

THE TEACHING OF ART IN THE ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM

FOCUS: LEARNING CENTERS

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

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A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carol Burt".

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Creative Project Abstract

The main focus of this creative project is on learning centers and their utilization in elementary art education. As a more individual student-oriented method of teaching art, learning centers break away from traditional methods of placing emphasis on the end product and comparison with adult models. The recent introduction of a Disciplined Based Art Education (DBAE) has helped to integrate this transition into the total elementary school curriculum. In following the DBAE philosophy, the use of individualized learning approaches and learning centers will help to integrate art into the curriculum, providing both teachers and students with more positive experiences in art education.

A sample learning center is included with examples and explanations provided for each activity. The chosen artist is Pablo Picasso, focusing on his personal background and his many contributions to the art world. The learning center should be implemented after a classroom study of the specific artist and can be adapted to studies of different artists in the future. A sample lesson plan and artist brief have also been included.

Background

Realistically, art education began, not as a creative form of expression, but simply as a method for meeting the practical needs of everyday life. It was used to develop industry and a much needed system of writing. Walter Smith moved art to the classroom in 1870, labeling it as mandatory education and requiring it of all his pupils. His teaching of art involved the copying of pre-drawn and distributed simulations. The children were instructed to produce exact copies of these works, their creativity resulting in lowered grades (Hurwitz & Day 1-20).

In the 1900's G. Stanley Hall expressed new ways of teaching art in the classroom. He believed that teachers should take passive roles in their students' art education, thus allowing the child to unfold through his uninhibited learning. Educators today have, in some ways, gone back to the teaching strategies of Mr. Hall. Although the current practices have greatly changed in the past hundred years, we owe much to the founders of art education (Hurwitz & Day 1-20).

Disciplined Based Art Education was developed in the 1980's, using ideas from the past to stimulate education in the present. This philosophy divides art education into four disciplines or areas of study: art history, art criticism, aesthetics, and art production. The four disciplines are

integrated in the classroom to provide a sequential building of art-related skills and concepts, beginning at the primary level and continuing on into the secondary level (I.D.E. 1-4).

In studying the first discipline, art history, students view works of art to get a better understanding of those works in their historical contexts. This type of study allows children to discover how mankind has visually expressed and recorded ideas throughout history. Knowledge such as this will aid in the child's understanding and appreciation of art in today's society. Through examination, research, and classification, this process becomes an active study and should be integrated with the other disciplines to ensure a quality art education (I.D.E. 1-4).

The second discipline, art criticism, involves the interpreting and judging of contemporary works based on the quality, purpose, impact, and value of visual imagery. Students learn the value of art appreciation, realizing that they do not necessarily have to like a piece of art to appreciate it. They increase their perceptions and develop important critical thinking skills by learning to make valid judgements of art works using professional criteria. Integrating art criticism with the other disciplines will help students learn to make objective judgements about

art. (I.D.E. 1-4).

While involved in the third discipline, aesthetics, students are introduced to the practice of philosophical inquiry. Divergent thinking is used to create a greater understanding of the works and how they are related to art. Basic questions such as, "what is art" and "what is beauty", are discussed and related to the different art theories: art and beauty, art and nature, and art and knowledge. A four step process is used to analyze students' reactions to works of art and then to make valid judgements of them. This sequential process requires children to: question their judgements, search for answers, assess the logic of those answers, and draw conclusions. The steps should be followed in order, following the development of an artistic perception (I.D.E. 1-4).

Finally, art production involves students in art making activities, allowing them to express personal ideas, values, and concerns through the use of art media. With these experiences, students learn to solve problems and make decisions. They are given ample opportunity to explore different media and techniques while improving their ability to effectively communicate ideas through works of art (I.D.E. 1-4).

The DBAE approach has resulted in many positive learner outcomes, relating to each of the four disciplines. Creativity, skills in problems

solving, personality development, and increased attendance are the major benefits. Improved craftsmanship and control over materials stem from activities in art production. From art criticism students learn to participate in small group and class discussions while enhancing their reading and vocabulary skills. Studies in aesthetics lead to higher level thinking, and art history activities give students a greater knowledge of the world around them (Hurwitz & Day 1-20).

With the beginning of the DBAE approach came an excitingly new way of teaching art in the elementary classroom. Educators began placing emphasis on the processes used, rather than on the end-products. In contrast to traditional methods, the idea of setting children to the task of using a prescribed technique to produce a piece of art is now believed to be detrimental to the extension of the child's experiences or ideas. These important techniques are best learned as children struggle to express themselves and should be related to that child's specific needs. As the different techniques are acquired, they should be applied to other works which are under the personal control of the learner. John Dewey, a distinguished educator, was once quoted as saying, "current theory places as high a premium on the values of the learning situation (or process) as on its products" (Rowe 1-3).

Many educators commonly believe that children will learn only if adults carefully "feed" them information through a process of sequenced steps. However, current research indicates that it is far more natural and rewarding for children to learn art through related experiences in an encouraging and non-judgemental environment. It is only logical that art, as with any other skill, is best learned through its use in a controlled environment. Students should be encouraged to develop an understanding of their ideas and feelings through active experiences with art (Rowe 1-4).

Classroom Environment

The classroom environment plays an important role in developing positive attitudes towards art. Quality surroundings provide encouragement, inspiration, enthusiasm, and a sense of satisfaction and pride. Thus, the students' environment becomes a resource for promoting social, emotional, and academic growth, providing opportunities for children to stretch their imaginations, build their vocabularies, and strengthen previously learned techniques (Kaplan, et.al. 1-20).

Because the classroom itself contributes much to the overall learning environment, what is included in it and its availability is of primary importance. Every part of the room should be utilized, promoting

some type of learning or discovery. Students should have the freedom to move, both academically and physically, in a non-threatening atmosphere. Learning centers seem to be an ideal way to provide for this. They directly relate to and serve the needs of children, giving them: a place to talk, a place to sit quietly, a place to work cooperatively, a place to be alone, a place to release energy, or just a place to sit and think. Learning centers become the vehicles for moving students away from the traditional teacher-dominated learning experiences and into a more student-selected experience. This is particularly true in studies of art where the child needs to be free to express himself (Kaplan, et.al. 21-25).

Learning centers in art should be an integral part of the total school curriculum. Through their use, children are given many opportunities to pursue individualized and independent art activities which can incorporate the four art disciplines. They can choose areas which interest them and progress with those areas at their own rate, using a variety of materials to increase commitment and understanding of learning (Obriecht 7).

With a little imagination, a learning center can be set up in any classroom. Even the smallest of spaces can function effectively to establish learning in every "nook and cranny". Classroom items, such as, filing cabinets, bookcases, easels, and chart racks, can be used to store

center activities and provide efficient work areas for students. A refrigerator box may house a learning center, providing a small, quiet area for children to work. Bulletin boards, chalkboards, or even corrugated paper may be used to divide certain areas of the room for different learning centers. Backdrops hanging from the ceiling can section off work areas or display children's work. All sinks, windows, window shades, doors, closets, and desks in the classroom have possibilities for center utilization. Even the floor can be used with specifically designated carpet areas or throw pillows. The creative teacher will utilize practically anything available to provide an effective learning center (Davidson, et.al. 6-15).

Specific, open-ended activities should be included in art learning centers to teach specific skills and to provide for divergent thinking. These activities should be diverse and extensive, but not chaotic. They should be organized to accommodate children working in small groups or individually. The materials used may be teacher made, or they could be programmed materials and audio visual equipment. As long as the particular material reinforces the specific concept, it will be a valuable asset to the learning center (Davidson, et.al. 11-19).

Record sheets are often placed within the learning center. These

allow children to document their own activities. Their overall progress towards certain goals can also be checked. Most activities in the learning center should be self-checking, making it easy for students to record their own results. It is vital that the practice of recordkeeping be kept at a level that enhances rather than interferes with the learning process. This requires an ongoing communication between teachers and their students (Obriecht 61-71).

The teacher plays an important role in the learning center classroom. Although his or her age, training, and experience are the basis of authority, the teacher must exercise this authority to make learning fun and readily available to students instead of imposing it upon them (Kaplan, et.al. 1-4). A successful teacher knows his students, how they think and feel, and uses this information to provide activities which best meet their needs. In essence, the teacher is an active participant in students' learning (Davidson, et.al. 4-5).

Sample Learning Center

The learning center I have developed takes all of the above points into careful consideration. It has been designed to integrate the study of art into the elementary classroom. I have chosen the artist Pablo Picasso because of his unique style and varying techniques. The lesson plan and

the accompanying learning center involve students in an intense study of the artist, his subject matter, his different techniques, and his preferred media. The learning activities serve to clarify and reinforce concepts developed from the lesson plan. The activities included are self-checking, providing classroom teachers with an effective method of meeting the intended objectives.

The sample learning center incorporates many subject areas into one basic art lesson. The activities encourage divergent and critical thinking, allowing students to develop the important skills of problem solving, synthesizing, and inferencing. The activities also promote learning in the areas of developing vocabulary, establishing relationships, comparing and contrasting, and making sound judgements.

Included in the learning center is a visual board and a variety of teacher made and adopted activities. The materials provided may be used with any artist, depending upon the particular unit of study. Classroom teachers could use these ideas to begin studies in art history. With a few manipulations a new artist could be featured each month. Exposure to different artists will help children to better appreciate art and all that it entails.

In the following pages I have provided explanations and examples of

the learning center to aid in its use. A sample lesson plan, artist brief, and record/goal sheet are also included.

Visual Board

Materials: corrugated cardboard, mat board, selected visuals, trim, cut-out letters or stencils, rubber cement, exacto knife, velcro (optional).

The visual board serves as a backdrop for the learning center. Any visuals may be used; however, the more famous works are sometimes desired. Attaching the visuals with velcro will allow for its reuse with different centers. The visuals should be matted or mounted to make them more attractive in appearance. It is also suggested that a self-portrait or some type of picture of the artist be included on the board. Accompanying questions related to the visuals will contribute to the board's effectiveness. These may be laminated index cards stored in an envelope.

Reference: Carol A. Burt

Still Life Box

Materials: small box or container, construction paper, rubber cement, variety of objects (vase, silk flowers, plastic fruit, candles...).

Students use the objects in this box to create their own still lifes. They may choose which objects they wish to use and how they want to arrange them. The students then use the provided paints, chalk, or crayons to draw their arrangements.

Reference: (Kaplan 42)

Creative Writing

Materials: file folder (yellow), construction paper, markers, palette shaped paper, rubber cement.

Create an attractive design on the front of the file folder and place the writing paper and the directions on the inside. Lamination will help to protect the file folder. Students choose a painting from the visual board, and then write a paper pretending they are the artist. They are encouraged to describe their feelings as they produced the work. The palette shaped paper will help to motivate students' writing and reinforce art vocabulary in the process.

Hidden Picture

Materials: file folder (colored), construction paper (geometric shapes), dry erase marker, rubber cement, visual Violin, Glass, Pipe (1912).

Create an attractive cover with geometric shapes. On the inside of the folder place the directions and the visual. Students will study the picture, find the hidden objects (violin, glass, and pipe), and circle each with a dry erase marker. They will then create their own "hidden picture". Students may wish to trade their pictures with classmates to find the objects hidden.

Artist Palette

Materials: construction paper, markers, scissors, dry erase marker.

Place laminated copies of the palette at the center. Directions on

the back ask students to write characteristics of the artist being studied in the circles of the palette. Written in dry erase marker, the students' responses can be easily rubbed off the laminated surface.

Reference: (Kaplan 41)

Still Life

Materials: file folder (colored), construction paper, markers, visuals Still Life with Pitchers and Apples (1919) and Still Life on a Table (1931).

On the cover of the folder glue vases and flowers made from construction paper. Place the visuals on the inside, asking students to compare and contrast the two examples of still lifes.

The Three Musicians

Materials: file folder (colored), markers, rubber cement, construction paper, 2 copies of visual The Three Musicians.

Place one copy of the visual on the front of the folder with its title and author. On the inside glue a construction paper pocket to store the puzzle pieces. Make the pieces from the second copy of the visual. Cut puzzle pieces and draw each outline on one side of the folder. Write a definition on the outline of each piece. The accompanying vocabulary word is written on the appropriate puzzle piece. Words and definitions as follows:

1. Pablo Picasso-Talented artist who helped to develop cubism and collage.

2. Cubism-Variety of subject matters using fractured geometric shapes.
3. Blue-Period-Stage of Picasso's artwork where he portrays the outcasts of society in cold, blue color.
4. Rose-Period-Stage of Picasso's artwork centered around circus people in "rosy" colors.
5. Collage-Art form of pasting bits of objects on a surface.
6. Guernica-A small Spanish town which was the subject of Picasso's famous painting.

*The number and difficulty of puzzle pieces and vocabulary words may be adapted to different grade levels.

Portraits

Materials: file folder (colored), construction paper, stencils, markers, rubber cement, visuals Paul as Harlequin (1924) and Little Girl with Boat (1938).

Create an attractive cover using stencils and construction paper. On the inside of the folder, place the two visuals. Students should study the two examples and sketch an abstract and a realistic portrait.

The Blue Period

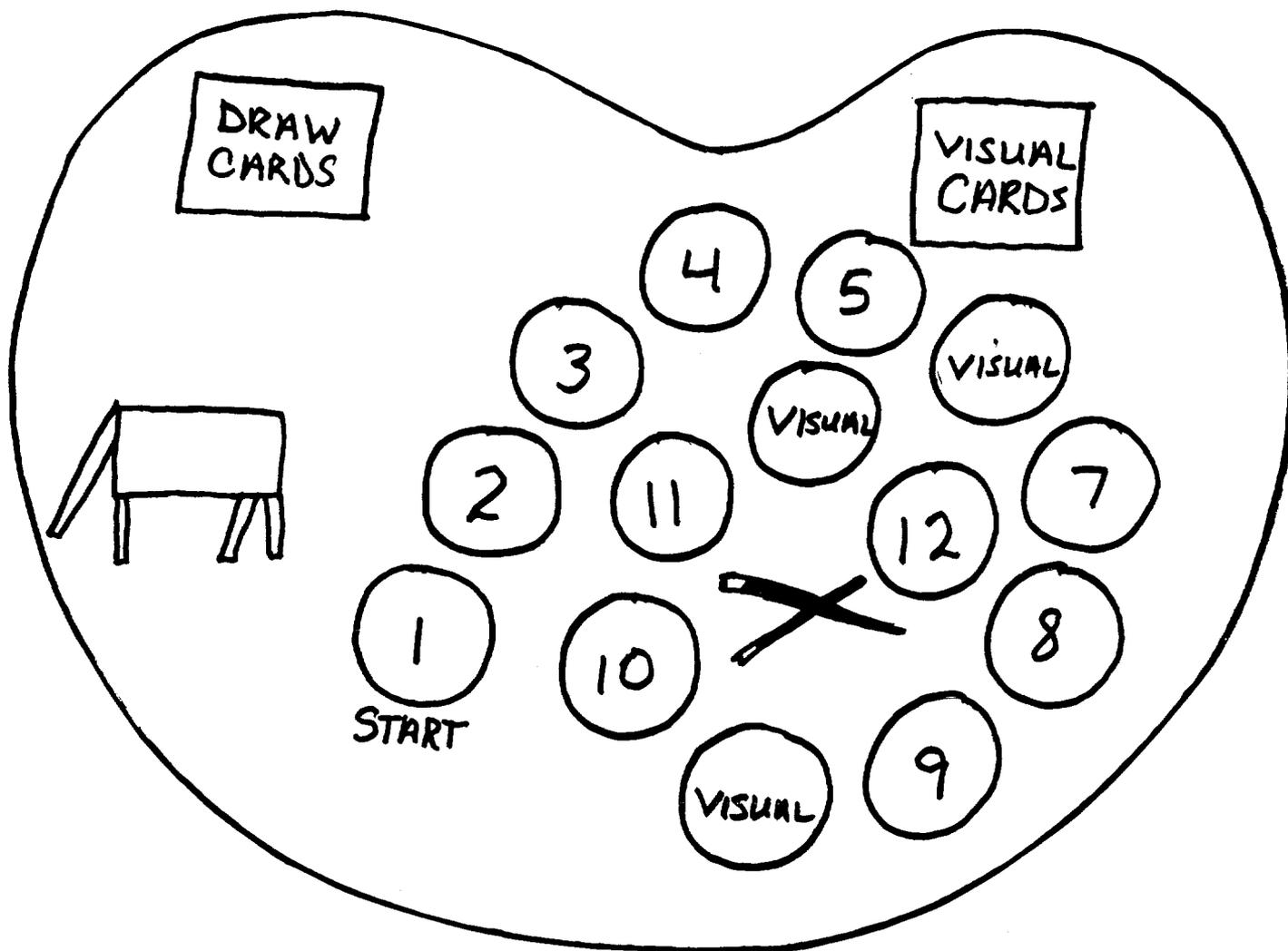
Materials: file folder (blue), construction paper, markers, rubber cement, visuals Woman With Fan (1909), Portrait of Sebastian Junyer (1903), and Harlequin and Companion (1901), copy of Picasso's signature.

Glue Portrait of Woman With Fan on the front of the folder, with Picasso's signature. Place the other two visuals on the inside with the directions. Students should study the two paintings from Picasso's Blue Period. They should then create their own series of paintings based on a color. A written explanation should be given as to why they chose that color.

Gameboard: Help the Artist Find his Paintbrush

Materials: heavy cardboard, markers, Picasso self-portrait, 1 die, draw cards and visuals.

Gameboard Diagram:



Draw Cards: Questions and Answers:

1. What was the name of Picasso's famous painting that showed the ugliness of war? *Guernica*
 2. What is the name of the art form of pasting bits of objects on surface? *Collage*
 3. What was included in Picasso's period of Surrealism? *Dreams and Fantasies*
 4. What color characterized Picasso's period of sadness and poverty? *Blue*
 5. What kinds of shapes did Picasso use in his "Cubist Period"? *Geometric*
 6. How old was Picasso when he died? *92*
 7. In what year was Picasso born? *1881*
 8. What is the name of Picasso's style? *Cubism*
 9. From what country is Picasso? *Spain*
 10. What artist brought Cubism into the art world? *Pablo Picasso*
 11. What are Picasso's paintings called that have objects grouped on a table? *Still Lifes*
 12. What is the name of the art form which uses fractured geometric shapes and collage? *Cubism*
 13. What color characterized Picasso's period of painting harelquins and acrobats? *Rose*
 14. Which artist had the greatest influence on Picasso? *Cezanne*
 15. What medium did Picasso use in most of his paintings? *Oil*
- *Make the draw cards from cardstock paper. Glue front to back with rubber cement. (Edges only)

Visuals and Visual Card Questions:

List of Visuals:

- The Studio in Cannes (1956)
- Bullfight (1901)
- Woman (1907)
- Interior With Blue Deck Chair (1958)

Landscape With Two Figures (1908)
Still Life With Guitar (1921)
Woman Reading (1935)
Woman in Red Chair (1932)
Portrait of Jacqueline With Hands Folded (1954)
Margot (1901)

*Any Picasso visuals will work

Visual Card Questions:

1. Describe the lines.
2. Describe the colors.
3. Describe the shapes.
4. What is the subject matter?
5. Describe the balance.
6. What element adds unity? Explain.
7. What element adds variety? Explain.
8. What type of rhythm do you see? Explain.
9. Identify the focal point and explain why.
10. What medium is found in this work?

*Large network of games-visual card questions can be used with any visuals. New draw cards can be made for new artists with a large classroom contest at semester's end.

Instructions for Play:

1. Players place tokens on start.
2. Roll die to see who goes first.
3. Roll die and advance the number of spaces indicated.
4. Numbered spaces:
If player lands on a numbered space, he or she will choose a draw card and answer the question. If correct, player holds the card for one point. If incorrect, card is placed in the discard pile.
5. Visuals:
If player lands on a visual space, he or she will choose a visual and a visual card and follow the card directions. If correct, the player holds the visual for two points.
6. Proceed to finish.
7. The player who totals the most points at the end of the game is

the winner.

*This game is designed for two players. Additional visuals and questions are needed for more players.

Reference: Adapted by permission from Carol A. Burt, 1992.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is important to remember when implementing a classroom learning center designed to integrate art into the elementary curriculum, that the child is of top priority. Students must be committed to and enjoy their projects in order to learn from them. Teachers must carefully plan for and organize centers that will provide for the effective and efficient learning experiences for each child (Obriecht, 1976). Each participant must do his share to ensure that the child's first experiences in art are, in fact, positive ones.

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Kaplan, S., Kaplan, J., Kunishima, M., and Taylor, B. Change for Children: Ideas and Activities for Individualizing Learning. California: Goodyear Publishing Company, 1973.

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Rowe, G. Guiding Young Artists: Curriculum Ideas for Teachers. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1988.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Davidson, T., Fountain, P., Grogan, R., Short, V., and Steely, J. (1976). Authors share ideas about schools, children, and learning. Book establishes a guide for use by classroom practitioners in the utilization of the learning center concept in developing a better learning environment for individual children.

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Indiana Department of Education. (1987). Outlines proficiencies for the primary and secondary levels of art education. Authors discuss the DBAE approach and the four disciplines included in this.

Kaplan, S., Kaplan, J., Kunishima, M., and Taylor, B. (1973). Authors provide a model for teachers to individualize instruction within their classrooms. Book suggests many activities which may be used in this process.

Obriecht, C. (1976). Book designed to encourage, expedite, and guide readers in the establishment of successful learning centers. Author provides many useful activities and ideas for practicing teachers.

Rowe, G. (1988). Author provides many art curriculum ideas for teachers. Approaches are set out with emphasis on process rather than product.

PICASSO--CUBISM AND COLLAGE

GRADE LEVEL APPROPRIATE: Fourth Grade

ART HISTORY FOCUS: Pablo Picasso

ART PRODUCTION FOCUS: Paper Mosaic

VOCABULARY:

1. Pablo Picasso
2. collage (art form of pasting bits of objects on a surface)
3. cubism (variety of subject matters using fractured geometric shapes and collage)

TEACHER MATERIALS:

1. Slides or visual examples of the following:
 - Gertrude Stein (1906)
 - Self-Portrait (1906)
 - Family of Saltimbanques (1905)
 - Harlequin (1915)
 - Mother and Child (1921)
 - Poor Folk by the Sea (1903)
 - The Balcony (1919)
 - Three Musicians (1921)
 - Portrait of Jacqueline Roque (1954)
 - Guernica (1937)
2. Visual board displaying works
3. Visual file
4. Paper Mosaic example
5. Construction Paper
6. Scissors
7. Rubber Cement
8. File folder

STUDENT MATERIALS:

1. Scissors
2. Colored paper scraps of magazine pictures

3. Rubber Cement
4. Corsage or hat pin (for lifting pieces of paper)
5. Pencil
6. Construction Paper

INTRODUCTION:

Pablo Picasso was a very talented artist who greatly influenced and contributed to the art world. His works developed through many different stages. He began realistically with Impressionist themes of streets, mother and children, and flowers, influenced by the Spanish world around him. He then plunged deep into the "Blue Period" where his use of vivid color was replaced by cold blues and instead of portraying the gaiety of life, Picasso began portraits of society's outcasts, suffering and lonely. The "Rose Period" came next with rose color paintings centered around circus performers such as, clowns, harlequins, and acrobats. Picasso then broke from the past with a shocking new way of indicating 3-dimensional relationships and expressing emotions. He used distorted human figures made from geometrical shapes to represent not only what he saw, but what he thought he saw within his subjects. This new art was labeled "cubism" and later combined with collage to create his unique and highly imaginative art.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Students will understand and recognize the terms Pablo Picasso, cubism, and collage, and be able to identify examples of each.
2. Students will apply above understandings by creating a paper mosaic according to a set of criteria found under evaluation.

TEACHING METHODS:

1. Teacher will talk about and show visual examples of the work of Pablo Picasso as it developed through the stages of the "Blue Period", the "Rose Period", and the "Cubist Period".
2. Teacher will define the terms cubism and collage and show examples of each.
3. Teacher will compare and contrast the periods of Picasso's works to show differences in each of the developing stages.
4. Teacher will focus children's attention on the unique

it to both cubism and collage.

EVALUATION:

Student Behavior: Students will sit quietly while teacher is talking, and participate appropriately in class discussion.

Student Work: Student's work will display the following criteria:

1. fractured geometric shapes
2. flat shapes
3. creativity
4. craftsmanship (clean gluing and even cutting)

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Daix, Pierre. Picasso. New York: Fredrick A. Praeger, 1965.

Elgar, Frank. Picasso. New York: Tudor Publishing Company, 1972.

Greenfeld, Howard. Pablo Picasso- An Introduction. Chicago: Follett Publishing Company, 1971.

PABLO PICASSO

BORN: October 25, 1881 in Malaga, Spain

DIED: April 8, 1973 at the age of 92

MATERIALS: oil, gouache, pencil, charcoal, ink, watercolor, and pencil

MAJOR WORKS: Guernica, The Three Musicians, and Still Life with Chair Caning

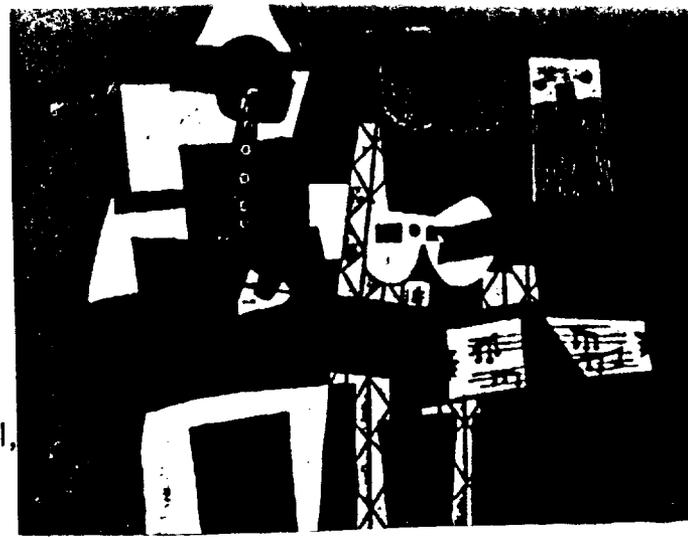
PERIOD: Cubism and Surrealism

INFLUENCING ARTISTS: Cezanne, Braque, and Matisse

MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS: Most of his work is related to "periods": the Blue period, the Rose period, and the Cubist period. Picasso helped to create the art form of Cubism and was one of the first artists to introduce the idea of collage.

SUBJECT MATTER: Blue period- poverty, sadness, and depression
Rose period- harlequins, clowns, and acrobats
Cubist period- variety of subject matter using fractured geometric shapes and collage
Surrealism- dreams and fantasies

Note: Pablo Picasso's real name was Pablo, Diego, Jose, Francisco de Paulo, Juan, Nepomuceno, Mario de los Remedios, Crispin, Crispiniano de la Santissima Trinidad. His mother referred to him as Crispin or Trinidad.



LEARNING CENTER GOALSHEET: INQUIRY CLASS

Name: _____

Long Range Goals: _____

Short Range Goals: _____

Goals: _____

Started: _____

Completed: _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

Daily Diary: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____

Evaluation Dates: _____

LEARNING CENTER EVALUATION

Rating Scale

- 1 = poor
- 2 = improving
- 3 = good
- 4 = outstanding

Name: _____

Date: _____

Teacher: _____

Self-Evaluation	Center Evaluation
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_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

- understands and follows directions
- works independently
- begins independent activities
- accepts responsibilities (commits self to tasks)
- attitude toward others
- handwriting
- begins and ends goals responsibly each day
- helps plan realistic goals according to needs
- completes tasks in a reasonable amount of time
- total use of center

Seminars: _____

Self-evaluation: _____

Center evaluation: _____