



OBJECTIVES IN ART EDUCATION

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You cannot disregard art even if you tried. Everything about you that has been fashioned by man—the clothes that you wear and the objects that you use, the house that you call home and the pictures upon your walls, the town in which you live and the statues in its parks—is a form of art. It may be good, bad, or indifferent; but it is a form of art nevertheless.

Art is the concrete expression of man's God-given urge to create a little world in his own image, to project his soul into his environment, and to leave on everything that he touches the unmistakable marks of his personality. In a larger sense, art may be considered as the result of man's attempt to adapt his environment to his needs, in order to attain self-fulfillment and to promote his well-being and happiness.

The degree to which man has achieved this end is the measure of his culture. The more cultured a man is, the more conscious he becomes of his environment. He looks at it critically; and, if it does not satisfy him, he tries to change it.

It is through critical observation alone that man can develop his taste. Through endless processes of comparison, deduction, generalization, and application, his ability to judge works of art becomes surer. He becomes more discriminating and less prone to compromise.

One of the objectives of art education, for this reason, is to sharpen your ability to examine works of art critically—or, in other words, to develop your sense of appreciation. This is bound to result from your study of the elements and principles of art, and from your intelligent application of them.

This act of appreciation is itself an act of creation. You will not be able to understand, much less appreciate, a work of art, unless you recreate it in your mind and give it your own interpretation. Your interpretation of that work of art, in turn, will depend upon your training and experience as well as upon your intellectual and emotional make-up. You can get out of a work of art only as much as you bring to it.

For this reason, the other objective of art education is to develop your power of self-expression, to help you interpret the world about you, and to foster your compelling urge to create. Nothing can give you greater satisfaction. In being able to transfer the beauty of a landscape or of a vase of flowers onto canvas, in being able to fashion with your hands something that delights the senses, you will feel almost like a god.

You will find that, even if you and your classmates draw the same object, your drawing will be different from any of your classmates. That should not surprise you. That is as it should be. The works of an artist cannot but be distinct from those of his fellows. The works on the same subject produced by the same artist on various occasions may even differ from one another.

For, if we compare the world of matter and experience to a ray of light and the personality of the artist to a prism, then we can compare a work of art to the pattern produced by the ray of light as it passes through the prism. Since the world of matter and experience has a million facets, since no two persons have the same intellectual and emotional make-up, and since every artists can come in contact with the world of

matter and experience in a million different circumstances, works of art cannot but be infinite in variety.

One of the chief characteristics of a work of art, as a matter of fact, is its originality—its distinctive mark of individuality. That is why it mirrors, not only the personality of the artist, but also the society and the period to which he belongs. In this sense, a work of art is a social and historical document.

It is wrong, for this reason, to think that art is foreign to everyday life and that it is the concern only of artists, critics, and scholars. It touches the whole of life, because it is the expression, the interpretation, and the criticism of that life. If we hope to understand life fully, therefore, we have to understand art.

But art does more than this. It enriches our experiences, broadens our knowledge, deepens our sympathies, and strengthens our conviction that God created man in His own image. Art is the proof that man is also a creator and a god.

By our original nature, man is a progressive and superior being. From a philosophical viewpoint, a man is just a bundle of desires. Not satisfied with a thing, he wants another no sooner than he gets the first. A teacher is human, no more no less. He desires progress. He wants to improve himself and be a little "who is who" in his small world. He is not satisfied knowing and seeing others move forward—he wants to go further if possible than what others before him have attained. He believes that if one can progress and by so progressing a certain goal is attained, why can't he if he tries hard enough. "Social approval is one of the most powerful forces by which personal-ity and behavior are determined."*

(x) *Educational Measurement and Evaluation*, Remmers and Gage, p. 72.

He believes in the full development of individuality as an instrument for the welfare of society. On top of all these, he wants economic and social security for himself and his family.

Is it necessary to use pressure to teachers to make them further their studies for professional advancement? That's not what they need and expect. Human as they are, it's instinctive in man to progress and improve in some way. Why don't we try the positive means rather than the negative? A teacher, because of the complexity of his nervous system is intelligent. He observes, takes note of things and remembers. He observes that he studies further for nothing. He goes back to where he starts after spending time, effort, and money. Very often he leaves his dear ones behind, just to get a further glow of what they term "modern educational trends." When he returns with his mind teeming with ideas fresh from schools, he finds himself downcast and disillusioned. The psychological effect is contagious.

Place the premium—that's all. That will serve as a magic wand to all. A teacher with a salary of P60 after finishing his bachelor's degree, gets the same salary as before. Of course, there's the subjective satisfaction of being a holder of a degree, but will the degree make him live better unless accompanied by something of the objective satisfaction? At times, it's even embarrassing. You can see, can't you?

Place the premium—and professional growth is taken care of. Given an incentive, man, and more so far a teacher, will improve himself professionally. Memorandums and circular letters will not be necessary and time in preparing and sending them out is saved. As said at the beginning, man is a progressive animal and what is needed is incentive, not pressure; encouragement, not repression.