

# Specific Considerations for Teachers of Visual Arts

## About this Resource

Danielson’s 2013 *Framework for Teaching (FfT)* provides teachers and school leaders with a common language to describe and discuss effective teaching in order to achieve continuous growth in teacher practice and student learning. The *FfT* was created as an overarching framework that describes the commonalities in every classroom—those aspects of teaching that are common across grades, disciplines, and students’ backgrounds. Thus, the *FfT* is appropriate for use with and by teachers of the arts. For the 2014-15 school year, teachers are evaluated on only eight components in the Danielson 2013 *Framework for Teaching*. The remaining components (those shaded in the following pages) of the Danielson 2013 *Framework for Teaching* may be used for non-evaluative (i.e., developmental) purposes only.

Many school leaders and teachers have requested additional support in using the *FfT* in classrooms in which student characteristics, subject content, or program models may differ significantly from other courses or subjects. In response, this document offers specific considerations<sup>1</sup> for school leaders and teachers through component-aligned questions. These questions may be discussed when providing feedback, engaging in pre- and post-observations, and planning next steps; they are not to be used for evaluating teacher practice. In addition, these questions can be used by teachers voluntarily as a resource to guide their thinking as they plan and reflect on their instructional practice in how they are meeting the needs of their students. While these questions may be useful for informing teachers’ usual planning, preparation, and professional learning processes, teachers may not be required to provide written answers to these questions as an additional professional assignment.

This document is not a separate rubric for teachers of the Arts, nor is it to be used as a checklist in classroom observations. Each *FfT* component’s “Rationale,” “Performance Levels,” “Critical Attributes,” and many of the “Possible Examples” are relevant to teachers of the Arts and should be used by school leaders when considering evidence of each component. This document only seeks to present additional context to consider, keeping in mind that not every question will be applicable depending upon the students’ need and context. Those

*“The Specific Considerations for Teachers of Visual Arts defines and aligns the 4 Domains of the FfTg as they relate to my visual arts teaching practice. The document’s design, in the form of questions, guides me in both planning and reflecting upon my lessons and their outcomes. In addition, it is a valuable document that can be referenced by teachers and school leaders to promote clarity and understanding in discussions relating to the workings of the visual arts classroom.*

*–NYC Visual Arts Teacher*

<sup>1</sup> New York State’s Education Law 3012-c requires that lead evaluators have appropriate guidance regarding specific considerations in evaluating teachers of English Language Learners and students with disabilities. While not required for teachers of the arts, this document was inspired by the Specific Considerations of Teachers of English Language Learners and the Specific Considerations of Students with Disabilities and follows a similar design.

components for which it was agreed that there were no significant special considerations for visual arts teachers (4a: Reflecting on Teaching and 4f: Showing Professionalism) are not included in this document.

Embedded in the questions are good instructional practices for students; this document is not an exhaustive guide of those good instructional practices.

The Office of The Arts contributed significantly to the creation of this document, and these questions align to the *Benchmarks for Arts Learning* as described in *The Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts: Dance, Music, Theater, and Visual Arts*. These specific considerations align with the work of the Office of the Arts to support students by helping to create rigorous learning environments that focus on academic and artistic achievement.

*“The Specific Considerations document...puts arts teachers into the ongoing dialogue with their colleagues and administrators. It [gives] them a common language to share in the ongoing school-based discussions about goals and assessment in a clear and widely understandable manner.”*

*–NYC Visual Arts Teacher*

## Domain 1: Planning & Preparation

### 1a: Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy

- How do you align lessons with appropriate learning standards in the NYC *Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Visual Arts, PreK-12*?
- In what ways do your plans demonstrate knowledge of museum collections and current events related to the visual arts?

### 1b: Demonstrating Knowledge of Students

- How do you plan to informally and formally assess or identify:
  - students' ability to handle materials such as paint brushes, pencils, and clay?
  - students' baseline skills in art media and understanding of art concepts?
  - students' past art making experiences and encounters with art in museums?
  - visual art traditions specific to a student's culture?

### 1c: Setting Instructional Outcomes

- Over the course of a year, how do you make sure that learning outcomes include objectives that address the Five Strands of Arts Learning, as laid out in the NYC *Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Visual Arts, PreK-12*?
- What are examples of planned instructional outcomes that cover topics such as:
  - analysis of masterworks and their own artwork that includes correct use of vocabulary associated with the art medium?
  - deep investigation of, and experimentation with, art materials?
  - completion of an original work of art such as a painting, drawing, or collage?
  - understanding of art concepts as related to the elements of art and the principles of design?
  - making connections between art appreciation and students' own art making?

### 1d: Demonstrating Knowledge of Resources

- How does your planning of learning activities make use of resources such as:
  - museum websites and sites like Art 21, MTA Arts for Transit, and Smarthistory?
  - local public museums, galleries, park statuary, and local buildings of architectural interest?
  - local artists, book illustrators, graphic designers, and museum educators?
  - a range of text materials to support art making and art appreciation?

### 1e: Designing Coherent Instruction

- How are *Blueprint*-based lessons designed for sequential instruction in art skills, development of concepts, and experiences in discussing works of art?
- How do you incorporate learning activities in your lesson that use resources such as:
  - live and video demonstrations of art making?
  - museum and gallery visits?
  - texts (e.g., transcripts of artist interviews, excerpts from artists' journals, art reviews, artists' biographies)?
  - art reproductions (digital or printed)?
  - artists' visits to schools or class visits to artists' studios?

### 1f: Designing Student Assessments

- Over the school year, how do you plan for formative and summative assessments based on the *Blueprint's* benchmarks, medium-specific performance indicators, and the Five Strands?
- How do you plan assessments that include evaluation of:
  - art making that demonstrates understanding of technique?
  - art making that shows evidence of imaginative qualities?
  - discussion and writing about works of art, including their own?

- use of visual arts vocabulary in speaking and writing?
- degree of experimentation with and exploration of art materials?
- ability to express ideas creatively in an art medium?

## Domain 2: The Classroom Environment

### 2a: Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport

- How do you support students in respectfully critiquing each other's original work?
- In what ways do you respect and encourage all students in art making and discussions?
- How do you ensure that masterworks used in lessons represent a wide variety of cultures?
- How do you support students in taking risks in art making such as experimenting with new media and new techniques?

### 2b: Establishing a Culture for Learning

- How do you promote student planning in the art making process (e.g., the use of sketches)?
- How do you give students opportunities to write reflections about their art making and encounters with masterworks?
- How is student artwork displayed in the art room, the school and, when possible, in the community?

### 2c: Managing Classroom Procedures

- What routines are in place to ensure that students play key roles in the set-up and clean-up of work spaces?
- What routines are in place for students to distribute, collect and care for art supplies?
- What roles do students have in the design of classroom, school or, where possible, community art displays?

### 2d: Managing Student Behavior

- What do you do to ensure that students work as artists and are attentive to their own work?
- How do you support students' respectful behavior towards others' opinions, artwork, and art making spaces?
- What standards of conduct have you established so students use the tools of the medium correctly and safely?

### 2e: Organizing Physical Space

- What spaces do you provide for demonstrations and for storage of materials?
- Where in the art room have you devoted space to displaying examples of student work (both finished work and works in progress)?

## Domain 3: Instruction

### 3a: Communicating with Students

- What guides you in explaining art making, art concepts, and art history both clearly and accurately to your students?
- How do you introduce the lesson within the larger context of the medium-based learning?
- What are your guidelines for incorporating appropriate art vocabulary when you introduce the lesson?
- How do you ensure that demonstrations of art techniques, such as printmaking, are clear and visible for all students?

### 3b: Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques

- In what ways do you provide opportunities for students in various groupings to engage in art-based questioning and discussions?
- In discussions of masterworks and student artwork, what are some ways in which you use various levels of questioning to promote students' critical thinking skills?
- How do you ensure that students take leadership roles in discussions of masterworks and in peer-to-peer critiques?

### 3c: Engaging Students in Learning

- How do you ensure that art technique instruction builds upon students' prior knowledge and skills in the medium?
- How do you support students' critical thinking about their art making decisions and processes?
- How is critical thinking encouraged in students' discussions of masterworks?
- How do you ensure that the lesson is well-paced, with a mix of art demonstrations, verbal instructions, student art making, and discussions?
- In what ways are fine art resources available for students to conduct research?
- How do you use groupings that are appropriate to the activity, such as:
  - whole class for demonstrating an art technique?
  - small groups and partners for shared discussions of masterworks, peer shares, or communal art making activities?
  - solo for creating individual artwork or doing individual research?
- What do you do to ensure that the lesson includes time for closure and reflection?

### 3d: Using Assessment in Instruction

- How do you engage students in critiques that encourage further experimentation with an art medium?
- How do you ensure that students critique one another's work and respond using the vocabulary of the medium and the elements of art and the principles of design?
- How do you ensure that students use self-assessment rubrics that reflect learning objectives for skill development (such as those related to color mixing, proportion, and perspective)?

### 3e: Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness

- In what ways do you incorporate students' out-of-classroom art experiences into the lesson?
- When students struggle with mastering a technique, how do you provide several strategies the students can try until they are able to successfully demonstrate use of that technique in their work?

## Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities

### 4b: Maintaining Accurate Records

- What strategies do you use to maintain accurate records of student progress in various art media (e.g., checklists, photos, student portfolios or folders, videos, digital storage of students' artwork)?

### 4c: Communicating with Families

- In what ways do you encourage students to share their artwork with their families and to share information about resources available for families (e.g., Family Day at an art museum)?
- In what ways do you engage families with class and school-wide art exhibits?
- How do you encourage families to engage in art learning opportunities (e.g., inviting families to accompany students on art-related field trips)?

### 4d: Participating in the Professional Community

- In what ways do you engage in the arts education professional community by, for example:
  - attending art-related NYCDOE professional development?
  - attending educator evenings offered by museums?
  - attending city, state, and national conferences and conventions (e.g., NYCATA, NYSATA, NAEA)?
- In what ways do you collaborate with school colleagues, including other teachers of the arts and teachers of other disciplines, to arrive at common criteria for student success in visual arts and other content areas?

### 4e: Growing and Developing Professionally

- What are some ways in which you participate in ongoing school-based and off-site professional development opportunities during the school day?
- In what ways do you to enhance your professional practice by, for example,
  - attending gallery and museum exhibitions, artists' lectures, and performance art experiences?
  - participating in teacher events and training provided by art museums?