Writing My Artist's Statement Lesson 8

Grade 8 Visual Arts

Critical Learning

- Artist statements tell a personal story.
- Artist statements are one way to connect with an audience.

Guiding Questions

- What is my story as an artist?
- How do I connect with my audience?

Curriculum Expectations

Reflecting, Responding, and Analysing

D2. apply the critical analysis process (see pages 23-28) to communicate feelings, ideas, and understandings in response to a variety of art works and art experiences

2.1 interpret a variety of art works and identify the feelings, issues, themes, and social concerns that they convey

2.4 identify and explain their strengths, their interests, and areas for improvement as creators, interpreters, and viewers of art

**Learning Goals
(Unpacked Expectations)**

- Reflect on personal art work to explain choices, strengths, and areas for improvement
- Use art terminology to critique the work of others and identify strengths and areas for improvement

Instructional Components

Readiness

- Practice in giving and receiving effective feedback
- Visual arts terminology
- Storyboarding
- Art techniques and their effects
- Scripting
- Story elements, e.g., character, setting, plot, problem/conflict, theme
- Story structure, e.g., beginning, middle, end (sometimes called 3-Act structure)
- Elements of art: line, shape and form, space, colour, texture, and value
- Principles of design: contrast, repetition and rhythm, variety, emphasis, proportion, balance, unity and harmony, and movement

Terminology

- Critique
- Artist statement

See **Glossary**, **The Arts, Grades 1-8,** 2009, pp. 187-207.

Materials

- Sticky notes
- Paper

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Minds On

Pairs ➜ Considering Audience
Pairs participate in a **Gallery Walk**, choosing one comic strip/panel and responding to the **Critical Analysis Process** (see **The Arts, Grades 1-8**, pp. 23-28) **question prompts**. In a **Think-Pair-Share**, students share their responses to the question with an elbow partner. Volunteers share with the whole group.

Pause and Ponder

A for L Use a strategy, e.g., **Traffic Light**, to assess and encourage students to self-assess.

Action!

Small Group ➜ Understanding Artist Statements
Distribute three **sample artist statements** to each group. Using a **R.A.F.T.S.** template, groups identify role, audience, form, topic, and purpose. Debrief with the whole group, creating an **anchor chart** for their artist statement and identifying **success criteria**.

Provide students with another sample artist statement. Groups assess the statement against criteria and make suggestions for improvement. Emphasize appropriate feedback comments and language, referring to the feedback **anchor chart.** Debrief with the whole group, clarifying **artist statement success criteria**.

Pairs/Whole Group ➜ Developing Audience Awareness
In a Think-Pair-Share, students practise speaking about their own work by responding to the **framework questions**.

Discuss the importance of the **critique process**. Post students' comic strip/page. Participate with the students in a Gallery Walk, using 3-4 sticky notes to post comments on comic panels/strips, asking questions, describing strengths, and making suggestions for improvement. Suggestion: colour code sticky notes according to type of comment. Encourage students to ensure that every work receives at least two sticky notes.

Whole Group ➜ Developing an Artist Statement
Emphasize the purposes of the activity, i.e., to foster critical reflection and to anticipate readers' needs in the artist statement. Make connections to the **Creative Process**. Students read the notes posted on their work and use additional sticky notes to respond.

Create and distribute an artist statement **Guiding Questions/Template** to scaffold and guide writing of the artist statement. Students form **Inside-Outside Circles**. Pose one guiding question from the artist statement Guiding Questions/Template. Partners take turns telling the answer to their partner. Students move two places to the right. Pose a second question. New partners tell each other the answer. Repeat so that students have rehearsed orally what they may write.

Individual ➜ Drafting the Artist Statement
Students draft their artist statement, using the template and exemplars as guides.

QuickTip
(1) Alternatively, display an example of comic art and pose the question: What do you, as readers, want to know about the artist, his/her artist process, and the artwork? See **What do my readers want to know?** (2) Avoid introducing new writing forms. Choices of form for the artist statement should be limited to familiar and/or explicitly taught forms. (3) This assignment provides opportunities for making cross-disciplinary connections, e.g., to Language.

A for L Students receive peer **feedback** on their comic strip/panel.

DI Some students may need extra time to complete their artist statement.

Consolidation

Pairs ➜ Revising the Artist Statement
Revisit the **K-W-L charts,** using the structure to highlight progress, address questions, and articulate learning.

Distribute '**Asking Questions to Revise Writing**.' (See sample congratulatory comments and questions in **Think Literacy Subject-Specific Examples: Visual Arts, Grades 7-12**, p. 29.) Pairs take turns in the role of audience. One student reads aloud his/her draft. Referring to the handout and success criteria, partners discuss strengths and next steps for improvement. Individuals revise their **artist statements** and complete **Proofreading without Partners** (For an arts example, see **Think Literacy Subject-Specific Examples: Visual Arts, Grades 7-12**, pp. 8-11.). Students self-assess using the **artist statement rubric**. Students submit their artist statement and rubric, along with the original storyboard.

A for L Students self-assess their artist statement, using the rubric. See **Metacognition Guide** and **Differentiated Instruction Assessment Card**.
A of L Evaluate Artist Statements using the rubric.

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Minds On …

Gallery Walk

A Gallery Walk is a flexible strategy for having students respond to a range of texts. In a Gallery Walk, students explore multiple texts posted around the room. Texts can include: print, images, historical and contemporary texts, draft or completed texts, professional or student texts.

Often, this activity is cooperative and structured by question prompts that require students to observe, discuss, and reflect. Because students move physically, it can appeal to kinaesthetic learners and provide variety in classroom activity. The activity can be used at various points in the lesson, e.g., as a community builder, a warm-up, source of debate, or consolidation activity. The debriefing focuses on key ideas and synthesizing observations, responses, and thinking.

To ensure that 'Our Comic World Wall' is a rich source of texts encourage students to continue to post examples from their own experience.

Traffic Light

See **Differentiated Instruction Assessment Cards**, *Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting*. Develop this strategy as a classroom routine to obtain information about understanding immediately and efficiently from students. The strategy also fosters metacognitive awareness in students.

Critical Analysis Process question prompts

- Is there a comic strip or page that immediately caught your attention? Why? (Initial reaction)
- Could you retell the story in the comic strip/page if the text was missing? (Description)
- Describe the emotions expressed in the comic strip/page. Are the emotions created through art techniques and/or text? (Analysis and Interpretation)
- Choose one comic strip/page and describe how would you change it to appeal to a different audience. (Expression of an Informed Point of View)

Think-Pair-Share

Bennett and Rolheiser (2001) describe Think-Pair-Share as "one of the simplest of all the tactics" (page 94). As pointed out by Bennett and Rolheiser and Think Literacy (page 152), students require skills to participate effectively in Think-Pair-Share, e.g.,

- active listening
- taking turns
- asking for clarification
- paraphrasing
- considering other points of view
- suspending judgement
- avoiding put-downs.

These skills can be modelled and explicitly taught. During group work, teachers can provide oral feedback and reinforce expectations.

See **Think Literacy Cross-Curricular Approaches, Grades 7-12**, pages 152-153.

Bennett, Barrie, and Rolheiser, Carol (2001). *Beyond Monet: The artful science of instructional integration.* Ajax, ON: Bookation.

Think-Pair-Share is a low-risk strategy to structure thinking time and encourage participation of all students. See **Differentiated Instruction Assessment Cards**, *Think Time*, *Ponder and Pass, No Hands* and *Wait Time*.

Teachers could also build on the previous lesson's sorting activity, e.g., by distributing to pairs a variety of texts, e.g., newspaper headline, classified ad, display advertisement, CD cover, song lyric, recipe, instructions, application form, test, expository/informational text, dictionary definition, editorial, film or restaurant review. Students sort texts into categories, e.g., "Story", "Not story", "Not sure".

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Action!

Sample Artist Statements

"Artists statements serve many different purposes from explaining an individual artwork or a larger body of artwork, to accompanying applications for a job, a grant, or to a post-secondary program. An artist statement is a personal reflection that expresses how you approach your work as an artist, and should provide insight about your artwork to the reader or the viewer. Learning to write effective artists' statements is an essential skill for all visual arts students." (**Think Literacy Subject-Specific Examples: Visual Arts, Grades 7-12**, p. 96) See **Glossary**, **The Arts, Grades 1-8,** 2009, pp. 187-207.

An artist statement is a tool for student artists to articulate what their artwork is about, what they are learning and how they value the creative process. It creates an opportunity for student artists and teachers to reflect on and assess their learning experiences. Artist statements also use appropriate literacy conventions so they are effective oral and written communication tools. Artist statements can also be displayed next to artwork.

See *Writing for a Purpose*, **Think Literacy Subject-Specific Examples: Visual Arts, Grades 7-12**, pp. 96-101, for samples, guiding questions, template and description of process.

R.A.F.T.S.

A R.A.F.T.S. template can be used as a structure for analyzing texts or as a structure for generating ideas and planning to write a text.

See *Setting the Context (Using R.A.F.T.S.)* in **Think Literacy Subject-Specific Examples: Language/English, Grades 7-9**, pp. 32-37.

R

Role of the Writer
Who are you as a writer?

- yourself
- character
- reporter
- student
- comic artist

A

Audience
To whom are you writing?

- peer group
- parent
- fictional character
- government
- jury
- teacher

F

Format
What form will the writing take?

- letter
- report
- interview
- e-mail
- prose statement
- journal

T

Topic
What is the subject or topic of the writing?

- societal issue, question
- personal interest or concern
- artistic process

S

Strong Verb
What is the purpose of the piece of writing?

- explaining individual artwork
- reflecting on how you personally approach art
- giving insight into the meaning of an artwork
- accompanying applications for a job, grant, or post-secondary program
- entertaining

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Anchor Chart

An anchor chart summarizes and displays for reference essential information on fundamental topics for reference, e.g., strategies for active listening, collaborative learning skills, audience and performer behaviours.

Because using anchor charts is a strategy for capturing students' voices and thinking, they are co-constructed by the teacher and students. By making students' thinking visible and public, anchor charts "anchor," or stabilize and scaffold classroom learning. Anchor charts should be developmentally appropriate and clearly focused, accessible, and organized.

See **Differentiated Instruction Assessment Cards**, *T-Charts* for a description of how T-Charts can be used for a similar purpose.

Success Criteria

Co-creation of rubrics and analysis of exemplars contribute to transparency and building shared understanding of criteria and standards. This work also supports development of peer and self-assessment skills **A as L** .

"Assessment *for* learning and assessment *as* learning also require that students and teachers share a common understanding of what constitutes success in learning. Success criteria describe in specific terms what successful attainment of the learning goals looks like. When planning assessment and instruction, teachers, guided by the achievement chart for the particular subject or discipline (see Chapter 3), identify the criteria they will use to assess students' learning, as well as what evidence of learning students will provide to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. The success criteria are used to develop an assessment tool, such as a checklist, a rubric, or an exit card (i.e., a student's self-assessment of learning).

Teachers can ensure that students understand the success criteria by using clear language that is meaningful to the students and by directly involving them in identifying, clarifying, and applying those criteria in their learning.

Examining samples of student work with their teachers helps students understand what constitutes success and provides a basis for informed co-construction of the success criteria.

The success criteria should be open to review and revision, guided by the teacher's professional judgement, as students progress towards achievement of the learning goals.

Teachers can enhance their understanding of success criteria and build common knowledge about levels of achievement through teacher moderation – that is, through assessment of student work done collaboratively with fellow teachers." (**Growing Success**, 2010, p. 33)

Artist Statement Success Criteria

Reflects effectively on creation of comic strip/page:
- explains inspiration
- explains goals
- explains design choices
- considers impact and demands on reader
- describes experience in creating the work, e.g., response to challenges and use of feedback
- makes connections to examples of comic art and issues
- explains strengths as a comic artist.

Communicates orally or in writing:
- expresses ideas clearly
- organizes ideas clearly.

Proficiency may also include:
- direct answers to the prompts
- elaboration through details and examples
- making connections to personal knowledge and experiences, other comic art, and the world
- descriptive language
- accurate use of art terminology.

What do my readers want to know?

See **Think Literacy Subject-Specific Examples: Visual Arts, Grades 7-12**, pp. 66-68. The process for developing content criteria for an artist's journal can be adapted to development of criteria for an artist statement.

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Framework Questions

Possible questions for encouraging a range of cognitive processing are:

- **Describe** - Describe your artwork thinking about the elements of design: line, shape, colour, form, texture, space, value. For example, *I used mostly dull, dark, reds that are warm*.
- **Analyze** - Discuss how the elements of design help to create one of the following 3 principles of design; balance, emphasis, or rhythm. For example, *I used the dark red colour throughout the work in order to keep it balanced*.
- **Interpret** - Discuss the choices you made in selecting the colours or other elements of design. What emotions do you want to convey? For example, *I want the viewer to understand how scared the figure is in the foreground, so the dark colour helps to convey that*.
- **Judge** - Discuss your choice of title for the work. Why is it appropriate? Discuss one aspect of your project that you feel was very successful and explain why. In addition, talk about one aspect of your work that you could improve.

Suggestions are from Edmund Burke Feldman (1992), *Varieties of Visual Experience*, in 'Framework for an Arts Presentation', **Think Literacy Subject-Specific Examples: Visual Arts, Grades 7-12**, p. 35.

Feedback

"As part of assessment *for* learning, teachers provide students with descriptive feedback and coaching for improvement. Teachers engage in assessment *as* learning by helping all students develop their capacity to be independent, autonomous learners who are able to set individual goals, monitor their own progress, determine next steps, and reflect on their thinking and learning." (**Growing Success**, 2010, p. 28)

Feedback provides students with a description of their learning. The purpose of providing feedback is to reduce the gap between a student's current level of knowledge and skills and the learning goals. Descriptive feedback helps students learn by providing them with precise information about what they are doing well, what needs improvement, and what specific steps they can take to improve. According to Davies (2007, p. 2), descriptive feedback "enables the learner to adjust what he or she is doing in order to improve."

Ongoing descriptive feedback linked specifically to the learning goals and success criteria is a powerful tool for improving student learning and is fundamental to building a culture of learning within the classroom.

As the teacher provides feedback, and as the student responds to it, the assessment information gathered is used to improve learning as well as instruction. Multiple opportunities for feedback and follow-up are planned during instruction to allow for improvement in learning prior to assessment *of* learning (evaluation). The focus of the feedback is to encourage students to produce their best work by improving upon their previous work and, at the same time, to teach them the language and skills of assessment, so they are able to assess their own learning and that of their peers." (**Growing Success**, 2010, p. 34)

Critique Process

A critique is an oral or written discussion strategy used to analyze, describe, and interpret works of art.

Critiques help students practise their persuasive oral, written, information gathering and justification skills. Provide direction and guidance for a critique. Choose a variety of questions and make them specific to the project for students to consider as they are viewing the work on display. Students walk around, look at work, and a class discussion can follow.

A written peer critique activity involves using sticky notes. Each student gets 3 - 4 notes on which they write 3 - 4 comments about the art work of others. Each note begins with a positive comment, such as, "The use of shading to make things look 3D is great!" the note may then follow with a suggestion using specific terms and positive tone, such as, "I wish there was less text in panel 3, so the image could be larger."

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Action!

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Creative Process

The creative process is intended to be followed in a flexible, fluid, and cyclical manner. As students and teachers become increasingly familiar with the creative process, they are able to move deliberately and consciously between the stages and to vary their order as appropriate. For example, students may benefit from exploring and experimenting before planning and focusing; or in some instances, the process may begin with reflecting. Feedback and reflection can happen throughout the process.

The teacher might highlight a particular stage of the process:

Stage of the Process	Student	Teacher
Presenting/Performing/Sharing	– identifies an audience (e.g., teacher, parents, peers, community) and prepares a space for sharing the work; finalizes his or her production	– promotes student talk about the arts – makes necessary arrangements to ensure that performers/exhibitors are sharing with an appropriate audience – promotes the collaborative sharing of ideas and strategies; helps structure the sharing for students – is supportive
Reflecting/Evaluating	– reflects on the process and the degree of success, and identifies further learning goals and opportunities and next steps	– encourages reflection – links evaluation to criteria and the lessons taught – provides a variety of methods of evaluation to accommodate the learning styles of a variety of students – provides descriptive feedback – evaluates on the basis of a body of evidence collected over time

See **The Arts, Grades 1-8,** pp. 19-22.

Introduce yourself:

1. Explain what inspired your work.

Focus on impact and meaning:

2. Explain what your goals are, what impact you hope your work will have on a reader, and what your message is.

3. Identify something a viewer should understand in order to understand your work.

Focus on your creative process:

4. Identify 1 significant artist choice you made and why you made it.

5. Identify 1 comment or feedback you received and explain how it contributed to your final piece.

6. Identify a challenge you experienced and how you tried to solve it.

Focus on your strengths and your learning:

7. Identify a strength of your work or of you as an artist.

8. Explain how your work connects to other comic art and issues you have seen.

9. Explain 1 significant thing you learned about comic art, stories, or yourself during this project.

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Action!

Inside-Outside Circles

Inside-Outside Circles is a strategy that structures a series of low-risk conversations between pairs of students. The strategy can be used to build community, explore ideas, or rehearsing for writing.

- Review norms for collaborative work, e.g., active listening, encouraging or coaching partners, giving and accepting praise or constructive feedback, maintaining appropriate level of talk.
- Students form two circles, the inner circle facing out and the outer circle facing in, so that each student is paired with a student facing the other direction.
- Pose a series of questions while standing in the center.
- At each question, partners take turns speaking and listening. They provide feedback to each other.
- After each question, at a pre-arranged signal, students take two steps to their right, so that students have a new partner for each question.

This strategy builds on skills required by Think-Pair-Share.

See Bennett, Barrie and Rolheiser, Carol (2001). *Beyond Monet: The artful science of instructional integration.* Ajax, ON: Bookation. Pages 160-161.

Consolidation

K-W-L (I Know-I Want to Know-I Learned)

The **K**now-**W**ant to Know-**L**earned strategy (Ogle, 1986) is linked to the before, during, and after framework. K-W-L is a generative strategy that structures thinking processes.

The "Know" column prompts students to activate and inventory prior knowledge. It can be completed individually or collaboratively.

The "Want-to-Know" column prompts students to generate inquiry questions that provide a purpose, e.g., for reading, discussion, study. It provides an opportunity to anticipate learning, to focus on inquiry as a habit of mind, and to learn about and practise posing effective questions. Learning about question can be scaffolded, e.g., by working with the categories of Bloom's taxonomy or by providing question words, question prompts, or a question matrix. These scaffolds could be posted in the classroom as anchor charts.

The "Learned" column prompts students to summarize and consolidate their learning. K-W-L's can be completed individually or collaboratively at various points in the unit.

KWL variations include:

- reconfiguring the usual 3-column organizer as a 3-part square, with "Know" across the top and "Want to Know" and "Learned" juxtaposed beneath
- adding columns, e.g., "Future" ("How I will apply this learning in the future").

Link to prior learning by connecting the activity in this lesson to previous use of the K-W-L strategy. Doing so explicitly helps students recognize how the thinking structure in the strategy transfers to other situations, critical aspects of becoming a self-directed and self-regulated learner.

The K-W-L strategy reflects key Literacy GAINS parameters, e.g., exposing and evoking students' thinking in order to respond with appropriate levels of challenge and support. The strategy also supports an inclusive classroom environment and differentiated instruction by permitting a range of access, or entry, points for students along a continuum of difficulty, depending on the questions asked.

Assessment *as* Learning

Teachers engage in assessment *as* learning by helping all students develop their capacity to be independent, autonomous learners who are able to set individual goals, monitor their own progress, determine next steps, and reflect on their thinking and learning. (**Growing Success**, p. 28)

Students' interest in learning and their belief that they can learn are critical to their success. After reviewing the impact of testing on students' motivation to learn, Harlen and Deakin Crick (p. 203) recommended the use of assessment *for* learning and *as* learning – including strategies such as sharing learning goals and success criteria, providing feedback in relation to goals, and developing students' ability to self-assess – as a way of increasing students' engagement in and commitment to learning. (**Growing Success**, p. 29)

The emphasis on student self-assessment represents a fundamental shift in the teacher-student relationship, placing the primary responsibility for learning with the student. Once students, with the ongoing support of the teacher, have learned to recognize, describe, and apply success criteria related to particular learning goals, they can use this information to assess their own and others' learning. Teachers help students develop their self-assessment skills by modelling the application of success criteria and the provision of descriptive feedback, by planning multiple opportunities for peer assessment and self-assessment, and by providing descriptive feedback to students about the quality of their feedback to peers. (**Growing Success**, 2010, p. 35)

See also the **Metacognitive Guide** and **Differentiated Instruction Assessment Cards,** *Metacognition*.

My Comic World
Artist's Statement Rubric

Name: _____   **Date:** _____

Category	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Thinking				
Reflects on creation of comic strip/page: • Explains inspiration • Explains goals • Explains design choices • Considers impact and demands on reader • Describes experience in creating the work, e.g., response to challenges and use of feedback • Makes connections to examples of comic art and issues • Explains strengths as a comic artist	Reflects with limited effectiveness	Reflects with some effectiveness	Reflects with considerable effectiveness	Reflects with a high degree of effectiveness
Communication				
Communicates orally or in writing: • Expresses ideas clearly • Organizes ideas clearly	Communicates with limited effectiveness	Communicates with some effectiveness	Communicates with considerable effectiveness	Communicates with a high degree of effectiveness