

**RECOMMENDATION No. 41**  
**TO THE MINISTRIES OF EDUCATION**  
**concerning**  
**THE TEACHING OF ART**  
**IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS**  
(1955)

The International Conference on Public Education,

Convened in Geneva by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and the International Bureau of Education, and having assembled on the fourth day of July, nineteen hundred and fifty-five, for its eighteenth session, adopts on the twelfth day of July, nineteen hundred and fifty-five, the following Recommendation:

The Conference,

Considering that art education, which makes an appeal to so many of the child's activities, provides an important means of aesthetic, intellectual and moral education, and enables the teacher to find out what the child is thinking and feeling and to discover his artistic aptitude,

Considering that, in the pursuit of learning, the pursuit of a profession, and the enlightened use of leisure, the skill and understanding acquired by studying art encourage the appreciation of beauty in nature, life, production and art,

Considering that art is an educational factor necessary to the all-round development of personality, and an important means to a deeper understanding of reality,

Considering that the multiplication of images, through photography, books, advertisements, films and television, to-day represents an advance as important as was the invention of printing, and that the visual education of children should therefore be more widely developed so as to guide

their thinking, cultivate their taste, and prevent their awareness from being blunted by vulgarity and ugliness,

Considering that the visual arts, as well as the other arts, can make a contribution to confidence and understanding among mankind,

Submits to the Ministries of Education of the several countries the following Recommendation:

1) Art, that is to say, drawing, painting, modelling and other similar activities, should be taught in all primary schools; it should have its place as a subject in its own right and as a means of expression, and should contribute to the teaching of other subjects.

2) Art, as a subject in its own right, should be compulsory in most classes in secondary schools, and optional for the rest.

3) Whether compulsory or optional, art should be coordinated with other subjects in the curriculum and with other school activities; this should be done whether or not the various subjects are taught by the same teacher.

4) So as to give the most gifted pupils opportunities of developing their aptitudes, and to make the study of art more attractive, it is desirable that a supplementary course with a flexible programme be provided for such pupils from different classes.

5) Because it is a valuable means of education in itself and because of its importance as a means of teaching skills, art should be regarded as of equal importance with other subjects.

6) When drawing up time-tables, adequate time should be given for art as a subject in its own right.

7) Since arts demands individual rather than group teaching, art classes should be small enough to enable a teacher to give attention to individual pupils.

8) In drawing up the syllabus for art and in deciding on the choice of methods, the aims of teaching the subject should constantly be borne in mind; the following aims should especially be taken into account:

a) educational aims: the cultivation, for example, of observation, imagination, expression, self-control, the capacity for sustained work and the ability to cooperate with others in group undertakings;

b) cultural aims: for example, the formation of taste, and the encouragement of an understanding of works of art and of a respect for them;

c) practical aims: the acquisition of skills useful in school, in everyday life, and for professional purposes;

## R 41

*d)* aims relating to the study of children: to find out what children are thinking and feeling from a study of their work;

*e)* social aims: to foster an understanding of the worldwide significance of art through an interest in and respect for the art of other countries, big or small, and to contribute to bringing up the rising generation in the spirit of peace and of humanity and friendship among the nations.

9) An important place should be given to the systematic teaching of the theory and practice of techniques, but the subject should be dealt with in such a way that the pupils' activities are related to the needs of everyday life.

10) The various stages of the mental growth of the young child and of the adolescent, as well as their interests, should be taken into account in elaborating the art syllabus and teaching methods.

11) In the use of methods and the choice of subjects to be set exercises to be carried out, and materials to be used, the teacher should be free to relate the work to local conditions and to the aptitudes and requirements of each pupil.

12) Encouraging children to find their own form of expression by means of free drawing, painting, modelling, and other similar activities is a valuable method of teaching.

13) The teaching of art should derive inspiration from artistic traditions both in the country as a whole and in the locality concerned.

14) In the secondary school, the appreciation of works of art and the history of art should be included in the curriculum; the teaching of the history of art should pave the way to an understanding of the evolution of art as being part of the development of civilization in each age.

15) It is recommended that all post-primary schools should have specialist studio-workshops for art and crafts.

16) It is much to be desired that, especially in primary schools, the equipment and materials required for art should be supplied free of charge by the school authorities or other bodies; materials obtainable locally should be used as far as possible.

17) Textbooks and all literature for boys and girls should be regarded as potent influences in the teaching of art; binding, paper typography and illustrations should combine both to cultivate and to satisfy the pupil's taste and sense for design.

18) It is recommended that the responsible authorities should supply such reproductions, casts, slides and films as may be required for the teaching of art; school libraries should contain a useful collection of books on art, both on history and appreciation and on techniques which the pupils can themselves put into practice.

19) The school should in itself provide an environment characterized by good taste and artistic understanding; this especially applies to the school building, the playgrounds and gardens, the internal planning of the school, its furniture, and the attention given to maintenance.

20) So far as possible, the pupils themselves should play a part either individually or in teams, in the maintenance and decoration of the school, and in creating the setting for school festivities.

21) The growth of artistic appreciation on the part of boys and girls will be greatly facilitated by their familiarity with local resources, such as art galleries and museums, buildings of artistic and architectural interest, private collections, local crafts and industries, and popular and folk art, and with the beauties of nature, as well as by occasional visits to special exhibitions, films and other such events.

22) The formation of circulating collections of reproductions and of original works of art for schools of various kinds should be encouraged.

23) It is desirable to request the education authorities to examine ways of providing schools with television sets, and thus of giving art teachers even in the least favoured areas an excellent teaching aid; such provision would also facilitate the organization of correspondence courses for children and adults living at a distance from the centres of artistic culture.

24) Like other mass media, the universal use of the cinema, which is undeniably a means of artistic expression, imparting news, and impressing ideas, sets teachers a problem to which great attention must be given; it is desirable to use the appeal of the cinema to children for good ends, and it will in fact be so used if care is taken during and after schooling to train their judgement and taste in respect of films.

25) Not only should exhibitions of children's work be held in their own locality or country, but such exhibitions should be exchanged between one nation and another.

26) The responsible authorities should pay special attention to the pupil who is artistically gifted and ensure that he receives the best advice and takes the most suitable course of study.

27) In view of the general character of primary education and the

## R 41

close links between the various subjects, it is desirable that art should be taken by the class teacher.

28) Secondary school art teachers should be selected not only for their artistic and technical capacity, but also because of their teaching ability and experience.

29) The artistic outlook of the future primary school teacher should be a matter of real importance; practical instruction in art and the teaching of the history and appreciation of art, and penmanship, should be included in the curriculum of the training college.

30) Secondary teachers of art should have training equivalent to that of their colleagues teaching other subjects, and the same status, standing and privileges.

31 ) In both primary and secondary teacher training great importance should be attached to psychology, particularly the psychology of spontaneous expression in children.

32) The buildings, interior planning and furnishing of training colleges should be such as to create an artistic environment for the future teacher; visits to buildings of architectural and artistic interest and to exhibitions, including those of childrens' work, will serve to enhance the student's usefulness as a teacher.

33) Collections of children's work from the infant school to the latest stages should be formed for exhibition in training colleges in order to illustrate methods of teaching art, both old and new; children's work from other countries should be included; there is also the fact that these collections would provide a source for the circulating schemes described above in clause 22.

34) It is desirable that the teaching of art should be subject to the advice of artistically qualified organizers or specialist inspectors; if this is not possible, the inspectors or advisers concerned should do their best to appreciate the requirements of art teaching and to encourage its development as far as possible.

35) Conferences and refresher courses, both at home and abroad should be encouraged in order to help teachers of art to perfect their knowledge of their subject, to keep up-to-date with the various outlooks which are encountered in the teaching of art, and to exchange views on all matters of common interest.

36) It is very desirable to grant in-service teachers travelling and practical training scholarships, so as to give them opportunities of making a first-hand study of historical monuments, contemporary works of art, and teaching methods abroad.