

impact

University of Idaho Extension programs that are making a difference in Idaho.

Youth engaging in 4-H visual arts build artistic and life skills

AT A GLANCE

Youth enhance their creative thinking, problem-solving, communication, analyses and interpretation skills through visual arts lessons.

The Situation

The arts have been crowded out of the school day as the emphasis on improving standardized test scores increases and due to greater focus on teaching science and math content. The National Arts Education Association recently incorporated the role of the community in their mission to support the teaching of the visual arts. Art education research demonstrates that youth can express self and cope with emotional wellbeing through creating, reflecting and practicing. University of Idaho Extension 4-H Youth Development can play a key role in supporting art educators by providing visual arts resources for the classroom, afterschool and summer programs.

Our Response

UI Extension 4-H Youth Development provides resources for use within and outside the classroom, at afterschool and summer programs, and day and overnight camps. These resources include Create Art Now curriculum (2023), Outside the Box Visual Arts Learning Lab (2022), Create Art Now Supplemental lessons' packet (2023) and the Elements and Principles of Design Card (2018).



Samples of ink pen artwork from Series of Three in Ink lesson.

The supplemental lessons' packet offers youth additional visual art experiences to 4-H Create Art Now and Outside the Box lessons. These lessons are educational activities that support student learning in creative thinking, communicating and planning and organizing. They provide a sequential learning experience where youth explore, reflect, practice and share artworks. The lessons follow the experiential process of creating by following directions, reflecting on the process and artwork, and applying techniques in a second artwork. Youth begin to build skills they can apply to other areas of their lives.

The supplemental lessons introduce youth, fourth through eighth grade, to drawing, using oil pastels and ink pens. The eight scripted lessons encourage the

development of art techniques and vocabulary through repeated practices, thus expanding their creative thinking, problem-solving, communication, analyses and interpretation skills. A critique worksheet and Elements and Principles of Design Card are also provided in the supplemental lessons’ packet.

Program Outcomes

4-H professionals offered the lessons in spring and summer 2023 in school, afterschool and at 4-H programs. Seventy-four youth participated in programs in four counties. Youth completed four to six of the lessons and responded to survey indicators. Youth indicated if they did the activity and if they liked it, were neutral or did not like it. Table 1 shows the level of liking the lesson.

Table 1: Percent of youth liking or not liking the lesson.

Supplemental art lessons (N=54)	I liked it	Neutral	I did not like it
Contour Drawing (n=52)	75%	25%	-
Oil Pastels on Black (n=54)	76%	24%	-
Oil Pastels – Diptych (n=26)	96%	4%	-
Pastel: Landscape Perspective (n=29)	100%	-	-
Oil Painting: Mosaic (n=22)	91%	9%	-
Doodles and Shading in Ink (n=26)	100%	-	-
Series of Three in Ink (n=21)	90%	10%	-
Composition in Ink (n=20)	80%	15%	5%

Youth ranked their level of agreement with skill-building indicators. Overall youth indicated that they learned new art techniques through practicing, making changes as they worked and enjoyed the process. These indicators support youth learning creative thinking skills. Making changes after practicing demonstrates ability in planning and organizing. Describing their artwork and giving it a title indicates communication skill development. Sharing their

artwork with the group or the opportunity to display it is another aspect of building communication skills (Table 2).

Table 2: Percent of youth indicating skill building while doing art lessons.

When doing art, I was able to:	Strongly Agree or agree	Neither disagree nor agree	Really disagree or disagree
Learn new art techniques for drawing, oil pastels or ink pens (n=34)	100%	-	-
Try an art technique several times (practicing) (n=42)	98%	2%	-
Make changes in my artwork after practicing techniques (n=34)	97%	-	3%
Enjoy the process of creating artwork (n=49)	98%	2%	-
Give my artwork a title (n=44)	78%	20%	2%
Describe what I see in my artwork (n=38)	86%	11%	3%
Describe my favorite part of my artwork (n=34)	97%	3%	-
Share my artwork in an exhibit or display (n=40)	88%	8%	6%

The supplemental lessons support the 4-H visual arts program goal of life skill development through visual arts. The pilot of Create Art Now curriculum and Outside the Box visual arts learning labs had similar findings. Collectively 4-H is helping youth build creative thinking, communication and planning and organizing skills through doing visual arts.

Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

The 4-H Create Art Now supplemental lesson was funded under the 4-H Ignite Your Spark Building Capacity grant from the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare under the American Rescue Plan Act, 2022.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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