

# THE Art Teacher's SURVIVAL GUIDE

*for Elementary and Middle Schools*

Helen D. Hume  
Marilyn Palmer

Third  
Edition



**JOSSEY-BASS™**  
A Wiley Brand



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*Edition History*

Jossey-Bass (2e, 2008; 1e, 2001)

Published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey.

Published simultaneously in Canada.

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***Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is Available:***

ISBN 978-1-119-60008-4 (paperback)

ISBN 978-1-119-60019-0 (ePDF)

ISBN 978-1-119-60021-3 (epub)

Cover Design: Wiley

Cover Image: © flyfloor/Getty Images

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

*To family members and friends, still here, or gone forever,  
my gratitude to all for both input and putting up with me when  
I'm in the midst of whatever has, at the time, interested me most*

—Helen Hume

*To my husband, John Palmer, and my daughters, Lauren Schaefer  
and Lindsey Vernon, for their unfailing support and  
encouragement with all the endeavors of my life*

—Marilyn Palmer





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# About the Authors

**Helen Hume** is a retired art educator who has taught art at all levels, including pre-service teachers at Florissant Valley Community College, and has supervised practice teachers in art for Webster University and Fontbonne University. She also taught in international schools in São José dos Campos (Brazil) and Antwerp (Belgium), where her husband's work took them.

She is an active, exhibiting member of the St. Louis Artists' Guild, and former editor of *Keynotes*, the Symphony's Volunteer Association's newsletter. She currently serves as photographer on the *Picture the Music* Committee of the St. Louis Symphony Volunteer Association. Hume is a plein-air oil painter and teaches painting in a sheltered workshop for adults. She has been a member of the National Art Education Association since the beginning of her art education career and was honored as Missouri's Higher Art Educator of the Year. She is the author of books such as *The Art Teacher's Book of Lists* and *The Art Teacher's Survival Guide for Elementary and Middle Schools, Third Edition*, which, co-authored with Marilyn Palmer, is her tenth book for artists and art educators.

**Marilyn Palmer** was an art educator for 34 years in Parkway School District, St. Louis County, Missouri. She taught art classes at the elementary level for 17 years. Her Master's thesis book, titled *A Multicultural and Historical Art Curriculum Guide for Grades K–6*, led to her teaching Cultural Connections as an art teacher for 2 years at a middle school. She later taught various art classes, including Computer Graphics and Ceramics in high school, where she also served as Department Chair and Regional Visual Arts Leader. Her travel experiences with art students at the secondary level include both domestic and international trips, such as to Italy, Spain, Greece/Grecian Islands, and England.

Within her classes, she taught many children of special needs as well as students who were identified as gifted in art. Marilyn was a consultant for *The Art Teacher's Survival Guide for Secondary Schools* by Helen Hume. She has also been a judge for Saint Louis Symphony's *Picture the Music Competition*, and currently teaches at Art Unleashed, where she offers classes to high school students as well as adults.



# Acknowledgments

**T**he authors are grateful to the people who taught us—our professors, fellow artists, museum professionals, other authors, and our *students*. We’ve learned from all of them. They are generous with ideas and love to help everyone learn. Often being told *how* to do something is just the beginning for students, who take it from there and go on to the next step—and do something which we teachers might not have considered!

Art teachers whose generous input was especially appreciated were consultants Lauren Schaefer and Linda Sachs. Lauren suggested changes from the Second Edition of the book and contributed several new projects to this Third Edition. TAB teacher Linda Sachs generously allowed the authors to observe her *art studio* classroom in action.

Other teachers, and artists who have shared ideas, student artwork and information are: Sandy Collins—Fine Arts Director (Ret.) Parkway School District; Carrie Finnestead; Dr. Jennifer Fisher—University of Missouri St. Louis; Julie Glossenger; Darcey Kemp; Dr. Louis Lankford; Dr. Mick Luehrman; Sherry Neifert and Shannon Leon—classroom teachers; Hester Menier—Missouri Art Education Association President; Brian Murphy; Linda Packard; Maggie Peeno; Brenna Roth; and Mary Tevlin.

In addition to student work, teachers, artists, and collectors have shared ideas and images that enhance this full color edition: Cathy Harland; Brother A. Brian Zampier; sculptor/photographer Sandy Skoglund; Sue Hinkel; and Dr. and Mrs. Stephen Kunz; and Laura Wagner—Fort Zumwalt Assistant, Public Relations and Media.

Friends and family who are sounding boards when we are talking about writing a book are most appreciated: Susan Hume, LuWayne Younghans, Cindy Kunz, Laurie Wilson, Beth Goyer, Suzanne Walker, Linda Bowers, Lauren Schaefer, Lindsey Vernon, John Palmer, and Peggy Dunsworth.

Professional information from school districts and workshops at the National and Missouri Art Education Associations led us in the right direction. A huge thank you to Dr. Dennis Inhulsen, Chief Learning Officer of the NAEA; Janice Hughes and

Cathryn Gowan—staff members of the NAEA; Dr. Jennifer Fisher—University of Missouri St. Louis; Dr. Marilyn Stewart—NCCAS (National Common Core Art Standards); Rick Peterson—*Show Me Art* Editor (Ret.); Dr. Roger Kelly, Missouri Director of Fine Arts; Laura Wagner—Fort Zumwalt School District; Wentzville, Missouri; and Hester Menier—MAEA President.

Working with professionals in the publishing field has kept the authors on track as we all worked *online* within Jossey-Bass/Wiley's schedule that would ensure swift publication of this full-color book. Our gratitude for their guidance and patience to Editor Benji (Elisha Benjamin), Production Editor Nisha (Nishantini Amir), Illustrations Team Naveen (Nityanandan Paramisivam) and Raji, (Rajalaxmi Rajendrasingh ) Copy Editor Aravind Kannankara, Acquisitions Editor Riley Harding, Mackenzie Thompson Editorial Assistant, and Christine O'Connor, Managing Editor.

These Art institutions gave us the right to use artworks that are in their collections or they represent the professional artists whose artworks are featured: Lisa Ballard—Artists Rights Society New York; Jennifer Belt—Associate Permission Director, Art Resource; Boston Museum of Fine Arts; Chicago Art Institute; Grace Pamperien and Jennifer Martino—Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, Arkansas; Collections Information Specialist [Ama Iromuanya](#)—Dallas Museum of Arts; Jessica Herczeg-Konecny, Digital Asset Manager—Detroit Institute of the Arts; Christa Barleben—The Eiteljorg Museum, Indianapolis; Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Santa Fe; Getty Trust; Liz Lumpkin—Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, Missouri; Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria; Marty Stein—The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Margareth Verbakel—M.C. Escher Trust, Netherlands; Peter Huestis—National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Stacey L. Sherman—Nelson Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri; Conna Clark—Philadelphia Museum of Fine Arts; Saint Louis Art Museum; registrar Richard Sorensen—Smithsonian American Art Museum, .

# About the Book

**T**he *Art Teachers Survival Guide for Elementary and Middle Schools, Third Edition* features many exciting new components! This book is beautifully enhanced with full-color museum photos as well as full-color student artworks. It also includes many reproducible copyright-free handouts for teachers to use such as Safety in the Art Room, Public Relations, Elements and Principles of Design, and current up-to-date information from the National Art Education Association.

Written by two art educators with experience at elementary and middle school, high school and university, it offers fully updated projects for today's students. Ten chapters offer a spectrum of projects in two- and three-dimensional art, using a wide variety of media.

In discussion with teachers at all levels, we find that elementary teachers introduce basic art materials to students and the classroom routine from day one. Many students who enter kindergarten may have already been using crayons at home and in pre-schools. By now, they may be somewhat tired of crayons, markers, and Play-Doh. It is up to you to introduce them to the *potential* in these and other materials. What a privilege! Delightful work from lower elementary students may be a result of just turning them loose to experiment and finding what they can do with paint. Young students may not yet know how to create art on the computer or research, but count on it, they will be learning.

Research has shown that creating art increases right-brain (intuitive) thinking and helps develop problem-solving ability. We also mustn't lose sight of teaching "art for art's sake." Children still deserve to experience one of the joys of childhood, the feeling of accomplishment when creating something beautiful. And all children's art is beautiful! Perhaps it could be better with a little more time spent on it, and the next effort could be an improvement, but children deserve the opportunity to create and have their efforts appreciated.

Eventually you have the opportunity to introduce them to what is happening in today's art world. Help them learn about artists and art created in other times and cultures. Unlike the arts, most state assessment systems require the annual testing of students in reading/language arts, mathematics, and science. Some also require this in each of the fine arts

departments. Although fine arts are not always required to be tested, check to see if yours is one of many states in the USA that has elected to write its own Grade Level Expectations in Fine Arts. Up-to-date information and planning sheets from the National Art Education Association are included in Chapter 2.

This book emphasizes the importance of teaching *all* the students coming into the art room, with specific suggestions for teaching students with special needs, including those with autism, visual and hearing impairment, developmental disabilities, motor impairment, social/emotional needs, and gifted students. Benchmarks for student skills at each grade level are given to help the art teacher with student assessment.

The authors include a look at TAB (Teaching Artistic Behavior), sometimes referred to as *Choice-Based Art Education*. Many projects are written to encourage individual creativity. Curriculum connections, adaptations for younger students, and alternative projects are often included with a lesson. Rich historical and cultural information is woven into every lesson with background information for the teacher. Many practical tips are offered to set the art teacher up for success, ranging from displaying student artwork to setting up technology in the art room.



# CHAPTER ONE

## Let's Teach Art

### Art Has Its Own Curriculum

Elementary and middle school classroom teachers often incorporate art into some of their lessons, but it is a special treat for students to look forward to their art-class day, when the subject is art. Teaching art is not exclusively for art specialists, and most states recommend that elementary and middle school students receive 45–60 minutes of visual art instruction each week. Home-school teachers have also learned that their students benefit from art lessons.



**Figure 1.1** *The Magical Zebra*, Peyton Cunningham, Grade 2, cardboard, tempera, 9" × 5" × 3.75", Chesterfield Elementary School, Rockwood School District, St. Louis County, Missouri. Art teacher Julie Glossenger.

## ONGOING PROCESS

Teaching the curriculum of art is an ongoing process. Ideally students learn to look at and create art, expanding familiarity with artists, styles, and cultures throughout the elementary, middle, and high school years.

## WHOLE-BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

The higher-order thinking skills and problem-solving abilities of students increase as a result of their ongoing experience. Research has shown that students who participate in the visual and performing arts perform better in other fields of study.

Developing skills is also an ongoing process. Students should have experience every year in creating by drawing, painting, printmaking, mixed-media, and sculpture. In-depth experience in a medium fosters creative exploration. Students can be encouraged to come up with creative solutions, and it is amazing how inventive students are.

## HIGH EXPECTATIONS AND CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

I saw a child making a production of throwing away a work of art that he had worked on carefully all hour. It was as if he were saying “Tell me to get it back out and that it is beautiful.” As early as third grade, some students’ expectations are so high that they rarely meet them, and some students keep “starting over” and never get anything finished. Perseverance is important in character development, and art is a wonderful place to reinforce it.

Art is such a personal thing! Students are highly sensitive about their work. Your expectations and suggestions should be phrased carefully. This does not mean that you should never criticize children’s art. Simply ask the student what the next step might be to make it more complete.

## New Concepts in Art Education

Teaching art has gone beyond simply introducing children to the appropriate use of media and improving their skills through projects. Although these have traditionally been the basis of teaching art, the potential for so much more exists. Informed teachers are willing to experiment with new concepts in art education.

Begin to develop a system for your classroom that allows for choice-based-art for students from about second grade on up through elementary school. It is also called TAB (Teaching Artistic Behavior). If students have learned a variety of skills before they begin choice-based art, they are more willing to choose from among all the options.

## TAB—Teaching Artistic Behavior

TAB, also called choice-based art education, is a trend in art education that is exciting to students and teachers alike. In most districts, choice-based art is taught in grades two or three through five. Lower elementary students are exposed to drawing, painting, ceramics, sculpture, and fiber arts, which prepares them for making their own decisions as they advance.

From second grade onward in some schools, students are taught to become (and behave) as studio artists: making a plan of their idea with a sketch and a few words to describe the art. The concept can be revised and refined as they progress. Students select a medium or process, solve their own problems, complete their work, evaluate it, share it with others, and clean up. This sounds like an overwhelming experience for young people, but they appear to thrive on it and talk with confidence about it.

Based on conversations with TAB converts, it is suggested that teachers shouldn't be disappointed if at first the artwork doesn't seem to be the quality your teacher-directed artwork had been before you were using choice-based art education. If students have been taught the skills, or given a mini-refresher lesson, original, creative thinking will come out.

In the beginning of the year, each "studio" is introduced (one at a time) for students to explore and try out art materials to see what is possible. Each student might have a checklist of exercises to complete.

### IN A STUDIO A STUDENT MAY BE WORKING ON,

WORK IN PROGRESS—continuing with the original plan, improving, innovating

SKILL BUILDER—trying out supplies to see what they will do, experimenting

MAKE AND TAKE—one-day project

A WOW PROJECT—something they are proud of, did their best work on, is original, and shows growth as an artist. Students do a self-assessment at the end of each day, as well as mark the studio they worked in—this helps the student and teacher keep track of which studios were visited.

**Art Teacher Linda Sachs, Rockwood School District,  
St. Louis County, Missouri**

## TAB (CHOICE-BASED ART EDUCATION)

As they enter, each student picks up his or her notebook, in which they will sketch an idea and devise a plan for the day. They may begin something new or follow through on a previous sketch. In a studio, a student may choose to resume a work-in-progress, try a skill builder, or experiment with some new material. Choice-based learning can be all-out, as the authors observed in Linda Sachs' art room in the Ridge Meadows School, Rockwood

School District in St. Louis County, Missouri. A classroom is divided into identifiable studios such as *Painting*, *Sculpture*, *Drawing*, *Printmaking*, and *Fiber*. The centers might simply be tables separated as much as possible, with all the equipment, directions, inspiration, and materials for that studio nearby. Walls or cabinets in a studio-center might have examples by famous painters, sculptors, or printmakers. For example, the fiber studio might include small examples of weaving, a selection of yarns and fibers, needle selections, and an ongoing weaving on a large standing frame loom on which everyone in the class may weave.

A painting studio might feature aprons on a coat rack (students help themselves to the aprons as needed), tabletop easels and canvases on shelves, tempera in dispenser bottles, palettes (disposable paper plates or plastic palettes with wells), and clean brushes. The cabinet doors or walls in that center might display a color wheel, and paintings by one or two famous painters. Students either work on an individual painting or may choose to work in a group to paint something as major as a large ceiling tile. Or each is individually enlarging a portion of a famous painting reproduction (see the project titled “Enlarge a Masterpiece” in Chapter 5). A group project involves decisions such as: What is a design that we all can like? What is our painting medium? How many people should work on this together?

Creative teachers in small rooms solved the problems that such jam-packed rooms presented. One teacher identified studio-centers by placing a labeled cardboard box lid (or the bottom of a sturdy box) with specific materials at one end of each “studio” table. Another numbered wall storage cabinets to be “studio-centers,” and the students wrote in their notebooks the numbers of the storage cabinets and the materials and equipment to be located in each. The sculpture equipment and media were in one cabinet while the painting materials and brushes, drawing and printing supplies were put in other cabinets. When students are ready to work, they check in their notebooks to find the location of materials. As real artists would, they put things back neatly near the end of the hour. Students are always given adequate warning when it is time to begin cleaning up in order to save time for the 5–10-minute end-of-hour critiques.

At a Missouri Art Education Conference, keynote speaker Katherine Douglas said she pretends to “cry,” saying “Oh, I’ve tried something that is too *hard* for you. I feel so bad! Things are *such* a mess.” Of course, the students snapped right to it and cleaned up after themselves.

Structuring class time to accommodate self-directed learning might involve beginning the class with a brief overview (5–10 minutes) of the work of a specific artist, showing a short film or examples, or giving a short mini-lesson. One teacher takes a video of herself as she gives a mini-lesson, which she uses again and again when she needs a demonstration. She shows these even to her kindergarten students during their quieting-down time.

Art teacher Linda Sachs in St. Louis County, Missouri, has begun a TAB art gallery in the hall outside the studio, where students display their own art works, placing their statements next to it.

TAB may not be taught year-round, as some teachers use modifications of choice-based art. For example, at the beginning of the school year, a teacher might give a quick overview

of the elements and principles of art while introducing the artwork of one or two famous artists. Or one might choose to do messy projects such as ceramics with all grade levels at the same time for a 2–3-week period.

### Some Considerations to Make TAB Work

- Keep track of the time. A 5–10-minute quiet time at the beginning and end of each class in front of the whiteboard is useful for introducing a new technique or artist.
- Plan your time well; organize space and materials; and give a special introduction about artists or various media.
- Help students develop a habit such as picking up and leaving their notebooks on a table near the door.
- Use wide plastic tape to mark on the floor a quick pathway from the door through the classroom, leaving space for a quiet-time sitting area in front of a whiteboard, in front of the drying rack, and in front of the sink.
- Have students roll out a neutral-colored display panel (felt) (approximately 30 × 70 inches) on the floor for displaying finished artwork at the end of the hour. At the end of class, it allows an artist time to share a new artwork with fellow students and have a discussion about the finished work.
- Some TAB teachers encourage students to write in their notebooks about what was accomplished that day, or to grade their day's work on the classroom computer.
- Pull-out plastic drawers contain a multitude of scrap materials: cloth, buttons, corks, paper scraps, aluminum pieces, etc.
- Label every single drawer or container on the front, asking that it be replaced front-side-out.
- The location and use of equipment such as a computer (for individual researches), glue guns, scissors, pliers, hammers, nails, small handsaws, etc., along with safety equipment (goggles—if needed), must be clearly labeled and introduced.
- Projects in a variety of media all going on at once need instruction. To avoid repeatedly answering the same question, write simple instructions, using Sharpie on white poster boards to hang near the appropriate studio. Older students might be interested in creating some of these posters.
- Record finished student work on a class camera or cellphone. This allows you and each student to maintain a portfolio that shows growth throughout the year—and is helpful for presentations or when you must give grades.
- Encourage students to display their work in a gallery that is not in the art studio. They may place an “artist's statement” next to it.
- Older or experienced students can be used as “coaches.”





**Figure 1.2** *Awesome Cool Band*, Hailey Davenport, Grade 2, collage, oil pastel, acrylic on paper, 12" x 18", Ridge Meadows Elementary School, Rockwood School District, St. Louis County, Missouri. Art teacher Linda Sachs.

## Inspirational Sources for Project Ideas

More and more avenues exist today for teachers to share project ideas. Even if you already have an idea, it is always interesting to see how another teacher tackles the same project. Try *not* to copy anything you see exactly as you see it. That is really easier than it sounds, because, as you get involved in the process, you will naturally make some different decisions along the way. Use others' ideas as jumping-off points. Ask yourself: "What do I like best about what I see?," and then "What could I change to make it more *mine*?"

### SOME SUGGESTIONS

- Go to art shows in other schools and school districts. Seeing an idea in person is the best way to learn. You can usually deduce the process enough to give your favorites a try. It is easier to decide if it's appropriate for you when you see the actual work.
- Exchange ideas with other art teachers in your school district or with colleagues who work in other school districts. You are the best support network for each other—in not only lesson ideas, but classroom organization, behavior management, and so much more.
- Buy books! You are already on a good path. Many ideas in one or two books can make your search for ideas so much easier and more time efficient.
- Many teachers follow other teachers on Instagram or on blogs. If you have a favorite or two, you can use them as a rich resource. Just remember that it's always best to give the project your own "spin" in one way or another.

- Pinterest is another great source that will give you multitudes of ideas from many teachers all over the world. It is from here that many find the teachers and artists they want to follow.
- Let yourself soak in ideas from many sources, but at the same time work on developing your own creative skills. You will soon find inspiration from nature, or a museum or gallery that stimulates a new idea in you!

## What Children Should Know and Be Able to Do—Grade-Level Characteristics

The following characteristics of students at each grade level are aligned with National Core Arts Standards and grade-level expectations that were developed by experienced art professionals. Some students may work far beyond these levels while others may not yet have reached them.

### THE KINDERGARTEN CHILD



Figure 1.3

#### Characteristics of Kindergarten Children

- Have little sense of scale and omit things that are not important.
- Quite self-centered, do not work particularly well in groups.
- Usually are able to verbalize needs.
- Unable to sustain any activity for more than 20 minutes.

#### What Kindergarteners Can Do with Materials

- Art equipment—students begin to learn about using art tools in a safe, responsible manner.



Clay—manipulate to form a ball, make a coil, flatten, squeeze, make a pinch pot.

Drawing and painting materials—learn to use large markers, crayons, large and small brushes.

Paper—cut, glue, tear, bend, fold, curl, fold in half.

Print—make a simple print with stamps, fingers, or objects.

Scissors—use control to cut curved or straight lines.

### Kindergarteners' Understanding of Concepts

Identify and draw differences in line—thick, thin, zigzag, curved, straight, interrupted.

Recognize and draw geometric and free-form shapes—categorizing as large or small.

Make large shapes by combining geometric and free-form shapes.

Identify and use light and dark, primary and secondary colors—red, yellow, blue, green, violet, and orange, but may not be able to identify whether they are primary or secondary.

Identify and create patterns by repeated use of line, color, form, or a single shape.

Perceive things that are alike and different—recognize differences in art media.

Talk about their own art and that of other artists, identifying the subject of an artwork.

Communicate ideas that are personally important.

Are aware of houses, buildings—are able to talk about design on clothing.

### Suggestions for Teaching Kindergarteners

Introduce the skills and media lessons step-by-step.

Allow kindergarten students to experiment with materials.

Let them make portraits of themselves, family, and friends.

## THE FIRST-GRADE CHILD



Figure 1.4

### Characteristics of First Graders

Have a great range in maturity, which results in wide differences among them in their ability to listen, comprehend, and follow directions, but may have difficulty with more than one idea at a time.

Draw what they know, not what they see—can draw a complete figure, but tend to exaggerate the more important parts.

Love lessons that are full of activity and fun—imaginative stories, fantasy, plays, games, and dances.

Can work enthusiastically and be absorbed in creating art.

Show satisfaction with artwork and desire approval of the teacher and classmates; are more aware of the people around them.

Are interested in mechanical devices and moving parts.

### What First Graders Can Do with Materials

Clay—make pinch pots or form a piece of “pinched-out” sculpture from clay, simple slab construction, apply glazes.

Equipment—use safe practices with art tools and can learn to close the lid on a glue bottle.

Markers, pencils, or crayons—use materials to fill an area with solid color.

Paint—mix primary colors to make secondary colors, fill an area with solid color, make value differences (colors lighter or darker), finger paint, use crayon resist with watercolor, and can learn to make controlled (dragging, not pushing) strokes with the brush.

Paper—fold and identify an edge, glue, fringe an edge with scissors, tear, cut.

Weaving—use large paper strips to weave paper in a simple pattern.

### First Graders' Understanding of Concepts

Recognize and describe line, shape, color, and pattern in historical artworks. Recognize texture and pattern in clothing or in nature and describe it. Appreciate movement in a work of art such as van Gogh's *The Starry Night*.

Respond to a feeling about a work of art based on their own lives.

Understand that form and function go together (a clay pot must be strong).

Know that artists have designed clothing, buildings, and furniture.

See the difference between two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional forms.

Discuss subject matter in art, understand differences in still life, portrait, landscape, seasons.

Begin to understand how to show space (with reminders): overlapping, making figures smaller in background.

### Suggestions for Teaching First Graders

Introduce the vocabulary of line, pattern, color, shape, and space. Have them identify line and shape in the room or on their clothing.

Teach students one step at a time and encourage them to talk about their own work and that of others at appropriate times.

## THE SECOND-GRADE CHILD



Figure 1.5

### Characteristics of Second Graders

Welcome responsibility—the chance to show they know how to do something.

Observe more details in their surroundings (buildings, people, clothing).

Love nature (animals), imaginary creatures, fantasy.

Are extremely self-confident; willing to tackle anything.

Are fascinated about how things work—castles, boats, machinery.

Are open to new experiences—field trips, TV, books, movies, new clothes.

Love games, stories, dances, plays.

### What Second Graders Can Do with Materials

General—construct sculpture from found objects, create realistic forms such as animals.

Brush—wash brush between colors.

Clay—create sculptures, roll a few coils, make pinch pots, apply glazes.

Equipment—understand and use safe practices, assist in getting materials out and putting them away.

Paint—mix two colors of tempera paint to make a third color, control paint to make a variety of lines.

Pencil, crayon, charcoal—create value by changes in pressure.

Paper—use joining methods, curling, bending, folding, tearing, attaching one piece to another, weaving to create a pattern.

### Second Graders' Understanding of Concepts

Become more aware of size relationships in comparing objects and in regard to themselves.

Become more aware that things are designed by artists (cars, clothes, kitchen items, furniture, buildings).

Become aware of themes in artworks from various cultures.

Are able to add lines that resemble real texture, for example, hair, or to incorporate real texture within a composition.

Understand that personal selections, such as clothing, reflect personal expression.

Understand that lines can be used to make something appear three-dimensional.

Make geometric shapes.

Understand positive and negative shapes (may be best done with cut paper).

Observe design (pattern, balance) in natural organisms such as butterflies or insects, and in artworks.

Recognize differences in art media.

### Suggestions for Teaching Second Graders

Stress cooperation, sharing, and responsibility.

Introduce unfamiliar art forms and materials.

Talk about jobs that artists have—let them be designers.

Allow them to combine found materials in sculpture.

Show them fantasy art in history and encourage fantasy paintings and sculpture.

Create a composition that uses a variety of lines: dotted, zigzag, wavy, interrupted.

Introduce a paint-mixing technique that uses several values (tints and shades) of one hue, such as green. Allow the use of a small amount of the complementary color (red).

Lead them to compare and contrast two works of art, referring to subjects, the purpose for which it might have been created, the media used, and elements and principles of art.

Expose them to differences in art among several cultures—European, Native American, and Egyptian.

Caution not to use trite symbols (suns in corners with rays, stick figures, pointy mountains, balloon or cauliflower trees).

Have them make an original landscape or cityscape about their school, home, or neighborhood that creates the illusion of space (foreground, middle ground, background). Other appropriate themes are nature or the country.

## THE THIRD-GRADE CHILD



Figure 1.6

### Characteristics of Third Graders

Enthusiastic, open to new experiences and using new materials.

Anxious to please their peers, careful not to do anything too different from what the other students are doing.

Tend to separate themselves by gender outside the classroom, but work well in mixed-group projects.

Interested in learning to draw realistically, frustrated at times when they are not able to appreciate that fantasy exists in the imagination and may be used in artwork.

Enjoy art museum visits and learning about the role of artists in society.

### What Third Graders Can Do with Materials

General—distribute and collect materials, clean tables, take general responsibility.

Brushes—wash brushes, mix colors with the brush.

Clay—create sculptures, roll a few coils, use a roller to make a slab, apply glazes.

Paint—mix tempera, understand crayon resist, use and take care of watercolors.

Ink—make monoprints, stamping, collagraph printmaking.