ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT IN CHILDREN

Children's artistic development is sequential and can be separated into a number of stages. Their art works will exhibit characteristics particular to each stage as they pass through them. As with all developmental stages, children proceed through them at different rates and often exhibit characteristics of one or more levels at the same time. An awareness of these stages is necessary in order to establish individual levels of expectations for students. For a more detailed description of these stages, see Lowenfeld and Brittain, *Creative and Mental Growth*, 8th ed., Macmillan Publishing Co., New York, 1987.
Scribbling Stage (approximately 2-4)

In this stage, the child moves from uncontrolled scribbling to controlled mark making and finally to the "named" phase; i.e., s/he is willing to talk about the marks and relate them to things and experiences.

- Initially, mark making is a physical activity rather than an attempt at picture making.
- Because very early experiences are not attempts at picture making, the child neither needs nor wants to explain the image.

- There is little coordination of small muscles at this stage; the child grasps the tool with the whole hand and moves the arm from the shoulder.
- Marks and scribbles become related to the self, ideas, events, people, and objects, and the naming of these marks become important to the child.
- The first recognizable objects are usually human figures - an indication of the child's interest in people.
Preschematic Stage  
(approximately 4-7)

- Graphic communication begins at this stage; children consciously make forms which relate to their environment. There is now a relationship between the child's intention and product.

- Shapes tend to be geometric.

- Some objects may appear upside down or sideways; figures going uphill seem to be falling backwards; chimneys are perpendicular to roofs.

- Colour is often used emotionally or randomly (e.g., purple grass).

- Placement and size of objects are determined subjectively. Children will enlarge beings and objects emotionally important to them and omit those to which they are indifferent.

- Objects are often distorted to fit available space.

- When people are drawn, they are looking at the viewer, and are usually smiling.

- Gradually, the child’s drawings of people include arms (often projecting from the head), a body, fingers and toes, clothes, hair, and other details.
Schematic Stage (approximately 7-9)

- Most children develop schemas at this stage - a conceptual means of representing an object or person in an art work. A schema for an object is often influenced by its emotional significance, kinesthetic and tactile experiences or its function.

- Objects such as people, trees, and houses, become more detailed, showing great individuality among children.

- An understanding of spatial relations is evident. People stand on a baseline, birds and airplanes fly above. Objects are usually arranged along the baseline without actually touching it.

- The sky is often painted as a strip of colour at the top of the page. The area between the sky and base line represents air.

- A double baseline representing foreground and background may be used.

- Objects are often drawn at right angles on either side of a baseline to indicate things on two sides of a central point.

- The inside and outside of objects such as houses may be shown by leaving out a wall.

- In the same picture, objects may appear from different points of view. For example, in a picture of a kitchen, appliances maybe viewed from the side, but the dog basket, in which a new puppy is curled up, may be viewed from above so that the very important puppy is clearly seen.
Post-Schematic Stage
(approximately 9-12)

At this stage, children are beginning to realize that they are members of a society; their own peer group, or "gang" becomes particularly important.

- Human figures show more detail. Sex and occupational roles may be clearly defined.
- Since the emphasis is on detail rather than action, people are portrayed in stiff postures.

- People start to appear in profile.
- Students are preoccupied with visual realism, and are self-conscious about their drawings.
- The visible baseline disappears and an understanding of the plane emerges; overlapping and relations between objects appear. Attempts are made to show depth through object size.
- The sky comes down to the horizon.
The Pseudo-Naturalistic Stage (approximately 12-14)

- Children become increasingly critical of their products at this stage. A desire for naturalism indicates a shift to an adult mode of expression - a desire to draw what is seen.

- There is a greater awareness of depth and more sophisticated attempts at perspective.

- Awareness of the environment is reflected. Elements important to the student are drawn in detail.

- The human figure is closer to correct proportions; sexual characteristics are often overemphasized.

- Awareness of joints and body actions is evident.

- Cartooning is popular.

- Some students will endeavour to represent visual impressions as realistically as possible. Others will react subjectively to experiences; their visual representations will attempt to show what feelings are being experienced.

SUMMARY

The uniqueness of each child is given heightened significance in *Children Learning: A Primary Curriculum Handbook*, Department of Education, 1990. There it states that the focus of curriculum planners, principals, and teachers must be on the child. All must have knowledge of the growth and development of children and the ways by which they learn. In their progress through these stages of artistic development which closely parallel Piaget's stages, it is recognizes that there is not a chronological line at which, when a child has passed it, the child has moved from one stage to another and a child does not move completely (or abruptly) from one stage to another.

Although the development rate is different from child to child, their growth in artistic ability is constant and sequential. The art program which they experience must be planned and ordered in developmental sequences which meet their expanding needs. Classroom tasks and concept exploration activities must recognize the varying levels at which students will meet them. It must be remembered that art making is a means by which the child makes sense of the world. It is a way of learning, not something to be learned. The child's application of a concept in that explorative learning process will reflect the developmental level s/he is currently at. This means that the teacher must know the students well, build on their experiences and take them to new levels of understanding and seeing.
PHILOSOPHY

There are many ways of knowing. In our culture, the predominant way of passing on knowledge and sharing thoughts and feelings is through the use of words. However, there are other ways of learning and sharing knowledge. We experience the world through our senses. Visual, auditory, spatial, olfactory, and tactile elements all contribute to our knowledge of the world. To limit exploration and expression to words is to restrict the learning process.

When children participate in the art process, they explore their world and communicate their response to it visually. To create art is to share personal experiences and attitudes. To look at and understand the art work of others is to learn something about their experiences and attitudes. Art is a visual language in which every child should be able to communicate comfortably and effectively. Effective communication and expression in any language requires knowledge of the elements of the language and an ability to organize them meaningfully using its tools and processes. When we are given ample opportunity to explore and experiment with the elements of visual language, we are, in essence, given the chance to develop fluency and flexibility in this mode of communication.

Perhaps the most important aspect of communicating in any language is the opportunity it affords for expression. Through language, verbal or visual we confirm, review, interpret personal experiences, establish our identity, explore fantasies and dreams, express thoughts and feelings. Our most meaningful expression is based on our experiences and interests. Thus, it is important that children’s art work is based on their experiences and interests and that the environment in which they express themselves is an open, accepting one.
GOALS

A well-balanced art program addresses the intellectual, emotional, and social growth of the child. The main aims and objectives of the primary and elementary art program are summarized in the following paragraphs.

Through art education

1. children will develop their visual awareness. Learning to see is a skill that can be developed. Seeing is an active process that involves recognizing, analyzing, and interpreting visual qualities. Through study and analysis of visual qualities in natural and built environments and in art works children develop increased visual sensitivity. Through class discussion of visual discoveries, the quality of each child's experience is enhanced.

2. children will express themselves visually. They make visual images based on their experiences and interests. Children are better able to realize their expressive intention when they have acquired art skills and concepts. These skills contribute to the child's success, confidence, and satisfaction in visual expression. All children are capable of expressing themselves visually and should be comfortable using art as mode of communication.

3. children will develop an appreciation for the visual arts. Art is a visual expression of life experience significant to the artist. The artist shares or communicates something of himself/herself with others. To understand and appreciate art is to be receptive to the experiences, thoughts, and feelings of others; the cultural, social, and historical contexts of art works; the technical qualities of art works; the aesthetic qualities of art works. Exposure to a wide variety of art works and art forms fosters an understanding and appreciation of art.

4. Children will develop an increased self-awareness and an appreciation for individuality. At the core of art education is the dictum that art is personal expression in visual form. All children are individuals with unique life experiences, thoughts, feelings, responses, and interests. Individuality should be expected and encouraged. A teacher fosters appreciation and respect for variety in creating and responding to visual works. Art provides a tremendous opportunity for reflection, for learning about oneself. It also fosters self-reliance, initiative, decision-making, problem-solving, creativity, and responsibility.
OBJECTIVES

Students in the art program can be expected to achieve according to their learning potential in the affective, cognitive and psychomotor domains. The program supports a series of objectives which apply over the primary and elementary years. These objectives recognize the increasing complexity of concepts and skills that students encounter as they progress through the program. Objectives, at this level, must be somewhat general since students will achieve them from a multitude of directions. The specific learning objectives that contribute to those found here and in the Primary Curriculum Handbook, 1987, must be tied to the teachers’ art lessons, which are based on the concepts and skills listed in this guide. Those objectives for the Primary Level will be applicable at the Elementary Level with a greater degree of complexity and sophistication.

Intent

All students possess the innate ability to express themselves visually. Rich visual expression incorporates the three major areas of learning: the affective, the cognitive, and the psychomotor.

The Art Program
• fosters an appreciation of visual art and the visual environment.
• fosters student confidence in visual expression.
• promotes an atmosphere in which visual creation is accepted as a natural, everyday mode of expression.
• fosters an appreciation of the uniqueness of every human being.
• stresses the relationship between seeing and feeling.
• establishes a foundation for aesthetic development.

Content

The Art Program
• uses the students’ experience of their personal, physical, social, and cultural environments as the basis for visual expression.
• develops students’ ability to identify, manipulate, and care for simple to complex art media.
• explores simple to complex concepts relating to the elements of design (line, shape, colour, texture, and space) and the principles of design (movement, repetition, balance, contrast, emphasis, and unity).
• develops visual awareness through such activities as describing, comparing, classifying, matching, and manipulating.
• explores sensory perception through listening, touching, tasting, smelling, body movement, and examines the connection between sensory and visual perception.
• explores the connection between visual perception and emotion.
• uses visual as a basis for identifying, discussing, reinforcing art concepts and for sharing responses to art.
• contains a strong verbal component through which students acquire art vocabulary, reinforce their visual perception, express their responses to art and the environment, exchange, modify, and develop ideas.
Method
- Students should be provided with rich personal, physical, and cultural experiences through field trips, discussion, dramatization, collecting, manipulating, and looking at books, posters, videos, and films in preparation for visual expression.
- Identification of design elements and principles in art and the environment should be fostered.
- Students should be supported in identifying and understanding connections between what they see and what they feel.
- Experimentation with media should be encouraged.
- The students’ art vocabulary should be broadened by encouraging students to discuss what they see and feel, using rich descriptive language.
- The Program should be learner-based and flexible. It should promote an atmosphere of success and enjoyment as well as nurture a respect for individual differences by acknowledging the value of the contributions of each student.

Corey Hard, St. Francis of Assisi, Owlar Cove, Grade 6
"Ron Hextall Makes A Save"
CONCEPTS AND SKILLS

Some art classes explore theory (art concepts) and technique (art skills). Although these do not have to be dealt with in isolation, it is sometimes expedient to do so. At the same time, the teacher must remember that the development of concepts and skills is a means to an end.

Theory and technique are often the weakest aspects of the art program in the average classroom. They are usually the areas in which the classroom teacher needs the most support. *Art in Action* is the main source of this type of information. It is essential that children develop their knowledge and understanding of art concepts as well as the ability to apply them in their own work. It is also essential that they develop a knowledge of art materials and skill in using them.

When children have access to this information and when they are taught to apply it (usually through the process of making art as often as possible), it is easier for them to achieve their intention in their visual expression. And, if their visual expression lives up to their expectations, they will be pleased with their efforts and their ability to express themselves visually.

Further refinement of the following concepts and skills as they relate to specific lessons should emerge from student needs, content and media utilized. Determination of which concepts/skills to teach at each grade level will be influenced by the students' previous art experiences and stage of artistic development, as well as by the media and resources available. Formulation of these into specific objectives lies with the individual teacher since each child will vary in their needs. A variety of levels of complexity of any given concept will be present in any group of children performing a particular task. Their application of these concepts and skills at whatever level of complexity will be evident in their discussions and art images. For every child, as they progress through the program, exposure to the underlying concepts and skills will be in a sequential manner which recognizes their needs. The concepts themselves should build in complexity as students are exposed to them.

Art Concepts

The Elements of Design

*Line*

- There are many kinds of lines: thick, thin; straight, curved; long, short; solid, broken; vertical, horizontal, diagonal; light, dark; soft, sharp; jagged, smooth.
- Lines can be used to create shapes.
- Repeated lines can make a pattern; e.g., stripes, plaids, radiating, zig-zags.
- When one shape touches another shape, a line is created.
- Lines can suggest direction.
• A line can suggest movement or show the path of movement.

• Lines can be arranged to show texture.

• Lines can be repeated many times to make a dark area or to show a shadow.

• A line can lead the eye through a picture.

• A contour line shows the edge of an object.

• A line can show the form (volume) of an object.

Shape/Form

• Shapes (e.g., a painting, a drawing) have two dimensions. Forms (e.g., a sculpture, a person) have three dimensions.

• There are many kinds of shapes and forms; e.g., circles, spheres; squares, cubes; triangles, cones.

• Shapes may be open or closed.

• Shapes vary in size.

• Shapes can be repeated at regular intervals to create a pattern.

• Families of shapes contain shapes that are similar.

• Shapes can be created inside other shapes.

• Shapes can be geometric or organic.

• Shapes sometimes act as symbols.

• Shapes can be positive or negative.

• The size relationship of one shape or form to another shape or form is called proportion.

• Light helps us see form (the volume of an object).

• Spaces exist between and around shapes and forms.

• Shapes and forms may be large, small; irregular, geometric; organic, representative, abstract.

Colour

• The primary colours are red, yellow, and blue.

• If two primary colours are mixed together, a secondary colour results. The secondary colours are orange, green, and purple.

• Blacks, whites, greys, and browns are referred to as neutrals.

• Colours can be light or dark.

• If white is added to a colour, it becomes lighter. A colour with white added is called a tint.

• If black is added to a colour, it becomes darker. A colour with black added is called a shade.

• Colour families (analogous colours) are made up of colours that are similar.

• Colours can be warm or cool (e.g., red is warm, blue is cool).

• Colours may be symbolic (e.g., white for purity, purple for royalty).

• Light shows us the colour of objects.

• Colours can be bright or dull.
* Colours can be strong or weak. Intensity refers to the purity of strength or a colour.

* When only one colour and its tints and shades are used in a composition, it is called a monochrome.

* Colours may be opaque or transparent.

* Colours opposite each other on the colour wheel are called complementary colours.

* By their placement colours can be used to create space (distance) in a drawing or painting.

Texture

* There are many kinds of textures; e.g., rough, smooth, slippery, fuzzy, spiky, spongy, woolly, furry, pebbly.

* Textures can be felt and seen.

* Some textures are very regular and even; others are irregular and uneven.

* Texture can be used to draw attention to something.

* If the texture of an object is obvious, the object is probably very close.

* The textural appearance of an object varies according to the angle and intensity of the light striking it.

Space

* People and objects occupy space.

* Some spaces are natural (caves, the seashore) and others are built (e.g., a living room, the inside of a car).

* Objects close to us often overlap objects that are farther away.

* Point of view influences how an object is seen.

* Objects appear to be smaller when they are far away.

* In works of art, objects which are meant to be close to us are often at the bottom of the page.

Principles of Design

Line, shape, colour, and texture may be organized in an image to create:

* emphasis (attention is drawn to the most important part or focal point of
• unity (a feeling that all parts create a harmonious whole)

• variety (parts of the image are similar enough to maintain unity but sufficiently different to make the image interesting)

• movement (the element of design leads our eye through the image to the part that is most important)

• balance (the image may be formally balanced like identical objects on balance scales or informally balanced)

• contrast (when an object, shape, line, texture, or colour is quite different from others in an image, it stands out)

• rhythm (when elements are repeated, identically or with slight variations, patterns and rhythms occur)

When line, shape, colour, and texture are organized in certain ways, they communicate information to us.

Art Skills

In order to develop their ability to express themselves visually, children must have ample opportunity to use art materials and to practise skills. Art material can be used in many ways, and children should be familiar with the potential of each medium (material). Children refine their art skills in subsequent experiences with a particular medium and eventually will be able to make choices in how to use a particular medium to convey meaning. Children learn art skills in a variety of ways; experimenting with art materials, watching demonstrations, discussing how artists (including themselves) have used art materials in an art work, solving problems, and practising.

The details of developing particular art skills will be found for the most part in the Art In Action series. However, a list outlining general art skills is presented below for ease of access. This list has been adopted, with minor modifications, from the Ontario Ministry of Education's Curriculum Ideas for Teachers: Visual Arts (Primary and Junior Divisions), 1985.

Painting Skills

• applying paint: filling in large areas, controlling paint in small areas

• drawing with paint

• painting lines of varying thickness and density, broken lines, dots, textures, smooth edges, and so on

• mixing colours

• applying paint next to previously painted areas

• painting on top of dry paint

• painting on top of wet paint

• applying paint to wet paper

• applying a wash

• mixing tints

• mixing shades

• blending colours

• applying paint to create texture
• mixing watery paint
• mixing just enough paint to cover a surface
• painting smooth edges
• combining paint and other media (e.g., paint and crayons, paint and a collage of materials)

Paintbrush Skills

Children should acquire the following paintbrush skills:
• putting paint on the brush
• controlling the amount of paint on the brush
• taking paint to the paper
• washing the brush before changing colours
• stippling
• spattering
• dry-brush techniques
• twisting
• twirling

Paint can be applied by tools other than a brush (e.g., a piece of sponge or cardboard).

Crayon and Stick Media

Stick pigments, which include crayons and oil pastels can be
• used heavily or lightly
• blended
• dotted
• used both at the ends and on their sides with grooves cut in
• heated or ironed
• used over and under other media (e.g., paint)
• smeared

Charcoal can also be used in some of the ways described above.

A variety of shapes and sizes of paper extends children’s creative choices. When children use an art medium that makes large marks, they should have the choice of using large sheets of paper (e.g., 45 x 60 cm). Effective backgrounds include newsprint, cream manila, construction paper, finger-paint paper, sandpaper, mural paper, onionskin, tissues, corrugated paper, cardboard, wallpaper, and masonite.

Cutting and Tearing Skills

Children should develop the following skills in using scissors:
• holding the scissors correctly
• manipulating scissors and paper to suit the purpose
• cutting a preconceived shape without first outlining it in pencil
• turning the paper to facilitate cutting
• cutting with even strokes

Children should also learn how to
Tear paper. Tearing does not mean ripping, which allows no control over the outcome. By tearing paper correctly, children can make shapes without first drawing them in pencil. These techniques include the following:

- using the thumb and index finger on each hand in short, controlled movements
- using a longer pulling motion to control the tearing

**Pasting Skills**

Pasting skills include choosing a suitable adhesive and deciding on the amount needed for a task. For most paper work, a semisolid paste is strong enough. Glue may be required for three-dimensional work. Other pasting skills include the following:

- applying small amounts of adhesive around the edges
- applying small dabs of adhesive at strategic points
- applying paste to the shape and not to the background
- applying pressure until the paste or glue begins to stick

Paste can be applied in a variety of ways; e.g., with fingers, brushes, toothpicks, and rolled-up or folded scraps of paper. Paste marks should not show on the finished product.

**Modelling and Constructing Skills**

The characteristics and properties of the materials used determine the modelling and constructing skills required.

Teachers should know the skills and techniques appropriate to each medium and the medium's advantages and limitations. Modelling and constructing sometimes require a child to learn how to use tools as well as how to control media.

**Modelling materials and methods include the following:**

- modelling clay (i.e., plasticine)
- regular water-based clay (note safety precautions)
- modelling dough (see recipes, pp. 65-68)
- papier-mâché (see recipes, pp. 65-68)
- wood-block sculpture (note safety precautions)
- cardboard/box and tube sculpture
- stitchery
- sawdust and paste (mixed before class)
- macramé
- soft sculpture (e.g., sculpture in cloth)
- simple mobiles and free-standing sculptures
- carving medium (e.g., soap, plaster,)
- wire
- sand-casting (i.e., pouring plaster into wet sand formations)
- paper sculpture
- found objects
• natural objects (trees, branches, stones)
• weaving
• collage
• felt, cloth, glue

For more information about working with art media, see Appendix E. "Safety and Art Materials".

Lisa McCrack, St. Jude's Elementary, St. Bride's, Grade 3
"Flying Kites"

Andrew House, Christ the King School, Belltown, Grade 2
"The Best Swimmer"

Brian Joyce, Stella Maria School, Bonavista's Cove, Grade 6
"My Sneaker"

Janice Dicks, Sacred Heart Elementary, Marystown, Grade 2
"Our Family Is"