

Product-Based and Process-Based Learning in the Arts

Product-based learning

- The end goal is to create something specific as envisioned by the teacher/leader/adult.
- Specific materials are provided; the teacher has sometimes pre-created all or some of the components.
- There is a “correct” vs. “incorrect” way to do things.
- The teacher imparts expertise and drives the learning.
- Students follow teacher instructions and aim for their work to reflect the example(s) given.
- Assessment focuses on the accuracy of the end product.
 - *Did the student make a _____ ?*
 - *Did they do it correctly? Did they follow instructions?*

Process-based learning

- The end goal is to create something (specific or not) as envisioned by the student(s).
- Students can choose materials or are encouraged to work with provided materials in their own way.
- There is no one right answer. Open-ended exploration is encouraged.
- Students drive their own learning, individually and collaboratively.
- Students explore, problem-solve, and adjust accordingly. Their work reflects their personal style and ideas.
- Assessment focuses on the thinking and the process behind the work.
 - *Did the student explain why they made what they made?*
 - *Did they reflect on how they worked?*

NOTE: Arts classrooms don't have to be *entirely* process-based. Product- and process-based approaches can both be used, depending on the skills teachers want students to develop.

	Media	Mode	Interpretation
Limited process	Students make limited choices within a single medium.	Students make limited choices that apply to one mode of expression.	Teacher develops the main concept and students add personal touches.
Moderate process	Students choose from a limited range of media.	Students choose from a limited number of modes.	Teacher provides some parameters; students develop ideas within them.
Advanced process	Students choose from a wide range of media.	Students choose from a wide range of modes.	Students generate and develop their own concepts and ideas.

Chart adapted from Purtee, M. (2015). "Now You Can Easily Assess Your Students' Process." *The Art of Education*, November. www.theartofed.com/2015/11/18/now-you-can-easily-assess-your-students-process/

Product and Process-Based Learning in the Arts

The following lesson examples are from kindergarten visual arts classrooms, showing the progression from limited process to advanced process. **Process-based artmaking is an important approach to implement early on, as young students benefit greatly from open-ended, exploratory, hands-on learning.** Process-based art experiences help develop students' social-emotional, language, literacy, cognitive, and physical skills, and prepare them for advanced student-centered experiences at the upper grades by promoting collaboration, problem-solving skills, and ownership over learning.

LIMITED PROCESS

Teacher tells the class about why it is important to be thankful on Thanksgiving. Students trace, cut out, and decorate hand turkeys using materials pre-created / provided by the teacher, writing what they are thankful for on the turkey's body.



MODERATE PROCESS

Students read about and discuss thankfulness, choose something they are thankful for, outline the item in black crayon, and fill them in with the watercolor colors of their choice.



ADVANCED PROCESS

Students read about and discuss thankfulness and Thanksgiving, then design their own classroom Thanksgiving feast for friends and family, brainstorming and creating every element from start to finish (from invitations to table decor to entertainment).

