Aesthetic Valuing and the California Visual and Performing Arts Standards

In your final reflection for this course, you will be asked to summarize your own philosophy and briefly describe how you will succeed in meeting the California visual arts standards as they relate to each strand:

- artistic perception
- creative expression
- historical and cultural context
- aesthetic valuing
- connections, relations, and applications

One of the most challenging objectives for visual arts education is to help children truly "see" art. We can begin that process by teaching them the elements of art so they can "see" line, shape, space, color, value, texture, pattern in works of art. We can give them tools to create their own art. We can give them hands-on experience with art, teach the historical and cultural significance of different styles and media in art. Aesthetic valuing is often the biggest challenge to educators. Wikipedia defines aesthetics as "a branch of value theory which studies sensory or sensori-emotional values, sometimes called judgments of sentiment or taste. Aesthetics is closely associated with the philosophy of art." (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aesthetics). Gardner discusses Key entry points for understanding concepts and developing intelligence in the different domains. These three entry points, in particular, are essential for the "artistic" intelligence domains.

- Aesthetic
- Hands-on experiences
- Interpersonal and collaborative activities

The performing arts clearly offer hands-on experiences and interpersonal, collaborative activities. We discussed the "aesthetic experience" in chapter 22 in the textbook. You may wish to look again at the discussion of aesthetics and the "role of wonder" (. 264). See the aesthetic questions in the textbook (pp. 266-267). The California standard for the visual and performing arts - aesthetic valuing - gives us our biggest challenge. How do you teach aesthetic discrimination and appreciation for the arts? That depends on your own concept of aesthetics and values.

What is beauty? The famous quote - "beauty is in the eye of the beholder" - truly applies to the arts. What is artistic quality? This depends on your own personal experience, exposure, training, cultural sensitivity, etc. These questions are subjective and personal. How do you assess this standard in your students? How do you evaluate your proficiency with this standard as a teacher? You can expose your children to the many forms of visual and performing arts. You can teach them the elements of each art - and give them opportunities to be creative within the arts. You can introduce them to visual artists, musicians, dancers, actors, playwrights, but how do you know they will understand and comprehend - let alone appreciate and value the arts? The value
each of us places on each different arts experience in terms of aesthetic appreciation is personal and subjective. Below are the aesthetic valuing standards for 1st through 6th graders in the visual and performing arts. You will be selecting one grade level to discuss aesthetic valuing for your week nine discussion.

**First Grade: 4.0 AESTHETIC VALUING - Responding to, Analyzing, and Making Judgments About Works in the Visual Arts**

Students analyze, assess, and derive meaning from works of art, including their own, according to the elements of art, the principles of design, and aesthetic qualities.

**Derive Meaning**
4.1 Compare and contrast selected works of art and describe them, using appropriate vocabulary of art.

**Make Informed Judgments**
4.2 Identify successful and less successful compositional and expressive qualities of their own works of art and describe what might be done to improve them.
4.3 Select an artist's work and, using appropriate vocabulary of art, explain its successful compositional and communicative qualities.

**Second Grade: 4.0 AESTHETIC VALUING - Responding to, Analyzing, and Making Judgments About Works in the Visual Arts**

Students analyze, assess, and derive meaning from works of art, including their own, according to the elements of art, the principles of design, and aesthetic qualities.

**Derive Meaning**
4.1 Compare ideas expressed through their own works of art with ideas expressed in the work of others.
4.2 Compare different responses to the same work of art.

**Make Informed Judgments**
4.3 Use the vocabulary of art to talk about what they wanted to do in their own works of art and how they succeeded.
4.4 Use appropriate vocabulary of art to describe the successful use of an element of art in a work of art.

**Third Grade: 4.0 AESTHETIC VALUING - Responding to, Analyzing, and Making Judgments About Works in the Visual Arts**

Students analyze, assess, and derive meaning from works of art, including their own, according to the elements of art, the principles of design, and aesthetic qualities.

**Derive Meaning**
4.1 Discuss works of art created in the classroom, focusing on selected elements of art (e.g., shape/form, texture, line, color).
4.2 Identify and describe various reasons for making art.
Make Informed Judgments
4.3 Describe how and why they made a selected work of art, focusing on the media and technique.
4.4 Select something they like about their work of art and something they would change.

Fourth Grade: 4.0 AESTHETIC VALUING - Responding to, Analyzing, and Making Judgments About Works in the Visual Arts

Students analyze, assess, and derive meaning from works of art, including their own, according to the elements of art, the principles of design, and aesthetic qualities.

Derive Meaning
4.1 Describe how using the language of the visual arts helps to clarify personal responses to works of art.
4.2 Identify and describe how a person's own cultural context influences individual responses to works of art.
4.3 Discuss how the subject and selection of media relate to the meaning or purpose of a work of art.

Make Informed Judgments
4.4 Identify and describe how various cultures define and value art differently.
4.5 Describe how the individual experiences of an artist may influence the development of specific works of art.

Fifth Grade: 4.0 AESTHETIC VALUING - Responding to, Analyzing, and Making Judgments About Works in the Visual Arts

Students analyze, assess, and derive meaning from works of art, including their own, according to the elements of art, the principles of design, and aesthetic qualities.

Derive Meaning
4.1 Identify how selected principles of design are used in a work of art and how they affect personal responses to and evaluation of the work of art.
4.2 Compare the different purposes of a specific culture for creating art.

Make Informed Judgments
4.3 Develop and use specific criteria as individuals and in groups to assess works of art.
4.4 Assess their own works of art, using specific criteria, and describe what changes they would make for improvement.

Sixth Grade: 4.0 AESTHETIC VALUING - Responding to, Analyzing, and Making Judgments About Works in the Visual Arts

Students analyze, assess, and derive meaning from works of art, including their own, according to the elements of art, the principles of design, and aesthetic qualities.

Derive Meaning
4.1 Construct and describe plausible interpretations of what they perceive in works of art.
4.2 Identify and describe ways in which their culture is being reflected in current works of art.
Make Informed Judgments
4.3 Develop specific criteria as individuals or in groups to assess and critique works of art.
4.4 Change, edit, or revise their works of art after a critique, articulating reasons for their changes.

The Artistic Intelligence

Technology has enabled scientists and researchers to develop greater understanding of how the brain works and how children learn. However, we continue to ask questions. Gardner (2004) posted FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) on a website - http://www.howardgardner.com/docs/Dr.%20Gardner%20FAQ%2007_2004.pdf. Below is an interesting question regarding "artistic intelligence."

Q. Is there an artistic intelligence? Aesthetic vs. Non-aesthetic Uses for the Arts

A. Strictly speaking, there is no artistic intelligence. Rather, intelligences function artistically—or nonartistically—to the extent that they exploit certain properties of a symbol system. Should an individual use language in an ordinary expository way, as I am doing here, he is not using the linguistic intelligence in an aesthetic way. If, however, language is used metaphorically, expressively, or in a such a way as to call attention to its formal or sound properties, then it is being used artistically.

By the same token, "spatial intelligence" can be exploited aesthetically by a sculptor or painter, non-aesthetically by a geometer or a surgeon. Even music intelligence can function non-aesthetically, as when bugle calls in the armed services are used to summon individuals to a meal or the raising or lowering of the flag; and many patterns designed by mathematicians for mathematical purposes have ended up on display in art galleries. Whether an intelligence is deployed for aesthetic purposes represents a decision made by an individual and/or her culture. An individual can decide to use linguistic intelligence in the manner of a lawyer, a salesperson, a poet, or an orator.

However, cultures also highlight or thwart artistic uses of intelligences. In some cultures, almost everyone writes poetry, dances, plays an instrument; in contrast, Plato sought to eliminate poetry from his Republic while Stalin scrutinized every poem as if it were a diplomatic note. Of course, informally, it is perfectly all right to speak of artistic intelligences. I do this myself, particularly as a shorthand for those intelligences that are frequently mobilized for artistic ends. In this context it is worth noting that multiple intelligences ideas have grown comfortably in schools which highlight the arts; and "MI" ideas seem an uncomfortable stretch in schools where the arts have been minimalized or marginalized.

Multiple Intelligences in the 21st Century

Gardner continues his work with multiple intelligences - adding to and refining his research. The Good Work Project is involved in continuing research on intelligence domains. Research in the arts continues: "Our studies of GoodWork in the Arts aimed to understand the beliefs and values essential to individuals in the domains of Theater, Jazz Music, and Dance. More specifically, this research explored how these artists’ values are challenged by the contemporary climate; how the goals of the respective domains and the personal goals of the artists intersect; how the artists navigate the obstacles they encounter; what sustains their commitment to work; perceptions of changes underway in the their domains; the implications of changes for the future health of their domains. We also studied the role of contemplation among jazz musicians, as well as the role of mentoring among dancers." ([http://www.goodworkproject.org/research/arts.htm](http://www.goodworkproject.org/research/arts.htm)).

Howard Gardner's "The New Imperative" - [http://www.sunysb.edu/Reinventioncenter/Conference_04/Gardner/Presentation.htm](http://www.sunysb.edu/Reinventioncenter/Conference_04/Gardner/Presentation.htm)

The new imperative for educators is to nurture five minds for the future: The Disciplined Mind, the Synthesizing Mind, the Creating Mind, the Respectful Mind, and the Ethical Mind. This nurturing will require establishing and keeping clear “uncluttered” goals. These goals are needed at traditional four year colleges as well as major research universities.

The Disciplined Mind

The Disciplined Mind considers the ways of thinking in major disciplines—in science, history, mathematics and the arts. The scientist, for example, knows that correlation is not the same as causation and considers matters of evidence rather than faith and opinions. The historian is concerned with the role of the human agency and avoids “presentism.” Unlike science, each historical event is unique and cannot be replicated. Each generation needs to rewrite history in terms of its own concerns and in reaction to previous historical efforts. Mathematicians think beyond mere formulas; they understand the nature of proof and discovery; and artists likewise master skills and media so that they can ultimately transcend popular forms or imitation of earlier models.

How can we use our multiple intelligences to help students understand complex disciplinary concepts? There are multiple entry points through which they can develop key concepts:

- Quantitative/logical learning
- Narrative
- Existential
- Aesthetic
- Hands-on” experiences, and
- Interpersonal and collaborative activities.
The Synthesizing Mind

The Synthesizing Mind, exemplified by Charles Darwin, is a mind that can take large amounts of undigested and unevaluated information, similar for example, to information that may be found on the Web, integrate it and produce a synthesis that takes knowledge and understanding to the next level. This mind is likely to become ever more important in an age where there is too much information about and individuals must decide what to focus on and how to arrange it in ways that are useful to one self and to others. It is amazing how little my discipline of Psychology has yet determined about the act of synthesis.

The Creating Mind

The Creating Mind, epitomized by Albert Einstein and Virginia Woolf, is robust and even iconoclastic. A master of one or more disciplines, this mind synthesizes what is known and, going beyond that, thinks outside the box—an imperative in the computer (algorithmic) age. It asks good questions and new questions. The Creating Mind is ultimately judged in terms of its effects on future work and understanding in relevant domains.

The Respectful Mind

The Respectful Mind goes beyond mere tolerance and accepts and celebrates diversity as a fact of life at home and abroad. This mind has a need to understand the perspectives and motivations of others. In achieving this understanding, it is guided by emotional and interpersonal intelligence. The Respectful Mind will not be nurtured in students unless it is also exhibited by parents, teachers and administrators—and, it is necessary to add, by politicians, entertainers, and other public figures.

The Ethical Mind

The Ethical Mind is geared toward “good work”, which is work that is excellent, expert, and socially and morally responsible. It is work that is intrinsically motivated, rather than work done chiefly to satisfy someone else’s rewards or punishments. Teachers and researchers, as professionals, have an imperative to be themselves models of good work since students have a real need to be exposed to such exemplars. Students also need to be cautioned about and learn to recognize bad or compromised work. Ultimately a society’s fate is determined by the quality of the work done by its professionals and other practitioners.

As Ralph Waldo Emerson taught us, Character (which includes self-knowledge) is more important than Intellect. While the first three types of mind foster intellectual understanding, the Respectful and Ethical Minds emphasize the development of positive personal and social values.

Visual Arts Video Resources

Structured Drawing Programs - Young Rembrandts

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5pQuLpsdoVE