

TASK 2 – PART B: INSTRUCTION COMMENTARY

Respond to the prompts below (**no more than 6 single-spaced pages, including prompts**) by typing your responses within the brackets following each prompt. Do not delete or alter the prompts. Commentary pages exceeding the maximum will not be scored. You may insert **no more than 2 additional pages of supporting documentation** at the end of this file. These pages may include graphics, texts, or images that are not clearly visible in the video or a transcript for occasionally inaudible portions. These pages do not count toward your page total.

1. Which lesson or lessons are shown in the video clip(s)? Identify the lesson(s) by lesson plan number.

Video clip 1 shows **Lesson 2** of the learning segment. In lesson 2, students completed a **painting activity during a guided teacher demonstration** as an introduction to watercolor paints, brushes, and techniques. Each student received a sheet of watercolor paper that they divided into 8 equal sections. Using a live video feed from my iPhone, an Apple TV, and the 70” television installed in the classroom, I demonstrated six different watercolor painting techniques for the students to practice. After each technique was shown via live video demonstration, students had time complete that technique as I moved around the room to guide their practice. The remaining two squares on the sheet were to be used for the student’s choice of experimental watercolor techniques.

Video clip 2 shows **Lesson 5** of the learning segment. In lesson 5, students participated in a **class-wide written critique** using worksheets to generate specific feedback that were designed prior to the lesson. At the beginning of class, students placed their completed artwork on the table in front of them. Each student was given at least four copies of the “Watercolor Wildlife Feedback” form. Students were instructed to circulate around the room to analyze and respond to other students’ artwork and provide written feedback based on the predetermined criteria, including the use of visual texture, contrast, composition and color mixing. During the critique process students had the opportunity to engage in subject-specific discourse with their peers and with the teacher whereby they were able to make connections between the visual arts concepts addressed within the learning segment and relate those concepts to their own work and the work of their classmates. Engaging in this discourse and completing the written feedback forms also allowed students to use art vocabulary and gain experience in analyzing and interpreting the work and process of other artists.

2. Promoting a Positive Learning Environment

Refer to scenes in the video clip(s) where you provided a positive learning environment.

- a. How did you demonstrate mutual respect for, rapport with, and responsiveness to students with varied needs and backgrounds, and challenge students to engage in learning?

Throughout both video clips, I demonstrate respect for all students in the class and also demonstrate the rapport that I have with students from various backgrounds through using students’ first names, validating their choices and valuing their unique perspectives. In the classroom, students view me as both an authoritative expert in the content area, as well as someone who understands and values their unique and varied backgrounds. I address students with deference and consistently show that I value their opinions and questions by listening and responding with patience and humility. Additionally, students demonstrate respect for me as the instructor throughout **video clip 1**. Specifically, from **3:41-5:40**, I am leading an interactive media demonstration on watercolor paints, during which students are listening actively and working diligently to follow instructions and participate fully. Students’ attention is divided

between watching the video demonstration on the TV screen, watching me as I instruct, and engaging with their own artwork as they practice the demonstrated painting techniques. Students work quietly and patiently as they experiment with this new media for the first time.

I also demonstrate respect for students by supporting their autonomy and validating their choices in the art studio. For example, in **video clip 1 from 0:37-0:54**, a student makes an independent choice to leave his seat to replace the water in the bucket from his table. Rather than feeling “disrupted” by this student, I make a decision to use his behavior as an exemplar for other students in the class, reminding and encouraging them to be responsible for their shared materials and workspace and to make independent choices to meet their own needs in the art studio. I want to empower them to make these choices and encourage them to be responsible for the shared materials and studio space.

In **video clip 1 from 7:11-7:35**, I make it a point to engage one-on-one with the female student in the white cap, who was identified in Task 1 (planning) as one of the students in this class who has specific learning needs related to her chronic truancy. For various reasons, at the time that this learning segment was introduced, this student was struggling to find motivation to pursue academics and was feeling particularly disheartened and self-critical with regard to her artistic ability and potential to be successful in this class. This phenomenon began prior to my arrival in the classroom, but at this point in time I had already invested much energy in an attempt to remedy the situation through regular contact with the student, her counselor, and the student’s mother. On this particular day, the student returned to class for the first time in several days, so I made an intentional decision to interact with her in and relate to her with regard to the new material being presented, which I hope provided justification of her decision to attend class from her perspective.

Video clip 2 begins with me checking in and having individual conversations with two of the students in the room who have ADHD - the brunette female in the black shirt from **0:20-1:46**, and the male student in the maroon t-shirt and glasses from **1:50-3:03**. These check-ins, though they appear quite “normal,” are part of my instructional supports for these students relative to their specific learning needs. This component of instruction is one way in which I show responsiveness to students with varied learning needs.

It should be noted that these same two students are the ones who organically begin to debate interpretation of another student’s artwork and art-making approaches during the whole-class critique that takes place during lesson 5, in **video clip 2 from 9:16-9:45**. In my opinion, this moment is indicative of the success I have had in creating a learning environment that fosters respectful interaction among students, shows responsiveness to students with varied needs and backgrounds, and challenges all students to engage in learning that is more than just superficial. Despite the fact that these two students express differing opinions, they are attentive to each other and demonstrate mutual respect.

3. Engaging Students in Learning

Refer to examples from the video clip(s) in your responses to the prompts.

- a. Explain how your instruction **engaged students to create meaning** through interpreting art, developing works of art/design, **AND/OR** relating art to context as they applied their knowledge and skills to create, present, or respond to visual art.

Throughout **video clip 1 (for example, from 3:41-5:40)**, I am leading an interactive media demonstration on watercolor paints, during which students are listening actively and working diligently to follow instructions as they create their own “swatchboards” of watercolor painting techniques. Through this activity, students are given the opportunity to participate in a unique manner, as the traditional notion of a “media demonstration” is challenged, and students are instead given the opportunity to engage with the content with immediacy, in a hands-on

way. I believe that guiding and talking students through some of the difficulties or hesitations that they might experience as they begin to work with new media gives them confidence to persist in these efforts.

- b. Describe how your instruction linked students' prior academic learning and personal, cultural, and community assets with new learning.

Prior to this learning segment, one of the instructional segments that students had participated in with their lead teacher was painting landscapes with acrylic paint. In **video clip 1** from **0:00-0:27** and again from **5:42-5:45**, I link the current instruction from the media demonstration to students' prior instruction with regard to painting various components of landscapes.

At the end of **video clip 1, from 9:25-9:53**, I remind students of one of the talking points that watercolor artist Peggy Macnamara covered in her presentation to the class during the field trip is lesson 1. Ms. Macnamara spoke about being open to making mistakes and revising works in progress. This point of instruction references students' prior learning, and more specifically, it draws upon the community assets that students at this school have. These assets include access to museums like the one we visited, as well a number of local artists like Ms. Macnamara who work in the city and are willing to donate their time and expertise to the educational endeavors of local high school students.

In **video clip 1** from **1:29-1:48**, I introduce a dry brush technique for watercolor painting. I was aware that students were at least somewhat familiar with the term "dry brush" and the idea behind this sort of paint application from their work on the acrylic landscape paintings. I make it a point to establish the differences in using this technique across the different paint media, since watercolor cakes require you to use at least some amount of water to activate the paint, whereas students had more opportunities to go into their paintings with a completely dry brush when working with acrylics. This piece of instruction is intended to eliminate the possibility for student error or confusion in using the dry brush technique with watercolor paints.

Also in **video clip 1** from **7:47-8:16**, I question students about their experience with the watercolor paints up until this point in the class. I ask students if they think working with watercolors is "more or less fun" than working with acrylic paints. Determining how to answer to this question, in spite of the fact that it is closed-ended, requires students to compare the two media and evaluate them relative to each other, no matter how instantaneously that happens. This is a quick and effective way to make a connection between students' prior and current learning in their minds – by initiating a relationship between the two during instruction.

In **video clip 2** from **9:00-9:15**, I take advantage of an opportunity to take the featured student's current learning (analyzing use of a gradated wash of analogous colors in a classmate's painting) in the lesson 5 critique and link that to previous learning from lesson 3. I remind the student that during lesson 3, everyone in the class was challenged to create a gradated wash using three analogous colors. By linking these activities I am providing a means for this student to understand connections between his previous learning and what he and the rest of the class are doing on this day.

4. Deepening Student Learning during Instruction

Refer to examples from the video clip(s) in your explanations.

- a. Explain how you **elicited student responses** to promote thinking and develop their abilities to express or understand meaning through interpreting art, developing works of art/design, **AND/OR** relating art to context.

During the critique activity from lesson 5, which is shown in **video clip 2**, students were asked to record written responses about the work of their classmates on "Watercolor Wildlife feedback forms." I developed this feedback form to establish guidelines for the evaluation of

peer artwork during the critique, and also to establish the criteria students would use to analyze and interpret artwork in this activity. I also chose to have this critique be a written one instead of being discussion-based, as many of the students in the class had limited to no experience with art critique prior to this lesson. I wanted them to have a means of participating that was not too daunting. That being said, I envisioned the critique day as one where students could freely participate in individual analysis of peer artwork, or choose to engage in small-group discussions about the art and art-making approaches of their classmates. All the while, I would travel around the room and engage individual students or small groups in informal discussions using the same criteria that were printed on the feedback forms. This would give students who were less familiar with critique a chance to participate through speaking as well as writing, but would eliminate the pressure that would surely result from asking these students to deliver oral analyses of artwork in front of all of their classmates.

Throughout **video clip 2**, I can be seen visiting with different students in the room and participating in these informal discussions. There is a considerable amount of background noise because at the same time, many students around the room are automatically transforming the written critique activity into a more discussion-based one, where students collaborate with their peers to devise and discuss interpretations of artwork and art-making approaches. Within these discussions, students agree and disagree about their interpretations. However, the discourse remains respectful and productive as students monitor their own abilities to respectfully share differing viewpoints.

There is specific evidence of one such small group gathering that is happening in **video clip 2** from **8:08-9:45**. For the sake of understanding the habits of this group and the class at large, we may overlook a brief moment at 8:28 where the female student with blue hair teases her friend for not having received the direction on what to do with completed feedback forms before laughing it off as she moves on to critique another artwork. The students who remain in this small group (there are several off screen to the left of the camera, including the two students with ADHD who were discussed in prompt 2a) continue to observe the artwork and offer interpretations of the artist's approach in painting this sea turtle.

From **9:16-9:45** these two students, with an audience of several others, engage in a bit of discussion about the artwork and their differing interpretations of the artist's intent. Through this exchange, we can observe that students in the classroom are interacting with each other in a way that is respectful, meaningful, and representative of their abilities to engage in deeper level thinking. This supports the idea that the learning environment has been designed to naturally elicit student responses and engage them in thinking and tasks relative to developing art, interpreting art, and relating art to context.

- b. Explain how you provided students with opportunities **for student choice (e.g., of content, methods, or style)** in ways that deepened their understanding of visual art concepts/contexts as students created, presented, or responded to visual art.

The interactive media demonstration in **video clip 1** provides students with opportunities for choice and experimentation, which serve to enrich student learning. From **6:22- 7:00**, students are instructed to fill the two remaining empty squares on their "swatchboard" with two experimental painting techniques of their choosing. Providing opportunities for student choice during this activity encourages students to make connections between what they are currently learning and what they already know. Students create meaning through memorable, personally significant experience as they develop works of art during this interactive demonstration, rather than watch idly as the teacher engages with the media in front of them.

During the critique activity from lesson 5 that is documented in **video clip 2**, students had total authority regarding which paintings they chose to **respond to** and **interpret**. I did, however, encourage students throughout the activity to explore artworks from tables other than

their own (1:43-1:47, 2:58-3:04, and 7:47-7:55). Since students had the opportunity to closely view the other artworks at their table while the whole class worked to complete their paintings, I wanted them to use this time to visit other artworks around the room.

5. Analyzing Teaching

Refer to examples from the video clip(s) in your responses to the prompts.

- a. What changes would you make to your instruction—for the whole class and/or for students who need greater support or challenge—better support student learning of the central focus (e.g., missed opportunities)?

Consider the variety of learners in your class who may require different strategies/support (e.g., students with IEPs or 504 plans, English language learners, struggling readers, underperforming students or those with gaps in academic knowledge, and/or gifted students).

If I were to teach this learning segment again, I would make some changes to guidelines for student participation in the critique activity during lesson 5 that was featured in **video clip 2**. In the video clip (7:37-7:43), I ask a 7th grade student in passing how many artworks he has critiqued so far, in an effort to ensure that he is on task to complete all four feedback forms before the end of class. After reviewing the video, I realized that the main reason why I asked him this is because I was not entirely confident in his ability to finish the work that I had assigned to him in the amount of time that I provided. Upon reflection, I would say that the same is true about several other students in the class who I had also asked to do more work than I knew they were capable of. Similarly, there are a number of high-performing students in the class with more artistic experience (and more experience with critique) who probably could have completed more than four feedback forms during the class period, while maintaining careful consideration of their responses for each one.

In retrospect, I would clarify and redefine teacher and student expectations relative to how many feedback forms each student should fill out during the critique activity. Instead, I would plan for instruction by considering what each individual student is able to do, and then modify our shared expectations accordingly. Alternatively, I could tell all students to take their time, fill out each feedback form carefully, and finish whatever amount they can in the time available, without strictly quantifying my expectation of students' work products ahead of time. I realized that by asking all of the students in the class to complete the same quantity and quality of work in this allotted time, I was completely disregarding what I knew about students' unique learning needs and abilities. For example, the students with 504 plans who receive extra time as an accommodation were not granted this, but were expected to participate in spite of the fact that I denied them appropriate instructional supports. The real problem in this is that my lack of attention in creating expectations for myself and for my students about what they should be able to do could ultimately be quite damaging or limiting to some students.

Another change I would make is that I would have shut the door to the classroom prior to or during delivery of instruction in lesson 2. Throughout **video clip 1**, there are several occasions where an excess of noise created by students in the hallway travels into the classroom, as my students are quietly working and attending to instruction. This background noise is particularly noticeable from 2:20-3:00 and again from 3:25-3:45. While I was teaching, I was so focused on delivering instruction that I apparently did not recognize this noise as enough of a distraction to stop what I was doing and address it. As I watched **video clip 1**, I realized that although this noise would not necessarily appear to interfere with instruction to the average viewer, there were certain students in my room – in particular, those with ADHD – who might have been *extremely* distracted by the level of noise in the hall. I certainly could have planned better to prevent this problem and also could have modified my instructional practice to be more

aware and considerate of the experience of my students with specific learning needs in this situation.

- b. Why do you think these changes would improve student learning? Support your explanation with evidence of student learning **AND** principles from theory and/or research.

It is readily evident that changing delivery of instruction by eliminating distractions like boisterous noise coming in from the hall would benefit not only students with specific learning needs like ADHD, but also the entire class.

With regard to my proposed change to participation guidelines for the critique activity based on my knowledge of what students are able to do, I believe that research in educational psychology supports my belief that by creating unclear or unrealistic expectations for my students, I was doing them a real disservice. Teacher expectations play a significant role in student performance. Research has generally found that “students live up (or down) to the expectations that their teachers have for them” (Slavin, 2015). To put it simply, we know that when teachers expect students to perform well, they are likely to perform well. Oppositely, if teachers expect students to fail, they are likely to fail.

I should never assume that my students with specific learning needs will be unable to complete the same task(s) as their peers simply because of who they are. However, it is important for me to consider what they are capable of and what their expectations of self are as I deliver instruction. I believe that realistic, personalized goal setting is an important educational tool because it allows students to gauge their achievement relative to their individual strengths and weaknesses.

References

Slavin, Robert E. (2015). *Educational psychology: theory and practice (11th ed.)*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.