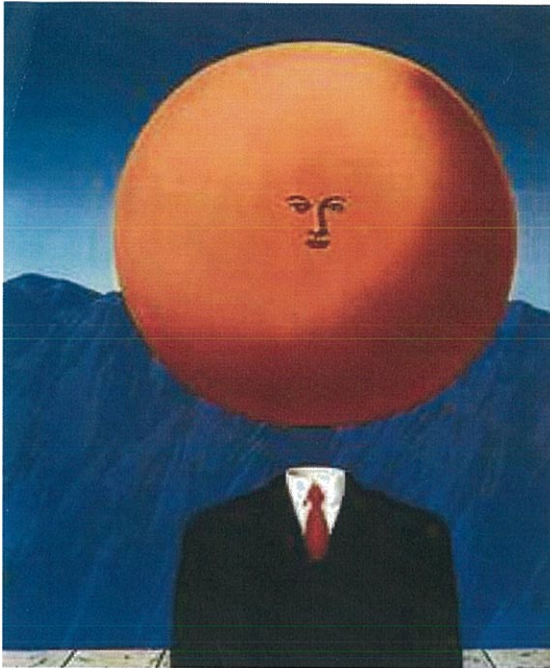


In this art history class, student art duplicates famous art



For fifth-graders at the American School of Asuncion learning art history is their favorite lesson of the year. They especially like this three-part project.

1) **Research:** In groups of 4, students spend one class looking for a famous painting to re-create. It is best to look for a single subject with a vertical background (though we have done multiple people in a picture). At the end of the class, they should have an art piece, artist, title, and date. Generally, all information is found on the website www.artchive.com

2) **Painting:** In the second art class, students must paint a background in the same color and style as the picture they have chosen. When in groups of four, this can be done in one hour.

3) **Posing with props:** In the third art class, students bring any props found in the original painting that were not incorporated into the backdrop. Finally, they must choose one person in the group to be the model. Clothing should be as accurate as possible to the original.

The teacher can take the pictures, post them next to the original piece of art and voilà...art history comes alive! The final pictures are displayed and viewed at the annual Art Exhibition via a PowerPoint presentation for all to see.

(When you look at the two paintings on the left, can you tell which is the student's and which is the artist's?)

Seminar for the 21st Century: The Touchstones approach

by Howard Zeiderman

As educators, we are constantly made aware that the world is continually evolving. Today's globalized environment, rapid technological innovations in communication and information, and the interdependence of issues and challenges require our students to develop a new set of skills and attitudes in order to flourish and lead in this emerging world. The Touchstones seminar is a significant step toward fulfilling new goals in listening, thinking, problem solving, and leading.

Founded in 1984 by three senior faculty members at St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland, Touchstones has been refined over 25 years through field testing, educational research, and rigorous application. Touchstones has developed programs for schools across cultures, as well as for government and corporate leaders. From our research, a powerful and flexible seminar approach has emerged that prepares all people—students, faculties, and professionals in every field—to transmute critical skills and knowledge.

Classroom proficiency is not enough to prepare our students for the 21st-century world. They must become learners adaptable enough to teach themselves. In the Touchstones environment, students learn the skills necessary to supplement their own opinions with others' perspectives so that genuine collaboration can occur. Students must not only have mastered the problem-solving strategies of previous generations, but also be able to design new approaches for an environment defined by perpetual change and impermanence.

How does this transformation oc-

cur? The Touchstones method takes all groups, regardless of educational or professional level, through four stages: establishing legitimate voices, collaborating, listening to others, and sharing responsibility and leadership. Together, the discussion leader and the participants openly discuss and evaluate the impact of their assumptions, values, and beliefs on their ability to engage in fruitful and real investigation. In the final stage, each member of the Touchstones group becomes simultaneously a participant and a leader. The students themselves design, conduct, and critique the sessions and gain experiential learning that translates to all aspects of life within the human community.

These are students prepared for life in the emerging world. As citizens of their respective nations, they appreciate the value of their peers' voices and respect the diversity of views in a global community. As future professionals, they grasp the powerful role of collaboration. As future leaders, they understand the gains that come from sharing power and governance.

Howard Zeiderman is cofounder and president of Touchstones Discussion Project. He is a senior faculty member at St. John's College and the former director of the Executive Seminar program of The Aspen Institute (2004-2008). Touchstones currently supports school and executive programs throughout the United States, and in Tanzania, Myanmar, Jordan, and Haiti.

Learn more about Touchstones at our website: www.touchstones.org.

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TOUCHSTONES provides critical thinking, dynamic learning, and fruitful exchange.

WE MAKE TODAY'S STUDENTS TOMORROW'S VANGUARD.



The international educator understands the importance of making students adaptable, flexible thinkers and clear, powerful communicators in today's global community. Touchstones Discussion Project's unique seminar method, developed for easy use in any classroom, helps students become independent learners, collaborative communicators, and effective leaders.

"Touchstones is a perfect match with my philosophy of education. When we trust our students, empower them to take charge of their education, and offer them the necessary guidance, they astound us."
Garreth Heidt, Teacher, Bucks County, PA

For more information on our innovative, easy-to-implement educational method, contact Touchstones at 1-800-456-6542 or visit our website at www.touchstones.org.

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Report on US online learning

The North American Council for Online Learning has released the third in a series of annual reports on the status of online learning nationally, writes eSchool News. "Keeping Pace with K-12 Online Learning" looks at two areas of virtual schooling: state-led online programs and state-level policies governing online education, and the ways that the two intersect. The report states that online learning continued to grow in school year 2007-2008, both in the number of new programs and the improvement of existing programs, and many states have passed new legislation to promote further growth.

Given this expansion, the study issues these policy recommendations: the creation of national content standards; the inclusion of online instruction practices in teacher college curricula; the revision of district accounting measures that take into account the particulars of virtual schooling; and the establishing of standard metrics for basic quality assurance, such as consistent measures for course completions. Currently 44 states offer significant online student learning opportunities.