

CLASSROOM TIPS

VISUAL ARTS

Tips to help in making sure all students have a safe and productive learning environment.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

It's a good idea to establish a system for collection of student work when it is due, and for the return of work when students are absent on that day. Large folders in a central location marked with the class name/period work well for this purpose.

Allowing additional work time for students who have been absent or who work more slowly is critical to ensure success for them. This time could be before or after school, during lunch, or at home if the assignment can be transported easily.

Students enjoy seeing the teacher engaged in the creative process, when appropriate, during studio time in the classroom. Refer to yourself also as a "learning artist" and participate with the students!

Tips to help the act of "teaching" the content so all students are successful.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

To reinforce concepts and to serve as a memory aide, it helps to have posters of the art elements and design principles hung in your classroom at all times. The posters with text and visual examples provide a constant reminder to the students of the building blocks and vocabulary of visual art.

Make your expectations of the students, class, and assignments clear at the start of the term. Students respond well not only to boundaries and consistency, but will have greater opportunities for success when they understand exactly what the teacher expects.

Before jumping into the "doing part" of the unit or lesson of study, take time to pre assess your students' levels. This pre assessment can then direct your teaching to include the vocabulary and skills needed by the students for success. This may require addressing concepts that students were expected to master in earlier grades. The visual arts skills and vocabulary necessary for students to achieve the expected content standards sequentially build upon each other throughout the grades.

Students often have a difficult time pacing themselves through the course of a longer unit, as they all work at different speeds. Providing oral and written "time markers" enables them to gage their time effectively and helps promote student success to meet deadlines.

Taking the time to teach the skills and vocabulary (Artistic Perception) necessary for student success in that lesson is important to remember. Students will use this information in other classroom lessons and in other classes.

Reminders of the "reasons" behind content and/or teaching strategies.

PEDAGOGY

In standards based practice and to support students' achievement of the standards, your assessment tools and scoring criteria must be introduced prior to beginning the

unit of study. Students need to know and understand what they are expected to learn and how they will be asked to demonstrate that learning.

Try to engage students in describing, analyzing, interpreting and judging works of art, by asking critical questions. A tip in designing such questions involves asking the question of yourself. If a question can be answered with a yes or no, or with very little original thinking, then it doesn't get to the deeper levels needed to analyze or interpret. Rote responses are not what it called for in aesthetic valuing.

Providing visual aids (posters, charts, diagrams, examples of work), orally reviewing the assignments and writing directions on the board and in hand-out form, will enable all students to be successful.

...provide for a range of learning styles within your art classroom...

As you circulate through the classroom while students are working, ask students *why* they made specific choices. Try to avoid making your comment first then solicit student input. It is far more engaging to discuss their ideas/inspirations and often yields unexpected results.

DANCE

Tips to help in making sure all students have a safe and productive learning environment.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Whatever environment is used as the dance "studio", it is important to make sure that area is safe for students. It should be swept, well lighted, and free from debris and obstacles that may be a hazard to students.

Allow time for beginning students to learn and feel comfortable with the key concepts, styles, moving their bodies, and techniques of dance before putting them, in front of their peers as in a more formal performance environment or solo.

Tips to help the act of "teaching" the content so all students are successful.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

Remember that students need time to warm up muscles before moving. This is critical to avoid sprains and injuries that may result from moving too quickly into the activity portion of the lesson.

Students learning to move and actually experience the elements and skills in dance need to know specific guidelines for group and solo work.

Reminders of the "reasons" behind content and/or teaching strategies.

PEDAGOGY

When the teacher and students consistently use correct dance vocabulary in all activities, even the simplest and most beginning levels, student vocabulary is expanded and reinforced – building a thorough and reliable foundation.

MUSIC

Tips to help in making sure all students have a safe and productive learning environment.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

It's a good idea to keep rhythm instruments visible on shelves arranged by instrument genre: wood, metal, etc. It also is helpful to further separate them by function: shakers, pitched, unpitched, etc. When students choose instruments by category and put them away in the same manner, instrument classification and function is reinforced.

Establishing a clear signal for rest or quiet is key in working with instruments and teaching beginning students.

It is important to establish clear steps for taking out and returning of materials used in the music classroom to ensure students' safety, care of musical instruments and materials, as well as providing a time efficient routine.

Tips to help the act of "teaching" the content so all students are successful.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

Providing and referring to visuals, such as charts and posters, in the music room help to reinforce the language and elements of music to a wide-range of learners. This is important to remember to accommodate those who need both visual and audio clues.

It is effective for continuity and skill building to begin each music lesson with the same activity, which increasingly builds difficulty throughout the year. For example, a "steady beat" activity such as clapping, marching, or patting, focuses the students' attention as well as builds skills.

Reminders of the "reasons" behind content and/or teaching strategies.

PEDAGOGY

When the teacher and students consistently use correct music vocabulary in all activities, even the simplest and most beginning levels, music vocabulary is expanded and reinforced.

THEATRE

Tips to help in making sure all students have a safe and productive learning environment.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Elaborate costumes and scenery are often unnecessary for elementary school productions, especially for those performed in the classroom. It's best to focus on dramatization with the students for greater reading comprehension.

Tips to help the act of "teaching" the content so all students are successful.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

Allow time, and guide students in the search for subtext and hidden messages that may not be overtly mentioned in the lines of dialog. Finding those nuances of meaning in what a student says and does, builds characterization.

Allow beginning theatre students to focus on creative dramatics and improvisation rather than on the "product" (the play itself or the scene). This will deepen the skills and understanding of theatre practice.

Reminders of the "reasons" behind content and/or teaching strategies.

PEDAGOGY

Build in the instructional time needed for students to learn and understand basic theatre vocabulary necessary for communication and success in the theatre tasks before them.

It is important that with warm-ups, heater games, improvisations, and other informal theatre processes, that students are aware of why they are doing these activities. This will support a deeper understanding of key concepts in theatre such as the subtext of the play.

Students need the time to explore and become familiar with practices that build content and knowledge, as well as expression and self-esteem.