



Lower EL



Upper EL

Focus

Art

EXERCISE 09

Parent Objective

To practice and perfect subtle shading techniques.

Indirect Objective

To increase mindfulness and concentration.

"Everything depends on being able to see and on taking an interest."

Dr. Maria Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind*



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Maria Montessori's Education of the Creative Mind

Value Scale Strips (Gradation)



Materials:

Drawing paper cut into 1"x 11" strips, ruler, pencil, and charcoal. Alternatives to charcoal: pastel, chalk, crayon, or a soft lead pencil.

Preparation:

Choose a quiet spot in your home where you know that your child will not be distracted, nor interrupted, a place where he or she can return to the work when desired. Have your child divide a strip into 1" segments using the ruler and pencil. Place newspaper on the drawing surface to collect charcoal dust.

Instructions:

1. Invite your child to learn how to draw shadow and light.
2. Moving left to right,* begin with the first segment and have your child carefully and completely fill it with the darkest (blackest) tone possible.

**Children with left hand dominance should move from right to left.*



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3. Challenge your child to do the same for the next segment but, this time, let up some on the pressure to create a shade just a little lighter than the first.
4. Progress to the next segment and then to the next, gradually lightening the value with each, until the final one is left blank (white).
5. Repeat with additional strips until the child feels that he or she has achieved a seamless, gradual transition from dark to light.

Optional Extensions:

- Repeat the above exercise but do not segment the strip. Attempt to make the gradation as even as possible.
- Experiment with blending techniques using fingers, sticks ("tortillon"), erasers, fabric, and more.

Note: *Initially your child may be drawn to this exercise as a way to improve drawing skills and, specifically, the capacity to depict form realistically. However, with repetition and time—typically many days to become proficient—he or she also increases inner discipline.*