



Design Matters for Kindergarten

Kate Bagnocche

Teaching kindergarten learners about the structures and functions of art is made easier when lessons are taught in a sequential nature with a logical progression from one topic to the next. This was a lesson I learned well when I recently had the opportunity to teach a group of kindergartners. In this article I outline how I taught students to plan a three-dimensional design and then transform the design into a two-dimensional cut-paper collage.

Zolo Toys

Introducing complex art methodology through a play-like approach immediately engages young learners. University students are not immune either! One day, I introduced Zolo toys to my methods course.

Zolo toys are creative building sets that consist of colorful, abstract, plastic forms that can be put together in almost unlimited ways. The forms are drilled so that multiple forms can be joined to create sculptures. (Other toys that fit together could also be

used, such as Mr. Potato Head and Lego Blocks.) The toys are a perfect way to teach about form and design, and I couldn't wait to teach with them.

The Lesson: Part One

I began by distributing the toys to each table of kindergartners. After I showed the children how to assemble the pieces, they immediately began to practice making sculptures that could stand. Sculptures were assembled, disassembled, and assembled again



and again. The attention span of the children never waned. After twenty minutes, I called a halt to the experimentation.

At this point, I asked children to tell me a little about their designs. What forms did they use? What colors? Were the sculptures real creatures? Did they have names?

The Lesson: Part Two


I gave each child an assortment of small pieces of construction paper, construction paper crayons, scissors, and glue. Children were instructed to look at their own sculptures and to draw the forms that they saw.

Most of the children took great care to draw the shapes to scale and to use the same color scheme as the three-dimensional forms. They were encouraged to add lines, dots, and other decorations. When all of the shapes were drawn, children cut them

out, arranged, and glued them to black construction paper. Additional designs and details were added, if desired.

To close this lesson, I asked students to compare their original sculptures to their final cut-paper collages.

A Final Note

While not all two-dimensional designs exactly replicated their three-dimensional counterparts, the lessons learned were valuable. Students were able to slow down, plan, and execute an effective design. They were able to experience the difference between two-dimensional and three-dimensional objects. Best of all, children were engaged in a sustained learning experience. 

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NATIONAL STANDARD

Students use visual structures and functions of art to communicate ideas.

WEB LINK

www.zolo.com

Introducing complex art methodology through a play-like approach immediately engages young learners.

Lesson Objective

- Students will demonstrate effective use of simple toy forms to create a sculpture that stands on its own.
- Students will transcribe their sculpture into shapes to create a cut-paper collage.

Materials and Supplies

- Zolo or similar toys
- 8 x 12" (20 x 30 cm) black construction paper
- assorted colors of 4 x 4" (10 x 10 cm) construction paper
- construction paper crayons
- scissors and glue