

**Connecting the Arts to Curriculum for Gifted Students**  
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Susan Jackson, PhD  
Celebrating High Potential  
Supporting People Who Are Gifted or Twice-Exceptional

While a certain level of intelligence is necessary for creativity, there is no guarantee that high intelligence will result in a life of creative productivity.

According to Smutny and von Fremd (2009), with high ability students, opportunities in the classroom for creativity result in:

- Personal connection with the content areas.
- Originality and expression of individuality.
- Discovery after exploration, experimentation, and imagining.
- Higher level thinking and depth of learning (students take what they have learned, make it their own, and take it to the next level).
- Artistry and depth of feeling (students recognize and use their sensitivities).

Creative domains to explore in the classroom:

- **Traditional – cognitive creativity:** divergent reasoning, flexible thinking, fluency, originality, elaboration, perceiving connections, testing and experimentation.
- **Intuition and the senses:** depth of feeling, intuition and hunches, responsiveness to the five senses.
- **Imagination:** vivid imagery, rich and detailed fiction, daydreaming, exploration of alternate realities, invention.
- **Artistry:** sensitivity and responsiveness to the arts, unique observation and vision of the natural world, individualistic views and ideas, whimsy and humor, connections to rhythms, patterns, colors, shades, etc.

**Where to start? Find catalysts that inspire** (Toni, 2009).

- Examine the connections among visual art and the academic domains.  
Examples:
  - Mathematics
    - Finger counting
    - Landscape
    - Ball gown
    - Fractals
  - History
    - General Washington
    - Monticello
    - Antarctica
    - Coal mine

- English – poetry
    - Poem scroll with deer
  - Science
    - The Microscope
    - *Sky Tree: Seeing Science Through Art*, by Thomas Locker with Candace Christiansen
- Provide choice of medium of expression
- Writing
  - Painting
  - Drawing
  - Oral story
  - Dramatic skit

### **Using *Sky Tree* in the classroom** (Smutny, 2009)

- Provide a prompt
- If you are a tree that is 200 years old, tell or show two of the most interesting events in history that you have seen.
- Use free verse poetry
- Provide the pictures as a visual catalyst.
  - Have students respond as a group and then as individuals.
- Instructions for whole group:
1. Choose a topic.
  2. Have the students look at the picture together.
  3. Talk about it.
  4. Ask the class to describe what they are looking at.
  5. Write every line on the board. The total number of lines does not matter, but 8 to 10 work well.
  6. As you get responses, affirm the effort of each student and thank him or her for sharing his or her creativity.
  7. Read the whole poem and ask the students if they like it.
  8. Pass out a visual catalyst for each student and ask them to write a free verse poem.
- Instructions for individual students about ways to approach the picture:
1. Describe what you see.
  2. Talk to the picture.
  3. The picture talks to you.
  4. Have a conversation between you and any part of the picture.
  5. Be the picture.

## **Resources for visual and other catalysts**

Note - Read the copyright information for each site carefully. With many of them, you are allowed to save and reproduce much of the material for educational use. However, you should read the information provided for each image to determine whether or not additional copyright protections apply.

### **Accessible without a subscription:**

Arizona State Museum, University of Arizona

Online exhibitions – [www.statemuseum.arizona.edu/exhibits/online.shtml](http://www.statemuseum.arizona.edu/exhibits/online.shtml)

For educators – [www.statemuseum.arizona.edu/edu/](http://www.statemuseum.arizona.edu/edu/)

Arizona State University Museum

For educators – [asuartmuseum.asu.edu/education/schools.php](http://asuartmuseum.asu.edu/education/schools.php)

Art Institute of Chicago

Archival Image and Media Collection – [digital-libraries.saic.edu/cdm/landing\\_page/collection/mqc](http://digital-libraries.saic.edu/cdm/landing_page/collection/mqc)

[www.artic.edu/research/archival-collections](http://www.artic.edu/research/archival-collections)

For educators – [www.artic.edu/learn/teachers-pre-k-12](http://www.artic.edu/learn/teachers-pre-k-12)

Artwork Resource Packets – [www.artic.edu/aic/resourcefinder/resource-type-resourcefinder/45](http://www.artic.edu/aic/resourcefinder/resource-type-resourcefinder/45)

Heard Museum

Digital library (requires reproduction application) – [cdm262401.cdmhost.com/cdm](http://cdm262401.cdmhost.com/cdm)

Teacher's Resource Art Posters – [heard.org/education/teacherresources](http://heard.org/education/teacherresources)

Metropolitan Museum of Art

The Collection Online – [www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online](http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online)

For educators – [www.metmuseum.org/learn/for-educators](http://www.metmuseum.org/learn/for-educators)

Museum of Northern Arizona

Educators can request an online tour.

For educators – [musnaz.org/plan-your-visit/what-to-do-here/museum-tours-and-group-rates/school-tours-and-programs](http://musnaz.org/plan-your-visit/what-to-do-here/museum-tours-and-group-rates/school-tours-and-programs)

Musical Instrument Museum

For educators – [mim.org/education/educator-resources/](http://mim.org/education/educator-resources/)

National Gallery of Art

NGA Images – open access images –

[https://images.nga.gov/en/page/show\\_home\\_page.html](https://images.nga.gov/en/page/show_home_page.html)

For educators – [www.nga.gov/content/ngaweb/education/teachers.html](http://www.nga.gov/content/ngaweb/education/teachers.html)

Phoenix Art Museum

For educators – You can request the most recent set of 5 poster-size images from the collection. Includes object information and lesson plans.

[www.phxart.org/education/educators/teachingresources](http://www.phxart.org/education/educators/teachingresources)

Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art

For educators – [www.smoca.org/education/educators/](http://www.smoca.org/education/educators/)

### **Accessible with a subscription:**

ArtStor – Digital library that may be available through your library. Available for non-profit organizations, including K-12 schools.

[www.artstor.org](http://www.artstor.org)

EBSCOhost Image Collection – Also may be available through your library.

Oxford Art Online – Institutional and individual subscriptions are available.

[www.oxfordartonline](http://www.oxfordartonline)

### References

Locker, T., & Christiansen, C. (1995). *Sky tree: Seeing science through art: Sky tree*. New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers.

Smutny, J. F. (2008). *An arts approach to the curriculum for gifted students*. Presentation given at the annual conference for the Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented, Dallas, Texas.

Smutny, J. F. (2009). Imagining trees. In J. F. Smutny and S. E. von Fremd, *Igniting creativity in gifted learners, K-6: Strategies for every teacher* (pp. 187-191). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Smutny, J. F., & von Fremd, S. E. (2009). *Igniting creativity in gifted learners, K-6: Strategies for every teacher*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Toni, Y. (2009). Reaching for depth through free-verse poetry. In J. F. Smutny and S. E. von Fremd, *Igniting creativity in gifted learners, K-6: Strategies for every teacher* (pp. 65-73). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

### Contact Information

Susan E. Jackson, PhD

Website: [celebratinghighpotential.com](http://celebratinghighpotential.com)

\*This handout is available at [celebratinghighpotential.com/presentations/](http://celebratinghighpotential.com/presentations/)

E-mail: [celebratinghighpotential@gmail.com](mailto:celebratinghighpotential@gmail.com) or [Susan.Jackson@lonestar.edu](mailto:Susan.Jackson@lonestar.edu)

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