

Visual Thinking Strategies "VTS"

VTS is a teaching method based on the theory of aesthetic development. The method is designed to use visual art images to increase critical thinking skills, and improve literacy and language skills.

Resources: vtshome.org

Visual Art helps us connect to the rest of the world. Because students are subject to a visual world between computer, television, print media, and a variety of visual stimuli, it is vital to put into practice the ability to sequentially apply understanding and meaning to the images they see.

"Through VTS' rigorous and engaging individual and group 'problem-solving' process, students cultivate a willingness and ability to present their own ideas, while respecting and learning from the perspectives of their peers."

"Through VTS training programs for schools and museums, educators learn to facilitate student-centered discussions, engaging learners in a rigorous process of examination and meaning-making through visual art that has been carefully selected for age and developmental appropriateness."

"Experience with VTS produces growth in all students, from challenged and non-English language learners to high achievers. In addition, teachers enjoy the process and benefit from a new approach that reaches all students and is useful across their practice."

In VTS discussions teachers support student growth by facilitating discussions of carefully selected works of visual art.

Teachers are asked to use three open-ended questions:

- What's going on in this picture?
- What do you see that makes you say that?
- What more can we find?

3 Facilitation Techniques:

- Paraphrase comments neutrally
- Point at the area being discussed
- Linking and framing student comments

Students are asked to:

- Look carefully at works of art
- Talk about what they observe
- Back up their ideas with evidence
- Listen to and consider the views of others
- Discuss multiple possible interpretations