

1935

An Experimental Study of the Developmental Processes in Art Appreciation

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Recommended Citation

Voss, Mildred Dow (1935) "An Experimental Study of the Developmental Processes in Art Appreciation," *Proceedings of the Iowa Academy of Science*, 42(1), 173-173.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.uni.edu/pias/vol42/iss1/84>

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AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESSES IN ART APPRECIATION

MILDRED DOW VOSS

To determine by what processes art appreciation could be increased, two groups of fifty children each from the second, third, and fourth grades were matched for intelligence, mental age, chronological age, socio-economic status, grade, sex, and art appreciation scores. One group served as an experimental group, the other as a control group. Art appreciation was measured by a battery of tests including the following: (1) the McAdory Art Test revised to include only the best and worst choices of each test item; (2) Part I, Section I, on recognition of proportion, of the Lewerenz Tests in Fundamental Abilities of Visual Art; (3) twelve pairs of items from the Whorley Unity Scales.

The first experimental group was presented with a series of paired exercises, one member of each pair illustrating a principle of art, the other member violating the principle. The children were required to indicate the illustration they preferred but no indication was given by the experimenter as to the correctness of the choice nor the principles involved. Each child in the experimental group gained on an average .49 of a point over each child in the control group.

To test the effect of instruction accompanying the exercises the groups were reversed. To the new group the experimenter indicated which exercise was correct and explained in terms of the principles of art why it was correct. On retesting the groups, each child in the new experimental group had gained an average of 3.4 points over each child in the control group, a significant gain.

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