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DISCIPLINE-BASED ART EDUCATION GUIDELINES FOR OLDER ADULTS

*The University of Arizona*

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DISCIPLINE-BASED ART EDUCATION GUIDELINES FOR OLDER ADULTS

by  
Coragene Riggs

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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the  
DEPARTMENT OF ART  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
For the Degree  
MASTER OF ARTS  
WITH A MAJOR IN ART EDUCATION  
In the Graduate College  
THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

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APPROVAL BY THESIS DIRECTOR

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## ABSTRACT

This treatise outlines guidelines for teaching discipline-based art education to older Americans, or persons over sixty-five years of age. Discipline-based art education, in this paper, is defined as art education that includes all of the domains of art learning and practice; art history, art criticism, art production, and aesthetics, as taught by means of a continuous, sequential curriculum. The guidelines herein, while appropriate for any sort of older adult art learning situation, are especially formulated for the art teacher who instructs older adults who enroll in art programs offered through recreational facilities.

Additionally, this paper discusses the changing role of the older adult population, presents a historical overview of art education for older adults, an assessment of the art learning objectives of older adults today, and a method of teaching discipline-based art education that specifically accommodates the requirements of an older adult population. A sample curriculum structure and sample lesson plans for a beginning drawing course for senior citizens are included.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Older Americans, those persons over sixty-five, currently number one in every eight persons, or comprise over one-fourth of this country's population. Because of increase life expectancy and the subsequent anticipation of several more productive years, many are returning to education. Although some older adults enroll in colleges or universities to begin or complete degree programs, many seek education for stimulation. For reasons of interest or development of skills, many choose art as a viable field of learning.

At present, art programs for older adults appear to be flourishing. A variety of art and craft courses, offered by recreational centers, adult schools, churches and synagogues, community colleges, and museums are available to most older Americans. Many of these courses, however, provide only one approach to art learning--art studio production or the making of art products.

Quality art education for older adults entails more than the fashioning of art products. Whether enrolled in oil painting classes or basket making courses, it is reasonable to propose that older students should be presented with

the opportunity to learn about the historical and cultural aspects of their art course subjects, and how to appreciate and evaluate works by artists. Additionally and traditionally, quality art education for older adults calls for improved instruction. The position of this paper is that disciplined-based art education programs for older adults can provide both improved art learning and improved art instruction.

In order to facilitate effective art curriculum planning for older students, this paper submits discipline-based art curriculum guidelines specifically formulated for older adults.

#### Curriculum Planning Considerations

Four major curriculum planning considerations are identified within art education for older adults: (1) the changing role of older adults within society, (2) quality of instruction, (3) determining the objectives of older adults in art programs, and (4) the learning styles of older adults. A brief elaboration on each of these curriculum planning issues aids in understanding the discipline-based curriculum guidelines presented in this paper.

1. The changing role of older adults within society: How do today's older adults differ from those of past decades, and what are their desires regarding art programs?

Older adults have long desired quality art education. Today's older adults, who represent the most rapidly growing population class in this country, and who are no longer victims of old myths and stereotypes associated with aging, are, politically, in a position to demand it. Today's older adults approach art programs with serious learning intent and display future interest in their art course subjects. The field of art education can no longer patronize older art students with childish projects; it must provide for them, instead, quality art education.

2. Quality of instruction: What are the problems concerning the quality of art instruction for older adults, and what can be done to improve this instruction?

Art classes for older adults are often taught by persons untrained in art education. Adult education programmers, who may be understandably unknowledgeable about art learning, are often unable to determine instructor competency. Local artists who lack training in art instruction may be hired as teachers. The sheer numbers of the varied art programs offered throughout this country suggest that teachers of seniors certification may be a nearly impossible undertaking. Art curriculum structures for older adults must be designed so that teachers who lack art education training will be able to provide effective art instruction.

3. Determining the objectives of older adults in art program: What are the educational objectives of older

adults who enroll in art programs, and how do these objectives determine curriculum content?

Older adults, more than younger persons, have specific interests, needs, and goals in art learning. Determining the group education objectives of an art class is the most important aspect of curriculum planning. A curriculum structure must be adequately adaptable to provide for the learning values and needs of specific groups of older students.

4. The learning styles of older adults: How do older adult students learn, how do they prefer to learn about art, and by what means do they best learn and derive satisfaction from art classes?

Older adults who enroll in art programs, unlike those who enroll in college or university courses, are not interested in formal schooling, but do expect a quality of art learning that production-line art programs do not afford. Most older adults learn more when they are instructed or taught, and formal instruction may result in improved art skills and learning satisfaction. It appears that older students learn best from formal instruction within a relaxed, informal classroom situation.

These curriculum planning considerations and their implications are further discussed in the review of related literature, chapter two of this paper.

### Definitions and Delimitations

Discipline-based art education is defined as art teaching that, by treating the complete field of art knowledge, seeks to develop understanding about all of the areas in which art professionals work. These areas, or disciplines, are art criticism, art history, art production, and aesthetics. Instructional objectives in discipline-based art programs for older adults include exposing older students to all of these domains.

#### Art Criticism: Talking About Art

Most persons, including older adults, are familiar with journalistic art criticism, or reviews of exhibitions, plays, books and concerts found in the daily newspaper. Art criticism as a part of art education is a different type from the journalistic, and is meant to advance the artistic maturity of students. In art education, art criticism is often called "talking about art."

Talking about art entails examining an art object or a work of art in such a way as to gain knowledge about its meaning, merits, and aesthetic values. Familiarity with art vocabulary, learning in art history, practice in speculating on how a work was produced, and insight into one's own art making are other possible derivatives of this kind of art criticism.

## Art History

Art history is concerned with style--the style of an artist, the style of a group of artists, the style of a period of time in history--and with placing works of art in their historical and cultural settings. Because visual art works reflect the times and culture of the people who produced them, historical information serves to promote understanding about artistic heritage and the role of art in society.

Art teachers should be prepared with historical facts about each art object or work utilized as an exemplar of the course subject. Indeed, many art educators feel that knowledge of the cultural and historical origins of works of art is essential to critical analysis. Certainly the life and times of the artist, the physical location and social climate from which the work was produced, are valid bits of information that add considerably to the enjoyment of viewing, and that facilitate understanding of any symbolism present in the work.

## Aesthetics

Responses that evolve from viewing and talking about works of art quite naturally lead to talk about the nature and value of art. Persons asking questions about the nature of art are performing the first task of formal aesthetics. Learning to examine a work of art promotes aesthetic

awareness, as does learning to examine an aesthetic response. Aesthetic experience gained from viewing art both intellectually and emotionally contributes to an understanding of the domain of aesthetics--the heart of discipline-based art education.

### Art Production

Art production on the student level involves the fashioning of art products by practicing the techniques of artists. Because quality art products are not produced when students are merely encouraged to "use their imaginations" or provided with materials and left to their own resources, systematic instructional guidance should be provided in this endeavor.

### Curriculum Guidelines

Curriculum guidelines are defined as aids to a sequence of activities that are intentionally developed for educational experience. The discipline-based art curriculum guidelines outlined in this paper provide neither complete resources nor step-by-step procedures for the art instructor of older adults. Rather, they are adaptable guidelines that teachers can, with a reasonable amount of time spent in planning, tailor to the peculiarities of specific groups of older students, and adapt to the parameters of the art program, e.g., the length of class time and the number of times the class meets.

Flexibility within the art program is addressed in the development of these guidelines, based upon the assumptions that older students themselves may wish to participate in some planning of activities, and that a single class of older adults may contain students of diverse art backgrounds.

#### The Importance of This Study

Art learning that incorporates art history, aesthetics, art criticism, and art production can be and should be a reality for older adults enrolled in art programs. It is important, however, to recognize the existing differences between art programming for school children and the recreational art programs offered to older students.

Individual programs in art for older students are usually studio based, and must be planned to reflect the course subject in which such students have elected and expect to receive their art learning. Additionally, advanced classes for older students are often nonexistent, and should they be offered, there is no guarantee of continuous enrollment. Sequential course-to-course instruction, is therefore, often impossible. Sequential instruction within the course itself, that which advances from simple to complex, is a discipline-based art education approach fully practical as the literature reveals, for older students.

Generally, older adults who enroll in art classes seek personal fulfillment through education, and wish to enrich their lives by making an effort to produce art and respond to visual form. Because art is a discipline with aesthetic, perceptual, and intellectual dimensions which can be taught and learned, this is a realistic goal.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

#### A Historical Overview of Art Education for Older Adults

A brief historical overview of art education for the elderly contributes to an understanding of today's production-oriented art programs so regularly offered to older adults.

Research of art education for the older American saw its genesis in the 1950s with the Goodenough Draw-A-Man test for elders (Jones and Rich, 1957) and a doctoral dissertation Creative Potential in the Visual Arts for the American Adult (Kuhn, 1958). From this beginning through the early 1970s, studies in art education for older adults centered mainly upon creative activity and creative productivity (Gross, 1963; Dennis, 1966; and Dawson and Baller, 1972). Possibly this was a reflection of then current gerontological recommendations that emphasis be placed on creative talents in later life (Shock, 1963).

A growing public concern for the elderly was apparent in the 1970s. Art, for the most part, was seen as therapy for a neglected population. Research, planning, and the instigation of therapeutic arts programs were priority

activities of the National Council on Aging in 1973 (Sunderland, 1973).

A significant amount of research in art education for the elderly was produced during the decade of the 1970s. Art educators, buoyed by the Lifetime Learning Movement, saw educational opportunities for older persons just as important as those for the young (Timmerman, 1977). Data of the increasing numbers of older Americans coupled with research findings of the therapeutic results of arts programs inspired institutions of higher learning, museums, and local level adult schools and adult recreation centers to seek the elderly as potential customers (Hoffman, 1975).

The thrust of the single-faceted or production line approach so common in today's art programs for older adults is a remnant from this decade when art educations and art education researchers saw arts activities as therapy for a suffering older population (Corsco, 1973; Sunderland, 1973 and Hoffman, 1975).

#### Older Americans Today

Today's older Americans are no longer isolated, neglected, or suffering from the ills of a minority population. Only five percent of the 28 million<sup>1</sup> Americans over 65 are living in nursing homes at any given time, and only

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<sup>1</sup>The United States Census Bureau reported the number of persons over sixty-five as 28,040,000 as of July 1, 1984.

one-fourth of those surviving past 65 will need special care. Almost ten percent of all older adults continue to work, and another fifteen percent live comfortably on their savings. In fact, most older Americans are healthy and active (Campbell, 1986).

Today's older adults appear, in addition to being healthy and active, to take management responsibility for their own group activities. A recent evaluation of senior citizen centers by the National Council on Aging found that there are no longer defined roles of staff and participants, and that the seniors themselves take an active part in planning and managing the programs that serve them (Cardoza, 1986).

Myths about aging are rapidly deteriorating. Old stereotypes of age-related decline in cognitive functioning have been thoroughly dispelled (Franz, 1983; Long, 1983; O'Dowd, 1984). It has been found that mental decline is primarily a function of disuse and through training is reversible (Willis and Schaie, 1986). A recent study reports that despite old stereotypes and past prevalence of negativity associated with aging, adult learners assume responsibility for their own learning, and they are competency oriented (Ansello, 1982).

Educational-gerontological studies have found older adults of all educational and socioeconomical backgrounds ready and eager to learn (Covey, 1983 and Brady, 1984).

That older persons desire quality art learning has been continuously documented since 1976 (Anderson, 1976; Hoffman, 1980; Davisson, Rush, and Fitzner, 1982), and current literature attributes the failure of many art programs to the fact that older students sense when they are being poorly taught or patronized (Greenberg, 1985).

#### Needs as Seen by Art Educators

Art educators who study or work with older adults agree upon the need for quality art programming. Many imply that older adults benefit from education in art history, art criticism, and aesthetics. Greenberg (1980) stated that seniors seek active involvement with art media, art history, and art appreciation. Gluck (1980) emphasized the need for discussions of content towards the formal aspects of works of art, and warned that the goals of art educators of the elderly must always be realistic but never aesthetically or intellectually trivial. Fitzner, in a 1980 experimental study designed to determine effective arts curricula for adult learners, employed an aesthetic education or critical appreciative approach to art learning, emphasizing art production and art history. Through this approach, retired adults improved both their abilities to make critical judgments and the quality of their art products.

Despite urgent calls by art educators for art teacher training especially geared for elderly (Hoffman,

1980; Greenberg, 1980; and Jones, 1980), and despite the immediate need for a teacher of seniors certification process as seen by Greenberg (1985), many art classes for older adults are taught by marginally trained persons. It appears that major revisions are needed in this field.

#### Educational Objectives of Older Students

It has been shown that the information older students seek is, to a greater extent than in earlier life, a function of their interests, needs, attitudes, and values (Ostwald and Williams, 1985). A 1976 survey of interests and attitudes of the elderly towards the arts and humanities revealed religion, natural history, history, band concerts, and musical comedies to be the uppermost arts-related interests of older Americans (Anderson, 1976). Although it can be assumed that the interests of older Americans may have changed over the past ten years, the survey is significant in that it implies that the interests of seniors may not necessarily reflect the mainstream of popular culture. There is evidence that people with well-defined patterns of life-style are likely to carry these roles, activities, and patterns into old age (Covey, 1983).

Hienstra (1982) has demonstrated that older adults as a distinct population cannot be stereotyped according to their interests, needs, and goals. It has been shown that adults who join art programs which do not meet their needs

are not likely to remain long (Bloom, 1980). Wass and Olefnik (1982) clearly state that the most effective curricula planning is that which best suits the needs of a particular group of older students.

A 1982 study of noninstitutionalized older adult art students found that older students in all kinds of art courses regarded their art classes as serious undertakings in which to learn new or improve existing skills (Davisson, Rush, and Fitzner, 1982). This same study discerned that most older art students attended classes for reasons of enjoyment, continuation of previous art experience, development of creative abilities, and to learn about art.

Evidence of interest in art learning for the development of second careers is reported by Glass and Smith (1984), and Davisson and Rush (1981). Effective art education programming for older adults must consider and provide for a variety of art learning needs.

#### The Learning Styles of Older Art Students

A study of the learning characteristics of adults in art production classes (Bloom, 1982) revealed that fast pace, low explicit structures of art courses that prepare persons to become professional artists may be of little interest to older adults. Informal courses that do not follow methods of traditional schooling may raise art course appeal, however, production-line art programs, which represent

the lowest level of student risk of failure, may ignore the objectives of artistic growth.

A study analyzing research and practice of art for older adults (Jones, 1980) advised that seniors prefer learning broken up into small bits and that the teacher of older adults should lead class discussions on only a few learning areas at a time. Regarding pacing, Jones states that older students appear to prefer more time to make progress in art, and project deadlines seem to be particularly inappropriate.

Two studies have found that older adults, for a variety of reasons, not the least one being that they expect to be instructed, are unable to learn efficiently on their own (Arenberg and Rovertson-Tchabo, 1977; and Woodruff and Walsh, 1975). When older adults are instructed in learning strategies, their performance reveals significant improvement (Jones, 1980).

Three experimental studies (Dawson, 1962; Farris, 1953; and Fitzner, 1974) have shown that even in beginning art experiences, older adults operate very well on highest levels of complexity through formal instruction.

Recent literature about the art learning styles of older adults is scant. This is clearly an area for further research.

### Discipline-Based Art Education

Since the Penn State Seminar in 1965, major art educators have believed that effective art education must include several of the domains of art learning and practice such as art history, art criticism, art production, and more recently, aesthetics. In 1984, this multifaceted approach to art instruction was labeled discipline-based art education (Greer, 1984).

Discipline-based art education, as defined by Greer, incorporates the four domains of art as taught by means of a continuous, sequential curriculum. Tasks in art learning are ordered from simple to complex, Activities and skills are presented in sequence, producing an evolution from an untutored to a sophisticated understanding of art.

#### Art Criticism

Three methods of talking about art dominate the concept of art criticism within aesthetic education. The four stages of description, formal analysis, interpretation, and evaluation (Feldman, 1972) constitute one method; nine factors that possibly influence responses to works of art (Lanier, 1968), another. The third is a method of access to art objects or works of art called aesthetic scanning (Broudy, 1975). Guides to aesthetic scanning are explained later in this paper.

## Art History

Discipline-based art education seeks to educate students who will be able to appreciate and discuss works of art in their appropriate historical and cultural contexts (Greer, 1984). Broudy (1966) defined art history in aesthetic education as sufficient commerce with various examples of great art in order to establish habits of looking to art for the more subtle possibilities of feeling than ordinary experience affords. Lanier (1983) wrote of art history as an element referring to the circumstances or context of the aesthetic experience as well as to the background of an art work itself.

## Aesthetics

Greer (1984) suggests that the study of aesthetics, which deals with questions of the perception, understanding, and appreciation of objects, is essential in understanding art beyond its literal meaning. Further, because aesthetic perception or recognizing the expressive character of art works is basic to all areas of art, a major goal of discipline-based art education is art instruction that leads to aesthetic experience.

Broudy (1971) states that educationally, study about art is instrumental to both creativity and contemplation.

## Art Production

Discipline-based art education teaches that the artist skillfully manipulates media to produce visual images that stand for something of human import, and that students can be taught to develop abilities to make expressive forms (Greer, 1984).

Lanier (1983) emphasized that although neither children nor adults need to create visual statements, everyone should have the opportunity and should be motivated or assisted to do so.

Eisner (1984) suggested that well-taught studio art engages students to draw upon their personal resources for artistic expression, and encourages students, if they are able to produce works of high quality, to become their own critics.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHOD

There appears to be no literature about discipline-based art education, as defined by Greer (1984) in connection with older adults. The discipline-based art curriculum guidelines presented in this paper have been developed within Greer's definition with specific regard for what research has shown about the learning styles and the art learning objectives of older Americans.

These guidelines, while applicable in theory to any art learning situation for the healthy and active majority of older Americans, are especially geared for the art teacher who works within the established confines of programmed adult and older adult education courses. In these programs it is usually the art production skill to be learned that determines the bulk of the course content. Unlike school children, who usually have no choice regarding the content of their art learning, future participants of recreational art programs select their art classes by their interest in a particular subject. Planning a discipline-based art program around the course subject is subsequently a priority for the art teacher who wishes to offer discipline-based instruction.

The guidelines presented here are designed in this manner. The teaching of historical facts, aesthetic concepts, and critical studio skills relates to the course subject, and the activities presented lead, sequentially, to a better understanding of the course subject and to an improved appreciation of art itself.

Special attention has been paid to the educational values and requirements of the older adult population. Aside from the obvious differences between art education through recreational programs and art education within formal schooling, it is apparent from the literature that mainstream elders display some learning styles and preferences that set them apart from younger persons. People retired from work and child-rearing feel they have plenty of time to learn, and approach tutoring unhurriedly, preferring to absorb thoroughly one new concept or skill before moving to the next. While today's older adults regard their art classes as serious endeavors, unlike younger persons they are under no pressure to finish schooling and compete in the job market. Although they may enroll in art classes as an alternative to formal schooling, they appear to learn best from formal instruction within a relaxed classroom atmosphere.

Perhaps the most outstanding revelation from studies of older adults in educational situations is that their learning objectives stem directly from their interests,

needs, and goals. Because of this, it is important that the teacher of seniors evaluates the group attitudes, interests, needs, and goals of the class before planning exact curriculum content.

#### Evaluating Group Needs

The art teacher of older adults enrolled in recreational art programs does not deal with grade levels and their appropriate activities, textbooks, or curricula. Many decisions regarding curriculum content, whatever the course subject, must be geared to each new class of older students. Precise selection and organization of art learning experiences can be determined only after the educational objectives of individual class members are assessed and group interests, needs, and goals are evident.

An assessment of group values can be determined by verbal examination and class response during the first meeting of the art class. From this activity the teacher learns basic and applicable information that enables the evaluation of group needs, and indicates areas of emphasis and underplay within the course content.

In this initial class discussion, the teacher seeks answers to questions of this nature: Why have the students enrolled in this particular class? How many have had prior learning in the course subject? Which students have enrolled in other art courses? Did they complete these

courses--if not, why? How many students have never experienced art learning? How do they plan to use the knowledge and skills they wish to learn from this course? Do any students work regularly within the course subject? Do any desire training for second careers?

A discussion based on questions of this sort will reveal areas of concentration that reflect the art of learning objectives of the group. In most cases, these objectives can be used as points of impetus in the art program, and there may be cases when these objectives should take art learning preference. For example: If a teacher of wood-working learns, by verbal examination, that the class wishes to craft toys for needy children, the production part of the art course should be focused on this objective. Likewise, if an outdoor sketching class displays an interest in historical buildings, curriculum content might concentrate upon this group interest.

Information learned about the former art experience of older students enables the teacher to gauge the competency level of the class, or, in the event that classes include students of mixed art learning experiences, helps in planning for these dissimilarities. An art class of older adults may include students with no previous art training, students who enroll repeatedly in the same course subject, and students with various degrees of knowledge and skills in between. If a teacher learns that a class contains

repeaters or recognizes repeaters from a former class, curriculum adjustments may be needed for these students. Some former students may wish to participate as instructor assistants. Most can begin anew, putting to work their acquired knowledge and skills to more freely participate in class discussions and improve the quality of their art products. In any case, an initial identification of seasoned art students within the class facilitates teacher planning of the art program.

There is an additional benefit from an initial evaluation of group needs--the development of a comfortable classroom ambience generated by the verbal exchange between the teacher and the class members. While some older adults may be perfectly at ease in the classroom, others may not. It is possible that a class may include seniors who have not engaged in schooling of any sort for many years. The teacher of older adults desires to promote a classroom atmosphere in which ideas can be exchanged and questions freely asked; especially important in discipline-based art education, which involves talking about art.

### Discipline-Based Art Education

#### Curriculum Guidelines for Older Adults

1. The teacher begins each class session by leading the class in the activity of aesthetic scanning, using an

art work or art object that exemplifies the course subject as the items to be scanned.

Aesthetic scanning<sup>2</sup> is a discipline-based art education method of "talking about art" appropriate for students of all ages. This method can be described as a means of "entry" into an art object or a work of art that consists of identifying its sensory, formal, expressive, and technical properties. Aesthetic scanning is ideal for optimum art learning in both classes and art programs of short duration, typical of those offered to older adults, because it facilitates familiarization not only with art criticism, but with art history, art vocabulary, and aesthetics, thus enhancing appreciative and productive skills (Figure 1). When employed as the opening activity for each class session, this kind of talk about art will prepare older students for the multifaceted art learning they will receive throughout the class session, and indeed, throughout the art program. For more information regarding aesthetic scanning, see the Guide to Aesthetic Scanning and the Instructional Guide to Aesthetic Scanning found in the Appendix.

2. The teacher provides an art work or an art object that serves as inspiration for talk about the nature of

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<sup>2</sup>Aesthetic scanning was developed by Harry Broudy as part of the Aesthetic Eye Project, a combined effort of the National Endowment for the Humanities and persons associated with the Los Angeles County Schools, California, 1975.

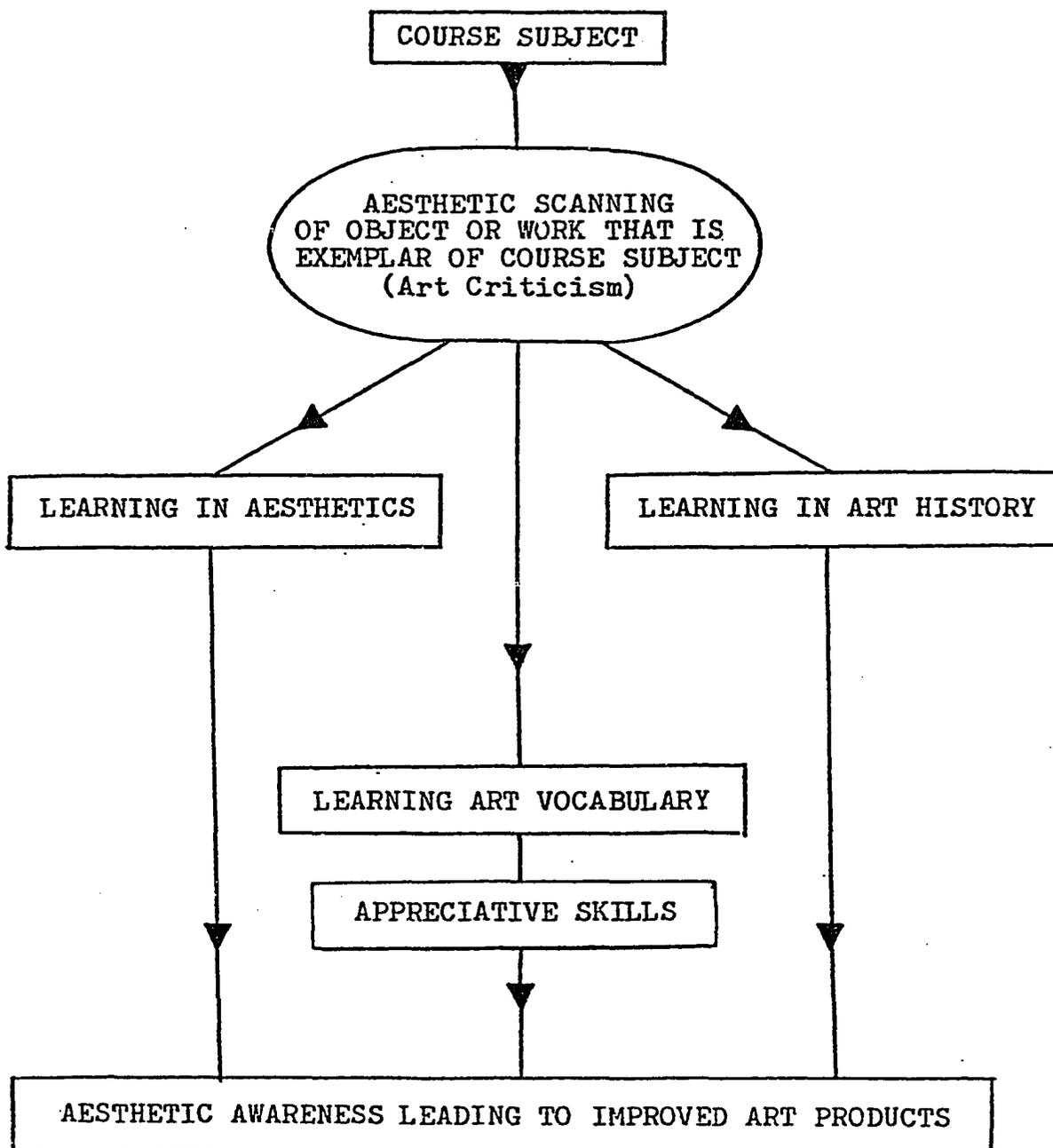


Figure 1: Aesthetic Scanning serves to prepare students for discipline-based art learning.

art. If the class displays interest, the teacher may present, at least in brief, some theories of formal aesthetics.

Any art work may be used as a "starting point" for a class discussion about the nature of art. However, older students, who have been shown to prefer art works which depict nature, may find stimulation for conversations about aesthetics from other types of art works.

3. The teacher provides reproductions of art objects or art works of historical significance. These reproductions also exemplify the course subject.

Art history exemplars can be chosen to represent particular artists, a particular period or era, or a particular style or subject matter, or any combinations of these. In any case, the teacher relates to the class any historical-cultural information that will add to their store of art historical knowledge, thus enhancing understanding and appreciation of their course subject.

There is evidence that older adults rate history as a primary learning interest, thus this population group may readily respond to learning in art history. The teacher might have historical information sources abundantly available.

4. The teacher demonstrates art production techniques related to the course subject and/or studio skills to be practiced by students in the class session.

Demonstrations provide older students with the formal instruction from which, according to educational-gerontological studies, they learn best. Additionally, art vocabulary used in aesthetic scanning and appropriately repeated in studio demonstrations, will help seniors learn and be able to employ the language of art. This may be imperative learning for older adults, who have been shown to take their art classes seriously and display future interest in their course subjects.

5. The students spend the remainder of the class session practicing teacher-planned art production techniques.

Research reveals that older adults respond best to formal instruction within an informal setting. Discipline-based art education, which calls for systematic art production skills instruction, adapts well to this requirement.

Teachers should remember: (a) that seniors prefer their learning broken up into small bits and in one area at a time, and (b) that deadline pressures are deemed inappropriate for older adult art students. Teachers should be prepared to move slowly and systematically with studio art instruction, and be constantly available to help older students with any encountered problems--either by verbal proof of their art learning.

It may be important for teachers to give special consideration to the production activity, because it is

usually in this area that students feel pressure to produce tangible proof of their art learning.

6. The teacher may wish to plan museum or field trips.

If circumstances of transportation and proximity of destinations are favorable, older adult art class members will benefit from museum or field trips. These trips cannot be depended upon to replace classroom instruction, but to enhance or reinforce classroom learning.

Watching an artist at work, selecting personal art supplies, or viewing and talking about art works in their settings are activities that serve to add zest to the art program.

7. The teacher of older adults who wishes to offer discipline-based art instruction should plan to use a curriculum structure.

Because discipline-based art instruction entails planned course content and class sessions, the teacher will benefit from the use of a curriculum structure. A curriculum structure lays out the basic parameters that define the art learning tasks to be undertaken, and provides a fundamental plan by which resources can be gathered and instructional activities developed. Additionally, a curriculum structure facilitates an arrangement and coordination of activities that provide the sequential instruction

and learning that is so important in discipline-based art education.

After determining the art educational objectives of the class, the teacher can spend time working with the curriculum structure. If the class has not revealed any group interests, needs, or goals that signify a major altering of the art class, the teacher will be ready to determine the course content for the remainder of the semester. Objects for scanning, for class discussions about the nature of art, and for art history exemplars can be chosen and located, and if they are to be borrowed, arrangements can be made to this end. Production activities can be organized so that the sequential and systematic presentation of skills will be easily demonstrated. Sources of historical-cultural information can be researched and noted so that a glance at the curriculum structure will reveal their location. Advance notice of necessary materials can be given to students who supply their own art supplies, and museum and field trips can be organized around related class activities by using a curriculum structure. Initial time spent in planning all phases of the art program eliminates frustrating, last-minute decisions, as the teacher knows from session to session exactly what visual aids, materials, and educational sources will be needed and where they can be found.

A curriculum structure appropriate for older adults in a discipline-based art education program includes eight categories:

1. Learning Objective: a brief sketch of what skills and information the class should have learned by the end of the session.

2. Art Criticism: the art work(s) or object(s) to be scanned, their source, and the intended emphasis.

3. Aesthetics: visual aids, their sources, and the intended emphasis.

4. Art History: the reproduction(s) to be used as art history exemplars, their source, the source of historical information, and the intended emphasis.

5. Art Production Demonstration: the necessary materials and/or visual aids, their source, and the intended emphasis.

6. Art Production Activity: the necessary materials and the intended emphasis.

7. Museum or Field Trips: their objectives, confirmations and transportation arrangements.

8. Advance notice of student supplied art materials.

A sample curriculum outline is included in the Appendix.

### Hypothetical Basic Drawing Program

The following pages of this chapter contain plans for a hypothetical eight-session discipline-based art education basic drawing program for older adults. The curriculum structures for session numbers 1 and 2 are laid out, and a detailed exegesis is presented of these sessions. Teacher notes from a hypothetical group evaluation are included after the curriculum structure of the first session, so as to show, hypothetically, how the interests, needs, and goals of class group can be worked into the art program. The plans for sessions 3 through 8 of this sample program are generalized, as there is no need to further pursue specifics.

This hypothetical art program is presented here in order to illustrate in detail, a discipline-based art program for older adults.

Hypothetical Basic Drawing Program: Curriculum Structure

SUBJECT: Beginning Drawing                      NUMBER OF SESSIONS: 8  
 SESSION: 1    DATE: July 3, 1986

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Upon the completion of this class session, students will have been introduced to aesthetic scanning and will have some understanding of its properties, will have been exposed to art vocabulary, and will have learned that it is wise to qualify critical judgments.

Students will have learned a bit about the life and times of Rembrandt, and will be able to recognize his drawings from the mid 1600s.

Students will have learned that questions about the nature of art are questions asked in the study of aesthetics.

Students will know basic materials commonly used in drawings, and will have an idea of the scope of art work referred to as "drawings".

By the end of this class session, students should feel comfortable with the class group, the teacher, and be looking forward to the next class session.

## ART CRITICISM: AESTHETIC SCANNING

Work for Scanning: Three Cottages, drawing by Rembrandt

Source: University Library, repro #436X, 5th floor

Emphasis: Introduce scanning, talk about critical judgments

## AESTHETICS:

Visual Aids: Study for Woman, drawing by De Kooning  
 Three Cottages, drawing by Rembrandt

Source: University Library, Woman, repro #241C, 5th floor

Emphasis: Compare the two drawings, class discussion about why both are considered art

## ART HISTORY:

Exemplars: Rembrandts drawings, Nos. 222, 171, 173

Source: Drawings of Rembrandt, Vol. 1, Univ. Library NJ33

Emphasis: Biographical sketch Rembrandt, life and times of Rembrandt circa 1640

Source of Historical Information: Random House History of Art, Vol. III, home library, and Drawings of Rembrandt

**ART PRODUCTION:**

Demonstration: Various materials used in drawing

Materials: Pencil, pen, charcoal, pastels, ink, brushes, conte crayon, paper, easel

Visual Aids: Same as art history exemplars: #222 is reed pen and bistre, #171, red and white chalk; #173, pen and wash in Indian ink

Source: Same as history exemplar

Emphasis: What is a drawing? The various materials commonly used in drawings today, drawings in Rembrandt's time, and types of art works called "drawings"

Production Activity:

Materials:

**MUSEUM OR FIELD TRIPS:**

Objective:

Confirmation:

Transportation:

Materials for Next Class: Students to bring two #3 lead pencils, newsprint pad 18"x24".



This time allotted for class discussion, in order to determine art learning objectives of class group.

Exegesis: Session 1

Hypothetical Basic Drawing Program

The process of aesthetic scanning is introduced using a library reproduction of Rembrandt's drawing Three Cottages. If the students are shy about calling out the sensory and formal properties, they will probably warm to the naming of the expressive properties, and may venture guesses as to the technical properties of the drawing. When this activity is complete, students will have been exposed to art vocabulary.

The teacher then displays the drawing by De Kooning, Study for Woman, along with the Rembrandt drawing, and lets the class respond to the obvious differences between two works of art that are both drawings. The teacher will find an opportunity to relate to the class that questions about the nature of art are questions of aesthetics. A class discussion may develop and should be encouraged.

Next the teacher displays three more drawings by Rembrandt and presents a brief biographical sketch of his life, including dates so that students may identify the era of Rembrandt. The teacher and the class may discuss what they know of this period of history, and this period of art history. The drawings are all from the 1640s and it may be interesting to understand what events were taking place in Rembrandt's life at that time.

The next art learning activity is the art production demonstration. Referring again to the drawings by Rembrandt, the teacher calls attention to the various media used. It may be explained to the class that in the time of Rembrandt, pigments were extracted from the various parts of plants. Bistre may be defined. The teacher explains that drawings may entail the use of many different materials and talks about the types of art works that artists refer to as drawings. The teacher then demonstrates various media commonly used today for drawing.

The remaining class time is used for a class discussion that hopefully allows the teacher to evaluate the art learning objectives of the class group, and to learn about the class members experiences with and attitudes about art.

The session closes with the advance notice of all student-purchases art supplies that will be needed for the next class (i.e., 2 #3 pencils, 6 sticks of charcoal, and an 18"x24" newsprint pad.

#### Hypothetical Class Evaluation:

#### Hypothetical Teacher Notations

In this hypothetical class evaluation, let us pretend that eighteen students were questioned as to their interests, needs, and goals regarding the hypothetical beginning drawing class. Attitudes about drawing and the visual arts would be noted by the teacher.

Perhaps the majority of students would say they wished to learn to draw for reasons of personal enjoyment. Six or seven students might wish, specifically, to learn portraiture. Let us say that three students want to be able to draw animals. The remaining students might be either undecided or not particular. Perhaps the teacher may note that no students said they were interested in drawing landscapes.

Suppose ten students had previously completed other types of visual art programs; three had previously enrolled in drawing classes.

The teacher might lead the class to discuss their preferences in artistic style and their favorite artists. Let us suppose that most students voiced a definite liking for the old masters, or what they referred to as "real" art. Perhaps six or seven students would appear to have no distinct preferences regarding artists or artistic style. A few students might indicate a strong dislike for what they called "modern" art. However, upon further questioning, the teacher might learn that most were familiar with Impressionism and did not think of that style as "modern."

Let us say that portraiture appealed to many in the group, followed by historical subjects. Perhaps one student would indicate a love for drawings of animals, and several others might appear to feel likewise.

The teacher might note an isolated incident that would appear to have some effect upon the class. For example, suppose that one student who had previously enrolled in drawing classes brought a portfolio to show to the new teacher and was determined to present it. The teacher might observe that the student's drawings displayed a degree of competency which appeared to impress some class members and intimidate others.

#### Planning from Hypothetical Evaluation Notes

From these hypothetical notes of the initial meeting of the class, the teacher might determine that despite the number of students who had formerly enrolled in art class, members would enjoy and benefit from a basic beginning discipline-based drawing class.

Because of the overwhelming preference displayed by class members for the work of "old masters", it was decided that drawings from familiar masters, along with information on their lives and times would serve as subjects for learning in art history.

Because portraiture was regarded as important art learning for many of the group, the teacher made plans to use faces in the beginning drawing exercises, and contacted two persons to model for the final class sessions.

The teacher felt that because of strong prejudices on the part of the group toward contemporary art, art works

with subject matter, particularly faces and perhaps animals or historical matter, would be good choices for aesthetic scanning. But in order to expose students to other types of art works, a decision was made to use some works with no discernible subject matter as visual aids in discussions about the nature of art.

Rather than introducing any formal aesthetic theories, the teacher felt this class would benefit from being made aware of the kinds of questions asked by aestheticians.

Thinking back to the initial class discussion, the teacher noted to place extra emphasis on the qualifying of critical judgments during aesthetic scanning, hoping that some students might learn to approach unfamiliar styles of art with an open mind before accepting or rejecting them.

Having read through the notes taken during the initial class discussion, the teacher remembers and is able to evaluate the attitudes about art and the art learning objectives the class displayed as a group. From these impressions, the teacher first formulates the art learning objectives for each of the remaining class sessions; then, working with the curriculum structure, plans the curriculum content for the complete art program.

The curriculum structure and exegesis for session 2 of this hypothetical basic drawing program for older adults begins on the following page.

Hypothetical Basic Drawing Program: Session 2

SUBJECT: Beginning Drawing                      NUMBER OF SESSIONS: 8  
 SESSION: 2    DATE: July 10, 1986

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Upon the completion of this class session, students will have practiced scanning, and will be able to recognize yet another type of drawing--that of oriental pen and brush.

Students will have been exposed to and have talked about a contemporary work of art, and have asked questions that imitate the role of the aesthetician.

Historically, students will be introduced to the life and times of Durer--and 3 of his drawings.

Students will learn the characteristics of line and shape, and be introduced to exercises to practice drawing value. Students will be able to identify and will have practiced contour drawings of faces.

## ART CRITICISM: AESTHETIC SCANNING

Work for Scanning: Heron, drawing by Tan-an

Source: University Library, repro #356X, 5th floor

Emphasis: Practice scanning, special emphasis on materials and technique

## AESTHETICS:

Visual Aids: Trine, student drawing

Source: University Art Bldg., Rm. 324, ok pick up anytime

Emphasis: Examine contemporary drawing, talk about various drawings that are referred to as art, provoke and field questions about the nature of art

## ART HISTORY:

Exemplars: Durer drawings, #15, #22, #20

Source: Masterpieces of Drawing, U. Library NJ48

Emphasis: Three very different drawings by the same man. Biographical sketch of Durer, talk about life and times

Source of Historical Information: Random House History of Art, Vol. III, home library

ART PRODUCTION:

Demonstration: Characteristics of line and shape, value exercise, blind contour drawing

Materials: Pencil, pen, easel

Visual Aids: None

Source: Same as history exemplar

Emphasis: Freedom to use entire space of paper, loosening exercise

Production Activity: Practice drawing lines and shapes, practice value exercise. Try with both pencil and charcoal. Blind contour of person seated in next chair. Regular contour, taking time, using what has been learned about lines, shapes.

Materials: Pencils, charcoal, newsprint pad

Emphasis: Learning to fill page, learning to be loose, learning to gauge sizes of shapes

MUSEUM OR FIELD TRIPS: None

Materials for Next Class: Add conte crayon and kneaded eraser

Exegesis: Session 2

Hypothetical Basic Drawing Program

The second session opens with scanning of the drawing Heron, by Tan-an, a 16th century Oriental artist. This delicate drawing is an excellent example of Eastern style brush work, and the class may be particularly interested in the technical properties.

An abstract drawing was chosen for a visual aid to inspire talk about the nature of art. Because the class as a whole appears to prefer drawings that depict nature, the discussion inspired by this drawing could be lively. The teacher once again might speak about the various kinds of art work referred to as "drawings", and the class may discuss what kinds of works are called art and why.

In keeping with students' preference for old masters, three very different styles of drawings by Durer are presented as exemplars for art history learning. The teacher may present a brief biographical sketch of Durer, and speak to the class about his mastery of drawing.

The students practice along with the demonstrations of the characteristics of line and shape, and directed by the teacher, use pencils to graduate from light to black in the value exercise. The students are asked to give full attention to the contour drawing demonstration. They are asked next to face a partner and try blind contour drawings of the heads and faces of their partners. The teacher may

explain that this exercise serves to free up drawing and to gauge special relationships. During the remainder of the session, the students practice regular contour drawings of each other.

Conte crayon and kneaded erasers are announced as additional supplies to be brought to the next class session.

Hypothetical Basic Drawing Program: Sessions 3-8

Sessions 3-8 of this hypothetical basic drawing program would include, as did sessions 1 and 2, aesthetic scanning, class discussions about the nature of art, and art historical learning focused on masters of drawing. Sequential drawing instruction, with an emphasis on portraiture, would constitute the art production activities of these sessions.

One session might involve a trip to a museum, where the class could scan art works instead of reproductions. If the class progresses in studio work, live models might be used in one or two sessions.

## CHAPTER 4

### CONCLUSION

Discipline-based art education may provide the means by which today's older adults can enjoy quality instruction and learning in the visual arts. For older adults who wish to make art a part of their lives, discipline-based art programs can supply the necessary knowledge, skills, and understanding of art relevant to a variety of art learning objectives.

As knowledgeable audiences and consumers of the visual arts, discipline-based art trained older adults will be able to appreciate and evaluate artists' works. As aspiring artists or craftspeople, their art products will display originality that a more complete understanding of art inspires. As students of art history and aesthetics, older adults will be able to receive information and stimulation in these areas through local level art programs. This is especially important for older students who may not have access to courses in higher education, or who may not desire textbook learning.

Discipline-based art programs for older adults are not meant to be therapeutic, but rather, educational. It has been established that older adults who voluntarily

enroll in art programs do so to enjoy learning about art. Certainly some may be experiencing age-related role changes, however, it appears that most accept these changes as a part of growing older. It must be assumed that older Americans today, who look forward to productive long lives with leisure hours to devote to interests put aside in earlier life, seek stimulation and education, not therapy, from their art classes. Art educators agree that in order for older students to obtain the art learning they seek, art programs must provide much more than "busy hands" production oriented art classes.

Discipline-based art education answers this need, and theoretically, it is possible that discipline-based art courses will prove to have a lower risk of student failure than art production line courses, which are traditionally known to carry this advantage. A production line art course, which furnishes instruction in the assembly of an art product is single faceted; the product is the only test. If an older student is unable to successfully "turn out" the desired end product, art course failure is evident. In a discipline-based art program, older students who make inferior art products may excel in class participation, or may find that their interests and abilities lie in art history or exploring the nature of art. For some, the art production may become less important than talking about and learning to know about art. Talking about art, which is the

basis for the curriculum guidelines outlined in this paper, presents little risk of student failure.

In discipline-based art programs, teachers untrained in art education may themselves learn more about art by preparing for and leading class discussions about art. It is doubtful that the discipline-based guidelines in this paper will enable a person totally untrained in art to teach art courses for older adults; this would entail a detailed and specific curriculum. However, by following the suggestions described in this paper, an artist or art teacher untrained in art education might successfully provide learning in all of art's domains.

At this point in time, research in art education for older adults, indeed, educational gerontological studies also, are not very helpful to the art teacher. Because older American are the fastest growing segment of this country's population, their roles in society are continuously expanding. Studies of the art educational interests, needs, and goals of older students may be outdated before they go to press.

Perhaps more about the interests of older adults can be gleaned from newspapers, popular magazines, and television. Labels applied to seniors such as "Muppies" (Mature Upper Professional People), groups like the Gray Panthers, events like the Senior Olympics, and marketing data show senior citizens to be the largest consumers of recreational

equipment indicate that today's older Americans actively pursue and embrace all that society has to offer. It is likely that now, more than ever before, older adults desire quality art education that meets a variety of art learning objectives. This can be realized with discipline-based art education.

- Begin by discussing the:

SENSORY PROPERTIES (Elements of Design)

Size: Big, medium, small, approximate dimensions

Color: Hue, value, intensity, tint shade

Line: Thick, thin, tapering, uneven, long, short, continuous, broken, direction (vertical, horizontal, curving, etc.), focus (sharp, fuzzy, blurred), boundary (edge)

Texture: Rough, smooth, wet, dry, hard, soft, dull, shiny, coarse, porous, etc.

Shape: Organic (natural), inorganic (humanmade), open and closed forms, geometric forms, free forms, size (length, width, depth, height, area, volume, density), mass (light, heavy), positive and negative space

- Next describe how the artist has arranged the elements of design by looking for the:

FORMAL PROPERTIES (Properties of Unity)

Theme and Variation: Dominant features that may be repeated with variations

Repetition: Reoccurrence of elements

Balance: Regular repetition of forms, suggestion of motion by recurrent forms

Dominance: Difference in importance of one aspect to others

- Next describe the "feeling" of the work by discussing the:

EXPRESSIVE PROPERTIES (Personal Response)

Mood Language: Opposites, as serious-frivolous

Dynamic States: Forms which express tension (conflict, peace, suspense, surprise, power, etc.)

Idea and Ideal Language: Nobility, courage, wisdom, pride, authority, revolution, innocence

- Then discuss the:

TECHNICAL PROPERTIES

Media Identification: Material or materials used to make object

Speculation: Determining how the object was made through careful observation or inspection

Aesthetic Scanning has four chronological steps:

1. The class is first instructed to identify and describe completely the sensory properties of the object or work being scanned. Sensory properties include sizes, proportions, shapes, lines, textures, colors, values, and any other elements of design. The teacher asks the students to assume that every part of the object has been put there by the artist for a reason, and helps in the observing of every detail. No response is overly naive in scanning.

2. Next the class is asked to respond to the ways in which the object is organized to achieve expressive power by identifying its formal properties. Formal properties are properties of organic unity and include theme, thematic variation, balance, evolution, and hierarchy. How has the artist arranged or distributed the elements of design discussed in Step 1?

3. The class is then lead to respond to the value import of the object by looking for its expressive properties. What is there about the object or work that evokes response? The students describe the mood of the object, the dynamic state of the object, and find what forms express these aspects. Opposites (warm-cold, somber-gay) are a good place to start. Social and psychological interpretations and expressions of values are responses within the category of idea or ideal language.

4. Finally the class is lead to realize the significance of the object or work by identifying its technical properties. Speculating on how the object was made contributes to an awareness of technical details that helps students appreciate the work involved in the making of the object.

Figure A.2. Guide to Aesthetic Scanning

SUBJECT:	NUMBER OF SESSIONS:
SESSION:	DATE:
LEARNING OBJECTIVES:	
ART CRITICISM: AESTHETIC SCANNING	
<u>Work for Scanning:</u>	<u>Source:</u>
<u>Emphasis:</u>	
AESTHETICS	
<u>Visual Aids:</u>	<u>Source:</u>
<u>Emphasis:</u>	
ART HISTORY:	
<u>Exemplars:</u>	<u>Source:</u>
<u>Emphasis:</u>	
<u>Source of Historical Information:</u>	
ART PRODUCTION:	
<u>Demonstration:</u>	<u>Visual Aids:</u>
<u>Materials:</u>	<u>Source:</u>
<u>Emphasis:</u>	
ART PRODUCTION ACTIVITY:	
<u>Materials:</u>	<u>Emphasis:</u>
MUSEUM OR FIELD TRIP:	
<u>Objective:</u>	<u>Confirmation:</u>
<u>Transportation:</u>	
MATERIALS FOR NEXT CLASS:	
<u>Students to supply:</u>	

Figure A.3. Outline of Sample Curriculum Structure

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