

The Learner

High school (middle adolescent) students are egocentric. They have a very recognizable character and a cultural context which supports and fosters its existence. The middle adolescent years (ages 15 - 17 approximately) are tumultuous at best, but they are also the most sensitive, the most questioning and inquisitive years. Middle adolescence is marked by the emergence of new thinking skills. The intellectual world of the teen is suddenly greatly expanded and while friends play an important role, the middle adolescent is increasingly becoming self-directed. They experience more feelings, are exploring issues of sexuality and some may engage in high risk behaviour. It is also during this period that the move to establish psychological independence from the parent increases and their psychological energies tend towards preparing for adult roles and making preliminary decisions about work goals.

At this stage, subject matter produced is often open ended and includes detailed realism to abstract work. An understanding of space, color, and design emerges which enables the student to use the artistic conventions creatively. Social issues, emotional outlets, and skill development serve as motivation for a wide variety of image making. Work becomes more individual as the student artists begin to to develop a personal style and are less influenced by peers. The art student at this age (15-17 years) should have developed a degree of skill with many media from achieving previous Key Stage Outcomes and is now intent on refining skills and applying them in the most effective manner to achieve artistic effect. They will also be interested in experimenting with media to discover how they can be used most effectively. They may try out the same idea with a number of different of media and they may portray objects and people from a variety of viewpoints and unusual perspectives or distortions, showing only parts of subject matter for artistic or emotional effect.

Students at this level are developing a sense of behavioural maturity and learning to control their impulsiveness. Possessing and managing the appropriate symbols of their social/cultural context is a primary concern for the middle adolescent. With the opportunity art education provides to explore the meanings of this symbology, students can develop an understanding of the power and messages of symbols and ultimately formulate a better understanding of themselves.

Just as some individuals may be governed by one learning style, or are particularly weak in a style, so some learning activities can be dominated by explicit or implicit assumptions about learning styles. The learning styles of students differ as each student is a unique person who may indicate preference for specific learning experiences. Within any group of students there will likely be found a range of skills, abilities, and interests and because students develop at different rates, it is essential to adapt instruction to meet individual needs.

Instruction can be adapted to address differences in learning styles by combining verbal and non-verbal communication, requesting and offering concrete examples of abstract ideas, and providing hands on activities to provide experiences which make the concepts real and give them personal meaning for the student. Creativity is one of the most important considerations of art instruction as it is adapted to meet the needs of all learners. It is essential to encourage in students the development of original thinking and authentically creative work as all students can benefit from a balanced program of creative work and from the opportunity to try out different approaches to art.

Instructional Approaches

Making art is usually a solitary, personal endeavour which as a learning experience can be enriched in the right environment.

Preparation for Making Art

Essentially there are three major components to consider when making art - subject matter, visual composition, and materials and processes. Planning and motivation in each of these areas will help enrich the art that students make.

Subject Matter

Some students may have lots of ideas about what they would like the subject matter of their images to be. Other students must be helped to discover concepts, experiences, feelings and ideas for subject matter. They must be encouraged to see that the subject matter of art is the stuff of life itself - that subject matter exists all around them - that the seemingly mundane is not necessarily boring and may deserve a second look.

Personal Experience as a Source of Subject Matter

Students cannot make art about nothing. They have to realize that they have had interesting and moving experiences, have met interesting people, have had flashes of insight, are living in a visual world that is sometimes beautiful and sometimes ugly, and therefore have a great deal of potential subject matter for their art. Besides their own experiences, other topics can come from group discussions or from assignments. In any event, students must develop the skill of using experience (their own and that of others) as potential material for art imagery. They also need opportunities to discuss experiences, to heighten their quality and reveal their potential. Ideas can be generated by the following:

- **Looking:** Looking at art, pictures, artifacts, television and film. Going to galleries, visiting sites.
- **Talking:** Talking with another person, with a group, with people who know something about the topic of interest.
- **Experiencing:** Performing the activity the art work is about.
- **Reading:** Reading to gather information about a topic of interest.

Inventing and Generating Ideas

The following strategies may be helpful:

- **Brainstorming:** The group generates as many ideas as quickly as possible following the formal rules of brainstorming (i.e., no criticizing, quantity over quality).
- **Mental Exercises:** Internal research, visualization, memory search, meditation.
- **Experimenting:** Manipulating media and objects and studying the results.
- **Free Play with Media:** Nonstop creative play on the intended subject to crystallize ideas and feelings.
- **Doodling, Cartooning:** Another form of free play.
- **Inventing with Questions:** Who? What? When? Where? Why? ... What if?
- **Synectics and Visual Metaphors**
- **Finding Similarities:** In visual qualities, emotional or conceptual qualities.
- **Observing:** Looking at the subject from many points of view - visual, intellectual, and emotional. Breaking the object into smaller parts.
- **Looking at Visuals:** Original art, reproductions, magazines, television.

Keeping a Sketchbook / Journal

Students should be encouraged to keep a sketchbook. A sketchbook/journal is often used to collect interesting ideas which may be used as a source of inspiration for art making. In it students may record their ideas visually and/or verbally. If they like, students can glue in found images (other people's ideas). The sketchbook/journal need not contain any finished art pieces.

Design

The elements and principles of design are the components of visual composition. Students who understand how the use of design in an image contributes to its meaning/message will be able to intelligently and effectively manipulate them in their own image making.

The following strategies for teaching design may be helpful:

- **Looking at Art:** Looking at original art in galleries, students own works, reproductions and discussing how design is used in them.
- **Reading About Design:** Much material is available in print, including in the resource materials for Art and Design.
- **Experimenting:** Purposely changing aspects of design in art about similar subjects to see the differences.
- **Design as the Subject Matter:** Making design elements the subject of the work.
- **Previous Experiences:** The current application of design in a work of art is the cumulative result of prior applications. Students who have had much previous experience in art making are more assured, flexible and adept in their use of design in current work.

Materials and Processes

Each art medium has a number of characteristics. For example, oil pastels have brilliant colour, smudge easily, blend easily, are slightly tacky, and are available in different sizes. Each art medium may be applied in a variety of ways. For example, the same oil pastels may be applied thickly or thinly, applied using the point or the side, blended with other colours, applied in combination with other media such as water colour paints, and/or may be scratched after applied.

The characteristics of a medium and the method of application exhibit qualities which contribute to the mood and meaning of an art work. Students require knowledge and experience with materials in order to obtain the effect they seek in their art works.

The following strategies may be helpful for teaching about materials and processes in art:

- **Looking at Art:** Looking at original art in galleries, student work and art reproductions and discussing the medium, and how it is applied, and its influence on the mood/meaning of the piece.
- **Experimentation with the Media:** To be followed by discussion and exchange of students' discoveries.
- **Reading:** Reading about and researching information about materials and processes.
- **Demonstration.**
- **Previous Experience.**

Making Art

Making art is a time-consuming activity. The artist/student:

- selects or is assigned a subject;
- researches it by observing, manipulating, experiencing, considering;
- interviewing, etc.;
- contemplates appropriate design;
- contemplates appropriate medium and technique;
- works on the image ... all the while interacting with the work, shifting, changing, responding to the image itself;
- brings the image to a close;
- summarizes the experience;
- exhibits the work.

During the actual art making phase (fifth step above), the teacher acts as a facilitator. Students who have difficulty getting started or keeping moving need support and some direction. A review of the student's original idea, their objectives, and possible routes to take may be all that is required. It is not the role of the teacher to tell the student what direction to follow. Rather, the art teacher encourages the student into considering their original intentions and the alternatives they could follow, and the student decides how they will proceed.

Summarizing

There are many aspects of making art which are intuitive. (If it could be explained in words, we wouldn't make pictures!)

Although much of the art making experience is beyond verbal description, there are many aspects of visual expression which may be verbalized and thus brought to a concrete level of understanding. Much of the information about the art experience which may be brought out in verbal discussions is very helpful to students and teachers alike.

Discussion reinforces the art making process and can enhance the total experience.

Student work should be posted fairly frequently and students gathered to discuss the work. Work may be in progress or complete. Through discussion students can:

- share with the group their experiences on a work including aspects that they feel are successful, problems or surprises they encountered;
- offer positive criticism of other students work;

- explore the variety of approaches to design, media, and subject matter taken by individual students;
- take away new ideas which they may wish to adapt in future work;
- acknowledge and respect the wide spectrum of individual approaches to making art;
- offer potential solutions to art problems encountered by other students;
- bring to the attention of other class members aspects of a work which may have been overlooked.

Presenting/Exhibition

Art and Design students should present their work to the public whenever possible. Exhibiting students work is a form of recognition of the importance of the work they are doing. It acts as a form of public relations.

The following is only a partial list of potential exhibition/presentation ideas:

- a permanent art display area in the classroom and/or in a more public school site;
- a yearly exhibition in the school;
- a yearly exhibition in a local art gallery or other community building;
- a permanent installation for the school, a public building or its grounds;
- art works as gifts for children (e.g., books, toys, posters). These can be prepared for children in lower grades, children in hospital, etc.;
- art may be photographed and published in print (a school publication, newspaper, journal, etc.);
- student art used in a slide show which introduces new students to the school and its programs.

Addressing the Needs of All Learners

It is recognized that some students will bring individual differences to school, which challenge “standard expectations” for achievement. Support systems must be in place for those students who have not reached the key-stage outcomes from earlier grades, or who are struggling to meet key-stage outcomes at their current grade level. It is intended that this curriculum guide provide standards with which teachers can locate a student’s achievement level and identify the appropriate accommodations needed for attainment of the outcomes.

Assessment and Evaluation

Student assessment in visual art is based on outcomes. Teachers should take into account students’ perceptual development, procedural and conceptual understanding, and personal expression.

Assessment should be ongoing and include a wide range of assessment techniques focusing on the students’ creative and responsive processes, as well as on any cultivating product. In visual arts, teachers must also rely to a great extent on their observation.

Recognizing the importance of outcomes-based curriculum and assessment in the arts, this document includes sample scoring guides, rubrics and assessment resources.

The sample scoring guides and rubrics are intended to serve as a model for outcomes-based performance assessment and a departure point for teachers to produce their own assessment documents. Students may be assessed through performance in a group activities, but assessment is scored on an individual basis. Outcome criteria must be the same for all students regardless of talent or experience.

Purposes of Evaluation

Evaluation should be an integral part of the learning process and should examine the following:

- students' growth and progress in the processes of perceiving, producing, and appreciating;
- the development of the students' knowledge and understanding of art concepts;
- the program, course objectives and content;
- the quality of instruction;
- the learning environment.

The main purpose of evaluation is to facilitate student growth and progress. It should also:

- foster students' powers of self-awareness, self-criticism, and self-discipline;
- determine the degree to which program aims have been met;
- indicate to the teacher why plans, units of instruction, or programs succeed or fail;
- identify the need for program changes and the nature of those changes;
- document significant areas for purposes of reporting to the students, the administration, trustees, and the public.

Students should be continually encouraged to develop the ability to appraise their own artwork through discussions, interviews, peer evaluation, and other activities. In the Senior school the teacher must encourage students in positive, sensible, and yet critical ways to examine their personal work and growth so that they become more self-disciplined and understanding of the nature of the program.

It is important that the evaluation process reflect the philosophy and policies of the curriculum teaching guide as well as be attuned to the review, development, and implementation phases of the program.

Assessment of Student Growth and Progress

As an integral and complex part of the teaching-learning process, assessment in the visual arts should be constant and ongoing. It should be positive, concerned with the promotion of student growth and development and the provision of effective learning experiences. It should not be allowed to have a detrimental effect on students' understanding and self-image. In evaluation, consideration should be given to the growth and development of students' perceptions, the

quality of their products, and the appreciation that each student has of his/her own work and that of others. The ultimate aim of the evaluation process should be the development of self-evaluation, self-discipline, and self-actualization in students.

The teacher should assess student growth and progress through listening to and observing students as they are in the process of producing, thinking through problems, and appreciating artwork. A variety of procedures and techniques (e.g., various types of tests, examinations, and critiques) can be used to assess students' growth in knowledge and skills related to the design, studio, and history course components.

The general aims and specific objectives of the course should be defined as clearly as possible. Specific criteria can be developed and delineated for each activity or assignment so that students understand what is expected of them and teachers have a clear definition of how to guide student learning. Some suggested evaluation strategies follow, while further examples can be found in Appendix A.

Listening to Student Comments

Listening to what students have to say during performance and appreciation activities is one way to evaluate changes. If the teacher is not satisfied with what the students are producing or if the students seem disappointed with their results, judicious questions or changes of approach may be helpful. For example, if the teacher notices that the majority of the students are having difficulty with a certain problem, some facilitating exercises related to it may be necessary. Simply recording low marks will not help the situation. It is important for the teacher to become alert to student needs through listening to their reactions during the activity.

Observing Behaviour and Behaviourial Changes

The following observations frequently indicate a growing maturation in students. Well-motivated students will:

- develop ideas readily;
- act and talk purposefully;
- respect opinions that differ from their own;
- have reasonably flexible ideas that can be altered to suit the medium;
- not be greatly distressed by mistakes;
- be relaxed when working;
- not destroy unsuccessful attempts;

- weigh the suggestions of others before accepting or rejecting them;
- know when they have reasonably completed a piece of work;
- be absorbed in their own work and not be easily distracted;
- know what they want to do next and find out for themselves how to go about it;
- enjoy trying something new;
- experiment freely without feeling pressured to complete a product that others will admire.

Students will possess these qualities to a greater or lesser extent depending on their level of maturity and may show signs of difficulty. They may, for example:

- appear tense and assume rigid postures while working;
- consistently request help;
- frequently start over;
- wander around the classroom and experience problems in settling down to work;
- destroy their own products or throw it away;
- seem to fear failure;
- start to work on ideas in several media within a short period and not finish any of them, or finish them too quickly and seem not to care about results;
- have a tendency to erase as they draw;
- refuse to listen to or follow instructions.

If these behaviours occur frequently, appropriate adjustment in program activities, instructional strategies, motivational techniques, or student counselling will be required.

Studying Students' Art Products

Teachers should understand and appreciate the fact that students differ in the ways in which they work, see, and feel when producing art. By pointing out the positive aspects in all types of work, whether abstract, realistic, or non-objective, teachers can encourage the development in students of a tolerant attitude towards a range of visual forms.

In addition to looking at students' actual products, teachers should consider the process involved. They should consider:

- how students perceive, that is, how well students internalize visual concepts in works of art and in the environment;
- whether students understand the language of art;
- whether students understand artists and their works (the process of understanding and critiquing one's own work and that of peers is related to similar techniques used to view professional artwork);
- how students react and feel during the producing phase;
- to what extent students' analytical capabilities have developed (i.e., their ability to classify, describe, explain, and interpret);
- whether students' ability to judge (i.e., criticize or estimate) has improved;
- to what extent students' ability to execute has grown (i.e., whether their creativity, fluency, flexibility, use of the imagination, originality, and ability to synthesize have increased);
- students' skill in using tools and materials in producing artwork;
- to what extent students' ability to value and appreciate has grown;
- students' ability to express personal ideas;
- students' ability to adapt to the unforeseen;
- students' ability to make decisions;
- students' ability to evaluate themselves and others fairly and constructively;
- students' ability to integrate acquired knowledge, experiences, and skills into their artwork;
- students' sensitivity to the environment and to their cultural heritage;
- whether students strive to achieve excellence;
- whether students work with interest and dynamism;
- whether students work methodically;
- whether students work independently;
- whether students concentrate on their work;
- whether students show perseverance in their work;
- whether students complete assignments;

- whether students take the initiative and act on their own;
- whether students work well in cooperation with others;
- whether students communicate enthusiasm;
- whether students are mindful of appropriate language.

Arriving at a Mutual Final Assessment

The ultimate goal of evaluation is to assist students to become more familiar with and confident in the process of self evaluation. To assist in the evaluation of a project, a checklist or rubric of pertinent outcomes, technical skills, aspects of composition, originality and work attitudes may be drawn up. Each point can be discussed by teacher and student to arrive at a mutual assessment. As students progress through their years in secondary school and are exposed to formal critiques and evaluation sessions, they become more self-disciplined and more capable of dealing with self-evaluation. Teachers should strive to assist students to develop confidence, a sense of pride in their work, and a degree of objectivity in responding to what they have done. However, success in this process only comes with time and patience.

Testing

When formal tests are given, their proportional value must be considered. It is unfair to make any test count for too high a percentage of the whole year's or term's mark. Student participation in class, studio behaviour, and the products themselves must also be considered.

Formal written tests are given to evaluate specific knowledge in the theoretical aspects of design, history, and studio. It is important to help students to use good prose as they write about their own art and the art of the past and present.

Methods of Organization:	Methods of Data Recording:	Ongoing Student Activities:
Individual Assessments	Anecdotal Records	Written Assignments
Group Assessments	Checklists	Assignments/Projects (assessment of process and product)
Contracts	Rubrics	Performance Assessments (ongoing assessment of process and student participation)
Peer and Self-Assessments		Portfolios
Portfolios		Sketch books/Journals
Conference		Homework
Audio and visual recordings		

For more information, please see *Evaluation of Students in the Classroom, A Handbook and Policy Guide* from the Department of Education. It provides generic information on evaluation.

