

Starting the Lesson

Introduce the VTS: it allows students to examine art, to think, to contribute observations and ideas, to listen, and to build understandings together. Ask students to recall these aspects of the process often.

Call students' attention to the first image. Always give students a moment to look in silence before you invite them to speak.

Asking the Questions

After they have examined the image, ask the question, "**What's going on in this picture?**" Once students have learned this question, use variations.

Whenever students make a comment that involves an interpretation (a comment that goes beyond identification and literal description), respond first by paraphrasing, and then ask, "**What do you see that makes you say that?**"

In order to keep students searching for further observations, frequently ask them, "**What else can you we find?**"

Responding to Students' Comments

Listen carefully to students, making sure that you hear all of what they say and that you understand it accurately.

Point to what they mention in the slide. Be precise, even when it is a comment that has been repeated.

Use **encouraging** body language and facial expressions to nurture participation.

Paraphrase each comment. Change the wording, but not the meaning of what is said. In rephrasing, demonstrate the use of proper sentence construction and rich vocabulary to assist students with language.

Accept each comment neutrally. Remember that this process emphasizes a useful pattern of thinking, not right answers. Students are learning to make detailed observations, sorting out and applying what they know. Articulating their thoughts leads to growth even when they make mistakes.

Link answers that relate, even when there are disagreements. Show how the students' thinking evolves, how some observations and ideas stimulate others, how opinions change and build.

Concluding the Classes

Thank students for their participation. Tell them what you particularly enjoyed. Encourage them to think of viewing art as an ongoing, open-ended process. Avoid summaries; linking throughout is enough to show how conversations build. Preview the slides to be discussed in the next lesson.

Source: www.vue.org/what_basicVTSataglance.html

VTS is based on the work of cognitive psychologist Abigail Housen and veteran museum educator Philip Yenawine. Housen has been investigating the nature of aesthetic development and its role in education for over twenty years. As part of her doctoral work at the Harvard Graduate School of Education in the late 1970's, she developed a measure and method for assessing aesthetic development. In 1983, she published her doctoral thesis "The Eye of the Beholder: Measuring Aesthetic Development," which includes her well-documented stage theory. Yenawine has directed education programs at many museums, including The Metropolitan Museum of Art and The Museum of Modern Art in New York City, and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago.

Beginning their work together in 1988, Housen and Yenawine focused on studying the effects of specific treatments (such as VTS) on aesthetic development, and the relation of aesthetic thinking to cognition in general, using Housen's method and theory as the basis of further experimentation. Also influential in the development of VTS is the work of psychologists and educational theorists Rudolf Arnheim (in whose honor the curriculum is named), Jerome Bruner and Lev Vygotsky. Vygotsky's research concerning the relationship of language to thought, and his findings concerning growth that occurs from interaction with others are particularly influential.

Field-tested since 1991 in the United States, Russia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, VTS is specifically designed to address the concerns and abilities of beginning viewers. It is easy for teachers to learn, inexpensive, and efficiently fits into school schedules. VTS creates partnerships between local schools and art museums, integrating museum visits into classroom studies.

Source: www.vue.org/what_overview.html