

Art in Action

Docent Tips from Ana B. and Ann G./2012-2013

Thank you for volunteering!

Tips for the Veterans (What you might not already know)

AIA has revamped their web site in the following areas:

(1) AIA has tried to suggest more evolved questions for the older grades to stimulate conversation and critical thinking. Those questions are contained in the discussion section of the online lessons (not the books).

(2) Click on “Program User” at the top of the web site, then “school coordinator” in the drop down menu and you will see “key concepts” which contains 4 or 5 key concepts for every lesson. Our goal is for the kids to “take away” 1-2 key concepts for every lesson.

(3) For those using the smart board rather than the art board to show the masterpiece, make sure you bring up the Original masterpiece contained under the “Discussion” section of the online lessons—it has the highest resolution. The art board is preferable to show detail but the smart board is sufficient.

(4) --A painting tip (thanks Juanita) which is very helpful, especially for 5th grade classrooms which have no sink. When teaching a painting lesson, ask the kids to wipe their brush on a paper towel **BEFORE** dipping the brush in the water container to clean it—the water stays cleaner longer. The cut up sponges can be used to dry the brush after cleaning it in the water. Use “real” paper towels from the art shed. The paper towels in the classroom are not absorbent.

(5) We are planning on leaving the shed unlocked so you don’t have to hunt for the key. If it is locked, there is a key in the North Parent Group drawer in the office on a blue plastic wristband.

(6) In the lesson overview section in the website there is a lesson description you can print to send home to inform parents what the kids learned that day.

Tried and True Tips

Supplies – We supply you with an “art box” which will be ready in the Art Shed on the Friday prior to your Wednesday lesson or the Monday before your Friday lesson. We supply everything you need except scissors and glue which are in the classrooms. Please bring extra newspaper paper towel or wipes if you have them.

We will send a reminder that you are teaching 5 days prior to your lesson. **You must find a replacement for yourself if you cannot teach. We can provide you with a list of docent volunteers for your grade.**

Art Box

- Review the contents of the art box before teaching the lesson. Make sure you have all the supplies you need. Let your grade level coordinator know if you are missing something.

- Return art boxes to art shed at the end of each lesson (do not leave in classroom)
- Wash out brushes/sponges/containers and return to art shed (there is no sink in the art shed). Assistants can help with this task.
- Leave wet artwork to dry in classrooms.
- Ask teacher if he or she would like to keep the artwork—most teachers will keep the artwork until the end of the year. If not, retrieve it the next day and return it to the shed and leave it on the table.

Executing the lesson

- ✚ Place the name stickers on the back of the paper ahead of time or ask one of the assistants to do so while you are leading the discussion.
- ✚ Ask the younger kids to gather on the reading rug for the discussion. For the older kids, walk throughout the class so the kids can see the work up close—this also keeps them focused.
- ✚ Bring in music to inspire the students while they execute the lesson.
- ✚ Practice the project beforehand.
- ✚ Strive for a discussion on the masterpiece rather than a lecture. Good starting questions for the younger grades are “What do you see?” “How does this painting make you feel and why?” “What do you like or dislike about this painting”? Strive to challenge the older kids during the discussion—“How does Cubism convey the mood in Picasso’s “Weeping Woman?”
- ✚ Curriculum integration—Ask the teachers what the kids are studying and relate it to the lesson. You would be surprised how often you can find a connection. See also curriculum suggestions on the AIA web site under the “Teacher/Docent” section.
- ✚ Tape up examples of previous work (which will be in your art box).
- ✚ Do a demonstration before the students try to do it themselves – this is very important – even if you don’t have time to do the entire project. Doing your demo on cardboard helps all to see.
- ✚ In older grades, write the steps for the project on the smart board.
- ✚ Share successes or suggestions for improvement with your grade level coordinator and chairs.