

Improving Art History with Active Learning Methods

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Today's Goals

What is active learning?

Why use active learning methods in art history?

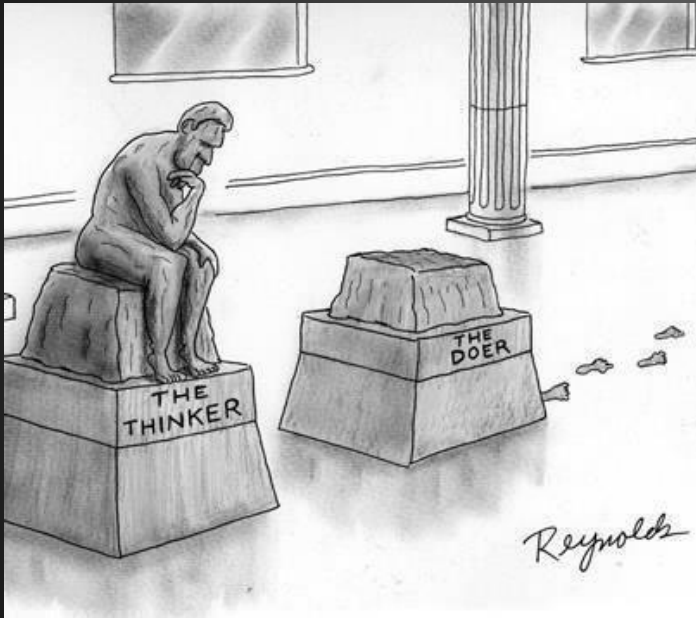
What are the challenges?

How to design active learning experiences.

Active v. Passive Learning Models



Why use active learning?



- Encourages higher order processing of course material
- Allows for peer-to-peer learning and productive collaboration
- Provides opportunities for formative assessment and feedback
- Supports creative inquiry and student-driven research
- Fosters personal investment in learning and intellectual curiosity

What prevents active learning in art history?



- Logistical constraints
- “Art in the Dark” culture
- Need to cover content

Designing Active Learning Experiences

- Goals and Learning Objectives
- Activities that support learning objectives
- Scaffolding knowledge
- Assessment strategy (not necessarily a grade!)

Achievable Goals for Active Learning Experiences in Art History

- Practice fundamental skills
 - visual analysis
 - techniques and terminology
 - contextual embedding
 - writing and communication
 - research and interpretation
- Reinforce key ideas and concepts
- Unpack challenging material
- Make broader connections

Practice fundamental skills

- Workshopping and review (writing/communication)
- Crowdsourcing an annotated bibliography (research)
- Partnering to create a drawing or sculpture from a verbal description (communication/ use of terminology)
- Slow looking and object-based learning (visual analysis)
- Student-generated rubrics (writing/communication)

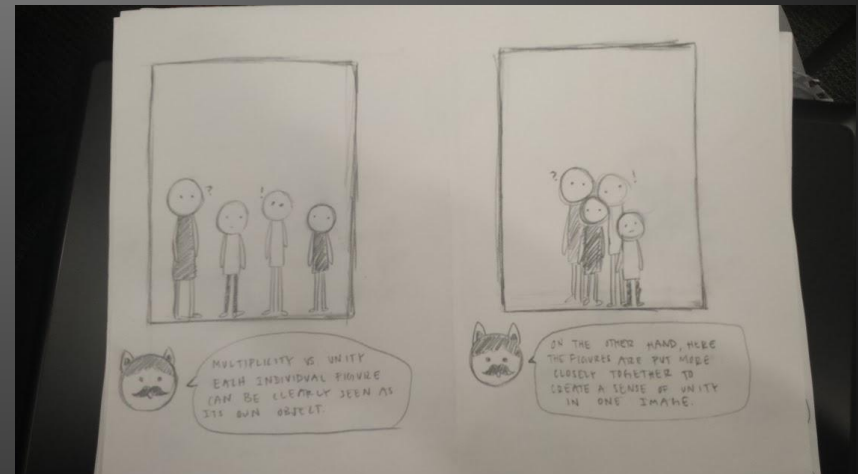
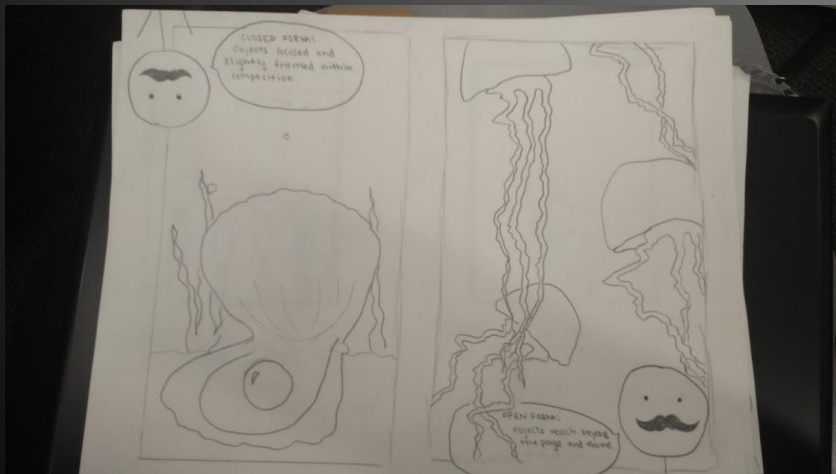
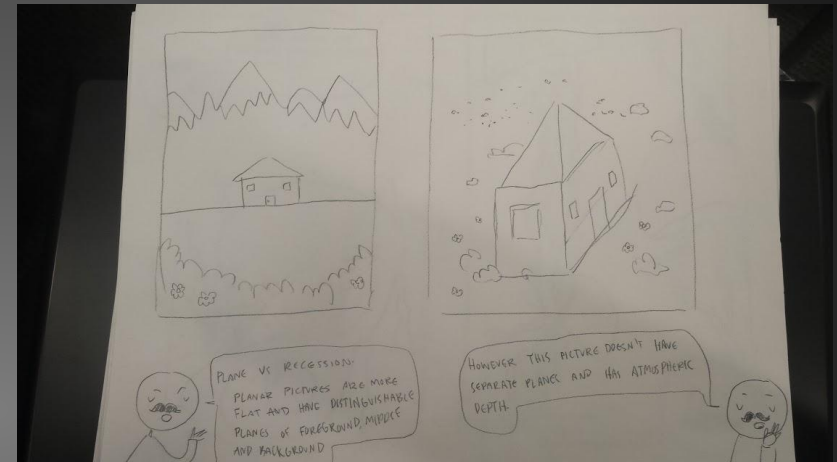
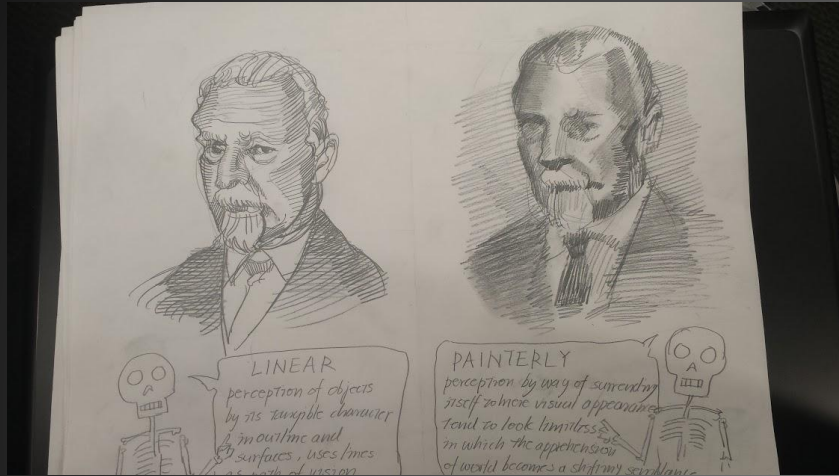
Reinforce key ideas and concepts

- Search for examples of movements, artists, or themes
- Problem-based learning (audioguide; exhibition proposal)
- Create a visual timeline
- Concept maps linking artists, movements, or cultures
- Role-playing games or class debates

Unpack challenging material

- Discussion-based activities
 - Think-pair-share
 - Assign roles (reporter; recorder; researcher; manager)
 - Model discussion strategies (“conversation moves”)
- Translate into another media (rewrite a text as a graphic novel)

Wölfflin's *Principles of Art History* as a Graphic Novel



References and Resources

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