

Bulletin 1954, No. 12

how children can be

CREATIVE

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III

FOREWORD

THIS BULLETIN has been prepared to help teachers and parents understand the contribution of creative expression in the all-round development of children. In order to achieve balance among the various learning activities, a school program needs to give appropriate emphasis to the creative arts.

Because all the arts are closely related, a broader, sounder learning experience can be provided when each of the arts can supplement the others. Many illustrations are offered in this bulletin to show how children and teachers living and working together in elementary school classrooms can create songs, poems, stories, rhythms, dances, pictures, handicrafts, and other art forms. These may be valuable in and of themselves, but they take on greater value when they are developed around children's own interests, needs, and purposes.

To some children who cannot be academically successful, art experiences in various forms are especially valuable. Such experiences give them an opportunity to succeed that is necessary to their mental and emotional security.

Teachers who can participate with children in creating art forms, not as experts, but as learners, can help children realize that one does not have to be a skilled artist to experiment with or to manipulate materials or ideas in creative ways.

Parents play a most important part in encouraging or discovering children's powers of creative expression. They need to see clearly that although every child may not become an artist, he can use art forms creatively in his daily living, and for his own pleasure and enjoyment.

One of the authors, Arne Randall, has contributed to this bulletin both while he was a specialist in the Office of Education and in his present position with Texas Technological College, Lubbock, Tex.

This bulletin is one in a series based upon the publication, *The Place of Subjects in the Curriculum*, Office of Education Bulletin 1949, No. 12. These publications are designed to discuss in more detail problems of teaching in some of the subject areas; and to analyze situations and illustrate ways in which teachers can help children do a better job of living and working together. Each of these bulletins subscribes to the philosophy of *The Place of Subjects*, but shows more specifically how teaching and learning go on (1) in the fields of reading, arithmetic, written expression, and art; (2) in the areas of developing the ability to solve problems and to

experiment; and (3) in organizing the classroom so that children understand their rights as individuals, and the responsibilities that go with these rights. Each discussion is planned to emphasize meaningful, purposeful experiences for children which the teacher can adapt to his situation and his group of children.

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The way it looks to him.

VI

how children can be **CREATIVE**

AS CHILDREN become acquainted with their world, they begin to use the objects and materials around them to express their thoughts and feelings. Teachers and parents can do much to provide a stimulating environment in which children feel free to create. This bulletin is organized around questions which may arise in making opportunities for creative expression available to children.

How Can Children Be Creative in Their Daily Experiences?

Who is the creative child? He is every child in every classroom and in every home. Some children create as a natural form of expression, without adult help or stimulation. Other children need an environment which supplies both materials and the encouragement of a parent or teacher. Children are creative in different degrees in different media. They may draw, paint, engage in dramatic play, express themselves through pantomime or impersonation, or with puppets or other dramatic forms; may develop rhythms, or dances, write music to be sung or played, or make a simple musical instrument; may model with clay, weave, cook, sew, build with blocks, and write stories or poems. These and other related forms of expression are natural to many children. Many of these experiences when carried on at school may be drawn together in such a way as to supplement each other, and so enrich the whole school program.

Because each child is an individual, he may prefer one medium to another. A function of the adult is to help him get at least some experience with as many of these as possible. Teachers and parents need to develop an attitude of mind which will permit children to experiment freely in any medium that will encourage the desire to create.

Any or all of such activities may be carried on without being genuinely creative or artistic. This is true when they are carried on in a routine way, or when a child is required to follow set directions for making an object or expressing an idea. Following directions has its place in the

development of skills such as spelling and arithmetic, but has less importance in the creative arts, unless children have themselves helped to develop the directions for a dance, or for making a linoleum block print, or for some other purpose that is important to them. As children experiment with various media, they may find a need for acquiring certain techniques and skills. At that point the teacher may demonstrate the skills involved, but should not impose them.

What makes an experience creative? Creativity is primarily a point of view, a way of feeling about things, situations, people, the world, one's school, one's home, and a way of responding to these things in one's environment. At the same time, creativeness calls for a willingness to experiment, to be independent, to express original ideas without regard to how others may feel about them. In creative expression, the child attempts to show what he feels about people, objects, or an experience. He is not concerned with creating a product that is just like another one, with reproducing what someone else has done. Only one who has known the thrill and the uplift of creating something that is his own, can fully appreciate the importance of this experience to the individual. Creative expression represents a form of communication through which every child, including the handicapped, can share his ideas with others.

Daily activities at home, school, and in the community offer continuing opportunities for creative expression. Children can be creative in the way they express their ideas about things in their environment—the polliwog, the cocoon, rain, the playhouse, the scream of the fire engine's siren, the first dandelion of spring, or the factory machine. Children may be creative in their own natural way as they tell a story, manipulate a puppet, engage in dramatic play, arrange flowers, set the table, serve food, organize postage stamps in an album, decorate their own rooms, or carry on many everyday activities. Children usually find happiness and satisfaction when they are creating for a purpose—to select colors for the wall in their classroom, to make decorations for a party, to prepare scenery for a play, plan and make costumes, design invitations for a school party, to organize a portfolio for a Red Cross exchange, or to use dramatization and music to entertain parents.

Such activities as these represent an important kind of learning that is not based primarily on the use of books. It is a different kind of learning because a person sees in his home, in the out-of-doors, in factories, in the community, in his own work, many opportunities to express what he feels about people and places. Children as well as adults need continued encouragement to express such ideas in many different forms, using many kinds of materials creatively.

An excellent illustration of the development of on-going daily school activities in a creative way is found in the June breakfast program of the

Maury School of Richmond, Va. There the teachers and children agree upon a theme early in the school year. They discuss it; each group chooses the part of the theme they would like to work out during the year. Then in relation to reading, social studies, literature, music, health and physical education, and art particularly, they pull their learnings together around the theme that has been chosen.

One year, Maury children had heard a great deal about crowded school conditions, and from their thinking and discussion they developed the theme, SO MANY CHILDREN. Through songs, dances, dramatic play, some formal dramatization, choral speaking, and rhythms, boys and girls presented their ideas about the importance of children, their relation to their families, and what their responsibilities are in the world today. In one scene children brought from the corner of the auditorium a tall pole to represent a gaily decorated mast, which two children supported as they stood in the center of the floor. Other children took long ropes with which they outlined the deck of a ship, with the mast as a focal point. Then families impersonated by the children came on board with baby carriages and picnic lunches, laughing, dancing, and singing. As the children sang "Sailing Down the River," one had almost the feeling of movement because the children had done such a good job of creating a situation that seemed real.

It was not make-believe so far as the children were concerned, because for that hour, they were on a real boat, and were the fathers, mothers, and children they were impersonating. So it was with the other episodes that developed the theme. On view outside the auditorium were sketches that had been made by the children for the costumes or for the settings of the various scenes. Books were displayed, open at the place from which information had come. Sources of songs and poems were similarly shown. A great many of the skills the children had learned in handwriting, spelling, arithmetic, and reading had been used to describe their sketches, or to point out the kinds of questions and problems on which they were seeking information. All of these materials had been organized and displayed in an artistic way that showed children's creative ability.

How Can Children Be Creative in Working With Various Media?

Creative expression often grows out of experience. Such experiences stimulate children to use many kinds of materials for a wide variety of purposes. A skillful teacher guides children to express themselves creatively in ways that are satisfying to them and which help to convey their thoughts and feelings to others.

Whatever the material, children need to get the "feel" of it, to experiment, to manipulate. The teacher must know when to help, when to guide the child, and when to leave him alone. In one classroom where 8-year-old children were working, one girl sat absorbed in making clay candlesticks. She made one after the other until she had 10 or 12. A visitor asked the teacher why the child made nothing but candlesticks. The teacher replied that the child, who was new in the school had never before had the opportunity to work with clay. She was getting the feel of it. Presently the teacher would guide her to make other objects and eventually to create something that grew out of an idea, rather than being limited to something she had seen.

The art forms and the materials commonly used include, first of all, *drawing and painting* calling for tempera colors, finger paint, crayons, pencils, and charcoal for the making of pictures, maps, murals, self portraits, stage settings, illustrations for stories, and other ways of helping ideas come to life. From *papier mâché*, older children may make a large Easter rabbit or a favorite book character for younger children, as large as the children themselves, and then may paint it with appropriate colors. Such an activity calls for using a number of art media for a real purpose. The fact that the purpose is a real one for children does not detract from its creativeness.

Dramatics of various kinds have an important place in the school program. They offer many avenues for children's creative expression. Children may carry on dramatic play that is realistic or purely imaginary. They may use a full-size playhouse, or a train made of blocks and boxes, or a pioneer cabin they have constructed as the center of such activity. Using their own background of observation, or what they have learned from books, as in the case of the pioneers, they create characters and situations as the basis for their informal play. If they decide to play their story for another group of children, it may become more formalized and organized, but should never become fixed and inflexible.

Younger boys and girls enjoy impersonating a policeman, a fireman, or

postman. Older children may choose to impersonate a favorite character from a popular book. Pantomime may grow out of such impersonation when the characters are placed behind a sheet or curtain with a strong light to outline the figures which are usually so placed as to create silhouettes.

The peep show is a simple way to create a dramatic effect with such materials as a shoe box, colored paper as background, and paper doll type characters that can be pasted upright on the bottom at one end of the box. The so-called "movie" consisting of a sequence of events and characters may represent the next step beyond a peep show, when a series of pictures is unrolled on a miniature stage as a child turns a crank.

Puppets are of various types. A simple form is the stick puppet which can be easily manipulated. It consists of a figure pasted to a heavy piece of cardboard and fastened to the end of a ruler which the child moves about the stage. A fist puppet may be made of any soft material that can be slipped on over the hand, with the index or middle finger manipulating the head, and the thumb and little finger the arms which may be best described as empty sleeves. The child causes the puppet to act in such a way as to fit the words that the actor himself speaks. The marionette which is manipulated by strings is a more complicated type and suitable for use mainly by older elementary children.

Informal dramatization based on an outline of a plot and with descriptions of the characters is one of the more difficult types of dramatization, since it must be spontaneous. The children who are the actors must be thoroughly familiar with the story so that they can carry along the conversation and the action. In effect, they can express themselves creatively through this and all the other dramatic forms described here.

Music too has many creative aspects. Children may create simple rhythms as they skip, hop, or jump. One member of the group may be reading a poem, or a record may be played to provide a theme around which they may create rhythms or a dance. Boys and girls may make simple rhythm band instruments from scrap wood, bottle tops, cardboard boxes, or other waste materials.

Children may create words and music that will strengthen or contribute to a school activity. For example, a group of children made some puppets as characters to summarize a study in history. Then they made words and music to describe the puppets. The words went something like this:

Bing bang, bing bang, bing bang, bing

Listen to the patter of the puppets' feet sing.

They march across the stage, some are young and some are old,

They march across the stage, some are shy and some are bold—

Bing bang, bing bang, bing bang, bing

Listen to the patter of the puppets' feet sing.

Next individual children tried their hands at writing songs and poems about puppets. Children may be encouraged to set a favorite poem to music as another way of stimulating creativity on their part.



You play—I'll write the notes.

Closely related to the creation of music is the use of *rhythms* and the *dance*. Creative expression of feelings and moods through rhythms is highly individual, then in pairs, then in small groups. Children may develop a dance from an idea, a song, or a poem such as Vachel Lindsay's "The Potatoes' Dance." Or various types of movement such as that of a snowflake, or a storm, or an airplane may be the starting point for an interpretive dance. The seasons, the forces of nature, living things, the circus, or occupations may serve as a springboard to get ideas going.

Creative expression may be *oral* or *written* when it involves language as such. The child may dictate as the teacher writes. The result may be an experience story which is copied on a chart or into a book. Or the story may be purely fanciful, but if it is sufficiently good, it may be put into book form and placed on the shelf along with books by recognized authors. Or the result may be a play based on a book or a period in history, or an interpretation of transportation or communication today.

Children may express themselves creatively through *choral speaking*.

When children have had a pleasurable experience in learning such a poem as Rose Fyleman's "Wishes," they discover that they can say the poem together. They may suggest, or the teacher may suggest, that they group themselves by putting the high voices together, the medium voices together, and the low voices together. Then boys and girls decide with the help of their teacher which lines will be spoken by the entire group and which by a small group within the large group. Their presentation should be perfected but not to the point where too much emphasis is placed on the performance so that children cease to get enjoyment and satisfaction from the experience.

In *crafts and construction work*, children have many opportunities to create with their hands. Older elementary school children at Greenville, S. C., created a horse that primary children could ride, by constructing a framework, or armature, out of a saw horse and a nail keg and shaping it with *papier mâché*, as well. Strips of cloth were pasted on the finished forms as an outside protective covering. Boys and girls avoided realism in coloring their animals, for they enjoyed making polka dots, daisies, leaf forms, and other designs on the sides of their animals.

Children in another South Carolina school were confronted with the problem of limited finger-paint materials. They experimented with cooked laundry starch made fairly stiff ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup cold water, $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups boiling water, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup soap flakes not granulated, 1 tablespoon glycerine), to which they added vegetable coloring or powder paint. Some soft clays and mud can also be used as a base for finger paint.

The children painted directly on large white oilcloth mats placed on a large table so there was plenty of room to spread out. As they painted with the finger paint, they sometimes listened to music and tried to express what they felt about the rhythm or the melody. By experimenting children found that in addition to using their fingers and the palms of their hands as brushes, they could get interesting effects with sponges, corn cobs, wadded paper, bottles, pencils and other objects which could be rolled over the paint. When the child produced a design that satisfied him, he placed a sheet of newsprint or of glossy shelf paper of the same size as the mat directly on top of the paint, smoothed it all over with his hands, and when he peeled it off, had a finger paint picture. When children were through painting, they washed the oil cloth with a sponge, so that it was ready for use the next time.

In a Pennsylvania city, boys and girls wanted to make Christmas presents for their parents. They had no money to spend, but the teacher encouraged them to use their imaginations in planning what could be done with waste or scrap materials. They learned the principles of weaving by stretching gunny sacking or a net bag in which oranges had come (material with a large mesh) over old smooth wooden picture frames of

various sizes, depending upon the size of the piece of mesh to be used. Then with colored string, metallic Christmas ribbon, twisted crepe paper and straw, the children produced some interesting table mats. To match the mats they made lamp shades by wrapping yarn in harmonizing colors around wire-frames of lamp shades that had been discarded. They made lamp bases from discarded bottles, painted blocks of wood, driftwood, or tin cans weighted with sand and decorated with a punched design. The shop teacher in a nearby junior high school provided some skilled students to do the electrical wiring. At the completion of their project, the children evaluated the success of their activities from the point of view of whether the products were artistic and functional, and what they had learned about using their own ideas in creative ways.

Some of the older boys in a California school had become dissatisfied in working with chalk, crayon, and water colors. They wanted to experiment with some new medium. At the suggestion of the teacher, each of the boys brought to school a pair of pliers and began to "draw with wire." They found that it took real skill and imagination to twist the wire into the figure of a horse or some other animal, of a cowboy, or of a fantastic object that did not resemble anyone or anything. When these were finished, they could be used as "mobiles" suspended from the ceiling or as decorative pieces on shelves or walls.

Stimulated by this use of a new and different medium, some of the boys experimented with using plumber's shears and empty vegetable or fruit cans that had been thoroughly washed and cleaned, to make Mexican-type tin candlesticks. As the boys explored other media, some used soap and a jackknife to produce a sculptured ship or rabbit, or became interested in carving balsa wood. Such explorations led also to the use of native clay and eventually to the making of a crude sort of pottery; to the use of linoleum block prints and to the use of a potato as a substitute for the linoleum block.

During the course of the elementary school years, children should be exposed to many media and should be encouraged to try their hands at using them. With the guidance of a skillful teacher, they will find certain forms of expression more satisfying than others. When this is true the creative experience may lead them to make a conscious effort to develop skill and to improve the quality of their art objects in such a way as to lead to a vocation or an avocation. This outcome is not the purpose of the creative act, but is an important by-product.

How May an Environment Be Provided for Creative Experiences?

An attractive and stimulating environment with materials and tools, plenty of time and space, and a permissive and appreciative atmosphere lends itself to rich and varied creative experiences on the part of children. In the school, such a classroom is a joint responsibility of teacher and pupils working cooperatively.

The teacher makes some beginnings in arranging the room so that creative activities will develop. She arranges interesting objects and materials where they are readily accessible for pupil use.

The children are encouraged to plan ways of making their classroom interesting and attractive. They plan ways of arranging it for carrying on their projects. They bring objects and materials to the classroom. They bring toys, nature objects, travel souvenirs, pictures, and maps. They learn to share them with other children through displaying them effectively and writing or telling about them.

Work space is an essential element for many kinds of creative activities. Children need flat tables, easels, workbenches, or floor space where they



I'll mix mine—you stir yours.

may, paint, work with clay, or construct objects of wood or cardboard. They need places where they can weave, make musical instruments, or have a puppet show.

Teachers and pupils in many classrooms have set up *work centers* for various kinds of creative work. Each center has some space for working and for keeping the necessary materials and tools. Some of these centers may be for clay, paint, weaving, scissors and paste, woodwork, metal work, or some other type of art activity. A weaving center may have small looms, often handmade. The materials for weaving may be yarn, cord, raffia, rags, unraveled gunny sacking, or grasses. Painting centers often have easels or a linoleum wallboard on which children may paint with tempera or water colors. Often materials for finger painting or drawing with crayons are available. Waterproof clay bins are being installed in some classrooms.

Another type of center may be for music. It may have musical instruments, such as flutes, chimes, and drums, homemade rhythm band instruments, and a record player with records for creative rhythms and dancing.

In another center, there may be a typewriter with which the children put their ideas into written form. Or large sheets of newsprint or tag board may invite children to put down their ideas.

Yet another center may be provided for creative experiences in drama. This might be a portable theater with puppets that can be manipulated. It might be a small portable stage that can be used in a corner, center, or front of the room. It might be simply arranged by using decorated unbleached muslin curtains that may be drawn across the room on a wire to form a background, and may be fastened back close against the wall when not in use.

Centers may be set up on tables or shelves along the sides or in the corners of a room. Others are arranged in alcoves provided for work space. Some rooms have a work counter with sink and electrical outlets at the back or side of the room.

In some classrooms *portable equipment* is used for the materials and the children work at their regular tables or desks. There may be a cart which is wheeled in with the materials for painting. Another may have equipment for cookery, which may be a creative experience. In other classrooms the children use various types of work space—hinged shelves, tables, or built-in counters, but go to storage centers for their materials and tools.

In some schools, *wall space* is used for painting, pasting, or other types of art activities. Some of the newer classrooms are being constructed with a section of battleship linoleum from floor to ceiling to be used for painting, for display, or other purposes.

A fifth grade in one school in the State of Washington wanted a stage

setting for a play. Unfortunately the room was too crowded to lay the sets on the floor for painting, and the walls had been too recently painted to permit working directly against them. Oil cloth was secured and tacked onto a long piece of board which was hung to the picture moulding. The oil cloth was sufficiently long that it overlapped the edge of the floor. Any paint that dripped off the set could be wiped off the oil cloth without difficulty. This not only provided an excellent place for painting sets, but murals were also painted on it at other times.

The wide variety of *materials* needed for creative activities should be kept readily accessible so that children will have many opportunities to express themselves in different kinds of media. Cardboard, paper, paste, clay, paint, crayons, ink, wood, colored pieces of cloth, and a chest of clothes for "dressing up," are some of the materials which should be available to children. They should be encouraged to use those things that can be found in their environment for creative expression, such materials as straw, shells, driftwood, tinfoil, paper cartons, felt, or leather.

Storage space for the materials and tools needed for creative activities is essential. Many classrooms have storage facilities built into the walls. They have cabinets with doors, files, and open shelf space. Some of these have shelves wide enough for large sheets of newsprint or drawing paper. Many schools have central storage rooms where some of the supplies are kept.

Some pupils and teachers have helped solve the storage problem for art materials by cutting down along the corners of paper cartons and turning in the edges. This reinforces sides and makes strong "tote" trays for carrying materials from one part of the room to another, or from room to room. These trays can be stacked in a corner for permanent storing of art materials.

Children need a variety of *tools and equipment* available for creative activities. Scissors for cutting, brushes for painting, and wheels for pottery making facilitate work in arts and crafts.

When sufficient tools cannot be supplied by the school, teachers and pupils use their ingenuity to create some from materials at hand. One small school in North Carolina needed more tools for a classroom. The pupils made a gauge out of an umbrella stay by inserting a short section of it into a wooden handle. A knife was made out of a hack saw blade mounted in a wooden handle. By sharpening a nail and inserting it into a wooden handle, a hand drill or an awl was made. The children learned that a hack saw blade would take care of some of their sawing needs when one end of the blade was wrapped with string for a handle.

The *furniture* of a classroom should be flexible and movable so that tables can be pushed together in groups, a puppet stage or play store may be assembled, or space can be cleared for rhythmic, music, and dramatic

activities. A record player, radio, or small piano should be available for creative rhythms, dances, and plays.

Ample provision for *displaying* the creative work of children is desirable. Bulletin boards should be large enough and in keeping with children's own height. Display shelves or nooks are excellent. Some classrooms have display shelves built into the wall between the classroom and the corridor so that the items exhibited may be viewed from both sides. Such equipment as wire and tape recorders, slide and opaque projectors make possible hearing and seeing children's creative work. Ample opportunity to see or hear the creative work of others and to share one's own work is an incentive to creative expression.

A group of sixth-grade children were so proud of their paintings, that they planned with their teacher and principal to display them from time to time in the large frames in the principal's office, in classrooms, and in the corridors of the school. They removed some of the pictures from the walls, took out the prints, cleaned the frames, painted them with appropriate colors and put into each a mat that would hold the average-size picture that they made. They called these the "all-purpose frames." Regularly the children took turns in putting up their work in the classrooms, in the principal's office, and in the corridors. The principal reports that since the children's paintings have been displayed in prominent places, the art interests of the school have increased.

Sufficient *time* for creative expression of various kinds should be provided in the daily schedule. Children should be as free as possible from time pressures when carrying on such activities. They need adequate time for arranging and putting away their materials and the results of their work.

Pupil committees or groups may be selected for taking *care* of the various centers and other materials. They can also learn to display or present the creative work of their class skillfully. Such group participation helps the creative activities run smoothly and provides opportunities for learning to cooperate and to assume responsibility.

One group of third-graders had difficulty cleaning their paint pans and water jars since there was no sink in the room. Paper cups and the "cap-shaped milk bottle caps" were adapted for use. The students soon discovered that they could save paint by mixing only what they needed and when they were through, the paint was either permitted to dry and be re-used, or if a particular color had served its usefulness the cup was thrown into the waste paper basket.

Some *fine examples* of painting, ceramics, carvings, recorded music, and writing should be part of the classroom environment from time to time. This will give the children an opportunity to live with beautiful things as a daily experience. They will discuss with their teacher the things they

like about these works of art and the qualities which make them beautiful. A skillful teacher changes these art objects at appropriate intervals to provide the richest opportunities for the children to enjoy many fine works of art. Libraries, boards of education, museums, and people in the community help to make such works of art available for classroom use.

People of the community who have special interests in painting, carving, pottery making, writing, dancing, or playing musical instruments may be invited to the school to tell the children about their work and to show them some of their accomplishments and where possible, to demonstrate how they work.

Not all of the children's environment for creative expression is at school. Much of it is in the home and community. Teachers and parents often take children to visit museums, art galleries, historic sites, parks, or to attend concerts. They visit many places of interest in the community, such as the railroad station, post office, stores, markets, and airport. From these experiences in the community may develop many kinds of creative expression.

Nature is a pervasive part of the environment of children which leads them to express themselves creatively. They talk, sing, dance, and paint in accord with the seasons, the birds, trees, ocean waves, forest animals, moon, and stars.

How May the Fine Arts Be Coordinated In Children's Creative Experiences?

The various fine arts have natural relationships which should be kept in mind when providing opportunities for children to be creative. Similar elements have characterized the arts through the ages. In primitive arts, simplicity, repetition, and symbolism are found in the music, art, literary forms, and architecture. During later periods, the arts became more intricate and were characterized by elaborate forms of decoration. Contemporary art forms have again returned to more simplicity in design. Children can be helped to see these relationships in the different art forms of various periods in the development of our civilization.

In their own experiences in creative expression, children may use the

various art forms at times with considerable coordination. They may draw or paint to the rhythm of music. They may illustrate stories or poems they have written. They may create dances and rhythmic dramatizations as they listen to music. Enrichment can be derived through such experiences when these arts are in their proper working relationships.

A kindergarten teacher in Athens, Ga., read *Song of the Swallow* to her pupils. She played swooping, soaring, gliding music on the piano. The children enjoyed "being swallows" as they responded rhythmically to the music. Then they painted pictures showing the swallows in flight. The drawings were characterized by the spirit and rhythm of the story, the music, and the dance. The children participated in all of these art forms in their proper relationships and each form gave heightened values and meanings to the others as experienced by the children.

On another day the children listened to a recording of Grieg's music about *Peer Gynt*, who walked out in the woods and found a cave where there was a giant. The children talked about how they would feel if they were in a mountain cave. For rhythmic activities that morning, they "were" the boy, giants, dwarfs. As they continued to listen to the music, they made paintings showing how they would look and feel in a cave with dwarfs and giants about. They moved rhythmically or danced from their work tables to their portable paint centers as they worked. Their drawings were full of rhythm and showed varying degrees of lightness and darkness coming from the stories and the music.

A Denver teacher played a recorded movement of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony for a group of fifth-graders. On large pieces of paper they expressed their reactions to the music in color and form. If the music soared, so did their designs. If it was heavy they used dark colors with heavy blocks and forms.

When it was bright, they used yellow and orange and pink with sharper, less massive designs. When one melody was heard over another, light colors and lines were drawn over darker and heavier designs.

From this beginning the children created panels for their walls, a design for the back of their piano, a dance (with balloons and scarfs) and a number of poems. All of these creative expressions grew out of listening to a masterpiece of music.

What Is the Importance of Creative Experience as Compared With Other Types of Learning?

Creative experiences do something for the spiritual and emotional aspects of the child's life that skills alone never can. Yet both are essential to a well-balanced personality. In this twentieth century, children are living in a fast-moving world, one that is different in many respects from the years in which their parents and grandparents grew up. Skills such as those involved in the three R's are essential in everyday life, in earning a living, and in being an effective citizen in a community. But the arts are equally essential to the spiritual, the social, and the emotional life of the child. Creative experiences provide the opportunity to use skills already learned or still being developed, in ways that are satisfying to boys and girls. The emphasis in creative expression is upon the effects of creating the song, the poem, the story, the play, the clay object or the rhythms, on the child's attitudes and behavior. The development or refinement of skills as such is not the major purpose.

For example, children who are studying pioneer life have accumulated a good many facts about how the people who first settled their community built their homes, secured food and clothing, furniture, heat, light; how they grew their crops, how children went to school, what they did for recreation. But such facts are comparatively dead and not too interesting unless they can be brought to life. This children may do by dramatizing a pioneer party. Background panels are painted to represent the interior of the cabin with the fireplace the center of interest. The tools and utensils shown, the costumes worn, songs sung, the dances used, must be historically accurate, but still call for interpretation. Children will search out the information from books, from pictures, from the museum, from older persons in the community, with a zest that makes learning and remembrance more certain. As children stage a pioneer party for themselves and for their parents, they are reconstructing imaginatively a period in the history of the United States that will become more meaningful through such activity. The skills involved in reading for information, in taking notes, in measuring, in building stage properties, are being used, but are not pushed to the forefront in the minds of either children or parents.

The child who expresses in pantomime his impersonation of a character may often give an interpretation of what the person is like much more effectively than he could do in words. He has the experience of being creative and of getting satisfaction from sharing his ideas. Another child who manipulates a fist puppet, who talks to it, and has it talk back, is often getting away from his own shyness in speaking. He makes use of the puppet as an emotional outlet, because the puppet may say things that he himself would never have the courage to express before an audience.

Necessary as skills are, attitudes and behavior are important, too. Through creative experiences, when children discuss, plan, carry out an activity, evaluate the results and plan again, they are able to make generalizations not only about the nature of their accomplishments, but also express how they themselves feel about what they have done. Through such procedures, changes in attitude and behavior are brought about, and emotional stability can be developed.

What Is the Role of Parents in the Creative Expression of Children?

The role of parents in relation to children's creative expression should be essentially the same as to many of their other activities. It is important that what the parent says about a child's creative effort should encourage the boy or girl to continue to create with pencil and paper, with crayon or paint, or with a handcraft. If a parent says of a child's picture which he has brought home, "Do you call *that* a house?" or "You'll have to learn how to draw people," by so doing he may discourage further effort on the child's part. The boy or girl may not bother to bring his next picture home for the family to see. Later he will leave his piece of pottery, his wood carving, or piece of weaving at school, rather than risk adult criticism. But if in contrast, the parent says, "Tell me a story about your picture," he encourages the child to make further creative efforts, as well as to give him something to talk about that is of real interest.

Children are not adults. Therefore their work can be judged only in terms of what each individual child is capable of doing. The self-portrait which a 6-year-old makes may have no resemblance to him, but it is his best effort to transfer to paper his idea of what he looks like. The body

is round, the head is round, and the arms and legs are of the stick-figure type. When he becomes an 11-year-old, his picture will probably be quite different. It will have better proportions. The arms and legs, hands and feet will be drawn, and there will be some facial expression, and details of dress and activity will be pictured.

Parents may find effective ways of helping children by observing what the good teacher does. The teacher who is a good guide tries to help the child make progress by comparing what he does this week with what he did last month. The emphasis is not on the fact that "This is poor," and "This is good," but rather on appreciation shown by such comments as, "You made me feel you were running," or "I can guess what you are doing." A picture is good not because it looks like a photograph, but because it creates a feeling or mood in the person who sees it. The feeling may be one of pleasure, amusement, recognition of an idea or situation, recollection of a personal experience, or it may take other comparable forms.

At home parents can provide a definite place with work space, equipment and materials for children—an easel, newsprint paper, crayons, paints, clay, musical instruments, picture books, puppets, a simple type of loom for weaving, and other things that will stimulate experimentation and manipulation. Often it is possible to help children recognize the possibilities of scrap and waste materials that can be used in creative ways. If parents experiment in some media themselves, children are likely to find pleasure in trying their hands, too. Encouragement of the creative at home can supplement and extend the work of the school.

Most important of all, parents should recognize the creative arts as a safety valve, as an emotional outlet for children that will contribute to their development, or will prevent difficulties from arising.

That child is fortunate who finds in his home good examples of creative art, of music, of literature; who sees in the choice of colors, and of furniture and room arrangement the use of art principles in creative ways. The arrangement of flowers, the setting of the table, the selection of clothing, the use of color in planning a garden can all give evidence that creative art is an important part of daily living.

How May the Teacher Become More Effective in Helping Children To Be Creative?

To be most skillful in helping children be creative, the teacher himself must be creative in his point of view. He should be able to recognize possibilities for creativeness in various situations, in various materials, and in various children. He must respect children as children. He should not impose his ideas and standards upon children who are engaging in creative work.

Desirably, the teacher should participate in creative experiences himself. He should experiment with various media for creative expression.

The skilled teacher has many experiences with a wide variety of art media. He may work with clay, weave, paint, make jewelry out of metal, or decorative masks of *papier mâché*. Sometimes he works simply and freely with these materials to get the feel of them and to express ideas and emotions that have come from his experiences in living. He has many opportunities to see good works or performances of art—drama, dance, paintings, or pottery. Again he may create some functional object for which he feels a need, as a lamp, some bookshelves, or a low table. The wider the variety of media and experiences, the better he should be able to help his pupils develop their creative abilities.

Teachers should have many creative experiences with music. This may include singing, whistling, or playing musical instruments, possibly a tonette, informally improvising the rhythms and tunes. It may include the making of simple musical instruments, such as chimes, drums, or ukuleles. It would include listening to fine music. It may mean more serious work in composing songs, instrumental music, or operettas. Such composing may be done by the individual alone, or may be done by groups of people working together. The teacher who has participated in the group composition of a song becomes better prepared to help children have a similar experience.

Rhythmic experiences are closely related to music. Individuals may listen to various kinds of music and respond rhythmically, creating their own dances. Or they may create their dances and then locate suitable musical accompaniments.

Creative writing offers the teacher an unusually fine means of expression. Already he should have reasonably good skills in writing. For his own enjoyment and satisfaction, he may try his hand at various kinds of creative writing—stories, poems, drama. He should read widely in creative literature, including many authors and several literary forms.

Some of the creative experiences of teachers should be with a coordination of the arts. They gain an understanding of the possibilities for coordinating music, art, literature, and dance through participating in such experiences themselves.

How are teachers to have these experiences in creative expression? Some they will carry on by themselves. In some they will participate with friends. Again they will seek help and inspiration through workshops, creative-art studios, and courses which provide guidance, instruction, and materials. Through experiencing themselves the creative process in the arts, teachers gain added skill in helping children to be creative.

What Are the Major Values of Creative Experiences for Children?

Creative experiences help the child develop as an individual in many ways. They provide him with varied ways of expressing his thoughts and emotions. He can communicate more easily, and effectively with other children and adults than the child with limited means of expression.

From creative experiences comes enriched living for the child. He finds many avenues of enjoyment through creative experiences in music, art, crafts, writing, drama, and other forms of expression. Some of these experiences involve creative listening or observing; others involve the actual creation of something, through individual or group effort. Children carry on some of these activities at school, some at home, and some in other parts of the community.

Through having a part in creative experiences the child has an opportunity to participate in a highly personalized activity. It gives him much personal satisfaction and a tangible feeling of accomplishment that can give him emotional security. Rich experiences in creative expression help to fulfill the goal of education labeled as self-realization.



It's our show.

The child who is shy may gain great satisfaction through speaking for a puppet in a creative drama. He may speak with a group and even take a small solo part in choral speaking.

Another child may derive great enjoyment through expressing his ideas with paint. Some children express themselves freely and effectively in writing. Others find music a more satisfactory medium. They sing and whistle and play musical instruments, improvising as they go.

One of the greatest values of creative expression is the opportunity provided for the release from tensions or frustrations. The individual may express freely the way he feels about elements in the environment which cause him distress or unhappiness. Once these feelings are brought out from within him and put into some tangible form, he may begin to relax, view them with more detachment, share them with others, and often makes some satisfactory adjustment to a situation that cannot be changed.

The therapeutic value of creative experiences is recognized for persons with serious adjustment problems. Creative experiences are also of much value for the well-balanced individual, for they can facilitate his mental health through providing an excellent means of gaining release from tensions and gaining satisfaction through accomplishment.

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Shows how a sympathetic and intelligent teacher helped children give expression to their innermost thoughts and emotions through creative art, writing, music, and dance. Points out the therapeutic and enrichment values gained by the children and increased understanding of the children by the teacher.

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Grateful acknowledgment for pictures is made to the public schools of Chicago, Ill., and Denver, Colo., to Alice Nichols of Ball State Teachers College, and to the American Music Conference.