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and expressive qualities of art. Through the Art Criticism component, students learn how to interpret art content and meaning, which enables them to discuss works of art using appropriate vocabulary.

Aesthetic Understanding

This component analyzes characteristics that classify an object as art. Students learn to identify factors that influence the meaning of an art object. Aesthetic understanding combines the abilities to see, interpret, evaluate, and express individual understanding.

Different components can be used to plan goal-oriented art experiences. Every lesson will not include all components. Whenever possible, however, planning an art lesson should include consideration of the components that will support the art process.

Purpose

Art *Connections* has been designed with three ideas in mind. The first is to provide elementary teachers with a resource that will build on their understanding of art. The second is to provide students with meaningful art experiences that use a variety of materials and techniques. The third is to suggest ways to integrate art into the curriculum.

How to Use This Book

The first five lessons of *Art Connections* introduce basic concepts. These lessons address components that create a foundation for the activities found in the book.

Two of these lessons, Art Talk and Looking for Meaning, approach fundamental art issues without requiring any art production. Instead, the lessons are models for leading research, discussions, and games that illustrate the issues.

Elements and Principles of Design and Color Studies each include a project that applies the concept introduced in the lesson. These concepts should be considered basic to any art production experience that includes making choices about shape, line, texture, space, or color, and the arrangement of these elements.

Evaluation Is an Inside Job is a crucial element in this book. The ideas in this section introduce creative problem solving and help guide self-evaluation. Students are encouraged



to view their work in a positive, more objective way, enabling them to find meaning in any perceived imperfection.

Following these five opening sections are fourteen lessons within the production component. These lessons develop knowledge of art processes and skills using a variety of materials, tools, and techniques. Each lesson contains information that will support historical inquiry through discussion or research. These lessons follow a consistent format and were designed for integration with objectives from other subject areas. At the beginning of each lesson is a quote and a brief introduction. This is followed by a little history on the lesson topic, procedures to be used for the project, ideas to be integrated, a suggested list of resource books for students, teachers, and parents, and an occasional reproducible page.

Each of the fourteen lessons has two titles. The first title refers to the art concept; the second refers to the topic that is being integrated. Applications of the topics can be found under the Integrating Ideas section of the lesson. Suggestions are made for enhancing a unit of study. The book lists are for support for further exploration.

Integration



Two stonecutters were engaged in similar activity. Asked what they were doing, one answered, *"I'm squaring up this block of stone."* The other replied, *"I'm building a cathedral."*

Willis Harman, Global Mind Change, 1988

This quote can be used to express the idea of integration; that is, seeing the whole picture rather than each part separately. *Art Connections* provides a springboard for integrating art with other subjects. It includes activities that deal with higher-level thinking skills and real-life experiences. This framework provides opportunities for children to question and make their own connections. Integrating becomes a way of thinking, a way of looking at our world, a tapestry in which the various threads are woven and interrelated to create a whole, pleasing image.

Integrating Ideas

The following ideas encourage experiences that gain insight into authors and illustrators:

- ② Assemble a bulletin board which highlights a well-known artist, illustrator, or author. Have works from the highlighted artist available. Do this occasionally throughout the year, each time highlighting a different artist.
- ② An author's or illustrator's lifestyle, background, and interests can be reflected through children's books. For example, Byrd Baylor's love of the outdoors, life in the desert, and Native American influence are present in her stories. The experience of living in New York City is apparent in some of Ezra Jack Keats's books. *Watch Out for the Chicken Feet in Your Soup* shows the influence left by Tomie DePaola's Italian grandmother. Have students discover some of these influences on their own. When highlighting an author/illustrator, give students time to make their own observations and generalizations about that person. Then have students find background information on various authors and illustrators. (*Horn Book*, *Cricket*, and *Classmate* are good resources.) Also check the list at the end of this lesson titled "Books." Students may be pleasantly surprised by how close their observations are compared to the background information of an artist.
- ② Writers like Byrd Baylor have many illustrators. Discuss the differences in the artists styles. Note that her book *Animal Tracks* is illustrated with the use of photographs.
- ② Write a letter to an author or illustrator. Curiosity motivated one fifth-grade class to do this. They asked Chris Van Allsburg "Why are so many of your illustrations in black and white?" "Which comes first—your writing or your drawing?" "Tell us about the dog, Fritz, that appears (sometimes hidden) in all your books." It was very exciting to receive a reply.
- ② After students have a basic knowledge of various authors' styles of writing, arrange them into small groups. Give each group a stack of books written by the same author. Have students look at leads, topics, endings, imagery, humor, character development, adventure, point of view, and so forth. Have each group write a list of observations they've made of the author's style and share the list with the class.
- ② Compare illustrations in science and social studies texts to those in fiction books.
- ② Examine the following list of books that have won the Caldecott award over the past 10 years.

1992 *Tuesday*. David Wiesner. Clarion Books.

1991 *Black and White*. David Macaulay. Houghton Mifflin.

1990 *Lon Po Po*. Ed Young. Philomel.

1989 *Song and Dance Man*. Karen Ackerman. Knopf.

1988 *Owl Moon*. Jane Yolen. Philomel.

1987 *Hey, Al*. Arthur Yorinks. Farrar.

1986 *The Polar Express*. Chris Van Allsburg. Houghton Mifflin.

Looking for Meaning



*"A people without
history is like the
wind on the buffalo
grass."*

*Anonymous Native
American saying
(Sioux)*

Understanding Art and Culture



Ideally, the study of art in any culture begins with a willingness to suspend judgment. A person should seek to understand the beliefs, traditions, and everyday life of different cultures. Oftentimes, these beliefs, traditions, and lifestyles are reflected through art. Guidelines for describing and defining art are introduced in this lesson. These guidelines are used to examine and compare artwork objectively. The research outline and games at the end of the lesson can be used when learning about any culture. Using these, we can begin to understand the story art can tell.

When looking at the meaning of art historically, the idea of "art created for its own sake" is a new concept. Native American artworks, for example, were functional objects to be used by the people who made them (and eventually for trading purposes). "Special" objects were also made for religious or other ceremonial purposes. The symbols and patterns that adorned the objects often became tribal traditions that held specific meaning for



Procedure

STEP 1.

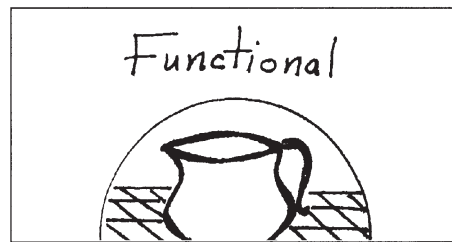
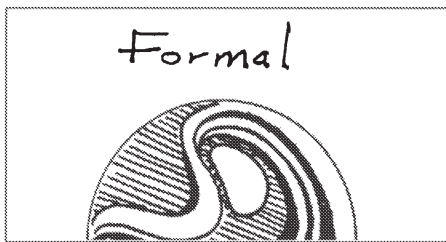
Have the class collect a variety of pictures, postcards, or photocopies of Native American art.

STEP 2.

Divide the class into groups of four. One student in each group is assigned the role of director; a second student is assigned the role of vote counter; a third student is assigned the role of recorder; and a fourth student is assigned the role of reporter.

STEP 3.

Have students make voting signs using index cards, tagboard, or paper plates. Each student needs four signs, one to represent each quality. The design on the sign should illustrate and name the concept.



STEP 4.

Invite the class to look at the assortment of pictures, one at a time. Each student in each group should decide which quality or qualities the artwork contains and hold up the corresponding sign. (Remember, one object can have any or all of the qualities.)



Pause

Creating and evaluating do not take place at the same time. Take a break and take a look (review).

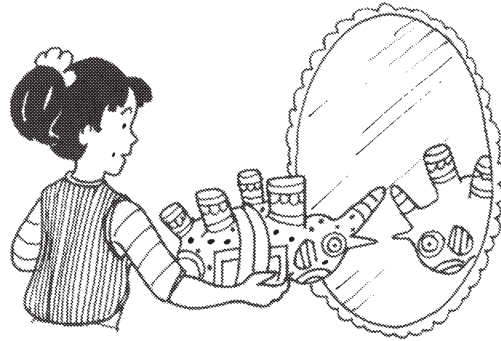


Does the work look the way I imagined it?

Visualization in the preparation stage helps to make decisions about subject, design, color, and technique. It is used to start the creative process rather than determine what the end results will be. Work that is creative, more often than not, is the result of an idea that has been allowed to develop. If the work doesn't look "quite right" it may be that the student is trying too hard to make the image exactly the way it looked in his or her mind.

What do I like about the work?

Evaluate a work in progress frequently. Try to see it from a different point of view. Hold the piece in front of a mirror, upside-down, dim the lights, or wait an hour and look at it again. What areas are the most interesting? Why? Are there unexpected things happening that I like? These are clues that help decide how to continue. Build with the elements that are working.



What can I improve?

The *Serenity Prayer* by Reinhold Niebuhr puts into words the best evaluation state of mind. "Grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change; Courage to change the things I can; and Wisdom to know the difference."

Every work has its problems and any area that is not successful is a question. Does the shape need adjustment? Is the color too dull? Sometimes it's enough to recognize the problem, leave it, and move ahead. At other times, the student may decide to make a change. Changes should be made in the same relaxed way that work begins, with questions about the materials, challenges, and possibilities.

I've made a mistake. What can I do?

An insightful art teacher once told his students that to be artists they must first make 100 mistakes. Keep in mind the quote by Edward Phelps: "The person who makes no mistakes does not usually make anything." A flaw can become an asset. A hole in a painting can

