



Art Production

DEVELOPING SIGNIFICANT PRODUCTION ACTIVITIES IN RELATION TO WORKS OF ART

Through discipline-based art education production activities, students:

- Explore meaning through the historical, critical, and aesthetic content of a work or works of art.
- Recognize that artists make conscious choices of media and techniques to express particular ideas.
- Develop an understanding and appreciation of artists' challenges, ideas, and skill through the use of the elements of art and the principles of design.
- Develop an understanding of art and appreciation of artists' challenges, ideas, and skill through experimentation with art media and techniques.
- Recognize that art media and techniques in the works artists produce reflect the technology and belief systems of the time period in which they were or are created. This approach also ensures that works of art will not be trivialized or copied.

Significant art production activities based on an initial study of a work or works of art may be developed through the:

- Meaning of the art work.
- Subject of the art work.
- Style of the art work.
- Media and techniques used in the art.
- Common themes shared by two or more works of art.

In approaches that begin with an art making activity, the:

- Ensuing study of artists' works may relate to a specific theme.
- Following study of artists' works may grow out of the production activity.
- Production activity may make subsequent research more meaningful.

Goals to consider when developing instructional activities that foster meaningful art making:

- Involve students in activities which are centered on the main ideas and most significant aspects of the work(s) being studied, instead of a purely product-oriented activity.
- Identify and use appropriate art-making activities that help students understand why the works were created.
- Identify and use appropriate art-making activities that help students understand how the works were created; for example, using media similar to what the artist used so that they are familiar with the process the artist dealt with and the potential and limitations of the medium. This is particularly important when the media or processes used are relevant to the work's interpretation. Design rich art-making activities that place the student in authentic decision-making situations similar to that of the artist who produced the work studied.
- Do not make all of the decisions for them; let them be creative. Encourage variety among the finished products.
- Help students to improve their individual art-making skills.
- Help students create works reflecting a variety of styles, cultures, and historical periods (even within the same assignment, perhaps).
- Remember that art-making activities that allow students to think like artists will result in a wide variety of solutions and products. In no case should student work look like a copy of the artwork studied.

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ENCOURAGING QUALITY ART PRODUCTION FROM STUDENTS

In an effort to compile effective approaches that encourage quality art making in the classroom, a request for responses to questions about art production was posted on ArtsEdNet, the World Wide Web site of the Getty Education Institute for the Arts. The following comments illustrate the variety of approaches that can be used to encourage students to do their best in making art.

How do you encourage quality art production and promote originality and creativity in your students' artwork?

Sharon Warwick (warwick@iglobal.net):

“In order to get students to push themselves further in quality art production, I:

- Ask for more detail, elaboration, or embellishment when they say "I'm finished."
- Model and demonstrate production techniques.
- Break down tasks to be accomplished into component parts.
- Encourage students to slow down when working.
- Give productivity grades as well as project grades, including both when averaging.
- Have everyone who finishes early do another independent project which begins with a one page report and a production plan for the project.
- Reward and praise the careful workers; try to reprimand privately and praise publicly; ask students directly how they can improve or perfect their work.
- Encourage students to edit each others writing and to critique each other's work in a friendly and productive manner.
- Use lots of images for research but do not allow copying or tracing.
- Ask them for assistance in editing or drawing so that they understand that objectivity which helps us see better and thus improve.
- Frequently make preliminary sketches or maquettes.”

Mary Holmgren (tnelson@ties.k12.mn.us):

“I teach art to first grade students. When I am demonstrating a project, I try to make my example as "generic" as possible, and talk about it as being just one example. I don't leave my example up, because I don't want 22 clones of my example. I usually give some clear guidelines or frameworks for what I'm looking for, but I always leave lots of room for individual choices. I generally ask for ideas from students, as well. If possible, I also show student examples. I also make generous use of visuals. For example, if we are doing drawings of animals, I have many photographs or posters of animals on display to use for inspiration, as well as art reproductions with animals as subject matter.

As the students are working, I continually circulate around the room, talking to students and asking about their ideas, sometimes giving suggestions. I talk about the interesting ideas I see happening and how wonderful it is that everyone's work doesn't look the same (wouldn't it be boring if it did?). I also will ask at various times for everyone to get up and step back from their work so they can see it from a different vantage point, telling them that this is a process artists use to evaluate their work. Sometimes you can tell what else needs to be done when you look from a distance.”

Sandra Hildreth (shildreth@northnet.org):

“I try to find ways to reward students for doing their best work (by displaying it, using it as examples, etc.). I purposely design projects so that they start out easy, to give students confidence. I give them "tools" that enable them to make their work look better (skills, techniques, and tips). I try to give them options to choose from so that they feel a sense of ownership about their own productions. Never, never do a project in which students are expected to make the same product!!! It's also important to design projects with lots of flexibility and options for individual variation and to bring attention to those who are doing exceptional jobs. I encourage creative problem solving approaches - try something, analyze it, reflect upon it, revise or start over. It's OK to make mistakes and to learn from them.”

Shelton Wilder (wilderse@conrad.appstate.edu):

“Art by definition must be quality, or it is not art! There are many variations on this thesis, but I stay on the idea that it's not art if it's slack, and I continually remind students that it's my job to push them towards a superior performance. Merge this thought with the challenge that 'Only you keep yourself from making good art,' and keep that thought alive in the classroom. It's the dialogue and commitment to the thesis that seems to insure a quality outcome. Once students have discovered a few helpful skills and techniques for improving their image making, and begin to believe that underlying form is mostly the awareness and application of the principles of design, they begin to make the leap to quality quests. A lot of praise and encouragement along the way are essential as well.”

Nancy Walkup (walkup@art.unt.edu):

“In my experience, high expectations are requisite. Each student should be expected and encouraged to do his or her best, without comparison to others. I believe the study of a number of images from different cultures, times, and perspectives through a DBAE approach frees the student from any desire to copy, while encouraging individual and original responses. I also think students' self esteem and pride in their work is promoted by public displays of artwork throughout the school and the community.”

What aspects of art production do you consider most important?

Mary Holmgren (tnelson@ties.k12.mn.us):

“In general, I am interested in how students are able to use their own ideas. An interesting activity related to this is using the art game, Token Response, where students judge artworks on different criteria such as originality, quality of workmanship, how long it takes to make the art, would this look good in your home, etc. It gives another aspect to talk about as far as the focus of a particular piece of artwork.

Sandra Hildreth (shildreth@northnet.org):

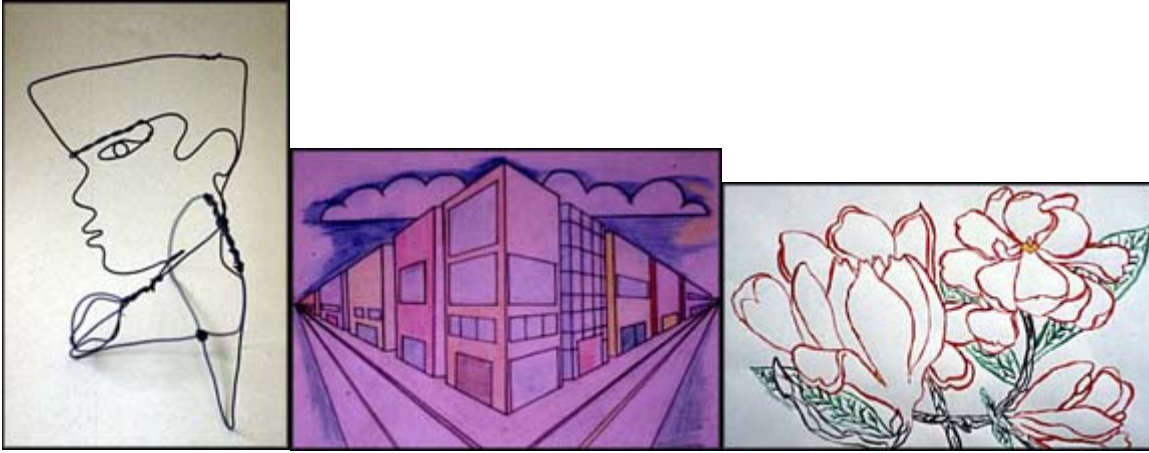
“The great majority of my students are never going into art careers, so the degree of artistic excellence is not important to me (though I recognize it and reward it). What I would like them to take away from my classes is a sense of self confidence in terms of being able to create unique things that look good, to put it very simply. Knowing that they can do that and it is valued is something that will help them throughout their education and life. Be proud of doing a good job, take care of materials, create something unique that looks good and is hopefully meaningful to them. Self-discipline. Responsibility. Originality. It should apply to science lab experiments, English paper, careers, etc.

Rosa Juliusdottir (rojul@ismennt.is):

“I think the actual art production is incredibly important, from beginning to end. It is creativity that is the important factor; to nurture the creative spirit within every child and help them learn to use art to express their wishes, dreams, ideas, and feelings in a way that makes them feel great. This is what I try to do.”

Art Production

The Elements of Art



LINE: A line is the path of a moving point, a mark made by a tool or instrument as it is drawn across a surface.



SHAPE: A shape is a two-dimensional area that is defined in some way, perhaps with an outline or solid area of color. Shapes may also be implied.



FORM: Forms are objects that have three dimensions: length, width, and depth.

SPACE: Shapes and forms exist in space. On a flat surface, artists can employ various means to imply the illusion of three-dimensional space, such as modeling to show volume, objects diminishing in size as they move to the background, overlapping, showing more detail and brighter colors in the foreground with duller colors and less detail in the distance.

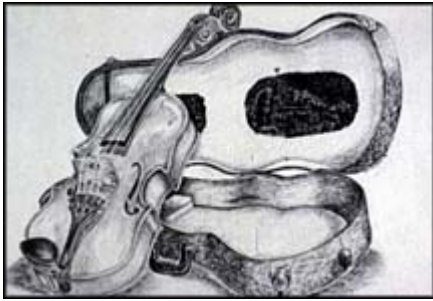


TEXTURE: Texture refers to the way things feel or how they look as if they would feel if you could touch the surface.



COLOR: Color is produced by light waves reflected from objects to our eyes. Color is possibly the most expressive element of art, but the most difficult to describe. Colors

appeal directly to our emotions and can stand for ideas and feelings.



VALUE: The term value refers to relative lightness or darkness, whether in color or in black and white.

The Principles of Design



RHYTHM AND MOVEMENT: The term rhythm as a principle of design indicates the repetition of visual elements, such as shapes, lines, or spaces. Visual rhythm creates the sensation of movement as the viewer's eyes follow the "beats" through a work of art.



BALANCE OR SYMMETRY: Balance is the principle of design concerned with equalizing visual forces, or elements, in a work of art. Visual balance causes you to feel

that the elements have been arranged appropriately.

PROPORTION: Proportion is the principle concerned with the size relationship of one part to another.



VARIETY: Variety is concerned with difference. Too much sameness might be dull. Artists add variety to their work to make it more interesting.



EMPHASIS: This principle makes one part of a work dominant over the other parts. An artist uses emphasis to focus the viewer's attention on the most important areas of a work of art.

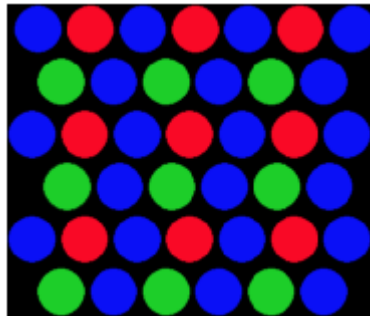
UNITY: Unity allows the viewer to see a complex combination as a complete whole. If all of the parts are joined together in such a way that they appear to belong to a whole, the work of art will be unified.

COLOR THEORY

Additive Color Synthesis is a method of creating color by mixing various proportions of two or three distinct stimulus colors of **light**. These **primary colors** are commonly red, green, and blue; however they may be any wavelengths to stimulate distinct receptors on the retina of the eye.

The distinguishing features of additive color synthesis are that it deals with the color effects of light rather than with pigments, dyes, or filters, and that the stimuli come from separate monochromatic sources. The most common example of additive color synthesis is the color television screen, (or RGB monitor), which is a mosaic of red, green, and blue phosphor dots. At normal viewing distances the eye does not distinguish the dots, but blends or adds their stimulus effects to obtain a composite color effect.

This is an enlarged example of additive color synthesis from a **RGB** type source.



The principals of additive color synthesis are as follows (numerals indicate relative proportions).

- (a) Equal stimulus proportions of two primary colors create a **secondary color**

1 Red	+	1 Blue	=	Magenta
1 Blue	+	1 Green	=	Cyan
1 Green	+	1 Red	=	Yellow

- (b) Equal stimulus proportions of all three primaries create white:

1 Red + 1 Blue + 1 Green = White

(c) Unequal proportions of two or three primaries create other colors:

2 Red	+	1 Green	=	Orange		
2 Green	+	1 Red	=	Lime		
1 Blue	+	1 Green	+	4 Red	=	Brown

All color sensations can be produced this way, including those red-blue mixes (purples and magentas) not found at any wavelength band in the spectrum.

In photography, the principles of additive color synthesis underlie making separation negatives for photomechanical reproduction of color images, and dye transfer and similar printing processes. It was also the principal behind the [Autochrome film process](#) and similar [screen](#) processes. In the darkroom, additive color printing uses red, green, and blue exposures to obtain prints from color negatives and transparencies (1). The [Grainmaker](#) filter relies on this principle of additive color printing.

I'm always interested in discussion, scientific or otherwise. You can Email me at jscruggs@bway.net

(1) ICP Encyclopedia of Photography.

The Alphabet of Art

The Robert J. McKnight Memorial Web Site

Welcome to the Alphabet of Art. This site explains, in simple terms, the elements of visual design. Once you understand the Alphabet, you'll be able to "read" pictures and other works of visual art and understand why they work the way they do.

The Alphabet of Art was developed by the late Robert J. McKnight, a sculptor, designer, and theoretician of art. McKnight believed that the historical development of communication systems paralleled the development of the senses in the individual. Just as a newborn child orients itself to the world first by touch, then hearing, and only later by eyesight, so objective systems of communication developed in that order. First came the numerical system, based on our fingers and the sense of touch. Next came the alphabet, based on our sense of hearing. McKnight saw the evolution of a visual notation system as the next logical step—hence the Alphabet of Art.

McKnight derived many of the ideas in the Alphabet from Maitland Graves and his book, *The Art of Color and Design* (1951). McGraw-Hill.

The Alphabet of Art is a service of [Guidance Communications, Inc.](#) This site was developed by Jack Massa, based on manuscripts and illustrations by Robert J. McKnight. If you have comments on the Alphabet or this site, please [email me](#). And now...

The Alphabet of Art — A Notation System for Visual Design

The visual notation system known as the Alphabet of Art is made up of Elements and Attributes.

The seven Elements are the things that the artist or designer works with: Line, Line Direction, Shape, Size, Texture, Value, and Color. The system also considers the concept of Composition, which is defined as the total effect of the use of the Elements.

The Attributes are defined as the qualities that the art or design conveys to the observer. The Alphabet discusses three Attributes: Emotional, Esthetic, and Spatial.

In any notation system there must be a method of making comparisons. In the aural alphabet, based on our sense of hearing, comparisons are made by the sound qualities inherent in vowels and consonants. In the Alphabet of Art, the Elements and Attributes are viewed as having a range of contrast, from minimum to maximum. The range of contrast provides the ground for making visual comparisons and judgments.

The following table shows the Minimum and Maximum Contrast for each Element and Attribute. This table is the basic summarization of the entire Alphabet of Art.

PRINCIPLE	Maximum Contrast	Minimum Contrast
ELEMENTS	-	-
Line	Curved	Straight
Line Direction	Diagonal	Horizontal or Vertical
Shape	Naturalistic	Geometric
Size	Large	Small
Texture	Rough	Smooth
Value	Light, Dark	Grayed
Color - Hue - Chroma - Value	- Primary Strong Light, Dark, Bright	- Secondary Weak Gray, Dull
COMPOSITION	Asymmetrical	Symmetrical
ATTRIBUTES	-	-
Emotional	Active	Passive
Esthetic	Dynamic	Decorative
Spatial	In Depth	Static

Choose a topic to read more about the Alphabet:

A [Line](#)

B [Line Direction](#)

C [Shape](#)

A [Size](#)

B [Texture](#)

C [Value](#)

A [Color](#)

B [Composition](#)

C [The Attributes](#)

A [The Picture Plane](#)

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EDUCATING THROUGH EXHIBITIONS

The National Art Education Association (NAEA) has recently published *The Educationally Interpretive Exhibition: Rethinking the Display of Student Art*, written by Kelly Bass, Teresa Cotner, Elliot Eisner, Tom Yacoe, and Lee Hanson. This unique booklet focuses on an educational model, rather than on a gallery model. The interpretive exhibition of student artwork is intended to help people understand the relationship between thinking and the process of the creation of visual art. Art and classroom teachers, as well as those involved in staff development, will find this a valuable resource, especially as the booklet's emphasis on the educational model supports Goals 2000 and educational reform as it applies to standards, frameworks, and assessments.

The Educationally Interpretive Exhibition: Rethinking the Display of Student Art is available from the NAEA's Publications Department, 1916 Association Drive, Reston, VA 201-1590, 800-299-8321. Member price is \$12.50, nonmember price is \$18.50 (includes shipping and handling).

Personal Recommendations by Art Teachers

Mary Jane Young, T.R. Miller High School, Brewton, AL Toulouse95@aol.com:

“It really does make a difference in exhibitions when you post an explanation about the processes involved with student work. I include, whenever applicable, the name of the process, a brief explanation of history, description of unusual media, vocabulary terms and definitions, steps involved and objectives or the lesson disguised in layman's terms. It adds validity to the display. People know my students are learning (and the readers are, too). With today's fancy word processors and printing programs it is easy to make these snazzy looking in a short period of time. Many times I pull information right from the file containing the lesson plan. I mount them on colored construction paper and laminate if I think I might use them again.”

“I never cease to be amazed at how many people (parents, faculty, students and the general public) actually read these and look for evidence of the items in the work. I even get phone calls asking about more specifics. Much of the public wants to become informed. It also adds validity to my program. People don't think my students come to art to just color, paste, and have an easy class. I tell my shell-shocked students that they must have been confused when they signed up for art; they thought it was going to be a breeze. Many say they work harder in art than in any academic class.”

**Peggy Bennett, Marrington Elementary, Goose Creek, SC 29445
rbennett@InfoAve.Net:**

“I have invited parents, other faculty and administrators to participate in a demonstration lesson I developed last summer. I will have people come to participate in this lesson

during American Education Week. The lesson, "Beyond the Gate" is about Charleston, SC blacksmith Philip Simmons and the ornamental wrought iron work he makes. The lesson is designed for adult learners and helps them to better understand what is being taught in art education. The lesson is specifically designed to cover all four components of DBAE. The lesson activity has the learner create a gate by using quilled paper. This lesson has been a big success for me in helping others who don't teach art to understand how much we really do teach in the art classroom. I highly encourage others to plan a demonstration lesson for use with parents and other people. As we all know, people learn more by participating in the process, and they will remember it, too.

Art Making Questions

Artworks only exist because someone makes them. Chicana and Chicano Space focuses on the decisions art makers face throughout the production process. Students select and develop art making ideas throughout the recommended sequence of lessons. These lessons culminate in a major art making activity in [printmaking](#) or [mural making](#) in lesson five.

Art Making Questions

1. **Beginning With Ideas:** Why do I make art?
 1. **My Ideas:** What ideas come from me? (motivation, inspiration, aspiration, problem)
 2. **Outside Ideas:** What ideas come from the rest of the world? (other sources for ideas)

2. **Working With Choices:** Which choices are most important to me?
 1. **Sensory Choices:** What sensory elements do I choose? Why?
 2. **Formal Choices:** How do I choose to organize the elements? Why?
 3. **Technical Choices:** What tools, materials, and processes do I choose? Why?
 4. **Cultural Choices:** How do my choices reflect the ideas, beliefs, and activities of my culture?
 5. **Artworld Choices:** What art ideas, beliefs, and activities do I choose and from whom have I learned them?

3. **Achieving Goals:** When finished, did I succeed?
 1. **Choosing A Goal:** What was I trying to do? Craftspersonship? Expressiveness? Form? Historical or art historical significance? Learning? Originality? Realism? Utility or effectiveness? Other?
 2. **Evidence:** What evidence is there that I met my goals? Evidence in my artwork? Evidence outside my artwork?
 3. **Judgment:** Did I do what I wanted to do?

Learning to think like an artist means:

- Looking at things more closely than most people do.
- Finding beauty in everyday things and situations.
- Making new connections between different things and ideas.
- Going beyond ordinary ways of thinking and doing things.
- Looking at things in different ways in order to generate new perspectives.
- Taking risks and exposing yourself to possible failure.
- Arranging things in new and interesting ways.
- Working hard and at the edge of your potential.
- Persisting where others may give up.
- Concentrating your effort and attention for long periods of time.
- Dreaming and fantasizing about things.
- Using old ideas to create new ideas and ways of seeing things.
- Doing something simply because it's interesting and personally challenging to do.