

Art in my Primary Classroom



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Materials

- Most important—pens: black ballpoint, rollerball, or gel pens. I purchase a class set.
- A class set of clip boards for drawing in other parts of the school or on walks or visits further afield
- Felt-tip coloured markers, thin and thick. Each child has a set of each type.
- Pencils, writing and coloured
- Oil pastels
- Poster paint
- Watercolours
- Variety of paper--different sizes and types
- A collection of “art box” materials (paper rolls, small boxes, interesting containers, meat trays, corks, spools, etc.) for sculptures or other student-initiated art projects
- Glue sticks, white glue, masking tape, scotch tape
- A picture file of animals, buildings, and the like collected from magazines and newspapers to bring out when photo references are needed
- Play dough
- Clay
- A class set of small blackboards (about 14"x10") and chalk kept inside old socks which are used for erasers—an old primary teacher’s trick!

A Variety of Experiences



Field Trips

I organize many field trips to view art exhibits or to visit other interesting places in the community. Students can draw at the site if appropriate. If that’s not possible, they respond to their experience back in the classroom.

I usually give them a choice of materials when they all participate in what I call “**project day,**” held when we return to the classroom or the next day after an outing. Some will draw, some will paint, some will make little illustrated books, and some will construct sculptures. Some will work with a friend or in a small group, and some prefer to work independently. When they share what they have created, I make sure that all have a chance to tell what they like best about their own work and perhaps what they might do differently the next time. One or two of their classmates will give them some positive feedback and suggestions, as well.

Students completed powerful drawings after I read the story *Zlateh the Goat* by Isaac Bashevis Singer. It is a story about a boy and his goat who spend three days sheltering from a snowstorm inside a haystack. The boy drinks the goat's milk and the goat eats the hay. It was a very powerful story, and the students responded to it.



Students enjoy drawing **story maps** after hearing a well-chosen story that has a good story line, such as a circle story like *Rosie's Walk* by Pat Hutchins. They might work with a partner or a small group for this one.

Sometimes we work together to create a special **bulletin board display**. Some examples:

In late February I discussed the saying, "March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb." I pulled out my picture files of lions and sheep and spread them about on the tables. Students created separate images of lions and lambs, using their own ideas and the photos for reference. This time I asked them to create paper collage figures, using with no scissors (ripped paper only) and no pens, except for the eyes. Most enjoy these challenges, and the results are always interesting.

Murals provide students opportunities to work together cooperatively and to learn to solve problems if disagreements arise. I usually ask them to paint spring flowers to brighten the room. Precut paper insures that the murals will fit our bulletin boards. One year I had them produce a mural to illustrate a poem we wrote together about a sudden storm they experienced at recess. Since it was just one mural, different groups chose to complete different parts of it, which showed a peaceful recess scene, the rising storm, a hard rainfall, and then students rushing back into the school. Sometimes a mural represents a study we are doing in class, like a tide pool scene at the beach, perhaps with the sea creatures we had studied drawn separately and pasted on in appropriate places. I do not

Organizing an **Artist of the Month** program is a good way to introduce a variety of art styles and to teach students a little about art history. There are high-quality print sets that schools can purchase, and a collection of art calendars is helpful. Sometimes there are good videos in the school or public library about certain artists. The school library has a series of books that is at a perfect level for teaching primary students something about the lives and times of different artists. The artist's work can be displayed on a bulletin board in the room. I discuss the paintings with the students ["What colors does he use?" "What shapes do you see?" "Does she outline her figures?" "Does he use a lot of detail?"] Then I ask them to complete paintings or drawings "in the style of." The results are always interesting.

I ask students to draw their own pictures to illustrate the **Student-Led Parent Conference** forms and also to draw a picture of themselves with a parent at their favourite centre the day after the conference.

Name DJAE Date March 7, 2010



In my Student-Led Parent Conference,

my favourite centers were math

and art

I was especially proud when I showed My Writing

My Mom said she is proud

of me