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AN ART TEACHER WORKING WITH A
CLASSROOM TEACHER AND CHILDREN
IN A PUPPETRY EXPERIENCE

By

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INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

This paper centers around an experience a class of twenty-one fifth grade children and their teacher had with puppetry. The art teacher worked cooperatively with the classroom teacher and children throughout the experiment. The purpose of this paper is to describe ways in which she worked with the classroom teacher and her pupils and helped to meet pupils' need to make wise choices and decisions. The paper will include a description and analysis of three decisions: first, the decision by the group to make puppets; second, decisions made by a boy in making his hand puppet; and third, decisions made by a girl in making her string puppet. On the basis of these findings, recommendations for ways in which an art teacher can work with classroom teachers and children will be made.

The composer of this paper is variously referred to as the writer, the art teacher, and Mrs. Taylor.

Definitions

The Cooperative Way of Working

The cooperative way of working means that a group joins forces for a common purpose. Together the group sets the goals, plans procedure, carries out plans, and evaluates accomplishments. In any group there must be a person or persons to guide the proceedings. Where there is a special teacher working with the classroom teacher, both furnish guidance in the classroom.

One aspect of the role of the teachers in the cooperative way of working is to pre-plan together to familiarize themselves with the possibilities and problems of the art experience to be undertaken. After an understanding of the purpose is obtained, the leaders will try to identify possible ways for guiding the group. then they plan with the children and help them throughout the experience.

The cooperative way of working is the democratic procedure; therefore, for those of us who believe this, there are many desirable values to be recognized. One of these values is the encouragement of each member of the group to communicate his ideas and feelings. The teachers having this point of view believe in the integrity of the child and try to clarify his own expressions rather than imposing their ideas and suggestions

upon him. Children seem to maintain a high degree of interest when they are encouraged to voice their opinions in an open discussion and when allowed to try their ideas while working with materials. Some of the other values which can be derived from the cooperative way of working are creativeness, resourcefulness, self-expression, self-confidence, respect for others and for materials. Being responsible for contributing, sharing, and making wise choices and decisions are other values. This paper deals with the latter value primarily; however, there is a close relationship between wise choices and decisions and some of the other values. Each of these learnings tends to reinforce the others.

Children who are guided in the making of choices and decisions in an art experience will be encouraged and forced by circumstances to be creative, resourceful, and responsible. For example, in the making of puppets a child must resort to his individual intuition for designing his creation. In the making of such character features as hair, eyes, ears, feet, hands, and clothing the individual has many opportunities for experimenting with scrap materials. A child who desires to accomplish a task will assume the responsibility for obtaining materials.

Children reveal to the art and classroom teacher their social, emotional, and physical needs through their choices and decisions. These needs will be observed by

the teachers, and guidance for meeting the needs may be rendered. For example, students will be encouraged to find an easier method when the preceding one has failed or was not quite satisfactory.

The Classroom Teacher

The classroom teacher in this situation was responsible for all of the school experiences of her students with the exception of specified times when special teachers gave instruction in music, Bible and art.

The Art Teacher

The art teacher in this situation had the responsibility of guiding the students in art for four one hour periods per week. Two weeks of eight such one hour periods were available for this art experience.

The art teacher worked cooperatively with the students and sought the cooperation of the classroom teacher in this experience. The children and classroom teacher were guided in participating throughout: in choosing the art experience, in planning, developing and evaluating it.

Wise Choices and Decisions

By choice is meant the selection of one from a group of two or more items. Decision means the final

settlement or judgment. Wise refers to that which is right or true, or that which possesses wisdom. The wisdom of the choices and decisions to be discussed is analyzed by the children, the classroom teacher and the art teacher. The values used in the analysis are: self-expression, independence, resourcefulness, wise usage of time, enjoyment, responsibility, determination, experiencing success, respectfulness for others and for materials, cooperativeness, willingness to share, ability to solve problems, and ability to carry out own plans.

Description of Procedure
Used in Study

Planning for the Experience

Since the writer sought to work with a selected classroom group in an art experience which would offer opportunities for children to make choices and decisions, certain criteria by which to choose the group were formulated. The group selected would preferably be between the grade levels of four and six. They should, if possible, be average in age, size, and mentality for the grade level they represented. The teacher would have interest in art education, be a person with whom one could plan and work, and be one who had an understanding of the students under her supervision. It was also desired that the experience take place late in the year when the writer would know the students and teachers in each classroom. It was desired that the art experience be broader than painting or drawing, and one wherein students as a group and as individuals would have ample opportunity for devising ways of working and choosing materials to be used. The art experience would be based on the interest of the students, the classroom and the art teachers.

Surveying the School for Interest

Surveying the school for a group which would most nearly meet the criteria was the next step taken. The survey was made by two different means. First, a questionnaire was used on which teachers could list or check the art experiences in which their students had participated and the experiences which they would like for their students to explore.¹ Second, interviews were held with teachers and students in order to find common interests concerning the different types of art experiences.

Choosing the Group

The results of the questionnaire and interviews were the determining factors in the final choice of the group. This group met more of the criteria than any of the others.²

Planning with the Teacher

After the group of students, teacher, and art experience had been chosen, the art teacher contacted the classroom teacher in order to plan for the experience. It was necessary for two teachers working together to have basic understandings as to time schedules, space for working, illustrative materials available, integration of art with

¹See appendix, p. 46 for this section of the questionnaire.

²For a complete account of this, see page 11 of this paper.

other studies, and ways of working if the maximum success was to be obtained.

Planning and Working with the Group

Planning was included with working since it took place throughout the experience rather than just at the beginning. It was the desire of the writer that the group plan and work under the guidance of the art and classroom teachers.

Recording the Experience

It was planned that the developments of each class period be recorded by the classroom teacher, the art teacher, and the students. The teacher kept a general outline of the day's activities. The art teacher recorded conversation and described developments occurring within the period. Students kept a record of their individual thoughts and activities for each day.

Evaluation of the Experience

An evaluation period was held several times a week, or when needed, for the group and for individuals. At the end of the experience an overall evaluation period was held by the group, classroom teacher and the art teacher. The classroom teacher and art teacher, individually and together, made an evaluation of the art experience.

CHAPTER II

ACCOUNT AND ANALYSIS

Selecting the Group

Questionnaire

The questionnaire, devised to determine the interest of the teachers in various art experiences, was distributed during the first week of school. Seven out of nine teachers from the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades returned it. All of the teachers stated that children in their classroom had participated in the following: drawing with crayons, pencil, and colored chalk; modeling with papier mache and clay; painting with tempera; and mural making with chalk and paint. Five teachers said that their students had printed with scrap materials, linoleum block or stencil. Students of three had participated in weaving with yarn, raffia, and native materials. Children of four had experienced sketching with pencils and charcoal. Four groups had made posters and one group had made puppets.

All of the teachers stated that they would like for their children to continue with drawing, modeling, painting, printing, weaving and sketching. Five wanted them to make more murals. Three wanted to add sculpture made from scrap materials, paper, plaster of paris, wood, and

papier mache. Four thought that their students would like to carve in wood, plaster of paris and soap. Five wanted lettering added to their program. Two asked for puppetry.¹

Interviews with Teachers and Students

With the results of the questionnaire in mind the art teacher discussed with each teacher her plans for the year and possible art experiences which could be integrated with units and also those which might not be so closely related to their other studies. After the art teacher understood the programs of study developed by the teachers, she entered classrooms to help children choose, plan and develop art experiences. Mural making, poster making, and making a model of an Indian village among many other art experiences were carried on in the first months of school. Many children, as they saw the art teacher in the lunch room and halls, made requests indicating art experiences and materials which they would like to explore. A few days before Christmas a fifth grade student from Mrs. Myers's room approached the writer in the school corridor with her request. The child reached for her hand and said, "Please help us make puppets! All of the class would like to make some. You will help us, won't you?"

¹See appendix, page 46.

During the conference Mrs. Myers reported on the reasons for the interest which her children showed in making puppets as follows:

The fifth grade children read in their spelling books a short story entitled "Fun with Puppets". This brought about much discussion. Some remembered a puppet show which had been put on by a fifth grade group during the previous school term. They asked many questions, such as, how the heads were made and how the puppets were manipulated. They finally asked why they could not make some puppets, too. I suggested that they talk with the art teacher about the idea. During the intervening time, two children brought in two puppets which some member of their family had purchased. They had much fun and interest ran high. They could hardly wait to ask the art teacher about helping them make puppets.¹

After the conference with Mrs. Myers many more of the students from this room expressed to the art teacher their desires for making puppets. Other specific interviews with teachers and children concerning their interest to work with certain materials and art experiences will not be related since their situations did not meet as well the criteria which the art teacher had set up for selecting the group.

Final Selection of the Group

The group finally chosen by the writer for this study was Mrs. Myers's fifth grade. The group consisted of twenty-one children. The art experience chosen by the children was puppetry. The criteria met by this group were: The children were average

¹Taken from the art teacher's daily records.

fifth graders. The teacher was one who understood children and felt that art education was a necessary part of school activities. The children and classroom teacher displayed a great deal of interest in the desire to make puppets, an experience broader than painting. A puppetry experience would involve many ways of working and give ample opportunity for devising them and choosing materials to be used. The request for helping this group make puppets came after the first three months of the school year. Since the art teacher had worked with this group before in other art experiences, she saw many possibilities for a successful experience.

Planning with Teacher

The classroom teacher and art teacher met several times to plan for the puppetry experience. These meetings took place in the hall, library, classroom, and in the art office. They consisted of informal chats as well as more formal conferences. Some of the decisions made and topics discussed were: Time schedule, storage and working space, illustrative materials, integrating puppetry with other class work, and working together.

Time Schedule

The time set for the art teacher to meet this class was 9:30 to 10:30 A.M. The art teacher arranged her schedule so that the time from 10:30 to 11:30 was free to record the day's conversations and developments or remain in the classroom more than the allotted one hour. The classroom teacher suggested that an extra hour be taken for the experiment at the end of the period or at any other time during the day when needed.

Storage and Working Space

In planning for the puppetry experience the teachers surveyed the classroom work and storage space. They saw that the room was small, about one-half of the size of an average classroom. This room, located on the second floor, had no water. It had a three by six foot closet, and only room enough for one small work table. Desks were movable with eighteen by twenty inch slanting tops. The teachers

concluded that the room was inadequate for carrying on an extensive art program. It was decided that the classroom teacher have the closet cleaned and arrangement made to store the art materials there. She was to borrow a table to be used as working area inside of the room. It was decided that another table outside of the door in the hall could be used. Old newspapers for covering the desks and tables were mentioned.

Illustrative Materials

The classroom teacher said that she would talk with her children about looking for pictures and articles on puppets for the bulletin board. The classroom teacher and art teachers planned to visit both school libraries, public library, and Florida State University library to obtain books and illustrative materials on puppetry. The classroom teacher had a hand puppet which she volunteered to bring to show to the children. The art teacher had several puppets made by former fifth grade students which she would bring and use as examples.

Integrating Puppetry and Other Class Work

When discussing the possibilities for relating puppetry to other subjects, it was brought out that the class was then studying the life of the Southern states. This group had completed its study of pioneer days and

was beginning to study colonial days. Possibilities for making characters, such as negroes and colonial ladies and gentlemen, were discussed.

The classroom teacher suggested that she work with the children in keeping individual daily diaries which would constitute English and spelling work for this period. It was decided that the diaries would involve the individual's idea of his actions during the art period; what he learned, and what decisions he made and reasons for making these decisions if reasons were known. At the end of each art class a period of time would be given to writing the diaries.

Working Together

The classroom and art teachers agreed that in order for children to achieve maximum success in a puppetry experience each would need to cooperate with the other. It was agreed that each teacher would have certain duties and that they be clarified. The following duties are the ones discussed and agreed upon by both teachers.

The art teacher was responsible for guidance in the making of the puppets with the classroom teacher being the helper by answering children's questions, helping them solve their problems, and assisting both when asked for help. The classroom teacher would have full responsibility for the daily diaries and the English and

spelling which would be involved. The art teacher would direct class discussions with the classroom teacher feeling free at any time to enter the discussion. Both teachers would assume responsibility for helping children keep the room orderly. The classroom teacher would help the art teacher understand the individual children since she was familiar with them and their backgrounds.

Planning and Working

With the Children

Account of First Day's Working with the Group

This section of the paper will show how the experience developed as the teachers worked with the children. The following are conversations and descriptions taken from the records made by the teachers and children and used as evidence for revealing what took place.

Several books, articles, and puppets had been brought in by the teachers and children prior to the first day of working. This was done to further the interest and understanding of puppetry. With this knowledge in mind the art teacher entered the classroom ready to initiate planning. First it would be necessary to help the class decide upon an art experience to be explored. In case the making of puppets was chosen the topics for discussion would be: possible kinds of puppets, ways of constructing these puppets, materials to be used, where and by whom they would be obtained, and possible characters which might be made.

The art teacher entered the classroom and walked toward the classroom teacher to ask for permission to begin the planning and to see if there were any questions she would like to ask.

Upon the art teacher's arrival the children began talking about puppets in a low tone, partly to their neighbors and partly to the art teacher. The student nearest the door reached out and took the art teacher's hand and said, "We know what kind of puppets we want to make. I am going to make an old fashioned woman with her hair piled up high on her head." Another comment made was, "I am going to make a great big fat colored woman." The art teacher listened to these remarks and nodded or answered with an approving gesture.

After receiving permission from the classroom teacher to proceed, the art teacher sat in a desk within the group circle and began the planning discussion.

She said, "I understand that some of you would like to make puppets."

The class responded, "We all would."

"Let's see the hands of those who would like to make puppets", she said.

There was not a single child who did not raise his hand.

"Is there any one in the room who does not want to make puppets?" asked the art teacher.

There was no response.

The question of the class' choosing an art experience had been settled before the arrival of the art teacher. The next step was to find out how much the class knew about making puppets and the type of puppets they wished to make.

The art teacher asked, "What kind of puppets are there?"

Chris answered, "There are hand puppets."

"Chris, would you like to tell us how hand puppets are made and used?" she asked.

He said, "You put them on your hand. I don't know how they are made."

Mary Mac explained, "We used a sock on our hands one time as a puppet and painted the face on it with lipstick."

The art teacher pointed out, "That's one way of making a hand puppet."

Mary Mac added, "During the summer Sally and I had a puppet at my house one day and we built a stage and had a play."

"What kind of a puppet was it, Mary Mac?" asked the art teacher.

The child replied, "A hand puppet. We saw a puppet show at church once."

Seeing that the class knew very little about hand puppets she guided them to another type by asking, "Does anyone know of still another kind of puppet?"

Margaret said, "String puppets."

Mary Mac asked, "Are string puppets harder to make than hand puppets?"

The art teacher explained, "They may be a little harder. Can we think of another way of manipulating puppets?"

"What does manipulate mean, Mrs. Taylor (the art teacher)?" asked Leslie.

Several in the class explained that it means to make move, whereupon the art teacher asked, "Have any of you ever seen or heard of still another type of puppet?" After there was no answer the art teacher said, "Could we put one on a stick?"

Leon told of seeing a stick puppet that had strings on the arms and legs. When you pulled the strings the arms and legs moved.

The art teacher asked, "What was the puppet made of?"

Leon answered, "Card board and wood, I think."

These children had a vague understanding of a number of types of puppets, were eager to decide the type of puppets they were going to make and the ways of making them. This group's main interest was string puppets since the only experience most of them had had was the show which a fifth grade had put on the year before.

The art teacher knew that the planning had to be completed within this hour, therefore, she directed the class to another phase of planning by asking, "Why do you want to make puppets, or what made you decide to make them?"

Phoebie answered, "I never have done one before."

Leslie said, "I want one of them."

"Mrs. Myers (the classroom teacher) said that it would be fun," Chris added.

Mrs. Myers (who was also sitting with the group) explained, "He was referring to the class making puppets last year. I told them that the last year's group enjoyed making them very much."

Mary Mac said, "I saw the play last year and was curious about how it could be done."

Other responses were, "See what it would be like", "Fun to make", and "Want one for my own".

The art teacher then asked, "What made you think of making puppets?"

Jackie said, "We read about them in our spelling book."

"Tell me about the story in your speller, Jackie," suggested the art teacher.

Jackie said, "It was a very short story about some children who were playing with some puppets."

The children seemed to be more interested in planning for the puppetry experience than they were in where the idea came from, so the art teacher asked, "How would we go about making the puppets?"

Chris explained, "The head would have to be the first thing we made wouldn't it?"

"I think so. How would we make the head?" asked the art teacher.

Chris asked, "Could we use clay for the head?"

Phoebie questioned, "Clay will break, won't it?"

"Yes, it probably would, but most any material would break, if it were given rough treatment. Is that the main reason why we could not use clay by itself for a head?" questioned the art teacher.

J. S. pointed out, "Clay will not get hard."

"Will clay get hard, class?" asked the art teacher.

"Yes", responded the children.

The art teacher then asked, "Do you think that clay would be too heavy for the head of a puppet?" There was a positive response from the entire class. "Then, what materials could we use for the head?" questioned the art teacher.

Phoebie asked, "Could we use papier mache like we used for the dragon head on the ship, and like this other puppet head?"

The art teacher replied, "I think that we could. Most puppet heads that are made in schools are made out of papier mache."

Phoebie pleaded, "You tell us how we can make our heads, because we don't know how."

At this place the art teacher asked, "Does anyone in the class have an idea how the heads can be made with papier mache?"

The children gave no answer.

The art teacher drew upon the clackboard diagrams and explained four ways in which a puppet head might be made. These four ways were: by using all papier mache pulp, by using a clay base with a papier mache coating, by using a light bulb with a papier mache coating, and by using a wad of paper as the base with a papier mache coating. The paper coating could be applied as pulp or strips. In cases where clay or a light bulb had been used as a base the outer coating of papier mache would be removed from the clay or light bulb.

A brief discussion concerning features and types of characters followed the construction discussion, then the students decided upon the type of puppet they would make. Each child was asked to write in his diary ideas for his puppet and ways of construction. Each child in the class stated that he planned to use a light bulb for the base of his puppet's head. The writer believes that the idea of using a discarded light bulb fascinated the children, particularly since a light bulb was pretty, nice to handle and cleaner than clay.

The class decided that light bulbs, papier mache and boxes in which to keep their work were the materials needed for the next day's activity. The art teacher offered the class a box of striped paper which had been used as packing in a large mailing box and gave them permission to use the powdered wheat paste which was available from school supplies.¹

The following quotations taken from the pupils' daily diaries reveal what took place with respect to the class and three individual children:

Today we are getting ready to make puppets. We talked about hand puppets a little. We talked about string puppets too.

I am going to make a colored man with some overalls with one half of a suspender and the other half a string. He is going to have a bald head with some cotton around his head for hair, and he is going to have a corncob pipe.

The following was taken from the second child's diary:

Our class wants to make puppets. We will make them of papier mache. Mrs. Taylor asked what kind of puppets we wanted to make. I want to make a string puppet. There are string, hand, and stick puppets. I shall make a colored woman. I don't want to tell the others. She will have a polka-dot dress and a white apron. Also a bandana (bandanna) over her hair. She will be fat. She will have other things too. We are to bring a shoe box for our materials to be kept in. A light bulb for a head.

The following was taken from the third child's diary:

All the children are going to make puppets. Some are going to make colored people and some are going to make white people. I am going to make a white man with a tall silk hat on, and a long coat. I am going to bring a light bulb for the head.

The art teacher drew some heads on the black-

¹Taken from the art teacher's daily diary.

board and showed us how we could make them.¹

Account of Working with Group the Remaining Days

The first day of planning for the puppetry experience involved the making of many decisions in order to assure each child an understanding of possible procedures for obtaining materials and working. Many other decisions had to be made later by the group, such as: constructing the body, arms, and legs; putting the body together and clothing and stringing the puppet.

The children worked the first week and a half making and painting the heads for their puppets. The main problem in making the heads for the puppets occurred on the second day. The papier mache pulp which the children were applying to the light bulb for the head began to fall off. The art teacher stopped the group and discussed possible reasons for this. Among these reasons were: the papier mache pulp being too wet, not having enough glue, or the light bulb being too slick. After a few experiments the class decided that the light bulb was too slick for the papier mache pulp to stick properly, therefore the art teacher suggested that they might use paper towel strips soaked in glue to cover the head. The suggestion was accepted and it worked with great success. The second problem appeared after the first child finished applying the papier mache to the light bulb for the

¹Taken from the children's daily diaries.

head by cutting the papier mache cover in half and slipping the bulb out. The light bulb had previously been greased with vaseline to make it easy to remove, but still it would not slip out. The class decided to leave the light bulb in the head, remove the metal base and attach the hook for the body in the bottom of it.

The question of puppet bodies arose upon the completion of the puppet heads. They quickly referred to several books which had a number of diagrams showing possible ways of constructing puppet bodies. Several boys interpreted one of the diagrams in two steps. First, they cut a three foot figure out of cardboard showing the different parts of the body: the head, shoulders, hips, arms, and legs. Second, they explained to the class how the different parts of the body could be made round by using a cardboard foundation which they covered with rolls of newspaper held together with one inch strips of cloth. This method was accepted by the group and proved to be successful.

The children were so eager to clothe the puppets that hands and feet were of little concern. At the beginning of each day there was a discussion period for clarifying ideas, showing work, or making decisions relative to solving problems of individuals or group concern. During one of these meetings the problem of

hands and feet was brought up before the group. Suggestions were made that the hands and feet could be made of papier mache or cloth stuffed with cotton. This problem was solved by individuals in different ways.

The decisions for clothing the puppets were individual. Each child chose the color, type and method of making his puppet's clothes.

Near the completion of the puppets one little boy asked the classroom teacher why the art teacher had not told the class to bring string for the puppets. When approached on this subject the art teacher questioned the boy. She asked whether the class was ready to string the puppets, whether this was the next step to be taken, and if so, when the discussion of this problem should take place. During the next discussion period the subject of strings for the puppets was brought up and discussed. A sample puppet which was on display in the classroom was the children's guide for stringing their own.

Most of the string puppets were completed about the same time. The hand puppets had been completed a week or more before the string puppets. These three children spent the last week in playing with their puppets and in helping others finish theirs.

Summary of Working with Teacher

Mutual interest, respect, and understanding of the problem were obtained by the art teacher and the classroom teacher working together in this art experience. This report of the first day clearly points out evidence for the above statement. First, the classroom teacher had been stimulating her students before the arrival of the art teacher by collecting books, articles, and sample puppets and allowing these materials to be displayed and used. Second, the classroom teacher was present and participated when the art teacher and children planned the art experience. Third, she directed the children in the writing of their daily diaries, an important part of this art experience. Fourth, the classroom teacher directed some of the art activities both while the art teacher was present and absent. Fifth, she participated in the class evaluation.

Summary of Working with Children

The art teacher worked with the children before and during the art experience. First, she stimulated the children's interest by showing concern for their desires as she responded to them outside of class. Second, she stimulated interest by placing illustrative and reading materials where children could find them.

Third, in discussing the art experience to be explored the art teacher encouraged the pupils to express their ideas. Fourth, the art teacher helped the children in selecting and defining the problems. Fifth, she helped them decide ways in which to meet these problems. Sixth, she helped them carry through the plans they had made. Seventh, she encouraged and respected the individual's choices and decisions. She also helped these individuals find ways to express their ideas. Eighth, she helped the children in evaluating this art experience as a group and individually.

Analysis of Wisdom of One Group Decision

In summarizing the first day's report it was revealed that the class chose to make puppets. They decided to make string puppets, to make the puppet heads first and to use light bulbs for the bases. The other decision was to bring a box for storing their materials.

The writer chose to use the group's decision to make puppets as the topic for the analysis. The writer feels that proof of the wisdom of this decision will be found in the group's evaluation. The following statements, grouped according to kinds of values, were made during the evaluation period in response to the art teacher's question, "Do you think that this experience has been worth while and why?"

Group 1.

"Yes, if we want to make puppets again we will know how to make them."

"We learned different ways of making puppets. Use what materials we can find."

The two statements in group one show that the children had learned something new, how to make a puppet, and felt self-assured that they could make more. They had also learned to use scrap materials.

Group 2.

"It has been worth while because we enjoyed making them."

"Making puppets is so much fun I don't know how we thought of them."

The children expressed their feeling of success and enjoyment in making puppets in this group.

Group 3.

"I learned that it was important to bring in materials."

"It was worth while because we had to follow directions set up by the class and solve our problems."

These quotations reveal that the children were concerned with being responsible and resourceful by bringing in materials, following the groups' directions and solving problems.

Group 4.

"We learned that we had to stick to what we are doing even when the going got hard."

This statement suggests responsibility and determination.

Group 5.

"We learned to share."

"We learned to work together."

Willingness to share and cooperativeness are two of the mentioned values for evaluating choices and decisions. Both are found mentioned in group five.

Group 6.

"I thought that you would have to be more skillful to make them look good."

"Learned how to sew better."

"Learned how to spell."

The children stated in the above group that they learned and practiced several types of skills. These skills were: to improve looks of puppets, such as getting parts attached securely and smoothing face surface, to sew better, and to spell better.

The second question asked by the art teacher during the evaluation was, "How well did the class work on this problem?" These statements will also be grouped according to values.

Group 1.

"We lost too much time at the beginning of each class."

"We were too slow when we cleaned up."

"We worked slower after Christmas than we did before."

"We lost interest in the puppets before we finished because it took too long."

The above statements made by the children show that they felt that the time was not used as wisely as they desired. Using time wisely was one of the values stated for this analysis.

"What would you do differently next time?" was the next question asked by the art teacher.

Group 1.

"Not spend so much time on the heads."

The above statement reveals that the children found one solution to their problem of using time wisely, apportioning time for each aspect of a problem.

Group 2.

"Bring in materials quicker because we will know what materials to bring."

Time, resourcefulness, and responsibility are all pointed out in this statement.

Group 3.

"Make puppets better because we will know how and it will be easier."

"I am going to make a hand puppet next time."

"I am going to make a string puppet next time."

"I am going to make hands and feet next time."

"I am going to make a devil again."

In group three the children stated that they are not afraid to make puppets again but next time they are

going to make them better, add feet and hands, and make a different type. This shows independence, a feeling of success, ability to solve problems, and interest and determination to explore puppetry further.

The writer feels that the children made a wise decision when they chose to make puppets since their interest was so great that each child finished a puppet, enjoyed making them, learned many worth while things, and felt success.

Account of J. S. Making His Puppet

The following section will be a description and record of conversation taken from the art teacher's daily diary concerning a boy who had not brought materials to make a string puppet. He chose to make a hand puppet with the scrap materials which were available at school. The following conversation took place on the first day of the working period.

"Now let's see what other materials were brought in today", asked the art teacher. Every one had brought in light bulbs and stands to put the heads on for drying with the exception of three boys. Two of these boys were absent the day before.

The art teacher then asked, "What do you suggest for these boys who didn't bring in materials today?"

The class replied, "Let them wait until tomorrow or until they bring in materials."

"How about the boys who weren't present yesterday?" questioned the art teacher.

John suggested, "Let them look and see what we are doing and help us."

The next day during the morning discussion period Larry announced, "I brought my light bulb."

"Good," said the art teacher, "Who else brought a light bulb today?"

"I brought mine," said Chris.

"I didn't. I couldn't find one," answered J. S.

The art teacher then questioned, "Did you look for one?"

J. S. said, "Yes, but I couldn't find one. I wanted to use a potato but decided that it would rot."

The art teacher offered, "J. S. do you think that a root or a knot off of a tree would work as well as a potato?"

J. S. replied, "I guess so, but I don't know if I can find one."

Art teacher asked, "Ben, do you have a light bulb today?"

Ben replied, "I couldn't find one."

She asked, "What would you like to do today?"

The boys each said, "I don't know."

She asked, "Is there another way to make a puppet head?"

Mary Mac suggested, "They could use a toilet roll and build it up with papier mache."

"Yes, J. S., would you and Ben like to try to make a puppet head with a toilet roll and papier mache?" asked the art teacher.

"Yes," responded the boys.

The art teacher asked J. S., "Would you like to go find the maid to see if she can find you a toilet roll?"¹

J. S. could not find a roll so the art teacher sent him to her supply office to get one from shelving paper. Upon his arrival the art teacher was busy with other members of the class, therefore, the classroom teacher helped the two boys start their puppets.

During a conference the two teachers discussed the possible reasons for J. S.'s and Ben's not bringing in materials which they had chosen to use for their puppets. The teachers decided that they probably did not have a light bulb at home that could be used. The same two boys were slow in bringing cloth when the class was stenciling designs on luncheon cloths and napkins earlier in the year.

J. S. and Ben finished very nice negro puppet heads and clothed them with few problems. They had made hands of cloth and stuffing and had sewed them onto the dress. Upon their first try at manipulating these puppets they found that they could not move the hands as they wished. The art teacher saw this and asked, "What makes the hands move on those hand puppets which Mary Mac brought to class? What makes the head move on your puppets?"

J.S. pointed out, "You can stick your fingers up in the hands and the head."

"Would you like for your puppet's hands to be fixed that way?" asked the art teacher.

J. S. said, "Yes, but I don't like the cloth hands. Could we make them out of paper mache?"

The art teacher nodded approval and asked, "How would you make the hands out of paper mache?"

J. S. asked her, "Could you fix the hands like the head?"

Art teacher questioned J. S., "How do you mean?"

¹Taken from the art teacher's daily diary.

He said, "Put a roll in the center and papier mache around it leaving a hole for the fingers."

She remarked, "That's good thinking, J. S. I see no reason why that would not work."

J. S. asked, "What can we use as a roll?"

She repeated his question and J. S. replied, "I don't know unless I roll up a piece of cardboard."

She asked, "Heavy cardboard?"

He replied, "No, it would not bend. It would be too heavy. Could I use part of that poster in the closet?"

The art teacher said, "Yes. Tag board would be about the right weight."

J. S. made his hands and tried them out. He was so pleased with the way they worked that he painted the hands while still attached to the dress. The result was that he had as much brown paint on the dress as he had on the puppet's hands. When he brought the puppet for the art teacher to inspect, he tried to conceal the paint on the dress by holding the puppet. When the art teacher saw the dress, he asked if he might take the puppet apart and wash the dress. The dress was washed and put back on without ironing.

J. S. finished his puppet before any one else did and enjoyed playing with it. He seemed to be very proud of his puppet since he had finished before the others who were making string puppets.¹

J. S. wrote the following lines in his daily diary to evaluate his puppet experience:

The next time we make puppets we will now [know] how to do it. We injoyed [enjoyed] doing it. Bring in your materials when we spoose [suppose] to. I learn [learned] how to make a hand by wad up paper and put it in a ring. I put paper [papier] mache over it then strip it and then paint it.²

¹Taken from the art teacher's diary.

²Taken from the daily diary of J. S.

Analysis of some Decisions Made by J. S.

In the beginning J. S. chose to use a light bulb in the making of the head for a string puppet. However, since he failed to purchase these materials, he changed his plans and chose to use scrap materials found at school for the making of the head of a hand puppet. The writer believes that, since J. S. did not bring his chosen materials, he was wise to accept the suggestion for using a paper roll, newspaper, and papier mache to make the head. The paper roll in the middle of the head was an opening for the fingers and suggested a hand puppet to him. Having the scrap materials J. S. was ready to begin work without further delay. A few days more of waiting may have lessened his interest. By beginning with his classmates he finished first and secured a feeling of success and approval.

The wisdom of allowing J. S. to be dependent on others for materials may be questioned. J. S. was responsible for securing cloth for the dress, needle and thread, and a box for storing his puppet. Since he obtained these materials readily, the writer believes that dependence was not the main reason for his being empty handed the first two days of the working period.

J. S. made two mistakes in making his hand puppet which he corrected by trial and error. The problems of

making hands which would not work the way he desired and getting paint on the dress accidentally were solved by his thinking and consulting with the art teacher. The writer believes that improving problem solving ability is a desirable value.

J. S. has mentioned several values which are related to making wise choices and decisions in his daily diary quoted on page 34 of this study. The statement, "The next time we make puppets we will know how to do it." shows that he experienced success and feels independent and confident relative to making puppets. J. S. also said he enjoyed the experience, learned responsibility, resourcefulness, and several new skills, such as: stripping and preparing papier mache for a puppet head and learning how to paint it.

Account of Mary Making Her Puppet

Mary chose to make a string puppet and completed the experience successfully. In order to reveal Mary's decisions, actions, and success the writer has chosen to quote from Mary's daily diary.

Tuesday

Today in art I suggested that we go around the room and tell what kind of puppets we wanted to make in art. I said at first that I wanted to make an old fashion [fashioned] girl. After awhile I changed and said an old Negro woman. I still don't know for sure which one I want. Tomorrow I am suppose [supposed] to bring a light bulb and a box of some kind to put materials in. I have decided to make an old Negro woman puppet.

Wednesday

I brought my materials for art today. I got as far as getting the head molded and I will be ready for starting to make up my features tomorrow. I brought a light bulb and a box to put my materials in.

I had a time getting my papier mache on the light bulb and greased before I could put on the papier mache. Tomorrow I am going to make my eyes, nose, mouth for my Negro woman puppet.

Thursday

Today I took my head down from it's place and felt of it, it wasn't very dry but Mrs. Taylor, our art teacher, said it would be all right to work with today. I started out by patching my head up but it wouldn't stay so I had to wet my papier mache and then strip it with paper towels. Then I had to put or make up my features for my Negro woman doll puppet I am going to make in art. After I made up my features I had to strip it again but before that I had to mix some paste and water together for glue and to paste the paper strips.

Friday

This morning in art I started out by feeling my puppet head. It wasn't dry so I ask Mrs. Taylor what to do. She said it was all right to work with so I had to patch my puppet's head, then I asked her if it would be all right to take the bottom of the light bulb off and she said she could do it so she took it off and it toar [tore] up my head and I had to patch it again and then show it to her. She said it was coming along fine so I put it away when the time was up for art to be over.

Wednesday

(We have not had art for several days) Today Mrs. Taylor brought in some paints that we could paint our heads with when we got ready to. I decided to put a few more paper strips on my puppet and then to paint it tomorrow.

Tuesday

Today in art we started out by talking about what we were going to do. My puppet's head was good and dry so I started painting my head brown and around the eyes white so it would show up with black eyes. I completed painting my head today. Today we talked about the bodies. We are supposed to bring pins, newspapers, cloth, and cardboard.

Friday

Today there were only three people who brought in their materials for art. I was one of them. I brought some pins, newspaper, cloth. I couldn't bring in any cardboard but Pheobie let me use a piece of hers that she didn't need. Mrs. Taylor suggested that we make a pattern for our puppet's body out of paper. So I started on that. Everyone kept getting theirs too large so Mrs. Taylor showed us how to measure it and size it down more. I finally got it right so that I could start on my body. I got started on my body today.

The next few pages in Mary's diary describe the ways in which she made the body for her puppet. These pages will be omitted in this report since a summary has already been given on the making of the bodies.¹

Mary's diary continues one week later:

Wednesday

Today when I got to school I realized I didn't have my puppet with me. When time came for art I didn't know what to do so I decided to make a pattern for my puppet's bandaner [bandanna]. So I first got my puppets [puppet's] head to see how wide and also how long to make it. After that I got my scissors and ruler to use. I estimated [estimated] how long and how wide then I made sure it was right by putting it around her head. After I got it just right I put my things away and walked over to Phoebie's desk to see what she was doing. She said she was just fixing to call me over to her desk to ask me to hold her arm for her. (puppet's arm) At the end of the art period I said to myself that I wasn't going to forget my puppet and I'm not.

Thursday

When I got home I started working on my puppet. I got some material and tried it on my puppet's head to see if it would do for a scrafe [scarf] for her head. I decided that it would fall off easily and wouldn't look too good on her. I asked Mother if she had any more cloth that would do to use. She found some flowered cloth that I used for a blouse. After she had looked some more she found a blue-green piece of cloth to use for a skirt. I fixed

¹See page 25 of this report for such a description.

my puppet a blouse but found out I couldn't quite make a skirt. Mother showed me how to do it. I got my skirt and blouse fixed that night.

Friday

Today I showed Mrs. Taylor my puppet. She thought it was real good. I sewed on a pocket and put a klenex in the pocket. I fixed some gloves also. I learned today that you could always make things better than it is.

Wednesday

Today I tried making some stockings which did not do. Now I tried again.

Thursday

Today is our next to the last day of art. We are suppose [supposed] to finish up as many things as we can today so we wouldn't have too much to do the last day. I finished up everything except my strings which I am going to do tomorrow.

Friday

Today I got my strings on my puppet. I cut a board and got my board fixed for my puppet. Someone showed me how to fix my strings. I enjoyed working on my puppet.

Analysis of Some Decisions Made by Mary

The writer feels that Mary was wise in her choice in making a string puppet. She had been motivated to the degree that she said that she was curious about how puppets were made, she thought that making puppets would be fun, and she wanted a puppet of her own. Mary's motivation was strong enough to keep her interested until the completion of her puppet. She was wise in her choice of making a string puppet because she was capable of making one. She had the opportunity to display her creative ability in making the head, body and clothes.

Mary's reports show that she was striving to improve every part of her puppet. Everyday she patched her puppet's head to get it as smooth as possible. She even worked on her head trying to make it better after she had planned to paint it. She was independent in obtaining and selecting the materials to be used. One day when she forgot her materials for working she thought of something to do to improve her puppet. Mary showed her creative ability when she chose to sew a pocket on the blouse and put a kleenex in it.

Mary was capable of making most of her choices and decisions wisely. She made gloves, bandanna, and hose for her puppet but chose to eliminate them in the final dressing. "The bandanna slipped off the head and didn't look good", and the stockings "would not do". The writer believes that Mary was wise to eliminate these articles of clothing since she gave good reasons for doing so and since she was not satisfied with them.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From this study a number of important values concerning ways of working with teachers and children in puppetry were revealed and made clear to the writer. Conclusions derived from this experience and recommendations in line with these findings for teachers in similar situations are listed as follows:

Conclusion I

Through planning and working together with the children in an art experience the classroom and art teachers obtained more easily and with greater thoroughness a mutual interest in, respect for and an understanding of a number of factors. First, teaching materials, such as sample puppets, illustrative materials and materials for making the puppets, were utilized in line with the development of the children. Second, better understanding of kinds of puppets which can be made by a fifth grade was gained. Third, needs of particular children were better revealed and met through an art experience of this type. Fourth, more suitable classroom conditions such as working and storing space, were arranged.

Recommendation I

It is recommended that such cooperative working relationships between teachers and between teachers

and children be extended in all art situations. In this manner problems similar to these and even others not present in this study may be more adequately resolved.

Conclusion II

It is concluded that under this type of time schedule and physical set-up the art teacher is unable to initiate procedures leading to maximum learning on the part of the children for the following reasons: The children in this situation had interest in puppets weeks before the art teacher could direct them in this experience. They waited until her schedule allowed her to help them. The art teacher in this situation knew and understood each child with whom she worked only slightly and therefore was not able to guide him in his choice making as intelligently as she would have wished. Even when helping this group or any individual child, it was difficult for her to know the most apt suggestion to make at the time.

Recommendation II

Therefore, it is recommended that the classroom teacher take more responsibility in the direction of the art experience with help from the art specialist during the initial planning and later when problems arise. One who knows and understands the backgrounds can help students make wise choices and decisions

better than someone without this information.

Conclusion III

It was found that this fifth grade consisted of students of various developmental levels and that puppets, which also vary from the more simple to the complex, can be made successfully by children at each of these maturity levels. Puppetry affords opportunities for many choices and is therefore, an experience through which varied needs can be met.

Recommendation III

It is suggested that art programs include experiences which provide possibilities as broad as puppetry. Teachers should encourage the utilization of possibilities for choice making inherent in these types of activities. In terms of art this would be deciding relationships of such factors as color, texture, line, form, and proportion.

Conclusion IV

In some instances better choices were made when children changed their minds due to unforeseen circumstances which arose as the experience developed.

Recommendation IV

Therefore, it is recommended that students be allowed to revise decisions in order to meet changing

conditions and when they see new possible ways of reaching their goals.

Conclusion V

The smaller the number of children in a group the greater individual attention and help can be given by classroom and art teachers in guiding children in choices they will need to make. This fifth grade group consisted of twenty-one children, a class small enough in size so that each child could receive individual attention or help in making various decisions.

Recommendation V

It is recommended that classes participating in art experiences consist of from twenty to twenty-five children.

APPENDIX

Questionnaire given to teachers
at the beginning of the school year
1950-51.

Name: _____ . Grade: _____

Purpose: To improve the art program in Quincy Elementary School. Evaluate the art program for 1949-50 and plan with the teachers the art program for 1950-51.

1. In what ways do you believe.....
.....
.....

5. Which art experience were your children introduced to last year? Mark with an X. Which ones would you like for your children to explore this year? Mark with a check (✓).

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Carving: | Sculpture: |
| wood | scrap materials |
| plaster | paper |
| soap | plaster of paris |
| Constructive crafts: | wood |
| metal | papier mache |
| wood | Weaving: |
| Drawing: | yarn |
| crayons | raffia |
| pencil | native materials |
| colored chalk | Sketching: |
| Modeling: | pencils |
| papier mache | charcoal |
| clay | Miscellaneous activities: |
| saw dust | musical instruments |
| Painting: | stage scenery |
| tempera | tie dye |
| water color | costumes |
| finger paint | posters |
| Printing: | lettering |
| scrap materials | toys |
| linoleum block | puppets |
| stencil | murals |

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