Artful Thinking in the Classroom

Frameworks developed at Project Zero | Harvard Graduate School of Education
Presented by: Jessica Ross
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Overview & Goals

This session will examine both the foundational theory of Artful Thinking and the actual application to classroom practice through an arts integration lens.

Participants will engage in several Artful Thinking strategies, and will analyze how the practice of making thinking visible fits in with content & literacy standards and current practices.

Share resources and ideas, have fun! Spend some time with Joan Miró and other artists.
Agenda

• Introductions
• Orientation: What is Project Zero? Artful Thinking?
• Rapid book making
• Looking at art: Opening Artful Thinking experience
• Overview: Artful Thinking research and background
• Observing & Describing
• Artful Thinking routines & text
• Reflection and questions
EARLY PROJECT ZERO SHOWED AN ARRAY OF Passions that STILL MARK PROJECT ZERO TODAY. THERE WERE AT LEAST FIVE A PASSION FOR THE BIG QUESTIONS, A PASSION FOR THE CONCEPTUAL, A PASSION FOR THE INTERDISCIPLINARY, A PASSION FOR THE FULL RANGE OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND, OF COURSE, A PASSION FOR THE ARTS. —DAVID PERKINS
DIRECTOR, 1971-2000

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Miró & books
Rapid Book Making

Basic Instant Book

These are very, very easy, once you get the hang of them. Their three spreads, or six pages, plus front and back cover, will not intimidate even the simplest author or artist. One-sided, they can be published in a minute or two by pressing the button at a photocopy. Yet I find myself going back to them—Purgatory Pie Press, we have even begun making a limited edition collaboration with some subscription called Bookstubs.

First make one, just to get the feel of it, from anything you have lying around that can be recycled, such as a piece of computer paper printed on one side or a yellow fiber that someone hands you on the street.

1. Fold the paper lengthwise, and open. Burnish with a bone folder each time you fold. (A)
2. Fold the paper horizontally. (B)
3. Fold the two open ends up to the middle, front and back. Then open these folds. (C)
4. Tear or slit along center from middle to top, as shown. (D)
5. Grasp both sides of middle slit, pull apart and down. (E)
6. Fold into a book form. (F)

You will notice that your book’s pages don’t line up perfectly. The reason is paper thickness. The thickness of a piece of regular 8½ x 11” (21.6 x 28cm) printer paper varies almost randomly. But think about how thick a map of that printer paper is, or a notebook, or a phone book, or a dictionary. Paper thickness adds up, even in this very simple book.

You can trim this book, because it will fall apart, though you cannot round the corners. If you want it to be even on the edges, when I don’t care (if I do), you need to make an allowance for the paper thickness. Do this on the second fold, the first horizontal fold. Do not fold it exactly in half, instead leave about ⅛” (3mm). If you are using thicker paper, allow a little more space. I always experiment with the paper first, before I start a real piece of art.

You will need:

One 8½ x 11” (21.6 x 28cm) sheet of lightweight paper
Scissors
Bone folder

Before you begin, understand that this simple book is what I buy. You will soon to make other books in later chapters that may be more satisfying, but none will be more instant. Enjoy this instantness, and see what you can do with it. If you publish an instant one, send me a copy to add to all the ones my students have made over the years.
What is Artful Thinking?

A program that uses art to teach thinking and thinking to teach about art.
Museum Mindset

- Looking deeply
- Surfacing questions
- Discovering connections
- Finding complexity
Begin with a long look

- Place your eyes on the image. As you settle into the painting, take a long deep break... try to hold the world still and be present in the moment.

- Let your eyes wander over the surface of the image. Some parts of the picture probably caught your eye immediately... some details take longer to emerge.

- Let your eyes follow the paths of lines... of colors...

- We don’t just see with our eyes... take yourself into the painting and explore the scene with your other senses: Look at it with your ears—what sounds do you hear? See it through your nose, your sense of taste, and touch.

- Imagine how this world looks from someone else’s perspective—try to see through the eyes of one of these individuals.

- Consider what story might be unfolding here... what happened before and what might happen next.
Routine

Think • Puzzle • Explore

A routine that activates prior knowledge & sets the stage for deeper inquiry

What do you think you know about this work of art?

What questions or puzzles do you have?

What does the work of art make you want to explore?
What are we asking?

See
• Observe
• Notice

Think
• Interpret
• Connect
• Synthesize
• Analyze

Puzzle
• Question
• Research
• Theorize
• Argue

Explore
• Begin process for inquiry
• Name next steps

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions from text. (R1)

Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text. (R3)

Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally. (S & L 2)
Breathing routines

When beginning a long look:
• Place your eyes on the image. As you settle into the painting, take a moment to sit up as tall as possible… straighten your spine from the belly all the way up to your neck. Relax your shoulders. Take a long deep breath, and try to hold the world still and be fully present in the moment with this painting. Take another deep breath and try to really breathe in this picture.

When concluding a long look:
• Before we leave this painting, close your eyes. Let the memory of the work of art sit in your imagination. With your eyes closed, listen… [read a quote by the artist, poem from the time period, or other small piece of information/story]. As you open your eyes and look back at the painting one final time, take a long deep breath.

When transitioning from one work to another, particularly for comparison:
• Before we begin looking at this/second painting, I want you to close your eyes and remember the painting we looked at first/before—paint a picture of it in your imagination… zoom in on a detail that you remember. With your eyes closed, take a long deep breath. As you open your eyes, stretch your spine as straight as possible, sitting/standing as tall as possible…

Note: these routines were developed from mindfulness research and are not officially Project Zero routines. They are used to help students focus and re-focus during a tour and to create moments of comfortable silence.
Reflect: How did your understanding of the work develop?
What is the role of information?

• A means to **deepen understanding**: teachers not telling learners what to think, but giving them some information to help them think further and deeper

• **Reframing and extending thinking**: teachers creating opportunities for learners to develop an understanding that their thinking changes and evolves as they encounter new information

• Encourages and supports **active learning**: teachers should present information as something to “act” upon

• Promotes **inquiry**: information should not be an end (the “answer”), instead should help expand the inquiry in new directions and lead to new curiosities; questions should be seen as goals (positive outcomes)

• Helps **reveal complexity**: information should not simplify, teachers should use simple routines to yield complex understandings
Artful & Visible Thinking Overview
Goal of the Artful Thinking Program

To help students develop thinking dispositions that support thoughtful learning – in the arts, and across school subjects.
Research background: The triadic theory of dispositions

- Ability
- Inclination
- Sensitivity
Which thinking dispositions?
ARTFUL THINKING PALETTE

- Reasoning
- Questioning & Investigating
- Observing & Describing
- Exploring Viewpoints
- Finding Complexity
- Comparing & Connecting

EXPLORING VIEWPOINTS
FINDING COMPLEXITY
COMPARING & CONNECTING
QUESTIONING & INVESTIGATING
OBSERVING & DESCRIBING
REASONING
How do dispositions develop?

By routinely engaging in specific patterns of behavior – by doing certain things regularly.
Features of Thinking Routines

- Short number of steps, easy to understand and remember (they work “out of the box.” Title of the routine usually says it all)
- Authentically start with, and build on, learners’ own ideas
- Encourage active processing
- Highly transferable across disciplines, contexts, and ages
- Uncover complexity and make it accessible
- Make thinking visible (and audible)
- Leverage the power of collaborative thinking (though can also be used solo)
- Develop thinking dispositions by cultivating intellectual habits of mind.
- Research-based
- Encourage slow looking and learning
ARTFUL THINKING PALETTE

**Reasoning**
What makes you say that?
Claim / Support / Question

**Questioning & Investigating**
Think / Puzzle / Explore
Creative Questions
See / Think / Wonder

**Observing & Describing**
Beginning / Middle / End
Looking: Ten Times Two
Listening: Ten Times Two
Colors / Shapes / Lines
The Elaboration Game

**Comparing & Connecting**
I used to think…now I think
Connect / Extend / Challenge
Creative Comparisons
Headlines

**Exploring Viewpoints**
Step Inside
Circle of Viewpoints

**Finding Complexity**
Parts / Purposes / Complexities
Complexity Scale
Artful Thinking in the Classroom

Something Artful...
Stand & Stretch
Exploring some routines

“Learning is a consequence of thinking. Retention, understanding, and the active use of knowledge can be brought about only by learning experiences in which learners think about and think with what they are learning.”

David Perkins, Smart Schools
Slow Looking – Careful Noticing
If something is boring after two minutes, try it for four. If still boring, then eight. Then sixteen. Then thirty-two. Eventually one discovers that it is not boring at all.

- John Cage

Sustained attention to things tends to foster deliberate thought. Readiness to develop the capacity for deliberate thought begins very early as children engage in their own kind of thinking—daydreaming, fantasizing, and making up all kinds of activities that we call play.

- Fred Rogers
Children's Innovation Project

Exploration with the raw material of technology is a means to learning, not an end.

**notice**: slow down, look carefully; there’s always more to see

**wonder**: follow questions to find new questions

**persist**: love and stay with a struggle

[www.cippgh.org](http://www.cippgh.org)
Task: notice a screw
Look carefully at the screw. Draw what you see. Try again from a new perspective.
Children's Innovation Project

sketch from multiple perspectives

www.cippgh.org
I noticed threading and it can roll in circles. When it rolls in a circle, it looks like the thread is coming down. Look at one, you will notice that. It is pointy.

www.cippgh.org
Miró & objects
Task: notice an object
Children's Innovation Project

unknown parts
Parts – Purposes – Complexities
A routine for exploring aspects of art and other interesting things

Look carefully at the work of art.
What are its parts?
What are its purposes?
What are its complexities?
A kindergarten child expresses with words (red, black) and symbols (+, -) the importance of polarity.
I made a parallel circuit. Everything is on. If I made a circuit like this they will all be dim.
What are we asking?

Parts
• Part/whole
• Components
• Connections

Purposes
• Why
• Function
• Do/happen
• Cause/effect

Complexities/Puzzles
• Question
• Research
• Theorize
• Argue

All organisms have external parts. Different animals use their body parts in different ways to see, hear, grasp objects, protect themselves, move from place to place to seek, find, and take in food, water and air. Plants also have different parts (roots, stems, leaves, flowers, fruits) to help them survive and grow. (1-LS1-1)

A great variety of objects can be built up from a small set of pieces. (2-PS-2 & 3)

The shape and stability of structures of natural and designed objects are related to their function(s). (1-LS1-1)

Describe and compare measurable attributes. Classify objects and count the number of objects in each category. (K.MD)
Observing and Describing

This disposition is about noticing and communicating impressions. Routines in this area emphasize careful and deep observation, self-awareness, and detailed description.
Why call this disposition the disposition to Observe and *describe*? (Why include description?)

- In order to mobilize observations— to put them to work in the service of understanding – we have to describe them to ourselves.

- Often, description is the mechanism by which observation occurs. The act of describing something causes us to look closely, look again, and look anew.
How do observation and description happen -- Where do they take place?

**Modes of observation**--the faculties through which we receive impressions.

- The senses – eyes, ears, touch, etc. – give us physical impressions
- The intellect/mind – gives us mental impressions
- The heart/ spirit/ conscience – gives us emotional, ethical, spiritual impressions

**Modes of description**--the different forms in which we express our observations.

- Verbal
- Written
- Visual
- Kinesthetic
- Aural
Miró & objects

Students & objects
How To Paint a Donkey

Poem by Naomi Shihab Nye

She said the head was too large,
the hooves too small.

I could clean my paintbrush
but I couldn’t get rid of that voice.

While they watched,
I crumpled him,

let his blue body
stain my hand,

I cried when he hit the can.
She smiled. I could try again.

Maybe this is what I unfold in the dark,
deciding for the rest of my life,

that donkey was just the right size.
Routine

See • Wonder • Connect

A routine that encourages the slow and careful looking

What do you **see**?

What does the work of art make you **wonder**?

What **connections** can you find between this work and something you know or have seen?
We the People Constitution
the so called MTV generation
is locked in a box
by the constant barrage of should and ought
by the undertow of popularity
of conformity of density and intensity
by the need to choose whether
to expose the Achilles heel that is your reality
or to wear boots
by the blur of the line between want and need
by the ease of staring at what they say you should be
what you don’t want to be
by the mass generalization
the labels that society embroiders on your sweaters
by the box you have to fit into
the box that becomes your reality
which is a tragedy, really
he says as he flips on the TV
—Alexis Kellner Becker
maybe talking about school
and is having a presentation
Poem is about a lesson of life

Choice about where
you should pause
no punctuation
no capitalization
1-26-10

Put on a wall up
Extra to survive
who is they
fit into the community
fit into the crowd
no control
no capitalization

Trust of friends
MTV has change
by the constant barrage of should and ought
by the undertow of popularity
of conformity of density and intensity
by the need to choose whether

Student Work
What are we asking?

**See**
- Observe
- Notice

**Wonder**
- Question
- Research
- Theorize
- Argue

**Connect**
- Build on what is known by connecting new information to past learning

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions from text. (R1)

Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally. (S & L 2)

Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words. (R7)
Routine

Looking Ten Times Two
A routine for observing and describing

Look at the image for at least sixty seconds.

List ten words/phrases that describe any aspect of the image.

Look again. Stretch yourself to see the image in new ways.

Add ten more words/phrases to your list.
Colors – Shapes – Lines
A routine for exploring the formal qualities of art

Look carefully at the work of art. What colors do you see? Describe them. What kinds of shapes do you see? Describe them. What kinds of lines do you see? Describe them.

Choose a kind of color, shape, or line that you listed. Consider: How does it contribute to how the artwork feels? How does it contribute to how the artwork looks? How does it contributes to a story the artwork might tell? How does it contribute to the ideas in the artwork? Repeat with at least one more element.

Reflect: What new ideas do you have about the artwork?
What are we asking?

**Color**

Use visual structures and functions of art to communicate ideas. (K-4 NAEA)

**Shape**

Identify and describe shapes. (CC Math K.G)

Analyze, compare, create and compose shapes. (CC Math K.G)

Reason with shapes and their attributes (CC Math 1.G)

**Line**

What other routines?

Dialogue d'insectes (*Dialogue of Insects*)
ARTFUL THINKING PALETTE

REASONING
What makes you say that?
Claim / Support / Question

EXPLORING VIEWPOINTS
Step Inside
Circle of Viewpoints

FINDING COMPLEXITY
Parts / Purposes / Complexities
Complexity Scale

QUESTIONING & INVESTIGATING
Think / Puzzle / Explore
Creative Questions
See / Think / Wonder

OBSERVING & DESCRIBING
Beginning / Middle / End
Looking: Ten Times Two
Listening: Ten Times Two
Colors / Shapes / Lines
The Elaboration Game

COMPARING & CONNECTING
I used to think… now I think
Connect / Extend / Challenge
Creative Comparisons
Headlines
Miró & art making

Students & art making
Gallery Walk

In pairs, tour the documentation in the gallery. Spend time carefully looking at one or two exhibits. Using the palette, find examples of student thinking.

What do you see?
What do you think about that?
What does it make you wonder?

Share your findings with another pair.
Study groups: Professional growth and support
Planning Forward

Looking forward to the next five weeks, consider some dispositional goals for your students over that time.

What thinking language or routines might help you meet those goals?

How might you make thinking visible?

How might you invite another colleague to support you in this process?
Reflection

I used to think…
But now I think…
Resources

• Joan Miro
  – NGA, Art in the classroom
  – Museum of Modern Art

• *Poetry Speaks to Children* by Elise Paschen and Dominique Raccah
Thank you!
jessicarosspz@gmail.com