

The Artist as Entrepreneur

First Steps Toward Your Goal

Lesson Description

In this lesson, students will take the first step in defining their career as an artist entrepreneur. Students will define their goal as an artist.

Concepts

Goal setting

Objectives

Students will:
State their career goal

Materials

Sticky notes
Folder or three-ring binder

Lesson Procedures

1. Explain that the artist's work is so much an exercise in personal expression, it is difficult to think of the work as a product. Therefore, it is just as difficult to think of the production of that product as constituting business activity.
2. Explain that all businesses appreciate a sale. A sale means that consumers find the product satisfying and are willing to provide the business with revenue. However, for the artist, a sale is often much more personal. It means that consumers admire the artist's creativity, imagination, and talent. Artists whose work presents an activist's view on political or social issues can consider a sale to be an affirmation of the artist's perspective. How can such a sale be thought of as a mere business interaction?
3. Explain that artists may find the business aspects of their work difficult to manage. So, the artist must be disciplined in taking the steps necessary to form their business. The first step is to determine your goal as an artist.
4. Ask students to reflect on their dedication to their art. Do not ask for verbal responses, but rather, ask that they consider the answers to these questions silently.
 - What is your preferred art form?
 - Do you use your art to express your emotions?
 - Do you use your art to express your opinions?
 - Is there any leisure activity you prefer to your art?

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5. Instruct students to envision themselves and their art. Ask each to consider his/her goal as an artist and write one sentence describing his/her goal. (*The sentence might state something like the following: I will play violin in the St. Louis Symphony. I will work as a graphic artist for an advertising firm. I will have my work shown in local galleries.*)
6. Explain that establishing a goal is the first step toward a career in art. Instruct students to write their goal statement and place it in areas where they are certain to see it several times a day. (suggestions: Computer graphic artists might place the statement on a sticky note and attach it to the computer monitor. A guitarist might place the note on his/her guitar case. A painter might place the note on an easel. All might place the notes on the telephone, the refrigerator, and other places of daily contact.)
7. Ask students to describe scenarios of where they want to be in five years. (*This could include scenarios of them in college undergraduate or graduate programs, they could be working for someone in their field of art, they could be establishing a business of their own.*) After the discussion, instruct students to work on a fifth-year “progress report” toward their goal.
8. Ask students to describe scenarios of where they want to be in ten years. After the discussion, instruct each student to work on a tenth-year “progress report.”
9. Explain that for students who dream to be self-supporting in their art, the goal statement and progress reports are the beginning of a career plan. For those who hope to be self-employed in their art, these statements are the beginning of a business plan.

Closure

Instruct each student to place their goal, their fifth-year report and their tenth-year report on a single sheet of paper, and place it as the first page in their notebooks or folders. (Students may also design these statements as the cover to their notebooks.)