

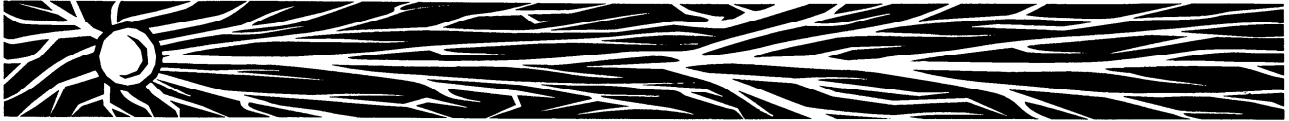
Games for Teaching Art

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Foreword

Teachers have been offering instruction in art production for decades, often with limited supplies and training. Specialized art teachers have been employed in many school systems to provide instruction in the visual arts. These teachers often receive the bulk of their training in visual arts production. Many art teachers are given an introduction to the concept of discipline-based art, which includes the four domains of art history, criticism, aesthetics, and production. They learn about the content of a discipline-based curriculum and may receive some training in its implementation. In many of these cases, the teacher is sent into the classroom, perhaps with a curriculum guide, but with limited resources for making the discipline-based curriculum an active reality.

The idea for this book came to me as a school art teacher. I found that I had a curriculum full of ideas and goals for the production of art. I was able to find resources with information about artists and visuals of their work. However, as I planned each unit, I lacked a resource that showed me how to take the information and activities and introduce them in interesting ways to my students. This book began as a few ideas for motivational art games, and grew as I found new ways to present information in each of the four domains. Many of the games are based on the structure of existing games or game shows, and contain content from the art curriculum.

This book is written for anyone who is in a position to teach art. It is intended to be a resource for teachers planning art experiences in art history, criticism, aesthetics, and production. Once the lesson content has been selected, these games can be used to make the lesson more fun.

SUGGESTIONS FOR USING THIS BOOK

- ◆ Keep the book with your other planning materials. As you plan the content for an art unit, consult the book for ways of presenting the content.
- ◆ Start collecting art reproductions for use in the activities that call for a variety of works.
- ◆ Introduce one game at a time. Some of the information will be new to the students, so you may want to limit them to one or two games in a domain the first year.
- ◆ Establish small groups or teams for your art classes, such as the students who sit together at a table, so that new groups will not have to be formed each time a game is played.
- ◆ Have some random grouping strategies available, so that students will have the opportunity to work with a new group on occasion. Grouping strategies can be sets of identical pictures, pieces of art work or fabric cut into sections, or cards naming famous pairs, trios, or groups. The pieces are passed out to the class at random, and then students are given time to match up with the members of their new group.
- ◆ When presenting a new activity, describe it to the students as a game. Games certainly appear more inviting to the average student than “learning strategies.”
- ◆ Use the suggested props whenever possible. Many of the games can be played without the props (such as the masks in “What’s My Viewpoint?”); however, props are intended to enhance the play aspect of the game.
- ◆ Allow students the opportunity to call on each other during play. This enhances the students’ sense of power and adds to the feeling of team play, rather than teacher-directed instruction.
- ◆ Experiment with using games from each of the domains: art history, criticism, aesthetics, and production.
- ◆ Reduce the play aspect of the activity by eliminating suggested props, such as masks, which may intimidate older students. Change the activity from a game to a focused discussion. For example, rather than using a time machine, simply present older students with an artifact or reproduction as a catalyst for a guided discussion or writing assignment. (*Note:* Be certain to clarify if the work is a reproduction.) Similarly, the steps of “The Critic’s Court” game can be completed without the props and roles.

- ◆ Alternatively, exaggerate games involving role play as a form of theater performance. Require advanced students to complete independent research regarding a work and to present their information to the class in a production. This approach particularly applies to “If Pictures Could Talk,” “The Time Machine,” and “The Critic’s Court.” Your approach will be determined in part by the group of students.
- ◆ Present the activity as a research assignment, such as designing a segment of the “Art Room Time Line.”
- ◆ Use the activity for a class drill, completed on entering class to review information about an artist, style, specific work, or period of art history. This can be done with games such as “Which One Doesn’t Belong?”, “Describe the Artist,” and “What’s Alike? What’s Different?”
- ◆ “The Dilemma Box” is particularly appropriate for older grades. Students can be required to bring in articles from the newspaper and magazines, defining the two sides of the argument to the class and presenting arguments for either side. Particularly relevant topics may become the focus of organized class debates.
- ◆ “The Idea Box” and “Visual Brainstorming” are appropriate for any grade. You may require students to bring in their own objects to add to the box, or to make their own, larger versions of the brainstorming web.
- ◆ “Describe the Artist” can be constructed as a set of individual cards, each containing a general question. Some of the questions may be yes/no, others may require discussion. Students then choose a card and respond based on their knowledge of the artist.

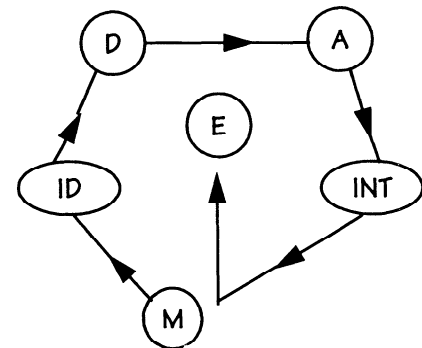


ART CRITICISM GAMES

There are a variety of approaches to art criticism in the art education literature that lead students through sequential steps in viewing and discussing art. The art criticism activities in this section are based on the criticism model designed by Bates (1994). Bates's model was chosen because it is clear, comprehensive, and connects the aesthetic viewpoints to art criticism while allowing for distinct content in aesthetics. Bates considers art criticism to be the process of seeing, discussing, and making judgments about the "visual environment." Bates's model includes the following six steps:

1. **Motivation:** the artwork is presented and students discuss the art form, media, and techniques used.
2. **Identification:** students identify the subject matter of the work and name the objects they see.
3. **Description:** students describe the art elements of color, line, shape/form, and texture in the work.
4. **Analysis:** students analyze the relationships achieved through the use of design principles—balance, emphasis, subordination, contrast, transition, rhythm, repetition, pattern, and unity.
5. **Interpretation:** students attempt to discover meaning in the work, either for the viewer, the artist, or the culture of origin.
6. **Evaluation:** the quality of the work is judged by ranking it with other like artworks, based on a given set of criteria.

**ART CRITICISM
TEACHING MODEL**



M = Motivation
ID = Identification
D = Description
A = Analysis
INT = Interpretation
E = Evaluation

All of these steps do not have to be completed for each critique, nor do the steps have to be considered in the order listed. However, Bates stresses the importance of having criteria by which to judge work during the evaluation. The criteria can come from the important considerations in the earlier steps.

The games in this section are based on the following goals:

- ◆ to introduce students to the steps in the art criticism model described above
- ◆ to provide students with specific practice in the art criticism steps, through the critique of their own artwork as well as the work of master artists
- ◆ to require students to define and identify the art elements and principles as used in works of art
- ◆ to identify, compare, and contrast design qualities in specific works of art

About the games . . .

- ◆ “The Art Exhibit” is a basic game that allows students the opportunity to present their completed artwork to the class and offer their own interpretation and evaluation of the work. This game is particularly useful for introducing younger or inexperienced students to the concept of a class critique.
- ◆ “What’s Alike? What’s Different?” uses a Venn diagram to compare and contrast two related works of art; focusing on the tasks of describing and analyzing.
- ◆ “The Clothesline Game” can be used to arrange works on a continuum based on any criteria, and could therefore be used for practice in description, analysis, interpretation, and possibly evaluation.
- ◆ “Will the *Real* ____ Please Stand Up” focuses on defining and identifying the art elements and principles used in a specific work.
- ◆ “The Critic’s Court” is designed to introduce students to all of the steps involved in an art critique and to allow practice in each step.
- ◆ “Connecting Compositions” offers students the opportunity to review their knowledge of art elements and principles through the consideration of the design of works by master artists. This game also allows students to play independently.

The Clothesline Game

OBJECTIVE

To compare and contrast opposite design qualities in works of art.

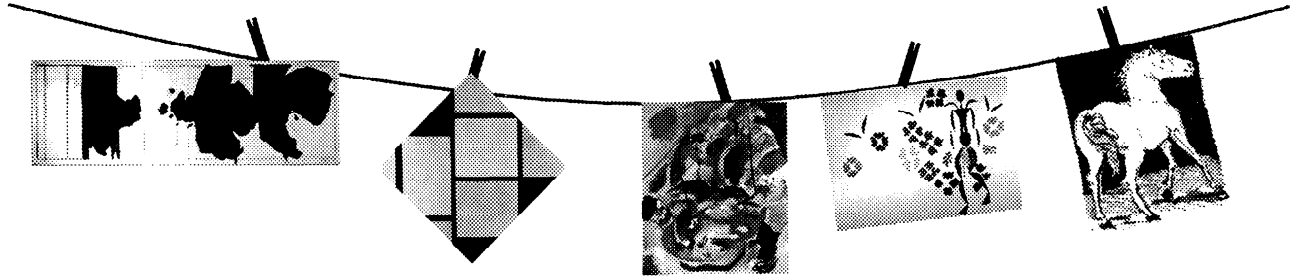
WHAT YOU WILL NEED

1. Two design qualities that you would like to contrast, such as objective versus nonobjective (abstract), as in the illustration on the next page.
2. A clothesline or rope and clothespins. You may also draw a clothesline on the chalkboard and use magnets to attach the reproductions.
3. A collection of small reproductions of artworks. Postcard size is ideal. You can cut reproductions out of museum pamphlets, magazines, or old books. Students can draw or paint cards to add to the collection (index cards are a good size). Choose several reproductions from the collection for the design qualities you will focus on today. One artwork for each small group is sufficient.

DIRECTIONS

The object of this game is twofold: to compare two opposing design qualities and to identify works that fit on a continuum between the two extremes.

Begin by attaching the clothesline to the chalkboard. (I use magnetic clips.) Write the two opposing design qualities at the two ends of the line. Choose an appropriate reproduction and place it at its end of the line. Choose a reproduction exhibiting the opposite quality and place it at the other end. Play continues with students placing the remaining reproductions on the continuum in their appropriate locations, until all the reproductions you have chosen have been placed. The class may wish to offer input into the arrangement and move some works.

*Abstract**Objective***USES**

This game can be used with the whole class to introduce design qualities in a work or works you will be studying. It can also serve as a review activity at the end of a unit or as a fun activity for students who complete a project early (it would help if they have played the game with the class before). When using this game to introduce a new work, the teacher chooses the first reproduction. For example, in introducing Japanese prints, the teacher may wish to focus on the use of diagonal lines. She begins by choosing a Japanese print and writing “diagonal lines” at one end and “horizontal lines” at the other. If reviewing a work or concept, students may be allowed to choose the initial work.

The game can be played with all grade levels, using age-appropriate concepts.

**Will the Real ____ Please Stand Up****OBJECTIVE**

To identify specific design elements or principles or to identify specific design qualities in the style of a specific artist.

1. A large sign that says “Will the *real* ____ please stand up.” The blank can be filled in each time the game is played. In my example, it would read “Will the *real pattern* please stand up.”

Photos: Far right—Bequest of W.G. Russell Allen, courtesy Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Others, National Gallery of Art. See “Photo Credits.”

2. Three student volunteers.

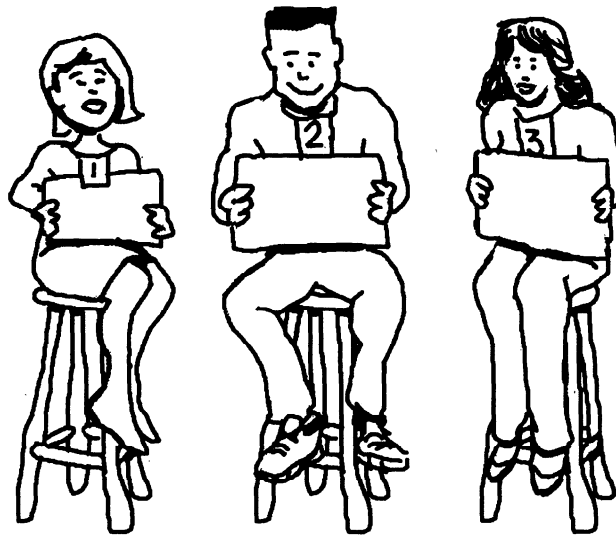
3. Three artworks to compare or three images illustrating different design elements or principles. For example, to review the concept of pattern, I made images on three pieces of foam core. The first one was just colored orange, the second had a line pattern, and the third I left blank. The volunteers each held their image so that it was *not* visible to the rest of the class.

4. A card with a number on it for each player. These can be made like a necklace or sandwich sign to be worn around the neck.

DIRECTIONS

This game is based on the old television game show *To Tell the Truth*. The three volunteers can see the images and know which one fits the description. It is the job of the rest of the class to ask questions that will help find the correct image. The student volunteers each represent one of the three artworks or images. The rest of the students in the class ask the three volunteers questions about their works. Each question is addressed to one person, either number one, number two, or number three. The volunteers may only answer yes or no. Students must be encouraged to generate questions that will help identify the nature of the work. For example, if they know they are looking for one with a pattern, an excellent question would be, "Does it have stripes?"

Will the real Symbol please stand up?



After a series of questions (I limit it to about twenty), the class votes on which volunteer has the right image. Is it number one, number two, or number three? The volunteers are allowed to make a statement about their work to try to convince the class that they have the correct image. Following the vote, the teacher says, “Will the *real* ____ please stand up.” The three volunteers can each pretend they are the one and begin to stand up, but finally only the volunteer with the correct answer stands.

USES AND VARIATIONS

This game can be used to practice identifying a design element or principle or to identify the work of a specific artist. For example, if your class has been studying Picasso, a good review activity would be to play “Would the *Real* Picasso Please Stand Up?” One work would be a Picasso, the other two works would be by other artists.

The game can be played with the works seen by the class or hidden from view. As a general rule, if the object is to review an idea, artist, or style, the works should be hidden. However, if you are introducing a new idea, the works should be in view and the three students informed of the correct explanation of the new idea.

In the original game show *To Tell the Truth*, the visiting celebrities or volunteers were allowed, even encouraged, to give incorrect answers (in other words, to lie). However, for younger students, false answers could prove confusing. If you have older students or a class that is extremely confident in a subject, allowing freedom to try to trick the class can provide an element of excitement. This should always be attempted with the images in full view of the class.



The Critic's Court

OBJECTIVE

To familiarize students with the processes of a formal critique.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

1. An artwork to critique.