



WHAT HAPPENS IN YOUR BRAIN WHEN YOU MAKE ART

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The Creative Train

Drawing

Painting

Collaging

Sculpting

Writing

Singing

Dance

What do you do that's creative?

Poetry

Cake decorating

Knitting

Scrap booking

Sewing

Playing an instrument

I like to do these things because...

It's fun

Entertaining

Clears my head

Helps me concentrate

Helps make sense of my
emotions

Relaxes me

Inspires me

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN OUR MINDS & BODIES WHEN WE MAKE ART?

Relationships/Problem Solving

The ability to make connections between unrelated things

- Awareness

Make predictions

- Hypothesize

Sequence thoughts

- Organized thinking

Develop processes

- Patterns, texture

Make decisions

- what kind of utensils to use
- what color

Communication

Verbalize meaning

Interpret the images

Connect thought to actions

Engages 3 learning modalities

- Visual-because we see what we are drawing
- Kinesthetically-because we are using our hands to create
- Auditory-because we are processing information by listening to what is being said

Assets

Activates the reward center of our brain

Feel good and perceive expression as a pleasurable experience

Lowers stress

Ability to focus deeply/concentrate

Tune out external stimulations

Sense of accomplishment

Creates a reflective state

Combining learning modalities helps absorb and interpret information. It connects unconnected neural pathways in the brain

RESEARCH

2016 Journal of the American Art Therapy Association (Kaimal)

- Cortisol is a hormone that helps the body respond to stress
- Scientist measured cortisol levels of participants
- 45 minutes after engagement in art activity there was a significant lowered cortisol level
- No difference in health benefits between experienced and inexperienced artists

• 2018 Frontiers in Psychology (Strange)

- Increased attention, creates "flow" which is characterized by increased theta wave activity in the frontal areas of the brain
- Moderate increases in alpha waves in the frontal and central areas of the brain

SO WHAT KIND OF ART SHOULD YOU TRY?

Open ended art

- Emotional outlet, encourages active expression and communication
- Builds executive functioning, ability to plan monitor, adjust behavior to achieve a goal.
- Make choice
- Telling a story
- Refine motor skills

National Association for the Education of Young Children (2009)

Process art is developmentally appropriate. Goals and skills are experienced as an intrinsic part of the process, not as the sole reason for engaging in the activity.

Gray (2008)

PLANNING OPEN ENDED ART EXPERIENCES

Planning Open Ended Art Experiences

1. What is your goal? Goals should focus on process rather than product.

Examples:

- Mix colors to make new hues
- Experiment with textures or tools
- For older children it may be in telling a story or expressing a feeling through the project

2. Will the children be able to make significant choices on their own.

Questions:

- How many decision have I made for them?
- Have I set the activity up to obtain a specific outcome?
- Have I told them what to paint or what colors to use?
- Is there an end product that should resemble a model?

PLANNING OPEN ENDED ART EXPERIENCES

3. Are there enough materials to encourage creative exploration?

- The amount will vary based on if you are introducing something new or building on a past experience

4. Is there enough time for thorough exploration?

- The creative process takes time as children explore new and different ways of using materials.
- They need plenty of time to work.
- Keep the schedule flexible so children can come and go or the activity can be brought out over a series of days

- Materials:
- A frame
- Items to thread in and out
- Things to enhance the art

Budget Stretchers

- Old ties, scarves, belts, fabric
- Snow fencing stapled to a board, fence outside, box

Making a loom

- www.simplifiedbuilding.com/projects/pvc-pipe-loom
- <http://unplugyourkids.com/2009/01/11picture-frame-loom>

A PLACE FOR WEAVING

Additional skills being worked on:

Math

- Awareness of position and space while weaving
- Measuring

Fine Motor

- Eye Hand Coordination (pulling ribbon through loom)
- Cutting yarn or paper

Language & Literacy

- Read and look at pictures about places where people weave
- New words: loom, weave
- Understanding words/pictures by returning materials to labeled containers

PAINTING WITHOUT BRUSHES & SPATTER PAINTING

Not using brushes? Think texture, shape and size. Use regular objects in new ways!

- Boots
- Feathers
- Lids
- Balls
- Straws
- Nylon stockings filled with smaller objects such as acorns, sand, or pebbles
- Rollers for painting a room or house
- Squeeze bottles

Spatter Painting

Materials:

- Large cardboard box
- Packing tape
- Brushes
- Tempra paint (3 or more colors)

Introduce Jackson Pollock during circle time

- displaying photos of his work and of him painting
- Discuss his technique (he stood above his canvas and splattered paint onto his canvas)

COLLAGES

Skills:

- Higher order thinking
- Expressive skills
- Creativity
- Fine motor
- Teacher methodology :
 - Open ended questions to encourage children to verbalize & extend vocabulary, chain sentences/words and use short term memory (retrieval)

Post a list of open ended questions or vocabulary words at the center/wall to prompt you.

- **Questions:**
- How did you make that shape?
- What name do you want to give that shape or picture?
- How many pieces do you have so far?
- How many do you think you will use?
- What do you see?
- What happens when you turn your collage upside down?

THE CREATIVE TRAIN

What is Happening in Our Minds & Bodies When We Make Art?

Goals:

- Create an expressive art experience
- Experiment and explore technique
- Create a moving piece of art

Directions

- Individual canvas
- Play with color and/or texture
- Share thought about your piece individually
- Give input when individual piece becomes part of the collective

REFERENCES

- National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2015). *Expressing creativity in early childhood*. Washington, DC: Author
- Thompson, S., C. (2016). *Children as illustrators*. Washington, DC: national Association for the Education of Young Children.