ART AS A METHOD OF TEACHING REQUIRED SUBJECT MATTER: GRADES THREE AND FOUR

By

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ART AS A METHOD OF TEACHING

REQUIRED SUBJECT MATTER:

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PREFACE

This study is primarily concerned with the use of art in public schools to enhance curriculum currently required by the State Department of Education. It is an attempt to incorporate some personal expressions of relevant experiences of children into their education, making the learning process easier and more enjoyable to both children and teachers. Too often children are bored with the way subject matter is presented and become indifferent about learning. Using techniques and applications of art to teach subject matter arouses interest in subjects and learning tends to become a process of which students are not even aware.

It is hoped that the implications of this study may be applied to a more effective and enjoyable education for students. The desire for increased personal experience with art as an aid in the learning process, was also fulfilled through this study.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to my advisor, Christine F. Salmon, Associate Professor of Housing Design and Consumer Resources for her competent guidance, and encouragement throughout this study. Also I would like to thank Dr. Kay Stewart and Dr. Larry Perkins for their willingness to spend time on and give support to this idea.

A special thanks goes to the children at Tryon Elementary, who participated so happily in this exploration. Without their cooperation this study would not have been possible.

Personal gratitude is given to my husband, Terry, for his patience and understanding and also to my parents, for their assistance and encouragement throughout my college years.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The climate in today's schools seems to be more intense than ever before. Children in elementary schools are being "processed" with a minimum of trouble or bother to the "system". However, something seems to be missing in the education of younger people. There is a lack of opportunity for developing the "real person" that is in each of us.

Peter Marin states that:

> One knows there is something else altogether: a way of feeling, access to the soul, a way of speaking and embracing, that lies at the heart of all yearning, for wisdom or real revolution. It is that, precisely, that has been left out.[1]

Values of society determine what is "necessary" to be taught in schools. These values are expressed by and aimed toward the benefit of adults who have apparently forgotten what was once important to them in their childhood.

Peter Marin also states that:

> What seems truly untouchable is the basic, irredeemable assumptions about what is necessary, human, or good; the treatment of the person, time, choice, energy, work, community, and pleasure. It is a world view so monolithic and murderous that it becomes a part of us even while we portest against it.[2]

In most educational systems today, reading, writing, math, science, English, and social studies are deemed the most important subjects to be taught in elementary schools. Art, in elementary school, is commonly viewed as a form of play, thus quite dispensable.

However, art is one subject that has a great potential to incorporate a sense of person. If art is taught more than once or twice a week, the student's time is said to be wasted. Art is a subject that is to take place in the last hour of Friday afternoon. Ironically it is the subject that may be most enjoyable to the majority of students.

Viktor Lowenfeld states:

> It is only through the senses that learning can take place. . . . Schools have done very little to educate these senses after nursery school and kindergarten. Learning in later years becomes abstract in nature.[3]

A student may be careful to complete an art object because he enjoys it. It is real or concrete to him. It is an expression of self. Yet when it comes to math or science, concepts are abstract and therefore more difficult to grasp and may not be so immediately applicable.

Need for the Study

Art needs to be recognized as a subject that can be integrated with other subject areas to make learning more meaningful, and also as a tool to be used to help incorporate a feeling of caring and warmth. Art can be the means to the whole learning process. Art can be a method of teaching.

Mary Richards[4] states that an opportunity to respond to an organic material is an opportunity to care. Caring comes from our bodies and their sensations--the pleasures of making and doing.

Art, when used as honest expression, can also create learning experiences that are needed to meet the present "curriculum requirements". The writer was in a teaching situation where children were

having "art" on Friday afternoons only. These particular children were more excited about art "period" than any other time throughout the whole week. They loved art. This attitude seems to be a typical one with children. Art helps to foster a pride of accomplishment as a child can see and cherish the end result.

The use of art with other subjects can help transfer a sense of joy of creating and make the learning of other subject matter more interesting. Using art as a teaching method with other subjects helps to make facts and concepts from textbooks become concrete instead of abstract, real instead of vague.

Conventional methods of teaching are not challenging today's children and consequently they are not learning what they are "supposed to". Textbooks are full of facts and ideas, but before a child can learn these, he needs to be interested or motivated enough to want to learn, to be curious and develop creative ability in all areas.

Methodology

In many elementary school systems, all subject areas are taught by one elementary teacher. Set "curriculum requirements" have to be met in each subject. If there is enough time left from meeting these traditional requirements, then "art" can be taught.

It was the experience of the writer to be in this type of educational system. Subjects being taught during the period of experimentation were science, geography, social studies, language arts, and mathematics. One or more art experiences were conducted in each of these subject areas. Art was used to stimulate, motivate, or interest the children while accomplishing the required curriculum objectives.

Sample

The children in the sample for this study were from Tryon, Oklahoma, a small low-income community located in central Oklahoma. In the Tryon Elementary school system, the third and fourth grades are combined in one classroom and taught by one teacher. The classroom contained an average of 22 children for the three semesters during which this study was conducted. There were 11 third graders and 9 fourth graders, 12 were girls and 10 were boys.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Peter Marin, "Children of the Apocalypse," Saturday Review, Vol. LIII, No. 38 (September 19, 1970), p. 73.

[2]Ibid., p. 72.

[3]Viktor Lowenfeld and W. Lambert Brittain, Creative and Mental Growth (5th ed., London, 1970), pp. 10-11.

[4]Mary Richards, Centering (Middletown, Connecticut, 1969).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Literature relating to the use of art education has increased in the past few years. Art expression has been used as a means to explore a child's self-concept or "hang-ups" he might have about certain subjects. It seems that more and more current literature deals seriously with the integration of art and the human being in education for the whole person.

> Education has generally been conceived as a process for training and strengthening the faculty of reasoning, on the supposition that rational or discursive thinking gives man the best control of himself and of his environment. It has for long been obvious that such a rational bias in education involves a suppression of the instinctual and emotional components of the human personality, and although this has been accepted as a necessary social safeguard, even by such a champion of the unconscious as Freud, it is now realized that no progress is made, even in the moral sphere, by a bird with one wing.[1]

Education in itself with all the books and facts is the "wing" deemed most important. Education, as it now stands, is not directly concerned with the person. All that is expected or wanted from a student is a rehashing of the "in put" from the school. No personal "input" is called for from the student. Personal experience in the school system is not relevant to the curriculum.

Mary Caroline Richards, author of the book Centering, believes that "Education is a part of a centering process which seeks to bring into wholeness a picture of Person."[2]

In the introduction of Foxfire 2, Wigginton says also that ". . . the purpose of our school then must be to help kids discover who they are, their loves and hates, and the stance they are going to take in the face of the world."[3] This seems to agree with the process of centering discussed by Richards. Wigginton believes that ". . . teachers should be responsible for putting children in situations giving them 'memorable experiences'."[4] According to observations made by the researcher, art provides such experiences.

In an article, "The Open Truth and Fiery Vehemence of Youth", Peter Marin states that ". . . we deprive the student of mobility and experience. . . . we empty the school of all vivid life."[5] One of the reasons seemingly relied upon for this deprivation is for the "sake of order". Another is that "Art is not a subject where there are specific answers, for here the teacher does not have a book with the right solution to every problem on his desk."[6] However, contrary to some beliefs, art classes can be as quiet and "orderly" as any other class. Lowenfeld, author of Creative and Mental Growth, states that "Sometimes a whole class will become so involved in an activity that a classroom will be surprisingly quiet."[7]

In The Integrated School Art Program, Winslow suggests that maybe ". . . we should seek neither the traditional nor the radical point of view in education but seek, rather, to advocate and to exemplify a balanced offering."[8] He goes further to say this about art in education.

> Art should serve to motivate and enrich the entire curriculum and it should contribute generously to integration of school experience. Art in the modern school should aim both to stimulate in the child the experience of creating and to help him improve the manner in which he expresses himself through creative process.[9]

Marin emphasizes that "The natural process of learning seems to move naturally from experience through perception to abstraction in a fluid continuous process that cannot be clearly divided into stages."[10]

Mr. John Rice, founder of Black Mountain College in North Carolina, started the college with the intentions of experimenting with the arts as an aid in the learning process. The first announcement from the college on their results was,

> We have found that often, through working in one of the arts, students are led to an intellectual awakening more effectively than in any other way. . . . The resourcefulness and enjoyment characteristic in arts, were discovered to be equally relevant to intellectual and social aims.[11]

In The Meaning of Crafts, Mattil describes many art projects to be used in elementary schools to provide opportunity for creativeness. He suggests that "It is important to master skills and information, but more important is the use of such skills and information for creative living."[12]

Coping and cooperation with others is a very important aspect involved in art experiences. Interaction, cooperation, and individualism are all involved with art experiences, school as it is, and living.

> Art has a greater potential in the development of children than is now accorded to it. Until we can shake loose from tradition, until we can stop giving approval to what we, as adults, would like to do, until we can shake ourselves out of the grasp of habit and the status quo,

art in education will not reach its full potential in the development of children.[13]

FOOTNOTES

[1]Herbert Read, "Education Through Art," Education and Art, ed. Edwin Ziegfeld (Paris, 1953), p. 25.

[2]Mary Richards, Centering (Middletown, Connecticut, 1969), p. 100.

[3]Eliot Wigginton, ed., Foxfire 2 (New York, 1973), p. 14.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Peter Marin, "The Open Truth and Fiery Vehemence of Youth," This Book Is About Schools, ed. Satu Repo (New York, 1970), p. 142.

[6]Viktor Lowenfeld and W. Lambert Brittain, Creative and Mental Growth (5th ed., London, 1970), p. 54.

[7]Ibid., p. 55.

[8]Leon L. Winslow, The Integrated School Art Program (New York and London, 1939), p. vii.

[9]Ibid., p. 25.

[10]Marin, p. 149.

[11]Richards, p. 119.

[12]Edwin L. Mattil, Meaning in Crafts (New York, 1959), p. v.

[13]Lowenfeld, p. 64.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE

Introduction

Explorations were made while I was teaching in a school system where required curriculum objectives had to be met. All efforts in class were dedicated to reaching these goals. Art was included in the curriculum for a brief period on Friday afternoons. The participating third and fourth graders looked forward to, and were enthusiastic about art time every week. The thought that other subjects were not so exciting was bothersome to me. It seemed logical that if art could be integrated into other subjects, they also would be more interesting and learning would become easier for the students. The same educational goals would be attained while simultaneously increasing the children's incentive to learn. These experiences in art would be used in all subject areas. Included on the following pages are some of the results of works of the students as they explored with me a method of teaching required subjects through expressions with art.

Science

"You cannot put the same shoe
on every foot."
--Publilius Syrus

Pottery

In science class the children were beginning to learn about the layers of the earth and what each layer was made of. Since clay is one of the layers, this opportunity was taken to let the children familiarize themselves with this material. The children knew that clay was a layer in the earth. After the composition of clay was discussed--that it was composed of leaves, twigs, silt, and other matter from riverbeds--the children made comments about the clay that they had found on the playground, in creek beds, on their farms, and near their homes.

In order to let the children get the feel of the clay, we began our exploration into the field of pottery. With the help of a potter showing the children different techniques that could be used with the clay, they eagerly started to mold their clay until they had finished their product. The potter informed the children that he would fire their clay objects in a kiln, explaining the process necessary to harden it. The children later referred to the kiln as the "oven", which suggested that the children did know how the objects were processed.

After firing was completed, the ceramic products were returned to the children. Painting the pottery followed immediately. It was sealed with an application of spray plastic. Their "prized possessions" turned out to be everything from flower pots, wind chimes, and necklaces, to a fake bar of soap and a snake with babies (Figure 1) (Illustration 1).

Figure 1. Pottery: Composition of Clay as a Layer of the Earth

Spatter Painting

Three different art experiences were conducted during the study of botany. The first was spatter painting of leaves. The primary purpose of this experience was to help the children to become aware of the different shapes of leaves and to give them an experience in spatter painting. However, the students were aware of more than that. They also noticed the edges of the leaves were different. Some were smooth and some were serrated. The spatters made the discovery of the fact of leaf serration a concrete concept for the children.

Illustration 1. A Painting by a Fourth Grade Student of Her Ceramic Pitcher

This was a very inexpensive project. The materials for the major part were furnished by nature. The children brought as many kinds of leaves to school as they could find, and of course they competed on who could bring the most different kinds. Powdered tempera paint was mixed and old toothbrushes and knives were used to spatter the paint. One of the hardest things for them to learn was which way to move the toothbrush against the knife. Before they learned the proper way, there were blue, green, and red speckled children walking around the room.

When the children were finished, they were asked to place their leaves in boxes labeled "serrated" and "unserrated". The following day, after the painting had dried, the children were to use their paintings again. They were to try and find out what kind of leaf they had spattered by their paintings. They had to use their own paintings. The children took their paintings to the library to use as a reference of identification. This also gave them a chance to show off their products. By the time the children had finished using their product, they had been exposed to spatter painting, leaf serration, classification, and three or four tree leaf types. These discoveries were real and joyful (Figure 2) (Illustration 2).

Leaf Rubbings

When rubbings of leaves were mentioned to the class, none of the children knew what rubbings were. The first step was to explain what a rubbing was and how it was made. Leaves had already been collected by the students, and using them for rubbings was a lesson on the venation of leaves.

Illustration 2. A Spatter Painting by a Fourth Grade Student

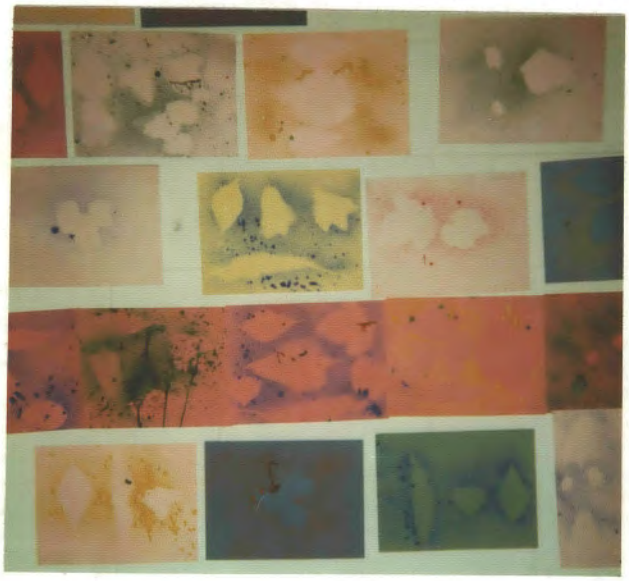

Figure 2. Spatter Painting: Introduce the Different Shapes of Leaves

Each child used his own leaves and traded with others to have a variety. The green leaves were placed under regular typing paper and rubbed with different colors of chalk. Each product was covered with plastic spray.

Through the rubbing process, the children discovered for themselves that there were two different types of veins in leaves. Some were straight or parallel, and some looked like fish bones or had net venation. While the rubbings were being made, the purpose of the veins in the leaves was discovered and we accomplished another lesson in botany.

Leaf Mosaics

This art experience was done purely for review and enjoyment

Illustration 3. A Leaf Rubbing by a Third Grade Student

Figure 3. Leaf Rubbings: Net and Parallel Venation

purposes. A unit on leaves had been completed. The students had already learned why leaves died when winter came, why they turned a color different from green, and about specific types of leaves.

Old leaves that had been studied were used for this project along with construction paper and some glue. The first step was explaining to the children what a mosaic was. Some examples of mosaics were used in the explanation which made the concept easier for the children to grasp.

In completing this experience, some children showed "mock sympathy" for the leaves, because they had once been alive and now their veins ran dry. The mosaics had become a lesson in life processes also.

Figure 4. Leaf Mosaics:
Life Processes

Drawings of Teeth

At the time of the next exploration in this study, the students were approaching a unit on dental health. The children were to become aware of the fact that a large proportion of the oral cavity is filled with teeth. They were also to be aware that the tooth consisted of a large portion of root. The children were to select a tooth from any book and make a drawing of the tooth they had chosen.

Although the drawings were not accurate, the children were amazed at the size of the root in comparison to the crown of the tooth. A common comment among the students was that they had pulled teeth and they didn't have roots. I explained to them that the roots of baby teeth dissolve before they are ready to come out. The children were

asked if they could feel the crowns, necks, and the roots of their teeth through their gums.

After the drawings were made, the care of teeth was stressed and more study was done on the inner structure of the tooth (Figure 5) (Illustration 4).

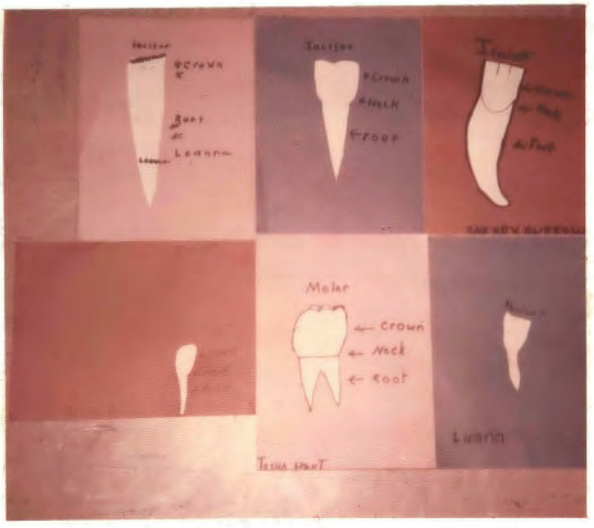

Figure 5. Drawings of Teeth:
Crown-Root
Proportion

Shoebox Caves

This part of the study related to a part in the text pertaining to caves. The first step in this particular experiment was to collect enough shoeboxes so that each child could have one of his own. These shoeboxes were to become caves.

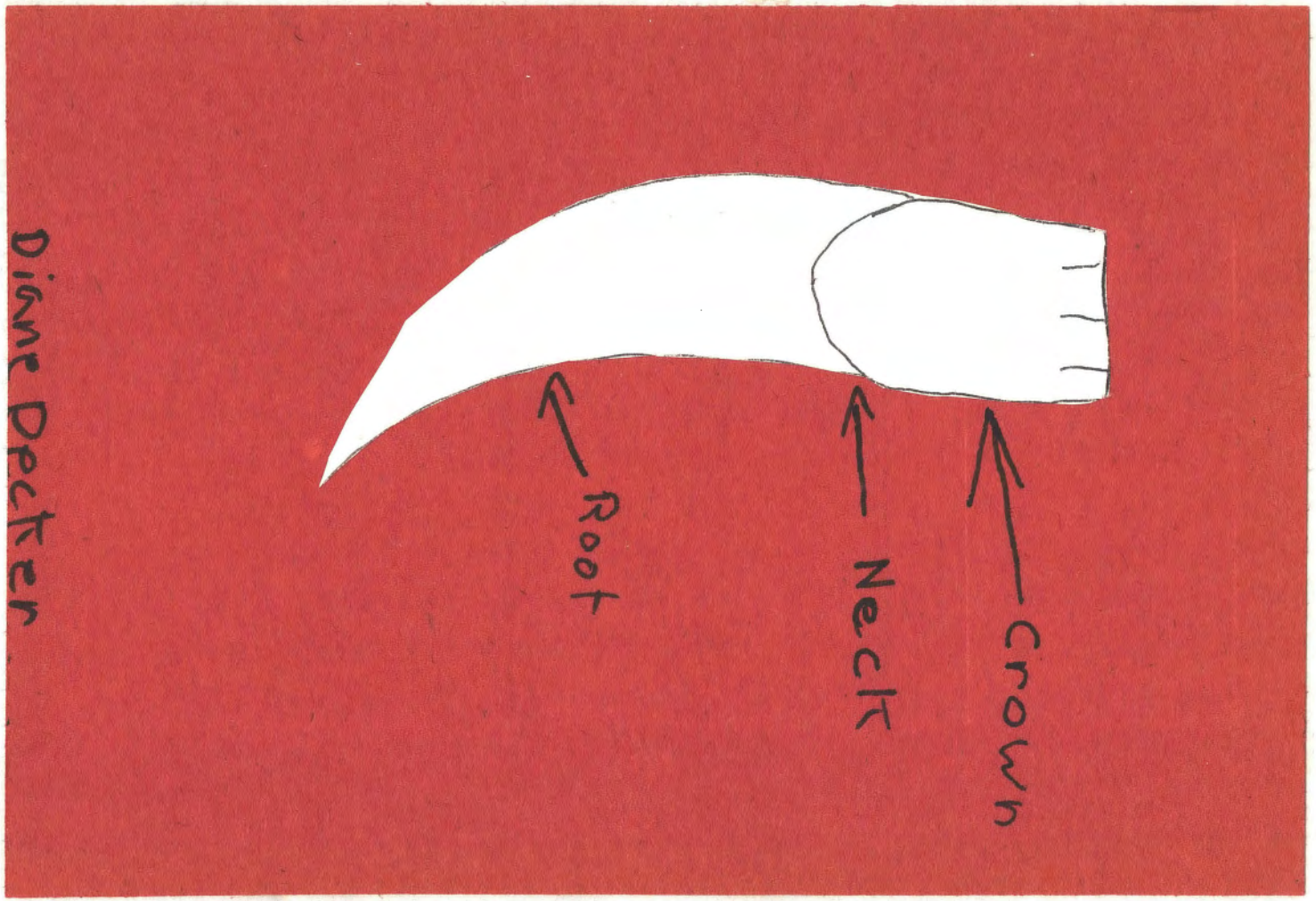

Illustration 4. Drawing of a Tooth by a Fourth Grade Student

The children then mixed their own substance to line the walls of their caves and to make stalactites and stalagmites. The mixture was made of flour, salt, and water. After mixing the dough, the children started lining their caves and produced all kinds of formations. The caves were left to dry for two days, until their formations were hard.

Powdered tempera paint and water were mixed to make all kinds of browns, yellows, oranges, and grays. The students then carefully painted their caves and added special touches including bats hanging from the ceilings of some of the caves.

Throughout the cave-making, children were discussing the difference between stalactites and stalagmites and how they were formed. After the caves were completed, each chose the longest formation in his shoebox and individually figured out how long it would have taken it to form if it were real.

By the enthusiasm shown by the children, it seems unlikely they will forget this experience and the facts they learned because of it (Figures 6 and 7) (Illustration 5).

Geography

"It is a bad plan that admits of
no modification."
--Publilius Syrus

Dough Map of the United States

Many of the children in the third and fourth grades at Tryon have not been out of the state of Oklahoma, so it is naturally difficult for them to visualize the entire United States. This is one of the reasons

Figure 6. Painting Caves

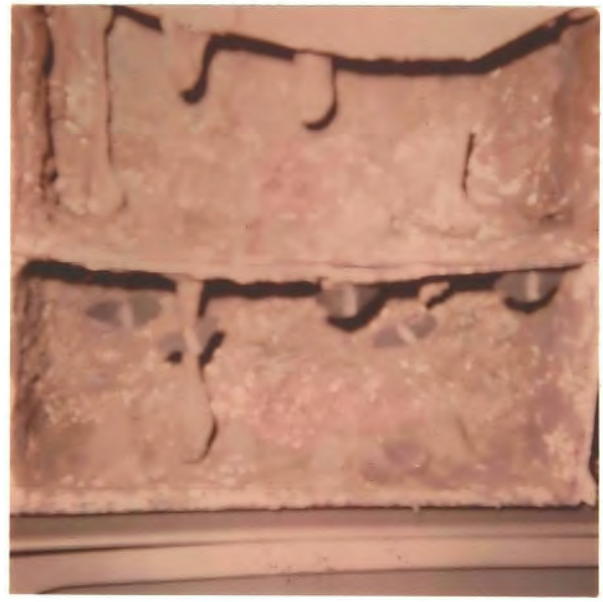

Figure 7. Shoebox Caves: Formations in Caves

the terrain. After the flour mixture was applied to the board, mountains, plains, forests, and deserts were formed in the dough. The map

Illustration 5. A Painting of a Cave by a Fourth Grade Student

why it is so important that some geography be taught at the Tryon School.

In this part of the study, the learning of a concept is to be achieved. The concept is that of the shape of the United States and which parts of it are made of mountains, plains, deserts, and forests. Also some knowledge pertaining to the scale of the areas was hoped to be attained.

The children first divided into groups that were to perform tasks in the project. The first step in the construction of the map was to find a large board suitable in strength. An opaque projector was used to sketch an outline of the United States on the board. Next the children mixed a dough consisting of flour, water, and salt, to form the terrain. After the flour mixture was applied to the board, mountains, plains, forests, and deserts were formed in the dough. The map was then allowed to dry.

In the time while the map dried, the children pointed out the Great Lakes, the Rocky Mountains, and Appalachian Mountains. They also discovered what region on the map the state of Oklahoma was in and where other states were located.

After the map was dry, different colors of powdered tempera were applied depicting different regions. Several days later the map began to crack, probably from an inadequate drying time. All the children decided that an earthquake had taken place. The next subject to be studied then was apparently earthquakes (Figure 8) (Illustration 6).

Figure 8. Dough Map of U.S.:
Physical Geography
of the U.S.

Social Studies

"No one can be happy unless he feels
in some way important."
--Conception Abbey Press

Model Metropolis

This art experience was eventually called the "Third and Fourth Grade Model Metropolis". In studying the reasons for making a town, the students decided they would like to make replicas of some of the buildings in their own town. Before they started their construction, however, they had to decide which buildings they thought were most important to the town. This decision led to several arguments

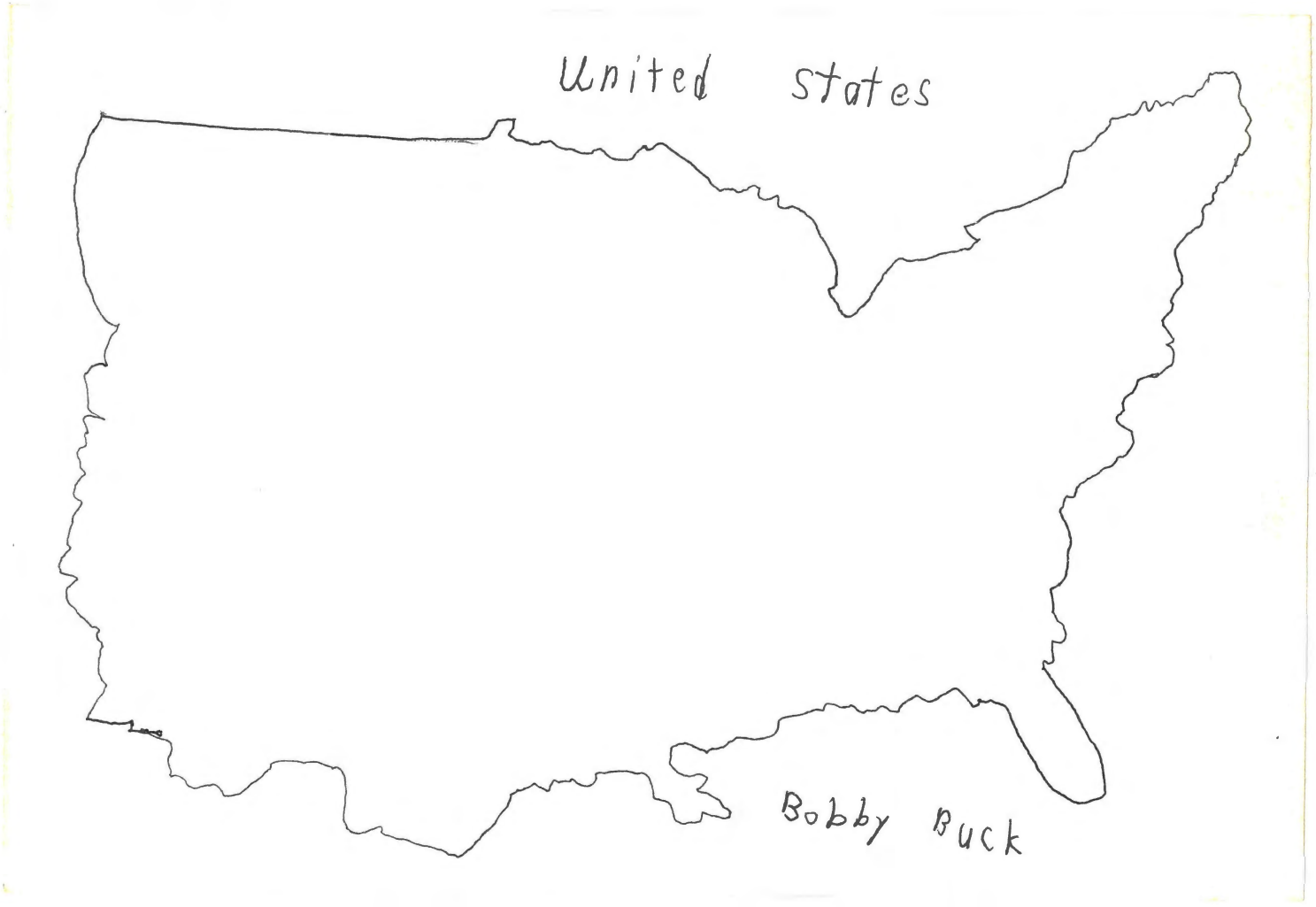

Illustration 6. A Drawing of the United States by a Fourth Grade Student

concerning personal values. They finally decided on seven buildings to be included in their model.

In placing the structures, the children became aware of why certain buildings such as city hall and the fire station are placed where they are in small towns. Also while making roads, they became aware of the reasons for stop signs. Some children even learned how to place brick.

Since the children conducted most of the project, much social interaction took place. Through this experience especially, the children learned to cooperate and compromise.

After their metropolis was done, the librarian asked if they would display their creation in the display window in the hall. This made the students even more confident and proud of their concrete lesson in social studies (Figure 9) (Illustration 7).

Figure 9. Model Metropolis: Importance of a Community

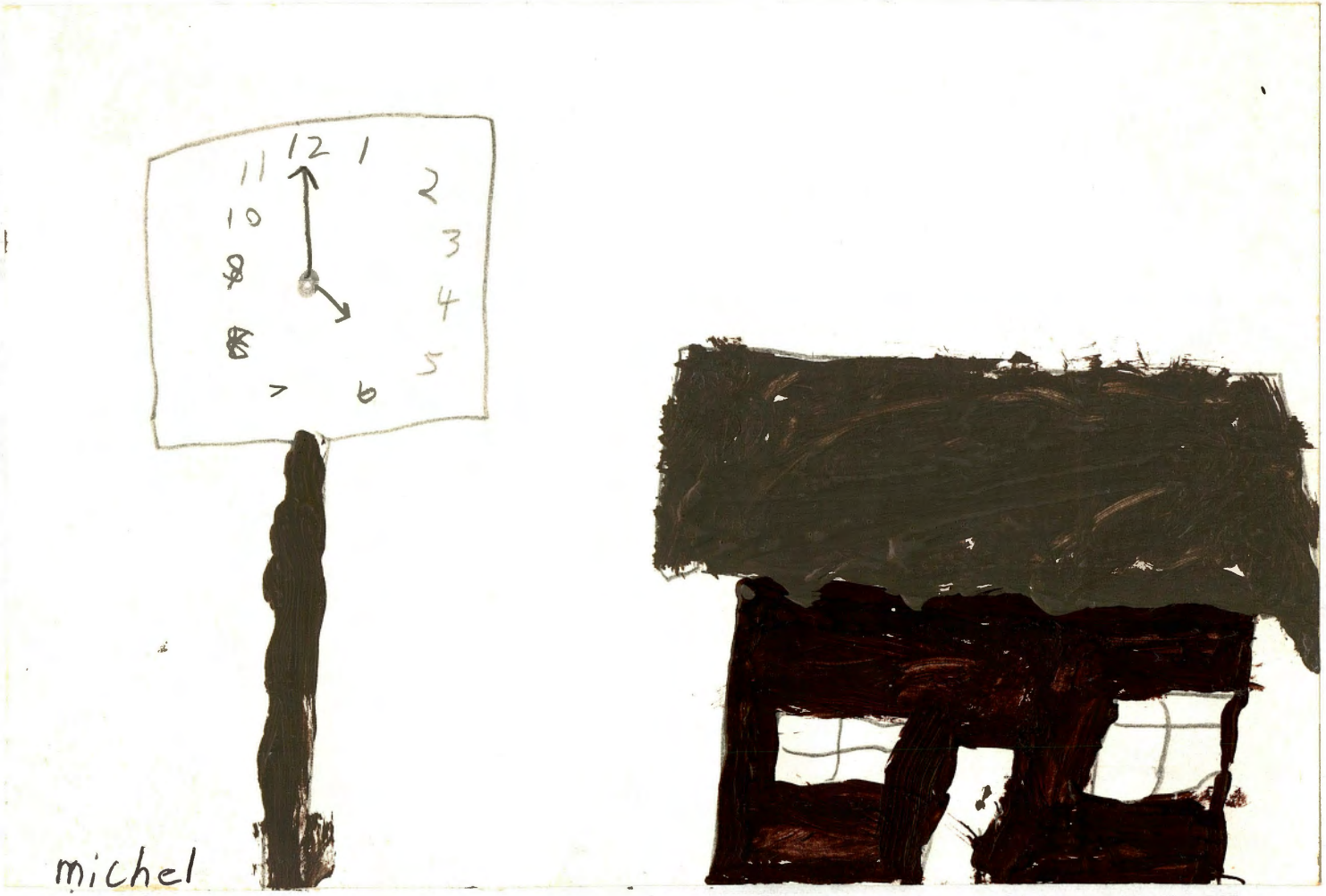

Illustration 7. A Painting by a Fourth Grade Student of the Bank

Trash Art

A lesson on ecology was the subject of an experiment in trash art. The class had discussions about littering the highways and other areas, and the hazards caused by the littering problem. The class listed ways that some companies are helping to fight litter, and discussed the pick-up of litter along the highways, and the costs of our thoughtlessness.

Since the school was in a rural area, the teacher allowed the children to walk along the highway beside the school, and pick up all the litter they could find. The children were asked if they thought they could make something pretty or useful out of this old "useless trash", or recycle it. They were determined that they could and immediately began the process of transforming old newspapers, bottles, jars, cans, wire, and many other items that had been found. Such things as a "Trash Cat", with wire eyes, and a "Google-Eyed Crushed Can" were created.

Imaginations were really working. Many children with the aid of a little glue and paint made vases from old bottles, and one student made Frankenstein. From some old newspapers and some paint, a boy made a giraffe. We were all amazed at the results of their efforts. The students had not been aware that they could be so creative. They realized that, given a little thought, things were reusable. One objective of the lesson was to instill in the children a consciousness and a health attitude toward conservation. This was accomplished (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Trash Art:
Conservation

Scrap-Paper Art

At the time this unit on ecology was being presented, there was a shortage of paper. This part in the study was to help make the children aware that this shortage was a reality and was a problem. The children were first made aware of the relation between paper and wood and trees. They also learned how paper was made. Each child looked closely at the fibers on a torn edge of paper.

The children discussed ways they could help prevent a greater shortage. Suggestions ranged from writing on the back of a sheet of paper, to not throwing away large scraps. In order to help in curtailing this shortage, the class cleaned out the closet, removing all the scrap construction paper which they used to create, without the aid of scissors, scrap-paper art. Again they had used something seemingly worthless and created something of interest, and at the same time had a lesson in conservation. (Figure 11) (Illustration 8)

Illustration 8. A Scrap-Paper Mosaic by a Third Grade Student

Figure 11. Scrap-Paper Art: Paper Shortage

Language Arts

"Sometimes our light goes out but is blown again into flame by an encounter with another human being. Each of us owes the deepest thanks to those who have rekindled this inner light."

--Albert Schweitzer

Felt Book Markers

This experience was conducted mainly for enjoyment, but also served to increase motivation. These students were to do book reports in the near future, and the teacher hoped these markers would help produce some excitement about their reading.

Each child could use a pattern or create his own book marker out of felt material. Felt designs in other colors could be applied. After the markers were completed, the children went to the library and picked out the book for their book report. (Figure 12)

Figure 12. Felt Book Markers: Introduce Book Reports

Shoebox Book Reports

Since book reports seem to be one of the most dreaded assignments in school, two experiments on book reports were included for this study. The first experiment was called "Shoebox Book Reports". Each child completed the reading of a book chosen by himself. Within his shoebox, he was to depict at least one scene from his particular book. Any material available could be used to make this report.

Some of the children made two dimensional pictures, but most of them made three dimensional boxes. One child made his into a television and had a moving picture to depict the whole story.

Each child was to give an oral report and try to make others like his book. A few children dressed like one of the characters and did a

little acting (Figure 13). This experience aided in providing enjoyment in the subject of reading as well as making book reports fun for the whole class (Illustration 9).

Figure 13. Shoebox Book Reports: Summarizing and Depicting a Story

Book Report Puppets

Book report puppets were done mainly to help children who have a difficult time talking in front of other people. This type of reporting also gave each child practice in hand and speech coordination.

Most of the children used socks to make their puppets, however there were some who used milk cartons or sticks for the base of their puppets. Each child made a puppet the narrator of the summary of his

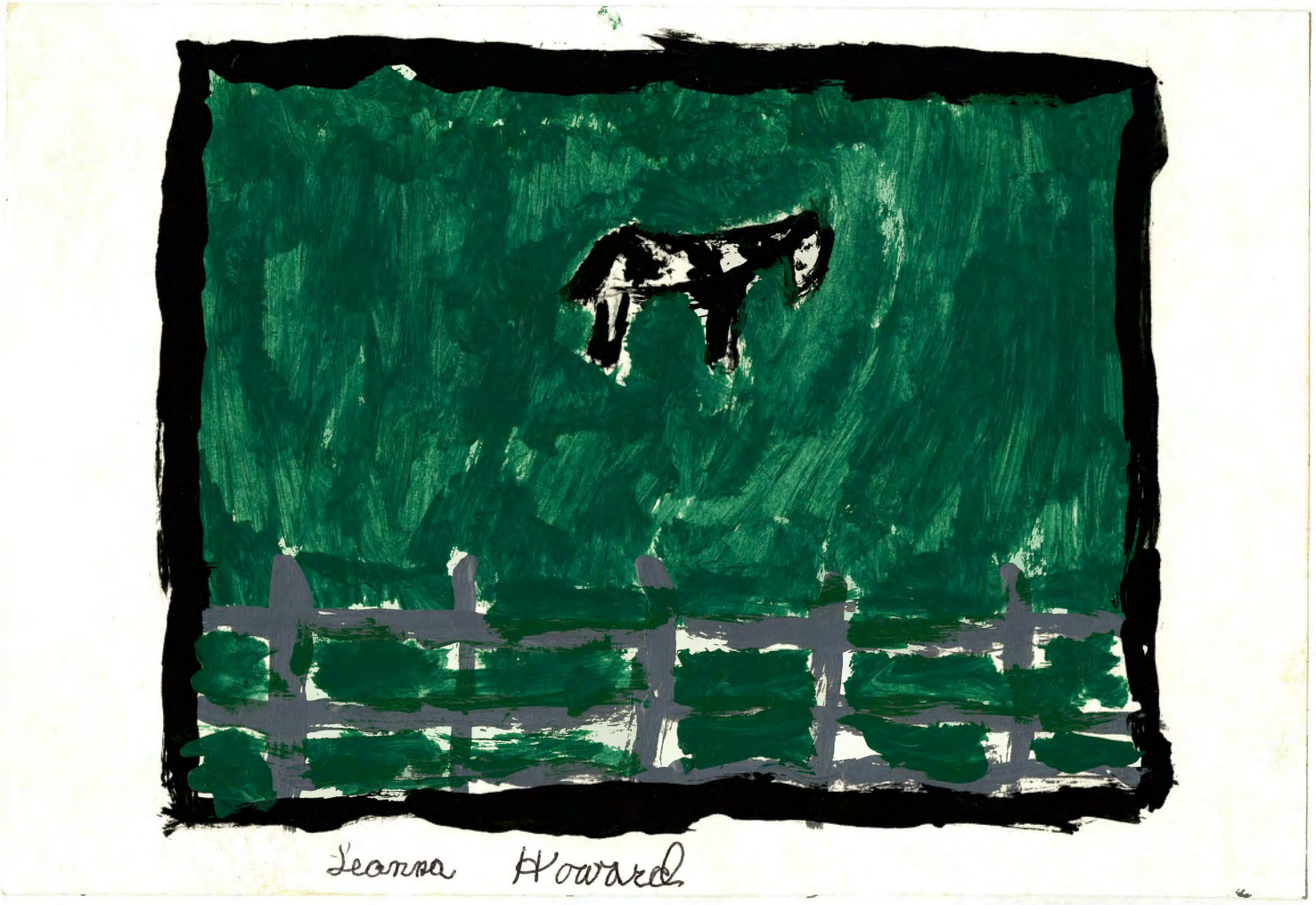

Illustration 9. A Painting by a Fourth Grade Student of Her Shoebox Book Report

book. The children were able to use notes and were completely hidden from members of the class. Some disguised their voices as if they were one of the characters in the book. This greatly helped those who were shy to give a good report. Expression in the children's speech was also improved by using this technique of reporting.

They also improved in reading skills. In the process of preparing their reports, they learned how to summarize, and the meaning of a copyright of a book. They also improved in reading skills. (Figures 14 and 15).

Figure 14. Book Report Puppets: Parts of a Book and Aid in Speech Expression

Figure 15. Book Report Puppet: Milk Carton

Fingerpaint Writing

Students of any age level can improve on their handwriting, but the third grade is the age just learning to write in the cursive style. The fourth graders also need periodic help on the formation of letters, however the fine muscles of young children are hard to control for performing such a tedious task as writing. The smooth, continual motions that cursive writing requires seem quite difficult for those who are used to the short strokes used in manuscript writing.

This part of the study included an experience using fingerpaint to practice the smooth motions in cursive writing. Fingerpaint was made by the children by mixing liquid starch and powdered tempera paint. A fingerpaint consistency was achieved. Shelf paper was used as the

painting surface. Each letter was written in the paint, mainly to let the children feel the movement and how the letter was formed. Perfect letters were not the aim of this experience. The aim was to try and achieve the correct procedure in producing the letters. Later quality in size and proportion was achieved.

This experience provided the opportunity to dispense with their mistakes without erasing or embarrassment. They seemed to like to "try again" since it meant messing in the paint and having fun. (Figure 16) (Illustration 10)

Figure 16. Fingerpaint Writing: Practice in Formation of Cursive Letters

Illustration 10. A Fingerpaint Writing by a Third Grade Student

Illustrated Poems

Many children, it seems, do not like reading poetry, but using poetry as part of an art experience helped them to willingly expose themselves to the reading of poetry even if it had been written by themselves. The children in this study did not like to read poetry, but after the class discussed rhyming words and the form of some poetry, they were willing to express themselves by means of poetry.

These poems were typed by the teacher and corrections were made in spelling. The students mounted their poems on construction paper and then illustrated them. The children gladly illustrated poems that they had written themselves. Some drew classmates which were the subject of their poem. Others drew monsters and wierd-looking animals that had been concocted by these children.

Each child was given an opportunity to read his poem, and most of the children took this opportunity. The poems were then made into a book so that everyone could read and see the work of art. The teacher was asked by the children to read and re-read the poems aloud. (Figure 17) (Illustration 11)

Mathematics

"Go as far as you can see, and when you
get there you will see farther."
--Elbert Hubbard

Astheometry

This exercise was conducted as a learning experience in the area of mathematics. The name of this particular experience is astheometry.

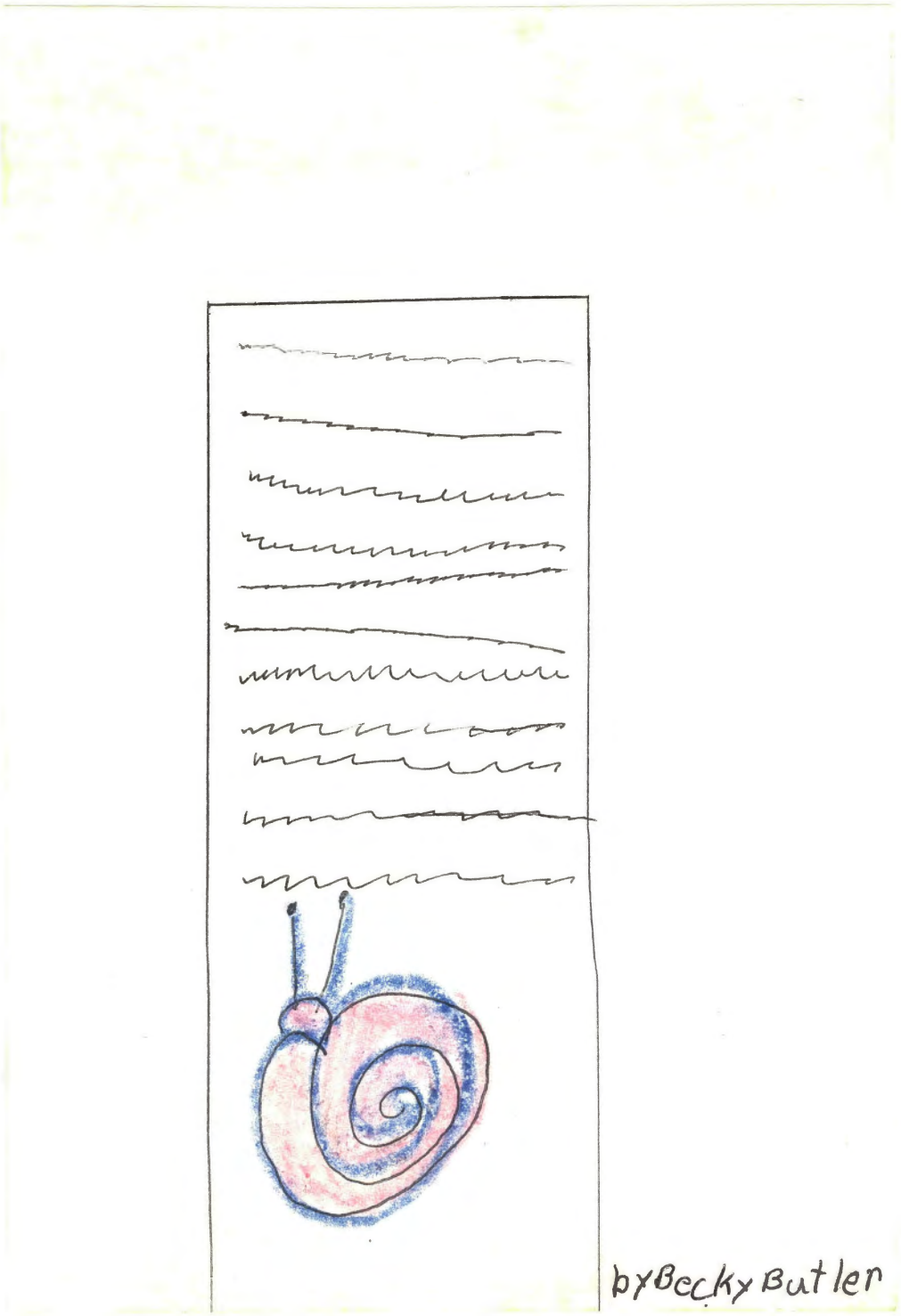

Illustration 11. A Drawing by a Third Grade Student of His Illustrated Poem

Astheometry is the making of geometric designs on a flat base such as a piece of cardboard or board, with a length of string.

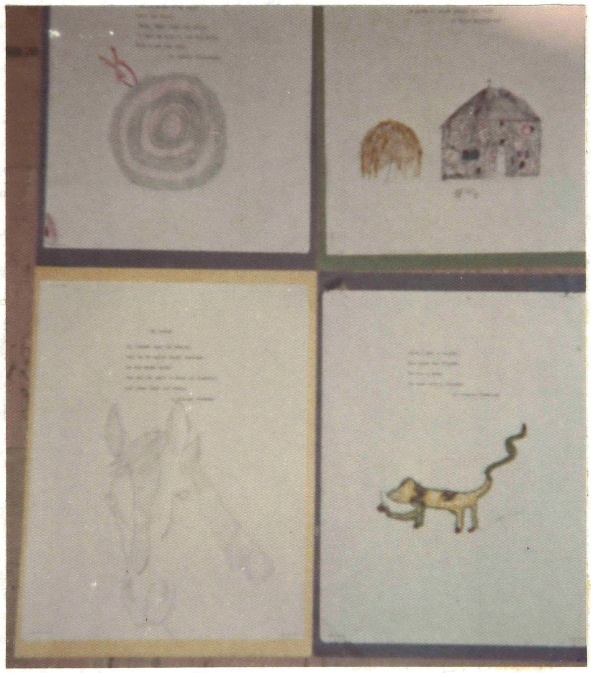

Figure 17. Illustrated Poems: Poetry Form and Rhyming Words

Each child was given a piece of colored poster board and was shown some examples of designs. The class talked about different geometric figures or designs and each child lightly drew the design he had chosen to translate into string. The children then punched holes evenly along the outline of his figure. The teacher demonstrated the technique used for certain figures and gave individual help when needed.

The children were asked to look carefully at their design and to decide whether they thought their design would balance or fall over. This suggestion hopefully helped them to correlate balance in design with that in physical objects.

After the astheometry designs were completed, the products were used in math class. Each child used his own design and figured how many feet and inches of string he had used. Many children had to review the use of the ruler. All children used either multiplication or addition.

The next concept the children were exposed to was how the string was made from cotton. Having had a previous lesson, they all knew how string was made long ago, but they weren't sure how it was made today.

After learning how their string had been made, many of them took a closer look at the strands. Something was being experienced and learned and the children were motivated by their own initiative. (Figure 18)

Figure 18. Astheometry: Geometric Figures

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

This study was undertaken to explore the possibility of using art as an avenue to the learning process for elementary children, making learning more enjoyable, meaningful, and therefore an easier task.

The writer was in a teaching situation that presented a problem dealing with the tradition of having art only on Friday afternoons. This third and fourth grade class from Tryon, however, enjoyed art more than any other subject.

In dealing with this problem, the teacher used art experiences in all the subject areas. At the same time, predetermined curriculum objectives, which were required, were also acquired.

These experiences were used to motivate, and to introduce the students to new subject matter. They were also used to help in developing a concern or an awareness in the children which would initiate further interest and learning. These experiences also allowed the student to expand according to his own ability.

While using art with each subject, the teacher asked questions to initiate thinking and promote class discussion. Students were provided an opportunity to interact with class members and also to cooperate with them.

Materials that were used in the art projects were those available through the school. One exception was the clay used in making the pottery. All materials used in the experiences were either free or inexpensive and easily accessible.

Evaluations consisted of observations made by the experimenter and photographs which are included in this thesis. Periodic teacher-made tests were also given to measure the attainment of the required curriculum objectives.

Conclusions

After experiencing the type of teaching described in this thesis, it would be hard to be satisfied completely with teaching without using art experiences. Art experiences enrich and intensify subject matter areas which are required and too often boring to children and teachers. However, that is not the only result found in this exploration.

The children participating in this art exploration were happier with school in general. Learning became easier for the children and became a process of which the children were not even aware. Learning became easier also because the children were truly interested and were dealing with something that was concrete and real to them. The children had a concrete object about which they could ask pertinent questions.

The motivation produced in these children, caused by these art experiences, created a more relaxed atmosphere in the classroom which provided even better learning conditions. This relaxed atmosphere was a product of a deeper involvement of the students with their learning experiences. Contrary to the belief that having art creates unruly and

noisy classrooms, the students became more attentive, happier, and therefore easier to control and direct toward other studies. The students exerted self-discipline and disciplined others too, so each would be able to acquire "their share" of learning.

Every teacher knows that it is impossible to make a child learn if he does not want to, yet these children were responsible for their own learning and were anxious for more. The most important factor, in the opinion of the writer, was that the children were learning and working at it, yet were having too much fun to realize it.

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