

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People® for Highly Effective Art Teachers (H.E.ART)

Adapted with permission from The 7 Habit of Highly Effective People by Stephen R. Covey

by

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Habit 1: Be Proactive®: The habit of personal vision.

Highly effective Art Teachers are “PROACTIVE.” They know the content of art and know how to teach it. They also know how to articulate and promote the role art plays in general education. Highly Effective ART Teachers (H.E.ARTs) become an essential part of their school and school district. H.E.ARTs volunteer work on state standards and curriculum development teams. They contribute to School Advisory Councils, or curriculum writing teams. H.E.ARTs become proactive advocates of the visual arts. They take the initiative to find out more about local, state, and national organizations as well as organizations that provide support for arts in school. H.E.ARTs join fellow visual art educators to network and collaborate with teachers in music, theater, and dance.

Habit 2: Begin with the End in Mind®: The habit of personal leadership.

H.E.ARTs have vision and “Begin with the End in Mind” as Covey recommends. Knowing that art education may not be perfect in a school, school district, or state, H.E.ARTs assess what they have, what they need, and where they would like the program to go in the future. H.E.ARTs have a vision and a plan to assess what they have and what they need to make realistic plans to make a real difference and effect change. H.E.ARTs dream of what art education could be if implemented at the highest level with high standards and ultimate support. They aim for the stars and take off!

Habit 3: Put First things First®: The habit of personal management.

H.E.ARTs make a plan and prioritize by using Covey's third habit “Put First Things First.” In Putting First Things First, H.E.ARTs need to recognize actions and activities that are simply non-productive time fillers. Stop focusing on the half empty glass and focus on what we have. Teachers do this a lot and art teachers are no exception. Often we find that time is wasted discussing what we do not have and the lack of support from our district and/or school administrators. If H.E.ARTs have adopted the Proactive habit and have a plan and goals with “the end in mind,” it will be easier to set out on an action plan and begin to “put first things first.” We must plan ahead to spend more time on the things, as teachers, we value most and believe we can truly make a difference. Teachers can equip themselves with the resources, tools, and skills needed to make and handle change. H.E.ARTs try to find solutions rather than make compromising choices. They seek new solutions to old problems!

Habit 4: Think Win-Win®: The habit of interpersonal leadership.

H.E.ARTs know how to work with others and seek collaborative opportunities by “Thinking Win-Win” when aiming for solutions to problems that arise in their educational programs. Effective problem-solving requires listening to all sides and seeking real solutions that make everyone a winner. Compromising means something is lost but a real win-win is better, requiring a real solution for all stakeholders. It is not always an easy solution and may require very creative problem-solving. These kinds of solutions are revolutionary.

Habit 5: Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood®: The habit of communication.

H.E.ARTs try very hard to understand the educational concerns, issues, and problems so they can accomplish the fifth Habit of Seeking First to Understand, then to Be Understood. H.E.ARTs seek to understand the bigger issues of art education outside of their individual classrooms and into their district, state, region, and nation. Gaining the view of the bigger picture can empower H.E.ARTs to become proactive and make changes at the local level. H.E.ARTs can truly Begin With the End in Mind if they take time to understand issues in general education and the role art education plays in that big picture.

Habit 6: Synergize®: The habit of cooperation.

H.E.ARTs seek out the camaraderie of colleagues both within their disciplines and outside. They seek members of their professional organizations so they “Synergize” themselves. H.E.ARTs seek a well-balanced program that looks outward as well as inward. A program that is part community and the community is part of the classroom. It is an example where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. H.E.ARTs know that together we have the POWER to CHANGE, and seek opportunities to make this happen.

Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw®: the habit of renewal.

H.E.ARTs find opportunities to learn, renew, and balance their lives. Covey calls this “Sharpening the Saw.” In order to do this; the educator may need to take care of the many aspects of their life. These include physical, spiritual, mental, and social/emotional realms of their lives. H.E.ARTs find opportunities for this by traveling with family and colleagues, visiting museums, and creating their own works of art. Participating in your professional organization can help the H.E.ART to Sharpen the Saw. By attending the professional development opportunities provided by the National Art Education Association, the H.E.ART finds opportunities to Sharpen their Saw.

How can the art educator out there working in the trenches become a Highly Effective ART Teacher? The first thing you can do is contact the National Art Education Association at 1-703-860-8000 or <http://www.naea-reston.org> and become involved with a team that seeks a Win-Win Solution to educational reform that includes the visual arts! At the same time, support your state-affiliated organization and begin to take an active role in visual art education in your state. Next, find out about the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and the Standards for Art Teachers. Familiarize yourself with best practices and begin to widen your circle of Influence. Highly Effective Teachers are the H.E.ART of educational reform.

Begin to put the 7 Habits into action by contacting Franklin Covey Company's Education Division, 1-800-272-6839 or visit <http://www.franklincovey.com> to learn more about how to implement the 7 Habits in your school. Ask them about one of their latest releases, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens* book by Sean Covey.

References

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