

Creativity, play and learning (arts in early childhood education)



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When I was an elementary school I tried to copy a painting in my arts I tried to pay attention to even the minor details, in my vision to create an exact replica of the original work. However, at the end of the class, I could finish only a very small part of the work. Our teacher had a look at my unfinished work and suggested that I could continue it the next week, and carry on with it until it is finished. I did stick to this single work which I considered a major project, while my friends were doing various things in the next two weeks. The teacher gave me extra lessons outside class, allowed me to keep my work safe in his office and provided me with the right kind of pencils, brushes and colours. The completed work was quite remarkable on its own right, though fidelity to the original work was questionable. When I look back to this incident, I feel that the teacher had in fact gone out of his way to accommodate my need for artistic expression. During that period, he was the most accessible person to me - through every act of understanding and kindness he displayed.

Another experience made me feel on the contrary, as my teacher did something uncharacteristic of him. In one of his classes, he asked us to draw outline pictures of a building. I happened to sit with a close friend of mine who could only draw one-dimensional picture. I felt I could help him produce a better work and tried to explain to him some techniques of creating a two or three dimensional effect. My teacher considered this as a distraction and raised his voice - asking me to focus on my work and to let my friend focus on his work. He needed finished works by the end of the class. I felt restricted and uneasy about this, and found that it had a totally negative impact on my own work during that class. The idea of following strict rules during a creative endeavor disheartened me.

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