

Arts Assessment For Learning

VISUAL ARTS — 5TH GRADE

HOW TO & TIPS: OIL PASTEL LANDSCAPE DRAWING

The idea of assessment in the arts feels and sounds intimidating. As an art teacher I was definitely hesitant to take this journey. The words assessment and art don't seem like they belong in the same sentence. I thought back to my own experience as an art student and tried to think of where I may have unknowingly participated in formative assessment. One memory in particular struck a chord with me. I was in an advanced painting class in college, and I remembered every studio session we would stop working and place all of our unfinished artwork against the wall. We would take a lot of time to critique each work, both positively and negatively. I remember feeling so inspired after these critiques, especially if I was unsure how to proceed with my work. There's something so powerful about seeing your work through someone else's perspective. It was this memory that made me realize the importance of formative assessment in art. Providing young artists with the opportunity to reflect on their work or hear critique of their work through another person's perspective, and then revise that work is invaluable. Whenever I'm feeling discouraged about using assessment in my teaching practice, I try to hold onto the memories of my experience as a student and how inspired I was by the feedback I received to help me take the next step forward.

The unit creating landscape drawings introduces one criterion per session in the following sequence:

- Depth: Creating a foreground, middleground, background
- Composition: Using the space in an interesting way that moves the viewers eyes purposefully through the artwork
- Texture: Using various lines creating visual texture, more detailed in the foreground and less in the background
- Scale: Understanding that objects in the foreground are larger than those in the background

Creating a student generated rubric by observing four images of landscape drawings:

Leveling the drawings:

- Students as a class view and discuss four landscape drawings that reflect each level (level 1,2,3 and 4). During a group discussion the students debate which level matches each landscape drawing.
- During this discussion, students focus on the important criteria, previously introduced throughout the unit. This helps the students to level the landscapes by discussing the specific criteria each piece demonstrates or is lacking. The focusing criteria are texture, depth, composition and scale.

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Students describe the levels:

- The group discussion concludes with the students agreeing on a level for each landscape. Each table is then assigned a specific level (level 1,2,3, or 4) and given a piece of paper labeled with that level and 4 or 5 bullet points below. Students then collaborate in four small groups to write the criteria that is lacking or being demonstrated by the landscape that matches their level.
- This student written rubric is then later edited with support from the teacher to strengthen the language. It is then displayed as a reference for both peer discussions as well as self-reflection.
- The intention is that a student generated rubric will give them ownership and will be used as a tool for conversations and feedback. The expectation is the rubric will scaffold students' understanding of the art vocabulary and criteria, raising the level of their artwork.

Peer-Feedback

- Students review the rubric and exchange artwork with their pre-assigned art partner.
- The students can reference a chart that is displayed in the classroom with "Art-Partner Prompts":

Have you considered...

You can add more _____ by...

One technique you could try is...

- Each partner chooses ONE criterion from the rubric they feel will improve their partner's landscape. On a post-it, they write a suggestion for their art partner that is directly related to the chosen criteria.
- After writing a helpful suggestion the art partners return their partners work and discuss their suggestions.
- The students return to their art making with a specific focus for their revision.

Self-Assessment:

- Students review their own artwork using the rubric and choose the criteria they feel is most lacking in their work. An example of this would be if a student reviews their artwork and notices that they only have a foreground and a background, therefore lacking in depth, they can choose depth as the criteria to focus on and add another landform level to create a middle ground and add to the level of depth in their artwork.