School of Education

POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE in EDUCATION

TEACHING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

PRIMARY MODULE 8

ART
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Prepared for the course team by Galor Holness
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1 A rationale for art in the curriculum

This Module is an introduction to the visual arts. It should enable you:

- to explore the visual arts as a means of creative expression and understanding;
- to practise working on your own with a range of art media and materials;
- to apply this individual experience in the context of the national curriculum and practical classroom activities;
- to appreciate the potential of art in terms of cross-curricular and cross-cultural activities;
- to organise classes, materials and environment so that the children are stimulated and encouraged technically and creatively;
- to understand the requirements and purpose of assessment.

Few children in a class will be able to draw from seen objects with great accuracy, though children can be helped by learning to observe the world around them more closely. While an important part of the teacher’s role is to encourage children who have a strong ability in painting and drawing, it is equally important to feed the imagination of those less technically skilled, and to strike a balance between the needs of accurate representation and of self-expression, either of which taken in isolation can inhibit development.

The creative process comes first, but the accumulation of technical expertise will increase both confidence and expression. The study of art history is also important, since by extending our understanding of other artists we can improve our own creations.

The national curriculum (DFE, 1995) requires that art in school should not be fine art alone but should involve pupils in a range of materials (such as textiles, wood and plaster). It stresses the importance of certain unique characteristics of the study and practice of art. These include:

- an emphasis on visual literacy;
- specific technical skills;
- the harnessing of observation, memory and feelings in order to express and communicate ideas in visual form;
- a distinct body of knowledge (of artists and of art itself);
- response to the work of other artists.

This Module is designed to enable you to start with a series of practical activities in your own home, so that you can explore a variety of art media, materials and approaches for yourself before introducing them into the classroom.

Discussing the processes you have explored and showing your creations to friends, fellow students or teachers will help to broaden your awareness of the potential of the materials you have worked with. Showing your work to children is also a very rewarding exercise as they react so imaginatively to images and ideas.
It is by no means necessary to be especially talented in the use of the materials and forms of image-making described in the activities; the important thing is to have tried these various processes in order to be able to appreciate the problems and potential they offer. At all stages in both exploring alone and teaching the class it is very important to retain your buoyancy, confidence, and pleasure in the activity.

2 Practical activities

You will find the Curriculum Resources video (index nos. 260–319) very useful in giving you guidance and ideas for carrying out practical art activities. The video gives examples of:

1 children working from observation
2 cross-curricular studies which will be valuable both for your individual work and for your work with children in the classroom.

Two different age ranges are shown, covering the early and later years of primary school. All the activities described can be used with pupils 4–12 years of age.

The two classes shown have pupils of varying artistic abilities. They were chosen for the enthusiasm they bring to their art-making. The school is St Nicholas's Combined, Kenilworth, Warwickshire. The class teachers are Janet Naujorkas and Jane Bates. The background to the schemes of work you will see is outlined in Appendix 2 of this Module.

The video

One of the fundamental concerns of art education is the development of skills and observation. Watch the first part of the art video sequence (index nos 260–319) where you will see Janet teaching a year 1 class.

1 In a notebook write down your answers to the following questions.
   (a) What textures might you hope to find on a visit to a churchyard?
   (b) How many rubbing activities are described?
   (c) When the children are drawing, what colours are used and what materials are they provided with?
   (d) How many different surfaces and objects did the children notice?
   (e) How do we make marks – what tools do we use?
   (f) How many different sorts of mark do the children make?
   (g) What range of materials did the children use?
   (h) What response was there when the children were asked how a tree should look?
   (i) What are the advantages of strengthening and adding body to the paint?

2 How do you think the children responded to the activities that you watched them doing in the video, and why?