

# Arts Assessment For Learning

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VISUAL ARTS — 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

## REFLECTION: OIL-PASTEL LANDSCAPES

### **Without judgement, describe what you did:**

Students participate in a group discussion while viewing four landscape drawings that represent each level (level 1,2,3 or 4). They debate which level matches each landscape drawing using specific evidence and criteria from the works of art. There is a 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 criteria the students are focusing on for the unit are texture, depth, composition and scale.

The group discussion concludes with the students agreeing on a level for each landscape, each table is 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 collaboratively revised during the following session to perfect the art language. When the rubric is complete it is displayed in the room to be referenced during both peer discussions as well as self-reflection.

### **What went well?**

The rubric was created by the students themselves in their own language and writing. They displayed a sense of ownership over it and felt more comfortable using this rubric as a tool for conversations and feedback. The students' understanding of the art vocabulary and criteria was further scaffolded and raised the level of their artwork. I also noticed their conversations were more criteria driven and more meaningful.

### **What was so-so?**

The first time around during this inquiry question the rubrics did not have strong enough art vocabulary. The addition of a session revising the rubric solved that problem.

### **What was the most challenging part of trying this?**

The most challenging part of trying this was time management. I wanted to make sure that while creating the rubric there was still time set aside for creating art. I have found that the more time I spend on formative assessment in my classroom the more fluid and seamless it becomes.

### **What was the impact of this strategy on student learning?**

As I mentioned earlier, student conversations and feedback became more meaningful which greatly improved the revising process. Previously, while listening in on student conversations, I was hearing a lot of shallow feedback like: "I like your drawing.", "Your drawing looks real.", "Your drawing looks sloppy." The peer feedback was not specific enough to help in revising work because it was lacking an awareness of the criteria. After collaborating on the rubric, the peer feedback was specific and criteria driven. This was an eye-opening discovery for me.

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## **What questions were raised for you as you implemented the assessment practice?**

I questioned whether or not my students would resent me for writing more and having more discussions, taking away from their art-making. Sometimes I felt they did but for the most part when they witnessed the improvement in their work they were more confident in the process. Also, as I had mentioned, the assessment practice progressed more quickly once it became routine. This is something that to this day I am still perfecting.

## **What new insights or understandings are forming as a result of this experience?**

As a result of this experience I understand how meaningful formative assessment is for a young artist. It is important to teach students how to give and receive respectful feedback, and most importantly how to use and learn from that feedback. I also find the mantra "You get what you assess." - insightful because I have found that when you set clear expectations, young artists can meet and exceed them.

## **How do the results of your action plan inform your inquiry question?**

The results of my action plan informed me that when students have a criteria focused rubric that is meaningful to them, it is a powerful tool that helps them give better feedback as well as improve their self-reflection. Naturally this helps them to grow into a more thoughtful artist.

## **Documentation to bring (student work, photos, writing, teacher journal, etc):**

Some of the documentation I have is student work (before and after) pictures, written work, photo of student created rubric, and visual rubric.