

Ten Design Education Ideas for Art Educators

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Here are ten ideas to make your program stronger and to strengthen art education in general. Don't try to do all of these. Just pick one or two this year and maybe another one or two next year. Give yourself five or ten years to accomplish them all but keep plugging away at it.

1. Change the name of your program to “Art and Design” or “Art, Media and Design.”

This simple gesture has a tremendous effect on how you see your role in the school and how others view what your program is about. It will open doors for collaboration that others wouldn't have thought of before. The design world is a lot of fun and has great energy to it. Try it, you'll like it.

2. Have your students do a display in the hallway showing examples of the four areas of design.

If your students put up a display in the hallway showing examples of object design, information design, environment design, and experience design, the students, parents, other teachers, and administrators will gain a whole new perspective on how many ways design affects their lives. Your art and design program will be recognized as an indispensable part of every student's education. (Check out www.designeducation.org)

3. Create an interactive exhibit for some other subject area in the school.

Students who are good at reading, writing and math have an advantage in schools. Work with your students to create an interactive exhibit about some other area of the curriculum like history, geography, mathematics, or science. This will give your students a chance to show that images and objects can be as powerful as words and numbers for learning and communicating important concepts and knowledge. (For hints on how to do an interactive exhibit contact Kid Curators at ldaquisito@msn.com.)

4. Teach students to draw the figure in motion.

We all teach drawing but there is a particular kind of drawing that is very useful for students to learn drawing the figure in motion. Being able to convincingly draw people and animals in the act of walking, running and jumping is still an entry point for many jobs in high-tech design areas like animation. Don't worry about being artsy just have them get the proportions and the movement right.

5. Add storyboarding to your curriculum.

Knowing how to storyboard will have more applications than you ever thought. Storyboarding requires knowledge of aspect ratios, framing (long shot, medium shot and close-up), eye line (normal, low, and high angle), lenses (normal, wide angle, and telephoto), movement (dolly, tracking, lock-off, crane, and zoom), and line of action. Check out this site for some examples. Famous Frames (more examples than you will ever need) <http://www.famousframes.com/>

6. Add model making to your curriculum.

Our students don't get enough opportunities to work in 3-D. Help them learn the techniques for making models architectural and product models with cardboard, plaster, modeling clay, foamcore, styrofoam, etc.. Two projects that involve model making include the Mars Millennium Project (www.mars2030.net) and Box City (www.cubekc.org). For some model-making examples try sites like <http://www.kmca.com/>
<http://www.architecturalmodel.com/>
<http://www.freeborns.co.uk/>

7. Add film and video production to your curriculum.

One of the best things you could do to strengthen art education is to begin doing filmmaking and video production in your classes. If we don't, the English teachers will. In a few years short videos will be all over the internet. Video will be a major way of communicating information and ideas and being creative. Start now to be ready when it all hits. There are some great software programs available like iMovie and Final Cut Pro. If you're not convinced check out sites like

www.ismfilms.com

<http://www.videomaker.com/>

<http://video.lycos.com/>

<http://www.multimedia-plus.com/>

<http://www.carefuleye.com/>

8. Add simple animation to your curriculum.

The internet is going to be a major distribution tool for short animations. They are going to be everywhere. Traditional cel animation techniques as well as digital animation using tools like Flash are going to be as common as e-mail. Start now to make animation a part of art education programs. Have one assignment in which the students are asked to create a 10-second animation. Check out sites like

<http://www.digital-foundry.com/>

<http://emsh.calarts.edu/>

<http://web.mit.edu/magc/www/>

9. Use the web as a resource and a teaching tool.

Right now some educators are still hung up on keeping students from having access to the web because of all the "bad things" out there. It is incredible how much information about art, media and design is available on the web. For example, sign up for Adobe's free on-line newsletters at <http://www.Adobe.com>.

Check out the top 100 web designers at <http://208.5.102.29/top100/rankone.htm>

10. Keep asking for another art teacher in your district.

You know you can't do it all. I'm betting that you have over 500 students if you are an elementary teacher and over 250 if you are a high school teacher. If so, your district needs to add another art teacher. Since you want to add media and design to your program and your background is probably studio art, ask for a teacher with skills in design education. Show what you could add in the areas of architecture, video, computers, animation, urban planning, etc. if you had another teacher.