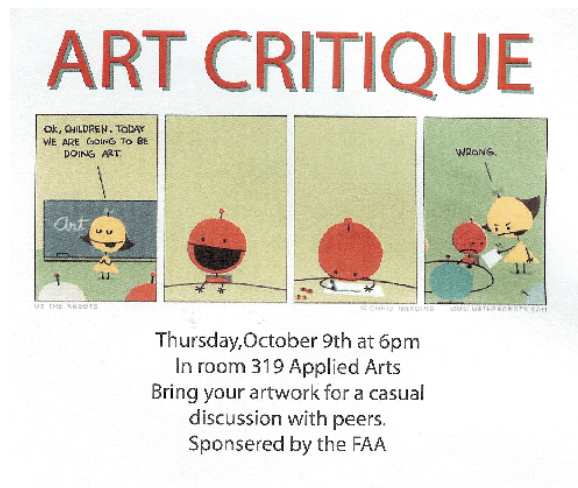


Tips for Facilitating High School Visual Art Critiques

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Who should/can critique artworks:

- Self (student)
- Peer(s)
- Small groups, Pairs, Tables
- Whole class
- Other classes (art, non-art; Invite others to see what you do in art, or team up with an English teacher when teaching art criticism and writing about art)
- Other teachers, parents, admin (feel free to invite others to crit days to show off what your students are doing or have others act as judges/commentary)
- Local professional artists (again, just invite them! Ask students if any of their family or parents are artists who might want to come in and talk to class, comment on student art)
- Friends/family/neighbors/mentors (for at home crits when/if students take work home for feedback)

Who should/can facilitate a critique:

Art teacher

Students – can choose 1-3 to take turns leading different parts

Advanced students can run crit for beginners

Local professional artist, art museum educator, or gallery curator

When or How often to critique:

1. **Before** project begins (looking at historical to contemporary artwork relevant to project – relevant in terms of concept and/or technique, medium, etc.)
2. **During**, known as “**In-process**” – can be done aloud, in small groups, or as a self reflection in journal/exit slip (expectations for what to write should be given)
3. At **end** of project
4. **WHENEVER YOU OR THEY WANT!!!!** Time to reflect and get/receive feedback can be helpful daily, weekly, by project, by portfolio, etc. Should be done often and regularly.

Evaluating the Success of a Critique:

- Did everyone participate with enthusiasm and respect and act as good audience members?
- Did teacher explain crit expectations, pacing, & benefits TO class and do students seem to know why a crit is done?
- Did students use new art vocabulary properly or just say “good, yes, no?”
- Did students seem interested in hearing about/seeing others’ work?
- Did they learn anything about others’ work and/or their own? **You’d have to ask to know!*
- Did the STUDENTS do more talking than the TEACHER??? ☺
- For smaller groups, did everyone engage and take turns talking?
- Did students stay awake and quiet?
- Were awkward or stressful moments handled and redirected appropriately by teacher?
- Was there closure, a wrap-up as well as a strong introduction to the crit?
- Was it valuable to see all the work up at once, in terms of lesson success, technical skill level, concept evolution? (and now, what is done with this new information on the teacher AND student end??)

Benefits:

- They see everyone's work, process, ideas.
- They get feedback from others, not just you and friends.
- They see how their work compares to others.
- They practice listening, speaking, talking about art like an artist, talk about their own work and share their process/ideas with others.
- You (teacher) get chance to hear them speak.
- Accountability.
- Deadlines and staying on task – crit days usually get people to have work ready.
- Time for reflection & feedback.
- You (teacher) get to see where multiple students are lost, stuck, and what you may need to reteach – sometimes we can't always see this one on one. Many students making same mistakes = reteach it.
- They can be fun and something students look forward to!! This all depends on how you structure, facilitate, and make it exciting! (Try different formats with classes- see next)
- ****TIP:** When all work is on table or pinned neatly on wall: GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO PHOTOGRAPH IT ALL AT ONCE!!! (See Wall Crit on next page)



"Rules" for Good Critiques: These should be shared with students verbally and/or in writing.

1. **Constructive Criticism** – Teacher should explain what this means & why artists need it.
2. **Honesty**, not arrogance or humiliation of others. Rude remarks, laughing at someone presenting or their work, or negative statements = zero or removal from crit/class.
3. **Participation** – raising hands, making original & thoughtful comments, taking notes, talking about your own work. No blurting or excessive commentary. No talking while others are talking.
4. **Vocabulary, Word Choice, Assessment Criteria** - Avoid these terms: cool, good, interesting, creative, unique, ugly, stupid, lame, etc. Instead use new art vocabulary, descriptive adjectives, and specific feedback related to specific criteria being assessed/taught/learned. ****Word walls and journals with key terms inside journal or on a crit handout are both helpful here.**
5. **Humility** - Be willing to hear what needs to be improved. No pouting, blurting, getting mad. Artists can be given a chance to explain/defend work if desired but this is done as teacher allows.
6. **3 Guidelines for Speaking:** Words should be kind, honest, and necessary.
7. **Structure & Pacing** - Create structure, seating, expectations, clean white background for work, & timing (take breaks for longer crits).
8. **Open & Close** - Teacher should open and close crit with thoughts, compliments, where to go from here, how to take work down to hand in, etc. Closure activities for students could include written reflection in journal or on crit handout, or general class wrap-up discussion for 5-10 min: What did you learn? Was this helpful? If given an opportunity to redo/fix/improve work, will you? (then give them the chance, with a due date say 4 days from them to resubmit a better/new piece for marks)
9. **Passing** - In some cases, allow students to pass – special needs and language students are not always excused from this, but teachers can make decisions on a student to student basis or hold smaller crits in small groups, pairing language learners or spec needs students with other students for help/tutoring. For students with any public speaking or language difficulties, teachers should consider this ahead of time and make arrangements that best fit student to avoid embarrassment/uncomfortable situations. All classes should show respect and patience when anyone is presenting work.
10. **Anticipate** - Work through and anticipate awkward moments, dealing appropriately and **consistently**.

Some Critique Forms & Formats:

- **Glow/Grow** – Design a handout divided down middle, 3 columns, #rows for # students you want each person to critique. One can be given to each person, a pair, or be LEFT taped beside a work of art and anyone who wants can walk by and write a comment (but must include their name).

Names of who I critiqued:	Glow	Grows
Jon <i>Good example</i>	I really love your use of shading to create a strong range of tone on the side of the building.	I think your drawing is lovely but I'm unclear on how it represents a known urban landscape. Maybe you can include more details or text? Good job!
Lex <i>Bad example</i>	Cool	Redo it - it sucks.

- **Tickets** – Design cool tickets for students to fill in and give to others students as they walk around looking at work on tables OR filled in during class crit. Make spaces for comments, what's working (glow), and what needs work (grow). Names required and teacher should discuss expectations for kind thoughtful words – no negative writing is allowed. *Can be useful during walk around in digital photo class where work can't be hung on wall but is up on monitors for all to walk by and see AND for 3d work.
- **Written Self/Peer Assessment** – Students complete crit handouts designed by teacher. These usually list project criteria and some questions about planning, process, project, struggles, successes, concept, and how student feels about each of these components. These are helpful when filled out prior to class crit, then students can use this handout when speaking (same for assessing peer's work). Such handouts are required to be submitted with the final project and count for marks. *Make accommodations prior for special needs and ESL students, such as simpler words, less q's, or pairing with another student to help fill it out.
- **Artist Statement** (can be done prior to starting project then compared to second one written after project is done as a comparison). Good for all classes, should be required for advanced students. Students should be shown/read examples of successful artist statements prior & be given clear expectations on how/what to write. Formative feedback is important here to assist students in refining their artist statements. **Note – I have a ppt on "how to write an artist statement" if anyone wants it!
- **Peer Crit #1** – Solo or in pairs/teams, crit someone else's work (draw names not pick friends) and present the work of the person you critiqued to the class (or to a smaller group). Some groups will need to crit more than one person's work. Teacher should provide guiding questions and project rubric as well as presentation and audience expectations.
- **Peer Crit #2** - Pair up and use handout as way to interview the other person. Each present the other's work to class – this style is good at beginning of term when they are not yet comfortable speaking aloud.
- **Self Crit** - Crit your own work & present to smaller group (your table) or whole class- 2 min . each.
- **Gallery Curation or Book Layout** – **Best to use ANOTHER CLASS' WORK (without names) for this one. Lay out all work neatly on table OR pin up neatly on wall (or you can hang from clothesline if no pinning wall is available). Using project criteria as guide, students (solo, pairs, or teams) must go piece by piece in rounds to determine which pieces stay and which come down. The goal is to find the 5-10 (or 2-5) strongest pieces (out of say, a 30 person class) that best illustrate the criteria (remember: CONCEPT & TECHNIQUE, not just one). The FUN part is that other teams can rebut and argue to have a piece go back up, but must make a strong argument why. Last, they work as a whole group to determine a "hanging order" as it might look on the wall of an art museum OR in a page by page book layout. The teacher can photograph final set.
- **Wall-style/Group or Class Crit:** Pin all work up neatly on wall (pins along outside edge of piece, not through it) or for 3d work, neatly arranged on a table for all to see at once. Arrange seating in semi circle close to work & discuss each person's work (can be teacher-led or each student can be asked to prepare a 2 min speech to share their strengths, weaknesses, process, & CONCEPT behind the work). Group & teacher provide helpful feedback, constructive criticism – with students' help, set 'good audience' rules to follow. Students can take notes, use visual journals, and/or give feedback tickets to 5-10 ppl or everyone (this makes them pay attention when others are speaking).
- **Other:**

Kinds of Assessment Questions You Could Ask:

- Ask about **process**
- Ask about **(final) product(s)**
- Ask about the **story** behind the work, what inspired it (if applicable, if student is comfortable sharing this)
- Ask about the **experience of making** the work, creation
- Ask about the **experience of going 'public'** and showing the work to others/peers (ask this after crit)
- Ask about **artistic decisions, creativity, and influences** on the work/artist (from class, elsewhere, world of contemporary art, cultural)
- Ask about **technical skills**...what was learned, what needs more work, areas of growth/strength/weakness, areas that may need re-teaching or clarification
- Ask about **craftsmanship and work ethic**: time spent, evidence of hard work/process/refinement
- Ask about **overall success** and where student feels this work may fit into art portfolio (links to previous work, the beginning of a series of new work, where to go from here)
- About the **specific criteria being marked** – how the student feels he/she met these and why

ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING:

Formative, detailed feedback, in-process, not marked, opportunity to receive (immediate) feedback and direction for how to improve, to determine student progress during a unit (often more than once) and be able to make changes/learn more or correct mistakes prior to the end

ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING:

Summative, evaluative, marked, public, done at the end to evaluate final work, to determine if learning expectations/objectives have been met (based on initial criteria set), affects students' future, sign of 'achievement' (sometimes mastery)

ASSESSMENT AS LEARNING:

Constructive, self and peer assessment, uses metacognition (reflecting on own thinking/actions), students becoming responsible for own learning and where to go next, the completion/participation of these can be marked, to use a form of assessment in order to learn about one's own progress and determine areas of success/that need improvement

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

When in your own teaching or learning experiences have you experienced each of these?

What types of assessments have been most/least helpful to you personally as a student?

What did you learn or how would you make it better/different?

How can you incorporate each of these into your unit plans for 302? (think about criteria, learning objectives)

LEARNING ALONG THE WAY:

SOME WAYS TO CHART STEPS AND PROCESS IN ART

These can act as formative assessments and can help in final summative assessments as documentation of learning and time spent – and how formative assessments were addressed, what feedback was applied.

- Sketchbooks
- Visual journals
- Daily process pages
- Preview/review of each day's plan and accomplishments – a charting of one's progress over time
- Daily/weekly/term self reflections, artist statements, letters to oneself on progress to date
- Checklists
- Portfolio with regular self reflections
- Students respond to teacher feedback (comment card, in journal, letter to teacher)
- Photograph/video stages of work (before, during, after)
- Visual diary, vlog, blog, Tumblr pages – require new entry/post/page a day/week
- Monday check-ins – everyone's art in whatever stage goes up on wall or set on tables for crit
- Friday 'the week in review' – students present what they accomplished this week, record in journal
- Set deadlines with reachable steps along the way to chart milestones – include visuals to document milestones, growth moments, changes in the work
- Entrance/exit slips devoted to this