

Amanda Vroman uses social media (often Instagram) to help her high school students Understand Art Worlds. Below, she describes her assignment.

Connecting to the Art World Assignment

This is a part of Understanding the Art World that my students STRUGGLED with. It is something that they always marked themselves low on during reflections. I struggled with facilitating it. I do art history activities and guide students towards artists I think they will connect with, however, their discovering stopped when they left my classroom. A couple years ago, I created my "Connecting to the Art World" assignment to promote more independence in discovering the art world. It is a simple concept, and it has had a very positive impact on the culture of my classroom. I create a post in Google Classroom for students to respond to with a link to a work of art, or demo that they have found through social media/youtube/internet searches. Along with their link, they respond with a sentence or two about why they chose it, what they like it about, what they learned from it, and how it broadened their understanding of the art world. I post the assignment every Monday and it's due every Friday. I encourage students to complete this outside of class, or with extra time they might have after clean up. It takes maybe 10 minutes to complete so I do not feel guilty about assigning work outside of class.

I have been doing this assignment for a long time now, and the impact that it has had is HUGE. My advanced students swear to the beginning students that is totally worth doing. I get emails throughout the summer with links to processes students want to try, or things they think are super cool. Students come in throughout the week asking if I have watched their link yet because they are excited to discuss new possibilities and discoveries with me. I only have students for 12 weeks due to the trimester schedule, so it's also a way for me to quickly learn more about students interests. Many students use Instagram to start following artists and continue to be exposed to artists and ideas after they leave my class. I feel like I am sneaking them art vitamins! Does every student do it every week? No. Do some students complain? Yes, but, the overall impact is worth it! When I survey students at the end of the trimester, I always get an overwhelming response that I should keep the assignment for future classes.

The post that I assign looks like this:



Connecting to the Art World # 7
Due Jan 18

Posted Jan 14



Connecting to the Art World # 8
Due Jan 25

Posted 10:29 AM

DUE DATE: January 18, 2019

REMEMBER: NO LATE WORK ACCEPTED ON THIS ASSIGNMENT.

0

Turned in

22

Assigned

Post a link to a demo, or a work of art. Specifically explain why chose this link. Your answer will be in complete sentences. You will include the following details that pertain to your choice.

- 1) How it relates to your current work.
- 2) What you learned from the demo or work of art.
- 3) Why you like it. Be specific, and use evidence from the work or demo to support why you like it.
- 4) How this link will influence your future work.
- 5) How it broadened your understanding of the art world.

[View Question](#)

Tips -

- I do not give them specific artists to follow. I have gone back and forth on this and decided against it simply because I cannot control what other people post and do not want to be seen as endorsing something that might not accurately represent my district. Artists are expressive, and sometimes their opinions are controversial.
- I do encourage them to start with their interests. We discuss how that can be an interest in a specific topic such as pets, or a medium such as watercolor.
- We talk about how to save posts on Instagram and create folders. I show them my folder of art posts that I have saved.
- If using youtube, we discuss following channels and saving videos.
- Most students end up looking at art outside of class, but there are students who simply struggle with remembering to post. I encourage students to set reminders on their phones, or schedule a specific day during the week to stay with me during seminar to complete this assignment.

- The first few weeks I am stickler about grammar and answering the questions posted thoroughly. However, I loosen up on that as the trimester continues. My overall goal here, is that students are discovering art on their own terms.
- Each post is worth points. Half the points account for posting, and half the points for a response. I made it so that by the end of the trimester the total points are equal to a project grade.
- I do not accept late work on this. I am usually very flexible on due dates, but the whole point of this is that it challenges students to create a habit of looking at art. It also keeps the assignment simple from a grading perspective.
- Be open about what art is. I allow food art, tattoos, floral, comics, and fan art.
- Some students will use this to find demos for their own projects and some will find awesome things that you could never do in a classroom. Each week is something new!
- Sharing your favorites shares from the week helps encourage interest.
- I like using Google Classroom for this because it keeps everything organized.

Impacts -

- I recently found a former student of mine on instagram who had started his own art account. He is completing a dual enrollment program with my district and a tech school so he has not been able to fit art classes in his schedule. He originally took art because it was a requirement and now he has own Instagram account as an artist!
- Students are learning techniques I would have never thought to teach, or don't know how to do myself. This assignment has pushed me even further into the facilitator role and I LOVE it.
- I also enjoy that I have found a purpose for those extra minutes at the end of class for students who clean up quickly. Done cleaning up? Get out your technology and look at art!
- I learned that I have a large group of students who are interested in fibers, weaving, and embroidery. These are all processes that I knew very little about but they are now process that are taking place in my classroom.

- I am a huge advocate for meeting students where they are. Students are on social media! Teaching students to use social media responsibly and as a way to connect is a huge 21st century skill. Professionals in all careers use social media as a way to promote and network. Why not teach that now?

Amanda Vroman © 2019