

Visual literacy in RE teaching and learning

Rachel Woods

Activities to complement the 3Rs visual literacy toolkit



RESPOND

Familiarisation sketch: pupils draw a thumbnail sketch of the work of art with main compositional elements and shapes as a good starting point to engage in ways of seeing the artwork.

Mind mapping exercise: pupils write their first responses as chains of thoughts, feelings and ideas as a mind-map with key questions to start them off.

Answers on a postcard: pupils write down their first response and feelings on a postcard, each could read it out to affirm the validity of individual responses and begin to build a community of ideas about the artwork.

'Be an art detective' draw a large line drawing for the whole class to add detail as information is gathered, for example using large post-it notes under headings or key questions. The evidence gathered through stages one and two RESPOND and RESEARCH can be collated within the REFLECT stage of the investigation process.



RESEARCH

Group research: different sections of the RESEARCH stage can be delegated to pairs or groups of pupils, with each pair or group,

gathering evidence and then presenting it to the class.

Colour matching: pupils use paint charts to cut out colour match with parts of the

artwork. Collage these as a colour palette on paper. Mix colours in paint to match and record in a sketchbook or on a group collage alongside the paint chart pieces.

Colour and symbol: pupils consider whether the artist used particular colours to symbolise certain meanings. Evidence collected can be recorded.

Marks, lines and messages: pupils note in writing and drawing how the artist has used lines and marks. Explain what message the artist is trying to express through lines and marks and whether it is effective, and why.

Light and dark: pupils describe the kind of light effects the artist has used, what time of day, weather effects, etc. Pupils record the direction of light and light source in thumbnail in sketchbook or on group image.

Describe the moods that have been expressed and how? If the artist has used light symbolically how does this add to the meaning of the work of art?

Texture and feeling: pupils note how the way the artist has used texture in their mark making or creation of a surface to express emotion or to add to the overall message of the painting.

Significant shapes: pupils note down ways in which the artist has used shapes to express emotion or ideas.

Shapes and meaning: pupils physically mime shapes in relation to a series of emotions or a scenario to reinforce the expressive power shapes have.

Instant responses: pupils write down one word responses to their understanding of the mood expressed and build a 'mood' map showing the connection between mood and content using adjectives to



describe the mood paired with a noun referencing colour or object in the painting as evidence for example menacing sky.

The Japanese Haiku poem structure can stimulate thinking and record ideas creatively. Pupils are given a reproduction of a piece of artwork and are asked to write down nouns, adjectives and verbs, using the 5,7,5 syllable structure as their first response to the artwork, one of which describes the season that the artwork suggests. See www.toyomasu.com/haiku/ These words can be moved around to create different structures and meanings to enhance expressive poetic effect.

Compositional notes: pupils record notes in sketchbooks.

Materials checklist: pupils make a list of materials and tools that they think have been used to make the artwork. Describe how the materials have been used in making marks, chiselling out the form, constructing shapes.

Artwork recipe: pupils could record the process and materials as a recipe structuring information under 'tools and materials, method and conclusions'.

Storyboard: pupils write a paragraph about what they think is happening perhaps as a storyboard or comic strip and where appropriate include speech bubbles to describe any interaction between figures or other subjects.

Art on a theme: pupils compare examples of artwork on a similar theme and discuss different interpretations.

Mix and match art genre: pupils work with a mixture of artwork examples and group them into similar genre or themes and compare subject, content and context.

Locating the origins: pupils mark on a world map where the work of art was made to help them consider the wider relationships.

Artist profile: pupils make an artists' profile containing biographic details etc.

Historical information: pupils mark the place where the artist came from on the map and think about the possible influences on the artwork.

Compare and contrast artwork on a theme: pupils research and describe other works of art that have the same subject matter.

Art critic: pupils design a newspaper article about the artist in relation to a headline, for example 'Artist paints pictures of suffering'.

Art debate: pupils prepare arguments through researching artist and art work around a topic for debate topic for example 'Artists should only make objects that communicate about beauty', 'Artists should not use their art to preach