

Students-at-Work and the Studio Habits of Mind

Teachers may emphasize any or all of the Studio Habits of Mind during Students-at-Work sessions. Because Students-at-Work sessions always involve working with art materials, Develop Craft: Technique is a central goal. But as mentioned, this Studio Habit of Mind is rarely taught in isolation. In the individual consults with students, teachers often cluster instruction about a number of Studio Habits of Mind that help students understand the connections among habits and how to integrate them into their working process. Certain clusters of Studio Habits of Mind occur together frequently in a single student-teacher interaction. (For instance, Develop Craft: Technique was often layered with Observe, Envision, and Reflect: Question and Explain, and Evaluate).

STUDIOS HABITS OF MIND ARE TAUGHT IN CLUSTERS

The two examples that follow show how teachers, depending on their goals, emphasize differing clusters of Studio Habits in their interactions with students during a given studio work session.

INTRODUCING THROWING: CENTERING ON THE WHEEL PROJECT (EXAMPLE 14.1)

This example is taken from a Vase Project introduced in mid-October in Jason Green's introductory year-long ceramics course for 9th-12th-graders at Walnut Hill. Looking at Jason's interactions with two students over the course of his centering lesson, we see how even the seemingly narrow technical issue of

trimming a pot can become a vehicle for students to develop the disposition to think with a wide range of Studio Habits of Mind. Two students, one advanced, one a beginner, are having technical problems with trimming. Jason asks questions that help them verbalize their technical difficulties and see what in their working process led to these difficulties. He patiently demonstrates techniques, observes the students, and guides their hands as they try techniques. He looks with them at other finished pieces to get ideas for successfully solving their own problems. When a beginning student is discouraged and wants to destroy the pieces she has built, Jason encourages her not to be too hasty in her evaluation, and to Stretch and Explore in her Envisioning of the possibilities:

You should save a lot of your stuff even if you think it's not working right now, because since these vases are going to be put together out of different parts, you might be able to use a lot of the parts . . . even if it doesn't come out exactly the way you want it. It might not matter because you might cut it up and use it a whole new way.

Jason thus helps these students Engage and Persist through work they are finding very difficult. He frequently encourages them to keep trying and assures them that they will succeed. When the beginning student complains that she feels so far behind, Jason doesn't dismiss her concern, but responds in a reassuring way:

Don't worry about that. Just [laughing] just don't worry about it, because your skills will catch up. You missed some classes so . . . most everyone in

here is two classes ahead of you, so they've had a lot more hours on the wheel. So it's easy to look around and see that everyone's making really tall things and you're not right now, but don't worry about it. It's still really early in the trimester so just keep practicing, and it'll come along OK.

When an advanced student feels frustrated with her lack of facility to achieve the delicate lip she envisions, he encourages her, saying she just needs to practice and showing her the precise skills necessary. He also makes sure to spend some time with her looking over her other work, pointing out its many strengths, and praising her on her progress so far, thus helping her Engage and Persist.

As these two students wrestle with trimming their vessels, Jason works with them to solve technical problems and thus Develop Craft. He also encourages them to look closely at their work and his demonstrations (Observe), consider their progress (Reflect: Question and Explain, and Evaluate), imagine new possibilities (Envision), move beyond their current capabilities (Stretch and Explore), and stick with it through difficulties (Engage and Persist).

CONNECTING WORLDS:

SECRET RITUAL VESSELS PROJECT (EXAMPLE 14.2)

During her Secret Ritual Vessels Project in the middle of her second-semester course for 9th-graders at the Boston Arts Academy, Beth Balliro's interactions with students focus on yet another cluster of Studio Habits of Mind. An ongoing theme in her 9th-grade class is to build connections between students' art-making and their daily lives. Through a homework assignment for which she asks students to "spy" on how the people they know use various vessels in their daily lives, Beth inspires her students to notice the world around them and connect it to their learning in art. The day's lesson continues this focus on vessels, shifting to their ritual uses. Each student has been assigned a type of vessel to create secretly (an heirloom, something to hold holy water, a cat's water bowl), and they are to make a set of three vessels of this type. The aim of the "secret assignment" is to help students connect with the project (Engage and Persist), think about the function of the objects (Reflect: Question and Explain, and Evaluate), and create symbolic forms that the assigned function suggests (Envision, Express). Also, as is often the case in Beth's classes, her assignment ties into the school's humanities curriculum as she seeks to forge

links between students' own work and artworks produced throughout other times and cultures (see also Examples 4.1 and 12.2). This class builds on earlier field trips to the nearby Museum of Fine Arts. Beth often provides packets of articles, images, and information that explore artists, mythologies, or religious cultures. She wants her students to find links between their works and those of recognized artists.

Beth also wants her students to be able to articulate the thought behind their work—the process they went through in creating the work, the decisions they made, and the relationship of the work to values of subcultures that they understand (Reflect: Question and Explain, and Evaluate). It is not uncommon for students to spend part of the class thinking about a certain type of art, making written and/or drawn notes, and writing in their journals. Articulation is of particular importance to Beth in working with this urban population, and she sees it as a central skill to help these students gain recognition in the broader art world. In this class, the Students-at-Work session is followed by a critique, where students look at each other's vessels set out on tables for display, write their observations about each vessel, and guess the type of "secret assignment" for one vessel.

As the Students-at-Work session starts, Beth directs energy to getting students excited about the project. The prompt of their assigned secret vessel serves to get them interested and focused (Engage and Persist), and to find ways to adapt their own ideas to their assigned form (Express). As students consult with Beth about their ideas, they do a lot of whispering of their ideas to keep their assigned form "top secret."

Early on, Beth consults with students on their ideas (Express), on how to think about their assigned form by imagining and planning possibilities (Envision), and on how to connect it to the idea of ritual (Express, Stretch and Explore, Understand the Art World: Communities). For instance, one girl aims to make hers look like a family heirloom wine glass. Beth talks with her about the idea of making it look "old." For students who have a hard time coming up with ideas, Beth asks them questions or helps them consider what the key functional aspects would be. She encourages their thinking of different possible ways to realize the form (Envision) while keeping true to the constraints of the assignment. Beth also reiterates the key idea of functionality in her interactions. For instance, for a student who is to create a vessel that transports something, she suggests thinking about making a lid for it because that

would make moving its contents easier. To a student making a very small vessel, she reminds her, "Remember this is for a human, not a mouse. It's so cute. But try to see if you can actually use it, 'cause I'd love for you to have something that you can actually use" (Envision).

As students move further along in the development of their form, Beth works with them to think about what they are making (Reflect: Question and Explain). She talks with them about the strengths and weaknesses of their pieces. For instance, she tells one student, "You've got a solid form and an amazing idea. What I would say now is deal with craftsmanship. Try to make it clean, perfect, beautiful, solid." She also challenges students to think about what their vessel will communicate to others (Express). For a student who is making a water bowl for a cat, Beth asks, "How do we know that this isn't to feed a big cat?" The student thinks and asks if she could write the word "bath" on it. Beth challenges her, "See if you can do it without words" (Stretch and Explore). With this assignment, and in each of these brief interactions, Beth reiterates the challenge to make an object's form express its use, a key artistic concept in ceramics. This project challenges students to move beyond their usual concepts of vessels and their uses (Stretch and Explore, Understand the Art World: Domain).

INDIVIDUALIZING DURING STUDENTS-AT-WORK SESSIONS

The examples from Jason and Beth show how teachers' goals for a given class or assignment permeate the casual, impromptu interactions during Students-at-Work sessions. However, another powerful aspect of the Students-at-Work structure is that it allows teachers to differentiate instruction without upsetting the general flow of work for the group. The two examples that follow show different ways in which teachers use the work session to individualize the curriculum.

DIFFERENTIATING FOR STUDENTS OF VARIOUS ABILITY/EXPERIENCE LEVELS: ABSTRACTION PROJECT (EXAMPLE 14.3)

It's the second semester in Jim Woodside's multi-age drawing class at Walnut Hill. Some of the advanced students are taking this course for the second or even third year. All the students have had at

least a full semester of drawing, experimenting with different types of materials and drawing from the figure and from still life. With this foundation, Jim's students are ready to move on to abstract drawing. Jim creates assignments that engage the wide range of abilities and experiences of his students and then adjusts his instruction to individual needs during the Students-at-Work sessions.

Today Jim has set up a massive tower of twisted paper stretching from ceiling to floor with lighting accentuating the abstract forms present in this still life. Students have positioned their easels around the structure, and, charcoal in hand, they prepare to draw. As they look at the still life and begin to set up their compositions, Jim tells the students to think in terms of dark and light shapes on the paper and says, "You can't look at it and get it wrong . . . so feel at ease." Over the next 3 hours, students draw multiple studies on newsprint. Ultimately, each chooses one of his or her sketches to develop into a larger finished drawing.

Over the course of this working session, Jim brings the class together several times for Critiques. He punctuates the Students-at-Work sessions with mini-Demonstration-Lectures about how to observe and draw shapes and the still life. Jim balances the need to develop less-experienced students' observational skills and techniques with challenging students with stronger backgrounds in drawing to enhance their more developed skills.

Jim has designed a project that will accommodate this wide range of learners. Considering their drawing experiences from the first semester and the technical skills they developed, he now wants to challenge students to explore the concept of abstraction—a concept that Jim recognizes may be difficult for his students. In an interview, he tells us:

Abstract art, to a lot of people, is sort of fringe and something that eccentrics and intellectuals talk about. I mean, these are stereotypes about, caricatures of it. And I'm not saying to them that I understand it all myself, you know. Or that I like it all. . . . But I want them to know that it really grows out of the same stuff that all art grows out of. And they can learn to evaluate it, and they can learn to understand it themselves. And the best way for them to do it is . . . to begin to do it themselves. And that's what I mean. And so . . . what I'm doing here is a little bit artificial and forced, setting up a way for that to happen for them.

The large still life in the center of the room is not an uncommon set-up in Jim's class. Observing a still life, choosing compositions from different points in the room, creating multiple sketches with various materials, and working toward a more finished piece over the course of several weeks are all familiar activities by this point in the year. Jim deliberately decided to design an assignment similar in scope and feel to the representational drawing with which students had become comfortable earlier in the semester. He wants students to see the link between representational and abstract drawing. Briefly explaining that abstraction is an important art world concept (students are well aware of this but hesitant nonetheless), Jim gently encourages students to do what they always do when looking at a still life. "Draw what you see," he tells them. By now this phrase is a familiar mantra in the class, so students can easily prepare for this otherwise novel task of observing and trying to make sense of the crumpled paper still life. Over the course of the afternoon, students begin to see connections to the drawings they made earlier in the year: They see that they are still working with shapes and lines and value.

Helping students build a bridge between representational drawing and abstraction is the primary goal of the class. However, Jim adjusts how he talks to students according to their individual needs. In what follows, Jim works with two beginning students, one who is struggling with the assignment, and one who has more confidence, excitement, and skills.

At five separate times throughout the working session, Jim consults with a 9th-grader new to the school who has limited English skills. About a half hour into the class, Jim notices that this student's page is sparse and that he looks confused. Jim takes the student aside and spreads another student's work out on the floor. He asks the student to observe the series of sketches and notice how each drawing is different. By looking at the work, the student could see how his peer deliberately changed the way she thought about each drawing, purposely using different lines and patterns each time. During this mini-Critique, Jim not only supports the beginning student in overcoming his initial obstacles with the assignment (Engage and Persist), but also helps him refine his observational habits (Observe). Most important, through the example of a peer's success, Jim encourages the student to move beyond his current abilities and try new ways of seeing the still life (Stretch and Explore). As Jim explains to us later:

I want him to throw himself into the act of drawing. Have fun with it. He really needs to loosen up and really put forms down and manipulate them on the page, and in a big bold way. So I'm always trying to get him to do that, because he doesn't. He's always watching himself. There are all the other kids in the room. And he doesn't have as much experience. . . . But what I was really doing there was showing him an example of a kid from the previous day who I would say is in a somewhat similar situation. And I think giving him a real clue to how to go about it. That helps artistically for him. And also language, you know, he needs to see something. So I was trying to explain that in as simple terms as I could, but I know he didn't understand the whole of it. So giving him an example I thought helped.

A little later, Jim briefly checks in with the student again and encourages him to use the viewfinder, a tool for designing compositions that Jim has frequently employed and discussed in earlier observational drawing sessions (see Examples 4.3, 5.3, and 9.2). Returning to him later, Jim watches the student working and notices that he is looking at too small an area of the paper still life and is not attending to the larger shapes that would help him make the bridge between observation and abstraction. He sits at the student's drawing easel and demonstrates looking too closely at the paper and how it keeps him from seeing the structural forms in the twisted paper. By explicitly demonstrating both technical drawing skills and the *process* of observing, Jim encourages the student to develop new habits of looking. By drawing on his sketch and then referring to the still life, Jim shows the student how to see the large shapes and learn to improve his own technical drawing skills (Observe, Reflect, Develop Craft: Technique).

It's now halfway through the class, and the beginning student has made some progress in identifying and drawing large shapes. In his next consult, Jim encourages him to go even further in pushing the lights and darks by using a kneaded eraser on his drawing, a new technique for the student (Stretch and Explore). Jim demonstrates this process right on the drawing, so the student can see clearly how to juxtapose a white surface with a dark black shading to make the forms on his page look like the crumpled paper he is trying to draw (Develop Craft: Technique, Observe).

In the last few minutes of the class, Jim compliments the student's work (Engage and Persist) and gives him some final bits of technical advice, demonstrating how to use white charcoal to make his contrast even stronger (Develop Craft: Technique, Stretch and Explore).

Jim works quite differently with a more confident beginner. With the first student, Jim needed to help him engage with the assignment, use visual techniques to work around the student's limited English proficiency, develop basic drawing techniques, and start to develop a way of observing the structure of the still life that would help him eventually bridge to ideas of abstraction. This next student, on the other hand, starts off excitedly, with a clear plan of what he wants to do. For his first study, he has darkened his whole page and is using an eraser to depict where the light falls on the paper. Jim supports this idea but also encourages him to explore more of the central ideas of the abstraction in this phase by doing multiple studies rather than focusing so much on technique:

That's really good. That's a good idea, and it would be good for you, and I don't want to discourage that. But I also don't want in this drawing for you to get too much into refining that technique. I want you to think about how those shapes relate to the four sides of the paper. So on your next one, let your approach be a little more with that in mind (Stretch and Explore).

When Jim next returns to this student, he encourages him to explore abstraction further. He tells him to depart from drawing strictly what he observes and become more logical about what he puts on the paper. "I think you should proceed almost like it's a math problem. Like very logically." He shows him how he can develop a "system" for thinking about which lines should be dark and which should be light (Envision). He gives him some tools to do this. He tells him to develop a plan, such as making all the larger forms darker. When the student seems a bit hesitant ("Outline it?"), Jim explains a core idea of abstraction: "That way there's a purpose for what you're doing. It's not just decorating your drawing. And that logic is really important, especially in an abstract drawing. It gives you a sense of purpose and relationship to what you're doing" (Stretch and Explore, Understand the Art World: Domain).

After students have done several studies, Jim breaks up the working session with a Critique in

which he discusses each student's work. When he discusses one student's work, he comments that it seems to be the one that has gone furthest to abstraction, where you no longer easily connect it to its original source of the still life. He uses the student's piece to reiterate a central idea of abstract drawing. "It's a texture on a piece of paper, and it's a way of organizing a piece of paper. That's what abstract art is. You're taking references from the world and you're organizing them into a two-dimensional world of your own." Following this group critique, the second student walks up to Jim and talks with him about his piece, saying that he's not really pleased with how the lines are working, mentioning his ideas for further work. Jim offers suggestions and supports the student's ideas. Jim reiterates the idea that the goal is to explore options, reminding him "this is just a learning process here" (Stretch and Explore).

INDIVIDUALIZING FOR MULTIPLE AGENDAS: CREATING HAT AND VEST PROJECT (EXAMPLE 14.4)

While Jim's example is about individualizing for a range of experience and ability levels, Kathleen Marsh's story in this Students-at-Work session, taught near the beginning of her second-semester class with seniors at the Boston Arts Academy, is one of a teacher multitasking to keep students on track with the assignment at hand and to help individual students with their outside work.

It's the first day of the final semester for Kathleen's 12th-graders. There's a lot going on, and Kathleen must prepare her students for the final push of their high school art careers. They are in the process of applying to colleges and art schools or preparing for jobs upon graduation. Not only do they need to have their professional portfolios in order, they also need to meet their graduation requirements, which include showing and defending their work in a senior exhibition. The students are somewhat distracted by all these outside events and battling a case of spring semester "senioritis."

Kathleen has much to accomplish in this class session. She introduces students to the current assignment of a self-portrait wearing a hat and vest that they have designed and created out of paper. She also introduces them to what they will be doing over the course of the semester, as well as going over what, as seniors, they will be doing outside of the class. She gives an introduction to the course requirements and reviews the syllabus. Kathleen discusses

the defense process and her plans for curating the show and taking slides of finished work. Since students are putting together their final portfolios, she reminds them of this by introducing a several-week self-portrait assignment that will result in a finished value drawing that can be a "showcase piece" in their portfolios.

Today is the first installment of this self-portrait assignment. In this class, students create wearable paper hats and vests from oak tag that express something about their identity. In later sessions, they will make charcoal value drawings of themselves wearing the paper clothing. Today's portion of the assignment challenges students to both Envision and Express something about themselves, as they must imagine what the hats and vests they make now will convey about themselves, and how they will look as they wear them for their value drawings. As seniors, the students are accustomed to working independently. However, Kathleen monitors their progress on this assignment, including instructing and getting materials for students who are proceeding ahead of others to the next phase of the assignment.

While students create the hats and vests, Kathleen consults with each student about the progress of his or her portfolio and completion of tasks for the senior exhibition. This is in part an administrative task to make sure the students are on target in their application process, but it can also be a chance to model an important process of evaluation. For instance, Kathleen spends time with one student, looking over each piece of his portfolio, discussing ways of finishing some of the pieces, and identifying

which ones he should include in the senior show. She later explained that this is one of the strongest students in the class, but he had initially only selected two pieces to include in the show. Kathleen discussed working over the course of several years with this student on his tendency toward perfectionism and being overly self-critical.

The flexibility of the Students-at-Work session allows Kathleen to keep the group focused on their work, while also adapting to students' varying work paces on a multiphase assignment. In addition, she has many chances to address crucial issues with each student that are not tied explicitly to this class assignment. In a single working session, Kathleen is able to keep the class as a whole engaged in working (Engage and Persist), while connecting with individual students on issues central to their development as artists, such as the preparation of their portfolios (Reflect: Evaluate, Develop Craft: Studio Practice and Technique) and progress in applying to college and/or art school (Understand the Art World: Communities).

This chapter has illustrated how teachers use Students-at-Work sessions to keep their art-making goals at the center of the learning process while personalizing instruction to suit a range of student needs. The Studio Habits of Mind emphasized by an assignment sometimes take a back seat to habits of importance to a particular student at a given time. In the Critique structure, described in the chapter that follows, both general and personal goals become the focus.

Critique and the Studio Habits of Mind

Critiques, by their very nature, foster the Studio Habit of Mind of Reflect: Question and Explain and, especially, Evaluate—learning how to judge what makes one work better or more effective than another. However, in the Critiques we observed, learning to evaluate works was only one of many goals. In every Critique we analyzed, teachers intended to teach at least five of the Studio Habits of Mind.

TEACHING STUDIO HABITS OF MIND THROUGH CRITIQUE

Develop Craft

Looking at students' work collectively often provides illustrations of how particular techniques can function differently in different works, which can help students expand their ideas about craft. In addition, techniques are often offered as solutions to problems that students identify in works. For instance, in one of Jim Woodside's Critiques, he asked students to identify errors in perspective in their own work, and they worked together to figure out how to correct them.

Engage and Persist

Critiques can be highly motivating. Knowing that everyone is going to look at and comment on their work can spur students to put their full effort into it. In addition, the critique process can engage students by giving them new insights into their work. For instance, Jim often uses Critiques at the early stage of

a drawing to help students identify the potential of a piece and to get them excited about its possibilities. Midprocess Critiques can also help students work through difficulties in a piece, either by identifying unrecognized strengths in their work, or by offering specific advice on aspects that they could change. In Critiques, the current piece is treated as an opportunity for deeper commitment to work and learn. For instance, Jason tells a student, "The glaze is transparent because you put it on thin. But you can try re-firing that and put the same glaze on thicker."

Envision

As students stand before their work, they are encouraged to think about what would have happened if they had done it another way. For instance, Kathleen Marsh asks a student to think about how much white space he intended to leave in his self-portrait. Jim Woodside asks students to imagine how one student's drawing would look if she had fully drawn the leg rather than leaving it unfinished. Mickey Telemaque asks students to think of ways a given photo could heighten its focus on light as the subject. Frequently in Critiques, teachers also specifically ask students to envision how they will finish a piece, or what they envision working on next.

Even without direction, as students look at and discuss each other's work, they envision different possibilities for how the work could look. In a senior Critique session, students' comments frequently involve envisioning their own and other students' pieces differently. For instance, one student notes, "It would just be a really nice photo if that wasn't there and there weren't arms just showing."

Express

Critiques offer an important chance for students to get some distance and recognize some of the global properties conveyed in their work that they might miss while immersed in the process of making. In addition, Critiques offer a chance for students to hear how others interpret their work. One of Mickey's design students described finding out that while her intention in a flag design was to celebrate her native Puerto Rico by showing that it was so "hot," other students interpreted it as an image of burning the Puerto Rican flag. Critiques offer a testing ground for finding out how one's work communicates.

Observe

The type of observation most particular to Critiques is that of observing works in comparison to one another. During the process of making works, most of the observation involves students looking carefully at their own work, and in the case of observational drawing, looking at the relationship between the work and the referent. In Critiques, the focus shifts. Generally, observing in Critiques involves looking at your own work in the context of pieces created by other students or in relation to multiple drawings of your own. Teachers often encourage specific observational comparisons, such as when Kathleen asked students to notice what different colors contributed to the skin tones in students' portraits or when Jim asked students to compare the expressive effects of different types of line quality.

Reflect

Question and Explain. More so than at any other time in the studio class, reflecting about student work is highlighted during Critiques. Teachers strive to draw students into a discussion that moves beyond just noting what they like and dislike, and into observing in the context of particular artistic concepts. Critiques are often framed around a set of targeted questions, such as when Mickey asked his photography students, "Why is this a photograph about light? All photographs depend on light; how are these [for the light assignment] different from every other photograph?" Another example is when Beth Balliro asked students to guess the intended function of their fellow students' clay vessels and to start thinking about the relationship between the vessels' form and their ritual functions.

Evaluate. Critiques offer an important chance for students to evaluate their own and peers' work. Critiques often begin with the teacher asking which of the drawings students think work and why, or asking them to comment on what works or doesn't work in their own piece. Sometimes an evaluative process precedes the Critique; students might be asked to choose their best work to put up for critique. Evaluation in Critiques is often analytical. Rather than merely sorting "good" from "bad" work, students learn to identify which aspects of a work are most effective and which may detract from the effect of a piece. As Jason explains, "I really try not to say something's good or bad. I just say this is what it is communicating."

Stretch and Explore

Just seeing the range of work produced by the group may push individual students to expand their thinking about their own work. To foster the Stretch and Explore aspect of Critique, teachers assign projects that are likely to yield diverse results. For example, Jason Green spoke about deliberately choosing glazes that produce widely varying results in order to promote more student exploration. During Critiques, he invited students to analyze the results of their explorations of materials much as they would analyze a scientific experiment. When errors are the focus, they serve as a chance to diagnose and/or as an opportunity for a work to grow in new directions. But the responses that students receive in a Critique generally do not emphasize failures. Rather, Critiques offer suggestions for how to think about what can be seen in the work and how the student artist might explore other possibilities.

Understand the Art World

Domain. Teachers draw connections between student art and professional art, and they make allusions to historical art references as they point out features in students' work. They may tell students that their work reminds them of a particular artist, sometimes showing them a print or two. This informs students about the larger culture of art and art history, but its greater purpose appears to be to emphasize students' connections to the historical and current community of working artists. For instance, during a Critique, Jim Woodside commented on one student's developing a certain "electric line quality" and use of space in his work:

He's really finding a way to draw, a kind of language that's his own, that will succeed for him as he approaches different kinds of problems. But that's something that he came up with really on his own, playing around with this project [*pointing to self-portrait from previous class*]. And I certainly think it's something that he can take into the way that he draws something like this [*holding up a sketch that the student is currently working on*]. . . . It reminds me of a Dubuffet painting.

In this Critique, Jim identified aspects of a student's emerging style and tied it to the larger art world.

Teachers present Critiques as reflective processes, including evaluation, that happen in professional arts communities, and not merely as isolated elements of an art class. As Beth prepares 9th-graders for a Critique, for example, she explains that Critiques are part of being an artist and that some Critiques are meant to be about evaluation, while others focus more on other aspects of reflection.

Communities. The social aspect of Critique is one of its defining features. Teachers focus on how students learn to value responses from peers and on ways to offer respectful and constructive criticism to their peers. Critiques reinforce the idea that art-making is a communal process, not only a private activity. Art is made to be shown to others and discussed, and that can be learned through the social process of Critique.

INTEGRATING STUDIO HABITS OF MIND THROUGH CRITIQUE

The eight Studio Habits of Mind fostered by Critiques are usually not discussed separately, but rather are integrated flexibly during Critique sessions. This integration is illustrated by the following examples of Critiques from Jim Woodside's drawing class at Walnut Hill.

COMPARING WORKS: CONTOUR DRAWING PROJECT (EXAMPLE 15.1)

While each teacher we observed held a Critique at least once, Jim held multiple Critiques in nearly every class session of his multiage drawing class. These Critiques were not necessarily formal, lengthy discussions; sometimes they lasted only a

few minutes. However, Jim's consistent use of Critiques stresses the importance he places on coming together as a group to look at and discuss the work that has been done.

In the first class session of the year in Jim's drawing course, he introduces Critiques as a central but informal part of the routine:

What we'll do is, we'll draw for a while. Then we'll put some drawings up on the wall, and we'll start to look at them and talk about them. And that's something we'll do a lot in this class. Those of you that have had me before, we, we always do that—we draw, put the drawings up, talk about them.

After the students do a few quick drawings of the still life, some blind contour (in which students do not look at the paper but only at the referent) and some in which students look at both the still life and the drawing, Jim asks each student to hang a blind and nonblind drawing next to each other. Before beginning the discussion, Jim gives the students a specific thinking task to guide their observation and reflection: "Everybody take a look at their two drawings, and just think in your mind how to compare the two. Just to describe the difference between your two drawings." This task helps students integrate learning how to Observe with learning to Reflect. Jim encourages them to evaluate their works, asking which they preferred and why.

As students make comments, Jim acknowledges and expands on their responses in a positive and encouraging way. For instance, one student says of a blind drawing, "Notice all her details are not . . . it's detailed but it's not." Jim affirms her evaluation and draws this comment into its fuller meaning:

It's detailed but it's not. Yeah, that's really good. I couldn't have said it that well. That's very true. I mean, we have all the information here [*pointing to a section of the drawing*], we know it's there, yet it doesn't seem like it's overly precise, or overly worked.

In this first class session, he wants to ensure that students feel comfortable talking in the group, and his comments help them to Engage and Persist in the Critique process.

While Jim uses this Critique to create a positive social atmosphere, it also works to build students' understanding of key aspects of the assignment.

Through discussion, students come to recognize characteristic differences between blind and nonblind drawings. A few minutes into the Critique, Jim moves a pair of drawings that reflect this distinction well to the center of the wall and asks students to focus on them. Building on students' comments, Jim introduces the idea that while the nonblind drawings may have been more technically accurate, the blind drawings have a more direct expressive quality to them:

Even though this might, there's a certain accuracy that's stronger here [*pointing to a nonblind drawing*]. These things are placed more in position. But there's a kind of believability here [*pointing to a blind drawing*], and that's a word that I'll use a lot throughout the year, *believability*. What makes drawing interesting is how direct your relationship is to what you're looking at, OK? And here, the relationship is in a way very direct, very honest. . . . There's not other things in the way. Like your perception of how it should look.

While students talk frequently in this Critique, Jim carefully guides the discussion to center on this key point. Thus, through a process involving the Studio Habits of Observe and Reflect (both Question and Explain, and Evaluate), Jim helps students explore a key intended lesson about the relationship between Develop Craft: Technique and Express. Jim also pushes students to see how they could use what they learned in the blind drawings in the rest of their work:

Now obviously we don't do every drawing in the world covered up and sort of scribbling. But there's a really important lesson here in that—how can you bring some of this state of mind, in a way, to this [*pointing at a nonblind drawing*]? How can you bring this kind of . . . freedom or lack of inhibition into your work?

In this very first Critique of the year, Jim explicitly sets up the expectation that what you learn through Critique of a given assignment should be applied to your work more broadly: Jim challenges students to use the lessons from this assignment and Critique to Stretch and Explore beyond their usual habits of art-making.

As shown, Jim's Critiques help students integrate various Studio Habits of Mind. By encourag-

ing students to Engage and Persist in the Critique, Jim fosters an iterative process in which students practice Observing and Reflecting, while they also explore the relationship between Express and Develop Craft: Technique. In addition, he encourages students to Envision how they might use what they learned to Stretch and Explore beyond their usual drawing habits.

CRITIQUING THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS: FIGURES IN EVOCATIVE SPACE PROJECT (EXAMPLE 15.2)

Jim often uses Critiques as a way to guide a class and punctuate a working session. In this midsemester figure drawing session, students were meant to focus on the expressive potential of light and of the space between figures (Express, Develop Craft: Technique; see Examples 8.1 and 12.1). Jim has set up dramatic lighting and shows examples of professional artworks (reproductions of paintings by Hopper and Diebenkorn) that have the evocative sense of space and light that he emphasizes in the class assignment. Throughout the 3-hour class, Jim repeatedly holds short Critiques to keep students on track with this focus and also to help them make explicit what they are learning about expression.

Opening Critique

Jim begins the class with a Critique that serves as a transition from one class to the next, by focusing on high-contrast figure drawings from the previous session. Unlike the first class session that centered on getting students to talk, this quick Critique has no student discussion. A key purpose of this Critique is to get students quickly into the mind frame of working and to help them build connections between what they have done in the last session and what they will do today.

Jim notes the effectiveness of all the drawings and comments that he could really see how the students were building on their previous experiences. His praise serves both to encourage students and to reinforce the idea that assignments in the class connect to each other. With a long wooden pointer, Jim draws students' attention to different areas of each drawing as he comments on the high-contrast technique and how it helps students organize space, separate shapes, reduce a complex scene, and maintain the focus on light.

Jim's stated purpose is to get students back in the mind state of working. He tells them, "I want to put

you mentally to where you were last week." Jim's comments emphasize the thought process that went into making their drawings: "This shape may have been a lighter gray or toward the lighter end of the spectrum, but you make that decision to go black or white with every gray you see and what you end up with is an abstract composition."

In this, as in all his Critiques, Jim moves beyond discussing technique while simultaneously staying grounded in the work. Here he connects the use of a particular technique (high-contrast drawing) to more expressive properties in one student's drawing:

It starts to look to me almost like some Native American design, like an Incan blanket. . . . All that is, is a drawing technique, a pretty simple technique of high-contrast drawing, looking at something ordinary in the studio, and you start to move to this whole other realm of all sorts of things that are pretty magical and unusual and really have little to do with the scene we're drawing.

Jim chooses to focus on aspects of the drawings such as expression and light that will be central to the next assignment: He will assign students to do a drawing that focuses on the expressive, evocative properties of the space between two figures. Thus, this Critique, while seemingly a reflection on completed work, prepares students mentally for the coming work session and primes them for key ideas to come.

Critique of Sketches

After students complete a couple of quick sketches of two figures, Jim gathers the class around the array of sketches on the floor for a few minutes. Though he asks students a few questions, Jim is the primary speaker in this Critique, as well. In an interview, Jim explains that the purpose of this Critique was to help students envision their final drawings from the sketches and ensure that they understood the focus of the assignment. "It was to make sure that they had the maps before the journey starts." He also uses the Critique to get students "excited about possibilities of this little assignment by seeing that emotional things are already being said in the pictures."

Jim begins by integrating Observe, Envision, Reflect: Question and Explain, and Evaluate. As he surveys the drawings, he says, "I see plans starting

to form in your brains about how you are going to approach this." The group looks at and evaluates the sketches in terms of what they reveal about how students envision the final drawings.

Jim chooses two students' drawings and asks the class to compare their different approaches. One student has exaggerated the distance between the figures and another has made the figures small relative to the space in the room. After talking about the expressive aspects of the piece, Jim asks, "What's different about the choices [Student 1] made and the ones [Student 2] made?" He focuses students' attention on how the drawings treat space differently. This Critique helps students learn to observe their sketches for the purpose of envisioning a more finished drawing. Jim wants them to Reflect: Question and Explain, and to Reflect: Evaluate their sketches for what they are starting to Express, and then to see if they can Envision ways of stretching to heighten this expression.

Final Critique

After the working session, Jim holds a longer Critique that involves more student discussion. In this Critique, each student's work is carefully discussed. This Critique focuses on giving students a chance to Observe and Reflect: Question and Explain, and Evaluate what they have done in their work and to get some practice talking about work (Reflect: Question and Explain). After listening to students' general observations about the works, Jim focuses the questioning on which pieces have the strongest sense of dramatic, evocative light, a central focus of the assignment (Reflect: Evaluate). When students comment on a dramatic piece, Jim often expands on their comments. For instance, he talks about how one piece has the feel of a big movie set in which only a small area is lit up, and that area is where the action is. He ties this to a "pretty strong decision" the student has made in leaving much of the drawing empty. In this way, he models how to connect observations about Express with Develop Craft: Technique. For another student, he holds up a Hopper print for comparison of the dramatic power of light. When students comment that the drawing has an "outside feel" even though it is inside, Jim ties this observation about an expressive property to a more technical idea, showing how this effect results from how the student has highlighted multiple light sources. Again, Jim connects students' learning from practicing to Observe and

Reflect: Evaluate to the central idea of the assignment, which is to link technique and expression (Develop Craft: Technique and Express). His use of the Hopper print is intended to help students begin to connect their own art-making to other artists' work (Understand the Art World: Domain).

This Critique proceeds one-by-one through each piece, with students making observations and evaluating their own work and working process, and then listening to comments about it from Jim and the rest of the students. Suggestions for further work involve noticing an interesting aspect nascent in the work (Observe and Reflect: Evaluate) and figuring out ways it could be taken further (Envision and Stretch and Explore). For instance, Jim tells one student that she can work on hers without the models so that she can focus on heightening the contrasts. This suggestion connects to her other recent work (discussed in the opening Critique) that involved building up abstract compositions. Thus, this final Critique integrates all eight Studio Habits of Mind.

These examples of Critiques illustrate that Critiques can have a variety of structures and functions. A key strength is that they aim to help students integrate their learning and development of Studio Habits of Mind. Students are meant to learn how asking questions and explaining ideas can support evaluation of a piece, to connect their work to that produced by others in their class and throughout history, to observe how different techniques can produce different expressive effects, and to stretch beyond their usual habits to envision new possibilities for their work. Teachers can guide Critiques flexibly so that they highlight the integration of different Habits at different times. For instance, in the planning stage of a drawing, Critiques may focus more on tying Observe to Stretch and Explore and Envision. Students are meant to open up and explore a range of possibilities for their work. After the work is complete, the Critique may focus on tying Observe with Reflect: Question and Explain and Evaluate. Students are meant to figure out and describe what aspects of a work function well, which do not, and why.