

Firebirds

Approach: One to one

Level: Year 4 and year 8

Focus: Students can identify and explain the features of successful picture making.

Resources: 5 pictures of firebirds.

Questions/instructions:

Some children were asked by their teacher to make a crayon and pastel picture of a make-believe bird called a firebird. They were asked to make their firebird look bright, strong and powerful.

Here are some of the pictures the children made.

Give student the 5 pictures to look at.

Remember, the teacher asked the children to make their firebird look bright, strong and powerful.

1. Choose one picture that you think has been done very well because the firebird looks bright, strong and powerful.

Allow time.

Picture of firebird chosen as strong, bright and powerful:

picture	y4	y8
1	2	1
2	1	0
3	2	0
4	59	45
5	36	54

2. Now try to explain to me everything that makes this firebird look bright, strong and powerful.

Explanation of features focusing on brightness/colour:

- density of colour;
- choice and use of colour;
- use of contrast

elaborated on 3 or more features	1	1
mentioned 3 features or elaborated on 2	5	9
mentioned 2 features	19	25
mentioned 1 feature	62	53
no mention of any relevant features	13	12

Explanation of features focusing on strength/power:

- speed/movement (e.g. lines of body shape);
- powerful appendages (e.g. beak, claws);
- ferocity/expressiveness (e.g. eyes)

elaborated on 3 or more features	2	4
mentioned 3 features or elaborated on 2	17	22
mentioned 2 features	26	29
mentioned 1 feature	34	30
no mention of any relevant features	21	15

% responses
y4 y8





3. This time choose one picture that you think hasn't managed to show the firebird as bright, strong and powerful.

Allow time.

Picture of firebird chosen as not being strong, bright and powerful:

picture	% responses	
	y4	y8
1	25	24
2	26	23
3	43	50
4	3	2
5	3	1

4. What could the artist do to make this firebird more exciting, so that it is bright, strong and powerful?

Explanation for improvement of features focusing on brightness/colour:

	% responses	
	y4	y8
density of colour; choice and use of colour; use of contrast		
elaborated on 3 or more features	0	0
mentioned 3 features or elaborated on 2	3	10
mentioned 2 features	18	24
mentioned 1 feature	57	46
no mention of any relevant features	22	20

Explanation for improvement of features focusing on strength and power:

	% responses	
	y4	y8
speed/movement (e.g. lines of body shape); powerful appendages (e.g. beak, claws); ferocity/expressiveness (e.g. eyes)		
elaborated on 3 or more features	1	4
mentioned 3 features or elaborated on 2	12	22
mentioned 2 features	25	25
mentioned 1 feature	34	27
no mention of any relevant features	28	22

Commentary:

While both year 4 and year 8 students were able to make appropriate broad distinctions between successful and less successful picture making, comparatively few were able to identify, analyse and elaborate well on particular features that contribute to successful picture making.