

Pittsburgh City Theatre Young Playwrights Program 2022-23 Evaluation Report

by

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University of Pittsburgh, 2024

Abstract

The Young Playwrights' Program is an annual grant-funded arts educational program for middle and high school students and teachers offered by City Theatre, located in Pittsburgh's South Side area. The program consists of in-school workshops for students and professional development sessions for teachers in collaboration with residential teaching artists contracted by City Theatre. Students also have the opportunity to develop their own playscripts and submit them to be produced into productions for the Young Playwrights' Festival in the fall. City Theatre emphasizes the public health significance of youth arts by offering them a platform to empower their unique voices, creating a safe, inclusive environment that helps build community, and providing a space for students to celebrate differences and build self-efficacy. Results indicated that overall satisfaction of the program was positive across students, teachers, and teaching artists. Additionally, City Theatre continues to offer the Young Playwrights' Program to students who have limited exposure of professional development opportunities in performance arts. General recommendations to improve program implementation include: (1) continue to target schools with higher rates of disparities and/or minority group populations, (2) provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate and share best practices, and (3) improve collaboration efforts between teaching artists and students.

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1.0 Introduction

Pittsburgh's City Theatre is a professional, non-profit performing arts organization that specializes in developing and producing contemporary plays. Established in June 1975 as the City Players by a company comprised primarily of Carnegie Mellon University graduates and funded by a Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) grant, the group gave free performances in schools, parks, and housing projects. In the late 1970s, the group changed its name to City Theatre.

City Theatre operates under an agreement among the League of Resident Theatres (LORT), the Actors' Equity Association (the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States), the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, and United Scenic Artists, and is a member of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for American theatre, and the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council. City Theatre's facilities include the 256-seat mainstage, the 110-seat Lester Hamburg Studio, and the Charles Morris Building, which houses two rehearsal halls, and costume, prop, and paint shops.

1.1 Young Playwrights Program

Federally funded through the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Intermediate Unit 1, the City Theatre Young Playwrights Program is a comprehensive arts education program that immerses students and teachers in the playwriting process with the guidance of a resident teaching artist. The program is aligned with Pennsylvania's Common Core and Academic Standards and is

eligible for 7th to 12th grade classroom teachers who teach in regions covered by Intermediate Unit 1 (Fayette, Greene, and Washington County), Intermediate Unit 4 (Butler, Lawrence, and Mercer County), and Intermediate Unit 7 (Westmoreland County).

Four major components make up the Young Playwrights program: 1) the Young Playwrights Teacher Institute and professional learning sessions, 2) in-school workshops, 3) the Young Playwrights Contest, and 4) the Young Playwrights Festival. Each component is described in detail below.

1.1.1 The Young Playwrights Teacher Institute and Professional Learning Sessions

Prospective classroom teachers who want to participate in the Young Playwrights' Program apply to participate by contacting Katie Trupiano, the Director of Education for City Theatre. Once the application period is over, Katie Trupiano makes the decision on which teachers receive the grant.

Classroom teachers who are new to the Young Playwrights Program are required to attend the Young Playwrights Teacher Institute, a professional learning opportunity focused on general play development and an orientation to program logistics and timeline of events. No new teachers joined the program in the 2022-23 program year, so this session was not offered.

At the start of the program, all teachers agreed to program guidelines that outline the items and services teachers receive and City Theatre's suggestions and expectations for implementation, evaluation, and data collection. Teachers and teaching artists, educators hired by the City Theatre to collaborate with classroom teachers, also received a copy of the Young Playwrights Resource Guide with instruction tips, guidance, activities, and ideas for preparing students and implementing the program.

Finally, for all teachers, professional learning sessions were provided before City Theatre productions on creative ways to incorporate playwriting and basic theatre skills in their classrooms. Relevant information related to the productions were also provided for program participants since they have the opportunity to observe City Theatre productions and discuss play development practices with production crew and actors.

1.1.2 In-School Workshops

In-school workshops were conducted by resident teaching artists who worked with classroom teachers and their students to provide 20 hours of classroom instruction, support, and reflection. Teaching Residencies consist of 13 hours of classroom instruction and 7 hours of individualized student conference time. The City Theatre considers past performance and fulfillment of expectations when inviting past participants to participate again. Workshops are customized to each teacher's classroom, and curriculum and in-class content can be adapted to classrooms focused on language arts, history, world cultures, science, and math. Residencies are recommended to begin early in the academic year so students may complete their plays for submission to the Young Playwrights Festival competition deadline at the end of March. These resident teaching artists are employed by City Theatre under a one-year contract and are required to provide 20 hours of classroom instruction per classroom teacher assigned with the teaching artist throughout the course of the program year. During the program, classroom teachers collaborate and co-teach with the resident teaching artists and provide additional instruction and support to students between teaching artist visits. Hands-on play-related workshops addressed ensemble-building, improvisation, basic theatre skills, monologue and dialogue writing, character creation, and other fundamentals.

Students also benefited from several additional activities including maintaining portfolios and journals to learn reflection and evaluation skills, composing and acting out scenes, receiving constructive peer feedback, participating in individual revision conferences with their teaching artist and/or classroom teacher, and attending the Young Playwrights Festival and a City Theatre production.

1.1.3 The Young Playwrights Contest

Each year, City Theatre provides students in southwestern Pennsylvania the opportunity to share their plays through the Young Playwrights Contest. City Theatre's Literary Committee reads and evaluates submitted scripts and selects several for production in the annual Young Playwrights Festival. Students with selected scripts are encouraged to develop their scripts with the assistance of professional dramaturgs (individuals within the theatre industry that provide research and development support to the theatre or production), directors, and actors. All students who submit scripts receive a written summary of evaluators' comments, constructive criticism, and suggestions for revision.

1.1.4 The Young Playwrights Festival

The Young Playwrights Festival is an annual event that occurs in the fall. One of the goals of the Young Playwrights Program is to have students who receive in-class workshops submit a play for the contest, however, it is open to any student in the southwestern Pennsylvania region regardless of the school's participation in the Young Playwrights Program. Each year, six plays are chosen and performed during student matinee and public sessions over a two-week period.

1.2 Evaluation Design

Intermediate Unit 1, an educational agency in Pennsylvania that serves Fayette, Greene, and Washington Counties, contracted the Allegheny Intermediate Unit's Evaluation, Grants and Data Department to evaluate the implementation and outcomes of the Young Playwrights Program. In addition to fulfilling the requirements of funding agents, the evaluation also seeks to provide program and participant information that can be used for continuous quality improvement in future iterations.

To prepare for the evaluation, teachers and teaching artists were provided with an outline of data submission expectations, templates, materials, surveys, and other evaluation resources. Reminder emails were also sent to teachers and teaching artists at key intervals to remind them of upcoming reporting responsibilities and timelines.

Evaluators focused on two evaluation questions for the 2022-23 Young Playwrights Program:

1. To what extent was the program implemented?

To answer this question, data were collected from teachers through an activity/lesson implementation log that provided details about their classroom activities. Teachers and teaching artists also provided further details about their program activities by responding to a year-end implementation survey and by submitting example lesson plans. Finally, the City Theatre program director completed a reflection report that provided additional insights into program implementation.

2. To what extent did the program influence change for students, teachers, or schools?

Data pertaining to program and performance were collected to answer this question through reflection surveys provided to all classroom teachers, teaching artist, and students at the end of the program year.

1.3 Methodology

The Young Playwrights' Program evaluation incorporated a mixed-methods approach by using a variety of data collection tools to answer the evaluation questions:

1. **Classroom Implementation Logs** – Classroom teachers filled out a pre-made electronic spreadsheet, which was developed by the Evaluation, Grants, & Data team with each Young Playwright-related lesson implemented in the classroom. Items filled out by classroom teachers for the logs included: lesson date, lesson type, what the lesson was designed to influence, title of the production that inspired the lesson, a brief description of the lesson, the length of the lesson (in minutes), grade levels of students instructed, and any other comments the classroom teachers can add. The logs will include lessons both done in collaboration with the teaching artists and those done independently by the classroom teachers. Evaluators were strongly encouraged to fill these out as soon as lessons were completed. Data from each teachers' logs were compiled into a spreadsheet for data analysis of time spent on lessons and the types of lessons implemented.
2. **Lesson Plan Examples** – Both classroom teachers and teaching artists are required to fill out and submit two lesson plans during the course of the program

year using pre-made electronic templates developed by the Evaluation, Grants, & Data team. These lesson plans illustrate classroom objectives, lesson materials used, warm-up activities, a detailed description of the lesson, and any Common Core Standards addressed in the lesson. Additionally, educators are asked to provide a reflective paragraph that addressed the success of the lesson, whether they would use the same lesson again, and what changes they would make if they were to use the lesson again. Similarly for the classroom implementation logs, evaluators encouraged the timely completion and submission of these lesson plans.

3. **End-of-Year Reflection Surveys** – Upon completion of the 2022-23 program year, web-based, end-of-year reflective surveys were sent to classroom teachers, teaching artists, and student participants to complete online. Survey components were uniquely tailored for each of the three groups of the Young Playwrights’ program and were designed by the Evaluation, Grants, & Data team using SurveyMonkey. The student survey consisted of questions related to prior experience with arts-based activities (e.g., writing, performance arts, etc.), overall satisfaction with the Young Playwrights’ program, and how the Young Playwrights’ Festival played a role in their development of playwrighting skills. The classroom teacher survey consisted of questions related to how City Theatre productions influenced the teachers’ play-writing and/or teaching strategies, the effectiveness of different in-class activities implemented, overall satisfaction of the professional development sessions offered, and overall satisfaction with their paired resident teaching artist. The

teaching artist survey consisted of questions related to the effectiveness of different in-class activities implemented, overall satisfaction with their paired classroom teacher(s), and areas of student improvement that occurred during the program year. Additionally, both classroom teacher and teaching artists had the opportunity to describe any challenges or obstacles that could improve the effectiveness of the Young Playwrights' program in the following years.

4. **Program Director Reflections** – Upon completion of the 2022-23 program year, the evaluation team provides questions regarding the Young Playwrights' effectiveness and any challenges that occurred for Katie Trupiano, the Director of Education for City Theatre, to fill out electronically. Director responses are open-ended and provide a unique perspective of the Young Playwrights' program operations and future implementation plans.

1.4 Public Health Significance

The unique connection between performance arts and public health operate in a manner that impacts social determinants of health in a variety of ways. This new philosophy regarding the scope of public health benefits has led to the idea of different “mechanisms” that support scientific findings of improving health outcomes. Examples of these mechanisms include “self-efficacy, personal & cultural resonance, emotional engagement & empathy, and expression & being heard”. These link to different health outcomes that span a variety of impacts, such as promoting environments that are safe and inclusive, community building practices, perceived quality of life,

opportunities for self-expression, and enhancing awareness of relevant social, racial, and health issues (Golden et al., 2024).

City Theatres' four core values are "community, collaboration, creativity, and equity, diversity, inclusion & accessibility" (City Theatre Company, n.d.). These core values each play a significant role in promoting health and enriching lives for both individuals and communities alike.

Different roles that each value contributes to are as follows:

- **Community:** Bringing people together helps build support systems, provides the opportunity for individuals to feel empowered, improves emotional and mental health of individuals, and helps create a sense of identity and self-worth (Carpiano & Hystad, 2011). The Young Playwrights' Program helps build these communities by pairing teaching artists with students and providing an outlet for youth to amplify their voices through playwriting. This process also promotes dialogue that relates to sensitive racial and social topics that helps students share their own personal experiences to a wider audience.
- **Collaboration:** Partnering with the community allows for students to develop their own stories and ideas into plays that have the opportunity to be produced for the Young Playwrights' Festival. During the playwriting process, students receive feedback of their work from teaching artists and dramaturgs. This feedback is designed to enhance their playwriting skills and to help build an appreciation of constructive criticism.
- **Creativity:** The Young Playwrights' Festival is designed for youth to express their voices through the playwriting process. The program gives students creative freedom in their playwrights, which fosters an environment where

students can take ownership of their work and be imaginative in their stories. Teaching artists and classroom teachers utilize a wide range of strategies in the classroom to evoke students' critical and creative thinking skills.

- **Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, & Accessibility:** City Theatre strives to provide accessible arts-related opportunities for youth by offering grants for participation in the Young Playwrights' Program. The program is designed to be a safe space for individuals to amplify their voices via their writing. Artistic expression helps facilitate communication around sensitive and challenging topics and fosters a space to promote cultural humility and diversity.

1.5 Findings at a Glance

Items below provide a summary of the main program evaluation findings for the 2022-23 Young Playwright Program. For further detail and explanation, please refer to the Introduction and Findings sections of this report.

- The federally funded Young Playwrights Program supported the participation of six classroom teachers from six school districts in southwestern Pennsylvania.
- The City Theatre teachers were expected to attend at least four of the six workshops provided by City Theatre, and all six teachers were able to do so, with two attending all six workshops.
- This year saw the return of the in-person Young Playwrights Festival and student matinees since the COVID-19 pandemic. All six participating school

districts brought students to the Young Playwrights Festival with a total attendance of 223 students.

- Teachers provided a range of 12-59 hours (average of 30 hours) of Young Playwrights-related instruction in addition to the required 20 hours of instruction provided by each teaching artists.
- Classroom teachers provided ongoing playwriting instruction to 178 students in grades 7-12 during the 2022-23 program year (range 14-42, median 30 students).
- Teachers most often used student consultations and independent writing exercises when using City Theatre productions during classroom instruction compared to other strategies.
- Classroom teachers and teaching artists implemented a variety of lessons and instructional strategies in the classroom.
- The six participating districts submitted 135 plays to the Young Playwrights contest, representing 53% of the 256 plays submitted. City Theatre produced professional plays of all contest winners at the 2023 Young Playwrights' Festival. One of these submissions was a contest winner. Given a total Young Playwright Program student count of 178, these 135 play submissions represent over three-fourths (76%) of students from the districts included in this evaluation.

2.0 Findings

2.1 Implementation

The Young Playwrights program enrolled six classroom teachers from Belle Vernon, Canon-McMillan, Fort Cherry, Lakeview, Sharpsville, and Washington school districts. Each district had one classroom participate in the program.

The Young Playwrights Program uses City Theatre productions as the foundation to provide professional development and workshops to teachers and students. Teachers are highly suggested to attend these productions in order to enhance their understanding of the play-writing process and to apply this knowledge in a variety of classroom implementation strategies, such as critical discussion or performance activities with their students. Additionally, these productions In addition to the Young Playwrights Festival, the City Theatre produced the following five productions (in season order) in the 2022-23 season (City Theatre Company, n.d.):

- *Clyde's* (September – October 2022) – “Under the watchful eye of the titular character, *Clyde's* follows the kitchen staff of a truck stop in a small PA town. Comprised of formerly incarcerated individuals, the staff come together to find fulfillment both in their lives and in creating the perfect sandwich. Layered with loveable characters, this show is ‘a genuinely funny and deeply emotional exploration of radical imagination, restorative justice, and the healing power of food’ (Bon Appetit).”
- *The Wanderers* (November – December 2022) – “Newly acquainted Orthodox Jews, Esther and Schmulik, have entered into an arranged marriage. Author Abe

and movie star Julia have entered into a secret, flirtatious correspondence without their spouses' knowledge. Swiveling between 1970s and present day, *The Wanderers* is a funny and mysterious new drama that puts a magnifying glass on the complications of love across generations and what it means to be happy.”

- *What the Constitution Means To Me* (January – February 2023) – “Playwright Heidi Schreck earned her college tuition and developed a deep love of the Constitution by winning debate competitions around the country as a teenager. All grown-up, her hilarious and optimistic new play reimagines how this living document served four different generations of women and what it will mean for the future of America.”
- *Native Gardens* (March – April 2023) – “Expecting Latinx couple, Tania and Pablo, have just purchased their first home next to long-time D.C. residents (and Potomac Horticultural Society award seekers), Frank and Virginia. Cultures clash when Tania’s plan for a “native garden” disagrees with Frank’s perfectly pristine posies and a property line disagreement turns into an all-out border dispute. Karen Zacarias’s brilliant comedy exposes well-intentioned neighbors’ notions on race, class, morality, and privilege.”
- *American Fast* (April – May 2023) – “College basketball superstar Khady is about to carry her team through the NCAA Women’s Championships, but when March Madness coincides with Ramadan, Khady lies to her devout mother about holding her fast. When her mother goes public with the story of Khady’s devotion to both Ramadan and basketball, Khady finds herself the heroine of

young Muslim women. Kareem Fahmy’s production questions family, faith, and what it means to win at all costs.”

To prepare for the 2022-23 Young Playwrights Program, classroom teachers were given guidelines that outlined expectations for their participation. These expectations addressed how they should interact with the resident teaching artist, how they should support Young Playwright activities between resident teaching artist visits, and what resources and benefits could expect to receive. Teachers signed and returned a copy of this document.

In addition to the Teacher Guidelines document, teachers and teaching artists received a Young Playwrights program manual – the Resource Guide – which included an outline of the program’s components, tips for implementation, suggestions for preparation, information about play development and writing, and lesson and activity ideas. This guide also included an appendix of other resources and forms.

As with past years, resident teaching artists were selected based on their expertise and qualifications as they relate to the program. Four teaching artists were chosen to support the six participating classroom teachers in the 2022-23 program year (two of the four teaching artists collaborated with two classroom teachers during the program year). To prepare teaching artists for situations that they might encounter in the classroom, they were provided one-on-one opportunities to work or meet with City Theatre education staff. Although teaching artists are instructed to follow the basic outline of the program provided in the Resource Guide, they are also given the flexibility to adjust their instruction as needed. City Theatre reported that some teaching artists take advantage of that flexibility more than others.

City Theatre's Director of Education and Accessibility conducted periodic visits for five of the six classrooms to observe teaching artists and classroom teachers and provided formative feedback.

2.1.1 Professional Learning Sessions and Performances

Before participating in the program, teachers that are new Young Playwrights are expected to participate in a one-time Young Playwrights Institute session. However, classroom teachers have the opportunity to participate for more than one program cycle upon re-application. This program year, every classroom teacher has previously participated in the Young Playwrights' Program, so this session was not held for 2022-23.

City Theatre provided six, virtual professional learning workshop sessions to participating classroom teachers over the course of the year. Each of the six professional development sessions corresponded to one of the 2022-23 City Theatre productions and featured a guest speaker or speakers from each piece:

- a) *Clyde's*: Interview with Costume Designer, Karen Gilmer, and the importance of character development and storytelling through costume and clothing.
- b) *Young Playwrights Festival*: Meet the Playwrights: a discussion with winning playwrights of the 2022 Festival to chat about their plays, inspiration, and how support from their educators helped them along the way.
- c) *Wanderers*: Chat with playwright, Joelle Lindsay, about her career as a playwright, the influences of educators in her life, and how she brings stories to the stage.

- d) *What the Constitution Means to Me*: Conversations with sound designer, Tate Abdullah, and lighting designer, Greg Messmer, about how they tell stories through their various mediums.
- e) *Native Gardens*: Set Designer, Tony Ferrieri, and his elaborate work onstage dealing with hyper realistic sets.
- f) *American Fast*: Conversation with projection designers Jason Thompson and Kaitlyn Pietras on this up and coming medium in theatre.

Teachers were expected to attend at least four of the six workshops (67%) and were given the option to attend the corresponding performance. **All six teachers attended at least four workshops and at least two performances.**

Professional learning session attendance was highest for workshops related to the following productions, with all six teachers in attendance: Clyde's, Wanderers, and American Fast. Five teachers attended the professional learning workshop for the Young Playwright's Festival and four each attended the workshop for What the Constitution Means to Me and Native Gardens.

Of the six City Theatre performances offered, **the Young Playwrights Festival had the highest number of attendees (all six teachers)**. At least one teacher attended each performance.

The six participating districts collectively brought 223 students to the Young Playwrights Festival, a 27% increase from the prior year's attendance (175). Participating districts also had the option to bring students to the offered student matinees: Native Gardens and What the Constitution Means to Me. Additionally, subsidized tickets were offered to attend City Theatre's co-production of Fannie with the August Wilson Center.

All six participating classrooms attended one Young Playwrights Festival matinee and one mainstage matinee. Attendees from the Young Playwrights' Program made up two-fifths of the

total audience throughout all productions. The Young Playwrights Festival had the greatest number of attendees from the Young Playwrights Festival (223 attendees), while *What the Constitution Means to Me* had the least number of attendees from the Young Playwrights’ Festival (52 attendees). The total percentage of Table 1 provides details about attendance at each performance.

Table 1: Performance Attendance of Young Playwrights Program Matinees

Production Name	# of Attending Young Playwrights Classrooms (N=6)	# of Attendees from Young Playwrights classrooms	Total # of Attendees (Young Playwrights Audience and Public Audience)	% of Young Playwrights Attendees
Young Playwrights Festival	6	223	733	30%
<i>Native Gardens</i>	3	77	245	31%
<i>What the Constitution Means to Me</i>	2	52	230	23%
<i>Fannie</i> ¹	4	202	261	77%
TOTAL AVERAGES (rounded)	4	139	367	40%

2.1.2 Classroom Implementation

A Teacher Year-End Reflection Survey that included questions about classroom implementation of the Young Playwrights Program was administered at the end of the program year. In previous years, teachers were asked to report this information in an implementation log. This change to collect this information in a survey format was made to simplify the reporting process. All six teachers completed the survey.

¹ Performed as a co-production with the August Wilson Center. City Theatre offered 225 subsidized tickets to this performance, of which program classrooms used 202 (90%).

Classroom teachers provided ongoing playwriting instruction to 178 students in grades 7-12 during the 2022-23 program year: 13 students more than the previous year. Participation ranged from 14 students to 42 students per teacher, with a median of 30, which is higher than the prior year’s median of 21 students.

Among the six teachers, one reported 50 or more hours of instruction, one reported between 30-35 hours, three reported 25-30 hours, and one reported 10-15 hours of instruction. **Overall, teachers reported nearly 178 hours of instruction; an average of 30 hours per teacher.**

Timing of Young Playwrights program implementation varied by teacher classroom (see Table 2). Three teachers began in October 2 in November and 1 in December. Half of the teachers ended their lessons in March 2 in April and 1 in May. Three teachers spend an average of one hour per lesson, 2 spend an average of a half hour per lesson and one teacher spent an average of 1.5 hours per lesson. The median amount of time spent by the 6 teachers on lessons for the entire program year was 23 hours with a range of 13 to 60 hours.

Table 2: Average Number of Classroom Lessons per Month and Average Time Spent Per Lesson

Teacher	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May
1	Average 3 Lessons/Month; Average 1 Hour/Lesson							
2			Average 2 Lessons/Month; Average .5 Hour/Lesson					
3		Average 2 Lessons/Month; Average 1 Hour/Lesson						
4	Average 4 Lessons/Month; Average 1 Hour/Lesson							
5		Average 3 Lesson/Month; Average .5 Hour/Lesson						
6	Average 4 Lessons/Month; Average 1.5 Hours/Lesson							

For each lesson logged, teachers also reported the lesson type from a given list. They were also asked to report the primary objective of each lesson, answering the statement “this lesson was

designed to positively influence...” from a list of options. Based on the total number of hours, over three quarters of all lessons fell into four categories: independent writing (22 percent), student consultations with a teacher or teaching artist (19 percent), paired or small-group writing (11 percent), or “other” lessons which included writing activities, creating and visualizing scenes, workshopping with the teaching artist, and workshopping with the teaching artist (27 percent).

The majority of lessons taught (79 percent) fell into four categories (N=176 hours):

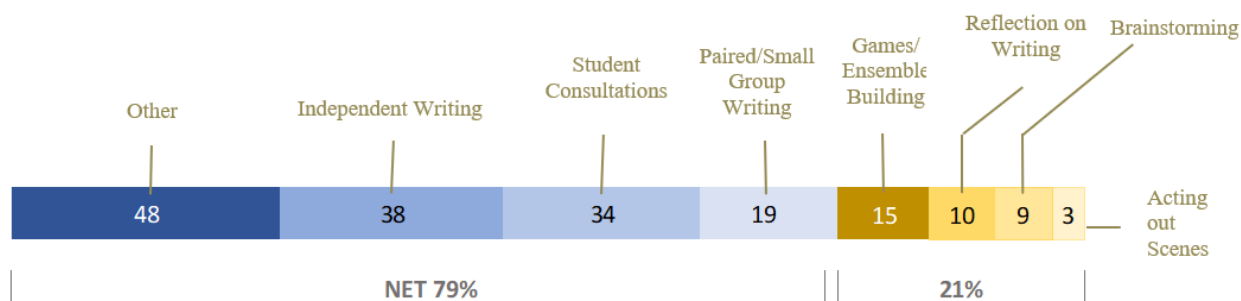


Figure 1: Breakdown of Lessons Taught

Most lessons were designed to positively influence students’ plot/story development (21 percent), followed by their general knowledge/understanding of plays (16 percent), and revision/editing (12 percent). Other, less common, objectives are included in the following chart (see Figure 2). **Of the 174 lessons, plot/story development was taught the most.**

2.1.3 Lesson Plans

2.1.3.1 Classroom Teachers

All six classroom teachers submitted two example lesson plans with accompanying reflections.

Classroom teacher lesson plan examples varied in their format, content, length, and presentation. School district lesson plan requirements may contribute to these differences.

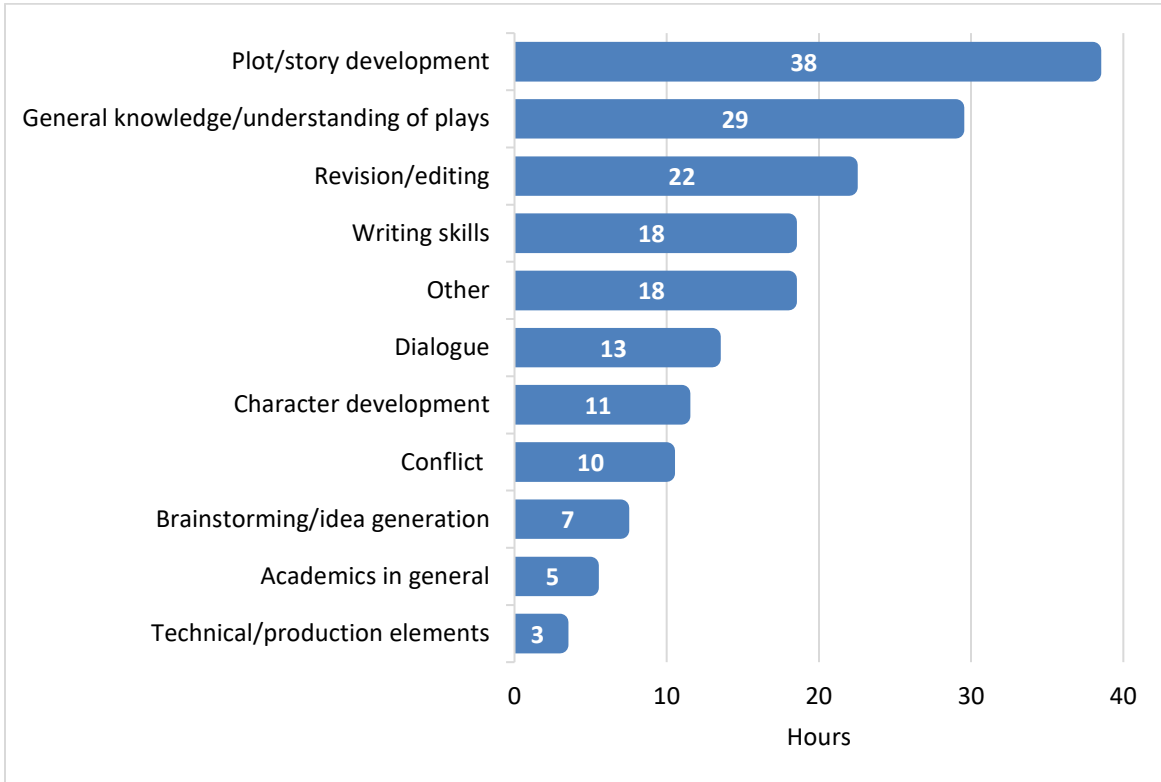


Figure 2: Breakdown of Intended Positive Influence of Lessons

Despite these differences, lesson plans were detailed and included several of the following elements listed as recommended items to include in the plans:

- Student group involved (grade levels, demographic elements, specific classrooms, etc.)
- Brief description of the lesson (one or two sentences)
- State or national academic standards (where possible)
- Duration of the lesson

- Procedure for activity implementation (“The student will...” or “The instructor will...”)
- Materials needed for lesson (if any)
- Expected student outcomes/objectives (“At the end of the lesson, the student will be able to...”)
- Assessment method used to determine student outcomes (i.e., observation, survey, assessment, classroom discussion/check for understanding, etc.)
- Follow-up activity plans or next steps for future lessons, if any.

While it is understood that not all elements would be present in all lessons, lesson plans were reviewed with the expectation that strong lesson plans would have at least several of these items. City Theatre also provided a lesson plan template that included sections for these elements. None of the teachers used the provided template, however, several included items from the list above.

Three of the six teachers submitted lesson plans that specified academic or content standard(s) that applied to their lessons.

Lessons submitted included content such as:

- Acting and improvisation
- Brainstorming
- Characterization
- Conflict
- Elements and techniques used in plays (e.g., diction, irony, tone, mood)
- Plot structure, patterns, and/or development
- Reading and learning about specific plays

- Scene writing
- Staging
- Types of plays/performances (e.g., Commedia dell'arte)
- Writing dialogue

Along with their lectures, teachers incorporated several types of activities, including:

- Games and activities
- Group work and writing
- Group discussions
- Independent reading and writing
- Improvisation
- Performing student work or other plays in class
- Watching videos and plays

A brief reflection on each lesson was also a required component of the lesson plan submission. Overall, teachers reflected on how these lessons were beneficial for student learning and engagement in play development. Some teachers also explained how they might change or add to the lesson in the future. Several teachers shared that the lessons, especially introductory lessons, helped students become more comfortable with and excited about playwriting.

2.1.3.2 Teaching Artists

Each teaching artist was required to create at least two lesson plans as part of their position with City Theatre, which they then submitted as part of their evaluation submission. Three of four artists met this requirement. City Theatre provided a template that teaching artists were to use, which included sections for focus/topic, common core standards, artistic or classroom objectives,

materials, warm-up or opening activity, body of lesson, reflection/assessment, notes, and identifying information. Two teaching artists used the template for the lessons they submitted for the evaluation and all three identified standards that aligned to their lesson(s). Overall, lessons were detailed and well-developed.

Lesson example concepts/tasks included:

- Characterization
- Dialogue and monologue
- Discussion
- Improvisation and in-class acting
- Journaling
- Play elements/structure
- Program introduction/expectations
- Reviewing/discussing City Theatre productions (*What the Constitution Means to Me*; Young Playwrights Festival)
- Understanding movement
- Writing activities
- Workshopping and peer review

Teaching artists were also asked to write a brief reflection of each lesson, answering the following questions:

- How well did it help students understand the playwriting process?
- What worked especially well?
- What might you do differently next time?

Like classroom teachers, teaching artists shared generally positive reflections of their lessons, with some providing changes they would make if they were to repeat the lesson in the future. One artist reflected on the positive changes they made to previously used lessons. Artists shared that lessons helped increase students' confidence in sharing their ideas on writing their own plays. Based on artists' reflections, students responded positively to lessons with engaging, hands-on activities.

2.2 Reflections

2.2.1 Student Performance and Year-End Reflection

A reflective student survey was conducted in late spring to gather student perspectives about the program. A total of 40 students submitted a survey (22% of all participants). The survey did not ask for any identifying information, so it is possible that some duplicates exist in the dataset. All respondents were attending high school at the time of program implementation, including 10th grade (30 percent), 11th grade (27 percent), and 12th grade (43 percent). **Twenty-eight respondents (70%) reported that the Young Playwrights Program was the first time they had ever been involved in an intensive writing program.**

2.2.1.1 Performance Attendance

Students were asked to share what kinds of live or recorded performances they attended during the school year. Nearly all of the respondents (95%) attended some type of performance,

with the most common being a musical (65%). Other common responses included a school play or musical (60%), a non-school production (45%), or a school concert (43%) (see Figure 3).

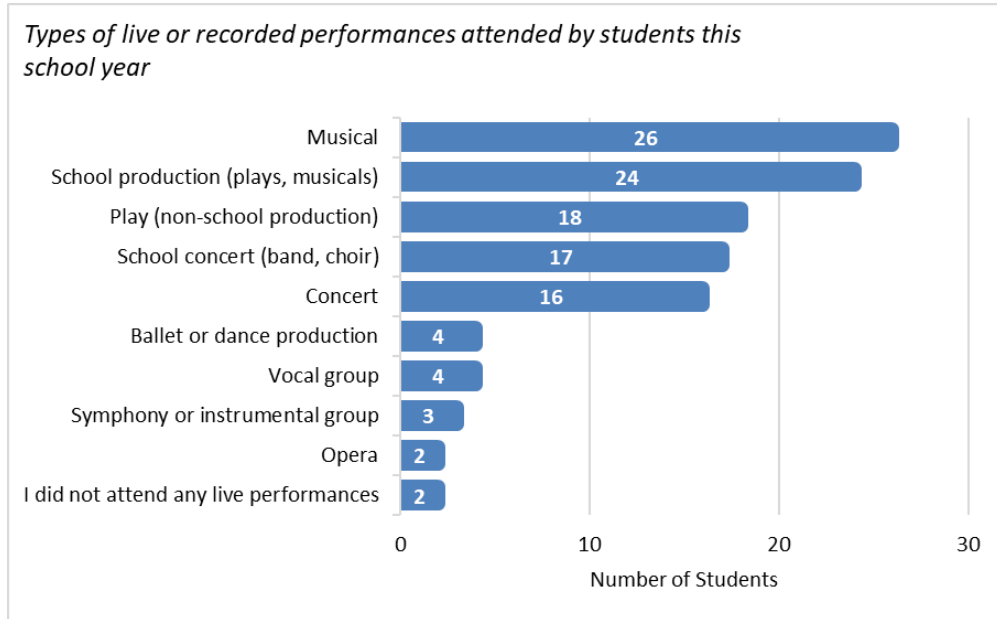


Figure 3: Types of Live or Recorded Performances Attended by Students This School Year

The most common type of performances attended by students were musicals, plays, and concerts (N=40). Of the 39 student respondents, 98% said they attended one or more live or recorded performances during the 2022-23 school year. Nearly half (49 percent) attended four performances or more, while 23 percent attended one performance or none (see Figure 4).

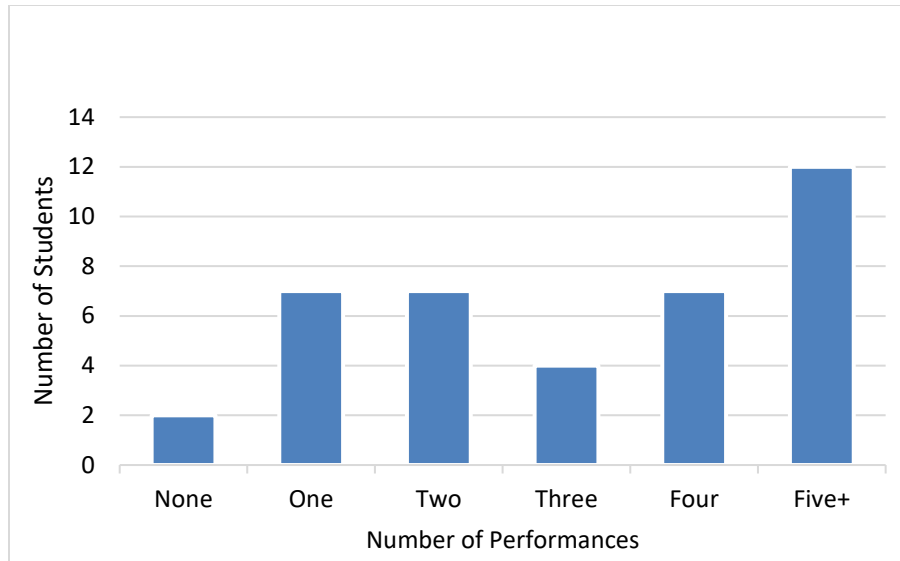


Figure 4: Number of Live or Recorded Performances Attended by Students during the 2022-23 School Year

All but two students attended at least one live or recorded performance during the school year (N=39).

2.2.1.2 Student Writing Experiences

Of 40 student respondents, 40% (16) did their own writing outside of school. Of these 16 students, most said they wrote creative stories (69%), followed by poetry (45%) and web site content (45%). Comic book writing, screenplays, plays, and other types of writing were less common (see Figure 5).

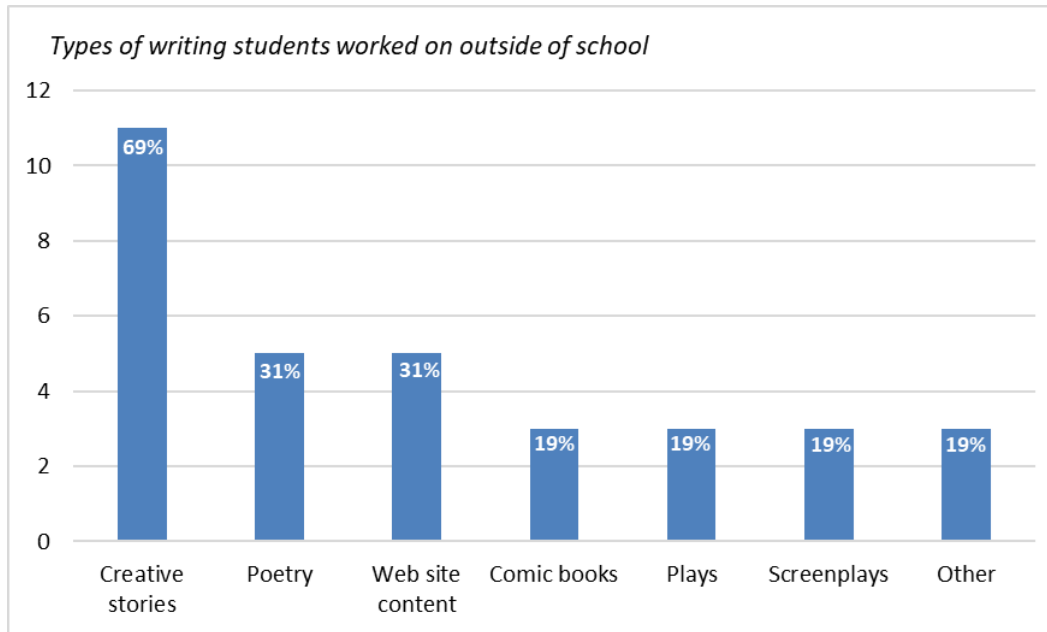


Figure 5: Type of Writing Students Worked On Outside of School

Of the 40 survey respondents, 73% (29) shared that they enjoy writing. When asked how the Young Playwrights program improved their writing, **43% (17) said they had a better understanding of plot structure, 33% (13) better understood dialogue, and 33% (13) better understood characters.** About 35% of students shared that their writing had not changed because of the program (see Table 3).

Table 3: Effect of Program Participation on Students' Writing (Most Common Answers are Bolded)

	% Answering "yes"
I better understand how plot is structured.	43%
I do not think my writing has changed.	35%
I better understand dialogue.	33%
I better understand characters.	33%
My writing is more creative.	30%
My writing skills have improved.	23%
I better understand brainstorming.	25%
I enjoy writing more.	18%
I write for pleasure more frequently (outside of school assignments).	18%

2.2.1.3 Young Playwright Event Attendance

Students who attended the Young Playwright events and other theater productions were asked about their experiences. Of 40 respondents, 36 (90%) attended their school's on-site mini festival or local productions of Young Playwrights' plays. Of these 36 attendees, 11 (31%) reported that attendance was 'extremely helpful' or 'very helpful' to their understanding of the play development process. More than half of students (58%) shared that it was 'somewhat helpful', and the remaining 11 percent of respondents found attendance 'not so helpful' or 'not at all helpful.'

Seventy-eight percent of respondents attended or watched a recording of the Young Playwrights Festival. When asked what they liked most about the festival, 74% of respondents shared a comment. The most common themes of these responses were watching the plays, along with the creativity of other students' plays and seeing them as a production. Additional themes listed in order of frequency include:

- The artistic expression of the students' plays;
- The quality of acting from the performers;

- Being able to discuss plays and ask questions with the play directors and students;
- The size and atmosphere of the theater; and
- The technical aspects of special effects.

Of 29 responding attendees, almost all (93%) shared that the Festival was ‘very helpful’ (7) or ‘somewhat helpful’ (20) to their understanding of play development. Attendees were also asked how different aspects of the festival affected their understanding of the play-writing process and inspired ideas for their play. Attendees reported that **character interaction, followed by dialogue and staging, were the most effective aspects of the festival for their understanding of and inspiration for playwriting** (see Figure 6). Students were also asked what effect, if any, the Festival had on them personally. Due to a low response rate (9 students), this question was removed from analysis.

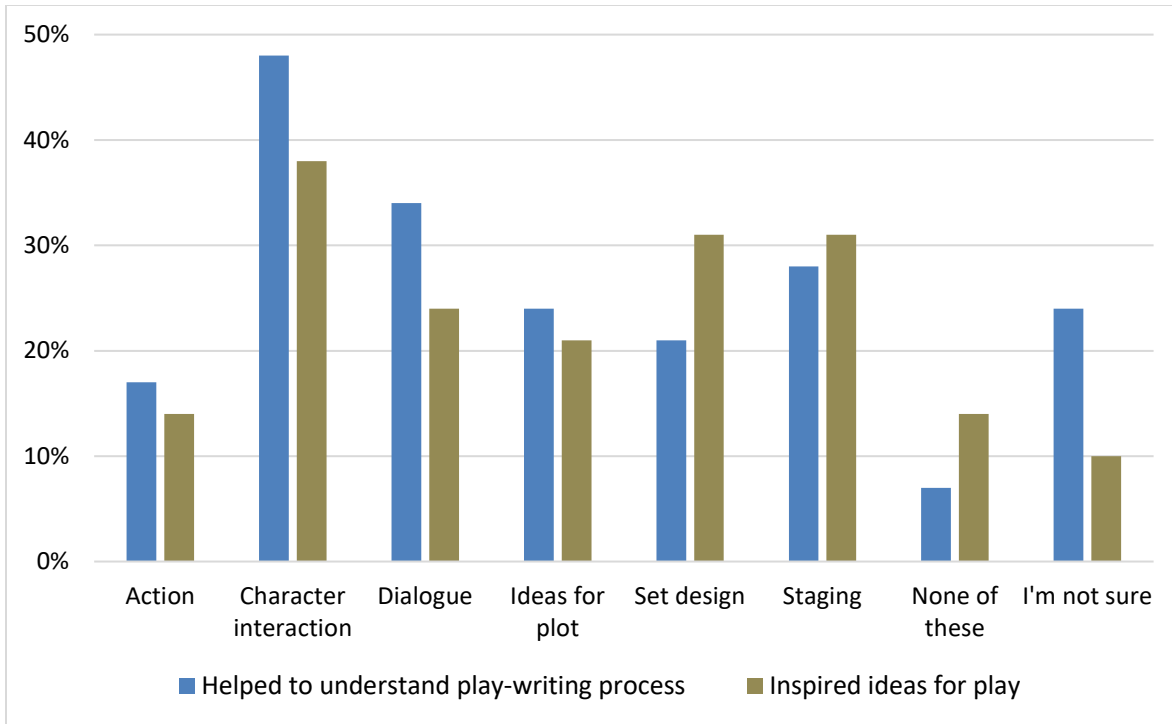


Figure 6: Impact of Different Elements of Young Playwrights Festival

2.2.1.4 Talkback Session Participation

A talkback is a discussion of a play that occurs after the performance. Actors and/or production team members are invited to sit and talk about their experience to the audience. Talkbacks are usually led by a moderator with some prepared questions, and then the floor is open to audience members for questions.

Sixty-eight percent of student survey respondents (37) said that they attended a talkback session. Of these attendees, over twenty-five percent found the session(s) to be ‘very helpful’ for their understanding of play development, 36% reported the talkback was ‘somewhat helpful’, and the remaining 36% felt that the session(s) were ‘not helpful’, or they were not sure of the impact.

Six students also commented on statements, questions, or comments during the talkback that stood out to them as they moved into their own play-writing process, including:

- “The particular [playwright] we were with said that she had only had one draft, and that was very surprising.”
- “She said that she [adapted] her plot from things that she liked.”

2.2.1.5 Student General Feedback

At the end of the survey, students were asked to share anything else they wanted City Theatre to know about their experience with the Young Playwrights Program. Eleven respondents shared a comment, with the most common theme being that they felt a lack of excitement or interest from their teaching artist in instructing the class. Students also expressed a general lack of guidance from the teaching artist or a sense of burden when requesting assistance. A less commonly reported theme was the need for better organization and activity planning by the teaching artist. Two students shared positive comments:

- “It was a great experience to be a part of this, and I learned a lot about creative writing, but specifically plays.”
- “It was enjoyable to get to write a play and our person was great...”

2.2.2 Classroom Teacher Performance and Year-End Reflections

Classroom teachers completed a reflective survey at the end of the program year that captured their overall feedback about the program. The survey asked questions pertaining to classroom program implementation, City Theatre, student gains, challenges, suggestions for changes, and the overall experience. All six participating teachers responded to the survey.

2.2.2.1 Teacher Production Attendance and Reaction

As part of their participation in the Young Playwrights program, classroom teachers had opportunities to attend each of City Theatre’s regular season productions. For each performance attended, teachers rated which components enhanced their understanding of the playwriting process (see Figure 7).

Each performance had a different component with the most ratings (except for Clyde’s and American Fast, which both had conflict as the most selected component). Across all responses, conflict, set design, and plot ideas equally enhanced teacher’s understanding of the play-writing process. While no teacher attended every performance offered, all of them attended the Young Playwright’s Festival. Only one teacher attended the American Fast performance. This lack of consistency across attendance as well as the small number of respondents makes it challenging to draw conclusions.

Teachers were also asked to share if any of the performances had a personal effect on them. Five teachers responded to the question, with highlighted excerpts from responses in Figure 7.



Figure 7: Teacher Comments on the Personal Impact Performances Had on Them

2.2.2.2 Production Application in the Classroom

Teachers discussed at least two City Theatre productions in their classrooms when implementing activities for their students. When teachers did incorporate the plays into their lessons, it was most often via critical discussion or brainstorming. Critical discussion was the most common activity during the past three years, as well. Less common practices included guided writing and classroom performance when incorporating plays into the lessons.

When asked if they used City Theatre productions in the classroom that were not offered as a student matinee, teachers shared that they used current festival productions by discussing plot, stage design, the writing process, or character development with their students. Three teachers shared that they did not view other productions in their classrooms due to time constraints, plays not being appropriate for the age group of their students, and the students' preferred style of learning (visual) that does not translate well with classroom activities.

When it came to teachers' opinions about student work they saw on display at the Young Playwrights Festival, their responses were unanimously positive. Teachers' thoughts on the performances are provided in the following word cloud (see Figure 8).



Figure 8: Word Cloud: Teacher Impressions of the Young Playwrights Festival

When asked to reflect on the value of students seeing their peers’ work being professionally produced at the Young Playwrights Festival, every teacher shared that having the opportunity to see other students’ work produced on stage showed students that they could be playwrights as well after seeing their peers’ work, motivated them to write their own plays, validated the opinion that their voices matter, and/or helped generated ideas for their own work. These themes were shared in the prior two years’ reflections as well.

2.2.2.3 Teacher Knowledge Gain of Playwriting Topics

Teachers were asked to rate the degree to which they experienced change related to several indicators. Answer options included considerable increase, moderate increase, slight increase, did not increase, and an answer option for those already familiar or comfortable with that element.

Half of the responses from participants indicated that their knowledge or capacity of

playwrighting topics increased either moderately or considerably because of the program (see Table 4).

Table 4: Increase in Teachers' Knowledge of Playwriting Topics

	Considerable increase	Moderate increase	Slight increase	Did not increase	Already familiar
My knowledge of the play development and production process.	1	3	1	--	1
My knowledge about how play writing can address academic standards.	--	2	1	--	3
My ability to develop new lessons to integrate play writing in the classroom.	1	2	3	--	--

2.2.2.4 Teacher Satisfaction with Professional Learning Opportunities

Teachers also rated their level of agreement with a series of statements related to the professional learning provided by City Theatre. These statements were:

1. “The format or structure of the professional development workshops provided by City Theatre was conducive to learning.”
2. “The content of the workshops held at City Theatre was relevant and useful for my classroom.”
3. “The resources provided as part of the professional development workshops were helpful.”
4. “Clear examples were presented during professional development sessions to further explain the content.”
5. “Professional development workshop presentation methods were effective.”
6. “Professional development time was used effectively.”

Every teacher indicated that they ‘strongly agree’ or ‘somewhat agree’ with each of the statements. Statements five and six each had the most responses (4) of “strongly agree”. These

items related to the effectiveness of presentation methods and time management of the professional development workshops.

When asked if they had any suggestions for the professional learning workshops, one teacher suggested adding a workshop to generate classroom lessons and/or activities.

2.2.2.5 Teacher Impressions of Learning Formats

With the continuation of virtual professional development following the COVID-19 pandemic, City Theatre leadership was interested in teachers' opinions about various implementation formats. There was no majority of which format was most convenient, with virtual workshops for each production, hybrid workshops, and less frequent, but longer workshops during the school day each receiving two responses as shown in Table 5.

Teachers' opinions about the most engaging professional development format were as varied as the previous question. Half of the teachers shared that hybrid workshops for each production were most engaging, while two teachers chose less frequent, but longer workshops during the school day, and only one teacher chose virtual workshops for each production. Based on the responses, hybrid workshops for each mainstage production appear to offer the most benefit to teachers in terms of both convenience and engagement (see Table 5). Compared to the previous year's findings, there is a desire for more in-person opportunities for professional development sessions.

Table 5: Most Convenient and Engaging Formats for Professional Development Sessions

	# Selected Most Convenient	# Selected Most Engaging
In-person workshops for each CT mainstage production (six total)	--	--
Virtual workshops for each CT mainstage production (six total)	2	1
Hybrid workshops (three virtual, three in-person)	2	3
Less frequent, but longer workshops on weekends/evenings (in-person)	--	--
Less frequent, but longer workshops during the school day (in-person)	2	2

2.2.2.6 Teacher Ranking of Young Playwright Activities

Teachers were asked to rank-order the effectiveness of activities related to the program, with one being the most effective and 10 being the least effective. The activities are listed as follows in order of *most to least* effective.

1. Student consultations with teacher/teaching artist
2. Independent writing
3. Acting out scenes
4. Brainstorming
5. Games/ensemble building
6. Paired or small-group writing
7. Activities that allowed students to move around
8. Reflection on writing
9. Discussion/group reflection of Young Playwrights Festival

One teacher provided a response when choosing the “other” option, stating that their personal follow-up lessons with students was an activity they provided in the program.

2.2.2.7 Challenges Experienced by Teachers

Teachers were asked about challenges or obstacles that they experienced related to their participation in the program. All but one (5) of the responding teachers indicated at least one challenge. Teachers reported a lack of time for implementing activities (3) and lack of support from administration (2) as the most frequent challenges. Difficulty finding or developing lessons for the age of students, a lack of understanding of other teachers in the building, scheduling conflicts, the time to attend workshops, and travel were all challenges reported once by teachers.

2.2.2.8 Student Gains from the Program

Teachers reflected on their experience and indicated areas where they thought students gained the most from the program (see Figure 9). They were asked to select no more than five of the provided answer options. Five teachers chose character development (83 percent), four teachers selected an understanding or development of conflict and general knowledge and/or understanding of plays (67 percent), and three teachers selected an understanding or development of dialogue and plot/story development (50 percent) as areas of student improvement. Seven areas received two or less ratings from teachers, and five areas received no ratings. Areas not selected (academics in general, acting, public speaking skills, reading skills, and understanding or development of technical/production elements) might be concepts the program could further explore in the future.

Similar to findings from the prior year, **teachers shared that their students gained confidence and skill as writers**, with two teachers mentioning that participants who were initially uninterested ended up having a positive experience participating in the program.

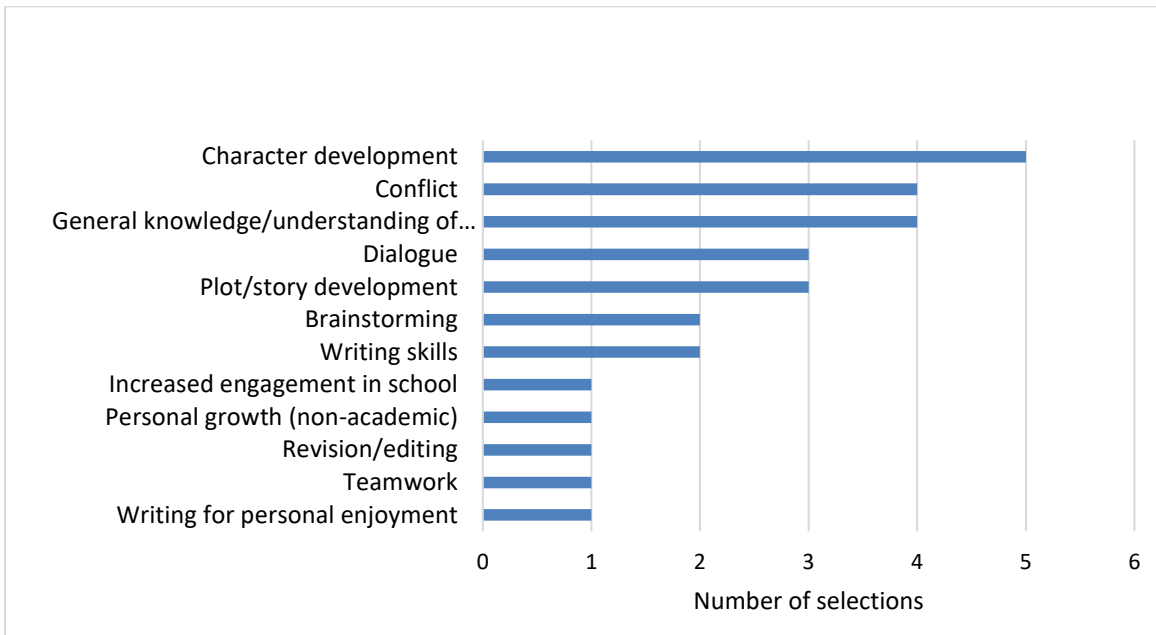


Figure 9: Teacher Ratings of Areas Students Gained or Improved the Most

One teacher noted how a teaching artist helped a struggling student get back on track:

“One student in particular generally is behind in work and lost, but when the teaching artist came, he was extremely engaged each time—even giving [the] artist samples of his original work for her approval. This program offers many children a creative opportunity that is not framed by the normal school environment. If that ‘normal’ environment has been viewed as stifling or unappealing, the energy and possibility of this different dynamic always seems to spark these students in meaningful ways.”

Five of six responding teachers indicated that students had the opportunity to watch a live performance (either in-person or virtually). Four of five noted that seeing a live performance was ‘extremely helpful’ to students’ understanding of the play development process. The other response indicated that seeing a live performance was ‘very helpful’ to students. When asked what the most beneficial outcome was of students seeing a performance, teachers mentioned that seeing a play inspired students that they could write and produce their own plays in the future, as well as seeing how all the elements of play writing and production come together in a performance.

2.2.2.9 Teacher Ratings of Program Resources

City Theatre provided teachers with the Young Playwrights Resource Guide and Talkback sessions and teachers were asked to rate these tools. Four of six teachers (67%) shared that they used the resource guide. Of these four teachers, one reported that the guide was ‘extremely helpful,’ two reported that the guide was ‘very helpful,’ and one shared that it was ‘somewhat helpful’ for students understanding of the production process. Teachers’ ratings of how the guide helped students’ understandings of the plays themselves mirrored the prior ratings exactly. One teacher offered a suggestion for the guide, requesting new activities in the Young Playwrights Resource Guide to increase in-class engagement for both teachers and students.

All six teachers shared that their students had the opportunity to attend a TalkBack. Half of teachers reported that the experience was “extremely helpful,” two reported that it was “very helpful” and one reported that it was “somewhat helpful” to students’ understanding of the play development process. When asked to share the most beneficial outcome from the TalkBacks, teachers mentioned being able to ask questions and receive advice and feedback from the actors, writers, and young playwrights.

2.2.2.10 Teacher Feedback on School Mini-Festivals or Local Productions

Some schools offered on-site mini festivals or local productions of Young Playwright plays. For the 2022-23 program year, four teachers reported that their school offered this type of event. One teacher indicated that the event was “extremely helpful,” and three teachers indicated that it was “very helpful” to their students’ understanding of the play development process.

2.2.3 Teaching Artist Year-End Reflection

As part of the evaluation, it was important to glean program implementation and outcomes from several perspectives. As such, teaching artists also completed a year-end reflective survey. The survey focused on what worked well, what could be improved, student outcomes, program implementation, and challenges and obstacles. All four individuals serving as teaching artists completed the survey.

2.2.3.1 Teaching Artist Ranking of Program Activities

Teaching artists were asked to rank-order the effectiveness of activities they offered from a provided list. The activities are listed as follows in order of most to least effective.

1. Student consultations with teacher/teaching artist
2. Paired or small-group writing
3. Activities that allowed students to move around
4. Brainstorming²
5. Games/ensemble building

² Brainstorming and games/ensemble building received the same score.

6. Independent writing
7. Reflection on writing
8. Acting out scenes
9. Discussion/group reflection on Young Playwrights Festival

Two teaching artists provided a response marked as “other,” stating that complementary readings to support lessons and peer-to-peer writing feedback were activities implemented in the classroom.

2.2.3.2 Teaching Artist Impressions of Student Knowledge Gain

When asked where the teaching artist thought students gained the most, general knowledge/understanding of plays and plot/story development were chosen by all four respondents. Character development, conflict, dialogue, and writing for personal enjoyment were all selected by two teaching artists. Increased engagement in school, teamwork, technical/production elements, and writing skills were all selected by one teaching artist. The remaining areas were not selected by any teaching artist: academics in general, acting, brainstorming, personal growth (non-academic), public speaking, reading skills, and revision.

Teaching artists also shared that **they saw students become more engaged in the lessons and optimistic in their writing**, despite being uninterested and not inspired at the start of the program. They also noted that over time, students had more of a desire to participate and became more extroverted and sociable with their peers. One teaching artist shared a powerful story of how their classmates were willing to have open conversations around sensitive topics (issues regarding race and history) and how to translate these difficult discussions into their plays.

One school offered an on-site mini festival or local production of Young Playwright plays, which the assigned teaching artist reported as “very helpful” to the students’ understanding of the play development process.

2.2.3.3 Teaching Artist Ratings for Working in a Classroom

Three of the four teaching artists reported their experience working with their assigned classroom teacher as “excellent” and the other reported it was “fair.” The list of answer options also included “positive” and “poor,” but none selected this option. When asked how the experience working with the classroom teacher could be improved, two teaching artists shared suggestions for improvement:

- The teacher should be present for all classes; and
- The teacher should allow for more time for in-class writing sessions rather than at-home writing for the students.

2.2.3.4 Teaching Artist Impressions About Program Improvements

When asked how the program experience could be improved, each teaching artist shared suggestions. These responses have been condensed into the following list of themes, in no particular order:

- Improvements in consistent collaborative efforts from the classroom teacher(s);
- Strategies to increase engagement for students with little to no interest in the program;
- The school semester ending early resulted in decreased time commitment and motivation from the students to engage in the program; and

- Education for the school districts on IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) concepts.

Teaching artists also selected programmatic challenges from a list of options, with a space to add additional comments. These obstacles are listed below in order of frequency, with the count of teachers (out of four) that selected each.

- Classroom teacher commitment or level of participation (2)
- Confusion over expectations/different interpretations of expectations (1)
- Lack of time (1)
- Scheduling conflicts (1)
- Timing of residency during the school year (1)
- Weather (school delays, cancellations) (1)

Classroom environment, inadequate space for in-school workshops, and ongoing issues due to COVID-19 were not selected as obstacles by the survey respondents.

One teaching artist provided additional feedback when selecting “other” as an option, stating there were issues with the school district.

2.2.4 Project Director Reflections.

Katie Trupiano served as the program director during the 2022-23 program year, her fourth year in this role. Ms. Trupiano shared her reflections about the year within the following four prompts:

- What worked well this year?

- “The 22-23 season was the first year we offered teachers FLEX subscriptions to see the Main Stage shows. In previous years (mostly pre-pandemic), we offered the workshop in person at City Theatre, immediately followed by an in-person performance. Due to these workshops being on Tuesdays, and most teachers living outside of the city limits, this could be difficult for teachers to attend. Based on teacher feedback from previous evaluations, we offered virtual PD workshops and allowed teachers to select performances that would work for their schedule. We saw a huge increase in participation and engagement from the previous year.”
- “Residencies and teaching artists continue to work well together, and we saw continued student participation across the residencies.”
- “The return of in-person YPF and student matinees was SO EXCITING for everyone involved. Some schools were so excited to return to in-person theatre, they attended multiple student matinees (attending YPF in addition to Native Gardens and What the Constitution Means to Me.)”
- What did not work (as) well this year?
 - “Teachers are tired of virtual programming. While it does increase accessibility to attend, it is harder to engage and participate in the programming.”
 - “This year, we had a difficult teaching artist/classroom educator pairing. By the time I was notified of the conflict (mid-February), the residency was almost complete. The teaching artist was removed from the residency, and I oversaw the final two workshops as well as the one-on-one feedback

conferences. Students seemed happy about the change, and all students in the residency were still able to submit to the contest.”

- What might be done differently?
 - “This year [2023-24], PD is shifting to 4 all-day in-person workshops. We’ll try this new schedule and see how it goes in terms of attendance and engagement. Our hope is that teachers will find it worthwhile to drive to City for all-day programming. (FLEX tickets will still be offered for performances).”
 - “The teaching artist that was removed from their residency in 2022-2023 is no longer working for City Theatre Company. A new teaching artist has been put in place at that school and the partnership seems to be running smoothly.”
- Anything else relevant to share?
 - [No response]

2.3 Young Playwrights Contest

City Theatre received 256 play submissions in spring 2023 for consideration in the Young Playwrights Contest, a 3% decrease over the prior year (265). Of these 256, 135 (53%) came from Young Playwrights-participating schools supported by federal grant funds. This was an increase over the prior year (51%). Of participating schools, 69 submissions came from middle school students and 66 were from high school students. All six participating districts submitted plays to the contest. Given a total student count of 178 Young Playwright Program participants, their 135

play submissions represent over three-fourths (76%) of students from the districts included in this evaluation.

One of the plays submitted from the grantee districts was selected as a winner and will be professionally produced by City Theatre and performed during the next Young Playwrights Festival.

3.0 Evaluator Reflections and Recommendations

In 2022-23, the Young Playwrights Program continued to successfully offer impactful and meaningful programming to students who might not otherwise be exposed to the creative arts. Through analyses of program data and stakeholder feedback, the following section summarizes key findings and recommendations for the future.

3.1 Uniqueness

City Theatre is offering a unique program to students who would otherwise have limited exposure to playwriting and dramatic performance at a professional level.

3.1.1 Recommendation

Continue offering and refining the program based on evaluation findings and stakeholder needs. Consider targeting the program towards schools with above average populations of marginalized students (i.e., low-income, minority groups, etc.). Consider offering individualized support and participation options based on individual teachers'/classrooms' needs. For example, a veteran City Theatre teacher may not need as much support and time with their teaching artist as a new participant.

3.2 Lesson Plans

Compared to previous years, lesson plans submitted by teaching artists and teachers were much more detailed and well-developed, with most submissions including the majority of items listed in the provided template.

3.2.1 Recommendation

Continue to encourage teachers and teaching artists to submit their lesson plans in the provided template. Consider providing teachers and artists with a platform in which they can share successful lessons and best practices. Consider asking veteran teachers and artists to submit different lessons than those previously shared, as evidence of the diversity of the Young Playwrights curricula.

3.3 Student Engagement

Several students shared that they felt a lack of excitement or interest from their teaching artist in instructing the class, a general lack of guidance from the teaching artist, or a sense of burden when requesting assistance. Teaching artists shared that they needed strategies to increase engagement for students with little to no interest in the program, and teachers shared that the program could be improved through more opportunities for one-on-one interactions between teaching artists and students.

3.3.1 Recommendation

The connection and collaboration between teaching artists and students is an opportunity for improvement. Consider providing teaching artists with additional training on how to engage and interact with learners of different grade levels. Consider increasing the amount of time teaching artists can allot for one-on-one instruction with students, by lengthening the program year. Finally, ensure that teachers, teaching artists, and students have a clear understanding of program expectations at the beginning of the year. Consider providing teachers and teaching artists with an implementation framework template and ask them to complete it, with input from the students, prior to the start of in-class instruction.

Appendix A Allegheny Intermediate Unit

The role of Allegheny Intermediate Unit's Evaluation, Grants, and Data (EGD) Department is to provide school districts and organizations with services and support to improve instruction and student learning through comprehensive training, resources, innovative programs, grant development, program evaluation, data analysis, and data-driven decision-making.

EGD offers the following services to assist Local Education Agencies (LEA), Intermediate Units (IU), State Education Agencies (SEA), and other education organizations in their education improvement endeavors:

- Grant development facilitation including grant application review, grant writing, grant evaluation plan development, and grant reporting.
- Program and process analysis including the development of measurable program goals, outputs and outcomes, and the creation of logic models and strategic plans.
- Collection, analysis, management, and reporting of program data.
- Program monitoring.
- Training and technical assistance in the topics of grants, evaluation, data analysis, and data-driven decision-making.

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