

2015-2016

Teacher Think Tank

How might we become more aware of our non-verbal communication in our teaching? How might we more effectively communicate non-verbally?



Photo: Katherine Abbott

“I would go so far as to argue that long before auditory language appears in hominids, emotional languages existed and were used to forge bonds; and these emotional languages relied on the dominant sense modality of all primates – vision.”

Turner, J. (2002). *Face to Face: Toward a Sociological Theory of Interpersonal Behavior*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Introduction:

During the 2015/16 Noguchi Museum Teacher Think Tank, a group of school and museum art educators gathered to experiment with their non-verbal communication. We focused on how our body communicated instructions and reactions with students, and how students and fellow teachers perceived our physical classroom management skills. Through these experiments, we discovered vulnerabilities, cultural assumptions, and tools for effective instruction and classroom management. Non-verbal communication prevails in art rooms and art museums because our medium is visual, and requires interactions that call upon our senses and intuition. The physical act of making and looking at art does invite verbal exchange, but non-verbal communications are equally, and perhaps even more important to harness.

Among our discoveries was that our face-to-face interactions communicated both physical and emotional information that often sent mixed messages. The community and environment we worked in affected our non-verbal interactions in what was deemed culturally and socially appropriate. We also learned that our non-verbal communication, when carefully considered, could replace our verbal communication. Our experiments were thoroughly documented and shared with our group, which allowed for us to personally reflect and discover ways to change and shape our practice. Below, you will find a heuristic we created as a group, meant to bring renewed awareness to our non-verbal communication. As well, we've also included an example of one our documented experiments.

If you have you any questions, or would like to talk more about the Teacher Think Tank, please contact us at education@noguchi.org.

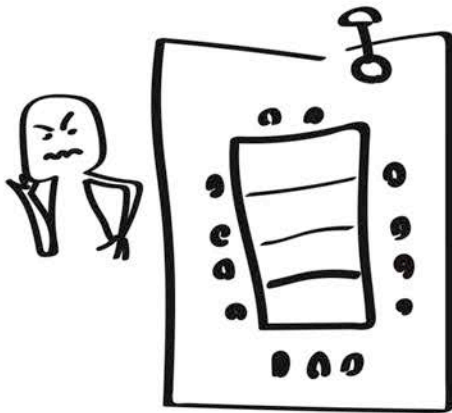
Non-Verbal Communication Heuristic

1. I recognize students' emotions by looking at their faces.
Always Sometimes Occasionally Rarely
2. I am aware of my emotions as expressed through my face.
Always Sometimes Occasionally Rarely
3. I recognize students' emotions by the way they move their bodies.
Always Sometimes Occasionally Rarely
4. My emotions are evident from the way I move my body.
Always Sometimes Occasionally Rarely
5. I am aware of students' emotions by characteristics in their voices.
Always Sometimes Occasionally Rarely
6. I am aware of my emotions as expressed by my voice.
Always Sometimes Occasionally Rarely
7. I am aware of students' emotions as expressed through how they talk with their hands.
Always Sometimes Occasionally Rarely
8. I am aware of my emotions as expressed through how I talk with my hands.
Always Sometimes Occasionally Rarely
9. I recognize students' emotions by the way they position their bodies.
Always Sometimes Occasionally Rarely
10. My emotions are evident from the way I position my body.
Always Sometimes Occasionally Rarely
11. I am aware of my emotions as expressed through my breath.
Always Sometimes Occasionally Rarely
12. I am aware of students' emotions as expressed through their breath.
Always Sometimes Occasionally Rarely
13. I am aware of the furniture in the classroom/museum.
Always Sometimes Occasionally Rarely
14. I am aware of the classrooms/museum presentation.
Always Sometimes Occasionally Rarely
15. I am aware of how I present myself through the clothing I wear.
Always Sometimes Occasionally Rarely

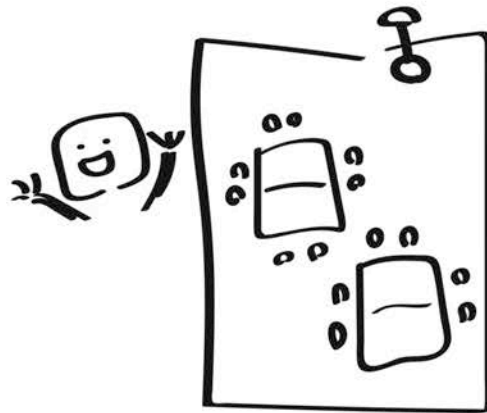
16. I am aware of how my students present themselves through the clothing they wear.
Always Sometimes Occasionally Rarely
17. I am aware of the energy in the classroom/museum.
Always Sometimes Occasionally Rarely
18. I am aware of eye contact between my students and myself.
Always Sometimes Occasionally Rarely
19. I am aware of smells in the classroom/museum.
Always Sometimes Occasionally Rarely
20. I am aware of the light in the classroom/museum.
Always Sometimes Occasionally Rarely
21. My emotions are evident in how I touch (ie. pats on the back) my students.
Always Sometimes Occasionally Rarely
22. I am aware of the sounds in the classroom/museum.
Always Sometimes Occasionally Rarely
23. I am aware of the temperature in the classroom/museum.
Always Sometimes Occasionally Rarely
24. I am aware of the props I use in the classroom/museum.
Always Sometimes Occasionally Rarely
25. I am aware of students' emotions as expressed through the tone of their voice.
Always Sometimes Occasionally Rarely
26. I am aware of students' emotions as expressed through their color.
Always Sometimes Occasionally Rarely

Non-Verbal Communication: Physical Space

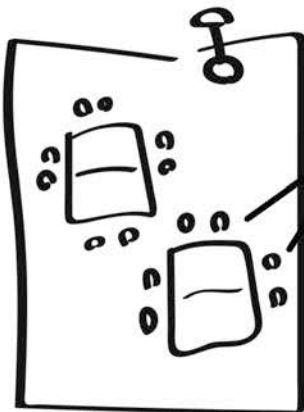
by Robin Lentz



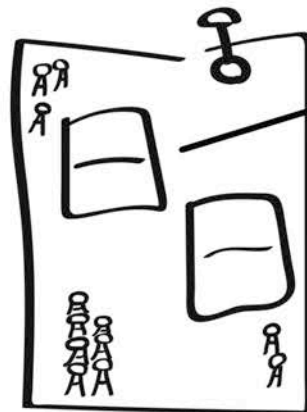
They can see each other but why am I always annoyed that they talk (shout!) across the table?



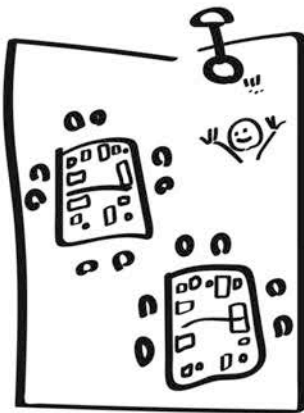
Ahhh!!! Now they can talk across a table but to a smaller, closer group. BETTER!



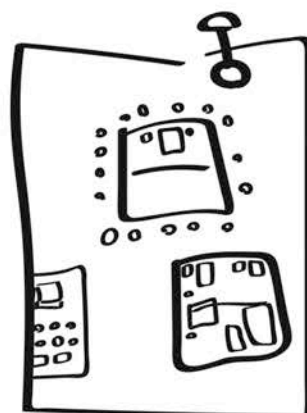
Stools -- "We will sit while we work today!"



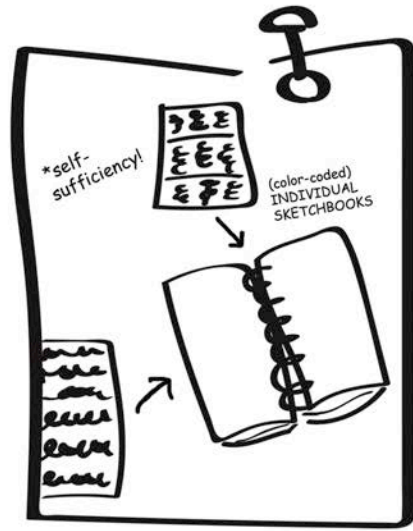
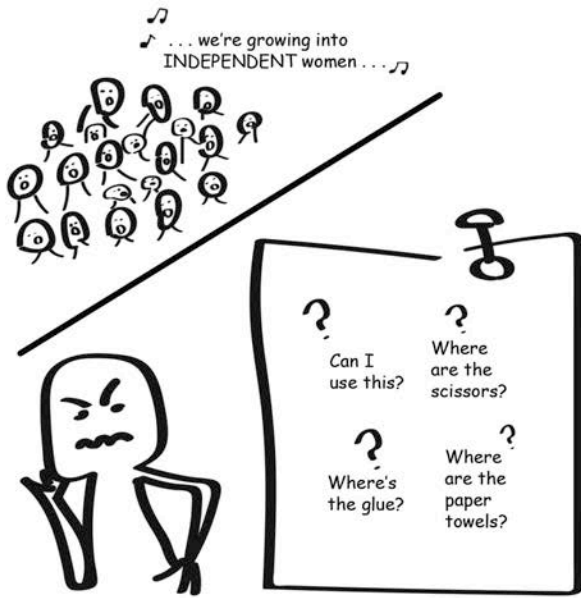
"We'll be standing while we make ART today."



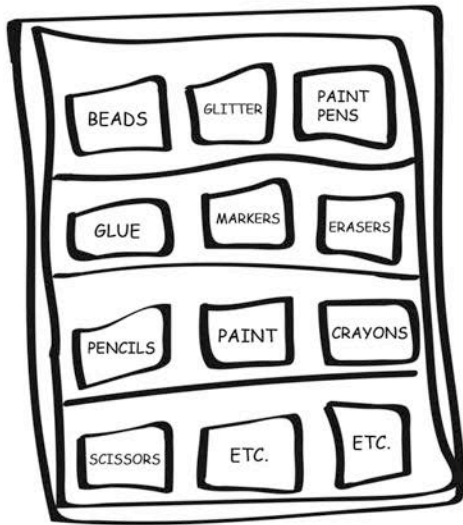
Kids are SO excited to see all the materials out on the tables that I can't compete. There's no good chance to introduce themes, techniques, etc.



Ahhh! Now kids have a place to meet and watch a demo. They can move to tables and get supplies when it's time to work and make ART.



Easily accessible sketchbooks so kids know what to do when lesson is over.



Ahhh! Organize independent materials so they are easily accessible - put tempting supplies out of reach or label:

- Yes! Use me
- Ask a teacher first
- Only on special occasions

