

Functional Skills

The intention of this essay will be to evaluate a range of ways to incorporate elements of functional skills in a secondary school art classroom. The three areas that will be considered are information and communication technology (ICT), English literature and numeracy.

ICT has an immense importance to the pupils learning throughout their academic year and during class time. It provides practical skills for learners to develop their ability to learn, communicate to their peers and teachers and to problem solve as it has a direct link to cognitive processes.

ICT should be integrated in the art classroom in a way that is creative and useful for the pupils. Initially, it is important to teach them to design and paint with only basic and raw art materials without the use of technology. This will provide them with the fundamental understanding that ICT will only enhance their artwork and also encourage them not to become dependent on technology. Once they become aware of this concept the learners can scan images through the computer and start the creative process of adding graphics and text to their art and self-portraits.

The use of technology will enable pupils to gradually develop a good knowledge and understanding of using packages such as Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop and also other graphic design software packages.

English literature is essential within the classroom, as pupils need to learn how to obtain knowledge and articulate and express ideas with a good use of vocabulary. This will evidently include reading and writing, which also has a link to the cognitive process as mentioned above

Larson and Marsh (2005) state that 'For many years, literacy education has been grounded in a cognitive psychological approach in which attention is paid to individual development'. (p.4)

It is the responsibility of the teacher to integrate new vocabulary and artistic readings into every lesson that is both practical and relevant to the topic at hand. One example of this is the word aesthetic, which is often used in art journals and other academic materials. The teacher could intentionally make sure the word aesthetic is within the text giving them the opportunity to check the meaning of the word in the dictionary or online, which will also relate to ICT functional skills. Once they have learnt the new word the teacher could give them the chance to type it out on the computer with the meaning underneath and place it on the wall within the classroom. The teacher can also encourage them to keep a written record of new words and phrases learnt throughout the year and each lesson. The integration of this process will be purposeful and give them the self-directed discipline to take some responsibilities for their learning.

With the constant conflict of pupils text messaging, writing in shorthand and speaking in jargon on the internet, it is important for the learner to recognise the differentiation of good and correct English. An art teacher can encourage a positive attitude in the pupils by providing and encouraging them to read English text and, to watch English television programmes such as The annual Summer Exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts broadcasted on the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) network.

Including numeracy whilst teaching art should be incorporated into the lessons in both a subliminal and enjoyable manner. Having a framework and structure to every lesson to insert mathematical thinking and problem solving can be delivered in a variety of activities that are straightforward. This could include the teacher instructing the learners to measure or weigh two and three dimensional sculpture work throughout the making of their designs and also for them to make a written documentation, as these will both develop functional skills.



As a teacher it is good practice to ask open questions to the pupils regarding dates and times in art history or the present. This will allow them to work out the questions. This can be done by asking questions such as: 'if Vincent Willem Van Gogh was born in 1853 and died in 1890 how old was he when he died?' A successful way to do would be while the learners are relaxed and painting and having general conversation in the classroom, rather than standing at the front of the room firing questions.

Written by Michael Butler

<http://www.michael-butler.com/>

Reference

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