

VTS *Visual Thinking Strategies*

Basic VTS at a Glance

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Starting the Lesson (Getting Ready)

At the start of the first class, introduce VTS: it allows students to examine art, think, contribute observations and ideas, listen, and build understandings together.

Project the first image. Always give students a moment to look in silence before inviting them to speak.

Asking Questions

After they have examined the image, ask the question, *What's going on in this picture?*

Whenever students make an inference (comments drawing conclusions based on observations), respond first by paraphrasing, and then ask, *What do you see that makes you say that?*

In order to keep students searching for more observations, frequently ask, *What more can you 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 observe in the image, pinpointing precisely, even if the observations are not new. 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 proper sentence structure and vocabulary to assist students with language development.

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, including both agreements and disagreements. Show how the students' thinking evolves, how some observations and ideas stimulate others, how opinions change and build.

Concluding the Lesson

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.



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