

A STUDY OF THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR
CREATIVE ART IN THE CLASSROOM

by

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INTRODUCTION

Art education has much to offer to the world of the twentieth century. The future of art education is bright and promising with unlimited opportunities as the educational standards improve and educators recognize the need for emphasizing creative living, attempting to make full use of man's inherent capabilities. The great progress that is possible in art education in the schools is a challenge to every art educator and seems to make this study of the opportunities for creative art in the classroom worth while and timely.

Society has been slow to realize the importance of the child. Education has come to realize the significance of creative childhood and has made an impressive beginning toward the development of the individual's integrity which is the fiber of a sound social structure.¹

The schools must prepare creators, not merely spectators and imitators, and it is the creative art program that can accomplish this important development. Encouraging creativity in this age of conformity is one of the greatest tasks that confronts every art educator and every classroom teacher. Creativity is essential to education. Creative habits and skills are needed by every person to meet his problems in youth as well as in the adult world, and children's art experiences can provide both enjoyment and profitable training. The problem of emphasizing creativity for every individual falls to the art education program.

¹Victor D'Amico, "What is Creative Teaching," School Arts, Jan. 1955, p. 8.

Art education is not a new field. The importance of the training of the hand and mind was recognized 2400 years ago. Plato expressed it when he said, "We must make art the basis of education because it can operate in childhood, during the sleep of reasoning; and when reason does come, art will have prepared a path for her, and she will be greeted as a friend."¹

Only with the beginning of the century came the recognition that art can make a significant contribution to the education of children. There has been progress in developing creative art in the schools in the last few years but there is much to be done in the future when one realizes that many schools have no creative art program, only a program that approves of imitation and stereotyped work. The vast possibilities of a valuable, progressive program in every school have scarcely been touched.

If the art programs can be built on a sound philosophy of creative expression, an important step will have been taken toward preparing better citizens for the world of tomorrow. The inter-connection of science and art becomes more fully apparent when they are both considered as means of communication and as indispensable factors in every stage of education.

John Dewey's philosophy of education rests on the axiom that the indispensable elements of the democratic way of life--scientific method as intelligence in operation, art, education--are all bound together in a single organic whole. To put the matter in other terms, all genuine experience is intelligent experience, experience guided by insight derived from science, illuminated by art, and made a common possession through education.²

Morality, science, art, all are forms of communication, possible

¹Manfred Keiler, Art in the Schoolroom, p. 2.

²Dewey, Barnes, Buermeyer, Mullen, Mazia, Art and Education, p. 9-10.

only through the sharing experience which gives civilized living. Today in all fields of endeavor, in science, in engineering, in medicine, one can see man's continued attempt to improve, enrich, and beautify life. It seems that no individual can live a truly balanced life without an acquaintance with art or in the results of art. It is an inextricable part of life itself.

Creative art can transform the environment of man. It can refurbish the mind and the home; it can change dull routine to emotional excitement--it can mean that personal, elusive thing--joy in living.¹

Art should never be a remote thing associated only with the past. It is something which every human being can experience and practice. Art and democracy have much in common. Both permit freedom, initiative, and self realization. Art and democracy offer opportunities for all, irrespective of religion, race, or color. Art can make a vital contribution to a better democracy, better understanding between nations, and a lasting peace.

It is the obligation of education to train the minds and talents of our youth to improve, through creative citizenship, our American institutions in accord with the requirements of the future, said Franklin D. Roosevelt.²

Today's art program in the schools should be a part of the progressive philosophy of education concerned with child growth and development. Art education is concerned with drawing and painting and crafts, but the emphasis is not on art for art's sake. Rather it is for what art means to the child and how it affects his personality, growth, and total being. Art seeks to give the

¹Ralph Pearson, The New Art Education, p. 14.

²Ibid., p. 2

child the opportunity to interpret his world and his thoughts and to express his individual ideas.

THE VALUE OF CREATIVE ART TO THE CHILD

Today more than ever before children need essential training, not only in the basic subjects, but in the fields that will make them capable of living a richer and more creative life and thus build a better world for all mankind.

Life without creativity is limited and arid. It is a man's aesthetic nature which makes it possible for him to live creatively. In a broad sense, art education is the total development of man's aesthetic nature; it is the maturation of his art impulses.¹

As the child combines his visions with the art material that is provided for him, he will learn to plan and execute sculptural and pictorial design according to his individual ideas.

A creative person is usually a happy person, so art in the schools plays an important role in aiding each child to realize his creative ability and become a happier, better adjusted person.

The word "uniqueness" describes the most important quality of the creative act. It is the character in art that characterizes one child's work from another's. --- To be unique is not just being different, it is the expression of the self and, once recognized, is the basis for all creative growth.²

A child's power to create is a precious gift that must be valued and encouraged by an understanding teacher. This creative spirit needs only to be released and guided to become a rich

¹Ralph L. Wickizer, An Introduction to Art Education, p. 3.
²D'Amico, loc. cit.

possession as a child grows to adulthood. For a young child, creation is a wonderful experience, a game of using color, form, and symbols as a means to say something in picture. Drawing and painting satisfies a need for expression, as does language, and almost every idea may find expression in art. It is a means of communication for a young child.

The power to create is born in children. In tender years it is self-assertive and happily triumphant. Later, unless protected and encouraged, it will surrender to adult standards and gradually wither and die.¹

For the child whose full command of language is years away, art is his best means of communication. The art forms which help him express himself and recreate the world around him are an important part of his growth. He will develop a better understanding of the community and the world as he expresses his feelings toward it in art. The young child first expresses his attitudes toward his home and his family and thus identifies himself as an individual in his surroundings.

The child's visual world is made up of many things. These impressions and visual images may not be commented on verbally but may influence his art products. The child who has the opportunity to express these ideas with art media will grow more observing and find satisfaction in seeing as well as reproducing and interpreting what he sees.

It is important that every child, through the language of art, discover the satisfying release of creative expression. The art program is not designed for the talented alone. All children

¹Ralph Pearson, op. cit., p. 206.

have the right to creative expression. Every child benefits from the opportunities to explore and to express his ideas freely and honestly with a wide range of art materials. These specific goals of art education are concerned with the value to the child:

"The aim of art education for children is to enrich their lives

- to promote growth through creative self-expression
- to aid each child in his general adjustment and the enrichment of his personality
- to sharpen his powers of observation
- to increase his appreciation of beauty wherever found
- to teach cooperation by group projects
- to promote clear thinking and problem solving
- to improve his skill and knowledge of art processes."

Philosophy of art education of the Clay Center, Kansas, City Schools.

THE VALUE OF CREATIVE ART TO THE CLASSROOM

Art has significant values in the educational program of every classroom as art activities fit naturally and logically into the aims and purposes of learning. Art can be used to motivate interest in other subject areas and to enrich the study of the social sciences and language arts in the classroom at every grade level. Art experiences are a visual aid to learning and provide an opportunity for experimentation and exploration in many subject fields.

Academic subjects in the classroom often do not offer an opportunity for the child to set up his own problem and to solve it at his own rate of speed and in his own way. A correlated art program can help the child find his own solution to a problem in many fields and thus provides recognition of individual differences. Art is valuable to the many children who, because of timidity and reticence, cannot express their knowledge and thoughts verbally. Often they can express with pictures, the facts they have learned from a particular study or lesson. The value of working together on a group art project is great and develops respect for an individual approach to a problem and increases tolerance toward a child's classmates. Children can share ideas and enlarge their own vision by sharing their pictures and ideas.

Art activities related to other areas in the classroom should develop from the natural interest and curiosity of children. Only when the experience integrates the challenge of materials with the child's own interests to produce an individualized expression are we justified in classifying correlation as a creative art experience. Unless art is kept creative no correlation really takes place.

Art activities in the classroom will contribute to building a positive attitude toward school and the classroom. The importance of art in any classroom depends upon well-planned and well-carried-out teacher-pupil experiences. Guidance by the teacher is ever present in art education. Guidance implies that the growth of the pupil may be meaningful when he and the teacher

evaluate his creative action together.

Art plays an important role in all children's learning and total growth. The purpose of art in the classroom may be two-fold: first, to satisfy the general needs of the many, and, second, to furnish special training for the few. In fulfilling these purposes, the teacher may seek organization of thinking rather than the correctness of execution, fulfilling of experience rather than activity, significance of substance and form rather than technical excellence, and aesthetic expression rather than mere imitation.

Rapport between the classroom teacher and the pupil is often nearly perfect during an art period. The teacher can easily fulfill her role of friend, counselor, guide, and helper. This can be a time when all the arts of good living are practiced. Sharing, helping, working in groups or independently, the children can use respectfully all the freedom needed to carry out their art projects.

Art work stems naturally from the children's wide interests at any grade level. Masks, costumes, properties, and backdrops for dramatizations can be created from the endless resources of the pupil's imagination. A field trip may be recorded by the children's pictures or a mural may culminate a particular study. Such projects give opportunities for every child in the class, regardless of his ability, to participate in a group and to experience the joy of creating.

Art, then, is the natural and logical force in the educative process for tying together, vivifying, and visualizing knowledge so that the mind may grasp the

otherwise incomprehensible feeling, the subtleties, and emotional motives of human actions.¹

THE VALUE OF CREATIVE ART TO THE EXCEPTIONAL CHILD

There are exceptional children in every classroom and their presence creates both a problem and a challenge to the progressive classroom teacher. The philosophy of the alert teacher is to provide the richest learning situation possible so that each child may grow at his own rate of speed and become the best citizen that he is potentially able to become. This attitude on the part of the teacher develops individual growth and opportunity for every child and takes into consideration the various levels of ability of each student in the classroom. Every child is endowed at birth with many differing characteristics, temperaments, and physical variations and as he grows, his abilities differ greatly.

Each child should have an equal opportunity to develop his own possibilities and capabilities. This equal opportunity does not mean standard treatment and standard goals for every individual. Each child must be treated differently if each is to be treated equally since his problems are unique.

Since art, by nature, is an individual matter, it is especially important in solving the problems and meeting the needs of the exceptional child. As art seeks to develop and to encourage

¹Ralph L. Wickiser, op cit., p. 19.

the unique abilities of each individual, it carries a lesson in respect for the uniqueness of other individuals and this is a sound philosophy for democratic society. Each child in the classroom has his place in society and art can help him fill his place to the best of his ability.

The severely retarded and the unusually gifted child may be in special classes if each is to have appropriate care; however, if every child who is retarded or has some gift was removed from the classroom, there would be few children left. So every exceptional child is entitled to consideration and understanding by a wise teacher wherever he is placed. His problem must be considered on an individual basis if our schools are to base our philosophy upon individual differences.

The problem for the classroom teacher is usually how to recognize the exceptional child and how to help him as he is and where he is. Her goal should be to take each child as far as she can in the year that he is in her classroom.

The Gifted Child

The gifted child can find a challenge in the varied materials and experiences that the art program offers. He will need frequent guidance and individual attention. The wise teacher will encourage him to progress beyond the group projects and to explore and experiment more than some of his classmates and thus his art experiences will be enriched according to his capabilities.

Most gifted children consistently produce a relatively large

amount of sensitive and original art work of a standard higher than that found in the output of the average student.

During childhood the gifted learner does not present notable problems for the sympathetic teacher of art. Such a child will pass through the various stages of pictorial expression with greater rapidity than will his normal classmates. Scribbles quickly give way to organized non-objective pattern: symbols appear in short order and are soon placed within an environment.¹

Gifted children require timely and effective guidance, though do not require as much stimulation and motivation as normal pupils. They are quick to establish goals for expression and find meanings in their environment. The gifted pupil also requires the greatest honesty and sincerity in guidance and also in evaluation of his work. They are usually severely critical of their own work and their creative expression is honest and sincere. The gifted child can, in art, be challenged to work to his capacity and be given the opportunity to develop his gifts to a high degree. Art education offers great opportunities for the total growth of the gifted child in the classroom.

The Retarded Child

The retarded child can usually be found in every classroom and demands special consideration from the classroom teacher.

It is one of my deepest innermost convictions that wherever there is a spark of human spirit--no matter how dim it may be--it is our sacred responsibility as humans,

¹Charles Gaitskill, "Art for Gifted Pupils," School Arts, March, 1955, 54:9.

teachers, and educators to fan it into whatever flame it conceivably may develop.¹

The classroom teacher should be bound by her philosophy of individual education to do all she can to develop the creative powers of every retarded child in her group. By special assignments within the range of his ability and special attention, the retarded child can find satisfaction and some measure of success. Thus his creative powers will be developed as much as possible.

The retarded child needs extra encouragement and the friendly understanding of his teacher if he is to use the limited ability that he has. Recognition for his creative art work will serve as a stimulus to urge him to progress in other fields. Mere copying and tracing methods increase the dependence and decrease the self confidence of the retarded child. We add to their handicap by not permitting them to use their initiative. They derive great satisfaction which they need from their creative efforts no matter how primitive their work may be.

Art should be taught in relation to other interests and activities and may well be correlated with every subject taught within the curriculum for slow-learning children. Art provides opportunities for giving the retarded child practice in cooperation, socialization, sharing, praise, and appreciation of his own work and the work of his classmates. He will be better able to find his place in democratic society and to live a more satisfying life if his art experiences are pleasant and stimulating.

¹Viktor Lowenfeld, "The Creative Process and the Handicapped," School Arts, March, 1955, 54:5.

An art program which fosters the power to create, provides many benefits for slow-learners. Mentally retarded children need to be freed as far as possible from their fears, inhibitions, tensions, and blocks.¹

The classroom teacher should be challenged to adapt the art program to the retarded child and thus use to the fullest, his capabilities. Art is a means of self expression and has no limits as far as chronological age, mental ability, or capability is concerned.

PRESENTING THE ART PROGRAM TO PARENTS

Every parent plays an extremely important part in his child's art development. If the parents understand the aims and the philosophy of the art program, they can encourage the child and share his pleasure and satisfaction in his creative art efforts.

Every opportunity should be used to help parents understand that the limited art experiences of their day have been replaced by new and varied ones and that wide experiences that add to the child's total development are provided in a creative art program in our schools today. Parents are often surprised to find that instead of imitating, their children are finding real joy in creativity and that their art experiences take countless forms beside coloring and painting. The art room now provides many materials and the opportunity for a child to use them in exploring, experimenting, and creating. Clay modeling, puppetry,

¹Jacquelyn White Boskin, "Retarded Children Need Art," School Arts, March, 1955, 54:13.

mural-making, sculpture, and many other media enrich the classroom experiences. With these many opportunities in the classroom the child communicates his ideas and feelings in a pleasant and permissive atmosphere and in his own individual way.

Parents should know that their children work both as individuals and within a group when their art classes provide the opportunity to model, carve, bend, cut, and shape.

A creative art program can be presented to parents by school exhibits and open house programs where they can see the children demonstrating the many media they use in everyday art classes. Demonstrations of art processes by children may provide the program for Parent-Teacher Association meetings and art workshops which may be attended by the parents will help them to understand the goals of the art program. Opportunity for the parents to participate in art experiences with their children can add to their understanding of classroom art procedure.

Parents may be urged to share their children's pride and satisfaction in their creations. The way a parent judges his child's art efforts is apt to affect what the child does in his art work, not only at home but also at school. Parents should encourage their child's art expression according to relative developmental criteria, understanding changes which are natural as all children grow and develop, as well as variation found among particular children on any developmental level. Parents should be helped to understand that the finished art product is not as important as the process, that the value of the art experience comes from the child's participation. They should be cautioned

EXPLANATION OF PLATE I

Junior high school students demonstrate copper
enameling at an art exhibit of the Clay Center, Kansas
city schools.

PLATE I



EXPLANATION OF PLATE II

Sixth grade pupils demonstrate weaving
at an art exhibit of the Clay Center, Kansas
city schools.

PLATE II



not to judge a child's art work by adult standards, remembering that a child expresses his ideas of the world he lives in and that the world looks far different to a small child than to an adult.

There seems to be a real need for parent education in developmental child art. An art teacher can see that good books on art education are in the public and the school library. She can find many opportunities to present programs for clubs and organizations to further understanding of the creative art program of her school.

THE CREATIVE ART TEACHER

Creating teaching deals with the development of individuals who are distinct and changing and who produce different creative manifestations. It deals with individuals who have different emotions, drives, and aptitudes and who perceive and mature at their own pace. Therefore, teaching situations are never exactly the same and it is the constant fluctuation of interest, attitude, and response which makes the teaching of art a constant challenge and stimulating experience.¹

The teacher of creative art encourages exploration and experimentation by providing many media for the children to use in their art experiences. Her role is one of guiding and stimulating rather than dictating. All children need the stimulation of a variety of materials and the encouragement of a teacher who respects the efforts of each child without setting up adult standards. The wise teacher recognizes that through art materials,

¹D'Amico, op. cit., p. 4.

young children communicate thoughts and feelings that otherwise might never be expressed. She understands that honesty of expression is characteristic of creative work at the elementary level. Children's pictures often depict certain needs and desires which find no other outlet.

Today's teacher is not satisfied with an echo of another's thinking. She is not afraid to try something new in her classroom and assumes a "let's try together" attitude to aid children in solving their problems in an individual way. The teacher can learn to know her pupils and watch their growth and development and to expect work according to their individual abilities. She is less concerned with the finished product than with the inner satisfactions the child derives from creative expression. Her primary function is to develop creative ability in all children.

The creative art teacher will stimulate her pupil's curiosity and imagination and will encourage individuality. She will respect sincerity and honesty in her children's art work. Over-direction and insistence on adult standards on the part of the teacher can result in stereotyped work rather than freedom of expression. She will plan with the children and listen to their suggestions and respect their ideas rather than imposing her ideas on the class. "The art teacher's prime function is to see that the creative experience is charged with aesthetic meaning."¹

The teacher of art, through suggestion and understanding, can protect a child's power to create. She will not talk about

¹Victor D'Amico, op. cit., p. 7.

creation and design but will keep her students doing the thing the words mean. The young child is not concerned with skill and literal truth for his imaginary world is more real than the realities of life. To a child, nothing is impossible and he will try any project without fear or hesitation.

Children have a native sense for related harmonies of color and space which need only to be encouraged and protected to grow into flowering art.¹

A creative art program in the classroom can offer such protection to a child's ability.

The teacher must be the most modest and humble of persons who sees in a child a miracle of God and not pupil material.²

Such a teacher will be interested in the child as an individual and provide him with challenging media, understanding, and honest respect.

Every effective art teacher understands the basic principles of design and guides her pupils in organizing their ideas. With a well chosen word or question the teacher is able to lead the children as they work together, to see, know, and employ good design. So they will grow in their ability to use design effectively in all their creative activities.

When a child asks, "What shall I make?" he tells his teacher that he needs help in making his decisions. The understanding teacher will not tell him what to make but will point out directions where he may find answers. In this way he will be guided toward sincere expression.

¹Ralph Pearson, op. cit., p. 207.

²Manfred Keller, op. cit., p. 85.

The creative art teacher should understand the function of art in total education, foundations of methods, and the nature of creative experience. She will be an imaginative person, warm and friendly, in her relations with her pupils. With these qualifications she will be able to play her role as a sympathetic guide. The teacher should have a knowledge of the use of resources, the use of evaluative criteria, and an understanding of a child's growth.

As an art educator, the creative teacher will assume her duty to help students successfully express on paper or model in clay and other three-dimensional materials, bits of their imagination, dreams, and interesting experiences. She will provide for the aesthetic needs of all boys and girls through the use of art medium and the inspiration of works of art.

MEDIA FOR CREATIVE ART IN THE CLASSROOM

Drawing and Painting

Drawing is the basic language of art and should be encouraged from very early childhood all through the school years. Through art experiences the child develops an appreciation for the drawing process and finds satisfaction in expressing his experiences and thoughts in pictorial form. Drawing and painting will do much to instill confidence, enthusiasm, and skill to materialize the rich subject matter that is stored in every child's mind.

The child at the easel with a paint brush in his hand is isolated in a world of his own. He can experiment and explore, finding out what he can and cannot do. The child needs many such experiences, especially in kindergarten and the primary grades, for it is during these early years that he establishes the rudiments of controls that must serve him as he matures. There is no greater discipline to impose upon a child than giving him such freedom to proceed on his own.

Since painting is, to a large extent, an emotional experience, the child often learns from sources that are not expressed in verbal concepts. The greatest value and growth will come from experimentation. He will also grow from observing his own and other's work. His teacher should constantly help him to see the world around him through sharper and more observing eyes. Every child is constantly collecting impressions and ideas from what he sees. He looks at and examines the world around him. These impressions and visual images are retained and may appear in many ways in his pictures. He may repeat lines, textures, and shapes that he observes in nature. These experiences are important in terms of total personal development.

Tempera paint should be in every classroom and it is especially suitable for the young child. Tempera and large brushes at an easel encourage a child to work freely, painting and overpainting to suggest texture and strength. The vivid, strong colors appeal to children. Transparent water colors in individual boxes are convenient to use for large classes but are better suited to the older child, since they are more difficult to

EXPLANATION OF PLATE III

Kindergarten children demonstrate easel
painting at a school art exhibit, Clay Center,
Kansas.

PLATE III



control than tempera. Watercolors are ideal for outdoor painting and field trips because of their convenient size. The older child likes to experiment in fusing the delicate colors.

Clay Modeling

Clay is one of the most valuable materials for children and should find an important place in every classroom. It is a most suitable creative material for very young children and is a challenging material for the older student. It is adaptable to various hand sizes, degrees of muscular control, and attention spans.

Clay modeling helps the child to detect the qualities of the material and to respect the medium. The modeler must keep his ideas flexible and he must explore the material's natural possibilities to the fullest extent if he is to create with clay. It is valuable in that, being a shape in space, it places emphasis on the wholeness and the relation of detailed parts of the whole. Clay stirs imagination, feeling, and expression. Creating non-objective three-dimensional shapes with clay is an enjoyable and valuable means of studying pure design. The child learns to regard all areas of his product in relation to the whole and as a part of his complete design. He need not create a known object. Realism and literal likeness seem to give way to the importance of the design as a child works freely and imaginatively with clay.

Clay modeling provides experience in sculpture which has a strong appeal for children. Because the hands are the most effective tools, the product becomes very personal, extending the

personality of the modeler. Clay allows the child to bring out his own experiences and thoughts in a fixed three-dimensional form. The child should be able to view his work from all angles as he models. He will then realize that there is no front or back to a well designed piece of clay. The flow of line, mass, texture, and color brings about a oneness that will encourage the child to see objects as a whole and to be aware of three-dimensional forms.

Clay modeling releases tensions and focuses attention on the object being squeezed or smoothed. Ideas are frequently expressed which would not ordinarily come to awareness--ideas more unique and imaginative than would be possible in conscious thinking and planning. Clay provides rich opportunities for experimentation and exploration and often as a child plays with it, it suggests its potentialities. He discovers that it can be twisted, squeezed, pounded, and that it can be broken and put together again. The modeler finds satisfaction in feeling the clay when it is rough and patterned or when it is smooth and satiny. He can form shapes that are tall, round, or flat, and discovers when he does so that the shape produces light and dark areas. No other classroom material possesses the many rich qualities that clay does.

If clay modeling is to be a rewarding experience, the student's mind must be receptive to the particular nature of clay. An experimental attitude toward the material gets results that are original and fresh. Curiosity and adventure are qualities to be encouraged in children. These qualities cultivate awareness

EXPLANATION OF PLATE IV

Sixth grade pupils demonstrate clay modeling at an art exhibit of the Clay Center, Kansas city schools.

PLATE IV



EXPLANATION OF PLATE V

Fifth grade pupils model clay in the
classroom at Lincoln School, Clay Center,
Kansas.

PLATE V



and awareness leads to satisfaction. All of this can be found in a lump of clay.

Clay is an inexpensive art material that provides children with a plastic medium which responds quickly and easily to their touch. Water-base or self-hardening clay is preferable since it dries hard and is permanent. It can be painted and a coat of shellac makes the finish waterproof and lasting. Plastic clay satisfies a very small child since his attention span is short and he can quickly model a shape and reshape it as often as he wishes.

Mural Making

Mural making is a valuable art project in elementary classrooms. It helps children to learn to work in a group and the lesson of planning and solving problems together is a democratic process that increases children's knowledge of democratic living. Each child sees his contribution become a part of a total picture and his need for group acceptance is thus satisfied.

The experiences of children with many interests are extended if they are encouraged to work on many group projects. Other children who are less imaginative are drawn into the group and are given confidence due to their contribution to the group effort and some of them are stimulated to initiate original ideas. Providing children with the opportunity to experiment in the field of their special interest is a very good way to stimulate a creative way of working.

Mural making is a cooperative enterprise involving the search for facts, planning, organizing, and executing. "Every participant subordinates his own contribution to the whole, yet all have the feeling of cooperative accomplishment in mural making."¹ By working together in creating murals, the child's interest in school life and activities is increased and friendships are developed. The idea of making a mural may come from the children and their planning and working together can result in unity and satisfaction to the group as a whole. Mural making is suitable for all ages, kindergarten through junior high school.

A mural may follow a field trip or a particular study and helps the children organize their learning experience. A mural may be made purely for the pleasure children derive from creating, or it may motivate interest in other subject areas or may be made as culminating activity for a unit of study. "A mural activity may be provided to bring together in one large picture the ideas of many individuals."² A mural may be used for decoration of the classroom or a hall where color and design are needed. It may be of the panel or border type, depending on the space where it is to be hung. It should be used temporarily and replaced often.

Design should always be important in the finished product. To get design quality the children may discuss the importance of filling the entire area and plan together the composition of the mural. It is important that a child learns to work freely within

¹Viktor Lowenfeld, "Creative and Mental Growth," p. 206.

²Arne Randall, "Murals for Schools," p. 1.

a large area and with a variety of materials. Mural experience encourages a child to use freedom in other art projects. He will profit by his mural experiences in planning and organizing other compositions.

The teacher's role in mural making is to see that there is a clear plan and that all the children participate to the extent of their ability. A permissive, cooperative attitude should be maintained in the classroom during the project. Children should sometimes direct, cooperate by taking orders, and always be open to suggestion from the group.

Background materials may vary. Building paper, wrapping paper, butcher paper, newsprint, and corrugated cardboard are well suited for murals. Crayons, tempera, fingerprint, and detergent build-up, as well as chalk and cut paper, are effective media. Cut paper murals made from colored paper give children a different concept from that gained from painting or crayoning, and the experience in using flat tones should contribute something to their future painting. Objects built up with detergent and starch mixture give texture and quality to a mural. When the mixture hardens, the whole surface may be painted with tempera. A three-dimensional effect is obtained with detergent mixture. Colored chalk is especially suitable for older children and quickly covers large backgrounds. It is easy to use for backdrops and stage scenery. Chalk and tempera combined makes an interesting effect and fluorescent chalk offers many possibilities for lighting effects.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE VI

Junior high school students work on
an abstract backdrop for a music festival,
McKinley School, Clay Center, Kansas.

Neenah
CHIEF TONK MOULD
SOCIETY OF PAPER
MAKERS U.S.A.

PLATE VI



Puppetry

Puppetry provides a worth while creative experience for children of all ages and has earned an important place in the classroom. One of the most important benefits of puppetry in the curriculum is the opportunity to coordinate many subject areas. Puppets can help the child visualize different times, places, and cultures, thus enriching his experiences in social studies, language arts, and fine arts.

Creative expression and imagination is stimulated as the child creates his puppet character and expresses his feelings and emotions through the words and actions of the puppet. A teacher can learn much about her pupil as the child operates his puppet and speaks for it. The child may work out many tensions through puppetry in the classroom. For the timid, self-conscious child, puppets can provide anonymity until he can conquer his fears and gain self assurance and poise. Every child likes play-acting and his need for dramatic participation is satisfied with puppets more easily than with other forms of dramatic art. Such experiences introduce the child to a form of entertainment that may provide fun for now and later years and often lead to a hobby that serves as a constructive use of leisure.

The classroom teacher can create new interest in a field or in a particular phase of her program by creating and using puppets. A puppet can add to the motivation in introducing a new study to a class or can be used to direct the class in singing or to add emphasis to health rules.

Puppets aid small children in developing physical coordination as they create singing and dancing roles for their characters. Older children profit by the operation of string marionettes and may develop great skill in using puppets of various types.

Puppets plays provide a wonderful group activity since use may be made of almost any ability the child may have. The children learn that it is important to cooperate rather than compete if they are to give a successful show. They share ideas as they write original plays for their puppets and work together on scenery and staging for the plays.

Puppets are suitable for every grade level. Simple puppets are ideal for kindergarten children and can be used in many ways in the classroom. They are useful in the reading readiness program and in teaching social living. No matter how crude the puppet may be, the child will forget his shyness when he is speaking for the character that he has created. The kindergartener or first grade child will enjoy making up simple stories for his puppet to act out, thus adding to his growth in speaking and acting.

There are many types of puppets that are easy for the young child to make and the material is inexpensive and easy to obtain.

Potato puppets are the simplest type to make though they cannot be kept for a long time since the potato will spoil in two or three weeks. A round, smooth potato is selected for the head. Different sizes may be used for children and adult characters and strange shapes are suitable for animals. Holes are cut in the

bottom of the potato to fit the forefinger of the puppeteer. Colored thumbtacks can be stuck in for the features or faces can be painted on with tempera. Colored pipe stem cleaners can be curled and stuck in the potato for the hair. Clothes are made of gathered pieces of cloth and attached to the head with pins. A child's original ideas can be used in creating his potato puppet.

Paper bag puppets are suitable for the primary grades. Small paper bags are filled with crumpled paper, gathered at the bottom, and tied over a cardboard cylinder or portion of a mailing tube for the finger of the puppeteer. The faces are painted with tempera and paper ears for animals can be attached. Hair can be made from crochet cotton, yarn, or string. The clothes consist of a piece of cloth gathered at the neck. Two slits at the shoulder line let the thumb and small finger come through to act as the puppet's arms. These puppets can be used with a box or a simple stage.

Mitten puppets can be successfully made by children of the primary grades and third and fourth grade children can do their own stitching. A pattern is made by the children drawing around their hands, keeping the three middle fingers in one group for the head of the puppet. The thumb and little finger are drawn separately and become the puppet's arms. The scrap box can furnish cloth for the dress. The pattern is pinned on the cloth and cut out and stitched around. The mitten is then turned right side out and the face is painted to create different types of characters. Bits of felt and buttons can be used for the features

EXPLANATION OF PLATE VII

Fourth grade pupils of McKinley School,
Clay Center, Kansas, display puppets made in
art class.

PLATE VII



instead of paint. Yarn makes many styles of hair and the puppets are then ready for use.

Papier-mache' puppets are more suitable for the children of the upper grades and junior high school. First, a ball of crushed newspaper the size of a head is attached to a cardboard cylinder by means of paper strips and paste. Wads of paper form the eyes, nose, and mouth. They should be large for the puppet is more impressive if the features are exaggerated. Large ears can be formed for such characters as rabbits and clowns by pasting several layers of paper together and attaching them to the head. After several layers of small torn strips of paper are pasted over the whole head, it is ready to be covered with small pieces of paper towels which hide the wrinkles and rough places. When the head dries it is ready to paint. A coat of shellac can be applied over the paint to protect the finish. Hair made of yarn, string, or cotton can be glued to the head. The clothes are simple dresses with short sleeves for the fingers of the puppeteer to make gestures. The dresses may be trimmed with buttons, sequins, and other things usually found in the scrap box. The dress is glued to the cardboard cylinder and can be changed to create different characters.

Collage and Construction Materials

Collage and construction materials provide primary experience in the use of texture, pattern, color, transparency, shape, and movement, giving a child a rich experience which he can draw

upon in other media. It permits easy expression of many ideas and feelings which might not be stimulated ordinarily or which might be blocked by a lack of the technique and knowledge required to produce visual effects such as texture.

The many materials used in collage develop a new kind of perception basic to art expression in seeing the material for its own quality as well as for its utilitarian purpose, as seeing texture rather than a garment, or seeing a shape rather than a bottle cap, or seeing transparency rather than cellophane. At the same time it develops an awareness of many different qualities of materials and encourages whole perception. These materials help to free the individual who has come to believe that all "art" is picture making.

In using collage and construction materials a child works according to his feeling for aesthetic form. He puts the material together in a way that pleases him to see and to touch. The variety of materials stimulates many ideas on a feeling or texture basis. They encourage and make easy the abstract expression of the essence of subject matter ideas, as in making a collage portrait of materials that tell what a person looks like. They suggest many varied and inventive uses.

Collage and construction materials are especially valuable because no standards have been set for their use. The child must determine for himself their value to him in solving his particular problem. Each person experiences greater freedom in that no rules or stereotyped formula keep him from evaluating and seeing the material clearly, inventing with it, and using it in his own way.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE VIII

Sixth grade pupils of McKinley School,
Clay Center, Kansas, work with collage and
construction material.

PLATE VIII



EXPLANATION OF PLATE IX

Sixth grade pupils gather around a table where their classmates work with collage material. McKinley School, Clay Center, Kansas.

PLATE IX



The visual stimulation is almost unlimited for the materials encourage experimentation and imagination as the child uses his imaginative powers to see beauty and design in scrap box material.

Collage materials are inexpensive and furnish a classroom, with a limited budget, the most valuable material for creative projects. The materials can contribute to creative expression and should be chosen for their texture and interest. Burlap, sandpaper, fur, feathers, sponge, and velvet are some of the materials that offer possibilities for collages. The visual effects must be interesting to the user. Such materials as crinkled tinfoil, shiny metallic paper, and cellophane can be used. Materials that have interesting shapes have a place in a collage collection. Such things as toothpicks, buttons, corks, and bottle caps form contrasts in an abstract design and provide a three-dimensional effect. No other project can offer more opportunity for originality than collage and three-dimensional constructions.

SUMMARY

The optimum creative growth and the best general development of all individuals through art is the aim of art education in our elementary schools today. A creative art program is the logical means of accomplishing this goal.

Though art education has been slow to develop in our schools, it is progressing as educators recognize the scope of education in our democracy and the function of art in total education. Research in human growth and in the science of education has

enlarged and validated the impact art experiences can have on the child's learning.

Many schools have no art instructor or supervisor so the responsibility of art education falls to the classroom teacher. In all too many cases the classroom teacher has had little or no art training and often feels incompetent to carry out a creative art program; however, this study reveals such a program is possible and within the reach of every progressive classroom teacher.

This study points out the necessity for a sound educational philosophy and the recognition of the value of art to the child and the classroom as prerequisites for a creative art program in the classroom.

Art is for every child including the gifted and the retarded, and can aid every child in achieving his highest potential. The study explores the creative development and the resources on which it depends, the function of the efficient teacher, and suggests media and projects effective in carrying out a creative art program.

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A STUDY OF THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR
CREATIVE ART IN THE CLASSROOM

by

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The purpose of this study was to explore the opportunities for creative art in the classroom. The vital role art plays in education is beginning to be recognized in schools all over America as education emphasizes creative living and attempts to make full use of an individual's inherent capabilities. The problem of emphasizing creativity for every individual falls to the art education program which is concerned with child growth and development and the function of art in total education. Thus a study of the philosophy of creative art for every child in the classroom is significant in developing creative art programs in the elementary schools.

American education offers art many opportunities to make a unique contribution to the educative process, a process wherein each person learns to make his own decisions and judgments and achieves optimum creative growth.

Creative art in the classroom offers a child a means of developing individually as he expresses his ideas and solves his problems through the use of a wide range of materials. Through his art experiences the child gains in appreciation, cooperation, resourcefulness, and observation. Art plays an important role in establishing democratic values, creative habits, and social skills. Almost every idea may find expression in art and the child finds satisfaction in creative expression.

Creative art is an integral part of the whole curriculum and thus creativity becomes one of the highest objectives of education in the classroom. Integration of art experiences with other subjects is a means of stimulating the child's interest and

enriching learning situations. A correlated art program can help the child find his own solution to a problem in many fields and thus provides recognition of individual differences.

Art is no longer designed to meet the needs of the talented few but its values extend from the retarded child to the gifted in each classroom. Since art, by nature, is an individual matter it is especially significant in solving the problems and meeting the needs of the exceptional child. Each child has his place in society and art seeks to develop and encourage the unique abilities of each individual and to help him fill his place to the best of his ability.

Art challenges the gifted child to work to his capacity and to develop his gifts to a high degree.

The retarded child can find satisfaction and some measure of success in his art experiences and his creative powers will be developed according to his abilities. Art in the classroom provides opportunities for the retarded child to experience cooperation, socialization, praise, and appreciation of his own work and that of his classmates.

Since parents influence their children's art development, it is important that they understand the aims of the creative art program in the schools. They need to realize that their children find satisfaction in creativity and grow through their opportunities to work with many different materials. Art exhibits and children's demonstrations aid in presenting the art program to parents.

Much of the responsibility of carrying out a creative art

program rests with the classroom teacher. The key to being an effective art teacher lies in understanding children, their interests, needs, and abilities. She will plan the art program to meet aesthetic needs of her students. When the relationship of art experiences to concepts of education is established, aesthetic needs will be met. In realizing that good teaching is creative guidance the classroom teacher will fulfill her role as guide, friend, and counselor.

Drawing and painting is a means of communication for the young child who expresses his ideas and experiences in pictorial form. Such experiences will help to instill confidence, enthusiasm, and skill to materialize the rich subject matter that is stored in every child's mind. Drawing and painting is the basic language of art and should be encouraged at all age levels in the classroom.

Clay is a valuable creative material for the young child and a challenging material for the older child. Clay modeling places emphasis on the wholeness and the related parts of an object that the child forms. Clay provides rich opportunities for experimentation and exploration and the child learns to regard design as the primary characteristic of his product.

Mural making is a valuable group project for the classroom. The children learn to plan, solve problems, and organize together, and in so doing their knowledge of democratic living is increased. Each child contributes to the whole product and his need for group acceptance is thus satisfied.

Puppetry is a creative experience suited to every age group

in the elementary school and junior high school. One of the most important benefits of puppetry is the opportunity to coordinate many subject areas in the classroom.

Collage and construction material provides the child with an opportunity to regard material for texture, pattern, and shape. He develops an awareness of many different qualities that materials possess as he puts the materials together in a way that pleases him to see and to touch.

A creative art program is the logical means of accomplishing optimum creative growth and the best general development of every child in the classrooms of our elementary and junior high schools. This study emphasizes the function of art in total education.