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The Educational Value of Art

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ART to function as a school subject must contribute to the general educational program. The objective of the art teacher should be an educational one, to enrich a student's life so that it will be well balanced and to arouse a desire for continued enriching. A student should be encouraged to do everything in a fine way—to be dissatisfied with mediocrity.

The teaching of art has not always had a place in the general educational scheme. Art has been classed as a cultural subject for the few, as an accomplishment for ladies of leisure, and as something practical only when it has deteriorated into a process. Within the last ten years, however, educators have recognized the educational value in art.

In order to have the teaching of art function it is necessary that teachers of art understand and have a broad conception of education. They must know in what way their specialty is to contribute to the fullness of a student's life. Teachers of art must realize that it is not just what is done today or what is put upon paper that is of greatest value. The importance of the work lies in the development of capacities and in that the work done today is a starting point of new desires and aims. Has a student's life been made richer? Has something come into it that will help him to build for a better future? These are some of the many questions which all art teachers must ask them-

selves if they are to evaluate their work properly.

The second important aim in the teaching of art should be the development of appreciation, appreciation that encourages creative ability and that stimulates fine execution. This appreciation should encourage a student so that the work of one day will be a step toward something finer the next day. It will lead the majority to desire finer form and color in the articles they buy and use. It will lead the artist and the workman to produce works of superior quality. It will develop interest in creative work. This all tends toward a higher average standard of living.

The following plan gives a contribution that art has to offer in the field of education. An art program is important in so far as it functions in raising standards. Any plan to raise the standards of living must take into consideration the elements of human happiness, as outlined here—namely: income, health, knowledge (control of habits and skills), social relationships and culture. There must be a balance of these in order to have a spiritual reaction, that is to attain a higher level. This balance is arrived at through the home, the business and the free activities of the individual. Under these heads are placed the subjects where problems in art are to be found. Art problems may be classified as those problems that have to do with the arrangement of line, mass and color.

HOME:

- Design
 - Architecture
 - Home Furnishing
 - Landscape Gardening
 - Clothing
 - Food Service (Aesthetic Value)

BUSINESS:

- Design
 - Architecture
 - Furnishing of Business Rooms
 - Advertising
 - Arrangement
 - Lettering
 - Display
 - Graphic
 - Illustrating or conveying ideas by drawing or painting

FREE ACTIVITIES: (Cultural, Religious, Recreational)

- Appreciation
 - Architecture
 - Painting
 - Sculpture
- Creative Work as a Hobby

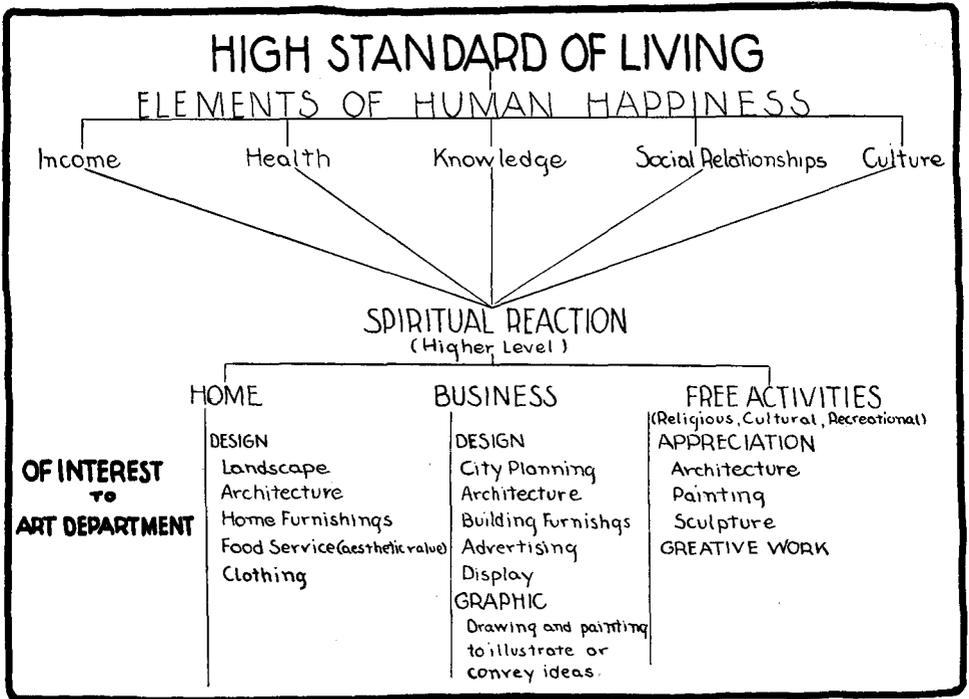
An art program planned on the foregoing outline touches all students. The fundamental principles are the same but the problems may be taken from the field of a student's interest. Then through the interest aroused in the field a student's activities may be directed into new channels.

The organization of such a program requires teachers and school officials who have broad interests and desire to develop them. It can be done under the leadership of the art department but requires the assistance of the school officials and other departments. The school officials can help by authorizing projects that will place examples of fine art before the students at all times. The architecture and the furnishings of the buildings should illustrate the principles of fine art. School officials should

be able to use the art department in planning these projects.

The relationship between the art department and other departments is naturally greater in some cases than others. A very close relationship is that between fine and industrial arts. While the department of industrial arts deals primarily with processes, it is a waste of time and material to produce articles that are not fine in line and color. Tawdry productions in no way enrich a student's life, no matter how well they may illustrate the change that takes place when raw material is made useful. At the present time the heads of our industrial concerns are realizing that the production of mediocre articles is waste. If the consumer has the opportunity to make a choice, he will choose beauty. Consequently the firm that appreciates fine design is out-distancing its competitors. The teacher of industrial arts should stress fine line, color and craftsmanship. It takes no longer to use a fine design than a poor one. If the teachers of fine arts ask for fine design in industrial arts, they must at the same time understand that there is a close relationship between process and design. A design must be fitted to its purpose.

The problem of living today is not so much one of procuring food, shelter and clothing, as it is one of maintaining standards of excellence below which these shall not be allowed to fall. The problems in the home are not so much in the making of food and clothing as they are in right living. These problems today have become problems in selection. It is not important that every girl should know how to sew a garment together but it is important that she should know how



to select the clothing that is becoming to her and suitable to her purpose. Clothing appreciation classes for women and men are being organized for the purpose of developing selective judgment. These courses are not in the technique of sewing but in the application of the fundamental principles of art, hygiene and textiles to clothing. The planning of a costume involves the same principles as that of any composition in line and color. The clothing teacher when she stresses design strengthens the work of the art department as well as that of her own department.

Food service is often considered lacking in aesthetic value. It is true, however, that attractive food is so because of its arrangement and color. The teacher of foods who appreciates a fine color design in a salad adds just that much

more to the art student's appreciation of color.

Orientation courses such as Contemporary Civilization make a valuable contribution to the art field. It is their aim to show the relationship of one subject to another and of all to life. In such courses, art and its social functions are evaluated in a way which would be impossible in courses limited to art alone. These courses encourage the development of appreciation for the satisfaction that comes from understanding what has been done by others. At the same time they stimulate the creative ability so that an individual desires the artistic experience. This may come through the intellectual curiosity of a student and is satisfied by participation that develops appreciation rather than technique. To others this

opens up a field where they may find a hobby. As a result elective art courses, formerly attracting only the art specialists, will now arouse a general interest.

All phases of art will fit into this plan. It is not necessary to justify drawing and painting by trying to make them into some so-called "practical" thing, that has to do with food, shelter or clothing. The satisfaction that comes from the attempt to do creative work, even though the work is to be shut up in a closet, justifies the doing. A student

should learn that the mere putting together of a composition does not insure its value from an artistic point of view. If he has made something fine he will enjoy sharing it with others. He must, however, be able to choose what is fine and be brave enough to eliminate what is not. When students can do this they have arrived at a higher level which will give them a richer life. The satisfaction that comes from having accomplished this will stimulate a desire for a still fuller life.

The Teaching of Art Appreciation in Schools Not in Reach of Museums.

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ART Appreciation is becoming more and more the major aim in art education. Most educators agree that it is the main purpose in the elementary schools. At the same time there is a vagueness in the minds of most teachers about material and methods, and comparatively little has been done in the way of investigating and utilizing sources of material that are in reach of the average teacher. In other words, we all agree that appreciation is the real purpose of our instruction, but how to achieve this purpose is still an unsolved problem to many.

For a time art teachers everywhere interpreted "Art Appreciation" to mean "Picture Appreciation." The schools which adopted a course in picture study felt that they had put themselves in step with the most advanced thought and practice in art education. Usually these

concentrated on learning the date, nationality and school of the painter or developed a story about the picture. The emphasis was placed on content and not on composition. Effort to develop an appreciation of *how* the artist did it, of line, of form and color is evidenced only in some of the more recent outlines. (ex. "Paintings of Many Lands and Ages," Heckman). We must not lose sight of the fact, however, that Picture Study, no matter how excellent, is only a part of Art Appreciation. Pictures, either as a complete expression of the art of a people, or as of fundamental educational value to the masses, are not the only, nor even the most important and revealing evidences of the artistic standards of a nation.

Some teachers, realizing this, turned to the museum as the best place where children could become acquainted with