, students who received instruction in at least one of the other activities also had higher Creating/Performing scores than students who had not.

Table 3.3 features the frequencies with which students were asked to engage in various theatre activities in school. Playing roles and reading a play or scene aloud were the most frequent activities. Thirty-six percent of students were asked to play roles at least once or twice a week, and 35 percent were asked to read a play or scene aloud at least once or twice a week. Twenty-nine percent of students were asked to improvise scenes at least once or twice a week, and 28 percent of students were asked to perform for an audience at least once or twice a week.

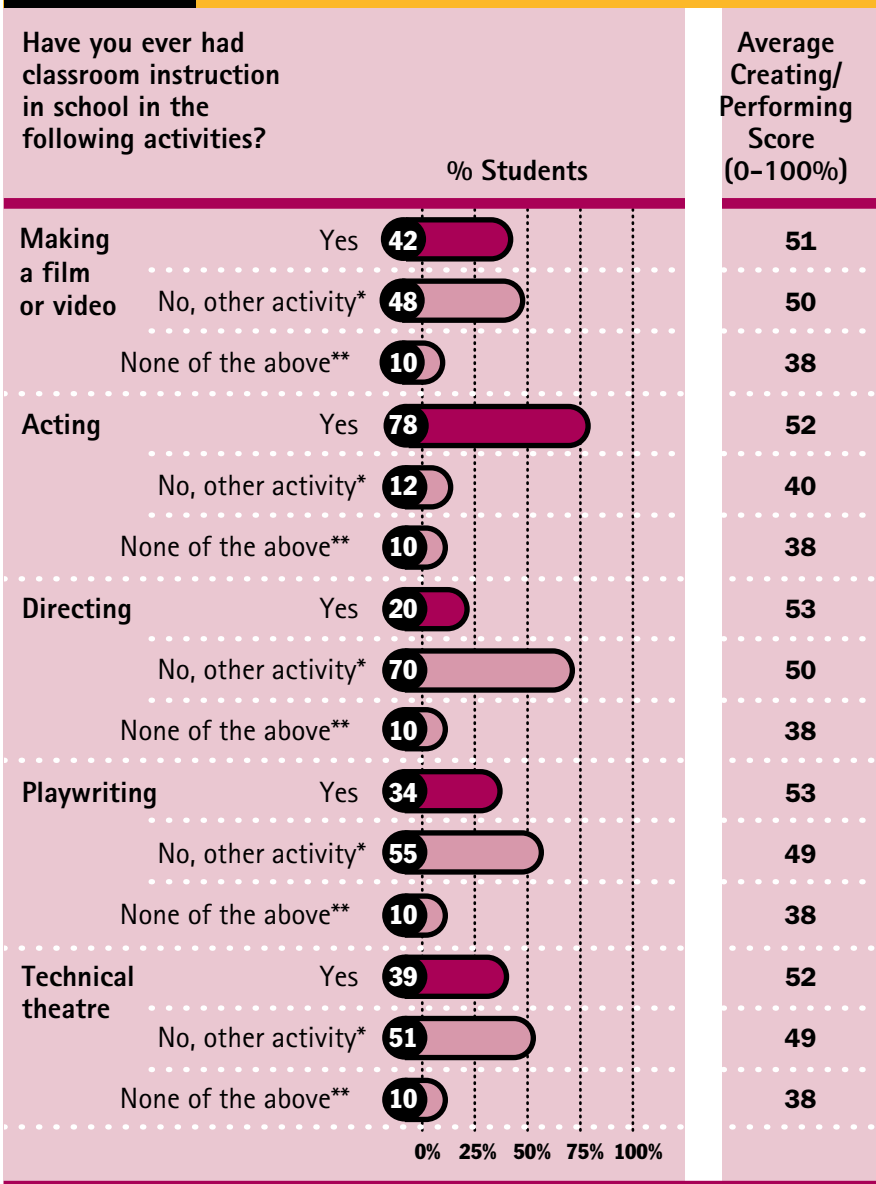
Relatively few students were asked to write a play or scene this

often (11 percent), although 22 percent of students were asked to do so once or twice a month. This was also the case for doing technical theatre; 12 percent of students were asked to do technical theatre at least once or twice a week, and 20 percent were asked to do technical theatre once or twice a month.

Again, exposure to theatre learning had a generally positive relationship to student Creating/Performing scores. Students who were asked to play roles at least once or twice a week or once or twice a month outperformed students who never or hardly ever were asked to do so. Students who were asked to improvise scenes at least once or twice a week had significantly higher Creating/Performing scores than did students who were never or hardly ever asked to do so. Further, the students who were asked to perform for an audience at least once or twice a week or once or twice a month outperformed their peers who were never or hardly ever asked to do so.

Table 3.2

Students' Reports and Creating/Performing Scores by Classroom Instruction for Various Theatre Activities



NOTES: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

*The percentage and score in this row are representative of that portion of the sample that did not respond "Yes" to this activity, but did indicate having instruction in one or more of the other activities in Table 3.2. For this series of background questions, respondents were to indicate only those statements that were applicable.

**The percentage and score in this row are representative of that portion of the sample that did not respond "Yes" to any of the activities in Table 3.2.

SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1997 Arts Assessment.



Table 3.3

Students' Reports and Creating/Performing Scores by the Frequency with Which They Engage in Various Theatre Activities

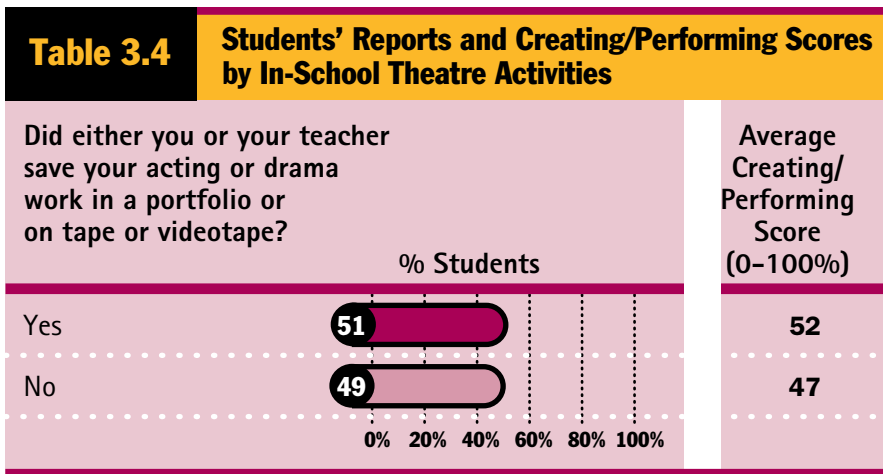
How often are you asked to do the following things in school?	Average Creating/Performing Score (0-100%)	Read a play or scene aloud	Average Creating/Performing Score (0-100%)
Play roles % Students		% Students	
At Least Once or Twice a Week 36	54	At Least Once or Twice a Week 35	52
Once or Twice a Month 22	51	Once or Twice a Month 28	51
Never or Hardly Ever 42	44	Never or Hardly Ever 37	46
0% 50% 100%		0% 50% 100%	
Improvise scenes % Students	Average Creating/Performing Score (0-100%)	Write a play or scene % Students	Average Creating/Performing Score (0-100%)
At Least Once or Twice a Week 29	55	At Least Once or Twice a Week 11	50
Once or Twice a Month 23	51	Once or Twice a Month 22	53
Never or Hardly Ever 49	46	Never or Hardly Ever 67	49
0% 50% 100%		0% 50% 100%	
Do technical theatre % Students	Average Creating/Performing Score (0-100%)	Perform for an audience % Students	Average Creating/Performing Score (0-100%)
At Least Once or Twice a Week 12	51	At Least Once or Twice a Week 28	53
Once or Twice a Month 20	53	Once or Twice a Month 32	53
Never or Hardly Ever 68	48	Never or Hardly Ever 40	45
0% 50% 100%		0% 50% 100%	

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1997 Arts Assessment.



Student' abilities to track the development of their own work over time in portfolios is of interest to arts educators. According to Table 3.4, 51 percent of students saved their acting or drama work in a portfolio, or had their work saved by a teacher. While students whose work was saved in portfolios appeared to have higher Creating/Performing scores than their peers whose work was not, those differences were not significant.



SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1997 Arts Assessment.



Out-of-School Theatre Activities

Table 3.5 features results for students who indicated whether they had or had not engaged in selected theatre activities outside of school.

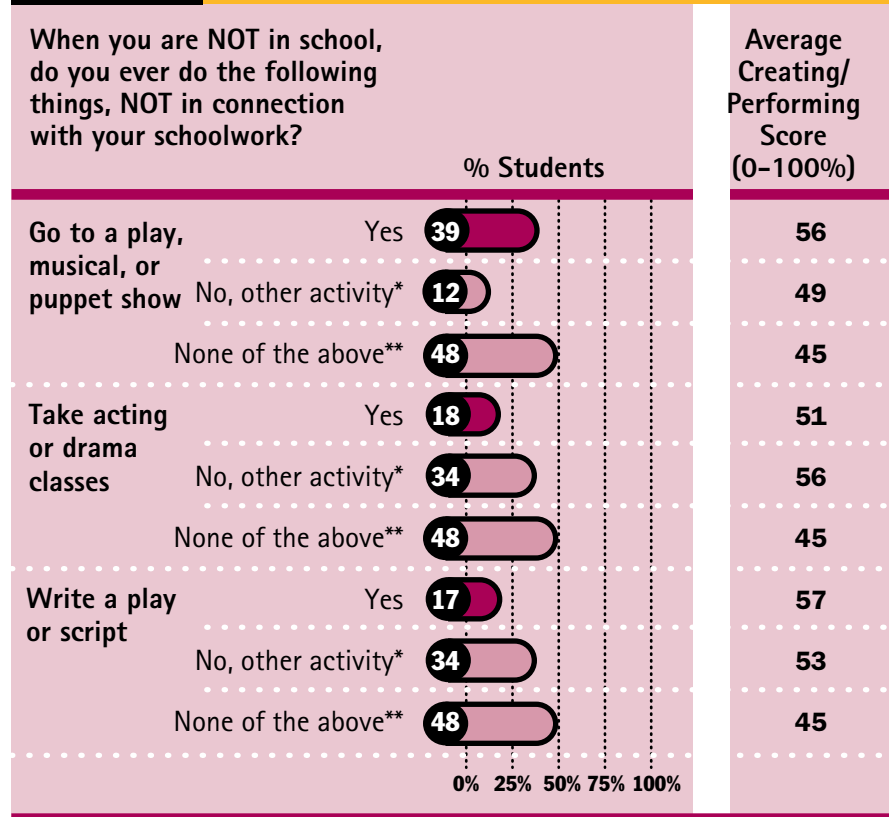
Results are presented for three activities. For each activity the table presents percentages and average Creating/Performing scores for three groups of students: (1) students who engaged in that activity, (2) students who did not engage in that activity but did engage in one of the other activities listed, and, (3) students who did not engage in any of the listed activities.

As shown in the table, 39 percent of students indicated that they had gone to a play, musical, or puppet show, while 18 percent indicated that they had taken acting or drama classes, and 17 percent that they had written a play or script.

For each of the three activities, with the exception of taking acting or drama classes, students who reported engaging in the activity had higher average Creating/Performing scores than did students who had not engaged in any of the activities. Furthermore, for all the activities, students who engaged in at least one of the other activities also had higher Creating/Performing scores than students who had not.

Table 3.5

Students' Reports and Creating/Performing Scores by Out-of-School Theatre Activities



NOTES: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

*The percentage and score in this row are representative of that portion of the sample that did not respond "Yes" to this activity, but did indicate doing one or more of the other activities in Table 3.5. For this series of background questions, respondents were to indicate only those statements that were applicable.

**The percentage and score in this row are representative of that portion of the sample that did not respond "Yes" to any of the activities in Table 3.5.

SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1997 Arts Assessment.



Summary

Chapter 3 presented different kinds of information about students' knowledge and skills in theatre, in addition to examining students' theatre educational experiences in (and out of) the classroom. Several points of interest emerged from this discussion.

Patterns of Student Performance¹⁰

Patterns of students' knowledge and skills in Responding and Creating/Performing varied. Some kinds of tasks seemed more accessible to students, and others more difficult for both Responding and Creating/Performing.

Responding

- More students could describe feelings conveyed by actors in dramatic performances, or what actors did with their faces, voices, or bodies, than could explain how actors used their faces, voices, and bodies to convey character and feeling. For example, 41 percent of students could describe the voice used by an actor in the *Bug Pleasing* radio play, and some of those students could describe one way the actor's voice conveyed his character. Fourteen percent were able to describe two ways the actor's voice conveyed his character. While 44 percent of students could describe the feelings conveyed by an actress in the film *Jezebel*, 10 percent were able to

explain one way in which the actress used her face or body to convey those feelings. (Two percent were able to explain more than one way in which the actress used her face and body to convey feeling.)

- More students could describe designs for costumes, sets, or other elements of staged productions than could link those elements to making an impression on an audience. For example, 34 percent of students were able to give clear and specific descriptions of a set piece they would design for a stage production of the *Bug Pleasing* radio play. Three percent were able to explain why one or more aspects of their designs would be suitable for an audience of children. Based on a script, 69 percent of students could list a few set elements for, or describe the mood of a scene from the Carson McCullers play *Member of the Wedding*. Nineteen percent were able to describe the mood correctly and list some set elements that would convey that mood.
- Students showed some knowledge of the technical elements of theatre. Sixty-five percent of students could offer reasonably accurate plans for how to create lighting effects for a scene in *Member of the Wedding*. Fifty percent were able to draw ground plans for a set of that scene that showed some

understanding of a theatre space. (Seventeen percent of students were able to draw complete and essentially error-free ground plans.)

- Students also showed some ability to analyze the text of the play *1,000 Cranes* in order to create brief scripts of their own. When asked to write an alternative ending for a short play, 35 percent of students were able to create solid endings that showed understanding of how the playwright presented his characters. Three percent of students were able to create endings that showed understanding of the playwright's intentions and greater script-writing abilities: for example, the capacity to create and resolve tension.

Creating/Performing

Each Creating/Performing task in the theatre assessment was scored with a number of different scoring guides. Students' abilities varied in terms of what aspects of their knowledge and skills were being scored, and to some extent according to task.

- Many students demonstrated a solid level of spatial awareness. For example, 89 percent of students showed clear spatial awareness in the Camping task, and 82 percent in the Improv/ Props task. These students for the most part avoided blocking their fellow actors and directed themselves toward an audience.

¹⁰ Some of the descriptions that follow refer to exercises and student responses found on the CD-ROM version of this report.

A smaller number of students were able to perform without ever blocking their partners or turning away from the audience; two percent of students were able to accomplish this in the Camping task.

- Students were also able to speak clearly and audibly in two of the tasks. Seventy-nine percent of students could be consistently heard and understood in Camping, and 93 percent in Improv/Props. However, 11 percent of students could be consistently heard and understood in Chocolate. It may have been challenging for students to both read an unfamiliar script and project their voices to an audience.
- Students' abilities to combine dialogue, action, and expression to communicate meaning to an audience varied across tasks. Sixty-seven percent of students demonstrated this ability most of the time in the Camping task, and two percent did all the time. In the Chocolate task, 30 percent of students demonstrated the ability to convey meaning (if only generally) most of the time, and six percent did all the time. Finally, 31 percent of students interpreted their lines in Improv/Props to convey meaning part of the time, while 12 percent succeeded in doing so all the time.
- Students' senses of ensemble varied with the task. The percentages of students who consistently listened and responded to one another were similar for the Camping and Chocolate tasks. In the Camping

task, 23 percent of students were able to work consistently well together. Nineteen percent were able to do so for the Chocolate task. However, while one percent of students were able to listen and respond consistently for the Improv/Props task, 77 percent of students were able to listen and respond part of the time. This may have been due to the challenging nature of creating a story and connections among actors with the abstract script for Improv/Props.

Self-Evaluation Responses

Chapter 3 also briefly explored students' responses to self-evaluation questions about their own performances. Part of the reason for this brevity lies in the sparse quality of student responses to these questions, even at the higher score levels. Many factors could account for this sparseness. Some very important ones could have been the lack of opportunity to engage in their performances more than once, or to view their own performances before writing about them. More research would be needed to explore fully the relationship between students' abilities to Create and Perform, and their capacities to evaluate their work in writing.

Students' In-School Theatre Activities

To create a context for examining students' Responding and Creating/Performing knowledge and skills, students' reports of their in-school (and out-of-school) theatre activities were explored in Chapter 3. For both Responding and

Creating/Performing, in-school activity was often positively associated with theatre achievement.

- Significantly larger percentages of students on the upper level of the Responding scale had acted in live theatre productions in school and had received classroom instruction in acting than the percentages of students in the middle and lower levels of the scale. Similarly, the percentages of students on the upper level of the scale involved with technical work in live theatre productions in school, and who had received classroom instruction in technical theatre were significantly higher than the percentages of students on the lower level of the scale. Finally, the percentages of students on the upper level of the scale who had received classroom instruction in making films or video was significantly larger than the percentage of students on the lower level of the scale.
- In Creating/Performing, students who indicated that they had done acting in live theatre productions in school outperformed their peers who indicated that they had not done so. Students who had received classroom instruction in playwriting and in acting outperformed their peers who had not. Similarly, students who were asked to play roles and perform for an audience in school outperformed those who never or hardly ever were asked to do so.