

Blog by Kerenza Yuen

In my first time working as art instructor in a gallery, Kingston School of Art has granted me a new perspective of art education in my Alternative Practicum placement.

One of the daily activities that piqued my interest was the journaling at the beginning and end of each day. Not only was it a great way to allow children to explore their thoughts, but it gave children a change of environment and pace. Journaling opened up a quiet time for children to be reflective.

It encouraged them to consider other artists' works in their communities, and children furthered their critical thinking skills by noticing a variety of styles. From observing, even children who were not able to write yet were able to explain methods and techniques from the artists in the gallery. Therefore, journaling is a valuable activity that I will bring with me in my teaching practices.

Another activity that I found valuable was developing a transferable structure of an everyday schedule at the beginning of each session. With a similar lunch time, identical snack times, and three activities weaved into the daily timetable, children knew what to expect. For example, washing your hands before and after eating was a habit developed throughout the week. By first snack time on Wednesday, most children automatically washed their hands before peeling open their snack containers without needing to be reminded.. As a future educator, I learned a lot about developing rules and routine in the beginning of each week.

Overall, there was a good mix of individual and group tasks for the children. Group games such as stretching allowed new children to talk to their peers and create friendships. Other activities like "finish the comic" or Pictionary helped smaller groups of children bond within different age groups. Being accustomed to facilitating lessons to Intermediate/Senior-level students, being with this group of young children opened my eyes to their imagination, creativity, and open-mindedness. Although I introduced art projects and taught artistic techniques, it was ultimately about bringing transferable life skills to these children in an art classroom.

