COURSE WORK (2).

THE NATURE OF CHILDREN'S ART/CREATIVITY ACTIVITIES AND SUGGESTED PROGRAMMES IN DIFFERENT AREAS OF THE ARTS AT SECONDARY SCHOOL.

ANY TEACHING-LEARNING ACTIVITY CENTRES AROUND THE FACT THAT A TEACHER IS DEALING WITH A LIVING INDIVIDUAL, WHO IS VIEWING CRITICALLY THE WORLD AROUND HIM AND ALL THE EXTERNAL ACTIONS AND INFLUENCES. I'LL ALSO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO REMIND ALL OF US PRESENT HERE THAT AT NO TIME WE MUST FORGET THAT THIS INDIVIDUAL IS NOT A "MINIATURE ADULT" BUT A 'CHILD'.

MANY TIMES AS A TEACHER OF ART I HAVE COME ACROSS STUDENTS WHO HAVE EXCELLED IN ALMOST ALL SPHERES OF EDUCATION-ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE, ELOCUTION, GAMES AND SPORTS, DANCE AND DRAMA, ART. THEY ARE GIFTED AS BEING TACTFUL, RESPONSIBLE, WITH A CREATIVE IMAGINATION, A SENSE OF HUMOUR, AN ACTIVE AND POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE WORLD AND A CAPACITY FOR QUICK THINKING! IN SHORT AN OVERALL DEVELOPED PERSONALITY!

I'VE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK TO THEIR PARENTS AND BY CLOSE OBSERVATION HAVE COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT IT IS NOT A MATTER OF CHANCE THAT SUCH INDIVIDUALS EXIST BUT IT IS THE JOINT EFFORT OF THE PARENTS AND TEACHERS WHICH MAKE THEM THE WAY THEY ARE. SUCH CHILDREN HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO AN ARRAY OF RICH EXPERIENCES FROM CHILDHOOD WHICH HAVE HELPED THEM TO BE - WHAT THEY ARE!

A CHILD, WHO IS NOT GIVEN THE SCISSORS TO CUT PAPER AT
WHEN MUMBAI WAS
FLAUSED!!
An early age, for the fear that he may inflict wounds on himself will not be in a position to cover his own text books by the time he is a fifth grader.

Some children are lucky to have parents who understand the need for exposing the children to a lot of experiences, but there are many who not only discourage but act as a hindrance in their growing up. Here the responsibility of a teacher doubles. Firstly the teacher should be able to tactfully encourage and remove the ‘fear’ and expose the children to as many happy experiences as she can give, during the time the child is in her presence.

Hence the teacher should give a serious thought to his/her teaching system taken as a whole, to consider his errors, and to establish correct modes of interaction with children. Children are like mirrors and it is necessary to be able to look into it "to have a proper image of oneself, of the child and how he is getting on, and this is all what teaching-learning activity is all about!"

Motivation is first step of the ladder of creative activity and———

The art teacher herself can be the best motivator. The teachers appearance, character, likes, dislikes, the teacher has to be ‘lovable’. Initially the ‘love’ for the teacher depends on the marks or grades, the personal attitude of appearance. But slowly the child begins to appreciate the teacher not for the grades or the personality but for such characteristics such as kindness, fairness, understanding and unconditional love.
"THAT DOES IT!"

"That does it!" I said when I saw my sister perched on a stool in the den eating the last bar of chocolate and reading my most treasured comics that were now full of stains and little bits of chocolate in brown blocks all over. With a shriek, I dived for my comics and slapped my sister black and blue. "That does it!"

I heard the familiar voice of my mother:

A few minutes later there I was pacing about in my room. I'll soon get even with that brat!
CHILDREN ALSO LIKE EVERYTHING THAT IS INTERESTING AND WHAT CAN BE INTERESTING? EVERYTHING THAT'S NEW. SO TO MOTIVATE A CHILD, THE ART TEACHER CAN MAKE USE OF VARIOUS ART ACTIVITIES SUCH AS MARBLING, SCULPTURE, PAPER FOLDING, VARIOUS TECHNIQUES, USING VARIOUS MEDIA, PRINT MAKING—WHICH WILL MOTIVATE THE CHILDREN INTO PARTICIPATING IN THE CREATIVE PROCESS.

THE TEACHER WHO IS RUDE OR RUTHLESS AND HUMILIATES STUDENTS WHO ARE NOT IMITATIVE, CAN BE THE BIGGEST DETERRENT IN THE CREATIVE LEARNING PROCESS. BECAUSE CHILDREN ARE SUPER SENSITIVE AND ONCE THEY DISLIKE A TEACHER THEY CAN DISLIKE ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING THAT DEALS WITH THAT SUBJECT!

STORIES: I HAVE USED 'STORIES' AS A VERY GOOD MOTIVATOR FOR GETTING MY CHILDREN TO FINISH THE WORK IN TIME. ALL CHILDREN LOVE TO LISTEN TO STORIES AND I PUT A CONDITION "IF YOU FINISH THE ASSIGNMENT TEN MINUTES BEFORE THE BELL RINGS AND CLEAN YOUR WORK AREA QUICKLY THEN I'LL TELL YOU A STORY IN THE LAST FIVE MINUTES.

THIS TECHNIQUE HAS WORKED WONDERS THE CHILDREN HAVE LEARNT TO FINISH THEIR WORK IN THE GIVEN TIME, THEY CLEAN THEIR WORK AREA WITHOUT BEING LAZY AND WHEN THEY LISTEN TO A STORY WITH A MORALE, UNKNOWINGLY THEY ARE INCULCATING A GOOD VALUE SYSTEM.

I HAVE USED STORIES FOR TWO OTHER PURPOSES ALSO. SOMETIMES DURING THE FREE PERIODS WHEN I GO FOR SUBSTITUTE ANOTHER TEACHER WHO MAY HAVE BEEN ABSENT, WE PLAY A "STORY BUILDING GAME" HERE ONE CHILD BEGINS ONE LINE OF THE STORY AND THE
CHILDREN BUILD UP THE STORY LINE. THIS WAY THE CREATIVE MIND IS MADE TO THINK. SO A CREATIVE ACTIVITY AND PLAY ARE BOTH AT WORK.

SOMETIMES I TELL A STORY AND ASK THE CHILDREN TO BREAK THE STORY INTO FOUR OR EIGHT SMALL PARTS AND PICTURISE THEM LIKE A STORY BOARD. IN HIGHER CLASSES, FOR INSTANCE THE SEVENTH OR THE EIGHTH GRADERS I'VE GIVEN ACTIVITIES LIKE EXPRESSING THE FEELINGS AFTER READING A NOVEL OR AFTER READING A POETRY.

BULLETIN BOARDS AND DISPLAYS ARE VERY GOOD MOTIVATORS FOR CHILDREN. THEY FEEL PROUD AND CONFIDENT WHEN THEY SEE THEIR WORK BEING DISPLAYED. A RESOURCEFUL ART TEACHER WILL GET HER CHILDREN TO ARRANGE THE DISPLAYS ON THE BULLETIN BOARDS GENTLY GUIDING THEM AND MAKING THEM AWARE VISUALLY OF THE GREAT MERITS OF THE DISPLAY WORK:

1) HE WILL LEARN 2D AND 3D ART.
2) HE WILL LEARN LETTERING.
3) HE WILL LEARN ABOUT THE NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE SPACE WITHOUT BEING TAUGHT ABOUT IT, THROUGH VISUAL AWARENESS.
4) THE CHILDREN WILL ALSO BE ENCOURAGED TO DO WORK OF A HIGH STANDARD IF GOOD WORK IS DISPLAYED.
5) COMPETITION OF THE DISPLAY BOARDS CAN MOTIVATE THE CHILDREN TO DO GOOD WORK.

PROJECTS : THE GROUP PROJECTS OR INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS TEACH THE CHILDREN IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH. HOW TO DISPLAY OR PRESENT INVOLVES PLANNING AND ORGANISATION. THEY LEARN HOW TO WORK ON THEMES. THEY LEARN HOW TO WORK WITH INDIVIDUALS OF DIFFERENT
NATURE AND HOW TO DEAL WITH PROBLEMS.

GRAPHICS AND PRINTMAKING:

GRAPHICS OR PRINTMAKING IS FUN AND MAGIC FOR THE CHILDREN. THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE IS VERY DELIGHTFUL. FOR PRACTICAL PURPOSES, THOUGH WE MAKE PRINTS TO GET A NUMBER OF IDENTICAL COPIES OF A PARTICULAR IMAGE, E.G., FOR MAKING CARDS OR POSTERS. PRINTMAKING PRODUCES IMAGES, TEXTURES, AND EFFECTS WHICH CANNOT BE PRODUCED BY MORE DIRECT METHODS. SOPHISTICATED MATERIAL ISN'T NECESSARY IF THE TEACHER IS RESOURCESFUL.

CHILDREN CAN BE MADE TO TAKE PRINTS OF ANY NATURAL SURFACE - BARK OF A TREE, GLASS, SAND, STONE ETC. THUMB PRINTS, POTATO PRINTS, VEGETABLES, FLOWERS, LEAVES, TREE TRUNKS, CORK, WOOD, HARD-BORD, DRIED CLAY, FABRIC CORRUGATED BOXES, OR EVEN CRUMPLED NEWS PAPER. STAMP PRINTS BY PREPARING THEIR OWN BLOCKS WITH WOOD AND STRINGS AND CARDBOARD STRING, AND MONO PRINTING FROM GLASS TO PAPER, OR PAPER TO PAPER ARE VERY EASY AND CAN MAKE WORK INTERESTING.

PRINTMAKING CAN BE VERY BASIC AND YET PRODUCE VERY EXCITING RESULTS. IN GRAPHICS ONE CAN DO WONDERS WITH THE CHILDREN. I'VE DONE THE GRAPHIC "SUN" AND GRAPHIC "GANESH" WITH THE CHILDREN WHICH HAS GIVEN ME TREMENDOUS JOY.

PLAY AND ILLUSION:

PLAY AND ILLUSION ARE VERY NECESSARY FOR THE 'CATHARSIS.' WE CAN CITE A NO. OF DRAMATIC ILLUSION GAMES WHICH WE
Can consider as direct preliminary stages to dramatic art, a child may take a stick and pretend he is riding a horse, he may lie on the floor and pretend he is swimming or jump from a table top and believe he was flying like a bird.

Children have a vivid imagination, and we as art teachers can make the best use of this imagination to produce meaningful work. I had told the children to imagine themselves to be birds, then they had to imagine they were flying over mountains and valleys and higher and higher, and then they had to paint. The results were breathtaking. (visual).

It is quite apparent from this that children need that element of play, our enthusiasm, imagination and 'sky-larking' to help them go about their daily chores, without being depressed, is extremely important for the child.

Drama: The children can be made to act out small skits before giving any assignment. A piece of drama can be even read aloud in class and the children can be told to picture the children can be encouraged to mime an encounter before the class really gets down to 'h'nt' the topic. This way the child will develop vivid imagination, and the joy received by the children will be abundant. Here the skill is not as important as the imagination, the fantasy and idea carry more weight.

If a project of drama is planned in which papier-mache, paper dolls and doll houses are included the experience will
THE DRAMATIC GAMES ARISE FROM THE NEED OF THE CHILD TO HAVE A TANGIBLE BASIS FOR ILLUSION.

POETRY: CHILDREN CAN BE ENCOURAGED TO WRITE ABOUT TOPICS RELATED TO THEIR ENVIRONMENT OR RECENT EXPERIENCES.

A CHILD ONCE WROTE ABOUT HER MOTHER:

"THERE IS NO WORD AS BEAUTIFUL AS A "MOTHER"
AND THERE IS NO MOTHER AS BEAUTIFUL AS 'YOU'

THE CHILDREN IF ASKED TO PICTURISE A POEM CAN GIVE BETTER RESULTS THAN THE ADULTS THEMSELVES. WHEN NELSON MANDELLA WAS GOING TO BE FREE - I SPOKE TO THE FIFTH AND SIXTH STANDARD CHILDREN ABOUT THE FEELINGS HIS CHILDREN AND HIS WIFE MUST HAVE EXPERIENCED. THEN I TOLD THEM TO WRITE IN PROSE OR IN POETRY AND THEY WERE TOLD TO DESIGN CARDS WITH THE MESSAGE. THE RESULT WAS VERY GOOD. SOME OF THE CHILDREN EVEN WISHED TO SEND THE CARDS TO HIM BY POST!

WHILE ASKING THE CHILDREN TO COMPOSE POETRY THE CHILDREN SHOULD NOT BE TAUGHT THE GRAMMAR OF POETRY. IF THEY ARE TAUGHT THE SCIENCE AND RULES OF WRITING POETRY THE CHILDREN WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO WRITE POETRY SO SPONTANEOUSLY.

SELF-EXPRESSIVE TOPICS:

CHILDREN SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO DRAW TOPICS SUCH AS:
AMBITION' 'DISAPPOINTMENT' THE DAY I WAS EMBARRASSED AND ANY OTHER TOPICS RELATED TO 'SELF'. BEFORE GIVING SUCH TOPICS THERE SHOULD BE A MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE, BETWEEN THE TEACHER AND THE STUDENTS. THESE TYPES OF THE TOPICS WILL GREATLY HELP THE TEENAGERS.

A GREAT DEAL HAS BEEN SAID ABOUT THE TEENAGERS - THAT IT IS A VERY DIFFICULT PHASE FOR THE CHILDREN. EVERYTHING THAT HAS ACCUMULATED IN A CHILD DURING HIS SHORT LIFE, SUDDENLY COMES TO LIFE AND MANIFESTS ITSELF VIOLENTLY INTO ACTIVITIES AND HIS- RELATIONSHIPS, TOWARDS THE OUTSIDE WORLD.

'JUDGED' BY ITS STRENGTH OF EMOTION, ITS DEEP IMPRESSIONABILITY, THE PURITY AND BEAUTY OF ITS EFFORTS OF WILL, A CHILD'S LIFE, IS INCOMPARABLY RICHER THAN THAT OF AN ADULT. AND THEREFORE ITS VARIATIONS ARE NOT ONLY MAGNIFICENT BUT EVEN DANGEROUS' SAID A PSYCHOLOGIST.

WHILE YOUNGER SCHOOL CHILDREN DISPLAY THEIR FEELINGS AND ANXIETIES IN THEIR EXTERNAL BEHAVIOUR, ACCEPT MANY THINGS ON FAITH, AND ARE EASILY MANAGED, TEENAGERS ARE EXTREMELY CATAROMATIC AND DEMANDING OF OTHERS AND SEEK INDEPENDENCE. THIS STORMY AGE MAY LAST FOR ONE OR TWO YEARS AND BEGIN TO CALM DOWN ONLY WHEN THE POWER OF REASON BEGINS TO PREVAIL OVER EMOTIONS. ONE WAY TO HELP THE CHILDREN SETTLE IS TO GIVE SUCH TOPICS AS WOULD GIVE THEM A CHANCE TO REST THEIR STRENGTH.
IT IS VERY IMPORTANT NOT TO DEPRIVE THE TEENAGERS OF THE PLEASURE OF TAKING THEIR FIRST INDEPENDENT STEP. IT IS IMPORTANT TO HELP THEM MEASURE THEIR STRENGTH AGAINST THE PROBLEMS OF LIFE, OVERCOME THEIR PROBLEMS WITH THEIR OWN RESISTANCE AND APPLY THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE.

AT THE AGE WHY DO THE TEENAGERS BECOME DIFFICULT? THEY BECOME DIFFICULT BECAUSE OUR CONCEPT OF THEM CONTINUALLY LAGS BEHIND THEIR DEVELOPMENT WHICH IS SUDDENLY VERY RAPID. TEACHERS AND PARENTS ARE USED TO TREATING THEM LIKE CHILDREN WHILE THEY EXPECT AN ALTOGETHER A DIFFERENT APPROACH. IT BECOMES CLEAR AT THIS STAGE, WHETHER THE RELATIONS BETWEEN CHILDREN AND TEACHERS WILL BE FRIENDLY OR WHETHER AN ELEMENT OF ALIENATION WILL APPEAR THAT WILL BE PAINFUL FOR BOTH SIDES.

THE TEACHER AT THIS STAGE MUST BE EXTREMELY UNDERSTANDING BECAUSE UNLESS AND UNTIL THE PROCESS OF MATURATION IS COMPLETE AND THEY LEARN TO MAKE INDEPENDENT DECISIONS, NO POSITIVE RESPONSE WILL FOLLOW. THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FOR THE ART TEACHER AT THIS STAGE IS - TO ENTER INTO THE WORLD OF A CHILD’S EXPERIENCE, TO TOUCH UPON HIS FEELINGS, TO HELP HIM APPRAISE HIS WISHES, OUTLOOKS AND TOGETHER WITH HIM, TO FIND THE ONLY RIGHT LINE OF BEHAVIOUR.

EXCURSIONS, VISITS TO MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES:

THESE WILL EXPOSE THE STUDENTS TO GOOD ART AND ENTHUSE THEM TO PRODUCE QUALITY WORK OF HIGH STANDARD. ALSO IT WILL GIVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO THE TEACHER TO BE SENSITIVE AND KIND AND TO TALK IN A HEART TO HEART FASHION WITH A CHILD, IN ORDER NOT TO HURT THE FEELINGS OR OFFEND A CHILD.

GENUINE TACT IS DETERMINED BY THE TEACHER’S SOCIAL
INTEREST IN THE FATE OF A CHILD. TACT IS NOT JUST THE ABILITY TO COMFORT, BUT AN ABILITY TO LIBERATE THE CHILD FROM THE TORMENTS, IN HIS MIND AND FEELINGS, OF PAIN AND SELF REFLECTION, THAT HE HAS BROUGHT UPON HIMSELF. MANY TIMES JUST LEAVING THE CHILD TO HIMSELF ALSO HELPS HIM TO SEE THE THINGS AS THEY STAND.

I AM MAKING A MENTION OF THIS HERE, BECAUSE AT A DIFFICULT STAGE, THESE THINGS ACT AS DETERRENTS IN THE CREATIVE PROCESS.

EXPOSURE THROUGH AUDIO VISUAL AIDS:

AUDIO VISUAL AID IS THE MOST POWERFUL TEACHING AID FOR AN ART TEACHER BECAUSE THE CHILD RECEIVES THE INFORMATION THROUGH EYES AND EARS SIMULTANEOUSLY RESULTING IN THE QUICKNING OF THE FIXATION PROCESS. A QUESTIONNAIRE SHOULD NECESSARILY FOLLOW AND AN INTRODUCTION SHOULD PRECEDE THE AUDIO-VISUAL SHOW.

AND LASTLY THIS IS WHAT I TELL MY EVERY BATCH OF STUDENTS THAT IMAGINATION IS INVALUABLE BECAUSE IT ENABLES US TO CREATE AN IMAGE OF SOMETHING ON A WHITE SHEET OF PAPER WHICH I CALL BLANK SPACE. NO SUBJECT OTHER THAN ART OFFERS SUCH A GREAT SCOPE FOR THE CHILD'S IMAGINATION AND CREATIVITY TO RUN WILD. THE CREATIVE WORK OPENS NEW HORIZONS IN ALL SECTORS OF ACTIVITIES.

I RETURN TO THE PROBLEM OF IMAGINATION REPEATEDLY BECAUSE IT IS OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE TO THE TEACHER, PARENT AND
CHILD. TO PRODUCE SOME IMAGE OR IDEAL CONCEPT, AN INDIVIDUAL HAS TO ATTAIN A CERTAIN LEVEL OF MENTAL DEVELOPMENT, SOME INTELLECTUAL POTENTIAL, MEMORY AND EMOTIONAL MATURETY. BY REVEALING A NEW AND DIFFERENT SORT OF REALITY, THE CREATOR ORIENTS OTHERS IN THE WORLD, GIVING BIRTH TO NEW AIDS AND NEEDS, BOTH IN THEMSELVES AND IN THOSE AROUND THEM. ALL THIS BEYOND DOUBT TAKES ROOT IN CHILDHOOD, IN THAT SPECIAL ATTITUDE TO REALITY WE ADULTS SHAPE IN CHILDREN, WHETHER WE WANT TO OR NOT.

THE PART, THINKING AND IMAGINATION HAVE TO PLAY IN THE CHILD’S OVERALL MENTAL DEVELOPMENT HAS BEEN EXTENSIVELY ANALYSED. IMAGINATION, WHICH OFFERS US A CREATIVE APPROACH IS NECESSARY EVERYWHERE – IN MATHEMATICS, POETRY, MUSIC AND POLITICAL STRUGGLE. HENCE WE SHOULD CONSIDER TO RATIONALISE LESS AND NOT TO LIMIT CHILDREN’S STRIVING TOWARDS THE IMPOSSIBLE, AS THIS DOES NOT IMPAIR THE FORMATION OF SCIENTIFIC THINKING IN THEM, ON THE CONTRARY, CHILDREN WILL DEVELOP THE ABILITY TO PERCEIVE OBJECTS AND PHENOMENA IN VARIOUS WAYS. THEIR MINDS WILL DEVELOP VIGOUROUSNESS, INQUISITIVENESS AND THE ABILITY TO SEE AND POSE PROBLEMS WHERE THEY ARE USUALLY OVERLOOKED.