

Multiplicityty

n my classroom, a major indicator of the success of an art lesson is the multiplicity of student responses to the art problem. I look for multiple solutions in my students' artwork—no cookie-cutter similarities or copies of exemplars, but evidence of divergent thinking. (As the editor of *SchoolArts*.

I look for the same evidence in student work when considering manuscripts for publication.)

How can we as art teachers best encourage our students to find multiple solutions? I think of my personal approach as "freedom within structure." In general, my goals for an art lesson are to propose and discuss an art problem with my students, present appropriately related art examples from different times and cultures, question students and encourage responses and questions from them, provide as many choices as reasonable in response and media, and share with the class divergent responses from their fellow students as they occur.

Of course, this ideal doesn't happen with every lesson or unit, as I must adapt for time constraints, attention spans, differing abilities, special needs, and learning styles for the six different levels of students that I teach (K–5), but I try to keep

my goals in mind. Having a student teacher every semester also helps me reflect on my goals and holds

me accountable, as I am constantly explaining what I am doing and why. I continue to look for guidance from multiple resources.

This past year, *SchoolArts'* themes have been based on an engaging resource, Daniel Pink's *A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future* (Riverhead, 2006). Pink believes that success in the twenty-first century will be based on the mastery of multiple right-brain directed aptitudes or senses he calls Design, Narrative, Empathy, Play, and Meaning.

Another resource I would like to recommend is Howard Gardner's newest book, *Five Minds for the Future* (Harvard Business School Press, 2007). Gardner's pivotal work, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, first published in 1983, proposed eight different intelligences: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, and intrapersonal.

In Five Minds for the Future, Gardner proposes, similarly to Pink, that there are different kinds of mental abilities or "minds" that will be necessary for success in the twentyfirst century. Gardner's include:

- The Disciplinary Mind: the mastery of major schools of thought, including science, mathematics, and history, and of at least one professional craft.
- The Synthesizing Mind: the ability to integrate ideas from different disciplines or spheres into a coherent whole and to communicate that integration to others.
- The Creating Mind: the capacity to uncover and clarify new problems, questions, and phenomena.
- The Respectful Mind: awareness of and appreciation for differences among human beings and human groups.
- The Ethical Mind: fulfillment of one's responsibilities as a worker and as a citizen.

As your school year winds down into summer, I encourage you to explore these multiple resources to recharge your batteries for the coming year.

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