

Sketchbook Teaching Tips

A few sketchbook tips from teachers:



"We don't like to make any kinds of marks in the children's sketchbooks. Instead we use post-it notes if we feel the need to make a comment, though even then we make sure comments are never undermining."

AccessArt comment: We agree. We are trying to encourage learners to make sketchbooks their own, and to take creative risks and try things out. This kind of personal, creative space is potentially very fragile. It's all too easy to knock creativity back, so tread sensitively.

"We find the best way to understand what is going on in a sketchbook is to talk to the learner with his or her book, or in small groups, so they can add their voice to share their intention."

AccessArt comment: This tutorial style format

works well with sketchbooks. Ask lots of open-ended questions which will help the teacher learn more about intention and also encourage pupils to reflect upon their practice and verbalise their thoughts. Children can learn a lot from others in this way, so working in small groups of say 4 and 5 pupils is an efficient way of doing this - it need only be for 5 or 10 minutes every few weeks.

"After a sketchbook CPD we decided, as teachers, that we would keep our own sketchbooks too. None of us are art trained but we enjoy it, and it means we try for ourselves all the exercises that we ask the pupils to do. The children also love seeing our experiments in our books - we're in it together!"

AccessArt comment: We hear this a lot - it's a great idea. And it's vital teachers know how an exercise "feels" before they ask a pupil to do it - that way you really understand the process. You'll also be able to spot ways to adapt the activity to your particular class.

"We struggled at first with giving children access to their sketchbooks because we were worried they would be misused or lost. After a while though it settled to a few children who would genuinely use them at lunch time, whilst others did not take them out, which was fine. We showed the children how to make simple elastic sketchbooks which they used as their "home" sketchbooks, and then they

had another sketchbook in class."

AccessArt comment: It's a shame to deprive those children who will really run with the idea of a home sketchbook, because of fear others will loss or misuse them, so making separate sketchbooks is a good solution.

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