

Understanding Unified Arts

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Fox Lane Middle School, Bedford, New York

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In order to understand what is Unified Arts at The Fox Lane Middle School — its activities and the strategies of the U.A. team — one should first become aware of the beautiful, unique, and flexible buildings and facilities that make up the school. It should be pointed out that this avant-garde building, which reflects the combined thinking and planning of a forward looking superintendent, a bold innovative architectural group, a private educational facilities consulting firm, and local staff personnel, began as an answer to the very practical problem of a need for classroom space.

In 1961, the existing schools in the Bedford district, both elementary and high school, were quickly becoming overcrowded, and the notion of a middle school to relieve pressures at both ends of the educational ladder was looked upon as a practical answer to this problem. At the same time, this arrangement, as envisioned by the superintendent and others close to him, would also make for a beneficial educational program for the diverse needs of the early adolescent.

The School Building

The resulting building is an architect's delight because of its simplicity of design and flexible character. The ability to encourage and accommodate change was a primary educational specification for the school. The buildings are located on a wooded and hilly terrain of some thirty acres that is shared with The Fox Lane High School. The two schools are centrally located in the district in a 135 acre complex. The Middle School was built primarily of reinforced concrete at a cost of approximately four and one-half million dollars which includes the equipment and furnishings. Because of its unusual emphasis on the individual (one third of each academic house is devoted to individual study space), its good provision for teachers' work space, and finally the way in which the buildings

enhance a difficult site, the school received a distinguished design award as one of the twenty-four trend-setting schools of the nation in 1967.¹

The school consists of three two-level wings or academic houses, clustered around the central arts building. A physical education building is located nearby. (See figure 2). Each academic house is in itself a small school with a student population of about 400, a staff of about 14 teachers, a head teacher, a guidance counsellor, and a secretary. The teachers of academic subjects form grade level teams. Each house has three grade levels — 6th, 7th and 8th. The two foreign language teachers in each house work independently of these teams. The head teacher has teaching responsibilities for one-half of the day and administrative duties for the rest of the time. The head teacher is responsible to the principal of the entire school and his assistant. These last two mentioned administrators have their offices located on the first floor of the central arts building.

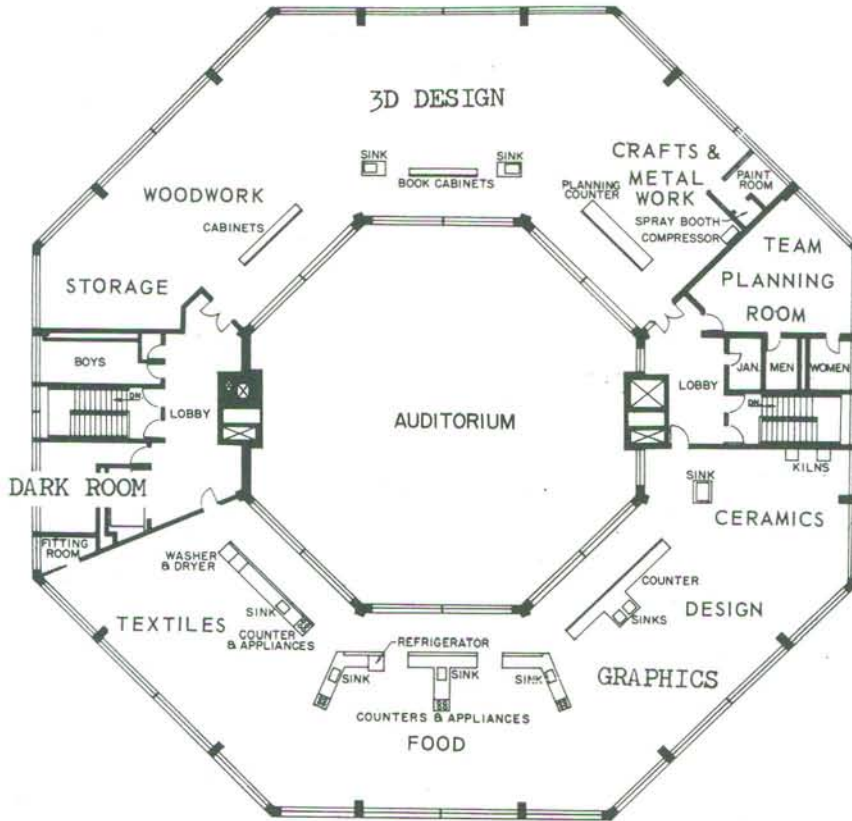
This building is a three-storey octagonal structure (See figure 3) that houses on the first floor the educational communications centre, the health suite, and the central power plant, in addition to the administrative offices.

On the middle level, the 'Little Theatre' dominates the centre of the octagon, while around its perimeter is the central library and the music suite. The Little Theatre seats about 350 students and was designed to obtain the goal of the educational specifications of accommodation individualized learning.²

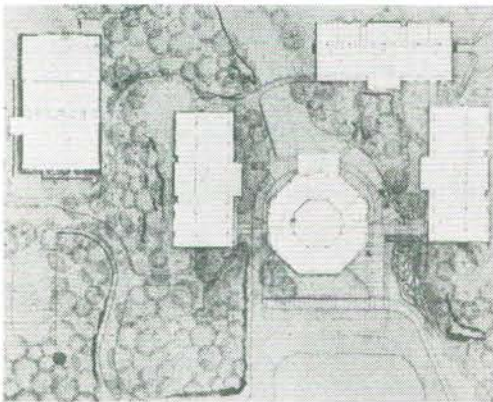
The top level of the arts building, an open space of approximately 10,000 square feet, is the area set aside for Unified Arts.

1 "How Award Winning Schools Company", *Nations Schools*, Vol. 81, No. 1, January, 1968, p.50-51.

2 "How Not to Move into a New School", *School Management*, November 1966.



The open space Unified Arts Facility – Figure 1.



Site Plan of The Fox Lane Middle School – Figure 2.



Central Arts Building and Academic House – Figure 3.

187 The Open Space Unified Arts facility

For a middle school year book, an eighth grade student described the open space area in this way:

In most schools, art is a once a week program at which time you draw a few pictures. Not so at this school. Just walking thirty steps in our Unified Arts department can take you through a number of areas where you'll see kids creating clay pots, wooden stools, lemon meringue pies, metal jewellery and maxi-skirts.

The areas that this youngster has alluded to are the seven material work areas on the third floor. The areas in a clockwise rotation around the perimeter of the octagon are ceramics, design, food, textiles, wood, graphics and metal. Storage space for projects and supplies is available within each of these areas. (See figure 1).

The areas are designated as listed above only because they contain the tools, equipment and supplies peculiar to that material or process. However, the divisions are true in name only, since all areas, the spaces between them, and the corridors nearby are used interchangeably for a variety of activities. For example, during the teaching of the Design and Materials Unit, all areas are used by the team for teaching the concepts of two and three-dimensional design. The Drawing for Communication Unit utilizes all areas for both freehand and mechanical drawing. The Independent Phase often finds such activities as puppet making and experimental painting taking place in the foods area. (See figure 4). This flexible use of the areas means that there must be flexibility in the storage cabinets used to house the supplies and small equipment needed to carry on these diverse activities. The Fox Lane Middle School has twenty-two of its cabinets on wheels for rapid, mobile changes in the purpose of an area. (See figure 5).

This flexibility in the use of the areas means also complete co-operation and mutual trust among the staff. Each team member has a complete set of keys to the cabinets in all areas of Unified Arts. Although one teacher has the responsibility for an area in the ordering of supplies and the maintenance of the equipment, this does not mean that he will spend the majority of his working day in that area. Since others will be using this area, the degree of tidiness the responsible teacher demands and the manner in which he has organized the area are talked about frankly among team members involved during common planning period. During this time they also will agree upon how they will use the existing storage space and will make suggestions to the responsible teacher of current supplies needed and long range suggestions for equipment and supplies for the future.

This flexible use of the material work areas — for example, using the foods area for painting classes — does not always meet the hygienic standards of the visiting traditional Home Economics teacher. However, the 'at home' climate the boys and girls have developed for an area as they paint and cook at the same time is, in the opinion of this writer, far more beneficial to their social growth than the sterile, operating room atmosphere found in many home economics suites across this nation.

There are three other areas that are used interchangeably: the two lobbies at the head of the stair wells and the textile work area. The lobbies serve as quiet gathering places for small-group instruction, especially when there will be some type of an audio-visual presentation. The textile area, the most flexible area in Unified Arts, can be quickly converted into a little theatre for approximately 100 students. The purpose for this use of the textile area would be for large-group lessons, especially in the Design and Material Units; audio-visual presentations for the entire grade level; enrichment programs



Painting and Cooking in the Foods Area — Figure 4.



Mobile Cabinets for flexibility in the Program — Figure 5.



Drawing for Observation — Figure 6.



Critiquing Student Drawings — Figure 7.

from local galleries; and administrative sessions at the beginning of the year or at the outset of a new unit. It is possible to use the textile area for these purposes at certain times since all other students and teachers on the floor would be in need of that particular lesson or could, indeed, benefit from the presentation. The use of this area, therefore, is programmed as part of the daily planning of the team in relationship to the entire Unified Arts program. The use of this area by a smaller group or the moving of groups because noise and odours might cause concentration problems would also be worked out in planning sessions but in this situation by only the teachers directly involved.

The open space of the Unified Arts facility not only affects greatly the diversity of the program but also influences the students' motivation and discipline. In this flexible open space, the student can see, hear, feel, smell and — yes — even taste what is going on about him. He can use all of his senses to perceive the interrelationship of the arts. This vicarious experience has produced highly motivated youngsters who in turn have made Unified Arts a place where substitute teachers compete to be placed and where the new or practice teacher can succeed. In addition, the open space also makes supervision of the novice teachers relaxing for all. It allows for both team and master teacher critiques of teaching ability, and, with practice teachers, it provides a wide number of experiences that could not be found in most schools of higher education.

Scheduling students for Unified Arts

The population of each of the three academical houses is heterogeneous. In each house are students from all four communities, in all three grades and of all abilities and attitudes. Each student spends two-thirds of his day in his academic house. This time, split into two-hour blocks, is devoted to

math and science in one block and English and Social Studies in the other. The basic assignment of students to these blocks is by grade level. More specific scheduling and grouping is done by the teachers within the time block.¹

The remaining two-hour block of the pupil's time is spent almost entirely out of the house with pupils from other houses in either the arts building or the gymnasium. A youngster will be in Unified Arts every other day for 45 minutes. This allotment, coupled with time for Music and a Foreign Language or a skills laboratory, will make up his scheduled out-of-house-time on one day. The next day he will spend one hour and fifteen minutes in Physical Education and forty-five minutes in a Foreign Language or skills laboratory. This schedule will repeat itself continually throughout the school year. Unified Arts and Music truly are the 'melting pot' of the school day, for it is only here that students of all categories, from all houses, and of both sexes, come together. It might be the only time during the school day that a boy or girl will get the opportunity to visit and relate with a friend from his home neighbourhood. This is one of the many reasons that students look forward to the time they will spend in Unified Arts.

At this point, some remarks should be made about the numbers of students on each grade level team. The Unified Arts team, as well as the Music instructors, are responsible for six groups or teams of students on any given day. There would be two groups each of sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students. For the sake of identification, they are referred to as 6A and 6B, 7A and 7B, and 8A and 8B, and represent about one-fourth of the school's population in that grade level for that day. On the following day, the Unified Arts team will see 6C and 6D, 7C and 7D, and 8C and 8D. (See Appendix I,

¹ While this description is accurate of the period of time that this study concerns itself with, the school is now about 2/3 ungraded!

page 40). The average size of a team of students reporting to Unified Arts at one time under the supervision of six Unified Art teachers would be approximately 90 students. This schedule allows for one hour common planning time each day for the entire team.

Introductory Phase

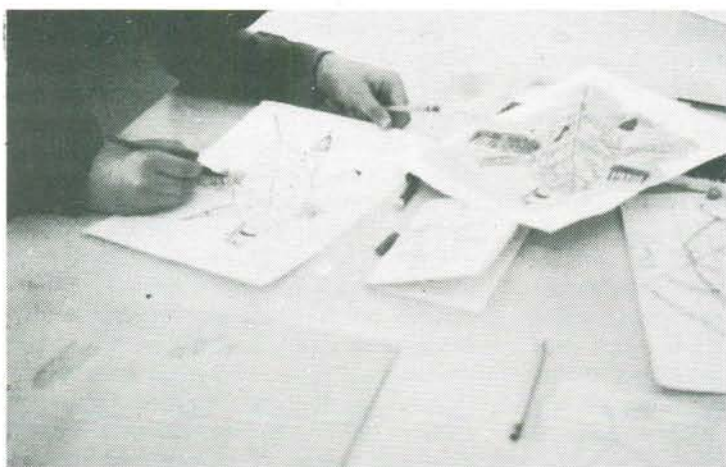
Unified Arts at The Fox Lane Middle School is a continuous program of the arts for all students grade six through eight, and it is composed of three phases called the Introductory, the Intermediate, and the Independent phases. Unified Arts is mandatory for all students, and it has been hailed as the most striking departure from conventional practices found at The Fox Lane Middle School. Since students report for Unified Arts every other day for three years, they are in essence receiving a year and one-half of the 'arts'. This time span is shorter than the traditional junior high program, which is usually segregated by sex with girls taking Home Economics for one year, boys taking one year of Industrial Arts, and both taking one year of Fine Arts. However, this writer submits that although the Unified Arts program results in less time, the educational gains for youngsters of the middle school age far outweigh this time loss. First and most important, the continuous program of Unified Arts keeps the common concepts of the arts in view of the youngster at all times for the duration of his stay in the middle school. Secondly, the program is not segregated by sex. Boys and girls have the same opportunities. The 6th graders have the same amount of time in class as the 8th graders. Finally, the program allows students to make a choice of their own curriculum in the 8th grade, thus allowing for specialization or generalization as they prepare to enter into the high school.

A common goal of this continuous program is the nurturing of the student's ability to recognize, communicate, plan,

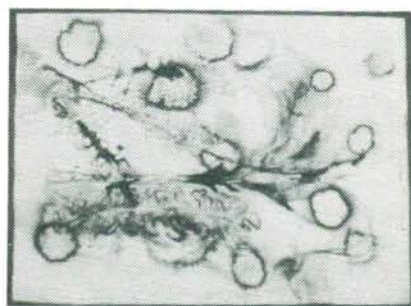
and finally execute the solution to a problem whether it be in the plastic or visual arts. As the student continues to solve problems, the Unified Arts team will direct him into moulding past experiences into new and different organizations. This process will thus give the student a basis for better choices in solving new problems, which will lead, in turn, to greater intellectual independence.

The Design Unit

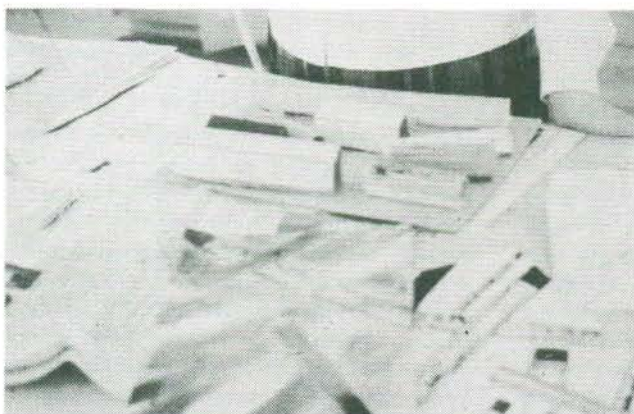
In the fall of the year, a sixth grader entering the Unified Arts program at The Fox Lane Middle School would find himself spending the first couple of weeks outside the school making observational drawings of small natural objects. (See figure 6). This lesson is part of the Orientation Phase of the continuous Unified Arts program. For this first lesson, he has been grouped quite arbitrarily by the Unified Arts team into classes of about 15 students. This concept of teachers becoming involved in the scheduling of students, rather than an administrator was a role change that served to improve the attitude of the teachers on the Unified Arts team. The student has been told that the object of his observational drawings is the notion of collecting data for use in future 'problems' in the Unified Arts program. All sixth graders are involved in this lesson on observation, as so are the entire team of Unified Arts teachers. All six teachers on the team, although all of their backgrounds were not in the fine arts field, work with the students on this lesson. It has been the philosophy of this team, from the time they voluntarily dropped their specialized classifications to become Unified Arts teachers, that if there is to be a marriage of the disciplines, then there must be a complete teaming of the teachers of the disciplines. This teaming, the key to success in a unified arts program, is obvious and logical but has not always existed in the unified arts programs in the past.



Design composition with a variety of media — Figure 8.



Experimentation — Figure 9.



Creating a 3-Dimensional Design from Original Design Composition — Figure 10.

For this lesson, Drawing for Observation, the former Fine Arts majors have coached the other members of the team in what to look for and what to ask of the students. This in-service education has been one of the many hallmarks of the Unified Arts program at Fox Lane. It also serves to point out the flexibility of the members of the team. They are eager and willing to learn themselves and to give up and compromise individual ideals for one concerted, united team effort. This united team effort does not just happen. Just as a winning ball club requires hours of practicing together, at Fox Lane the team, graced by a liberal measure of common planning time during the school day and a fairly comfortable team planning room, constantly plans and practices the art of teaching together. The team adopted a planning-teaching-observing-evaluating cycle which provides the team with immediate daily evaluative feedback. The team practices the game plan together, then meets on the following day to evaluate the 'game' in terms of the behavioural responses of the students and to make changes, if needed, for the next practice. I believe that this planning and practicing of his profession in full view of his colleagues has engendered a high degree of professionalism in each member of the Unified Arts team at Fox Lane.

If the weather should be inclement, the 6th grade youngster being described in this Introductory phase has been told where to report on the top floor of the Central Arts building. On these rainy days, students will draw objects that are man-made in lieu of the organic objects they have been drawing while outside. One requirement of each student is that he should bring up the first object and his drawing for his teacher's comments and approval before he begins drawing another. This constant critique between the teacher and the student serves to acquaint the teacher with the student and vice versa. It also develops an awareness of the need for making critical judgments. This

critiquing of student work both individually and in small groups will be referred to often in this description and is a teaching method used frequently. (See figure 7).

As students finish the collecting of the data on their objects, they begin a series of collage designs which will introduce them to the notion of arranging shapes in a given amount of space. The students explore the idea of creating a two-dimensional design collage by symmetrical, non-symmetrical, chance, and arranged methods. Upon completing this series of design exercises, the students are told that they now must take some or all of the previous data drawings they had made of objects and compose them into 'thumbnail' design compositions. Students are encouraged to work in small detail, on one-fourth of a sheet of paper, before enlarging the design into a finished size. In this way, they can work faster, usually completing one or two compositions per period. Again there is an exchange of ideas between teacher and student in both the collage exercises and the design compositions. When a composition has been approved by both parties, the student then enlarges the 'thumbnail' to finished size. In this way, they can work faster, usually completing one or two compositions per period. Again there is an exchange of ideas between teacher and student in both the collage exercises and the design compositions. When a composition has been approved by both parties, the student then enlarges the 'thumbnail' to finished size. The method of enlarging is the grid method, knowledge of which is believed by the team to be an important skill for future pattern making. Once a student has one enlarged composition, he uses this as a master copy and makes others from it by tracing. Using these tracings, the student now makes two or three renderings of this same composition, using such media as pen and ink, water colours, pastels, crayons, or magic markers. (See figure 8). Students are

also encouraged to do as much experimentation as they wish with mixed media and techniques. (See figure 9). This experience of realizing for himself the interrelationship of the design, technique and material for the first time is the primary goal of this design lesson and for the entire Orientation Phase of Unified Arts.

What has been briefly described constitutes the Design Unit of the Introductory Phase of Unified Arts, and at its completion, the school year would be near the Christmas recess. A more detailed description of the lesson by lesson procedure in moving through this design unit is found in Chapter IV. The reader should be cautioned that this entire unit does not move along for all youngsters in the very systematic manner presented above. There is constant shifting and regrouping of youngsters who make the program as individualized as possible. Neither should one reach the conclusion that all of this regrouping is accomplished without a great deal of team effort in the scheduling and teaching of the group lessons; the ordering of supplies and audio-visuals; and the tremendous amount of physical work in maintaining the equipment, setting up displays, storing away student projects, and the endless-endless job of setting up chairs for large-group lessons!

The Materials Unit

Shortly after Christmas Vacation, a sixth grade student will begin the second unit of work, the Material Unit. Again the continuing goal of the Introductory Phase, learning to solve Unified Arts problems through the discovery of the interrelationships of the design, techniques, and materials, is reinforced. The approach used is to change the materials but to keep the design composition the same, thus creating a different organization in a three-dimensional form. (See figure 10). In order to discover the many and varied techniques used to modify sheet materials — in this unit paper and

paper products were the prime materials — a lesson entitled, *Messing Around with Paper*, is employed by the entire teaching and learning teams. Students working for two or three days with no direction from the teachers except 'to do something with paper' experiment excitedly. Some of this excitement understandably is due to the fact that up to now the team had held the students in a somewhat 'tight' design experience, drawing and painting. Now the students are allowed movement. It is true that some of the students merely wad up paper balls and throw them at one another, while other students will make the traditional Christmas tree loop chains they have learned to construct in elementary schools. These actions are the price one must pay and must be prepared for in creative teaching. However, over a period of time, students do become, each in his own way, an inventor, an experimenter, a builder, an expressionist, perhaps a realist, and some a fantasist, during this lesson. The team never replenishes the first supply of paper, glue, and fasteners and it can be accurately reported here that creative problem solving increases as supplies decrease! (See figure 11).

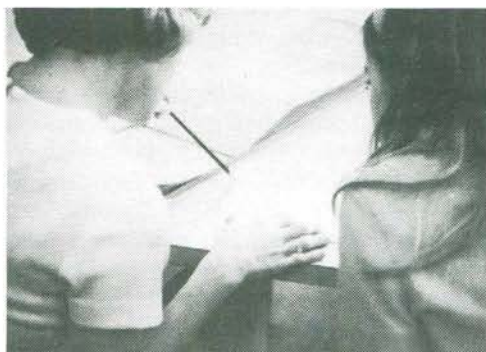
From this somewhat confusing, messy, but excited atmosphere students verbalize what they have done to the paper, how they have modified it, and what characteristics they have learned about paper. This new vocabulary of techniques and concepts becomes a working vocabulary for this unit and a natural transition into the final unit of work in the Introductory Phase which is appropriately called the technique unit.

The Technique Unit

The technique unit, which usually begins sometime in March, is again a reinforcement of the notion of the team that a student must understand the interrelationship of the design, technique, and materials in the solving of problems in Unified Arts. The differences, however, in this unit are that



Messing around with Paper – Figure 11.



Progress Profile in use by Teacher and Student – Figure 12.



Boys and Girls work side by side in all material areas – Figure 13.

first, the emphasis is placed upon learning the techniques of handling six materials; namely wood; paper and ink; metal; clay; foods; and fabrics, using student inspired designs as projects. The second difference is the length of time that this unit is in operation. The students spend approximately 18 sessions rotating through each material work area. It takes about one school year to complete this revolution. This continuation of a unit of the Unified Arts continuous program from one school year to the next makes it unique and is altogether possible because of the Progress Profile Evaluation Instrument that is maintained by the team and their team secretary. This record makes it possible for a quick, accurate, and cumulative assessment of each student's progress in the areas of Problem Solving, Communication and Performance. Thus students can easily be placed in the right part of the program upon returning from summer vacation. The Profile is used as a daily attendance record also and contains a photograph of each student that is extremely helpful in the identification of some 1000 students. It is especially appreciated by the substitute teacher. (See Appendix II, and figure 12).

During this technique unit, students move along in most cases in groups of 14 to 16 students and stay in these same groups for the total technique unit. This is not to say that there is not an emphasis on the individual. If certain students are observed by the team to have problems of lack of dexterity or physical maturity during the first two units, Design and Material, they are placed in soft materials areas such as textiles and clay for their beginning areas. Students with noticeable emotional problems are placed with team members who have proved themselves successful with these students, and, in some cases, these students will stay for more than one session and therefore never move through this entire rotational overview unit. Students who find

it difficult to relate to a teacher of the opposite sex — this difficulty seems to be a problem for the pre-adolescent — can be programmed so they have a teacher of the preferred sex.

It must be remembered at this point that all students, boys and girls working side by side, are involved in all of these material work areas. (See figure 13). The problems they are solving in these areas are for the most part of their own choice and design. The photograph in Figure 14 is by way of illustration of the strong commitment the team has to the design concepts and also their belief that a creative person must have a good grasp of the techniques of safely manipulating materials in an organized fashion and an understanding of the characteristics of tin-plate, aluminium, copper and brass. This writer submits that the student who made this mask has learned more in creating this project than if he had made a sugar scoop, a traditional sheet metal project in an Industrial Arts shop.

Perhaps one area where this occurs to a substantially lesser degree is in the foods area and this is true because of the timeless mores of civilized people not to waste food. Students may also be influenced by the deeply ingrained habits of their lifetime to cling to customary patterns of combining and consuming standardized foods. An honest effort is made with the students in this area to carry over into the final presentation and serving of food the principles of design such as line, colour, texture, size, and shape. However, in the actual preparation of new recipes (designs) student achievement is minimal. Since this is the technique unit, one of the skills stressed for the development is, indeed, the learning to read and follow a written recipe. This method of teaching is not to discredit the concept of creative problem solving being advocated in this study for the creation of new recipes. The concept would hold true here, in food as in any other areas, but experimentation

is slowed by the deep, moralistic law of man not to waste, and by student timidity to endanger their own digestion.

If the students appear to learn from and enjoy this unit, the teachers on the team have also learned an extraordinary amount of technical knowledge from one another. Each member has taught at least one materials area out of this field. That is to say that the former Home Economics teachers have taught graphics and ceramics, art teachers metal and wood, and Industrial Arts teachers textiles and ceramics. Some teachers have also increased their technical knowledge by attending workshops outside of the school and during the school day! In one case, the Home Economics teacher took a course in weaving at the community art school and thus enriched her textile area experiences for the students. Allowing her to go out of the building for classes a couple of times per week for two hours would be unheard of



Metal Mask — Figure 14.



Boys fastening fabrics in Textile Area — Figure 15.

in a traditional school, yet this was executed by the team without hardship.

Parents have also been very enthusiastic about this part of the program and have expressed it this way in a report in the Fox Lane Middle School Newsletter concerning a visit of two mothers to the Middle School for one day; 'We were looking forward to Unified Arts since our kitchens have been rather congested lately with various offspring cooking in the name of doing their homework — and we were pleased that clean-up was stressed by the teachers'. In the years that this report covers, there were only complaints by three parents concerning the program. These concerned their sons' using the sewing machines. When it was explained that the learning of the use of the sewing machine was not compulsory and it was only one of the many ways of fastening fabric together that was taught in the process of solving problems with fabric, the complaints stopped entirely. (See figure 15).

The Intermediate Phase

After students at The Fox Lane Middle School have completed a revolution through the material work areas in the technique unit, it is approximately January of their second year, and they now enter the Pre-Independent Phase of Unified Arts.

The team looks upon this phase as a time for, first, the adding of one more essential skill to all the students' technique inventory and secondly, the assessing of the students' ability to solve problems in Unified Arts.

Drawing for Communication

In the estimation of the team, the last important skill needed by students of Unified Arts in order to be good problem solvers is that of being able to communicate his ideas visually and, more precisely, to do this by creating depth on paper.

Toward this end all students are given a course in both freehand and mechanical drawing. These two courses, taught simultaneously by two teams of three teachers, continue until the end of March. Students have approximately twenty days of freehand drawing and then exchange with a group of students who have been learning mechanical drawing skills for the same purpose.

In freehand drawing, students at the outset learn some basic 'tricks of the trade' of drawing geometric shaped objects so they appear to be solid and to have depth. After mastering these methods, the students proceed into drawing three-dimensional still life shapes, using such media as Japanese brush; scratch board; palette knife; pen and ink; water colours; and pastels. The last section of the course in freehand drawing is devoted to the drawing of the human figure.

While these skills of drawing for communication are being taught to one group of students, on the other side of the building a group is learning to create depth using mechanical means. In this course, at least one-half of the time is devoted to learning skills of the use of the instruments, while the second half concentrates on drawing oblique and isometric shapes and placing dimensions on these figures.

It appears that, in this description of the unit on Drawing for Communication, it might be more important to talk about how the team functioned than what the content contained, since this unit proved to be one of the best examples of teaching in respect to co-operation, use of audio-visual equipment, programmed instruction, and in-service education in the entire Unified Arts program. The prime reason for its being singled out is the activity itself. Students involved in drawing are essentially immobile and are not involved in a dangerous activity. It was, therefore, quite easy for one teacher to often supervise or teach a large group of

students while the other teachers on the team either taught small groups and individuals or, in many cases, prepared new materials for use in the unit. The photos that follow illustrate these points. While one teacher works with a large group of students using an overhead projector (figure 16), another instructor can be working with a small group of students elsewhere (figure 17), or several teachers can be freed to prepare a T.V. tape (figure 18). This tape, placed into the Fox Lane Middle School Dial Access System, will be used later for a small-group lesson for students who were absent, or for review by an individual.

An activity such as the Drawing for Communication Unit also provides an ideal opportunity in the arts for the development and use of programmed instruction materials allowing students to proceed at their own rate of speed. (See figure 19).

The Problem Solving Unit

At this point in the continuous program of Unified Arts, it is now late Spring. A 7th grade student, having been made cognizant of numerous skills, techniques, processes, and concepts over a period of almost two years, is asked by the team to apply this knowledge to the solution of a common problem — a container. This problem, although selected by the teachers, was so general in nature that it could be solved in any of the material work areas of Unified Arts and any student could relate to it. Figures 20, 21 and 22 are examples of student solutions to this general problem in a variety of areas.

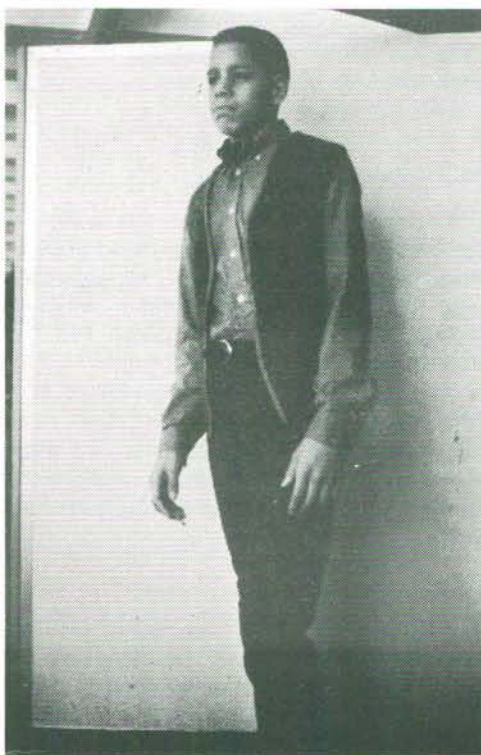
The methods and attitudes used by the students to solve the problems and the end results of these endeavours would provide the team with a prognosis of how the student will function in the forthcoming Independent Phase of Unified Arts. In order to emphasize a taxonomy for solving problems subscribed to by the team and which, in reality, has been the content of Unified Arts to date, the

team fashioned a problem solving outline to be used as a planning guide for each student.

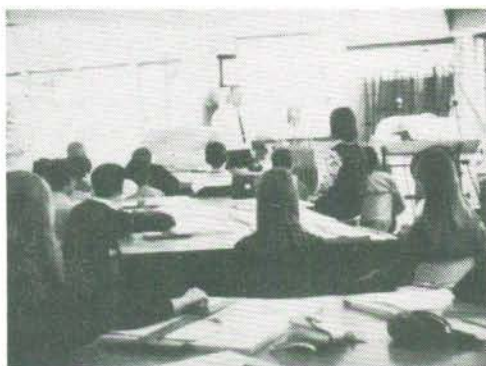
Again, students are actively involved in the materials of Unified Arts, and in turn, the atmosphere takes on a more excited, louder, and freer aura after the somewhat immobile, restricted, and hushed drawing unit. This pattern or rhythm of restriction followed by freedom for the students has appeared throughout the continuous program of Unified Arts and, in the eyes of this writer, has helped in the development of the students.

The Independent Phase

Students have completed the Introductory and Intermediate Phase of Unified Arts in most cases by the end of their 7th school year and are ready for the Independent



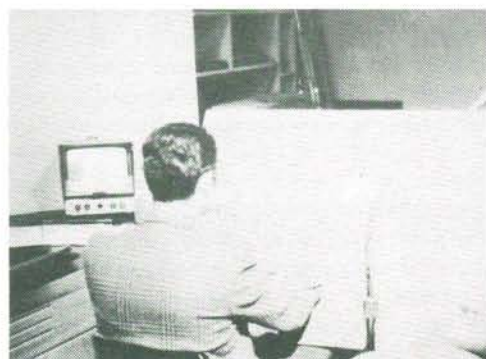
A Vest is a Container — Figure 22.



Large-group Instruction in Drawing for Communication — Figure 16.



Small Group Instruction — Figure 17.



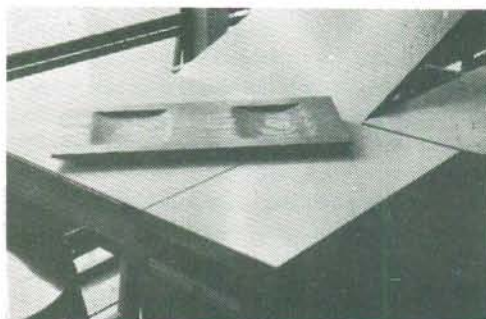
Team Members prepare T.V. Tape — Figure 18.



Individualizing Instruction with Programmed Materials — Figure 19.



Ceramic Problem Solving Containers — Figure 20.



Wooden Container — Figure 21.

Phase when they enter their 8th year at The Middle School. However, the team is not naive enough to think that all students will reach this pinnacle of the learning process by the eighth grade and neither does the team believe that each will reach it at the same time. Therefore, the Independent Phase at Fox Lane will attempt to accomplish — and develop — independent learning through two programs. These two programs are the Independent Study Interest Program and the Reinforcement of Problem Solving Program.

Independent Study Interest Program

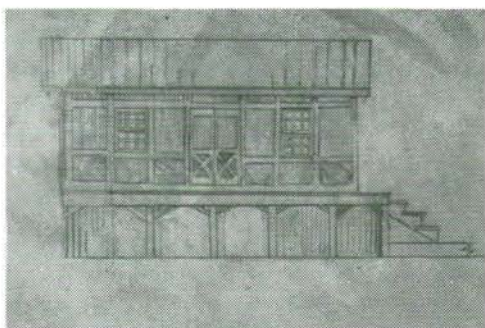
Students who, through records and teacher recommendations, have demonstrated their ability to work independently at the outset of the year, will select an activity from a catalogue of ideas. Something must be said about the activities that appear in this catalogue. The activities represent the results of an earlier survey made of student interests and was presented to the students for the first 19 day session in the format of six general subject areas with 13 sub-titles. The student selects an interest area which is headed by one or more teachers as the guides and consultants in that interest area. That a student in the majority of instances receives his first choice of a subject area is due in a large part to the flexibility, esprit de corps, and dedication of the team to this program. More will be said about this aspect below. Once the student is assigned to that subject area, he will select a project or activity of his own choice within the sub-areas. After providing the teacher-consultant with a plan of action, stating what he hopes to learn and accomplish, how he will proceed, and the time he thinks he will need, the student will draw a contract for the completion of the project or activity with the teacher.

During the student's planning stages with the teacher-consultant there will be communication with other team members about the advisability of the projects or

activities from technical standpoints and the determination in advance of the amount of co-operation and assistance that will be required for each area. In my opinion, it is these team discussions about students and their problems that give credence and substance to the notion of Unified Arts at this last level.

A student will have a period of approximately 19 sessions in Unified Arts to complete what he has contracted to accomplish. However, this date is not fixed for the individual student and merely represents a cut-off time when new subject interest areas will be added or other areas terminated. How can new areas be added while some are dropped and others remain intact? The answer to this question lies primarily in a flexible, dedicated, and student-centred Unified Arts team for the following reasons. First, students in most cases get their first choice of a subject area because, within reason, the team members at Fox Lane pay little heed to teacher-student ratios. If ten students wish to make puppets and twenty-five want to work in cabinet and furniture construction, this grouping is readily acceptable to the team. Their goal is one of what is good for the individual student is the only inhibiting consideration. Secondly, after a period of 19 sessions, as interest wanes for some students or projects are completed, teachers begin to pick up the students in new subject areas which have been generated out of interests reflected by these students. The students who have been under that teacher's tutelage are now assumed by another teacher, and this process allows for a pyramiding of areas. Students who contract to complete large undertakings can, by this program, spend the whole year working on their projects, and as the program progresses, other students, because of the flexibility of the staff, can spend shorter periods of time than the 19 day cycle.

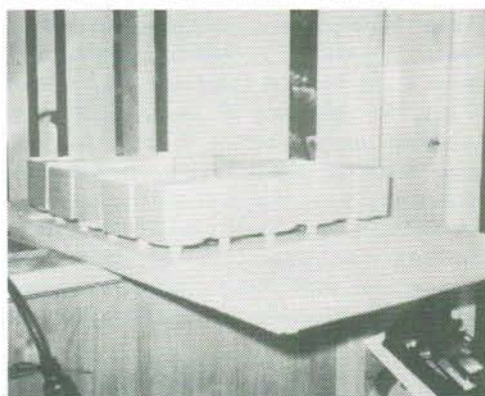
Let us look at some examples of this pyramiding process, using the two subject



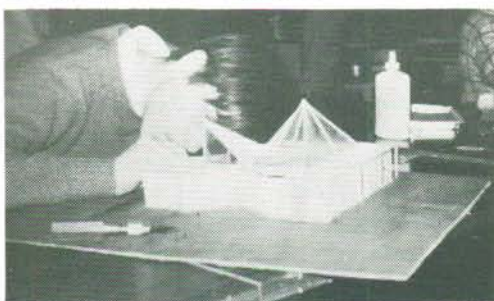
Elevation of a Vacation Home — Figure 23.



Re-designing a room — Figure 24.



City of the Future — Figure 26.



Model of a Dream House — Figure 25.

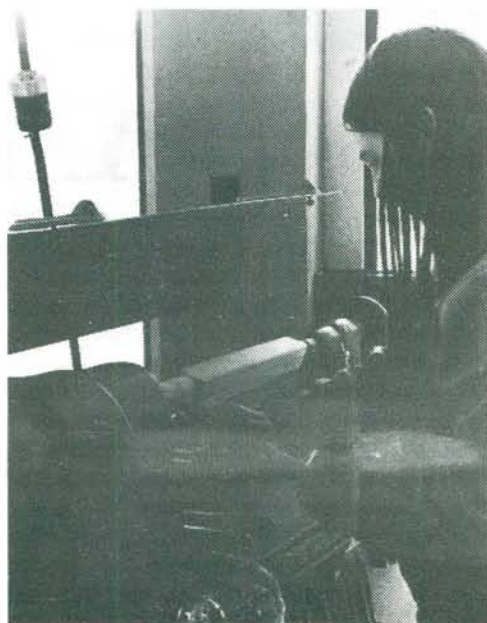


Passing on skills to Peers — Figure 27.

interest areas of Mechanical Drawing — House Planning and Interiors and Architectural Design — Model Making. In the first Unified Arts catalogue, these were offered as two separate areas with two teachers as the guides. Students contracted to do such projects as elevation drawings of vacation homes (figure 23), a re-design of their rooms at home (figure 24), a plan and model of a dream house (figure 25), and finally, plan and model of an entire self-contained city of the future (figure 26). Obviously all of these contracts are not of the same degree of difficulty and would not require the same amount of time to complete. They do represent an individual student's need and he is visibly excited because he has had a hand in writing his own individual plan of action in learning.

In the week prior to the end of the first 19 day session, students are asked about new interest directions. It was determined that there was a need for an interest area in Cabinet and Furniture Construction. The

teacher involved in the above mentioned Mechanical Drawing — House Planning was tapped to head up this new area in the field of woodworking. He turned his students who still wished to remain in Mechanical Drawing — House Planning over to the teacher in charge of the Architectural Drawing — Model Making subject area. Although the number in this group now increases because of this consolidation and perhaps would be considered too great for one teacher in a formal school setting, we must remember that Unified Arts at The Fox Lane Middle School is unique and allows consolidation of teacher responsibility to take place for the following four reasons. First, in the area of responsibility, the physical layout makes it possible for a clear view by several teachers of each at all times and since each teacher has had a part in the writing and planning of the activities in each area, there is an 'esprit de corps' among the staff. Teachers passing through areas will invariably stop and offer help,



Furniture Construction — Figure 28.



Ceramic Subject Interest Area — Figure 29.

guidance, encouragement, and criticism to youngsters not directly in their charge. Secondly, the staff is competent in many manipulative skills. For instance, a fine arts team member who has over the years built and raced sports cars and is presently building an airplane at home feels comfortable and is definitely qualified, in this writer's opinion, to demonstrate to 8th grade students how to operate a band saw! Another reason for this consolidation is the students themselves. They have now, at this point, progressed beyond the research and planning stages which require a great deal of teacher time. They, too, have developed skill competencies which they unselfishly pass on to their peers, and this student to student relationship is helpful in the crossing over in the consolidation of subject interest areas. (See figure 27). One other factor helpful in this consolidation is the fact that, of the original architectural drawing-model making students, some have completed their contracts and at this point are also moving on into other areas of interest such as the above mentioned Cabinet and Furniture Construction (See figure 28), Stage Design and Puppets, Ceramics (See figure 29), Industrial or Fashion Design.

In each of the 19 sessions, the list of possibilities and the dovetailing and crossing over of subject areas becomes increasingly larger. It should be remembered here that students can move at any time and some enjoy this flexibility by making shorter visits to areas than the 19 session installment. Whereas the program started with six subject areas with 13 sub-divisions in the beginning of the year, the fourth session had thirteen subjects areas and an endless number of sub-areas. Examples of the diversity of the program would be Enameling, Movie Making (See Figure 30), Drawing, Painting and Sculpture (See figures 31, 32 and 33), Clothing Construction, in addition to Electricity and Electronics, Plastic Crafts (See figure 34), and Jewellery Making.

In instances where the team lacked knowledge or skills in certain interest areas — for example puppet making, weaving, photography, and movie making — community resources were tapped and experts were brought into the school as both paid and volunteer consultants.

Reinforcement of Problem Solving Program

While the Independent Interest Program of the Unified Arts Independent Phase represents the epitome of a student-centred, problem solving, independent, and flexible curriculum, the Reinforcement of Problem Solving Program would be considered the other end of the spectrum. This structured program was designed to assist those youngsters who, through their past performance in the Orientation and Pre-Independent Phases and more recently in the Independent Interest Program, demonstrated an inability to solve problems and to appreciate the personal freedom congruent to that program.

It is interesting to note that, in the main, the students selected by the team to return to a problem solving unit for a sharpening of this skill were not, as one might suspect, the dull and unruly students. Instead they were in many cases students who, by their own admission, had dropped out because of lack of success in the program to date and a cohesive tie to any one teacher or one team.

Because this program needed considerable preparation on the part of the teacher and was also taxing, team members shared the responsibility for this group of students. The teachers worked with the classes every other day. These teachers shared the content and methods used first to establish rapport and then to promote self-reliance among these special students.

The methods varied. One teacher worked solely with paper and paper designs and constructions. (See figure 35). During these simple manipulative exercises, he established



Movie Making — Figure 30.



Drawing — Pen and Ink — Figure 31.

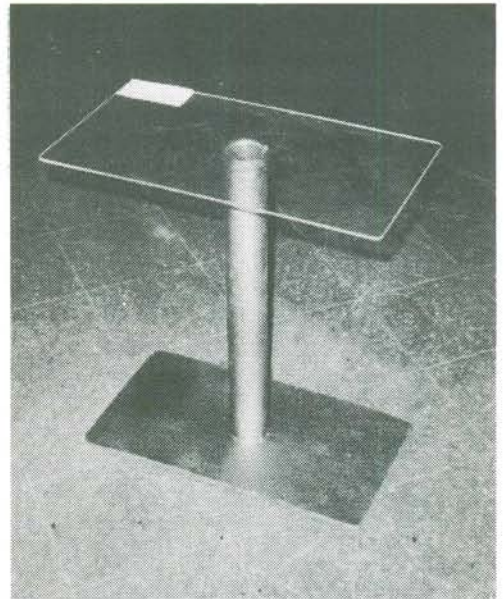


Painting — Acrylic Media — Figure 32.

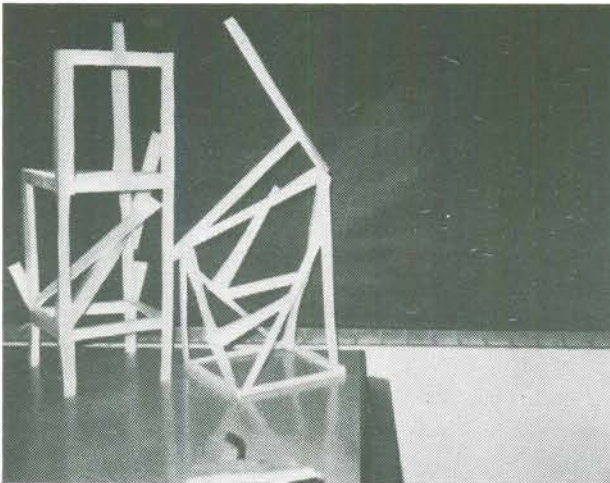


Sculpture — Papier Mache — Figure 33.

an unmistakable rapport that bloomed into the making of an 8 mm. stop-action movie of a piece of paper being manipulated into a shape! Another teacher used expressive painting which allowed him prolonged periods of time to speak with each individual student at length. When he gained their confidence, he carried them on into making metal jewellery. Invariably the same teachers have volunteered to work each year with these particular students and have generally carried the students over into another interest area as they felt the youngsters could now get back into the mainstream again.



Plastic Crafts — Figure 34.



Reinforcement of Problem Solving using Paper Constructions — Figure 35.

FIRST WEEK

APPENDIX I

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:15--8:30					
8:30--8:45	7C	7A	7C	7A	7C
8:45--9:00					
9:00--9:15					
9:15--9:30	7D	7B	7D	7B	7D
9:30--9:45					
9:45--10:00					
10:00--10:15					
10:15--10:30	COMMON PLANNING				
10:30--10:45					
10:45--11:00					
11:00--11:15	6C	6A	6C	6A	6C
11:15--11:30					
11:30--11:45					
11:45--12:00	6D	6B	6D	6B	6D
12:00--12:15					
12:15--12:30					
12:30--12:45			LUNCH		
12:45--1:00					
1:00--1:15	8C	8A	8C	8A	8C
1:15--1:30					
1:30--1:45					
1:45--2:00	8D	8B	8D	8B	8D
2:00--2:15					

SECOND WEEK

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:15--8:30					
8:30--8:45	7A	7C	7A	7C	7A
8:45--9:00					
9:00--9:15					
9:15--9:30	7B	7D	7B	7D	7B
9:30--9:45					
9:45--10:00					
10:00--10:15					
10:15--10:30	COMMON PLANNING				
10:30--10:45					
10:45--11:00					
11:00--11:15	6A	6C	6A	6C	6A
11:15--11:30					
11:30--11:45					
11:45--12:00	6B	6D	6B	6D	6B
12:00--12:15					
12:15--12:30					
12:30--12:45			LUNCH		
12:45--1:00					
1:00--1:15	8A	8C	8A	8C	8A
1:15--1:30					
1:30--1:45					
1:45--2:00	8B	8D	8B	8D	8B
2:00--2:15					

STUDENT:
FOX LANE MIDDLE SCHOOL
UNIFIED ARTS
PROGRESS PROFILE

(CIRCLE ONE)
 1. INTRODUCTORY
 2. INTERMEDIATE
 3. INDEPENDENT

DATE
 IN
 OUT

PROBLEM SOLVING

RECOGNIZES PROBLEMS

APPLIES PAST EXPERIENCES

WILLING TO EXPERIMENT

REMAINS FLEXIBLE ABOUT FINAL DECISIONS

DECISIONS BASED ON RESEARCH

ABLE TO PLAN

COMMUNICATES GRAPHICALLY

PERFORMANCE

UNDERSTANDS DESIGN CONCEPTS

CHARACTERISTICS OF MATERIALS CONSIDERED

PERFORMANCE TECHNIQUE DEVELOPED

PRODUCT FULFILLED ITS FUNCTION

PRODUCT CONSISTENT WITH ABILITY

SELF EFFORT MAINTAINED

TEACHER GOALS ACCOMPLISHED

STUDENT CITIZENSHIP

CODED COMMENTS

ALL CODES EXPLAINED ON BACK

TEACHER'S INITIALS

COMMENTS:

MARKING SYSTEM O: OUTSTANDING S: SATISFACTORY U: UNSATISFACTORY N/A: NOT OBSERVED

CODES FOR AREAS OF UNIFIED ARTS ENTERED

C - CERAMICS
 D - DESIGN
 F - FOOD
 T - TEXTILES
 W - WOOD
 G - GRAPHICS
 M - METAL
 CR - CRAFTS
 PL - PLASTICS

SC - SCULPTURE
 JE - JEWELRY
 FL - FLIGHT
 CI - CINEMA
 PH - PHOTOGRAPHY
 MO - MODELS
 MD - MECHANICAL DRAWING
 FD - FREE HAND DRAWING
 PS - PROBLEM SOLVING

CITIZENSHIP

INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING QUALITIES:
 COOPERATION RESPECT FOR PROPERTY
 PROMPTNESS RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY
 RESPECT FOR OTHERS SELF CONTROL

GENERAL COMMENT CODES

1. IS AN OUTSTANDING STUDENT IN ALL RESPECTS.
2. SHOWS EVIDENCE OF CREATIVE ABILITY
3. IS SHOWING IMPROVEMENT
4. WORKS HARD BUT FINDS SUBJECT DIFFICULT.
5. NOT WORKING TO CAPACITY.
6. DOES NOT COMPLETE ASSIGNMENTS.
7. UNPREPARED FOR CLASS ACTIVITIES.
8. DOES NOT SEEK EXTRA HELP.
9. SELECTS APPROPRIATE GOALS.
10. SHOWS HIGH STANDARDS OF CRAFTSMANSHIP.
11. HAS GOOD ATTITUDE TOWARD SELF
12. WORKS WELL IN A GROUP.
13. MANAGES TIME WELL.

EXPLANATION OF UNIFIED ARTS EVALUATION SYSTEM

The Unified Arts curriculum for Middle School students has been designed to bring the individual student to the best possible understanding of the interrelationship of design, technique and materials.

To accomplish this purpose, a student is exposed to a variety of experiences in the eight major areas of Unified Arts where he must solve a variety of construction and design problems, express himself clearly and concisely, select appropriate materials, and finally complete a product.

The evaluation of each student is a profile of his performance in the above categories in the areas of Unified Arts in which he has an experience. Evaluation will be continuous, and this report will be issued to parents upon completion of work in a particular area.

PLEASE CALL DR. WILTSE.
 666-6731 EXT. 268 FOR CONFERENCE

399-9340																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																													
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