

# Visual Thinking Strategies

## FACILITATOR GUIDE

VTS is an inquiry-based teaching method that improves a student's ability to describe, analyze, and interpret imagery and information through observing and discussing visual art. As the facilitator of a VTS conversation, your role is to make connections between responses. If possible, don't provide information, as the goal of VTS is to develop looking and reasoning skills, not to learn facts.

1

Open the discussion;

"What's going on here?"

2

Encourage students to backup their comments with evidence;

"What do you see that makes you say that?"

3

Invite differing opinions;

"What more can we find?"

## TIPS TO KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING

After asking, "What's going on here?"...

summarize student responses using conditional language ("Sara thinks this could be...").

This keeps the conversation open to different interpretations by other students.

By asking, "What do you see that makes you say that?"...

you're encouraging students to back up their statements with evidence of things they see in the work of art.

When you ask, "What more can we find?"...

you continue the conversation, invite differing opinions, and lead the conversation to compromise and empathy.

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# TIPS FOR SELECTING ARTWORKS

Choose a work of art from the GVSU Online Collection or use an artwork in-person on campus. We've also created two VTS PPT activities for your use, download them at [GVSU.EDU/ARTGALLERY](https://www.gvsu.edu/artgallery).

*Oh That We Could Shed Our Skin And Begin Again*  
Beverly Adams  
2018.10.1

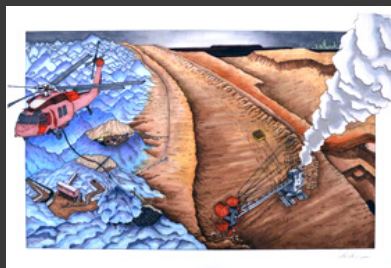
Choose a non-abstract work of art with easily identifiable objects.

Choose a scene of moderate complexity; if it's too simple the conversation will be over quickly, if it's too complex students may feel overwhelmed.

Consider your student's cultural backgrounds and ability level, choose an image with which everyone will be able to engage.



*Untitled (Mirror Pool)*  
Seymour Rosofsky  
Lithograph  
2007.659.1



*Coal Fields*  
Sean Hamilton  
Pen and marker  
2016.48.2



*Post Apocalyptic  
Airstream*  
Matthew Schenk  
Oil on panel  
2012.83.1

## TRY THESE ARTWORKS

*(click an image to enlarge)*



*Recollection*  
Dellas Henke  
Engraving  
2015.89.3



*The Novelist*  
Nicole Chiarvalli  
Digital inkjet print  
2015.34.1



*Potter's Lesson*  
Lori McElrath-Eslick  
Watercolor on board  
2002.447.1a



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# Browse the Online Art Collection

*More Than A Pea*  
Eleanor Lubbers  
2015.17.1

By Topic

(to find artworks related to  
your field)

By Special  
Collection

Download a  
GVSU Art Gallery\_  
VTS PPT

**If you use VTS in your class,  
please tell us about it!**

**For assistance, contact:**

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