

What Are Drawing Skills?

Drawing skills go far beyond formal skills like Line, Shape, Form, Tone, Perspective, Composition, and Proportion.

These skills form just one small part of what “drawing” might be. Many teachers focus disproportionately on these skills, paralysed by teaching them in the right order, and not always familiar with these skills themselves.

Try to think about the wider skills drawing might involve, before you focus in. Think, for example, about how drawing develops observation skills. About how drawing develops hand eye coordination. How drawing enables us to make exciting marks, and how it encourages us to feel confident to make a creative response to a stimulus. Drawing helps us understand how we might take creative risks. We learn skills which enable us to experiment with different medium. We develop our emotional literacy skills when we tap into how we feel and learn to communicate that on paper. And through making and looking at drawing we learn to be more visually literate, and to share our thoughts and views and listen to others. These are all important skills which we should make time for with an art class.

“Drawing” incorporates so many different skills. One child might favour neat, analytical

techniques, another child may be better suited to more imaginative or expressive work. It's really important we provide opportunities for pupils to practice the full variety of skills, so that each child finds their way into drawing in a way which suits them. This makes drawing as inclusive and accessible as possible.

One last point: There is no hierarchy, there is just the building of drawing intelligence. All children will progress, if given ongoing exciting opportunities and if we keep engaging them along the way. Progression will halt if teaching plateaus, or we fail to engage by closing down opportunities by reducing the drawing skills we offer.

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