

Expert Feedback on the Fine Arts TEKS

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1. Is a complete and logical development of fine arts concepts followed for each grade level or course? What recommendations do you have for improvements?

I decided to only review the draft of visual art from Kindergarten through high school level. I have commented on the items that I felt were inconsistent or needed further clarification. The information follows.

2. have the correct vocabulary and terminology been used?

I have made suggestions throughout the entire draft of June 2012.

3. Are there specific areas that need to be reworked?

I have made suggestions on this matter at the beginning of the review. Based on demographics of the state and country, I have suggested that an additional type of aesthetics (non-western) be augmented. The aesthetics of "formalism" which is the basis for criteria in art production in this country is over a century old and does merit the needs of the population that the state is serving. If need be, perhaps just adding concepts of identity, etc. might remedy the situation. Refer to the attached report.

4. Are the fine art concept/content statement grade-level appropriate? Are important concepts missing at any grade level?

Please refer to the various comments on the report. However it is imperative that female and artists of color be included in the art instruction and art history. It is also important to expose the students to local and regional art and artists. Some of the contemporary concepts of art such as iconography, self-identity or self-representation, cultural refiguration, reclamation, memory, kitsch, vernacular, neo-expressionism, trans-coding, and rasquache, low and high art, to name a few, should be taught to the students. However these concepts should be introduced at a higher level.

But it must be noted that children should be exposed to the artwork of various artists, not just the male European ones. This is ideal time when they can be inspired and can become life long supporters of the visual arts. About 15 years ago, a teen magazine did a survey concerning the idols of teenage girls. The top idol was Frida Kahlo, the artist from Mexico.

5. Are the student expectations clear and specific?

Yes, they are, but I made some suggestions, as stated in the report.

6. Are the subject areas aligned horizontally and vertically?

Yes, however the high school level could be more rigorous and demanding.

7. Should consideration be given toward adding other courses at the high school level to provide more options for students?

Yes. I believe that a course in public art or digital media, such as animation could be resourceful. My students in higher education decided to major in art because of their interest in animation and cartoons. I even taught a student who later went to Los Angeles and obtained his Master of Fine Arts in New Media this past May. He did an internship and worked on the Puss and Boots film. He also received an award for an animated film that he produced for his MFA thesis. He even received the Grace Kelly Award for his work in film. He was just hired by Sam Houston State University to teach animation.

8. Do you have any suggestions for ways to which the fine arts TEKS can be improved? I think that being inclusive in the content and assigned projects of the teaching is important. Also the school requires the student to become global, then some type of funding should be available so that the student can visit another country and see actual art and artists. Perhaps an affiliation with an institution of higher learning could be one solution, so that the high school students could obtain that experience through a study abroad program. Even just traveling to local and regional museums and galleries is important.

**Comments on Recommendations of First Draft prepared on June 2012 for the Draft
Proposed Revisions of Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)
Fine Arts**

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The Review Committee of the TEKS Draft Proposed Revision Form of June 2012 begins the proposed revision with an **Introduction** of the Arts in the Kindergarten and Elementary, Middle School, and High School by stating that “the Fine Arts, **as universal languages**, incorporates the study of dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts to offer unparalleled experiences and empower students to explore realities, relationships, and ideas.”

I just want to comment that based on the information provided in the materials, the foundation of the fine art teachings of TEKS is based on a visual language established by Western (linear) thinking, which was inherited from Europe. This philosophy is a modernist approach with limited artistic choices centered on European history. This type of aesthetics referred as “formalism,” focuses on newness and originality, emphasizing new styles that contribute to the linear development of art history. And this artistic philosophy marginalizes women and people of color. Yet, if the basis for the fine art education in this country requires a “focus on the 21st Century Skills” as it is stated in the committee’s comments on page 1 of Kindergarten, it must be brought to the committee’s attention that globally the majority of the population are people of color. In the United States, in the 21st century, the majority of the population will be people of color, not Euro-Americans. People of color are contributing more to the population growth in this country than Euro-Americans. According to Duane Preble in his publication, “Artforms,” “ethnic minorities already make up the majority of students in many American public school systems. By the year 2015, according to the United Nations, only one of the world’s largest urban areas will be located in the United States.” To continue to teach from a Eurocentric “mainstream” perspective would defeat the concept of educating students to become global citizens and to a certain extent negate their existence and erase their own self-identity. The richness of this country has traditionally been its diversity. In ancient America, Asia and some of Africa, the thinking process of time and living was cyclic, not linear.

Perhaps an attempt should be made to also include both non-western and western ideology. The postmodernist art movement of the 1980s and early 1990s was interested in intellectual theories and rejected claims to universality and claimed that no set of values can be utilized for all art situations. Furthermore, the postmodernist artist challenged “formalism” by challenging the hierarchies of visual art. If it is not possible to incorporate pluralism in art making, then perhaps the statement that the fine arts is a universal language should be revised, since this is an antiquated concept of the previous century. The concept of a universal language is non-existent, according to contemporary visual artists. This idea is consistent with the concept of “art for arts’

sake” which refers to art which claims to derive its value from formal qualities rather than from intellectual, political or social content.

The aesthetics factors of visual art in this country are derived from European formalism, influenced by the Gestalt theory of psychology formulated by an Austrian in the 1890s and then appropriated into visual art and design at the turn of the 20th century with the arrival of modernism. It was developed to verify that the whole was more than the sum of its parts in composition and design. If the committee does want to increase the awareness and appreciation of diversity of cultures through art, then it might be necessary to include a study in multiculturalism which embraces and recognizes cultural diversity and contemporary art which seeks to express concepts/issues, the environment, gender, technology, iconography, and a spiritual dimension. Perhaps even the influence of postmodernism would be necessary to expose the movement that rejected the universal meaning and hierarchies of art and embraced intellectual theories, intermedia, installation, semiotics, deconstruction, recycling past styles and themes, while even mixing ideas/objects, layering, juxtapositioning, and appropriating.

Under the First Draft, June 2012, TEKS Fine Arts, Edits of the Art: Kindergarten, Grades 1-5

The text in italics and bold are suggestions that I am making to the First Draft.

On page 1, section a-2 of Art, Kindergarten, in the first sentence, under the Four Basic strands, there is a deletion of the word, “performance” and substantiated by non-relevant to visual arts. However, there is a discipline of performance art in higher education which is not related to the drama discipline. In contemporary art, there is much art expression through “performance art.”

On page 1, section a-2, in the third sentence, I suggest an addition to the sentence.
“Students rely on personal observations and perceptions, which are developed through increasing visual literacy and sensitivity to : surroundings, communities, memories, imagining, and life experiences and *story-telling and family*, as sources for thinking about planning, and creating original artworks.”

On page 1, section a –2, in the last sentence, I suggest an addition to the sentence.
“While exercising meaningful problem-solving skills, students develop the lifelong ability to make informed judgments *and initiate a foundation to appreciate and value visual art.*”

On page 2, section (b) Knowledge and Skills, under section (1) (B),
“identify Elements of Art: line, shape, color, texture, and form, and the Principles of Design: pattern/repetition and balance in the environment.”

I want to question if not all of the Elements of Art and Principles of Design will be studied? The visual elements of art include line/points, shape, color, value, texture, space, and time/motion. The principles of design include unity/harmony, balance, scale/proportion, emphasis/contrast, movement/rhythm, variety, and pattern/repetition.

I would also suggest that instead of using the word “form” in the Elements of Art that the word “shape” be used in lieu. The word “form” has various meanings, particularly in visual art, it can also mean its composition and the physical appearance of something. It can also refer to the solidity or three-dimensionality of a drawn or painted object.

On page 2, section (2) (c), I would suggest that installation art be added or would this be too involved for a kindergarten student? I think that the student could use shoe boxes to construct box art or altar installations.

Under Art, Kindergarten, page 3, the first section (3), in the second sentence, “The student demonstrates an understanding of art history and culture ... and a variety of cultures, ***both western and non-western.***”

In section (3) (B), I suggest that the word “friend”s be added in, “share ideas in artworks about personal experiences such as family ***and friends***, and develop ...”

In section (3) (C), I suggest the following: “identify the uses of art ***decisions and experiences*** in everyday life.”

In section (4) (B), I suggest the following: “express ideas about original artworks ***and learn about the artistic significance and production of art in other cultures, such as the importance and use of Mexican bark paper, amate, or painting of native american tempees, etc.***”

On page 5, Art Grade I, under section (1) (B), I also question if all the elements of art and principles of design will be taught.

On page 5, Art Grade 1, under section (2) (C), I question if installation art will be included.

On page 5, Art Grade 1, under section (3) (C), I suggest that female visual artists like Frida Kahlo, Mary Cassatt, Artemisia Gentileschi, Faith Ringgold, etc. be studied.

On page 8, Art Grade 2, under (b) knowledge and skills in section (1), I would suggest that in the last sentence an adjustment be made.

“Students use what they see, know, and have experienced, ***such as familiar narratives***, as sources for examining, understanding, and creating artworks.”

On page 8, Art Grade 2, under (3) (A), I would suggest that the word “***content***” replace the word “meanings.” I would also suggest that artwork produced by female artists and people of color artists be included in the variety of artwork.

On page 9, Art Grade 2, under (3) (C), I would suggest that the phrase that art contributes to the improvement of the quality of life be added to the sentence.

On page 9, Art Grade 2, under (4) (A), I would like to know if the student could begin to analyze and interpret their own artworks, in order to contribute to the higher level of thinking skills.

On page 11, Art Grade 3, under (1) (A), the comment that symbols are appropriate for higher grade levels, would it be appropriate to teach the students about color associations and their significance at this grade level?

On page 11, Art Grade 3, under (1) (B), are the entire elements of art and principles of design incorporated in the students studies? Isn't value a property of color?

On page 12, Art Grade 3, under (2) (C), I would like to suggest that the students produce installation art, such as Day of the Dead or Ancestral Celebration altars, and new media, such as animation. The animation production is really quite simple. I had students produce animation videos from Elementary levels. They wrote their own stories, collaborated, did the artwork, story book, and filmed it. An adult visiting artist did the editing for them.

On page 12, Art Grade 3, under (3), I would like to add that the student demonstrates an understanding and appreciation of vernacular art of his or her community.

On page 12, Art Grade 3, under (4) (A), I would suggest that the student examine the artworks of self, peers, and historical and contemporary artists, but also outsider artists, self-taught artists, and local artists.

On page 13, Art Grade 3, under (4) (C), I would suggest that some written essays or reports be interpretations of artwork produced by the student, or peers, or artists.

On page 14, Art Grade 4, under (a) (2), I would suggest that under:
"Students rely on personal observations and perceptions which are developed through increasing visual literacy and sensitivity to: surroundings, communities, memories, *narratives*, imaginings, and life experiences as sources for thinking about planning, and creating original artworks."

On page 14, Art Grade 4, under (a) (2), I would suggest that on the last sentence, a phrase stating that *students are expected to develop an appreciation for visual art* be added.

On page 16, Art Grade 4, under (2) (C), I would suggest that installation art be added.

On page 16, Art Grade 4, under (4) (), I would suggest that the student consider using some type of text using phrases, or coded words, into his or her artmaking.

On page 17, Art Grade 5, under (a) (2), I would suggest that in the last sentence I comment be added to emphasize the expectation that the student needs to initiate a commitment to become a global citizen.

On page 19, Art Grade 5, under (4) (a), I would suggest that a phrase be added to include the examination of utilized media in the art production. I would also add a sentence that it is the expectation or objective of the student to learn to appreciate art and integrate it into their own personal lives.

First Draft, June 2012, TEKS, Fine Arts: Middle School Art, Grades 6, 7, & 8

On page 1, Art Grade 6, under (a) (2), in the last sentence, I would that a comment that expectations of the students are to become contributing members of society and also global citizens.

On page 2, Art Grade 6, under (2) (A) add the concepts of memory, and self-representation.

On page 3, Art Grade 6, under (2) (c), add installation art, and new media.

On page 4, Art Grade 7, under (2), add an appreciation and integration of art into their own lives.

On page 5, Art Grade 7, under (2) (A), add global society.

On page 6, Art Grade 7, under (2) (c), add installation art.

On page 6, Art Grade 7, under (3), perhaps the word to define the respect for traditions and diverse culture is “Pluralism.”

On page 6, Art Grade 7, under (4) (B), the interpretation of the artist’s intention is referred to as “intentionalism.” There are two versions of it; actual intentionalism and hypothetical intentionalism. Actual intentionalism is the view of the artwork as the artist meant it to be. Hypothetical intentionalism is the view of the artwork as an ideal viewer surmises the artist’s intent to have been.

On page 9, Art Grade 9, under (4) (B), the analyzing of artwork could be referred to as “intentionalism” and “cognitive meaning”. The intentionalism has already be defined. The cognitive meaning refers to comments on the artistic style, artistic movement, and stylistic approach of a work of art. However, this theory of cognitive functioning perhaps is taught best at a higher grade level.

First Draft, June 2012, TEKS, Fine Arts, High School Art

Art Level I, page 1, under (b) (1) Introduction:

I would suggest that on the fourth sentence an addition be made at the end which could state that,

“Students develop relevant aesthetic and cultural awareness through exploration leading to creative expression *and discourse*.”

Art Level I, page 1, under (b) (2) Introduction:

I would suggest an addition and that the third sentence should state that,

“Students rely on personal observations and perceptions, which are developed through increasing visual literacy and sensitivity to surroundings, communities, memories (*collective, popular, and*

counter), imaginings, and life experiences (*self-identity and reclamation*), as sources for thinking about, planning, and creating original artworks.”

Art. Level I, page 1, under (a) (2):

The last sentence can state that students are expected to become contributing members of society and global citizens.

Art Level I, page 2, under (1) (A):
and *memory* to the sentence.

Art Level I, page 3, under (2):

“Creative expression. The student communicates ideas through original artworks using a variety of media with appropriate skills. Students express their thoughts and ideas creatively, while challenging their imaginations, fostering reflective thinking, and developing disciplines effort *and strong work ethic*, and progressive problem-solving skills.”

Art Level I, page 3, under (2) (A):

“...problem-solving through direct observation, original sources, experiences, *narrations*, and imagination;”

Art Level I, page 3, under (2) (D):
Add *social commentaries*.

Art Level I, page 3, under (2) (F):
Add *experimental media*.

Art Level I, page 3, under (3) (E):

Add that the student must *research and reclaim self-identity or self-representation to empower self and provide source for artmaking*.

Art Level II, page 6, under (c), Knowledge and skills, (1) on the second sentence:

“Students use what they see, know, and have experienced, *reclaimed, and refigured* as sources for examining, understanding, and creating original artworks.”

Art Level II, page 6, under (C) (1) (A), add :

Use visual comparisons to illustrate concepts and ideas for original artworks from direct observation, original sources, experiences, *narration*, and imagination.”

Art Level II, page 7, under (1) (D), add:

“explore suitability of art media and processes ...(such as content, meaning, message, *appropriation*, and metaphor), ...”

Art Level II, page 7, under (2) (F), I suggest the following be added:

“select from a variety of art media and tools to communicate ...photography, *installation art, constructivism*, and digital art and media.”

Art Level II, page 8, under (3), on the third sentence, insert:

“Students develop global awareness and *plurality, a respect for diversity*, the traditions and contributions of diverse cultures.”

Art Level II, page 8, under (3) (C), insert:

“collaborate on community-based art projects, *such as public art*; and”

Art Level II, page 8, under (4) (C), insert:

“utilize responses to artwork critiques to make decisions about future directions in personal work; *examine and research the concept of identity as impetus for creating own iconography, a personal coded visual language.*”

Art Level III, page 12, under (3), add:

“ the student demonstrates an understanding of diverse customs, ...and contemporary visual cultures *and artmaking.*”

Art Level III, page 12, under (3) (B), add:

“distinguish the correlation between ... specific characteristics *and influences* of various cultures and contemporary artworks;”

Art level III, page 12, under (3) (C), it is stated that the student is expected to develop a plan of action for career, entrepreneurial, avocational and relevant art opportunities with a global economy. Does the school have the resources to support this? I think that this might be a bit demanding. Perhaps requiring the students to learn to research and prepare grant applications for art funding for specific projects might be more realistic.

Also if the student is being required to do community projects, then the student could be required to investigate material techniques and funding sources for such as project, such as a mural. Then the student could also be required to prepare a plan of action, prototype, budget, calendar, and contract. This might be more realistic and within reach and possibilities. Other possibilities might be local exhibitions in the community focusing on the history or interests of that community, such as a photographic exhibition of the history of a community. The student could seek old photos from members of that community and curate such an exhibition. The student could also prepare the proposals to secure the funding and publicity.

Art Level III, page 12, under (4) (A), add the following:

“interpret, evaluate, and justify artistic decision in artworks based on ...and a variety of visual ideas, *and understanding of creative formal issues.*”

Art Level III, page 12, under (4) (B), insert

“evaluate and analyze artworks using a method of critique (such as describe the artwork, analyze the way it is organized, interpret the artist’s intention, *such as concepts of intentionalism and cultural refiguring*, to evaluate the success of the artwork.”

Art Level III, page 12, under (4) (C), I suggest that the student insert more effort in research of his art production by writing an essay, instead of just an artist’s statement. The essay would require research and quotes and influences of art trends, artists, and other sources.