



The Advantages of Art



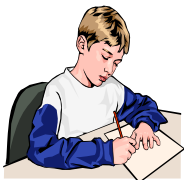
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The need of children to express themselves often prompts them to demonstrate in a visual form their thoughts, their experiences, their impressions of the world. It is essentially a desire for communication, for which creative visual media is sometimes the most effective media. Art provides the opportunity to augment creative expression, self-discovery, self-confidence, and self-concept. Each work of art creates a sense of achievement for the child who created the artwork. All children need a creative outlet to express themselves and art is an important activity which provides a good balance.

Throughout their ongoing development, children need a framework that aids them in learning the characteristics of the visual arts by using a wide range of subject matter, symbols, meaningful images, and visual expressions. As they grow ever more sophisticated in their need to use artistic means to reflect their feelings and ideas, an artistic framework can enhance their academic skills. Art promotes the student's thinking, working, communicating, reasoning, and investigating skills and provides for their growing familiarity with the ideas, concepts, issues, dilemmas, and knowledge important in the visual arts. As students gain this knowledge and these skills, they benefit in their ability to apply the knowledge and skills acquired through the visual arts to their widening personal worlds. Art expands the mind and expands the endless possibilities.



It is the responsibility of teachers and parents to choose among the array of possibilities offered by the visual arts to accomplish specific educational objectives in non-traditional media. The visual arts offer the richness of drawing, painting, sculpture, design, architecture, film, video; and folk arts – all of these can be used to help students achieve their educational standards. For example, students could create works in the medium of videotape, engage in historical and cultural investigations of the medium, and take part in analyzing works of art produced on videotape. The visual arts involve varied tools, techniques, and processes – all of which can play a role in students' academic achievement.



Along with the technical skills children acquire in art making, they learn vocabularies and concepts associated with various types of visual art practices. As they exhibit artistic competence, they develop increasing fluency in visual, oral, and written communication. The problem-solving activities inherent in art making help students develop cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills. They select and transform ideas, discriminate, synthesize, and appraise; while applying these skills to their expanding knowledge of the visual arts and to their own academic work.

Children learn that art, as representative of the world we live in, is infused with a variety of images and experiences. They learn that preferences of others may differ from their own. Students refine the questions that they ask in response to artworks. This leads them to an appreciation of multiple artistic solutions and interpretations. Study of historical and cultural contexts gives students insights into the role played by the visual arts in human achievement. As they consider examples of art works within historical contexts, students gain a deeper appreciation of their own values, of the values of other people, and the connection of the visual arts to universal human needs, values, and beliefs. They understand that the art of culture is influenced by aesthetic ideals as well as by social, political, economic, and other factors. Through these efforts, students develop an understanding of the meaning and import of the visual world in which they live.

Take an art class this summer!

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