



Creative Minds

By Cathy Weisman Topal

For After-School Educators and Programs, Grades K–5

Creative Minds is a K–5 **art-based curriculum** that introduces young people to the joy and wonder of viewing, wondering about, and creating art. This innovative, classroom-tested program capitalizes on children’s natural curiosity and readiness to create.

Creative Minds includes step-by-step support for after-school educators to create an authentic context in which to engage young people in viewing and making art while fostering **inquiry**, developing **problem-solving** and **communication skills, teamwork**, and **creativity**. This program is uniquely designed to provide many **opportunities for sharing and celebrating students’ work** with families, the school, and wider community.



PREPARE

Objectives

- As painters mix and add color to line prints, they will:
 - use the primary colors to mix secondary colors.
 - perceive subtle differences between and among colors.
 - describe and name colors using their own vocabulary.
 - use the scientific process of making a prediction, doing an experiment, and reflecting on their findings.
 - revise their work and recognize negative spaces that can be filled with color.
 - practice interpersonal, communication, and problem-solving skills.

Materials

- Squeeze trays, coated paper plates, or mixing trays, 1 per student
- Label paint brushes, not too thick, about 1/2" (1 cm), 1 per student (1 additional per student in reserve)
- Any previous line work. Group line prints from lesson 2. (See Teaching Tips.)
- Tempera paint (yellow, red, white, and blue) in squeeze bottles
- Oil pastels (black removed) if desired
- Water dishes (in reserve)
- Squeeze bottles of red and blue paint (in reserve)

Setup

- Cover tables with newspaper.
- Have previous line work available
- Set out trays with only a dollop of yellow paint, 1 per student.



Demonstrate mixing colors in small areas to leave room for all the mixtures. Mix in small, circular areas.

Vocabulary

English	Spanish
primary colors:	colores primarios:
yellow	amarillo
blue	azul
red	rojo
secondary colors:	colores secundarios:
green	verde
orange	anaranjado
purple	violeta
color wheel	rueda de color
palette	paleta
tint	matiz

(2nd century skills: (see page viii).
Creativity/innovation
Critical thinking/problem solving
Communication/presentation
Massachusetts Standards: 2.1, 2.6, 5.3
See pages 122–125 for a complete list.

TEACH

Engage

- 1 Explain that there are three colors that are very important. **Red, yellow, and blue are called the primary colors.** They are important because all other colors are created from those three colors. When artists placed the colors in a circle they found they could see and understand relationships between them.
- 2 Define and identify secondary colors: orange, green, and violet. Explain that the order of the colors, or pure hues, on the color wheel comes from the order of the colors in the rainbow. We are going to make some predictions about what will happen when we mix the primary colors.

Explore

- 1 Demonstrate the painting directions. Pick up some of the yellow paint from your palette. Paint with yellow on your paper.
- 2 Demonstrate painting yellow in a second place. Emphasize that students should use each color in more than one place in their paintings. Point out how many times yellow is used in the Downe Burns painting.
- 3 Squeeze a dollop of red paint onto the palette. Tell students, "This is your pure red paint source. Do not mix other colors into it."

- 4 Demonstrate dipping the **very tip** of the brush into the red paint. Slowly mix a **tiny** amount of red paint into the dollop of yellow until you have a pure yellow-orange hue with no streaks. Paint the yellow-orange in more than one place.
- 5 Encourage young painters to control their mixing, as they will need space to mix more colors.
- 6 Look for each new mixture in the Downe Burns painting. Point out the many different hues of orange and other colors. Notice how the hues repeat.
- 7 Create a sense of wonder as you invite suggestions for naming a new hue.

Create Part 1

- 1 Once students begin painting with pure yellow, add a small dollop of red to each palette. Encourage them to mix three oranges—yellow-orange, orange, and red-orange.
- 2 Paint pure red in more than one place.
- 3 Once students have painted with pure red, squeeze a small dollop of blue. Explain that blue is a stronger and darker color and can overpower other colors. Students need to keep this in mind when they are mixing three purples. (Don't demonstrate here; allow students to make their own discoveries.)

Part 2

- 1 Once students have mixed at least three oranges and three hues of purple, stop the class. Ask,

Mixing Colors
Use the three most important hues to make secondary colors.

- 1 Pick up yellow paint from your palette.
- 2 Paint areas of yellow on your paper.
- 3 Dip the tip of your brush in red.
- 4 Mix to make a pure hue of orange. Paint your hue in at least two places.
- 5 Repeat process. Make three different hues of orange.
- 6 Clean brush or pick a new brush.

The Color Wheel
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Variations/Extensions

- If a previous line work is not available, this lesson can be done on white paper. Be sure to remind students to repeat each mixed hue three times to create unity.
- Begin with oil pastels. Use them to add color to the small areas. This is an especially good way to begin group work of adding color to large group explorations. Use the following guidelines for painting a group mural:
 - Paint the paper spaces and let the line structure show through.
 - When colors touch, try blending.
 - Pay attention to the direction of the brushstrokes.
- After painting with one color for a while, switch colors, or leave the brush with the container and find a new color and brush.
- At the end of the lesson, let students predict what will happen when all colors on the palette are mixed. Compare brownie.
- Add white to the palette and encourage students to mix tints of pink, peach, and light blue.
- Read about the artist at www.downeburns.com.

Teaching Tips

- Work with Art from Previous Lessons** Black line paintings or line prints make beautiful compositions when the spaces are filled in with mixed colors.
- Try It First** Trying this lesson beforehand helps you become comfortable with the mixing procedure and the amount of paint necessary.
- Sequence Colors** Sequencing the distribution of the primary colors helps students focus on the subtleties of each mixture.
- Use Squeeze Bottles** These make paint distribution quicker and less messy.
- Display a Palette** Save one palette to display along with the finished paintings. This helps others understand how these beautiful colors were created.
- Rinsing and Wiping** Review brush rinsing and wiping techniques (See Handbooks).
- Water** You should not need water until you mix green in part 2. If you get too much red on the brush, wipe the brush on a paper towel and continue mixing.

Educator Edition

Big Book Features

- Large, brilliant fine art images accessible to all students and teachers
- Clear, step-by-step process illustrations

Educator Edition Features

- Step-by-step support for closely observing, discussing, and creating art
- Suggestions to help teachers differentiate instruction by age, ability, and interest
- Key vocabulary in both Spanish and English
- Literature and STEM connections
- Teaching tips including activity extensions and variations
- Many art activities feature natural and found materials for limited program budgets
- Detailed materials list included in each unit

“Within the Creative Minds Curriculum, elementary students are introduced to the basic elements of design used by an artist when creating a work of art (color, line, shape, form, texture and space). The curriculum facilitates students to learn not only art principles such as movement and proportion, it also helps students express themselves by means of multiple art mediums. Creative Minds lessons, suggested extensions, and connection with Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) makes it a must-have teaching tool for all elementary teachers. It offers a wealth of knowledge and fun!”

—Nancy Thibault, Strategic Communication and Development Manager, Rainbow Child Development

This unique, innovative program was developed as a partnership with the Massachusetts Cultural Council—the state’s art and culture agency—in partnership with the Massachusetts Afterschool Partnership and Davis Publications, the nation’s leading publisher of art education materials. The program was piloted in out of school and after school settings. The positive response was overwhelming. For information on how Creative Minds is used in after-school classrooms in Massachusetts, visit www.creativemindsmakeart.org.

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