

THINK LIKE AN ARTIST

Lessons for Experiencing
the Artistic Creative Process

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Dedication
To Willy, for his caring support and understanding
To Jennifer and Natalie, for their inspiration and creative talents

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Table of Contents

List of Downloadable Pages	v
Acknowledgments	vii
Preface	ix
Introduction	xi
About This Book.....	xi
Artistic Ways of Knowing Grid.....	xiv
Chapter One: Artistic Ways of Knowing	1
Artistic Ways of Knowing.....	1
Assessment: Reflection, Critique, Evaluation.....	4
Identifying Students Talented in the Arts.....	4
Arts Talent Criteria.....	5
Putting It Together.....	5
Artistic Ways of Knowing: Reflections (downloadable page).....	7
Artistic Ways of Knowing (downloadable poster).....	8
Chapter Two: Visual Arts	11
Potential Talent Criteria in the Visual Arts.....	12
Interpretive Visual Arts Elements.....	13
Lessons:	
Observer and Artist: Visual Description and Visualization.....	14
My Favorite Room.....	16
Symmetrical Colors.....	19
Personal Portraits: Scale, Ratio, and Art.....	22
Escheresque Tessellations.....	25
News Documentary Sculpture: Current Events.....	29
A Collage with Attitude: Drawing on Current or Historical Events.....	32
In the Palm of My Hand: Blind Contour Drawing.....	35
An Apple Three Ways.....	38
Picasso, <i>Guernica</i> , and Me.....	40
Artist’s Journal of a Day.....	46
Simply the Basics: Minimalism in the Visual Arts.....	49
Haiku Visions.....	52
Stylish Considerations: Musical and Artistic Styles.....	56
Time Out for Critique: Peer Artwork Evaluation.....	59
Peer Portfolio Review.....	61
Chapter Three: Music	65
Potential Talent Criteria in Music.....	66
Interpretive Music Elements.....	67
Lessons:	
Let’s Create a Song Together!.....	68
Environmental Soundscape.....	71
Sound Stories.....	73
Sound Paintings.....	75
A Rhythm Rondo.....	77
Dad’s Old Fashioned Root Beer: Rondos Extended.....	80
Improv Plus.....	84
Musician’s Journal of a Day.....	86
Simple and Sweet, Repeat: Minimalism in Music.....	88

Haiku Sound Impressions.....	90
Sound Waves, Overtones, and Harmonics	93
Exploring 12 Tones	100
Let's Do Dodecaphonic!.....	105
Twelve-Tone Composition: Putting It All Together	112
Peer Music Lesson	117
Peer Music Rehearsal and Critique	120
Chapter Four: Dance/Movement	123
Potential Talent Criteria in Dance/Movement	124
Interpretive Dance/Movement Elements	125
Lessons:	
Dance Factory: Isolations and Repetitive Movements.....	126
Animal Journeys.....	129
Forces of Nature: The Journey of Water	132
Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves: Canon Extended, Choreographic Form.....	136
Nutcracker Exploration	139
<i>Rodeo</i> : A Western Ballet.....	142
It Takes Two: Partners in Movement.....	145
My Moving World.....	149
Dancer's Journal of a Day	151
Keep It to a Minimum: Minimalism in Dance	154
Haiku Reflections through Movement	157
Dance Me a Story	162
Dividing the Beat	166
Metric Pulse and Poetic Meter	172
Peer Choreography Lesson.....	178
Peer Dance Rehearsal and Critique	181
Chapter Five: Theater/Drama	185
Potential Talent Criteria in Theater/Drama.....	186
Interpretive Theater/Drama Elements.....	187
Lessons:	
It's in the Bag: The Sense of Touch.....	189
Improv Zaps: Creative Mini-Lessons.....	192
Name Games	196
I Spy with My Metaperceptive Eye.....	199
Mirrors and Shadows: Developing Characters through Body Language.....	204
Vocal Play and Characterization.....	208
Silent Movies.....	212
Actor's Journal of a Day	215
Let's Not Get Physical: Minimalism in Theater.....	218
Haiku Expressions.....	220
Portraits Come to Life.....	225
Creative Storytelling	229
Exploring History through Role Play.....	232
Peer Dialogue Rehearsal	235
Peer Acting Rehearsal and Critique	238
Appendix: Resources	243
References	254
About the Author	257

List of Downloadable Pages

Artistic Ways of Knowing: Reflections	7
Artistic Ways of Knowing poster	8
Visual Arts	
Interpretive Visual Arts Elements.....	13
My Favorite Room	18
Pablo Picasso: Master of a Variety of Styles	42
Haiku Worksheet	55
Visual Arts Portfolio Assessment Criteria	63
Music	
Interpretive Music Elements	67
Dad’s Old Fashioned Root Beer.....	83
Sound Wave Basics	96
Overtone Series: Musical Relationships.....	97
Chromatic Scale on the Keyboard.....	103
Chromatic Scale Graph	104
Let’s Do Dodecaphonic	108
Grey musical score	115
Grand Staff and Keyboard.....	116
Musical Performance Assessment Criteria.....	119
Dance/Movement	
Interpretive Dance/Movement Elements.....	125
Haiku Reflections: Haiku from the Masters	160
Dance Me a Story	165
Note Value Pyramid.....	169
Mixing It Up!.....	170
Mixing It Up! – Your Turn	171
The Basics of Meter	176
Examples of Poetic Meter	177
Dance/Movement Performance Assessment Criteria	180
Theater/Drama	
Interpretive Theater/Drama Elements	187
Shuffle Cards	195
Character Analysis.....	202
Character Cards	207
Vocal Qualities and Characters.....	211
Haiku through the Ages.....	223
Contemporary Haiku Written by Children	224
Theater/Drama Performance Assessment Criteria	240



August Renoir, *Girl with the Watering Can*, 1876, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC

Acknowledgments

The arts are neglected because they are based on perception, and perception is disdained because it is not assumed to involve thought.

- Rudolf Arnheim

It is impossible to regard as cognitive any mental activity that is not itself rooted in sensory forms of life.... Any conception of intelligence that omits the ordering of qualities through direct experience is neglecting a central feature of intellectual functioning.

- Elliot Eisner

I have been working across the fields of music, the arts, and gifted education for decades. Throughout that time, I have faced the challenge of “translating” how artists think and perceive during the creative process to those in academic fields. I acknowledge this challenge as a central role in my desire to explain Artistic Ways of Knowing to those beyond the arts.

After many years on the proverbial soapbox at gifted conferences demanding the recognition of the arts in identification procedures, I took on the task myself. By chance, I brought the idea to Dr. Tom Kemnitz at the Royal Fireworks Press booth, who shares my views on the importance of the arts and immediately agreed to publish my work, resulting in *Arts Talent ID: A Framework for the Identification of Students Talented in the Arts*. I so appreciate his interest and support in publishing my ideas. The publication of *Artistic Ways of Knowing: How to Think Like an Artist* soon followed, explaining how perceptual awareness is the starting point of artistic cognition in the creative process. *Think Like an Artist: Lessons for Experiencing the Artistic Creative Process* is the culmination of this trilogy of books about Artistic Ways of Knowing. It provides a variety of lessons that are designed to enable children to have enriching experiences in the arts—and to help teachers recognize students who show potential talent. This would never have been possible without the support of Royal Fireworks Press. I am continually impressed with the quality of work and diligent details of the publication process. My personal thanks to Kerri Ann Ruhl for her vision of each page and to Jennifer Ault for critically overseeing the details to fine-tune the publication.

I have included in this book many valuable resources to expand ideas across the arts. My thanks to Gail Herman and Sally Stephenson for adding several lessons to the volume. The development of the curriculum took several years of painstaking research and writing in my basement office. My husband understands my ideas well, sharing a life in music with me. He was there continuously to provide support as my sounding board as I worked through ideas with him. His photographs help to enhance some of the pages of this book. Finally, a hug to my daughter Jennifer and my granddaughter Natalie, whose vibrant talents entice and inspire me to bring my ideas to life.



The Haroutounian Piano Studio

The concept of Artistic Ways of Knowing began at the corner of a piano keyboard. During several decades of teaching in my private and college studios, I had the opportunity to observe students as they worked through the creative/interpretive process on the piano. They would try out different musical ideas to gain technical comfort as they reflected on ways to use expression to fit their interpretive intent. There was a palpable intensity as they internally manipulated perceptions and emotions into a uniquely personal musical statement. As we shared ideas together in lessons, we “knew” when this worked. No words were necessary—we communicated through the language of music.

Thus began my quest to learn more about the cognitive/perceptive process of young, talented musicians and how we might be able to identify this spark of potential from the start. I soon ventured beyond my musical comfort zone, seeking doctoral studies in gifted education to understand more about the cognitive academic thinking process that parallels the artistic creative process. My book *Kindling the Spark: Recognizing and Developing Musical Talent* (2002) encapsulated what I learned from this venture, offering an introduction to the idea of Artistic Ways of Knowing.

I ultimately broadened my quest to include all of the arts, and as I researched the different arts domains, I learned that they all share a common creative/interpretive process. At the heart of this process is the perceptual/cognitive inner functioning of an artist making interpretive decisions. I developed the term *metaperception* to describe this internal functioning, stressing the vital role of the senses that lie at the heart of cognition in the arts. Metaperception is the artistic parallel to metacognition. Only by experiencing the arts personally can one realize how perception plays a central role in cognition.

The only way to develop the skill of metaperception—in fact, the only way to understand how to think like an artist—is to experience working in the arts. Being an audience member to a live drama production is one thing; being on stage as an actor is another. However, the ability to “know” as an artist is not limited to the art studio, dance class, practice room, or stage. Learning to realize the art in a painting, a musical score, a dance, or a theatrical production requires the ability to think like an artist. In other words, doing art can teach you to appreciate art.

The following set of texts use Artistic Ways of Knowing as a basic framework to understand how to think like an artist, how to bring Artistic Ways of Knowing to students who may only have experienced the arts superficially, and how to identify students who show potential talent in the arts based on the artistic process.

- *Artistic Ways of Knowing: How to Think Like an Artist* examines the perceptual and cognitive processes inherent in learning and interpreting in the arts in a way that is easily understandable to anyone. Readers explore each element of artistic thinking. Sparkler Experiences provide hands-on opportunities to realize how to think and perceive in each art form: visual arts, music, dance/movement, and theater/drama. The goal of the book is to provide readers with a greater understanding of how artists think and to encourage teachers and students to experience artistic “knowing” in every classroom.
- *Think Like an Artist: Lessons for Experiencing the Artistic Creative Process* applies the artistic process to Sparkler Lessons that include objectives, step-by-step activities, guiding questions, and talent spark indicators. The lessons are within each arts area and across the arts and include some integrated arts/academic lessons. The goal of the book is to bring creative arts experiences to students to expand their learning in both depth and

breadth. It can also help teachers identify students who show potential talent through more differentiated arts experiences. In addition, it links the curriculum to the identification process found in *Arts Talent ID: A Framework for the Identification of Students Talented in the Arts*.

- *Arts Talent ID: A Framework for the Identification of Students Talented in the Arts* offers specialists in the fields of gifted education and arts education an effective and pragmatic way to identify students who display potential talent in the arts (visual arts, music, dance/movement, theater/drama). The identification process reflects talent criteria specific to each domain and provides a framework that is pertinent to arts specialists and accessible to gifted specialists. The text includes an overview of recommended arts identification procedures and criteria for recognizing arts-specific talent characteristics. It includes nomination forms, observation rating scales, and performance assessment forms using talent criteria based on Artistic Ways of Knowing.

As you work through this book, it may be helpful to review the first book in the series to understand fully each component in the artistic creative process. The curriculum provides opportunities to observe potential talent in the arts through activities that reach outside the box for students who seek artistic challenges.

*Work in the arts is not only a way of creating performances and products;
it is a way of creating our lives by expanding our consciousness,
shaping our dispositions, satisfying our quest for meaning,
establishing contact with others, and sharing a culture.*

- Elliot Eisner

The band room seems oddly out of sync today. Instead of a full group of students playing under the baton of their teacher, they are working in pairs engaged in peer lessons—performing and listening while guiding each other with astute constructive criticism.

What is happening in the dance studio? Students are realizing poetic meter and metric pulse through eurhythmics linked with poetry. The students move around the room, interpreting iambic pentameter through movement, dipping on the accented syllables.

Students in the drama room are improvising a day in colonial times, with students spontaneously taking on the roles of different workers in the town. They develop a storyline through peer interaction, interpreting what they know about colonial communities.

Students in another class, inspired by a recent art museum visit, are presenting monologues that bring portraits to life. The students have analyzed the portraits for interpretive art elements and have developed a character analysis and monologue from their studies.

The gifted education class is taking the challenge of examining the relationship between mathematics and the 12 tones of the chromatic scale and creating their own dodecaphonic compositions.

These glimpses are a sampling of Sparkler Lessons found in this book. Students are extending possibilities within arts-specific classes and working across the arts or combining the arts with academic topics, with an emphasis on using the artistic process in these lessons.

The common threads through all these lessons are the opportunities for students to “do” art, to perform as artists, to learn to think like artists, and to display unusual artistic talent and giftedness. These are important opportunities for students to have. They should be part of each child’s school experience. It is to provide precisely these opportunities that this curriculum has been designed.

About This Book

Think Like an Artist: Lessons for Experiencing the Artistic Creative Process offers a well-organized set of lessons for each of the four arts domains: visual arts, music, dance/movement, and theater/drama. It includes lessons within each arts area, lessons across the arts, and lessons integrating the arts and academics. The goal of the book is to offer substantive lessons that emphasize opportunities for students to engage in the arts. These lessons reach beyond the specific performance skills that are basic to arts classes. Some of them include challenging tasks that can identify students who show potential artistic talent. They offer creative alternatives that may appeal to academic classroom teachers, and they provide specialists in the arts with opportunities for creative expansion in their arts-specific classes.

The wonderful thing about the arts is their flexibility in how they can fit into different grade levels. You may find that lessons that work with third graders may also work with eighth graders and shift content accordingly. Each lesson has a symbol at the top of the first page to indicate the difficulty level of the lesson on a scale of 1-3, with 1 indicating easier lessons and 3 indicating challenging ones. The lessons include differentiated options, which may increase the level of challenge in the lesson beyond that which is indicated. These optional extensions are perfect for students who

wish to go beyond what they have experienced in class—a good indicator of a student who may be talented in the arts.

Every Sparkler Lesson focuses on one or more components of the Artistic Ways of Knowing; these are listed at the top of the lesson. The opening box for each lesson includes objectives, materials, location, and interpretive elements used in the lesson. If the lesson will take more than one class period, that is also listed in this box. Below the box, the sequence of activities is lettered, with detailed directions. Each lesson offers a set of questions that can guide the activities, Sparklers to assist teachers in observing potential talent in arts areas, an explanation of how the Artistic Ways of Knowing are used in the lesson, and optional extensions. Some lessons also include resources and additional information related to the lesson content. The lessons in this volume are only a starting point, however. Teachers are encouraged to create their own Sparkler Lessons that are inspired by artistic learning.

Many of the lessons include pages that are to be projected for the students to see or copied to be distributed to the students as handouts or worksheets. These pages are available as downloadable PDFs from the Royal Fireworks Press website. They are labeled as “provided” in the list of materials at the top of each lesson, and the pages are marked with the following symbol to indicate that they are downloadable:



The Artistic Ways of Knowing Curriculum Grid on pages xiv-xv provides a useful visual reference that shows how each lesson in this book fits into the different components of Artistic Ways of Knowing. It also includes Sparkler Experiences from the book *Artistic Ways of Knowing: How to Think Like an Artist* to expand curricular options for the students. Those lessons are designated with “AWK” after the lesson name.

There are several lessons within this book that can work together as a unit or that can be used in a cross-curricular manner. Readers may notice that there is a lesson in each of the four arts domains about minimalism, and there is a lesson in each arts domain about Haiku. Teachers can combine forces to introduce students to these subjects and explore them in depth by working through the lessons either simultaneously or consecutively.

There is also a lesson called “Journal of a Day” in each arts domain. Although the lessons vary in nature and scope, they all have in common the idea of recording what one observes and finds interesting as a possible source for inspiration later. Many of the famous artists throughout history kept journals that blended words with art, and with today’s recording technology, that can be expanded to include audio and visual clips as well. Teachers who wish to impress upon students the value in journaling (in any format) can work together to teach these lessons one after another so that students can experience the range of possibilities available to them to capture ideas that may inspire them to greater arts achievements in the future.

Some of the lessons within an arts domain also lend themselves well to unit work. For example, there are three lessons in Chapter 3 that combine music with mathematics: “Exploring 12 Tones,” “Let’s Do Dodecaphonic!” and “Twelve-Tone Composition: Putting It All Together.” Music teachers and math teachers could team-teach these lessons, allowing students to realize the important connections between these two subjects. Teachers are encouraged to reach beyond each lesson to find connections with other lessons and with academic areas to expand the reach of the arts within the students’ lives.



Photo by William Haroutounian



Artistic Ways of Knowing Curriculum Grid

VISUAL ARTS	MUSIC	DANCE/ MOVEMENT	THEATER/DRAMA
<i>Perceptual Awareness and Discrimination</i>	<i>Perceptual Awareness and Discrimination</i>	<i>Perceptual Awareness and Discrimination</i>	<i>Perceptual Awareness and Discrimination</i>
Observer and Artist: Visual Description and Visualization	Environmental Soundscape	Dance Factory: Isolations and Repetitive Movements	It's in the Bag: The Sense of Touch
My Favorite Room	A Rhythm Rondo	Forces of Nature: The Journey of Water	Name Games
In the Palm of My Hand: Blind Contour Drawing	Musician's Journal of a Day	Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves: Canon Extended, Choreographic Form	I Spy with My Metaperceptive Eye
Artist's Journal of a Day	Exploring 12 Tones	Dancer's Journal of a Day	Actor's Journal of a Day
What Do You See? (AWK)	Musical Microscope (AWK)	Moving through Space (AWK)	Keen Observer (AWK)
<i>Metaperception and Creative Interpretation</i>	<i>Metaperception and Creative Interpretation</i>	<i>Metaperception and Creative Interpretation</i>	<i>Metaperception and Creative Interpretation</i>
Symmetrical Colors	Let's Create a Song Together!	Animal Journeys	Improv Zaps: Creative Mini-Lessons
Escheresque Tessellations	Sound Stories	Nutcracker Exploration	Mirrors and Shadows: Developing Characters through Body Language
News Documentary Sculpture: Current Events	Sound Paintings	<i>Rodeo: A Western Ballet</i>	Vocal Play and Characterization
A Collage with Attitude: Drawing on Current or Historical Events	Improv Plus	Keep It to a Minimum: Minimalism in Dance	Silent Movies
An Apple Three Ways	Simple and Sweet, Repeat: Minimalism in Music	Dance Me a Story	Let's Not Get Physical: Minimalism in Theater
Simply the Basics: Minimalism in the Visual Arts	Sound Waves, Overtones, and Harmonics	Dividing the Beat	Creative Storytelling
Stylish Considerations: Musical and Artistic Styles	Let's Do Dodecaphonic!	Metric Pulse and Poetic Meter	Exploring History through Role Play
The Art in the Art (AWK)	Exploring the Silence (AWK)	Kinetic Responses to Art (AWK)	"Scripted" Improvisation (AWK)
Unique Still Life (AWK)	I Am a Composer (AWK)	Dance in a Box (AWK)	Moving Mood Pictures (AWK)

Continued on the next page



Artistic Ways of Knowing Curriculum Grid, cont.

VISUAL ARTS	MUSIC	DANCE/ MOVEMENT	THEATER/DRAMA
<i>Behavior and Performance/Product</i>	<i>Behavior and Performance/Product</i>	<i>Behavior and Performance/Product</i>	<i>Behavior and Performance/Product</i>
Personal Portraits: Scale, Ratio, and Art	Dad's Old Fashioned Root Beer: Rondos Extended	It Takes Two: Partners in Movement	Haiku Expressions
Picasso, <i>Guernica</i> , and Me	Haiku Sound Impressions	My Moving World	Portraits Come to Life
Haiku Visions	Twelve-Tone Composition: Putting It All Together	Haiku Reflections through Movement	
Music, Color, and Mood (AWK)	Stomp Our Way (AWK)	Exploring Choreography (AWK)	Grab Bag Skit (AWK)
<i>Commitment and Critique</i>	<i>Commitment and Critique</i>	<i>Commitment and Critique</i>	<i>Commitment and Critique</i>
Time Out for Critique: Peer Artwork Evaluation	Peer Music Lesson	Peer Choreography Lesson	Peer Dialogue Rehearsal
Peer Portfolio Review	Peer Music Rehearsal and Critique	Peer Dance Rehearsal and Critique	Peer Acting Rehearsal and Critique
<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> : Interpretations in Art (AWK)	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> : Interpretations in Music (AWK)	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> : Interpretations in Dance/Movement (AWK)	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> : Interpretations in Theater/Drama (AWK)



Willem de Kooning, *Asheville*, 1948, The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC

CHAPTER ONE

Artistic Ways of Knowing

A massive canvas stands on an easel in the middle of the studio, with light beaming down from the vaulted ceiling above. Vibrant colors, swirls of texture, intertwining lines and shapes are carefully examined by the artist. His surroundings show evidence of the artistic creative process in action. There is a scattering of simple drawings of shapes and color combinations overlapping so that visual glimpses connect to one another. Photographs of people and objects are in the mix, begging to be transformed into abstraction. And there is paint—lots and lots of paint—in coffee cups, glasses, and on palettes, with brushes of all widths easily within reach for the next inspired addition to the canvas.

Six feet away from the canvas, the artist stands and looks, a mottled coffee cup of paint in hand. There is no sound, no need to move. He simply looks and soaks in the developing artwork to decide what comes next. The silence is riveting as the artist makes his next decision from the perceptual and expressive impressions he is receiving from his art.

In the vignette above, we are vicariously witnessing the creative process of an artist at work. The internal functioning taking place in the rapt silence of the moment meshes cognitive understanding with perceptive acuity and expressive intent to develop the next interpretive decision in the creation of the artwork. The artist is Willem de Kooning. This glimpse of his unique creative process exemplifies the Artistic Ways of Knowing.

The concept of Artistic Ways of Knowing¹—how artists think and perceive—explains the cognitive and perceptual functioning inherent in each stage of the artistic process. The Artistic Ways of Knowing were developed from ideas about the artistic process of perception, interpretation, and performance/production discussed in the literature and research across the fields of the visual arts, music, dance, and theater. The following pages present each component of the artistic process, with an explanation of its development from the literature.

Artistic Ways of Knowing

Perceptual Awareness and Discrimination: To perceive and differentiate through the senses with acute awareness

Differentiate to a higher level of complexity in the perception of sounds, images, motions, and concentration

Metaperception: To manipulate perceptions and emotions internally while making interpretive decisions

Differentiate through tasks that require more subtle, abstract decision making, with multiple choices for interpretation

Creative Interpretation: To rework and refine interpretive decisions using the elements of perceptual discrimination and metaperception

Differentiate by expanding exploratory experiences, encouraging the reworking and refinement of interpretive ideas

Dynamic of Behavior and Performance/Product: To communicate a creative interpretation aesthetically through reaction to an art performance (music, dance, theater) or an artistic product (the visual arts)

Differentiate through student-guided rehearsals toward a performance, repeated performances, or the reworking of an artwork or a written product for further refinement

Critiquing: To evaluate oneself and others with artistic discrimination

Differentiate by fine-tuning discrimination through vocabulary, level of artistic work critiqued, and detailed communication of perceptions

Perceptual Awareness and Discrimination

Artistic knowing begins with fine-tuned sensory awareness. Elliot Eisner, preeminent scholar in curriculum design and artistic learning, describes the importance of a qualitative awareness of the world by developing “critical abilities to differentiate, distinguish, to recognize and to make distinctions between many qualities that constitute our world.”² Eisner’s term *connoisseurship* describes the highest point on a continuum of perceptual awareness and discrimination.³

This perceptual awareness lies at the heart of talent development in every arts discipline. In music, students develop detailed aural discrimination of rhythm patterns, melodic shapes, and tonal colors.⁴ In dance, students become increasingly aware of intricate movements of the body as they move through space.⁵ Young visual artists perceive the world with acuity, aware of dimensions of space, color, and texture that go unnoticed by those who simply look.⁶ Drama students gain skill through internalizing emotion and imagination, with sensitive interpersonal awareness of their interactions with fellow players.⁷

Metaperception

Perceptual discrimination is the entry point of artistic awareness. However, artistic knowing emanates from the molding of senses and emotion from this awareness through a unique perceptual/cognitive process. This process is described in different terms, depending on the perspective. The field of aesthetic education describes it as aesthetic knowing,⁸ or thinking with an aesthetic sense.⁹ In the arts it is described as qualitative intelligence,¹⁰ visual thinking,¹¹ qualitative responsiveness or “knowing within,”¹² and virtualization.¹³

The term *metaperception* can be used to describe the inner manipulation and monitoring of senses and emotions that take place through the artistic interpretive process.¹⁴ Metaperception is the artistic parallel to metacognition, a term used to describe mental monitoring in cognitive thinking and problem solving. The term is useful because it is understandable to both artists and educators.

You can note metaperceptive involvement at the simplest level—a young child literally plays with a nursery tune, spontaneously singing the song in a number of ways. At its most sophisticated, a professional musician practices a short passage for several hours, experimenting with melodic shape, balance, and tonal colors and touches to produce an expressive intent prior to a concert. A young child in dance pays attention to the movement of her arm to touch an imaginary star. A professional modern dancer extends her arm with attention to shape, space, and relaxed movement to interpret the feeling of hope to the audience. Each is working through metaperceptive involvement in interpretive decision making. The opening vignette of de Kooning peering at his developing canvas is an excellent example of metaperception.

Creative Interpretation

As a student works metaperceptively through an arts medium, the expressive reworking of ideas becomes an artistic interpretive process, resulting in a unique creative interpretation. Students in

the arts are adept at finding and solving problems within their art form.¹⁵ For example, a music student may repeat a phrase with different dynamic scopes to decide how to project a dramatic arrival point. A dancer determines the scope of movement to depict the flow of a gentle breeze. A young actor continually reworks a monologue to develop the characterization of someone learning of a death in the family.

A creative interpretation may be a spontaneous drama improvisation, a carefully polished musical performance, or an inventive textile artwork. It describes the *process* of communicating personal ideas through a particular arts medium to others; the result is a final performance or product that communicates a uniquely personalized statement. Renshaw describes creative interpretation in music as “the ability of each child to make the music his own, thereby putting his own distinctive stamp on a musical performance.”¹⁶

Creative interpretation is not confined to performance. Students who react to music, critique an art piece, or interpretively evaluate a peer performance or product also work through creative interpretation. Students who are limited in their ability to demonstrate talent in an art domain may exhibit outstanding talent in their aesthetic sensitivity to art.¹⁷

Creativity is an integral element in gifted identification,¹⁸ with talent development emphasizing the need to nurture invention of thought.¹⁹ The arts are a perfect way to blend the invention of thought with the perceptive/expressive manipulation of ideas. The more students rework and refine work through the arts, the more they realize the cyclical artistic-interpretive process.

Dynamic of Behavior and Performance/Product

Most of us have experienced shivers down our spine during an outstanding performance in music, dance, or drama. The musician, dancer, or actor communicates an interpretation to an audience through a performance. The audience experiences the performance, thus sharing in an interpretive process. The mutual aesthetic experience of audience and performer creates the dynamic of performance. Most of us have also experienced being drawn to a painting or sculpture with ever-evolving senses to find details and relate to them personally. This aesthetic dynamic between the artwork and the viewer also describes this phenomenological experience.

The performing arts literature describes this aesthetic as the phenomenon of formed and performed art,²⁰ concurrent process,²¹ conscious and unconscious expectation,²² and closure between the experiencer and the performance being experienced.²³

In drama, Courtney describes a cyclical process between the player and the audience: as the player becomes more aware of what the audience is perceiving, the audience more closely connects with the player’s interpretation.²⁴

Those who react aesthetically to a performance or artwork through a vivid critique are exhibiting astute artistic sensitivity; however, they may not be the outstanding performer in the orchestra or the lead actor or dancer on the stage. These aesthetic behaviors in reaction to art depict the talents of future critics or outstanding teachers, directors, or choreographers. Recognition and development of these hidden talents lie comfortably within gifted differentiation.

Critiquing

The artistic process requires self-assessment of one’s developing work in an arts medium, as well as the astute critique of artworks. This critique involves examination beyond performance through perception and reflection to add depth to the artistic process. The importance of understanding beyond “doing” or production is widely recommended across the arts literature.²⁵ Affording opportunities for students to reflect upon and critique their work fosters the development of artistic reasoning.²⁶

Assessment: Reflection, Critique, Evaluation

When you think like an artist, the natural cyclical process of perceiving, interpreting, understanding, and performing or producing art includes ongoing reflection, self- and shared critique, and a final self-evaluation of the artistic product or performance. This evaluation then serves as the starting point for the next level of artistic refinement in the work or performance. Almost all of the lessons in this book include critique opportunities, as well as ongoing formative peer assessment.

Thinking artistically outside the box, the term *assessment* usually refers to performance or product assessment. This book includes lessons in each arts area for which students peer-teach or peer-critique one another using criteria pertinent to each art form.

The *Artistic Ways of Knowing: Reflections* page (p. 7) offers an open template suitable for use with any of the Sparkler Lessons in this book. It provides spaces for reflections on the lesson and for writing a constructive self-critique, it links learning with the concepts of Artistic Ways of Knowing, and it includes a simple self-evaluation scale. It is available as a downloadable PDF so that teachers can print it and distribute it to students so that they can take an active role in the evaluation of their work.

By including an artistic perspective in students' assessment options, students have a role in bringing their unique ideas into their self-evaluations. Seeking creative differences for students through the arts allows them realize: "This is uniquely who I am."

Identifying Students Talented in the Arts

The Artistic Ways of Knowing curriculum offers an excellent way to observe students who may show potential talent in a specific arts domain. The Sparkler Lessons in this volume are formatted and organized to emphasize the use of Artistic Ways of Knowing.

Arts talent identification begins in the general or arts classroom by observing students engaged in arts activities. Arts talent can best be noticed when students are creatively interpreting and solving problems in the arts. When students work in small groups or individually, as they do in many of the lessons in this book, teachers can more easily observe evidence of inventive ideas, metaperceptive reasoning, and critiquing. Lesson guidelines and differentiated options will assist in highlighting students who show potential talent for observation.

The generalized arts talent criteria that follow were developed through an analysis of existing observation scales used in specialized arts schools and gifted/arts programs across the country. They are categorized by the different Artistic Ways of Knowing to emphasize the common artistic process used across the arts. The criterion of commitment is paired with critique as a general behavior that is part of gifted/talented identification and is an essential element in the arts.

You will notice that these criteria directly relate to what we observe when students are working in the arts. Each criterion reflects a step in the artistic process that requires sensory discrimination, creative interpretation, and the dynamic of performance or product. Those working in the arts will recognize these criteria as arts-specific and important to talent identification in the arts.

Arts Talent Criteria²⁷

The student:

Perceptual Awareness and Discrimination

1. Is keenly aware of sensory detail
2. Internalizes and recalls sensory detail
3. Senses arts-specific content/skills
4. Shows fine-tuned discrimination

Creative Interpretation

5. Experiments and improvises
6. Shows aesthetic sensitivity in performance, appreciation and critique
7. Exhibits metaperceptive involvement when revising ideas
8. Shows personal expression and intensity

Behavior and Performance

9. Communicates interpretive sensitivity in listening, observing, and evaluating
10. Exhibits natural ease in technical skills
11. Learns quickly and improves skill
12. Performs or produces artwork beyond age or grade level
13. Captures the attention of observers or listeners (“spark”)

Commitment and Critique

14. Works with perseverance and focused concentration
15. Strives to refine work, shows self-confidence, and sets high goals
16. Constructively critiques self and others

The next step in developing an effective way to observe and recognize talent in the arts requires integrating the arts-specific content that separates each art form from the others into these criteria while retaining the Artistic Ways of Knowing that are common across the arts. *Arts Talent ID: A Framework for the Identification of Students Talented in the Arts* carries assessment to the next level for formal identification. It includes Observation Rating Scales that provide the quantitative data necessary for admittance into gifted programs.

Putting It Together

The Artistic Ways of Knowing provide a basic framework for the lessons in this book. (There is a downloadable poster for classroom use available on page 8.) This book offers a variety of lessons that will lead students to substantive arts experiences and provides a way to identify students who show potential talent in the arts.

Transferring the ideas about artistic learning into criteria that can be used effectively to identify students who show potential in the arts may spur the gifted education community to recognize the need to include the arts in their identification process. The more we can ensure that students have opportunities to experience learning through the arts, the more we can nurture Artistic Ways of Knowing as an essential part of children’s education.



Visual Arts/Language Arts Sparkler Lesson

Artistic Focus: Metaperception,
Creative Interpretation, Dynamic of Product

Haiku Visions

Objective: To examine the techniques used in Japanese silkscreen and watercolor artwork and interpret them creatively to portray an original watercolor, which is then used as the basis for writing a Haiku

Materials: Examples of Japanese silkscreen and watercolor artwork; medium-sized or large-sized watercolor paper (11"x14" or 11"x17" or larger), watercolor paints, mixing plates, brushes, smaller paper for practicing, and a pencil for each student; *Haiku Worksheet* (provided); construction paper, colored pencils, oil pastels, and thin markers for each student; art projector

Location: Art room

Timeframe: Two class periods

Visual Arts

Elements: Visual perception, color/hue, value, saturation

Haiku is a form of Japanese poetry that has a structure of three lines of unrhymed verse, with lines one and three containing five syllables and line two containing seven syllables. Traditional Haiku typically uses colorful words that describe nature, the seasons, and contrasts.

In this lesson, students use watercolor techniques to create a painting that inspires them to write an original Haiku. Prior to the lesson, find examples of Japanese silkscreen and watercolor artwork on the internet, and prepare them for projection. Also, make copies of the *Haiku Worksheet* to distribute to the students.

Day 1: Watercolor Japanese Art

- A. Ask the students what they know about Japanese artwork. What are the usual subjects of this style of artwork? How do the Japanese use silk in their artwork? Follow up the discussion by projecting examples of Japanese silkscreens and watercolor paintings for the students to examine. Inform the students that they will be creating watercolor paintings in the style of these Japanese artworks.
- B. Give the students watercolor paper, watercolors (tubes or painting palettes), mixing plates, and brushes in different widths, as well as smaller dampened pieces of paper to use to experiment with brushstrokes and mixing colors. Review the concept of blending colors to produce different values of color. As an example, discuss with the students the image of bamboo that is used in many Japanese silkscreens and paintings. These images are created with a single brush swipe for the branch and smaller brushstrokes for bamboo leaves.
- C. Allow the students to experiment with different ideas inspired by the Japanese art examples on their smaller pieces of paper until they have ideas for their watercolor painting.
- D. The students may want to sketch ideas lightly in pencil to map out their painting before applying the watercolors. The paper should be damp to begin, and the students should applying lighter colors at the start, then add darker colors for detail; this will create an

effect similar to that of a Japanese silkscreen. Offer the students guidance in their paintings as necessary. Allow the paintings to dry when they are finished.

Day 2: Haiku Interpretation

- E. Discuss with the students what a Haiku is. Have the students look at their paintings and think of ideas for a Haiku that would match their painting. Then pass out the *Haiku Worksheet* page to the students, and have them use them to create one or two Haikus.
- F. Provide the students with construction paper, and have them create a Japanese-style border around it or decorate it in some way using colored pencils, oil pastels, or thin markers. The idea is to create a look to the paper that corresponds with the look of their watercolor painting, which will enable the students to create an interpretation of Haiku through both art and words.
- G. Have the students share their Haikus and paintings with the class, explaining their choice of words in the Haiku to interpret their painting.

Questions to guide the lesson:

1. What is the basic subject matter of the Japanese artwork you see?
2. What do you notice about the style that is used in the silkscreens and paintings?
3. Why do you think watercolor would be a good medium to use to create artwork in the Japanese style of art?
4. How does your painting reflect the Japanese style and depiction of nature?
5. How can you convey the mood of your painting in words through Haiku?

Sparklers: Note students who show the following signs of potential talent in the visual arts:

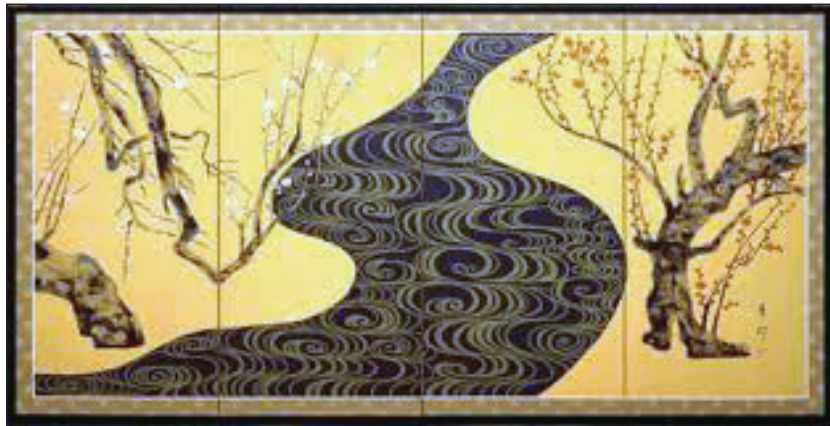
- Notice stylistic details in the examples of Japanese artwork
- Experiment freely with color mixing and brushstrokes using watercolors
- Sketch basic outlines on paper before starting, showing an artistic eye for composition
- Use watercolors with ease, demonstrating a subtle understanding of color values

Artistic Ways of Knowing

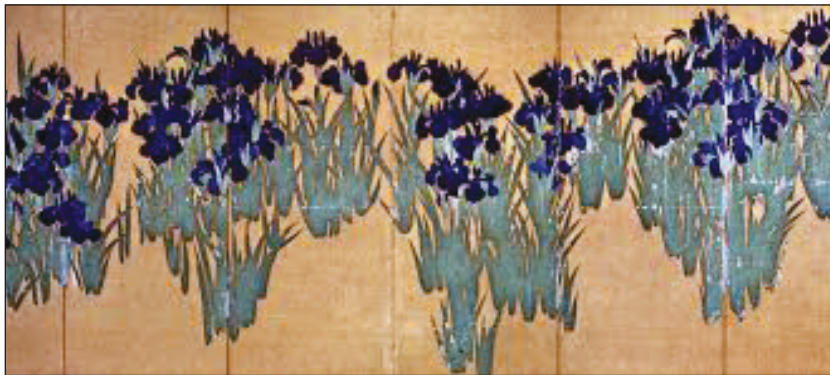
Perceptual Awareness and Discrimination:	Noticing stylistic details in Japanese art and discriminating differences in color mixture and value when working with watercolors
Metaperception:	Making decisions while developing a watercolor painting
Creative Interpretation:	Experimenting with different color effects while creating a watercolor painting; interpreting the mood of the painting through Haiku
Dynamic of Product:	Creating a watercolor painting in the Japanese style and a Haiku depicting the mood of that picture
Critique:	Sharing a finished watercolor painting and a complementary Haiku with classmates and describing the decision making that took place during the creative process

Optional extensions for this lesson:

- Students may want to expand their art impressions in the Japanese style by creating a larger watercolor or “silkscreen” that can be used as a backdrop for the *Haiku Expressions* lesson (p. 220).
- Students can research Japanese calligraphy and its role in Japanese art, experimenting with their creative artistic impressions from this research.
- *Haiku Sound Impressions* (p. 90) has students interpret music through Haiku and then create music to complement their Haiku.
- *Haiku Reflections through Movement* (p. 157) combines interpretive movements with Haiku to experience poetic elements through movement.
- *Haiku Expressions* (p. 220) explores how vocal qualities and gestures can enhance the recitation of a Haiku.



Ogata Korin, *Red and White Plum Blossoms*, 1712-1716, MOA Museum of Art, Japan



Ogata Korin, detail from *Iris*, 1701-1705, Nezu Museum, Japan



Ogata Korin, *Cranes*, 1658-1716, Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, DC



Music/Language Arts Sparkler Lesson

Artistic Focus: Metaperception, Creative Interpretation, Dynamic of Performance

Haiku Sound Impressions

- Objective:** To create a Haiku using reflective ideas developed from listening to music, and to create sounds to portray the mood of the Haiku in a Haiku/sound impression performance
- Materials:** Musical excerpt, blank paper and pencils, *Interpretive Music Elements* (provided), *Haiku Worksheet* (provided), musical instruments, found objects that the students have brought from home that can be used to make sounds, sound projection system
- Location:** Music room
- Timeframe:** Two class periods
- Music Elements:** Tonal color, texture, contour, dynamic, melody

Haiku is a form of Japanese poetry that has a structure of three lines of unrhymed verse, with lines one and three containing five syllables and line two containing seven syllables. Traditional Haiku typically uses colorful words that describe nature, the seasons, and contrasts.

This lesson intertwines Haiku and musical creation by having students use music as the inspiration for writing a Haiku and then making music to go with the Haiku, creating a Haiku/sound impression performance. Prior to the lesson, find music on the internet that will create a mood appropriate for a Haiku experience. Examples include Claude Debussy's *Claire de Lune*, *Little Shepherd*, and *Girl with the Flaxen Hair* and Erik Satie's *Gymnopédie No. 1* and *Gnoissienne No. 1*. Prepare to play the musical selection for the students. In addition, make copies of the *Interpretive Music Elements* page and the *Haiku Worksheet* to distribute to the students.

Day 1: From Music Reflection to Haiku

- A. Set the mood for this lesson by dimming the lights in the room (if possible), and have the students close their eyes. Tell them to relax, listen, and absorb the mood of what they hear. Then play the musical selection for about a minute, allowing a few seconds of silence after it is over before telling the students to open their eyes.
- B. Have each student write a word that describes the mood of the music in the middle of a piece of blank paper. They are to circle this word and begin webbing ideas about it outward for at least two minutes.
- C. Once the two minutes are up, ask the students for some of their descriptive words, and write them on the board. Discuss with the students how music can portray mood, pushing for colorful word choices as the list expands. Pass out the *Interpretive Music Elements* page to the students, and have them connect their verbal ideas to musical ideas. Ask them how the music created these moods.
- D. Discuss with the students what a Haiku is. Pass out the *Haiku Worksheet* page, and have the students use it to create one or two Haikus that represent the webbed ideas they created on paper, interpreting the mood of the music as poetry.

- E. Inform the students that on the following day, they will be creating music to go with their Haikus. They will be allowed to use musical instruments, but also encourage them to think of objects that they could bring from home that could be used to make sounds appropriate for musically interpreting their Haikus. Assign them to bring in their found objects for the next class if they come up with good ideas.

Day 2: From Haiku to Sound Impression

- F. Have the students explore sounds on various musical instruments and with the found objects that they brought to class. They are to share and compare sounds that they feel portray the mood of the Haiku they created.
- G. Have the students develop ways to use sound with words to create a combined Haiku/sound performance. They may want to refer to the *Interpretive Music Elements* page during this development. Ideas to explore to bring form and a sense of syntax to the performance include:
- A sound introduction
 - The Haiku narrated with pauses, with music interspersed
 - A sound background throughout, with selective sounds played as the Haiku is read
 - The Haiku recited, followed by a sound interpretation
 - Using sounds that describe syllabic rhythms (claves, finger cymbals)
- H. Once they have decided on a form, the students should develop and rehearse their Haiku/sound impression until it makes a cohesive creative statement. Explain to them that they should rehearse the completed performance at least five times.
- I. The students then perform their Haiku/sound impressions for the class without explaining the mood or their creative process, simply performing the piece. The rest of the students offer their impressions of the mood portrayed in the piece. The performers then explain their creative process, and the other students constructively critique the strengths and possibilities for improvement in the performance.

Questions to guide the lesson:

1. What interpretive music elements helped create the mood of the music you listened to?
2. How can you create a Haiku from the words you webbed about the mood of the music?
3. What types of sounds would enhance the mood of your Haiku, either as a background effect or interspersed in the performance? Is there a need for silence in the performance?
4. How can you put sounds together with words to create a performance that enhances both the music and the Haiku?
5. How well did each Haiku/sound impression performance reflect the elegance and simplicity of Haiku?

Sparklers: Note students who show the following signs of potential talent in music:

- Offer descriptive words that show interpretive sensitivity in response to the music
- Show an understanding of both the musical and language elements in the creative interpretation process of writing a Haiku
- Readily experiment with sounds made from a variety of instruments and/or objects while creating the sound performance
- Make constructive comments that show an understanding of the interpretive elements of music

Artistic Ways of Knowing

Perceptual Awareness and Discrimination:	Showing an awareness of sound and mood through listening and the creation of a sound impression
Metaperception:	Translating sound/mood reflections into words by writing a Haiku, and then translating them back again by creating music to go with the Haiku
Creative Interpretation:	Interpreting the mood of music through Haiku, and interpreting the mood of the Haiku through sound
Dynamic of Performance:	Developing a Haiku/sound impression piece and performing it for classmates
Critique:	Evaluating the Haiku/sound impression performances of classmates and making suggestions for refinement

Optional extensions for this lesson:

- Students can explore music that depicts different moods to inspire new Haiku creations. This provides an opportunity for them to learn more about Japanese music and instruments. The students can then create a collection of Haikus inspired by different types of music.
- *Haiku Visions* (p. 52) explores ways to create artwork inspired by Haiku poetry.
- *Haiku Reflections through Movement* (p. 157) combines interpretive movements with Haiku to experience poetic elements through movement.
- *Haiku Expressions* (p. 220) explores how vocal qualities and gestures can enhance the recitation of a Haiku.



Dance/Movement/Language Arts Sparkler Lesson

Artistic Focus: Metaperception, Creative Interpretation, Dynamic of Performance

Haiku Reflections through Movement

- Objective:** To interpret a Haiku through movement
- Materials:** *Interpretive Dance/Movement Elements* (provided); *Haiku Reflections* (provided); finger cymbals, drums, and/or chimes; art projector
- Location:** Dance studio or a room with open space
- Dance Elements:** Kinesphere, flow, time, abstraction of interpretive dance elements

Haiku is a form of Japanese poetry that has a structure of three lines of unrhymed verse, with lines one and three containing five syllables and line two containing seven syllables. Traditional Haiku typically uses colorful words that describe nature, the seasons, and contrasts.

This lesson expands the experience of understanding Haiku as an artform through interpretive movement and sound. Prior to the lesson, prepare the *Interpretive Dance/Movement Elements* page and the *Haiku Reflections* pages for projection. Also, make copies of the *Haiku Reflections* pages to distribute to the students.

- A. Project the *Interpretive Dance/Movement Elements* page so that the students can see it, and have them warm up by moving in place to these elements with an expansion of flow and time to create abstractions of the movements (e.g., extra-slow movements of the arms in different directions for “flow,” exaggerations of a scooping motion for “dig”).
- B. Discuss with the students what a Haiku is. Project the first *Haiku Reflections* page, and begin with the first Haiku (Basho Matsuo’s “An old silent pond”). Discuss the power of every word and syllable in the poem. Point out words that could be interpreted through movement (i.e., words that describe the environment or that express literal movement), and underline them on the projected page, if possible. Example:

An old silent pond...

A frog jumps into the pond.

Splash! Silence again.

- C. Ask the students for suggestions of interpretive movements for the first line of the poem. How can movement show abstraction of the idea of an old silent pond? Have the students share their movement ideas.
- D. Continue line by line, asking the students for suggestions, not just for movements but for expanding and abstracting the movements they make. Ask them to interpret the idea of silence through the suspension of movement.
- E. Have the students spread out in the room in their own kinesphere of space. Read the Haiku aloud while all of the students interpret it through movement.
- F. Give the students access to instruments such as finger cymbals, drums, and chimes, and have them incorporate the sounds made by these instruments into their Haiku movements.

Ask them to consider whether the sounds they make should come at the beginning or the end of the Haiku, while the students are moving, between descriptive words, etc.

- G. Divide the students into groups of four, and pass out the *Haiku Reflections* pages. (Explain to the students that the pages contain translations of Japanese Haikus; in their original forms, they contain the 5-7-5 syllable configuration, but when translated to English, that configuration is lost.) Have each group select a Haiku to use to develop a new Haiku reflection, with sound effects using the instruments where applicable. The students may choose to individualize movement in each line rather than have the group always moving together. Allow at least 15 minutes for this development.
- H. Have the groups perform their Haiku reflections for one another. After each performance, the other students constructively critique the performance. The groups also discuss their decision making while creating the movement pieces.

Questions to guide the lesson:

1. What dance elements can be used in the “Old silent pond” Haiku? Why did the poet add an ellipsis at the end of the first line, and how can that be interpreted through movement?
2. Where should we use sound effects to enhance the Haiku/movement performance, keeping in mind the simplicity and elegance of Haiku?
3. How can you use individualized movement in your group reflections rather than everyone doing the same thing together?
4. How can sound effects enhance your interpretive performance?
5. How did each performance reflect the elegance and simplicity of Haiku through interpretive movement?

Sparklers: Note students who show the following signs of potential talent in dance/movement:

- Offer insightful ideas that reflect an understanding of interpretive movement
- Move with a sensitivity that connects with the mood of the Haiku
- Work creatively with others to develop interpretive connections between words and movements
- Make constructive comments that show an understanding of the interpretive elements of dance

Artistic Ways of Knowing	
Perceptual Awareness and Discrimination:	Demonstrating an awareness of how words can be interpreted through movement
Metaperception:	Using reflective thinking to decide upon movements to express a Haiku and demonstrating sensitivity to the power of words in a Haiku
Creative Interpretation:	Exhibiting personal expression while developing movements that connect directly with the mood of each word in a Haiku
Dynamic of Performance:	Developing a Haiku movement piece and performing it for others
Critique:	Suggesting refinements in an interpretive movement piece and explaining the creative process of its development

Optional extensions for this lesson:

- Students can write their own Haikus, with an emphasis on creating the reflective mood they experienced through this lesson. They can then expand their Haikus to include movement.
- *Haiku Visions* (p. 52) explores ways to create artwork inspired by Haiku poetry.
- *Haiku Sound Impressions* (p. 90) has students interpret music through Haiku and then create music to complement their Haiku.
- *Haiku Expressions* (p. 220) explores how vocal qualities and gestures can enhance the recitation of a Haiku.

Resource:

McCutchen, B. P. (2006). *Teaching dance as art in education*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics. This text is a comprehensive approach to designing a dance curriculum based on the National Core Arts Standards in Dance. The curricula provides toolkits for analyzing and critiquing, creating and choreographing, and dancing and performing, as well as information about the history, culture, and context of dance. It also offers ways to connect dance with other disciplines. This lesson was inspired by the “Word Dances from Haiku” activity from this resource.



Theater/Drama/Language Arts Sparkler Lesson

Artistic Focus: Metaperception, Creative Interpretation, Dynamic of Performance

Haiku Expressions

- Objective:** To interpret Haikus using distinctive vocal qualities and gestures, then create a Haiku that expresses personal ideas and recite it using appropriate vocal qualities and gestures
- Materials:** *Haiku through the Ages* (provided), *Contemporary Haiku Written by Children* (provided), *Vocal Qualities and Characters* (provided), *Haiku Worksheet* (provided), paper and pencils, art projector
- Location:** Drama room or a room with open space
- Theater Elements:** Aural awareness, observation, vocal quality, pacing, volume, gesture

Haiku is a form of Japanese poetry that has a structure of three lines of unrhymed verse, with lines one and three containing five syllables and line two containing seven syllables. Traditional Haiku typically uses colorful words that describe nature, the seasons, and contrasts.

This lesson brings the elements of personal expression and interpretation into the creation of a Haiku. Prior to the lesson, prepare the *Haiku through the Ages* and the *Contemporary Haiku Written by Children* pages for projection. Also, make copies of the *Vocal Qualities and Characters* page and the *Haiku Worksheet* to distribute to the students.

- A. Discuss with the students what a Haiku is. Then project the *Haiku through the Ages* page so that the students can see it. Lead a discussion with the students about the themes of the poems and possible vocal qualities that could be used to interpret the poems aurally. (Explain to the students that the Japanese Haikus are translations; in their original forms, they contain the 5-7-5 syllable configuration, but when translated to English, that configuration is lost.) Pass out the *Vocal Qualities and Characters* page to the students, and have them refer to it as they come up with ideas about how to vocalize the words of the Haikus. They should consider such vocal elements as pacing, pausing, and volume.
- B. Ask for three volunteers to read the first Haiku, one student for each line. These three students are to read their line using a vocal quality, pace, and volume that fits the Haiku's theme. Encourage the students to use gestures that are appropriate to the poem as well.
- C. Have the rest of the students share their ideas and opinions about how the readings fit with the theme of the Haiku or how they could be improved to express the Haiku better. Ask for new volunteers to read the other Haikus, and repeat the sequence of vocalizing and critiquing with each of the poems.
- D. Next, project the *Contemporary Haiku Written by Children* page. The students should use the same format as before to read these poems expressively. They then discuss their choices of vocal quality, pacing, volume, and gesture for these poems as compared with the older poems that were written by adults. Ask the students to consider what was different about these Haikus and whether those differences (if any) led to different vocal and physical interpretations.

- E. Inform the students that they will write their own Haikus, and ask them to think of a personal mood or idea that they would like to use for their Haiku that may reach beyond the typical themes of nature and the seasons. Have each student write a word that describes that mood or idea in the middle of a piece of blank paper. They are to circle this word and begin webbing ideas about it outward. Once they have filled their paper, pass out the *Haiku Worksheet*, and have the students use the words in their idea web to create a Haiku (or two) that expresses their personal mood or idea. Allow 5-10 minutes for webbing, reflecting, and creating the poem.
- F. Have the students share their poems with the class, using appropriate vocal qualities and gestures. The rest of the students should constructively critique these presentations, including how the poems expressed the students' ideas dramatically through words, vocal qualities, and gestures.

Questions to guide the lesson:

1. What types of vocal qualities would fit well with the words in these Haikus? Which ones would not work?
2. How do the contemporary children's Haikus differ from the older ones that were written by adults? How are they the same?
3. What is a personal mood or idea that you feel would be a good starting point for a Haiku, possibly reaching beyond the typical themes?
4. What words could reflect this mood that would work in the stylized form of Haiku?
5. What vocal qualities, pacing, volume, and gestures worked for these presentations? How can we refine the Haiku presentations?

Sparklers: Note students who show the following signs of potential talent in theater/drama:

- Read the Haikus with appropriate vocal quality and expression
- Offer ideas about vocal qualities and gestures that are suitable for Haikus
- Develop a Haiku and present it with creative expressions and gestures
- Share insightful ideas about refining Haiku presentations

Artistic Ways of Knowing

Perceptual Awareness and Discrimination:	Developing an awareness of appropriate vocal qualities and gestures when reading a Haiku
Metaperception:	Reflecting on personal ideas and using them to create a Haiku
Creative Interpretation:	Developing an expressive way of reciting a Haiku using appropriate vocal qualities and gestures
Dynamic of Performance:	Presenting a Haiku with dramatic vocal qualities and gestures
Critique:	Discussing interpretive ideas that were expressed in classmates' recitations of Haikus

Optional extensions for this lesson:

- Students can create a video presentation of each student's Haiku followed by a recording of the student reciting the poem. The students can decide on an appropriate background, font, and background music.
- *Vocal Play and Characterization* (p. 208) explores how interpretive vocal qualities can enhance dramatic scenes.
- *Haiku Visions* (p. 52) explores ways to create artwork inspired by Haiku poetry.
- *Haiku Sound Impressions* (p. 90) has students interpret music through Haiku and then create music to complement their Haiku.
- *Haiku Reflections through Movement* (p. 157) combines interpretive movements with Haiku to experience poetic elements through movement.