

Art Inventory, or Feldman Model by Edmund Burke Feldman, is a way of organizing your thoughts for writing a critique. Reading Comprehension Skills indicated are processes identified for instruction in the Ames 6-8 Grade Art Department.

THINK

Description Describe the subject and/or style.

Make a list of the visual qualities of the work that are obvious and immediately perceived. Ask students "What do you see in the artwork?" and "What else?" Includes content and subject matter in representational works and abstract elements in nonrepresentational pieces.

THINK HARD

Analysis Examine the noteworthy elements and principles employed.

Focus on the formal aspects of elements of art and principles of design in addition to other formal considerations: exaggeration, composition etc. "How does the artist create a center of interest?" "How does the use of color impact the painting?"

Reading Comprehension Skills:

- Recalling facts & details
- Recognize Cause & Effect

THINK HARDER

Interpretation Infer about the content--what is the artist's message, idea, or feeling/mood.

Propose ideas for possible meaning based on evidence. Viewers project their emotions/feelings/intentions onto the work. "What do you think it means?" "What was the artist trying to communicate?" "What clues do you see that support your ideas?"

Reading Comprehension Skills:

- Finding the main idea
- Drawing conclusions & making inferences
- Identifying the author's purpose

THINK HARDEST

Judgment Evaluate the artist's success in communicating the work's message, idea or feeling/mood.

Discuss the overall strengths / success / merit of the work. This step is usually used with mature audiences.

Reading Comprehension Skills:

- All of the above (in summation)
- Recognize Cause & Effect
- Summarization

For more information and history behind this model, please reference the included summation by Robert Fromme. This & differentiated versions of the *Art Inventory* can be access at <http://visualartsiwacore.weebly.com/critical-thinking.html>

*Below is a portion of an archived explanation about the Feldman Model offered by Texas educator, Robert Fromme.
<http://www.getty.edu/education/teacherartexchange/archive/May97/0044.html>*

Here are some resources:

Feldman, E. (1970), *Becoming human through art*, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
Feldman, E. (1985), *Varieties of visual experience*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
Feldman, E. (1968), Some adventures in art criticism, *Art Education: Journal of the National Art Education Association*, 22(3), 28-33

Here is some background:

The theories of Stephen Pepper summarized centuries of work in aesthetics. Edmund Feldman's adaptation of some of Pepper's theories provided us with a model of art criticism that could be used in a subject (discipline) based art curriculum. The 60's saw the 'child centered' movement in art education face transition and change. Research and application turned to the task of establishing a teaching approach which was more 'subject oriented' in its focus. In the summer of 1966, Edmund Feldman, Eugene Kaelin and David Ecker presented a seminar on art criticism at Ohio State University which was to help change art education in this new direction where the "subject" is central to learning, According to Feldman, one of the conclusions of the Ohio State Seminar was that "what an art teacher does - whether in art appreciation or studio instruction - is essentially art criticism. That is, art teachers describe, analyze, interpret, and evaluate works of art during the process of instruction." (Feldman, 1968, p.24)

Another of the conclusions of the Ohio State Seminar was that education in aesthetics should involve the learner rather than force the traditional student - teacher (audience - expert) relationship in the learning environment. In Feldman's view, appreciation should have the learners involved in using criticism to inquire into the nature of art (its craft, its form, its content and the cultural heritage that is contributed by the work). In other words, Feldman had the position that teaching about making art and teaching about the appreciation of art require an active participation of students and the teachers talking together in the process of art criticism. Feldman saw learning about creating art and learning about art appreciation as experiences of active criticism moving from description and analysis (interpretation) to hypothesis grounded in the evidence.

Feldman saw three ways to enter the experience of art criticism. He listed these approaches as, Formalism, Expressivism and Instrumentalism.

His "Formalism" was a theory of communication in art where quality is founded in the formal concerns of the work (the relationship or composition of the physical elements). Formalism requires an acceptance of ideal and universal art values. We can think of this theory objective.

Speaking of 'Expressivism', Feldman said "expressivist" criticism sees excellence as the ability of art to communicate ideas and feelings intensely and vividly." (Feldman, 1985) Quality in expressivist criticism involves an acceptance of subjective concerns as legitimate values in the work.

Excellence, in Feldman's 'Instrumentalist' criticism, is based upon some quality of psychological, political, social, moral or religious consequences that results from the work.

To apply Feldman's theories, you can involve your students in the process of talking and thinking critically about art as they are learning to make it and as they are learning to appreciate the works of others. This experience should involve Feldman's model of description, analysis, interpretation and judgment. Keep in mind that theories such as Feldman's are human constructions. They are schematized devices for art criticism which may well include the same work of art as formal, expressive and instrumental. As art educators, we must value students' talking, thinking and the learning that results from the use of Feldman's tools rather than to require a perfect fit of value and criticism into Feldman's order.

(Here are the thinking levels described.)

Description: Students take inventory of what is visible. They can look for expressive lines, colors, shapes, textures, spaces and volumes as well as techniques.

Analysis: Students notice how these visual things relate to one another. They can compare the design relationships of these elements and the principles which help to organize the work.

Interpretation: Students are encouraged to identify themes and ideas in the work to find meanings and emotion. Think of it as description and analysis coming together to create the interpretation (explanation) of the work. Feldman once said, "It is difficult to be right the first try. In fact, being wrong -- missing the target -- is very helpful in arriving finally at a convincing explanation" (Feldman, 1970, p. 363). At this stage of the criticism, students can try to examine the work as if it were a product of Formalism, Expressivism and Instrumentalism.

Judgment: Students are encouraged to make decisions on the success, the value or worth of the art object. In this stage, the students can rank the work in relation to other works from the same time period or from other periods in art history.