Artistic development in the early childhood years has received a significant amount of attention from psychologists, educators, and others concerned with the arts. The breadth and intensity of this interest are not surprising, for the tendency to create visual images in the relatively early stages of life seems to transcend cultural, social, and economic boundaries (cf., Gardner, 1976; Kellogg, 1970).

Viewing Artistic Growth

The phenomenon of artistic growth has been addressed from at least three perspectives. The first is centered around the natural, genetically programmed unfolding of dispositions controlled by maturation. The second is based on considerations of the learning processes which interact with natural maturation and precipitate or alter artistic growth. The third is concerned with the nature of art, aesthetic value, and the unique properties of images produced by children. This chapter takes these perspectives into account while discussing a contemporary disparity between what is known about the nature of childhood and artistic development and the approaches that parents and preschool teachers take in addressing the issue of artistic growth.

For decades, Piaget's conception of developmental stages in human development influenced researchers in the area of developmental psychology. Piaget (1926, 1928, 1952, 1969) identified a sequence of developmental changes in children's mental structures associated with four fundamental and qualitatively different stages in human development. Piaget suggested that transitions between stages could be explained in terms of four factors which contributed to development: biological maturation, equilibrium, experience, and social transmission.

Although Piaget was specifically concerned with the intellectual development of children, his theory included that cognitive structures formed logical groupings which together composed an integrated whole. It seemed logical to assume that the stage Piaget identified applied to other domains of human development as well. This position, however, has been questioned by several researchers (e.g., Gardner, 1976; Hardiman & Zemich, 1988) concerned with children's artistic development. Gardner (1976) argues that during the sensorimotor stage, infants and toddlers involved in sensory exploration and the mastery of motor skills are not in any way involved in the arts. Gardner's conception of the arts as integrally concerned with symbol systems precludes authentic artistic involvement before children come to understand the meanings of concepts and acquire the ability to manipulate them. Gardner also suggests that 7-year-old children, at the very onset of the concrete operational stage, possess structural knowledge necessary to become artists and that no qualitatively different stages are required to fully participate in the artistic process.

Other theorists, including Lowenfeld (1951), maintain that qualitative changes in artistic development occur well into the formal operational stage. Some researchers emphasize the role of quantitative changes as well. Hardiman and Zemich (1988) note the role of quantitative differences within qualitatively different stages and propose that the stages should be regarded "as being in the process of becoming and not ending" (p. 363). These researchers agree with Gardner (1976) that the formal operational stage in intellectual development has no equivalent in artistic development.

The crucial period in children's artistic growth, then, corresponds to Piaget's preoperational and early concrete operational stages. If, in fact, it is at some point between the second and third or fourth birthday that children acquire the structures that henceforth guide artistic endeavors, it is surprising how little attention is given to the active enhancement of artistic growth in the first half of this time span.

Explanations for this lack of active investment in preschool children's artistic development can be found...
in the recent history of art education. Elfland's (1976) review of changing positions on the issue of children's artistic development and their impact on art instruction describes some of the historical conditions that still bear on today's practice.

According to Elfland, childhood was not recognized as a unique stage in artistic development until the end of the nineteenth century. In Walter Smith's Massachusetts Normal Art School, or in institutions influenced by the philosophy of Arthur Wesley Dow, children were seen as immature and unskilled immature adults, who needed to develop good habits and learn proper drawing skills. Teaching approaches were based on considerations of the nature of art (e.g., Smith, 1875) rather than the special needs of children.

The Child-Centered Approach

Only with the increase of interest in child studies in the turn of the last century did emphasis in art education begin to shift. As often is the case, what was previously unappreciated and neglected became the center of a new philosophy. The "child centered" approach quickly became the doctrine to follow in art education. The philosophy of Fransée Czek (cited in MacDougall, 1915, and Spring and Schrottveit, 1934) was especially attractive to educators representing the progressive movement. Czek believed in "method poisoning" (Elfland, 1976, p. 71) and that teachers should only "take off the lid" (Elfland, 1976, p. 71) and allow the child to develop from within. Victor Lowenfeld (1952), whose views significantly influenced practice in art education since World War II, agreed with Czek on many points, including the belief that any input from the outside world is potentially negative. Lowenfeld held that every child had an inherent creative impulse, which was impaired by outside influences.

Much has been written and researched in the areas of education and art education since the first edition of Lowenfeld's Creative and Mental Growth appeared (e.g., Butler, 1993; Smee, 1976; Wilson & Wilson, 1977). However, in many schools across North America, teachers continue to leave young children unattended, hoping that their art will unfold naturally with as few external influences as possible. This noninterventionist philosophy is even more universally held by preschool teachers. Tart (1987) argued that Czek's approach, while an early childhood art education concept in today's North American schools, is outdated and should be replaced by modern, interventionist approaches modeled after Pestalozzi (1915) and Froebel (1887). Tart observed that, in setting up art centers, preschool teachers often restrict art activities to quiet but "characteristic" gifts and occupations. "They do so, however, while professing a noninterventionist philosophy."

The child-centered approach to education brought attention to the unique abilities and needs of young learners. However, it also carried several undesirable side effects. The philosophy of "unintervention" was instrumental in reinforcing the common (and convenient) belief that artistic development takes care of itself. Little or no art training was necessary for teachers who would subsequently expend little effort on behalf of artistic learning. The undesirable aspects of this approach may account for the fact that today's recommendations of prekindergarten leaders in the field (e.g., Eiss, 1976; Wilson & Wilson, 1987) seem to pass unnoticed.

The Role of Adults

Life provides strong evidence that artistic learning is not the automatic result of nurturance and self-guided experience. Many young adults, graduates of child-centered programs and "producers" of noninterventionist approaches to art education, complain of their lack of insight, understanding, and ability in the realm of artistic expression. They feel illiterate and inadequate in one of the fundamental domains of human experience... Adult intervention may not only be useful, but essential, to children's artistic development. L.S. Vygotsky (1978) argued that many curriculum ventures are founded on major theoretical positions which do not adequately discuss the role of learning in the developmental process. Vygotsky disagreed with Piaget's claim that the process of development was essentially independent of learning, dismissing the notion that learning was first actively involved in, not influenced by, the pattern of development.

Vygotsky argued that the process of development hinged behind learning, resulting in what he called a "zone of proximal development." Vygotsky (1978) proposed that "learning awaken[s] a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when a child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with peers. Once these processes are internalized, they become part of child's independent developmental achievement." (p. 90)

According to Vygotsky, then, experiences which are tailored to children's actual developmental level do not sufficiently promote growth. A laissez-faire approach to learning encourages the child to move on its own rather than to move ahead toward areas well within the child's reach if he or she receives appropriate assistance. Vygotsky's theory supports educators' concern with the learner and his or her present developmental abilities, while it looks ahead toward the child's potential at any given point in time within a partic...
The zone of proximal development can be seen most clearly, perhaps, in young children's language acquisition. Adults, including parents and care givers, are undeniably instrumental in early speech development. Although children may seem to invent their first sounds, linguists believe that most children are truly responding to external input. Undoubtedly, these sounds are mastered and acquired meaning through social interaction, as others interpret the child's intentions and respond according to these interpretations. Parents do not passively listen, but constantly present new and challenging tasks. Children are exposed daily to language rules and structures by listening to adult conversations. They are stimulated to venture into the zone of proximal development, rather than to remain at an already attained level. This form of interaction is remarkably efficient and effective. Rapid language acquisition in the early childhood years has been documented by Chomsky (1965), Nelson (1980), Bruner, Roy, and Ramez (1982), and many others.

Although most adults, especially parents, find great delight in listening to children's babbling sounds, they do not attempt to preserve such a state forever. Common sense dictates that the beauty and innocence of the young child's earliest speech should not be preserved at the expense of communication. No one suggests that early attainment of a verbal vocabulary is detrimental to a child's ability to use language in a creative fashion later in life. In fact, depriving a child of those essential early learning experiences would be considered an abusive practice.

Yet, artistic development seems to be regarded in dramatically different terms. The "discovery" of children's art in the beginning of the century, and particularly the fascination with the spirit and process through which children create, made admiration of young children's art a social phenomenon. Today few argue that children's art is devoid of natural beauty, that it does not have an enviable sense of directness, purity, sincerity, and innocence. On the other hand, it may be useful to consider what extent admiration for and fascination with children's art can blind parents and educators so children's actual needs: their needs to be stimulated and challenged; to acquire skills and abilities that permit fluent use of visual symbols; and to operate at the level of a zone of proximal development.

Some researchers draw clear lines dividing childhood periods that should be approached differently in terms of the necessity of adult intervention. Gardner suggests that "during the natural artistry of the preschool years, active intervention is unnecessary" (1981, p. 89) and that "during this period the approach of unfolding, or giving full rein to natural development, seems indicated" (1976, p. 108). Gardner implies that only children of school age benefit from or require active external input in their artistic development. Gardner is certainly correct that when children between the ages of two and four are provided with materials, time, and opportunity to engage in artistic tasks, they do so readily. However, there is no evidence that appropriate external input would not enhance such "natural unfolding.

The very idea of "natural" unfoldng seems flawed, in that no matter how completely children are sheltered and protected from external influences, they do not grow up in a visual and aesthetic void. From the very beginning of their lives, children are exposed to and influenced by visual images, many of them produced by adults. Therefore, Lowenfeld's (1952) idea that "if children developed without any interference from the outside world, no special stimulation for their creative work would be necessary" (p. 1) cannot be sustained. Nor can his call ever be answered: "Don't impose your own images on a child!" (p. 3). Aesthetic growth is subject to external influence if only because children's experiences with art occur in a social context. What matters, then, is not the presence, but rather the quality, of external input.

The possibility that adult assistance might foster aesthetic growth has been discussed and demonstrated. As early as 1951, Alma Jordan Krueger studied an ability of nursery-school to third-grade children. She concluded that "proper stimulation toward creative activity would produce more and better trained artists and those a people versed in the appreciation of beauty" (p. 71). Subsequent research supports this proposition.

Pemberton and Nelson (1987), for example, demonstrated that graphic dialogue facilitates children's acquisition of drawing skills. These researchers used two strategies based on paradigms designed for verbal dialogues with young children: "growth recall" and "challenge continuation." Growth sketching immediately followed a child's production and involved an adult making a sketch that maintained the same basic reference and same structural depth, but at the same time structurally varied or "recaused" the forms, "so that the child was exposed to structures more complex than those in the child's current system" (p. 313). Challenge continuations, which also presented structures challenging the child's current level, did not closely follow the child's production, but instead evolved around the general topic of the dialogue. The idea of presenting children with graphic forms "slightly above the child's current level of performance" (p. 39) was influenced by language input studies (Nelson, 1980), as well as by the idea of Wilson and Wilson (1982). In
Vygotsky's terms. Pethbren and Nelson's study represented an attempt to provide children with an opportunity to perform within the boundaries of the zone of proximal development.

Burton (1982) discussed the instrumental role adults play in the "beginnings of artistic language" (p. 6), describing mutual interaction between a child and a teacher as a means of enhancing and expanding artistic learning. Burton demonstrated how the adult, recognizing the child's interest in control and view actions and reinforcing the child's tendency through dialogue, can alter the child's opportunity to pursue and reflect, which in turn intensifies the learning experience. The interventions that Burton recommended were intended not to tell the child what to do or to provide specific directions, but rather to encourage cognitive choice making.

Wilson and Wilson (1977, 1991) have been among the most vocal advocates of active involvement in young children's artistic development. They argue that children draw primarily from images derived from popular culture even before they reach school age. Wilson and Wilson conclude that learning from adult-made images is an integral part of the process of artistic growth. They suggest that:

"Without models to follow there would be little or no ritual marking behavior by children... The child learns to form configurational signs of his own making through observation of the configurational marking behavior of others. Having imitated that other people make drawings, then observing the way in which they are made, the variety of configurational signs that are made, and the diverse forms that these signs take in our culture (1977, p. 63).

Evaluating Children's Progress

One of the major difficulties in promoting adult's active involvement in young children's artistic development is understanding what constitutes progress in terms of artistic growth in early childhood years. The value attributed to children's spontaneous art has created a situation in which any departure from this artistic convention is regarded as a loss. Extensive analysis and study of children's art (e.g., Alexander, 1954; Golomb, 1974; Kolbete, 1970; Loverfield, 1952) created a number of conventions that define the genre of "child art." As Wilson and Wilson (1971) observed, the concept of "child" art is often associated with "those things which fit our image of a 'natural' or a 'creative' or a ' spontaneous' expression but we are turning a blind eye to the very drawings—the copied ones—that could reveal the true nature of artistic creation" (p. 51). Adults lack in children's art much in twentieth-century audience approach works of art from the past. Savile (1982) argued that this practice has made children invisible in the light of values and concepts relative to the period when they were created, and that the ignorance of ideas not present at that time for the purpose of interpreting a historically inappropriate. Richards's (1991) implied, however, that this type of historical viewpoint was in reality impossible, as some essential facets bringing such an outlook are no longer accessible to a contemporary audience. Similarly, one may argue that adults' life experiences and expectations provide a perspective for interpreting children's art that differs greatly from a child's perspective. It is possible to prevent adult ideas and concepts from being imported into the process of interpreting children's art. Richards's (1991) implication that "the modern viewer cannot, in a matter of logic, acquire the interpretive understandings and feelings for the qualities of the necessity for aesthetic understanding of artistic legacy" (p. 12) suggests that adult accounts of children's artistic efforts may never be fully accurate.

Wilson and Wilson's (1972) observations are certainly congruent with this position.

The persistent influence of adult conceptions of children's artistic development is manifested in current educational practice derived, surprisingly, from child-centered philosophy. The model that emerged from this tradition, and which continues to influence many preschool teachers, recommends organization of art centers in children's play environment. The role of the teacher is reduced to one of "disposer of art materials and facilitator of emotional responses for the child" (Gust, 1976, p. 17.). It is assumed that the child will spontaneously approach the centers and explore the available media with little or no guidance or supervision. This is certainly what adults would do in a similar situation. Provided with several activity centers, most of us would circulate among them, often in a systematic manner and take advantage of learning opportunities. Do young children, however, behave in the same manner?

Significance of Adult Input

For 9 months, I went to: housework/child each Wednesday morning in my young son's daycare. The program in which L. children, 18 months to 3 years of age, were enrolled was guided by child-centered philosophy. The facility's physical design allowed for negotiation of several "centers," including areas devoted to exploration of art materials. The teachers took great care to ensure that a variety of materials was offered on
14 different occasions: temper tantrums, crying spells, bad days. I am so frustrated! Every time I say something about my child's behavior, he just turns around and starts crying. It's like he doesn't listen to me. I feel like I'm never understood.

References


Significance of Adult Input in Early Childhood Artistic Development

Although several types of possible intervention have been described by researchers (e.g., Colman; 1974; Pemberton & Nelson; 1963; Wilson & Wilson; 1982), there is an urgent need for more efforts to propose, implement, and test models which promote the artistic development of young children. Art education must convincingly reach and teach preschool teachers of the significance of aesthetic growth in human development. We must also clearly state the fact that adult participation in this process of growth need not be detrimental and may well be, in fact, absolutely necessary.
Three, four and five year old children eagerly apply the same structural rules in drawing animals. Their drawings flee chaos and are organized and clear. For them everything starts with the circle. All is visible, nothing overlaps or crosses and they use the simplest linear directions.

A round headed mother hen accommodates her chicks whose heads are in side view, each with a single circular eye. The individual feathers are expressed as arcs.

There are four drawings of horses. Horses have round bodies and heads except that horse 1 is on a circle with multiple legs. The child says it is a horse. Horse 2 has six legs and identifying mane, tail and ears. Horses 3 and 4 have legs, saddles, horses, tails, and Completely visible faces. One horse with a dappled coat eats a plant.

Four cats with round oval bodies, one with five legs, mix reserves of linear features, ears, paws and tail.

The fact that most animals have four limbs sometimes results in four legged birds. The last, left, was drawn by a contemporary zookeeper. Amazing forest dweller, one other by a contemporary five year old child.

A rabbit matches a nearly aligned vertical row of circular circles with tops.
Chapter 7
Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Art Education

Cynthia B. Colbert
University of South Carolina

Many children each year enter kindergarten with several years of early childhood education already behind them. Visual arts educators must become familiar with the goals of early educational programs and the experiences that children are likely to have prior to kindergarten and first grade. An educator also must assume a more active role in developing the visual arts education curriculum for early childhood education programs and in providing for the special developmental needs of children in the lower primary grades.

In recent years, there has been a national trend toward formal instruction of academic skills in early childhood programs, a trend based on what many experts feel are misconceptions about young children and how they learn (Elkind, 1987; Kamii, 1983). Well meaning parents, often ambitious for their children's academic success, demand programs with stringent academic standards and content. These parents complain vociferously if worksheets involving mathematical skills, letter recognition, and letter formation are not sent home with their children regularly. Unfortunately, many schools comply with these parental demands, rather than trying to educate parents about developmentally appropriate practices that enhance children's growth and development.

A growing body of research in early childhood education suggests that children learn most effectively when they engage in activities that are both concrete and playful. Learning activities for young children, offered in the context of play, should be concrete, real, and meaningful to the lives and the needs of children (Almy, 1975; Biber, 1984; Evans, 1984; Forman & Kuczynski, 1984; Klop, 1985; Kline, 1985; Paget, 1972; Schiecke, 1966; Seefeldt, 1986; Smith, 1985; Weber, 1984). Research studies such as these, supported by publications and data addressed to parents (Elkind, 1987) and by the efforts of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), have initiated a national reappraisal of the needs of young children in educational programs.

Pressures to discriminate inappropriate early academic instruction of young children are being felt in schools and in district and state offices of education.

A developmentally appropriate curriculum is one that meets the needs of children within the class grouping and is implemented in a relaxed, comfortable, and playful fashion with attention to children's general and individual needs, interests, and development. The developmentally appropriate curriculum offers an integrated approach to education, addressing children's physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development. The NAEYC promotes developmentally appropriate practice encompassing instruction that is

1. Age appropriate, based on the universal sequences of growth and development that occur during the first 9 years of the child's life.
2. Individually appropriate, acknowledging that each child is unique and that the child's growth, learning style, and family background should be considered (Gredekamp, 1987).

A developmentally appropriate art curriculum for young children reflects many of these same concerns.

This chapter focuses on visual arts education for early childhood settings and on framing this education into the philosophies and suggested practices for educating young children. Quality early childhood programs center on the child, rather than the content of the instruction to be introduced to the child. The child-centered approach in visual arts education stays with the historical wisdom of the field, following the ideas of Lowenfeld (1947), Kerlinger (1969), and others who emphasized the child's abilities, interests, and needs in relation to visual arts. Subscribing to child-centered approaches to visual arts education does not mean abandoning the study of art as a discipline not eliminating the experiences that encourage children to talk intelligently about art. It is possible to reconcile the field's current shift toward subject-centered approaches with the specific needs of children to accommodate children's interests, skills, and abilities, and to bal-
Recommendations for Appropriate Practices

The following recommendations for appropriate practices in curriculum development and instruction have been selected from the NAECY guidelines, Developmentally Appropriate Practices in Early Childhood Programs (Reed et al., 1987), and recent research findings address issues of significance to the teaching of art to young children.

Guidelines for the development of appropriate curriculum for young children

A. Developmentally appropriate curriculum addresses all areas of children's development through integrated approaches to learning.

While important for study in its own right, art lends itself well to integrated approaches to learning. The use of language skills in describing spatial relationships in works of art and the introduction of art concepts such as symmetry and asymmetry help children develop a general understanding of spatial concepts and a vocabulary to describe spatial relationships. Because spatial concepts are a focus of early childhood programs for preschool children, many early childhood teachers enjoy using art experiences to encourage students to demonstrate their understanding of spatial concepts and art reproductions in guided discussions of spatial concepts such as near, far, inside, outside, above, below, in front, behind (Frogs, 1963; Salome, 1958).

Young children benefit from opportunities to see art materials in the early educational setting. The introduction of art concepts and the use of art reproductions with young children is appealing and has been shown to enhance children's acquisition of an art vocabulary, increase perceptual awareness, and strengthen descriptive powers of language. Researchers have also established linkages between drawing and language development in young children (Colbert, 1964; Columb, 1974; Goodnow, 1971; Lit, 1977; Lowenfeld, 1947; Williams, 1972).

Self-awareness and self-esteem can be enhanced by focusing on the self in many art experiences. The relationship of artistic and aesthetic development to language, thinking, perceptual, and motor skills is well documented in research conducted by both art educators and early childhood educators (Colbert & Taunton, 1990, xiv).

B. Appropriate curriculum planning is based on teachers' observations and recordings of each child's special interests and developmental progress.

Teachers can set realistic curriculum goals and evaluate the appropriateness of such goals from their observations and recordings of individual and classroom strengths, needs, and interests. Through teachers' own assessments of children, they can plan activities that match and broaden the curriculum for all children. If, for example, children become excited about the activities children might plan that unit of study for several additional class periods so that students could have time to further their explorations. If students engaged relatively few experiences in modeling dimensional forms and the teacher noted students expressing some difficulty in modeling, the teacher might introduce additional places experiments with clay or dough that involve students in rolling balls and coils and cutting flat forms. This would be added to the curriculum based on the teachers' observations that evidence needed more experiences with clay prior to modeling three-dimensional forms. Teachers monitor students' progress and adjust their plans according to the students' needs. For this approach to work in the classroom, teachers need to be confident of their opinions of student needs based on their observations and they must remain flexible in their approach to planning lesson and units. Flexibility might include allowing a group of children to continue with one activity while encouraging another group to work on a different one.

C. Curriculum planning emphasizes learning in an interactive process and is based on children's development and interests.

Research has shown that young children are capable of creating, perceiving, and evaluating the visual arts (Taunton & Colbert, 1984). Young children need guidance in using materials to create art and in looking at art works whether these materials and art works are within the reach of a professional artist. Children benefit from teaching visual elements in their environment and discussing what they see and what they value. A strong, systematic approach to planning instruction that focuses on young children's natural abilities to perceive, create, and appreciate the visual arts will engage, excite, and perhaps introduce children to a lifelong interest in art (Colbert & Taunton, 1950).

The sequence of lessons within and between units of study should accommodate children's diverse interests, skills, and capabilities. Art experiences should be varied enough to sustain children's interest, yet organized so that concepts and skills introduced in one unit are reinforced and built upon in later units of study. Selected
concepts and skills from the early part of the curriculum should be re-emphasized in a new context later in the year.

The art curriculum should provide young children many opportunities for learning to create art, to experiment with a variety of media, and to create both two- and three-dimensional work. Children can begin to understand the importance of selecting, composing, and using a variety of tools and processes. Children need to experiment with a variety of sources of inspiration for creating works of art, such as observing nature and the constructed environment, using imagination and memory, and trying experimental approaches to materials.

Children also need to learn how and why other people create works of art. What place art holds in everyday life, and why people value art. Learning to perceive and respond to works of art helps children to better express themselves verbally and to develop language and verbal skills. Viewing and discussing works of art encourages children to share their ideas about what they see, to listen to other children, to learn from others who see, and to become aware that other people may have views that differ from their own (Colbert & Taunton, 1990).

D. Learning about and materials should be concrete, real and relevant to the lives of young children.

Learning takes place when children interact with materials and people. It occurs as they touch, manipulate and experiment with materials. Learning is especially meaningful when children have a part in deciding what they will do and how they will go about doing it. Children's active participation in self-directed play using concrete and real-life experiences has been found to be crucial to meaningful and meaningful learning in the preschool and early elementary school years (Bredekamp, 1987).

Because art activity at the early childhood level often involves manipulating art materials to create two- and three-dimensional forms, concepts offered in visual arts instruction is easily demonstrated. Much of young children's art activity is hands-on, using a variety of materials intended to stimulate the senses and the creation of images and forms. Children's ideas and memories take concrete form when they are transformed into symbols that are drawn, painted, or modeled. When an instruction involves children in talking about works of art, those works or reproductions of them should be present to be touched and closely viewed by the children.

Teachers are cautioned against using worksheets, coloring sheets, workbooks, and adult-made models for children to copy. Although this is especially true for children younger than six years, older children have also demonstrated benefits from being actively engaged in concrete, real-life experiences (Bredekamp, 1987; Kamii, 1985).

E. Programs provide for a wider range of developmentally interesting and abilities than the chronological age range of the group would suggest. Adults are prepared to meet the needs of children who exhibit unusual interests and skills outside of the normal developmental range.

In any classroom, the age will vary from 9 to 12 months. And the normal developmental-age range for any group may be as much as 2 years. In some classrooms the range will be even greater. This means that teachers must be prepared to offer materials that vary in complexity and that reflect the age spans of the group (Bredekamp, 1987). Use of study must be planned in a open-ended fashion that allows children with varying skills and abilities to interpret the goals of the lessons for themselves. Teachers need to offer a range of materials and to plan variety in room arrangements and in grouping students to work together. Again, teachers must be confident in using their observations of student progress to plan educational experiences that meet the needs of all students.

F. Teachers provide a variety of activities and materials. Teachers increase the difficulty, complexity, and challenge of an activity as children are involved with it and as children develop understanding and skills.

Teachers can observe, listen, make notes and interpret the work of children as they engage in manipulation of materials or other activities. Teachers become facilitators of children's involvement in an activity by asking the children questions or by making suggestions or adding more complex ideas or additional materials to the learning environment (Bredekamp, 1987).

Art teachers usually work in this manner. They introduce the major concept and demonstrate an activity or discuss a visual attribute before encouraging children to work on their own. As children begin their work, the art teacher circulates, asking probing questions and offering encouragement. Art teachers push students who they know can add more to a piece and they probe for students' ideas about their work (Taunton, 1983). Teachers may offer further examples of different ways of working as they go around the room and see how various students have interpreted the activity for themselves.

G. Teachers provide opportunities for children to choose among a variety of activities, materials, and equipment, and time to explore through active
Summary

Young children need meaningful, developmentally appropriate, playful, and engaging visual arts experiences that address the arts in substantive ways. Teachers need not try to teach every lesson in the curriculum guide. Rather, they need to use every medium and art introduction available. A select group of well-developed, appropriate experiences with time available for children to return to their work if needed and time to discuss, reflect, and enjoy the work created will provide more opportunities for personal meaning and will invite children to develop a lifelong interest in the visual arts.

Teachers of the visual arts who work with young children need to recognize children's individuality and artistic development is a cycle, un hurried, thoughtful, and unambiguous manner that conveys to children that they are respected and their artistic efforts are valued. Good teachers of young children focus on what children can do, not on their limitations, and play experiences that meet their capabilities and stretch their views of what is possible.

References


Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Art Education
When children draw parallel lines descending from a circle, they discover a new way to outline shape by joining the bottom ends of the parallels. This new approach both simplifies inclusion of figures, suggests dimensionality, and makes body parts and color styles for emphasis.

When arms are drawn, their placement follows the same process as that supplied to outline line and round blocky figures. Arms issue from horizontally from the circular head.

Gradually, four, five and six year old children move arms down to the plane near the head and body, then downward to the new body shape, relating arms to it at perpendicular or sloping dimension. Legs remain extensions of the parallel sides of the body but may be drawn independently perpendicular to the horizontal drawn line.

Integrating in parallel lines, the child within a line inaugural period encompasses first one, then two, three, and four people, with space for the bodies.
Arts and Academic Achievement in Reading: Functions and Implications

BY ALLAN G. RICHARDS

Academic achievement, particularly in reading, for some students in Fayette County Public Schools in Kentucky has been a concern (Honeycutt, 2000). Over the past 6 years, I have been working with an excellent classroom teacher from the above school district, who has a passion for the arts and who has a deep respect for their power to enhance learning in different areas and disciplines. Along with parents and the classroom teacher, I have been assisting in the efforts to make students interested in the arts, which gives them a strong position to make connections to reading and writing concepts. At the end of the 1988-89 academic school year, test results show that approximately 90% of the kindergarten who were involved with the arts literacy strategy read on or above grade level. The following year, students in the Title One program showed remarkable improvements. Title One is a federally funded program that provides services to help socio-economically disadvantaged students, including teaching them how to read. Associating the arts with improving students’ academic achievement is not a new phenomenon.

Arts and Students’ Academic Achievement

Various studies have shown that the arts are successful in improving students’ academic achievement in many areas including reading (Catterall, 1995). After analyzing data from the United States Department of Education, indicates that students who are involved in the arts score in the top 25% on standardized tests and have...
"I've noticed more than just students who are not involved. Further, I noticed that students who are involved in the arts tend to have higher grades in reading, history, citizenship, and geography. A later study by a teacher, Chasen and Wagoner (1986) suggests that the gains made by grades 6-10 students from art instruction to 11th grade. Cohen-Solomon (1986) research suggests that the connection of a school would derive 20% more of its schoolday to teaching the arts, students would have superior academic abilities. With an upgrading of April (2001) says, "The arts do not increase students' achievement when achievement is conceived in terms and capacities - aesthetic connections between the arts and the cost of learning." (p. 20).

Other studies find that the arts do not improve students' academic achievement, but even in some of these studies there is evidence that the arts do. (Lipton 1998) and analyzes several studies. He suggests that improving students' scores through the arts in our classrooms. Hategan and White (2000) analyze the impact of music and art programs on the arts and concludes that improving academic achievement and some areas where they do not have significant influence on academic achievement. There are in the areas where the results are not significant. There is evidence that the arts boost academic achievement, but the samples are too small to be reliable.

The Goal

Improving the academic achievement of students in reading is the goal for the arts literacy strategy. To achieve this, students are exposed to different skills and studies that the arts to naturally provide. During this process, the experiences gained are valuable skills that are needed in the arts career in the real world and writing concepts. The key is the strategy of arts literacy in helping students to make critical connections to reading and writing concepts and with the application of the arts.

Applying the Arts

When teaching kindergarten and first-grade, students, the classroom teacher with which I have collaborated uses one of the top research-based reading curricula that emphasizes phonemic awareness, decoding, comprehension, fluency, and writing skills. (Adams et al., 2006). To prepare the very young students to become aware of the sounds, look for details, expand vocabulary, and comprehension recognize colors and shapes, and event critical thinking skills, they begin the school year with the arts. On the classroom walls, large framed prints of Addams, Van Gogh, Rembrandt, Dali, Rembrandt, and other artists. The walls are filled with various sculptures such as Rodin's Thinker, the Space Museum, by Hansen American, creative and weighted pieces, Borromia, Indonesia, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru, Chile by master craftsmen Bach, Dehaseal, Tolukov, Morgen, Rick. Books about musicians and artists for young people and informative picture books, and works by Caribbean, African American, Native American, Anglo America, Latin America, and other artists.

The emergent kindergarten and first-grade readers who study the elements of art, the principles of design, and then

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Understanding the Functions of the Arts in Reading

Learning to read is a complex process. It involves students' knowing how to manipulate symbols (letters) of the alphabet in concert with the fundamental concepts and principles of the language of the teacher, the classroom, and that which is used in their textbooks (Englemann & Osborne, 1997; Adam et al., 2000). This knowing is what Einker (1969) refers to as literacy, and he continues to say that there are multiple forms of literacy that tend to amplify knowledge and understanding through a broad spectrum of literacy skills. Many of these skills are developed through the arts. Being literate in the arts affords students a greater advantage as learning to read. From my observation, I suspect that the experiences gained from studying lines, shapes, colors, unity/space, and emphasis heighten print awareness and facilitate the comprehension of words and the development of other reading skills (Adams et al., 2000).

Lines

Lines enhance the writing of letters and the training of the eyes to be accustomed to the unique rhythm in reading. First, let's look at how lines enhance the writing of letters. Children learn about different lines and their functions in a picture, but there are four special lines that are stressed because of their characteristics, especially at the outset of the study of lines in this art program. The lines are horizontal, diagonal, vertical, and curved. These lines are important in the creation of symbols, especially those that are associated with the letters of the alphabet. For example, the uppercase "E" is written using two horizontal and a diagonal line. "I" is written using one vertical and three horizontal lines. "R" is written using one vertical line, a curved line going clockwise, and a diagonal line; and "O" is written using enclosed curved lines. Through practice using these four lines, children learn to write each letter and learn to associate the appropriate name with the right letter.

Secondly, some of these lines help to train the eyes in movements that are associated with reading. In Western societies, reading is done by moving the eyes from word to word across the page from left to right, and when the eyes reach the end of the line they move diagonally to the next line. This saccadic movement of the eyes is repeated until the reader reaches the bottom of the page. In art, this movement is associated with rhythm where the eyes move from one motif to the next. Horizontal lines tend to focus attention either from left to right or vice versa, and diagonal lines direct our attention along the slant of the line. The study of horizontal and diagonal lines trains the eyes to be cognizant of the saccadic rhythms that are associated with reading.

Shapes

The identification of letters and words is associated with positive and negative shapes. When we speak of positive shapes in art, we refer to a shape or shapes that are the focus of attention in an artwork, and negative shapes are the areas that surround the positive shapes (Lasar & Pestak, 2000). Letters of the alphabet and the words they make create positive and negative shapes. The actual written letter represents the positive shape and the space around it the negative shape; the name is true for words. No letter or letters of words have the same positive and negative shapes. For example, "I" forms different positive and negative shapes from the letters "C", "D", "E", and the rest of the letters in the alphabet. Consequently, letters of the alphabet and the words they create can be identified from specific positive and negative shapes. Studying positive and negative shapes in art makes students aware of these associations, and this awareness leads to the formation of a more concrete mental image of the characteristics of letters and words.

Colors

Comprehension is enhanced when children know line colors. Colors have a natural tendency to attract our attention and are associated with specific objects, i.e., the tree is green, the sky is blue, and fire is red. When colors are incorporated into pictures, they become more specific in identifying different things in that picture. i.e., Carmela in the girl wearing the red outfit, Mike in the yellow soccer ball, and Rosalind in the girl with the blue tennis racket. One of the images in the Open Court Reading series for first graders further illustrates. At first glance, the picture reveals a bright sun illuminating the ground on which a prominent purple cow stands. On the foreground, to the bottom of the page, there is a boy sitting on a couch reading a purple book. The text reads: "I never saw a purple Cow, I never hope to see one. But I can tell you, anyhow, I'd rather see than be one."

(Adams et al., 2000). By knowing their colors, children are able to identify and link objects to words in the text, i.e., the purple cow. This connection is important because it helps students to better understand what is being said in the written text. Understanding is at the heart of comprehension.
Unity and Space

Unity and space give children a sense of how words, sentences, and paragraphs appear spatially on a page. To understand this connection is to know the role of unity and space in a picture. To illustrate, I describe two compositions (A & B).

Composition A has four geometric shapes, and each of them is placed in a corner of the rectangular picture plane. A silhouette plane is another phrase used for an area on which a drawing can be made. For composition B, the placement of similar shapes is different: they overlap and touch each other, activating the center of the picture plane. The first composition shows shapes that have no relationship with one another, and the second composition gives us a feeling that there is a relationship between the shapes because of their proximity. In other words, the closer symbols are placed to one another, the greater the relationship appears to be. Composition B demonstrates unity through spacing. While letters in words might not touch one another, their closeness establishes a relationship whose outcome is commonly recognized as a "word" as opposed to a string of letters. Laser and Penneke (2000) suggest that reading would be impossible without this relationship. By studying unity and space in art, students recognize that the spaces between letters are different from those between words and paragraphs. This not only helps them to distinguish among words, sentences, and paragraphs, as opposed to a series of just letters.

Emphasis

Emphasis focuses on devices that help to interpret at author's intended expression in a particular piece of work. In art, one device that is used for emphasis is contrast—contrast in the size of shapes, contrast in the tones of shapes, contrast in the lines used to construct shapes, and contrast in the spacing of shapes demonstrate emphasis (Laser & Penneke, 2000). This emphasis focuses our attention on what the artist wants us to view; it may be a religious message (Rembrandt), it may be a story about the

bears of war (Picasso), or it may be anything. As a rule, there are devices that can be used in literature to create emphasis. Capitalization of certain letters in words, the total word, or a letter by itself, along with various punctuation marks are devices that are used to focus attention on what is being said in a written text. In this case, they are necessary for the interpretation of the author's intent. The study of emphasis in art makes students cognizant of what they must do to communicate effectively. This expectation carries over into literature once the connections are made to the written text. Furthermore, it makes more sense to students if capitalized letters and punctuation marks are given.

Cognitive Implications

The arts have cognitive implications for reading because they assist in learning. Sousa (1995) suggests that the brain receives information through the senses from the surroundings, and when this information becomes part of memory, learning has taken place. Connections between art elements, design principles, and emphasis are, in word comprehension, we observed. Students recognize positive and negative shapes of letters and words, the types of lines used to write particular letters, the necessity for emphasis in writing, and the importance of emphasis in written text. These are all part of the learning process for children's learning to read, and ultimately, their reading performance indicates their print awareness and the comprehension of words as having been part of their memory.

Rehearsal is an important function of learning (Sousa, 1995). Lines, shapes, colors, unity, space, emphasis, and other elements are studied through making art, producing, discussing the works of master artists, and analyzing the works of students. (criticism and appreciation). As children explore the arts through these avenues, their understanding of the art elements and design principles is reinforced. By being involved with the arts, this constant reinforcement of the various cognitive
competencies in print awareness and comprehension takes place. In other words, the arts are a revelational process that facilitates ranging abstract concepts to concrete ones in reading.

Comprehension shows that children are able to change abstract concepts to concrete ones when learning through the arts. Lowenberg and Brittain (1975) say, "To really know a rabbit a child must actually touch him, feel his fur, watch his nose twitch, feed him, and learn his habits" (p. 5). The arts afford children hands-on experiences through different art forms, media, subject matter, and motifs so that they can explore their environment. Not everyone learns in the same way, and in our society some children are left behind because their logical-mathematical and verbal-linguistic intelligences are not developed. The arts help students to learn in their own ways and at their own paces developing their intelligences (Gardner, 1993). Activating the different intelligences makes children more aware. This awareness indicates the learning of the various competencies that are required to recognize printed letters and comprehended words that are essential for students to learn to read.

Final Thoughts

This article shares my experiences as an art educator working with a classroom teacher to help students learn to read. I strongly believe that the value and the integrity of the arts must be protected. However, I also believe that if experiences gained from studying the arts can help students learning to read, it should be encouraged. Teaching reading within the arts is another possibility that should be utilized. Removing the boundaries around disciplines reminds us of the increasing compartmentalization of curricula even at the elementary school level. The arts are multifaceted and can break down these boundaries and help students to learn to read. This important work should not be ignored.

Alan G. Richards is Associate Professor of Art Education at the University of Kentucky. E-mail: richard@uky.edu

REFERENCES


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