

QUESTION A-6

(d) Do you favour any form of teaching which deals with shapes, colours, forms, textures—considered as “abstract” inventions, with the aim of developing inventive powers?

(b) Would you be in favour of a student studying from “nature” as well as abstract (non-figurative) composition? Or would you regard this as a confusing compromise?

This question was divided into two parts in order to try and sound out the views sometimes expressed that students are confused if they study both “abstract” design or composition and “nature.” Those who advocate an unequivocal, exclusive concentration on one or the other generally have strong views on this point. Those in favour of *both* see no necessary contradiction in a properly integrated course. Many nuances of opinion are, of course, possible on this question.

(a) Against 9%. For 80%. Doubtful 11%.

This represents a fairly high degree of agreement on the broad issue, though various reservations and qualifications were expressed.

Typical of many replies was the view that while in agreement with the teaching of “abstract”—it should be regarded as a means to an end, not an end in itself,

“... but not as the sole end.” (Netherlands.)

Others emphasised a possible danger:

“... provided it does not lead to a ‘modern’ or ‘abstract’ academicism.” (Netherlands.)

“An ‘abstract academy’ is as negative as a ‘naturalistic’ academy.” (Uruguay.)

Several replies agreed with this comment:

From Peru: “I think that this depends very much on each teacher personally and that the only thing that matters is the results.”

A cautionary note from the United Kingdom: “Only after he has learned to draw.”

From Switzerland: “As a recompense for studies from nature: learning to *play* with the materials in the freest manner.”

A number of replies were in the sense of “nothing against it.” A United States answer made the point:

“This approach applies to commercial and applied art only—not to the fine arts.”

(b) Study of both *not* confusing 71%.
Confusing 14.5%.
Doubtful or no answer 14.5%.

Of those in favour, several commented that study of nature should come first.

From the United Kingdom came a sharp and illuminating reply:

“I regard this as a confused question. An artist is always “studying” nature even if he is an abstract artist.”

Netherlands: “Depends on the needs of the individual student.”

And a similar comment came from Peru.

Uruguay: “I consider that here can be no confusion so long as the student appreciates that the elements of the composition of any work of art are abstract.”

Uruguay struck an unequivocal note: “Young people should receive a definite contemporary guidance. Only abstract composition should be taught.” The percentage of those in favour of studying both is substantially higher than