

How to succeed at teaching an art lesson

Even if you are a teacher that has never taken an art class beyond elementary school, **you can do this!** It is not so different from teaching anything else. You just need to stay a step ahead of the kids and **NEVER** rush them. **You can follow the lesson plan too, modeling it for them, and learn right along with them**—you should have fun with it—but if you



include your art in the binder, be sure to put your name on the back with the word “teacher”—we nearly selected a teacher’s work as a winner last year! **Allow the children to take as much time as they need.** Art, just like any other thing we do, takes time—repeating and practicing, making mistakes, and doing something over again until you get the result you want is often necessary.

Please let them finish. I can’t tell you how many times when we are selecting the top work from the binders our third grade teachers submit, we see obviously unfinished work—and some of the work had great potential if only the child was allowed to finish.

Some tips:

1. **NO pencils and erasers** in the art classroom when creating the final artwork (in some cases, they can be used for designing, but not for the final artwork). Using crayons, pens, markers, or paints directly gets a child to commit something on their paper. Pencils and erasers allow second-guessing and frustration, and also cut valuable time away from a student’s opportunity to finish a project. You may get protests at first, but you will see better results in their artistic endeavors.



2. Let the children know that their **“mistakes” can be turned into something else.** They are creating made-up characters so there is no right or wrong. That third-hand coming out of a creature’s head may not be such a bad thing!

3. You can **walk around and observe what your students are doing** as they create their work. If you see them struggling or at a point they don’t know where to go, encourage them to make it better—add some pattern or other detail, outline with a black marker, encourage them to fill the entire page—**their artwork can touch three edges of the paper.** These are all things that should be encouraged. If the character doesn’t have ears, ask how they hear. If there is not a mouth, ask how their character would eat. If only legs and no feet, how would it walk?



4. **Please make sure that you follow one of the lesson plans provided.** Most were created to use the most basic art supplies to alleviate any burden on you. If your school does not supply the materials you need or they are not in your budget, contact FUSD's VAPA office. They stock some supplies for you to use. Call 559-248-7173 to learn what's available.

5. **No googly eyes** and discourage recreating familiar cartoon or comic characters—we want the children to create their own unique characters that can help tell *their* story.

Encourage creativity! There is no right or wrong.

Challenge them to be different and unique!



6. **No signatures on the front** of the art please as they can be very distracting from the artwork. Character names written on the artwork are also unnecessary for the same reason. We will, in most cases, digitally remove them from any posters we create.

We hope that following one or more of the simple art lessons provided in the Arts Integrated Unit Plan encourages you to start integrating art lessons into other academic subjects.

Using art in teaching any subject helps increase creativity, confidence, problem solving, perseverance, focus, non-verbal communication, dealing with constructive feedback, collaboration with classmates, dedication, and accountability.