

Observation Tool:

Visual Artists at Work



Part 1. Observe your students working as artists!

Take notes here

What choices are students making about their **body & space?** Notice how kids...
move & physicalize while making visual art, or are still.
work standing up, sitting down, turned toward or away from others.
work in spaces that are chaotic, tidy, expansive or contained.

What can I learn from the **sound making in the room?** Notice how kids...
talk or make sounds with each other and/or to themselves.
talk about their artwork, story ideas or other topics that interest them.
might be energized by the sounds in the room, or might need quiet.
respond to soundscapes or music.

How are the kids **engaging their senses?** Notice how kids...
might hum, make noises to themselves or make sounds with the art materials.
For example: Enjoying the sound of ripping paper.
might be engaged in their immediate sensory experience.
For example: Enjoying the sensation of making dots.

How are my students **engaging with others?** Notice how kids...
collaborate with a friend or group of peers, or work alone.
discuss their work with peers and/or teachers.
look at their peers' work and show their work to others.
seek help or support from peers or teachers.

How are the kids using their independent art making **time?** Notice how kids...
make decisions/choices quickly or slowly.
take time before starting, finish early or want more time.

What seems to be their **process or flow?** Notice how kids...
play with the materials to get ideas, or execute a plan for a product that they already
have in their mind.
take risks, or worry about perfection.

What surprised me about how I noticed my students were working?

What have I learned about my students as artists through observing how they choose to work?

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Part 2. Reflect on the choices your students are making as they engage in the artistic process.

Look for activities to support their work process & offer new ways of working.

IF they are using material exploration as inspiration or as a resource for developing their work...



THEN check out more Explore & Describe Visual Arts lessons to build on and support this way of working

IF they are using their personal experiences, knowledge and/or identities as inspiration or a resource for developing their work...



THEN look for more opportunities to have kids apply their art making skills to creating work that expresses & connects to topics that are important or familiar to them.

IF they are using their body as inspiration or as a resource for developing their work...



THEN use the Quick Pose Warm up for embodying visual arts vocabulary to build on and support this way of working. Also check out Drawing with Chris!

IF they are using their peers as inspiration or as a resource for developing their work...



THEN encourage this way of working by trying peer reflections like Gallery walk or Turn and Talk.

IF they are using you or other adults in the room as inspiration or as a resource for developing their work...



THEN check out the Notice, Describe & Ask page and Artist Process page for ideas on how to support student autonomy.

IF they are using visual resources or references as inspiration or as a resource for developing their work...



THEN consider posting real life photos (as opposed to representations made by adult artists) as inspiration and reference.

IF you would like to encourage new ways of working...



THEN share this video with your kids- *Susanna, SJ and Rooster*.

IF you would like to encourage them to add more details...



THEN try a 5-Senses Journey to a setting or a character Quick Pose Warm

IF you would like to encourage them to develop their ideas further...



THEN check out the Notice, Describe & Ask page and Artist Process page for ideas on how to support students in revising their work.