

Art Activities For Latin-American Children
In Elementary Grades



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No. II

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- II. Art Activities for Latin-American Children in Elementary Grades
- III. Building Better School-Community Relations in Latin-American Communities
- IV. Music Activities for Latin-American Children in Elementary Grades

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FOREWORD

This booklet is one of several, intended as aids to teachers, prepared at Southwest Texas State Teachers College through a special school-community project in Inter-American Affairs in an attempt to improve instruction and community organization for Spanish speaking children and adults. Special effort was made to produce materials in health and hygiene, art and music, foods and nutrition, and community organization, because these areas are receiving much less emphasis than their educational importance justifies.

For the most part, our public schools have access to adequate materials in sufficient quantity and variety to provide teachers and pupils with the necessary tools for effective mental development of the child. However, as we all know, a child is constantly developing also emotionally, socially, and physically, and unless carefully selected opportunities and materials are provided for guiding these phases of child growth, the outcome is often a maladjusted individual.

Sometimes we become so intent on a certain phase of child education that we blind ourselves to the possibilities which lie abundantly about us for total child growth.

For example, a teacher may say, "I have three grades together in this room; I do not have time for informal activity procedures in such areas as games, music, health testing, or craft-work and the like; after all, the parents send the children to school to learn to read and to write and I have all that I can do in accomplishing this!" Such defensive statements are the rule and not the exception when talking with teachers who are adhering rigidly and with sincere respect to the formal recitation methods of teaching the so-called fundamentals.

Let us not become so intent on teaching Juan how to read that we lose sight of the fact that Juan has to get along with his associates, that he has to maintain a fair degree of health, that he has to be reasonably stable in his emotional reactions if he is to grow into a normal person and assume his rightful place as a responsible member of any community.

The philosophy expressed in these booklets is based on the recognition of the importance of providing opportunities and materials for the total development of the child and the adult.

Besides the executive and advisory committees for the special project, acknowledgment is due many other individuals for their assistance. Particular acknowledgment is due Mrs. Katherine M. Cook, Chief of Special Problems, and Mr. W. H. Sininger, Field Consultant for Special Projects in Inter-American Affairs, both of the U. S. Office of Education, for their encouraging guidance; Dr. L. S. Tireman, Professor of Education, University of New Mexico, for his stimulating counsel and inspiration; Mrs. Mary G. Buchanan, Associate Professor

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ART ACTIVITIES

For Latin-American Children in Elementary Grades

Preface

Human beings have always made things, using the most marvelous of all mechanisms, the human hand, to produce their ideas and to satisfy their needs. From prehistoric times they have had to devise ways of securing and preparing their food, of making their clothing, of fashioning their weapons, of providing their shelter, and of offering their worship to a higher power. The machine age limited the craftsman's freedom in a new and exciting way; its very nature created new attributes in its products to add to the former hand-type production. But machinery never did eliminate the human desire for, and delight in, handmade things. This we must recognize in the education of our children today. The soul craves more than duplication by mass production; it needs, for deeper satisfaction, the spirit of creativeness manifested by the craftsman's hands.

In the training of children in the area of art, we must recognize the need for providing educational procedures which will develop the following:

Right understanding and respect for materials, tools, and processes.

Appreciation for the line, form, and color basic to good taste and American culture.

Stable foundation in judgment as future consumers or users of new products.

The native skills of these children which will be functional in the planning of their daily lives.

The making of things in art classes must not be an end in itself. Objects must have a purpose if the requirements of present art education are met, the keynote of which is "Functionalism." Problems must be vital, or they are doomed to failure.

Desirable art activities in the elementary grades will include two types of handwork, expressional and technical. Many activities may be introduced as a means of allowing the pupil to express himself, such as the following: illustrating; building of model houses, stores, ships, planes, and community centers; preparing school program activities; clay modeling; free painting; and other forms of table work. Projects which allow the pupil to develop his technical skill include such activities as bookbinding, board and cardboard construction work, weaving, etc. These activities provide opportunity for the development of mental ability as well as for the production of manual dexterity.

Latin-American children have descended from races of people whose skills in handcrafts is recognized the world over. It is especially

fitting, therefore, that these children be given opportunities to develop similar skills in the public schools.

Clay modeling, painting, and weaving are crafts suited to students of all ages. These crafts have been selected to comprise the art activities suggested in this booklet because they can be adapted to various grade levels, are inexpensive, offer fundamental educational experiences, and are representative of the native crafts of the Latin-American people.

The art activities mentioned above have been used successfully at the intermediate-grade level with Latin-American children whose art training has been incidental and who have had little or no previous experience in these crafts.

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CLAY MODELING

Clay modeling is an art activity suited to students of all ages and grade levels. Clay is the material selected most frequently by children when they are free to choose for themselves. It is an inexpensive material which offers fascinating educational experiences.

Almost every community in Texas has access to native clay beds at its very door. One should dig beneath the surface deep enough to get pure clay, free from sand and gravel.

Necessary materials such as clay, large cardboards, sticks, rags, and buckets should be collected in advance of the lesson.

Interest Approach

In order to interest beginning students in clay modeling, experienced older students from high school may be used as assistant teachers. They can arrange cardboards on desks and tables, get large lumps of clay, and begin work. As the younger pupils evidence interest, high school students can be alert to take cardboards and clay about the room and ask, "Would you like to make something of clay?" It will not be long before almost all students will be enjoying the experience of creating something with this plastic material.

Other Suggested Interest Approaches for Clay Modeling

1. Show examples of fine pottery and ceramics (figurines of animals and people).
2. Visit museums and talk about objects made of clay.
3. Pin pictures of pottery, ceramics, and sculpture on the bulletin board.
4. Tell a story of how clay is used in our daily lives.
5. Look up the history of how pottery-making was first discovered.
6. Review how pottery was used in ancient times.

Suggestions for Good Clay Modeling

1. Work a ball of clay between the palms until all air pockets are pressed out and the clay is smooth.
2. Keep the clay in one piece to avoid air pockets that cause parts to crack off.
3. **IMPORTANT**—Keep all clay models wrapped in damp cloths in order to insure slowness of drying. This prevents cracking.

Modeling a Simple Piece of Pottery

1. Roll a ball of clay between the palms until it is smooth and round.
2. Cut the ball in halves.

3. Have the children model bowls.
 - a. Hollow out the inside with the thumb and smooth the outside with the fingers. (Teacher may demonstrate this.)
 - b. Large bowls are too difficult to keep symmetrical, and very small ones do not provide an opportunity to develop good form.
 - c. At the intermediate age level, a four-inch bowl is an appropriate size.

Modeling People and Animal Figures

Since clay is a heavy material, small legs, feet, arms, etc., must be made very compact against the body; otherwise these parts must be enlarged to hold up the body mass of clay. These techniques in modeling people and animal figures give students an opportunity to express their imaginative and creative abilities.

Other Methods of Making Pottery

Coil Method

1. Roll or press a piece of clay until it is about one-half inch thick (like bread dough).
2. Cut a round piece of clay the size of the bottom of the bowl that is to be modeled.
3. Make rolls of clay about six inches long and one-half inch thick.
4. Build the sides of the bowl by coiling the rolls of clay around the bottom.
5. Every time three rolls are coiled around the bowl, work them together with the fingers.

Model Over a Mold

1. Choose a bowl, glass, or vase that is larger at the top than at the bottom.
2. Turn the bowl bottom side up.
3. Grease the bowl with an oily substance, such as lard, vaseline, etc.
4. Work all air pockets out of the clay by pressing it with the palms or by rolling it on a clay board (cardboard or wood).
5. Roll or press the clay out flat (as bread dough) until it is about one-half inch thick.
6. Put clay over the greased mold and press it against the mold.
7. Wrap in a damp cloth until the clay is dry.
8. When clay is dry, sandpaper it until smooth. (If a kiln is available, the first or bisque firing is done at this stage. Colored glazes are then applied and the articles are re-fired.)
9. Paint with enamel, tempera, or water colors if pieces are not to be fired. Tempera and water color paints should have a coat of shellac

over them after the paint dries.

10. Designs, if used, should be simple and should conform to the shape of the article.

Two Ways of Preparing Clay for Use

1. Place damp clay as dug from the earth into buckets, cans, etc. Add water to make the clay the consistency of very stiff dough. Work it thoroughly with a large round stick or with the hands until it seems perfectly smooth. This should be done a day or two before actual modeling begins. Clay should not stick to the hands when modeling begins, yet it must be very pliable.
2. Dig clay and allow it to dry. Beat and hammer it into clay dust. Sift this dust if a very fine grade of clay is desired. Place clay dust in cans and stir while adding water until it is the consistency of very stiff dough. (This preparation should be done several days before modeling begins. This last method is especially good when the models are to be fired.)

PAINING

Painting is a means of expression that contributes to the total growth and development of the child. There are certain fundamental values to be obtained by the child through painting. Self-expression through this activity gives opportunity to do the following:

Develop imagination. (Paintings do not have to be realistic.)

Provide an outlet for creative ability.

Satisfy child's desire to express himself in color.

Develop skill in mixing colors. Develop knowledge that two or more colors mixed together make a new color.

Increase vocabulary.

Increase confidence because child creates something that is his very own.

Develop muscle coordination.

Provide quiet activity for the timid or nervous child.

Children should be allowed wide latitude in the use of color. Formulas, or adult ideas of color combinations, should not be forced on them; but through experimenting with and viewing good color in pictures, books, and surroundings, children's color judgments are formed.

Use of Tempera and Powder Paint

Tempera and powder paint are two media which are very popular with the student, once color has been introduced. The wide variety of uses and the fact that they dry with a rich velvety finish make these media most desirable.

Tempera is an opaque paint that comes prepared and ready for

use. It is a liquid paint (in jars). The color must be mixed thoroughly, but if, after mixing with an old brush or stick, the paint still seems too thick to apply, it can be mixed with water in a separate container to a creamy consistency (coffee cream thickness). The color should be applied with soft brushes in flat tones and can be used to cover large or small areas evenly and completely.

Powder paint is also an opaque paint. It comes in powder form and, when mixed with water to a creamy consistency, it is used in the same method as tempera. A definite amount of powder, which one thinks will cover the area, should be placed in a pan or jar and very little water added until the mixture is smooth. Then more water should be stirred in until the mixture is the consistency of coffee cream.

Since both of these colors are opaque they do not depend on the underlying surface for brilliancy. Heavy paper, newsprint, cream manila, or cardboard of any kind may be used, but it is advisable to use light-weight paper since there is the possibility of the paper's buckling. Brown wrapping paper with a slightly rough surface is excellent for large paintings or decorative work. Once the design or pattern has been worked out, the paper or board should be thumb-tacked to a drawing board and the design traced on or drawn on in firm light lines with charcoal or a medium pencil. The range of colors which are to be used should be at the side along with mixing pans, containers of water, and brushes. The color should be applied smoothly from the upper corner to the lower corner of the area. Once the color is dry, the area can be gone over with a second coat without danger of chipping or of the other color's showing through, but one should never stop in the middle and go over what has already been done.

Strong decorative effects can be obtained from these paints. They lend themselves to many uses, such as posters, design work, costume drawings, textile designs, wallpaper designs, interiors, box covers, screens, magazine covers, and greeting cards. There are many variations of these uses, however, and a novel one is to use either tempera or powder paint as a stain on wood. Thinned down with a considerable amount of water and sand papered when the surface is dry, this stain allows the grain of the wood to show.

An interesting two-toned effect can be attained by a second color spattered over the surface of a first color when it is dry. The spattering process is done either with a flit-gun spray (spatter gun) or an old toothbrush and screen wire.

To make posters, greeting cards, place cards, menu covers, etc., draw the size desired; with razor blades cut stencils of these plans for the spatter work. Place the stencils on art paper the size of the stencils, then pin them to a cardboard. Stand the board in an upright position and spray or spatter the tempera or powder paint into the stencil openings.

Powder paint is more practical for elementary school use than tempera paint. It is less expensive, easier to mix and apply, and it can

be ordered from almost any art supply house. Large and medium-sized kindergarten brushes are suitable for powder painting. Powder paints cost approximately seventy cents per can. An adequate supply for nine months for the average school-room would be a can of each of the following colors: yellow, red, blue, orange, green, purple, brown, white and black. These colors may be mixed in the following ways to vary their values:

Mix white with any color to lighten the value.

Mix black with any color to darken the value.

Mix green with yellow to produce yellow-green.

Mix green with blue to produce blue-green, etc.

WEAVING

Weaving is the process of interlacing paper strips, reeds, fibers, strings, threads or strands of materials for the production of mats, purses, belts, and fabrics for various uses. It is one of the oldest arts of man. Some types of weaving may be done with no equipment except paper, scissors and fingers, but for the most part, a loom of some kind is required. The very simplest handmade looms are suggested for the elementary school child.

The Loom

The loom is a piece of equipment designed to facilitate the process of weaving. It consists essentially of a frame over which one set of threads (warp) may be stretched and held in position, and of a shuttle which carries the crosswise thread (weft). Some primitive looms consisted of nothing more. But most looms are equipped with a device of some sort for separating the threads stretched on the frame so that the cross-thread may be passed between them conveniently. Most looms have a beater or "batten" by means of which the cross-threads may be driven close together to produce a firm and even fabric.

To Weave

The interlacing of warp (threads that are on the loom) and weft (the weaving thread) must be done in an orderly manner and according to some regular system to produce a fabric. The basic system is the thread-by-thread, over-and-under system that is known as the plain or the "tabby" weave. This weave produces the most closely combined warp interlaced with a given weft. It is an excellent weave for many purposes and may be made more interesting by the use of changes in color in either warp or weft or in both. The decorative possibilities of this weave are limited, however; for decorative fabrics some more elaborate system of interlacement may be used. The plain weave is more suitable for elementary children.

Suggested Problems in Weaving for Elementary Children

- A. Paper Weaving—for mats, doll-house rugs, etc. (Primary grades)
 1. Materials: Colored construction paper, scissors, paste.

2. **Construction:** Mats or rugs may be made any size desired. Each child chooses two or more sheets of colored paper which he likes.
- a. Fold one colored sheet of paper in the middle. Cut on the fold equal width strips, leaving a border uncut at each end. See Fig. I.

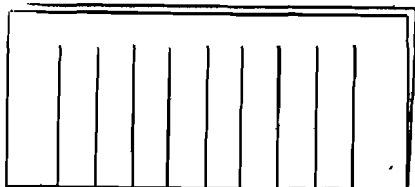


Fig. I

- b. Unfold this sheet. It is the loom and the cut strips are the warp thread.
- c. Cut the other two or more colored sheets of paper into single strips of approximately the same width as the loom strips.
- d. Take one strip and weave over and under, across from right to left, until the paper loom is completely woven with strips. See Fig. II.

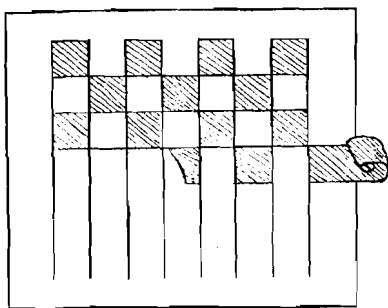


Fig. II

- e. Paste ends of strips (weft) to the border. Every other strip will be on the reverse side of the mat. Now the mat or rug is ready for use.
- B. Wooden Frame Loom—(Intermediate grades.)**
1. **Materials:** Wooden boards $1\frac{1}{4}$ " x 2" or $1\frac{1}{2}$ " x 4" (boards may be almost any length), shingle nails, saw, yard stick.
 2. **Construction:** Make frame suitable size desired for the rug or mat. The corners may be mitered like a picture frame (Fig.

III, A) or they may be cut so that overlapping corners will be the thickness of the board (Fig. III, B) i.e., saw $\frac{1}{2}$ " thickness of the board off for overlapping corners.

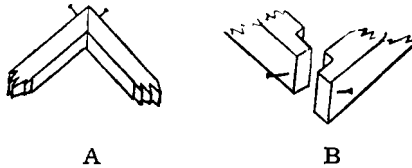


Fig. III

Children may bring frames off the ends of orange boxes and not make new frames. Draw a line down the center of each board of the frame. Measure equal distances $\frac{1}{4}$ ", $\frac{1}{2}$ " or 1" and mark with a dot on this line. Hammer a nail one-half the way down the board, placing a nail at each measured dot. (Distances between the dots depend on the size string, thread, or rag-strips of old materials to be used in weaving. The larger the thread, the longer space between dots.) If torn 1" or 2" strips are to be used for both warp and weft threads, measure 1" or more between dots for nails. See Fig. IV.

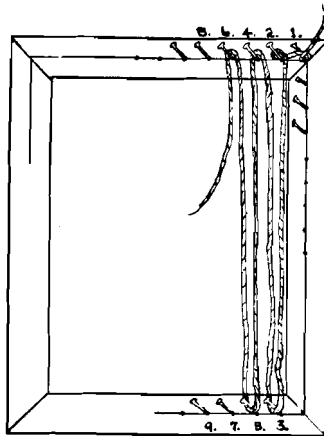


Fig. IV

3. To thread the loom, tie warp thread at a corner nail as 1, circle nail 2, cross loom, loop nail 3, cross loom and loop 4, and continue until the loom is threaded. Tie warp thread and weave from right to left, plain weave (over, under) circling nails at each side. This prevents weft threads from pulling warp threads in from the sides.
4. Taking mat or rug off the loom. Slip loops off of nails. Where threads are tied to nails, untie and tie them to joining threads.

The loops may be cut and tied, making a fringe, or left in loops. The mat or rug is ready for use.

C. Cardboard Looms—very stiff cardboard is best. These may be used for making small mats or purses.

1. Mats or rugs. Cut cardboard the size desired. Draw line one-half inch from each of two opposite sides. Measure $\frac{1}{4}$ " or $\frac{1}{2}$ " distances on each line and mark with dots. (See Fig. V). Notch,

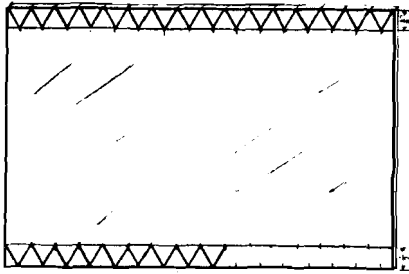


Fig. V

cutting points as indicated, using scissors or single-edge razor. (See Fig. VI). Tie warp thread at one side, pass warp thread

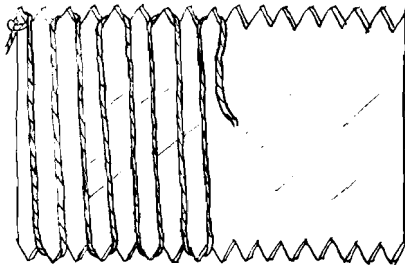


Fig. VI

back and forth, hooking it around notch at each side and back until the loom is threaded. Weave back and forth, right to left (over, under) as indicated for wooden frame. Care must be taken that the weft threads do not pull the warp threads inward from the sides.

2. Cardboard purse loom. This loom is made exactly like the cardboard mat loom. (See Fig. VI). The threading and weaving, however, are different. Tie warp at one corner, pass thread down to 2 and under to reverse side, hooking it around notch 1, (left to right) and back to 3, up to 4, etc. Pass the warp completely across the bottom of the purse but always hook it around the notch at the top, then return warp to the bottom on the same side of the loom. (See Fig. VII)

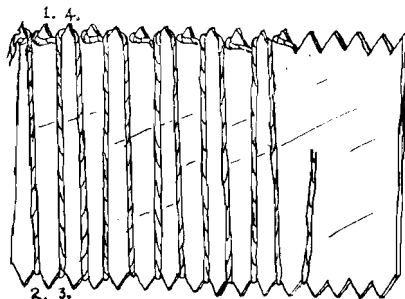


Fig. VII

The reverse side of the loom looks exactly like the side shown in Fig. VII. Tie weft thread at 2 (corner bottom) and weave from right to left going completely around the loom. Keep this process up until the thread reaches the top notch. Pack weft threads close together while weaving is being done. A bobby-pin or a small, smooth stick may be used to pass the weft threads over and under the warp threads. When the top is reached, tie weft threads to a warp thread at the side. Slip loops of warp threads off the top notches. Fold the cardboard loom and pull the purse off, turning it inside out for the right side. This purse may have a drawstring run through the loops at the top or it may have a zipper-top with a lining of material, cut the correct size, and stitched inside.

D. Spool Weaving.

This loom weaves a rope-like cord which may be coiled and whip-stitched together to make mats or rugs. Any large-sized spool is suitable. Tack four finishing-nails, equal distance apart, one half way down into the end of the spool. Pull wool thread through

center-hole in spool (Fig. VIII). Hold spool with left hand. Loop

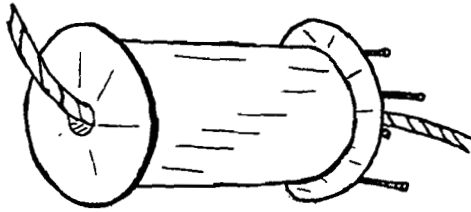


Fig. VIII

wool from left to right around a nail. Continue from left to right until all four nails are looped. (Fig. IX)

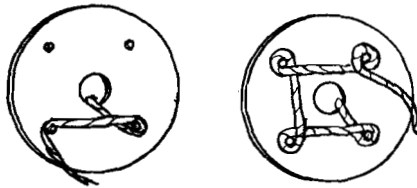


Fig. IX

Put wool across one nail above the loop. Now begin to weave. Bring the loop on nail up and over the loose end of the yarn, and continue this at each nail, working from left to right (Fig. X).

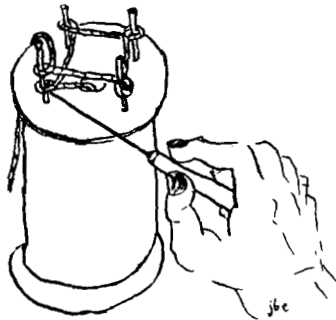


Fig. X

Pull the end down at the bottom of the spool. Continue to weave. When more thread is needed, tie on to the original yarn. To finish, raise loops from nails, draw the end of the wool tightly, and tie. Oval or circular mats or rugs may be made by whip-stitching this woven cord together. This is a good way to use odds and ends of woolen yarns.