Writing an Artist Statement

The Alameda County Office of Education has some very helpful information on their "Art Is Education" website. The "Downloads" section contains tools that can help your students to write their own artist statement. You can visit their website for additional arts advocacy information and templates that can help you curate your own classroom art exhibits.

http://www.artiseducation.org/artised/downloads.htm

Here is an excerpt from the ACOE's Art is Education "Making Learning Visible Tool Kit" download — an excellent list of questions that can help shape student discussion.

Process Documentation: Making Learning Visible

Making Learning Visible is a way of presenting student work that makes the learning transparent not only to the student and teacher, but to parents and the community. It provides a vehicle for the viewer to learn more about what students are actually thinking, what and how they are learning. In addition, it enables teachers, parents and visitors to ask more in-depth questions about the student learning taking place.

Making Learning Visible – Student Discussion Protocol

These are a lexicon of prompts for teachers to choose from to generate student discussion.

- Where did you begin? Tell us what you were doing.
- What did you think would happen? What happened? Why do you think it happened?
- What do/did you see? What do you wonder now?
- What did you learn from this? What was your favorite way of showing what you know?
- What was easy for you? What was difficult for you?
- What would you change about the way you did this, if you could?
- What else are you curious about? What if….? You changed, removed, added….
- Was there anything that surprised you about what happened? About what you learned?
- Is there something else in your life that this reminds you of?
- What did you find out about yourself and the way you learn?
- What things do you feel best about in this work? How could you make this better?
- Who did you work with? What did you learn from others in your group?
- Did you work well with others? How could you make your work with others go better?

Student Artist Statement Tip Sheet

art is education
Putting a Local Face on Arts Learning in Alameda County
www.acoe-artiseducation.org

What is it?
It is a tool for student artists to articulate what their artwork is about, what they are learning and how they value the creative process. It also communicates the value of arts learning as part of a complete and meaningful education to school and community audiences.

Why use it?
It creates an opportunity for student artists and teachers to reflect on and assess their arts learning experiences. It can be used to help achieve your goals whatever they might be—to reinforce classroom arts vocabulary or methodology, develop a language for students to understand their own learning or to assist building literacy skills.

What can I do with it?
- Post next to artworks on display or include in performance program, binder or invitations.
- Post student, teacher and principal statements in school.
- Include in school, PTA, or community newsletters.
- Use prompts for a suggested parent/student conversation.
- Send to district MAP leader to use as part of district plan, district webpage and other promotion.

How do I get started?
Below in bold are a menu of prompts you can use to jumpstart your students' thinking. Choose one that is appropriate for your students' grade level and arts experience. Or create a custom prompts that fits your project and students. When posting artist statements, include photos or drawn self-portraits of students if at all possible. The grouping of artwork, statement and student's face is a powerful combination.

K-3 grade Prompt Suggestions

When I Make Art Prompts
- When I _____ (paint/dance/sing/perform/make music), I see_____ .
- When I _____, I feel _____.
- When I _____, I think about_____.
- When I _____, I learn _____.

Story of the Painting Prompts
Pair off students to practice telling the stories of their paintings to each other before writing them down. If helpful, model telling a story about a painting to your students.
- This _____ is about _____.
- There are _____ and _____ in the painting.
- _____ is happening. (Describe action using playing, going, running ..)
- I liked making the painting because _____ .
- I learned how to _____.

Group Artist Statement
Assist your students in writing a group artist statement together that tells the story of how and why the students made the art project and what they learned. Choose from the prompts on the 2nd page to guide the story.

4 - 6 grade Prompt Suggestions

Group Creative Process Prompts
- Who am/are I/we, the artist? (Introduce myself as an artist to the audience.)
- What did I/we do? (Describe the artwork including the medium, subject matter and inspiration.)
- What happened along the way?

4 - 6 grade Prompt Suggestions

- Explore the artistic process including what problems I solved, any unexpected results or interesting anecdotes.
- What did I/we learn through the art project? (Reflect on what I learned about myself, the art medium, the subject matter and my world.)
- Why does it matter

Individual Creative Process Prompts

- Who are I, the artist?
- What medium(s) do I like to work with? Why?
- Description of the project I created worked on …
  - It was inspired by…
  - What happened next (Did anything interesting or unusual happen along the way? Did I solve any problems along the way? Did I change my approach to doing the project?)
  - Did the project turn out how I expected it to? Why or why not?
- What did I learn through the art project?
- Why is this important to me?

Big Picture Reflection Prompts

- When I practice art I feel….
- I see connections to other subjects and projects…
- Art opens up new possibilities for me…
- Art is important to me because…

7 - 12 grade Prompt Suggestions

Studio Habits of Mind Prompts

- In this artwork I learned to observe closely _____.
- I was most engaged and I persisted when_____.
- I took a risk when I _____.
- I took advantage of an accident when I _____.
- I think that this artwork is similar in style to_____.
- I can see that my ability to control the craft of (drawing, painting, modeling, etc) has improved because_____.
- I envisioned something new when I decided to add _____ to my artwork.
- I like this artwork because_____.

Creating Public Value Prompts

- I enjoyed working with _____ to create this artwork because _____.
- I needed their help to _____, and I learned _____ from them.
- I never noticed _____. Now I see _____.
- I used to think _____. Now I know _____.
- Now that I know _____,I think it's possible that _____.
- Having finished this _____ (project), I/my class/my community accomplished _____.

Adapted from the Alliance for Arts Learning Leadership Belief Statement: "Equitable classrooms use artistic disciplines to ensure that every child has the opportunity…to learn the value of collaboration, interdependence, and compassion...Schools provide learning environments for students to develop tools and life skills to dispel ignorance, to see what is, and to imagining what's possible.

Personal History Prompts

- Briefly describe yourself and your heritage.
- Describe why you chose to do the art you do. Who or what inspired you? How long have you been practicing?
- When practicing your art gets difficult, what keeps you going?
- Does art change the way you see yourself, others, your community? If so, how?