

Key Ideas

- Children can solve artistic problems by working together cooperatively.
- Artists and designers work in teams to solve common artistic problems.
- Many art forms require the teamwork of various creative people.
- Teamwork on group art projects includes defining an artistic problem (an idea), brainstorming, identifying possible solutions, testing solutions, dividing tasks and completing the project.

Program Summary

THE BIG A children and Don have decided to work as a team to put on their own puppet show. An exciting example of professional teamwork is provided as special effects animator Phil Tippett and his associates create a film about dinosaurs. The need for, and advantages of, teamwork in various art forms are illustrated by the parallel progress that the children and Phil Tippett's team make as they move through the basic steps involved in successful teamwork.

Tippett's team *brainstorms* ideas for their film while the children brainstorm a storyline for their puppet show. While Tippett's team discusses various ways to solve design problems, the children seek a *solution* to the best kind of puppets for their show. Both teams *test their solutions*, and then *divide up the tasks* necessary to finish their projects. The big reward for both teams' cooperation comes as they *complete* their projects and show them to others.

A delightful animated sequence by Don Arioli demonstrates the pitfalls of not working as a team.

Key Words

brainstorming—the process of asking questions and giving possible answers without judging them to develop solutions to a problem.

teamwork—the process of defining an artistic problem (the idea), brainstorming, identifying possible solutions, testing solutions, dividing up tasks and completing a project.

solution
team

Featured Artwork

Marionette, Javanese shadow puppet, rod puppet, hand puppet; Debbie Hammond

Prehistoric Beast; Animated film by Phil Tippett; Music by Mark Adler; Edited by Julie Roman; 1984

Puppet likeness of Don; Debbie Hammond; 1986; Clay, paint, wool and fabric; Commissioned by KCTS/Seattle

Before the Program

When did your students work on a team? Ask them to recall when they cooperated with others to accomplish a task such as ball games, dishwashing, grocery shopping or planning a party. Explain that sometimes artists and designers, too, work as teams to create works of art cooperatively. Tell them that this program will show how this can be done.

After the Program

Recall the Program

Ask students to recall the animated sequence about Don's family. What went wrong? Compare this example of non-teamwork with Phil Tippett and his special effects animation team, and with THE BIG A puppet team. What made them successful teams? What stages did each team follow? List them on the board.

Discuss Ideas for Creating Art

How could your students work as a team? Could they become puppet teams like THE BIG A children? What other art teams could be formed? Have them brainstorm for possibilities. Suggest that they consider ceiling decorations, murals or wall sticheries as well as puppets. (See each of these topics in the Appendix.)

NOTE: The papier mâché puppets, puppet stage and decorations created by THE BIG A children were actually produced in stages and required several class periods to complete.

Create Art

Decide on your class's teamwork activities. Offer two or three activities as choices to increase the chances of students' personal involvement. Also, if the activities grow out of a common source of ideas, the difficulty of initiating them is reduced. (For example, consider simultaneous activities in ceiling decorations, wall sticheries and murals. All three could begin with "forms in nature" as the common source of ideas—leaves, clouds, wind, stones, rain.)

Begin by *defining the artistic problem*: to make the ceiling and walls of the classroom look nicer. Next, *brainstorm* for *possible solutions* for ways in which forms in nature could be used for creating ceiling decorations, wall sticheries and murals. Demonstrate for the students how these could be made.

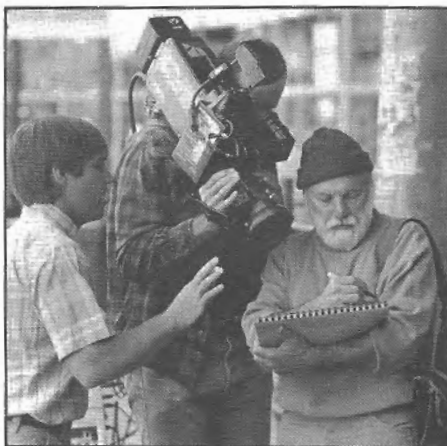
The students then *divide up the tasks* and form teams to *test solutions* to the problem. This includes using their Idea Books and trying ways to get ideas from nature, elaborating on the ideas, and selecting and working with materials and tools to accomplish the task.

Respond to Art

When the teams have completed their products and displayed them for all to see, involve them in the final stage of teamwork—*rewarding accomplishments*. Rewards become intrinsic when students find out how others react to their work. Ask other students, teachers, parents and community members to view the results of the class's teamwork. Have your students interview the visitors to find out what they see. Do they see and respond mostly to the design of the work? To the subject? To the way the tools and materials have been used? (See "Checklist I" in the Appendix for a guide to student interviews.)

The class can use magazine pictures, to prepare a display of art products made by teams of designers and artists. (For example, houses, restaurants, automobiles, housewares, toys or furniture.) Have a class discussion about the display. How do they think members of the teams worked together?

Invite an architect, commercial artist or product designer to speak to the class about teamwork.



Photograph: Joseph Freeman