

EDUCATOR GUIDE

Story Theme: The Young & the Restless
Subject: The Oxbow School
Discipline: Visual Arts

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Students at The Oxbow School present their work at a critique with faculty and colleagues.
Still image from SPARK story – Spring 2004.

SECTION I - OVERVIEW

EPISODE THEME

The Young & the Restless

SUBJECT

The Oxbow School

GRADE RANGES

K-12 & Post-secondary

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Visual Arts & Language Arts

OBJECTIVE

To introduce educators and students to the Oxbow School's intensive programs for high school students.

STORY SYNOPSIS

Spark follows a class of young artists from around the US as they progress through a semester at The Oxbow School in Napa Valley, an intensive arts program for high school students interested in pursuing school or careers in the visual arts.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVE

To introduce students to the critique process employed in graduate and post-graduate studio programs.

To encourage students to talk about their artwork and the artwork of their peers.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Group oral discussion, review and analysis, including peer review and aesthetic valuing as a group

Teacher-guided instruction, including demonstration and guidance

Hands-on individual projects in which students work independently

Hands-on group projects in which students assist and support one another
Critical reflection on personal expressions and how they are seen and received by others

EQUIPMENT NEEDED

TV & VCR with SPARK story "The Oxbow School" about an intensive semester-long arts program for high school students
Computer with Internet access, navigation software, speakers and a sounds card, printer
Cassette player, CD player, or computer audio program

MATERIALS NEEDED

Access to libraries with up-to-date collections of periodicals, books, and research papers
Pencils, pens, and paper

INTELLIGENCES ADDRESSED

Bodily-Kinesthetic - control of one's own body, control in handling objects
Interpersonal - awareness of others' feelings, emotions, goals, motivations
Intrapersonal - awareness of one's own feelings, emotions, goals, motivations
Spatial - ability to manipulate and create mental images in order to solve problems
Logical-Mathematical - ability to detect patterns, reason deductively, think logically



See more information on [Multiple Intelligences](http://www.kqed.org/spark/education) at www.kqed.org/spark/education.

SECTION II – CONTENT/CONTEXT

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Since 1999 the Oxbow School in Napa Valley has been giving young people from around the country opportunities to develop their artistic skills in advanced visual arts programs that go far beyond those offered at the high school level. In “The Oxbow School,” SPARK follows the progress of a group of students boarding at Oxbow from their arrival on campus to graduation day 3 months later.

The idea for The Oxbow School was conceived by Ann Hatch. Founder of San Francisco’s innovative artist-in-residence gallery Capp Street Project, Hatch created the Oxbow School as a place for high school students to study art in a professional environment – interacting with living artists, and surrounded by other students interested in making art. Oxbow’s program mirrors fine art degree programs at colleges and universities, fostering a community or cohort of artists who work together and exchange ideas about art. Like their college-level counterparts, the students at Oxbow participate in critique sessions in which they professionally present their work to teachers and peers who respond with questions, constructive criticism, and suggestions.

Oxbow offers an intimate class size with only forty eight students and eight faculty members each semester. The result is an intimate environment where students interact with one another and the faculty on a daily basis, living in residence together, eating meals together, and exploring the Bay Area arts scene together. As a way of expanding the classroom outside the school’s walls, students take field trips to arts institutions and art colleges in the region, as well as to the studios of working artists, to learn the workings of the contemporary art scene.

At the end of each semester, each student completes and presents a final project – the culmination of the skills and knowledge that s/he has gained over the preceding months. After the critiques are over,

parents, friends, and supporters come to Oxbow from all over the country to see the student’s work. They are often surprised by the high level of conceptual maturity and physical skill of the work. For many Oxbow graduates, the program is transformative, providing them with new ways of thinking about their work and an in-depth understanding of the art world. While some students continue their work in the visual artists, other students become aware of other creative mediums during their time at Oxbow, learning to develop their own voice as an artist.



Students at work: students participating in a group critique of another student’s work (above), and a student presents his own painting in the same critique (below). Still images from SPARK story, spring 2004.



THE BIG PICTURE

Programs like those offered at the Oxbow School are rare, in that they offer high school students a chance to experience art education in the way that they might in a university level or post-graduate curriculum. Because high school art programs are merely one part of a much larger course load, they cannot create a concentrated environment where students are fully immersed in the discussion and production of art works.

The most important pedagogical aspect of the focused environment created at Oxbow is that students present their work in critiques, which is the primary form of idea exchange and evaluation in college level programs. Usually this takes the form of a short verbal presentation in front of a small group of faculty, invited artists, and fellow students. The presenter discusses one or several pieces, including an explanation of the conceptual and material process that went into their creation. This is followed by a group discussion of the student's work propelled by a set of questions, comments, and suggestions. Through the critique, students are able to articulate and discuss not only issues surrounding technique and materials, but conceptual and historical issues as well. Often the discussion turns toward the relative success with which the piece communicates the issues it means to present, and historical precedents for the work. The critique offers the student the opportunity to open up the work to other perspectives and thus a means to rethink and rework the piece into a richer and more nuanced statement.

There are a few programs nationwide that are similar to that provided at Oxbow. Many states have Governor's Schools that offer low cost or free intensive summer programs in art. Though none exist in California, many universities, art schools, and community colleges across the state offer summer programs for high school students.

The California College of the Arts (CCA) offers the Young Artist Studio Program, a two week intensive program for students interested in the visual arts who have completed the sixth, seventh, or eighth grade. The San Francisco Art Institute also offers a two week intensive summer program in the arts called the Young Artists Program (YAP) which is also

aimed at talented students between the ages of thirteen and fifteen.

A program more similar to Oxbow's is Cal State's **Innerspark**, a summer school for the arts at the Valencia campus in Southern California. The program seeks to enable artistically gifted students to receive intensive education in the arts through a multidisciplinary program, and to provide an arena for future artists who may wish to study and practice the arts, or to pursue careers in the major performing arts companies and commercial and fine arts institutions in California. **Innerspark** makes an effort to choose students that broadly represent the state's socioeconomic and ethnic diversity.

Oxbow is one of a group of college-preparatory schools that have a formal agreement based on their philosophical beliefs. All member schools accept credit for classes taken by their students at the other member schools. Participating schools include boarding and day schools, including [Gateway High School](#) and [The Urban School](#) in San Francisco, [The Episcopal School of Dallas](#), [The Ethical Culture Fieldston School](#) and [The Masters School](#) in New York, the [Haverford School](#) in Pennsylvania, [Phillips Academy at Andover](#) in New England, and [St. Paul Academy and Summit School](#) in Minnesota.



A student at Oxbow School puts the finishing touches on his interpretation of Michelangelo's famous scene of the [Creation of Adam](#) from the Sistine Chapel. Still image from SPARK story, spring 2004.

RESOURCES – TEXTS

The Arts Education Partnership, a national center for arts education advocacy offers a range of excellent quality publications about topics related to arts education, including

- [The Arts and Education: New Opportunities for Research](#)
- [Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development](#)
- [Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning](#)
- [Gaining the Arts Advantage: Lessons from School Districts that Value Arts Education](#)
- [Why Your Child Needs the Arts Advantage and How You Can Gain It](#)
- [Learning Partnerships: Improving Learning in Schools with Arts Partners in the Community](#)

To order AEP publications or videos, please contact the CCSSO Publications office at (202) 336-7016 or e-mail pubs@ccsso.org for more information.

Clark, Gilbert, Michael Day, Dwaine Greer. "Discipline-Based Art Education: Becoming Students of Art." [Readings in Art Education](#), Ralph Smith (ed.) Reston, Virginia: National Art Education Association, 2000.

Efland, Arthur. "How Art Became a Discipline: Looking at Our Recent History," [Studies in Art Education](#), 29 (September 1988): 262-274.

Eisner, Eliot. [The Arts and the Creation of the Mind](#). Cambridge, MA: Yale University Press, 2002. Elliott Eisner argues that the arts are more important means for developing complex and subtle aspects of the mind to deal with the ambiguities and uncertainties of daily life than are the formally structured curricula.

Singerman, Howard. [Art Subjects: Making Artists in the American University](#). Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999.

Wolff, Janet. "Questioning the Curriculum: Arts Education and Ideology." [Studies in Art Education: A Journal of Issues and Research](#), 31(4), 198-206.

RESOURCES – WEB SITES

Arts Education Partnership – <http://www.aep-arts.org> – A national arts education resource,

research, networking and advocacy organization located in Washington DC, dedicated to arts education. They also offer a myriad of excellent publications about arts education and the impact of arts education on academic and social development. The AEP also offers the amazing resource of the 2003-04 State Arts Education Policy Database at <http://www.aep-arts.org/policysearch/searchengine> which allows users to review arts education policies on a state-by-state basis.

College-University Summer Program - <http://www.gpsid.esc2.net/GPHS/College-UniversitySumProg101003.htm>--A nationwide list of summer college and university programs for high school students.

Community Bridges Beacon - <http://spidey.sfusd.k12.ca.us/schwww/sch529/beacon.htm> - A listing of free programs offered by Community Bridges Beacon at Everett Middle School in San Francisco.

Gateway High School - <http://www.gwhs.org> - A model, college preparatory charter school in San Francisco committed to academic excellence through personalized, student-centered learning, heavily weighting the arts.

Innerspark: California State School for the Arts - <http://www.cσσα.org/indexFlash.html>

Idyllwild Arts Academy - http://www.idyllwildarts.org/html/academy/academy_academics.html - A private, high school boarding school dedicated to the arts

Intel's Computer Clubhouse - <http://www.computerclubhouse.org/members-galleries.htm> - A place where high school students can exhibit their online artworks.

The Center for Creative Youth - <http://www.crec.org/ccy> - A summer program for high school students at Wesleyan University

The Oxbow School - <http://www.oxbowschool.org>
World Wide Arts Resources - http://www.wwar.com/categories/Academic/Summer_Programs/--Some summer arts programs in the United States and Europe

Young Artist Studio Program at California College of the Arts - http://www.cca.edu/cgi-bin/dad?record=youth_artist_studio_program&dbase=extended_ed

The Urban School - <http://www.urbanschool.org> – A private high school in San Francisco with a robust arts program.

Young Artists Program at San Francisco Art Institute http://www.sanfranciscoart.edu/database/community_edu.htm#yap

Young Audiences of Northern California - <http://www.yabayarea.org> – The largest and oldest provider of arts education for K-12 students and communities in Northern California, offering performance and artist residency programs in all of the arts

BAY AREA RESOURCES

Ableza

Youth Mural Project
1279 Mildred Avenue
San Jose, CA, USA, 95125
<http://www.ableza.org/mural.html>

ArtSpan/Open Studios

Art for Inner City Youth
934 Brannan Street
San Francisco, CA 94103
415.861.9838
<http://www.info@artspan.org>

California College of the Arts

Young Artist Studio Program
2 locations - Oakland and SF
510/594.3710
http://www.cca.edu/cgi-bin/dad?record=youth_artist_studio_program&dbase=extended_ed

Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco

Museum Ambassador Program
Advanced Placement Art History for High School Students

Legion of Honor
100 34th Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94121

de Young Art Center (DYAC)
2501 Irving Street
San Francisco, CA 94122

24-Hour Hotline - 415.863.3330
Switchboard - 415.750.3600
de Young Art Center - 415.682.2484
<http://www.thinker.org>

Jewish Community Center

3200 California Street
San Francisco, CA 94118
415.292.1200
<http://www.jccsf.org/>

Precita Eyes Mural Center

2981 24th Street
San Francisco, CA 94110
415/285.2287
<http://www.precitaeyes.org>

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art

151 3rd Street
San Francisco, CA 94103
415.357.4000
<http://www.sfmoma.org/>
SFMOMatches pairs high school students with adult members to learn about modern art -
<http://www.sfmoma.org/education/matches.html>

Sharon Art Studio

Golden Gate Park
San Francisco, CA 94118
415/753.7004
<http://www.sharonartstudio.org/>

Stanford University Cantor Arts Center

Lomita Drive, Stanford University
Palo Alto, CA 94305
650/723.4177
650.725.3155.
<http://www.stanford.edu/dept/ccva>

San Francisco Art Institute

Young Artists Program
Email: communityed@sfai.edu
415/749-4554
http://www.sanfranciscoart.edu/database/community_edu.htm#yap

Southern Exposure

Artists in Education
Youth Advisory Board
401 Alabama Street
San Francisco, CA 94110
415/863.2141
<http://www.soex.org>

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

Young Artists at Work (YAWW)
701 Mission St @ 3rd
San Francisco, CA 94103-3138
415/978.ARTS (2787)
http://www.yerbuenaarts.org/b_ybca.html

SECTION III – VOCABULARY

Anticipate

To feel or realize beforehand, to foresee.

Articulate

To express in coherent verbal form, to give words to.

Catalyst

An agent that modifies and increases the rate of a change without being consumed in the process.

Convey

To communicate or make known, to impart.

Critique

A critical review or commentary, especially one dealing with works of art or literature.

Currency

Transmission from person to person as a medium of exchange; circulation.

Document

To record, in writing or visual representation.

Feedback

The return of information about the result of a process or activity; an evaluative response.

Integral

Essential or necessary for completeness.

Immerse

To engage wholly or deeply; absorb.

Marginalize

To relegate or confine to a lower or outer limit or edge, as of social standing.

Medium

The material of which a work of art is made up.

Negate

To make ineffective or invalid; nullify.

Prospect

Something expected; a possibility.

Renaissance man

One who is skilled in a multitude of areas and practices.

Rural

Of, relating to, or characteristic of the country.

Springboard

Something that helps to launch a career or activity.

Unveiling

Putting on display for the first time

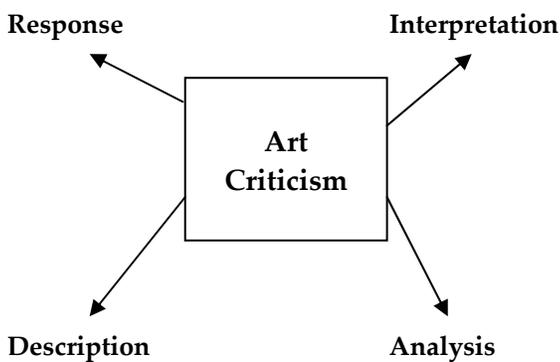
SECTION IV – ENGAGING WITH SPARK

STANDARDS-BASED ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION POINTS

Talking about Art

Brainstorm the concept of art criticism with the class and construct a mind map on the board structured around these four steps in the critical process.

Sample mind map



Drawing upon student responses, identify on the mind map the elements involved in each area. The following questions may help to guide the discussion.

Description - What do I see? What comprises the work of art in terms of materials, colors, textures, etc.

Analysis - How is the work organized? What is its composition? How does it communicate?

Interpretation - What is happening? What is the artist trying to say? What is communicated?

Response – What is the response to the work in terms of form and content? Why?

Show a slide of a famous work of art and ask students to study the print and note their observations using these four steps to structure their critique. Offer students the opportunity to revisit and add to the mind map in the light of this activity.

The objective is to provide students with a critical framework in which to discuss and analyze art. Have students write a 500 word critical response to the piece using this conceptual model to organize their ideas.

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS STANDARDS

In 2001 the California State Board of Education adopted content standards for the Visual & Performing Arts (VAPA) for students in pre-kindergarten through grade 12. A standard is a goal – an ideal – that the State Board of Education has agreed is important for students to achieve in a particular discipline. As in other content areas such as Social Science, Science, Language Arts, and Mathematics, the Visual & Performing Arts Standards explicitly describe the content that needs to be provided in arts instruction programs in order to accomplish the student learning specified for each grade level. From these standards, school districts can develop a sequential curriculum.

The VAPA standards are organized around five (5) component strands that overlay four (4) arts disciplines (dance, music, theatre, and visual arts) for each grade level from kindergarten through grade 12. The strands are interrelated and should not be viewed or used in a stand-alone, linear manner, rather they should be employed in a circular, woven, or spiral approach to curriculum development. The content within each strand builds sequentially as the student advances through the grades. They are:

- Artistic Perception
- Creative Expression
- Historical & Cultural Context
- Aesthetic Valuing
- Connections, Relationships & Applications

Arts Intensive

View the SPARK story on The Oxbow School and challenge the class to replicate the intensive approach. Ask students to make a work of art that, in whatever way they choose, represents an aspect of themselves, and encourage them to use any artistic medium including drawing, painting, sculpture, photography or computer generated images. Different mediums can be combined in this enterprise.

Allow students sufficient time to fully explore their idea and then invite each student to present a work-in-progress report to the group for discussion and feedback. Students will need to articulate their thought process, although they will not have a finished product.

To prepare students to critique each other's work, discuss and agree a set of ground rules with the group. The intention is to understand the purpose of feedback and manage the process so that it is meaningful, but also a positive and constructive experience in reflecting back what is seen in the work.

Students should be guided to agree the following type of guidelines to make the environment as safe as possible and then devise their own principles to add to the list. For example: always offer constructive criticism, be supportive, be specific and give examples to illustrate points, never be personal but refer to the work, give positive feedback first and balance it with points about potential areas to develop, be serious and thoughtful about the process and offer helpful insights and suggestions where possible. Each student should present work for critique and be allotted 5-10 minutes to do so.

Finally, suggest that students organize an open studio to exhibit the work. They should present the artwork in a professional and interesting way, producing a program for the event that provides information about each piece and an invitation for students throughout the school and for outside visitors, if they would like to display the work more widely. Students may like to take digital photos of their work to display at the event and to include in their portfolios.

Depending upon the time of year, the school open studio could apply to be listed in the regional open

studio publicity. For example, San Francisco Open Studios, contact ArtSpan: <http://www.artspan.org> 415/861.9838 or other youth art resource (see **Bay Area Resources**).

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS STANDARDS

Artistic Perception - Processing, analyzing, and responding to sensory information through the language and skills unique to dance, music, theatre, and visual art.

Students are engaged in perceiving and responding to the arts, using the language of each arts discipline. Teachers design instruction to develop the basic building blocks in each discipline, including specific vocabulary and the technical and perceptual skills a student needs to be successful in the art form.

Creative Expression - Creating, performing, and participating in dance, music, theatre, and visual art.

Students are engaged in the creative process, demonstrating their understanding, creating responses to artistic problems, and expressing themselves. Students are given opportunities to use what they have learned and practiced to create and participate creatively in that art form.

Historical and Cultural Context - Understanding the historical contributions and cultural dimensions of dance, music, theatre, and visual art.

Students are analyzing the role of the art form in the past and present. This strand builds the students' understanding of the contributions and cultural dimensions of each art discipline.

Aesthetic Valuing - Responding to, analyzing, and making judgments about works on dance, music, theatre, and visual art.

Students are critically assessing and making meaning from works of art - learning to talk about how artworks communicate.

Connections, Relationships, Applications - Connecting and applying what is learned in dance, music, theatre, and visual art to learning in other art forms and subjects and to careers.

In this strand students apply what they have learned in a specific art form to other areas of the curriculum. The students also build related career and skills understandings for each particular arts discipline.

The Medium in the Message

Encourage students to work in small groups or pairs and to choose an art medium that they know very little about. Suggest that the groups visit an art gallery, museum, studio or exhibition space to view work in the chosen medium and to learn about the art form and techniques. Encourage students to collect illustrative material on one artist – photographs of the work, display cards and information on the technical processes. Images can be scanned and enlarged to share with the group. Alternatively, students groups can visit an artist's studio as illustrated in the SPARK story to gain understanding of the work of a particular artist or attend open studio events and choose the work of one artist to explore further (see above).

Each group should prepare a presentation on the artistic medium or the artist chosen for the whole group to discuss. Groups should use photographs and visual images wherever possible and focus on one artist as an exemplar of an art form.

For middle school students show sample sculptural pieces or slides of creative sculptural forms to assist students in constructing a group sculpture, representing a feeling or value using found materials, clay or paper. Participants can brainstorm by jotting down ideas or diagrams to assist them in creating an original sculpture. For examples of such art, visit the two Web sites below on paper maché art <http://www.btinternet.com/~pulp.art/> and carved shapes made from pit heads <http://www.shamey.com/pit/pit.htm>.

Atelier – The History of the Modern Art Studio

For 11th and 12th grade students, invite students to research the *atelier* system in art education, developed in France in the 19th century. *Atelier* is the French word for a studio or workshop and in this system a trained painter in his studio taught the skills of his profession to a small group of qualified students. It was an apprenticeship system whereby masters of each generation sought to perfect their art and bequeath their expertise to their pupils. . The particular form the apprenticeship took-employment in a monastic workshop, membership in the guild system, contractual arrangement with a particular master-changed over the centuries. But the essence, whereby pupils apply to the studio of an individual artist for instruction, endured.

Students should approach this subject by framing their research around the following questions and producing a well-organized report.

Trace the history of the atelier system...

Fully explain its mission and intention
Which countries adopted the system or something similar?

What led to the decline of the atelier system?
With what has it been replaced, if anything?
Are there organizations that continue the tradition?
Does The Oxbow School high school intensive program relate to this system in any way? How?

Finally, initiate a discussion of art education in the light of The Oxbow School model and the research reports.

For more information about SPARK and its educational content, including the California Visual & Performing Arts Standards and what they mean for teaching and learning in the state, visit the SPARK Web site at <http://www.kqed.org/spark/education>.



For more information about the California Visual & Performing Arts Standards, visit the CA Dept. of Education at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/standards/vpa>.

