

# Notice, Describe & Ask

This language protocol allows children to feel seen for who they are, while building their ability to speak for themselves.

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## What is Notice, Describe & Ask?

Through Notice, Describe and Ask we talk about students' work in rich detail, but without judgment. As we engage children in conversation, we help them discover their own voice, while building their language and observation skills.

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## Why Do We Use Notice, Describe & Ask?

### Provides information artists need to develop their work

Describing expression specifically helps students see their choices with greater clarity. When artists hear their own work described, they get ideas of what to do next. Hearing their peers' work described gives them new ideas, opening a wider palette of choices to explore.

### Children feel valued and seen

The practice of close observation allows the teacher to slow down, let go of assumptions and judgment, and see what's really there. When the teacher looks closely at a child's choices and describes with specificity, it is deeply affirming- more so than "good job."

### Language becomes an exciting tool

The rich language environment that is created empowers child agency- giving them words they can use in naming their choices and work process. It builds new vocabulary and motivates children to use it, in speaking about things they care about. And it builds community, giving children time to talk to each other, and language for conversing about their work.

### Builds a foundation for inferencing

Focused attention to noticing gives children a foundation for inferencing- a crucial skill in reading, writing, science & social studies. Taking in all the details, without jumping to an immediate conclusion, allows them to be thoughtful in their inferencing and fully grounded in the evidence. Careful noticing among peers expands social emotional awareness.

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## How do you implement it?

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### Notice

Take time to learn by observing, before speaking. Notice habitual responses, and let them go. Then, notice artistic choices. Recognize & acknowledge your assumptions, power dynamics, identity, & positionality.

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### Describe

Describe specifically, enthusiastically, and without judgment, no matter where children are in their process. Call attention to varied choices.

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### Ask

Ask kids open-ended questions about their work, allowing them to speak as artists. Listen closely & repeat their words to show you understand.

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Learn More:  
<https://teachwithartsconnection.org/bridges/notice-describe-ask/>

