

1936

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Recommended Citation

Voss, Mildred Dow (1936) "A Study of Conditions Affecting the Functioning of the Art Appreciation Process at the Child-Level," *Proceedings of the Iowa Academy of Science*, 43(1), 323-324.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.uni.edu/pias/vol43/iss1/118>

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A STUDY OF CONDITIONS AFFECTING THE FUNCTIONING OF THE ART APPRECIATION PROCESS
AT THE CHILD-LEVEL

MILDRED DOW VOSS

The claim has been made in art psychology that sensitivity to such relationships as balance, rhythm, harmony, and unity is basic to discrimination of the best in art, or aesthetic judgment; to an understanding of the composition of a picture, or aesthetic analysis; and to the production of paintings of merit. To test this assumption a series of four experimental art courses was conducted to determine if an increase in the understanding of the principles of art through instruction would also bring about an increase in aesthetic judgment, analysis, and production.

Experiments I and II held the type of exercises constant but varied the procedure by omitting or supplying explanation of the principles of art. One hundred second, third, and fourth grade children were divided into matched groups on the basis of CA, MA, IQ, sex, grade, and McAdory Art Test score. The experimental group was presented with a series of paired pictures, one of which exemplified, the other of which failed to exemplify a principle of art. The children were instructed to choose the picture they preferred. No instruction was given as to which picture was better or why. Thirty thirty-minute periods of practice in choosing failed to produce a statistically significant difference in the mean gain of the two groups.

In Experiment II, with reversed groups, the same series of pictures, accompanied by an explanation of the principle involved, was shown. The new experimental group, after a training period of fifteen thirty-minute class periods demonstrated a statistically significant gain over the control group. Without explanation of the principles, practice in judgment of varying degrees of merit failed to produce a statistically significant difference between mean gain of matched experimental and control groups; with explanation, a significant difference did occur.

In Experiments III and IV, utilizing 85 fifth-grade subjects, explanation was held constant and the type of exercises varied. In Experiment III a series of principles was explained and illustrated by exercises drawn from newspapers and magazines each of which exemplified only the principle in question. In Experiment IV the principles were explained by illustrations showing both positive and negative applications from the Meier-Seashore

Art Judgment Test and from Goldstein's *Art in Everyday Life*. In both experiments the gain of the experimental over the control group in aesthetic judgment was significant.

Aesthetic analysis was tested by a series of questions designed to reveal the child's understanding of the composition of Marc's painting "Red Horses." Classification of these responses revealed a decrease in the number of responses indicative of a comprehension of the picture as naturalistic representation and an increase in the number indicative of a comprehension of the picture in terms of aesthetic qualities following Experiments III and IV.

However, original compositions, painted preceding and following Experiments III and IV, and scored in terms of an average of the ratings of ten judges, disclosed no significant difference between final mean scores of experimental and control groups.

In conclusion, simple explanation of elementary principles of art has been shown to increase the ability of elementary school children on aesthetic judgment and aesthetic analysis tests. The effect of training in the principles of art upon production should be further investigated.

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A STUDY OF CREATIVE IMAGINATION IN ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

WILLIAM A. McCLOY

In this investigation of the nature of artistic expression, creative imagination is studied through the medium of a model stage, appreciation of colored slides, and imaginative insight by abstract paintings.

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A TACHISTOSCOPIC STUDY OF AESTHETIC PERCEPTION

GILBERT BRIGHOUSE

The purpose of this experiment was to investigate the characteristic development of the perception of a painting for both