Making “Sense” of Art: Sensory Art Experiences for Infants and Toddlers

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Why Art?

(Yes... the research)
One of Gardner’s eight intelligences is spatial intelligence, which involves learning, exploring, processing and excelling through the use of the visual arts (1983).

Young children feel a sense of emotional satisfaction when they are involved in making art. This satisfaction comes from the control children have over the materials they use and the autonomy they have in the decisions they make (Schirrmacher, 1998).

Making art also builds children's self-esteem by giving them opportunities to express what they are thinking and feeling (Klein, 1991).

Exploring materials is very important because it is through exploration that children build a knowledge of the objects in the world around them (Kamii and DeVries, 1993).

While making art, young children develop control of large and small muscle groups and also helps children develop eye-hand coordination (Koster, 1997).

Art allows children to represent real objects, events, and feelings. It is a needed outlet for children whose vocabulary, written or verbal, may be limited (de la Roche, 1996). The early use of symbols in artwork provides a foundation for children’s later use of words to symbolize objects and actions in formal writing.

Art or Craft?
What is the difference between art and craft?

**Art**
- Open ended
- Unstructured
- Process oriented

**Craft**
- Goal oriented
- Structured
- Product oriented

From the Website:
What is the difference between art and craft?

**Art**
- Uses basic materials
- Open ended instruction

**Craft**
- Uses specific materials
- Closed ended instruction

From the Website:
What is the difference between art and craft?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Art</th>
<th>Craft</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Develops feeling skills (including self expression)</td>
<td>• Develops coordinating skills (including manipulating materials)</td>
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From the Website: http://www.earlychildhoodnews.com/earlychildhood/article_view.aspx?ArticleID=257
What is the difference between art and craft?

**Art**
- The goal is the process of discovery
- Outcomes will look different

**Craft**
- The goal is the end product
- Outcomes will look basically the same

From the Website: http://www.earlychildhoodnews.com/earlychildhood/article_view.aspx?ArticleID=257
What is the difference between art and craft?

**Art**
The individualized process leads to an individual product

**Craft**
The cookie cutter process leads to a cookie cutter product

From the Website:
Discussion

Which is more likely to be considered developmentally appropriate, art or craft?
Discussion

- Allow children to participate at their own level?
- Give children choices?
- Allow for socialization and interaction with others?
- Allow for flexibility, with no “right” or “wrong” outcome?
- Lend itself to being adapted if beneficial?
- Encourage exploration and thinking?
- Foster children’s positive feelings about themselves?
- Give children choices?
Self-Reflection

How “creative” is your creative art?

Is there a “right” way or a “wrong” way?
  Or is it open-ended?

Do all of the pieces look basically alike?
  Or is every child’s piece original and unique?

Does it require a great deal of teacher preparation or assistance?
  Or can the child work independently?

Does the activity emphasize the end product?
  Or the process and experience?

Is the experience “Teacher-directed” and initiated?
  Or child-directed and initiated?

Whose hands are busier – the child’s or the adult’s?

Is it art or is it craft?

PROCESS ---- PRODUCT
Art is the result of man's struggle to interpret his environment...

When we create, we use form and shape to make a profound statement about the world around us!

Yes, Shanika?

Can we get on with the art project?

Um, sure... so next we paste our cotton ball to the end of our popsicle stick...
Relationship Between Art and Sensory Experiences
Importance of Sensory Experiences

• Young children learn primarily through sensory exploration and play

• Children make discoveries while interacting with materials during sensory play

• Sensory play contributes to brain development
Art Processes and Sensory Experiences