



A study of certain methods of motivating students in pre-college art classes
by Donald Lee Walters

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF APPLIED ART
Montana State University
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Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to determine successful methods of motivating K-12 art students, as identified by experienced teachers of selected school districts, in the state of Montana, for the years 1967-69.

The problem was discussed with the city art supervisor of Great Falls, Montana; and with his cooperation a questionnaire was compiled and distributed to four hundred local teachers connected with teaching art in their classrooms. A return of over seventy-five per cent of the completed questionnaires was received and evaluated in conjunction with twenty-eight personal interviews and personal observations by the author. The teachers were asked to identify the types of motivation which they found to be most successful.

The use of demonstrations as an aid to motivate in the art classroom was recorded from the survey and the interviews as the most successful aid to the teacher. Teacher enthusiasm and the use of displays also ranked very high in the study of the teachers of art.

It was shown that there were a variety of ways to motivate, but the teachers did not rely on any one certain method; rather, they incorporated several within an art lesson. It was also found in the study that there is no single motivational factor that can be termed successful for all art situations.

This research also showed that there is a use for further investigation in the subject of motivational techniques in the art room.

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Signature Donald Lee Walters

Date August 6, 1969

A STUDY OF CERTAIN METHODS
OF MOTIVATING STUDENTS
IN PRE-COLLEGE ART CLASSES

by

DONALD LEE WALTERS

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF APPLIED ART

Approved:

John Bashor
Head, Major Department

Cyril Conrad by J.B.
Chairman, Examining Committee

A. Geering
Graduate Dean

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
Bozeman, Montana

August, 1969

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The staff of the School of Art of Montana State University and Dr. Harry Hausser, Professor of Philosophy, Montana State University.

John Bashor, Chairman, Art Department, Montana State University.

James Poor, Art Supervisor, Great Falls, Montana, the teachers of Great Falls, Montana, and the teachers interviewed.

Dr. Thomas G. Kennedy, Western Montana College, Dillon.

Clarice Walters, my wife.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine successful methods of motivating K-12 art students, as identified by experienced teachers of selected school districts, in the state of Montana, for the years 1967-69.

The problem was discussed with the city art supervisor of Great Falls, Montana; and with his cooperation a questionnaire was compiled and distributed to four hundred local teachers connected with teaching art in their classrooms. A return of over seventy-five per cent of the completed questionnaires was received and evaluated in conjunction with twenty-eight personal interviews and personal observations by the author. The teachers were asked to identify the types of motivation which they found to be most successful.

The use of demonstrations as an aid to motivate in the art classroom was recorded from the survey and the interviews as the most successful aid to the teacher. Teacher enthusiasm and the use of displays also ranked very high in the study of the teachers of art.

It was shown that there were a variety of ways to motivate, but the teachers did not rely on any one certain method; rather, they incorporated several within an art lesson. It was also found in the study that there is no single motivational factor that can be termed successful for all art situations.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Art is a constantly growing part of the curriculum in our public schools, and its growing importance is being recognized. Art is being taught in the schools not for a certain few people but for all individuals. It is part of the art teacher's function to stimulate creative experiences for everyone.

The art teacher usually has several basic objectives to follow in stimulating students in a school art program. Some of the objectives are to develop an appreciation and understanding of art and to encourage a recognition of art's place in the student's everyday life. The teacher should strive to give each student the opportunity for personal expression and satisfaction with individual accomplishment and to develop a knowledge of man's visual art heritage for a better interpretation and expression of his own. Furthermore, the instructor should emphasize the development of the knowledge and the use of various media and tools. To help accomplish the various goals of an art teacher in the classroom, certain motivational procedures are adopted.

Importance of the study. Much of a general nature has been written about motivation in the regular classroom, but little has been recorded in particular concerning motivation in the art classroom. In either of the situations, it has often been said how important motivation is, but little has been written describing the actual process. Why do we need to motivate? What are some of the techniques that one can use?

Teachers are often asking these questions.

With the variety of art talent that may be presumed to exist in the public schools, the development of ways to motivate these various talents is very important in developing creative experiences. Lawrence McVitty emphasized in his study that "It is clear that some stimulus, either interior or exterior, moves the child to respond."¹

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The purpose of this study was to determine successful methods of motivating K-12 art students, as identified by experienced teachers of selected school districts, in the state of Montana, for the years 1967-69.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Successful. An act of motivation may be considered successful when the majority of the students have shown a highly personal involvement with the project presented. If a variety of responses are given by the class, the motivation was broad and divergent in scope and was successful in encouraging uniqueness.²

Motivation. "Motivation is the stimulation to action resulting

¹Lawrence McVitty, "An Experimental Study on Various Methods in Art at the Fifth Grade Level" (Doctoral dissertation, Pennsylvania State University, 1954), p. 1.

²Donald and Barbara Herberholz, A Child's Pursuit of Art (Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Company Publishers, 1967), p. 32.

from an individual's desire to reach an established goal or purpose."³

Experienced. A teacher who has gained knowledge, wisdom, and skill in teaching over a period of time is considered experienced. In this study an experienced teacher was one who had at least one year or more of classroom teaching.

Studies. The process of gathering information through reading, observations, interviews, and the use of questionnaires. Much of the knowledge acquired through periodicals, publications, and books confirms classroom motivational experiences.

Experiments. Experiments are a series of tentative procedures. Concerning this thesis, experiments were actually used by classroom instructors. Procedures were also tested by other professionals and were recorded in this paper.

Evaluation. Evaluation by the instructor determined the degree, through observation, of a student's interest in a subject or in a project. A lesser degree of emphasis was placed on the finished product itself. Consideration was given to the student's art ability and his past experience.

Project. Any undertaking which is planned and carried out with a purpose in mind.

³Smith, Krause, and Anderson, The Educator's Encyclopedia (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1961), p. 584.

III. RESEARCH DESIGN

Instruments. The instruments used in this study were questionnaires, personal interviews and observations. In this study teachers who showed a wide variety of number of years taught and also had a varied geographical background in teacher training were selected at random. The teachers were asked to identify the types of motivation which they used for an art class and which were found to be most successful. The question and the discussion can be found in Chapter IV.

IV. DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study has been delimited to grades K-12 in the public schools. Questionnaires, interviews, and observations were used on the elementary and secondary level. The research for this study was conducted during 1967 to 1969 and delimited to the schools as outlined in the selected studies.

V. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

Chapter I includes a discussion of the problem, the method of research employed, and outlines the organization of the remainder of the study.

Chapter II presents the importance of the studies and the role that the teacher plays. The Review of the Literature also includes the importance of motivation and an introduction to some of the results

of certain techniques.

Chapter III discusses many techniques that could motivate students in the art room. These methods were found functional by the author and are supported by research in literature.

Chapter IV includes various methods that could be used for presenting an art lesson. Findings of the study and other methods of motivation that could be applicable in the classroom are outlined.

Chapter V presents a summary of the study, its findings, and the conclusions derived therefrom. Possible recommendations based on the study are also presented in this final chapter.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In taking up the problem of motivation, two aspects to keep in mind are: (1) the importance of motivation; and (2) how to motivate. The importance will be brought out in this chapter. New ideas may result from the process of motivation, but more important is having the experiences derived from creativity up to the completed objective.

The reasons for motivation seem to overlap and have some correlation with one another. The Educational Policies Commission of the National Education Association states, "The central role of the teacher remains the stimulation of learning for individuals and for groups."¹ E. B. Hurlock in his book, Child Growth and Development, helps emphasize further the function of the teacher in learning and the close relationship of motivation and learning; for he states:

When motivation appears to be lacking in students, the teacher's role is primarily that of motivating them so that learning can take place. It is possible to develop the learner's acceptance of the teacher's goal as his own; however, a higher aim is to establish goals on which both teacher and learner can agree.²

The teacher's motivation is always important in a classroom for the students of any age. Even those with outstanding ability must have some need or reason for doing a task. Most teachers can tell us that to

¹On the Role of the Teacher, A Report Prepared by the Educational Policies Commission of the NEA (Washington, D. C., 1967), p. 1.

²E. B. Hurlock, Child Growth and Development (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966), p. 586.

walk into a classroom and say in so many words, "Draw a picture," with no build-up or explanation will find the students sitting there wondering what to do. A picture of what? How large? With what media? What kind of paper? These points must be explained as part of the instructional procedure. A pupil wants to know and should know what to do and what his freedoms for expression are. These directions can be conveyed to him by the teacher and developed into a mutual understanding of the objectives. A study by McVitty states:

The motivations which involved the "personal factor" of a student-teacher participation resulted in the greatest degree of creative growth as indicated by the criteria used. Mere participation by the student alone does not guarantee learning.³

The above statement does not mean that a student should always or continuously be guided, especially in a creative experience. There are times when he should be by himself to concentrate and bring forth his own ideas.

Basic factors of motivation. The teacher, the atmosphere he presents, the classroom, the relationship between students, the interest in the subject, the materials, the past experiences, the teacher's explanation of the unit or project--these are some of the basic factors in starting to consider motivation.

Importance of the teacher. The beginning of the motivational experience should commence with the teacher. The mental attitude of

³McVitty, op. cit., p. 91.

the teacher is one of the primary, important aspects of motivation. He or she should try, through personal interest with the use of the voice, facial expressions, and even body movement, to create an exciting, interesting introduction or atmosphere that will carry over to the students. It is this interest shown by the instructor that will give an attentive and enthusiastic start to art instruction. Manual Barken speaks of the teacher, "They can create the atmosphere that can make the art laboratory a haven for personal development and self fulfillment."⁴ The importance of the teacher, especially during the introductory period of a lesson or a unit, is pointed out again by Barken when he states:

The conditions created by a teacher in which social interaction occurs are as potent a force toward creative action as the development characteristics of the children themselves. In fact the development capacities of children can grow to their optimal level only when the educational situation encourages their growth.⁵

The development which Barken speaks of here is an important development which begins as the teacher begins to develop the interest.

Through the interest created, the teacher hopes inspiration will follow. However, in Manfred L. Keiler's book, The Art of Teaching Art, he points out that one cannot force inspiration, but that once it is present, it requires proper guidance toward a desired goal.⁶ Some

⁴Manual Barken, A Foundation for Art Education (New York: Ronald Press Company, 1955), p. 221.

⁵Ibid., p. 219.

⁶Manfred L. Keiler, The Art of Teaching Art (University of Nebraska Press, 1961), p. 45.

important techniques for this necessary guidance will be brought out in the next chapter.

Objectives of the lesson. When motivating the student, it is very important to point out that the completed project for the lesson being presented is not the only objective. The main objective is the expression of experiences. "A child whose anxiety about representation is appeased by a sense of achievement is often willing to go further in a creative way than a child who is stymied because he feels he can't draw."⁷ This is when the proper motivation to prevent the hindrance of a student's creativeness is important. The individual difference for an assigned end result must be acknowledged. "The final product is only the result of the precluding experience. If the child cannot identify himself with the experience, the final product will necessarily show it."⁸

Instructor's influence on the student. The teacher can use any number of techniques in aiding the student who is creating a product not only to complete the work but also to develop his own style in doing it. The importance of the teacher in the above process cannot be over-emphasized, as pointed out by Burkhart's statement:

Only those teachers with some breadth in their training and background in art education were able to help their pupils

⁷Helen Merritt, Guiding Free Expression in Children's Art (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1964), p. 56.

⁸Viktor Lowenfeld, Creative and Mental Growth (third edition, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1957), p. 25.

develop their own individual styles of work in ways that could not be readily identified with their teacher's own paintings. Though in art education our predominant concern is to help all our pupils to work in any one course, to help each pupil discover ways of becoming more creative in his own particular and individual ways of work.⁹

Talent. This raised the question: Should the "non-talented" person be encouraged to take art? To evaluate a student's talent requires some knowledge of the student's background. Talent, according to McFee's study, appears to be a complex factor; for she states:

"Talent" in art has never been clearly defined. The traditional concept that one is born with talent is too simple to explain the complexity of a child's development in art. Mendelowitz considers talent mainly a matter of opportunity and reward. These are certainly important factors, but there seem to be inherent traits that "talent" also comprises--intelligence, eye-hand coordination, and intensity of drives.¹⁰

Therefore, it would seem that most everyone has some artistic knack but might not have the ability to express it. Usually, all one needs is the opportunity to develop creativity. However, if a student does not show his talent, it becomes the obligation of the teacher to motivate such a person throughout the entire lesson. If anyone is properly motivated, his creative aptness can be uncovered. This is one of the objectives of the art teacher.

Motivating the inhibited. Another objective of the art teacher is to help the inhibited art student. To overcome inhibition will take

⁹Robert G. Burkhart, Spontaneous and Deliberate Ways of Learning (Scranton, Pennsylvania: International Textbook Company, 1962), p. 9.

¹⁰June King McFee, Preparation for Art (San Francisco: Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc., 1961), p. 207.

more motivation for that student than it will for an individual with uninhibited ability or with experience. Here again, as stated above, the student's background is important. Viktor Lowenfeld found that:

A child who says "I can't draw" has become inhibited in the spontaneous creative expression of his experiences. We are often apt to believe that it may be an indication of lack of skill, that is, inability to represent things "adequately." That this is not so is borne out by the fact that children actually have no external standard for "adequate expression." Since all children express themselves differently according to their individual differences, there is actually no "right" or "wrong." If the child cannot express himself, something must have interfered with his self-confidence.¹¹

Giving such a person the guidance that will give him the security to create is essential.

Motivating the self-conscious. As a child gets older, he becomes more self-conscious about his work. Some students will not only need motivation to be creative and overcome this self-consciousness in an art class, but will also need some incentive to take an art course in the first place. This would be true especially in an upper-grade situation where art is an elective, and a student may be so self-conscious that this inhibition will keep him from taking a course. Here is the case when someone should motivate a restrained person to take an art course in school, for the student may have a talent but lack the courage to make use of it.

Motivating the uninterested. Many times a student is assigned

¹¹Viktor Lowenfeld, Your Child and His Art (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955), pp. 28-29.

to an art class who is not the least interested in art. With the proper motivation, an interest can be instilled. Again, as with the non-talented and inhibited student, a little extra stimulation is necessary. If the uninterested student is stimulated correctly and shown how much art is surrounding him and how much his everyday life is involved, he is likely to become interested.

Motivation from guest artists. There may be some instances when the teacher feels inadequate to help the students become involved with a certain project. In this case the teacher should not feel frustrated. For many years art teachers have called in others to demonstrate or discuss certain aspects of their subject area. Guest artists in the classroom may be termed tools of motivation; consequently, the regular instructor could increase enthusiasm and interest by inviting in a guest teacher.

Over-motivation. Another very important phase of motivation is to know when to draw the fine line between motivation and over-motivation. Too much talk or demonstration could be boring. As important as it is to motivate, the teacher should always be observant enough to note how much is needed. A student might get very excited and interested in an idea early during an introduction. A teacher's ability in timing in many instances is extremely important. Continued motivation may be carried out during a more personal contact at a later time with other students.

In summarizing, the astute teacher of art is one who guides his

students with the best motivational and instructional procedures by being constantly aware of what is useful to them and what is useless. The role of the discerning teacher is vital, as Keiler reiterates:

In addition, the teacher must be thoroughly familiar with his own student attitude toward a subject in order to decide how far he can incorporate or utilize their wants and wishes, and to what extent he must ignore them for their own benefit. This form of interaction between students' wishes and the teacher's knowledge and pedagogical skill must take place before the instructor can discharge his obligations effectively. However, the final responsibility for the conduct of a course always rests with the teacher; no one else can carry this responsibility for him, least of all his students.¹²

¹²Keiler, op. cit., p. 51.

CHAPTER III

TECHNIQUES TO MOTIVATE IN THE ART CLASSROOM

Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. In this chapter intrinsic and extrinsic motivational techniques will be discussed. In The Educator's Encyclopedia these two techniques are explained as:

Motivation resulting from goals or purposes developed or recognized by the person himself is referred to as intrinsic motivation. Motivation resulting from goals or purposes that are accepted from others or developed and recognized as the result of outside influences is referred to as extrinsic motivation.¹

Regardless of the technique used, the most important factor is the teacher. Vincent Lanier states it very well when he says:

Underlying all of these motivational devices is the one essential ingredient in the phase of methodology--teacher enthusiasm. Without it most of these techniques can easily be unproductive of the desired results. With it they are sometimes unnecessary. The art teacher who can be sincerely excited by the wonder of art and by the thrill of seeing his pupils experience this wonder, can infect a group with the same feeling. At times this is the only motivation that is needed.²

What makes a good teacher. Innumerable studies have been made on the qualities and characteristics of a good art teacher; the results have been either inconclusive and/or conflicting. There are many kinds of successful teachers, for one has only to go back over his own past experiences as a student to find many good qualities and characteristics

¹Smith-Krause-Anderson, op. cit., p. 584.

²Vincent Lanier, Teaching Secondary Art (Scranton, Pennsylvania: International Textbook Company, 1964), p. 133.

of his teachers. The matter of saying what an effective teacher should be like is difficult; at worst, impossible. Therefore, we should keep in mind that there are a number of good characteristics which a teacher should have, but that he has them in a number of degrees and combinations.³ Some of the good qualities of a teacher which will help to motivate in the art room are brought out in the following paragraphs.

Keep in mind, when introducing any unit with any kind of technique, in order to have it well received by the students, the teacher should start out with enthusiasm not only for teaching his special field of interest but also to teach other areas (water color, design, ceramics, etc.) of art required of him by his administration. Because art involves emotion, the teacher must feel he wants to be involved in a number of ways. To show enthusiasm, one would: (1) show interest in the students, (2) show interest in the subject, (3) be receptive to ideas, (4) know and understand the needs of the students, and (5) develop competency in areas that are taught.

As stated above, the start of the motivational procedure rests with the teacher, and before anything further is said, strong points are the appearance and the expression of the teacher. These are important right from the beginning in order to present a pleasant atmosphere in the classroom; unless a gloomy one is desired for certain effects.

³Reid Hastie and David Templeton, Art Education in the Secondary Schools (University of Minnesota, Research Report 1-63, Minneapolis Minnesota: Department of Art Education, 1963), p. 82.

If a teacher doesn't feel well and there is good rapport between the teacher and the students; he should relay his feelings to the class. They will usually be more considerate in their attention and behavior. This is usually important because of the often informal atmosphere in an art studio classroom. Viktor Lowenfeld stresses the importance of the introductory period when he writes:

It should be stressed in the beginning that there is no single approach to freeing children or adults in their creative potentialities, or to making them more sensitive toward themselves and their environment. However, it can be said that whatever a teacher does in stimulating creativeness greatly depends on three factors; (1) his own personality, of which his own creativeness, his degree of sensitivity, and flexible relationships to environment are an important part; (2) his ability to put himself into the place of others, and (3) his understanding and knowledge of the needs of those whom he is teaching.⁴

A good appearance is sometimes overlooked. There are some teachers who indicate carelessness and forget that a magnetic teacher should: (1) dress appropriately, (2) dress attractively, (3) be neatly groomed, (4) not be "extreme in appearance," (5) wear clothing and grooming appropriate to complexion, height, weight, and personality, and (6) have a pleasant facial expression.⁵ This does not mean the teacher must always dress formally when in the classroom. When working with clay and paper mache, informal clothes would be appropriate. Furthermore, if

⁴Viktor Lowenfeld, Creative and Mental Growth, (third edition, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1957), p. 3.

⁵Howard Conant and Arne Randall, Art in Education, (Peoria, Illinois: Charles A. Bennett, 1963), p. 36.

a teacher is too "dressed up," he or she might be too conscious about their clothing and hinder the informality of an art room.

Coupled with an attractive outward appearance, the teacher must possess those genuine inner traits that daily enhance his teaching in the eyes of his students such as: (1) friendliness to all, (2) an ability to work with people, not over them, (3) a willingness to share, (4) a real sincerity, (5) enduring patience, (6) the ability to dramatize, and (7) a well-developed sense of humor.

Not only should the students know the feelings of their teacher for a better understanding, but the teacher should also know the kind of student he has--his background, interests, and feelings toward him. These things cannot be known at the first class session but are learned over a period of time.

Teachers' ideal working conditions. Factors, pleasant or unpleasant, which influence a teacher, will reach into the classroom. An art-minded community and a decent home life for the teacher will benefit the teacher's interest in motivation. For the teacher to feel enthusiastic about his teaching in the art room, his room should be appealing to the students. Excellent working conditions, congenial fellow workers, and a cooperative administration add to the composition of desirable conditions. Also, necessary materials should be readily available.

Students' classroom conditions. Students can get frustrated and discouraged if the classrooms are too crowded. Overcrowding will

present at least two problems; one is that the teacher cannot reach all of the students for individual help, and the other is the lack of the necessary space to carry on many of the art projects--especially the three-dimensional projects. If a shy or self-conscious student is placed in this undesirable, crowded situation, his creative expression will often be inhibited. If the student can sit with friends or if he can have a little privacy, he might express himself more freely. Keiler points out how essential to the creative process these things are when he writes:

Impatience, impetuosity, fearfulness, and a lack of confidence are deadly enemies of the creative process. Patience and trust in oneself are essential, and both can be developed through guided experiences in the art room.⁶

Artist-teacher. "Art education can fulfill its function only under the competent guidance of a well-trained art teacher."⁷ In the field of art education, much has been said about the artist-teacher role. One cannot be the first, leave out the second, and be an educator of worth. An artist, no matter how well trained or talented he may be in the arts, does not always make an outstanding teacher. If an artist is not interested in the "teacher" aspect, he will probably teach only skills with little reason or theory behind them. A good artist-teacher is one who usually teaches to share the experiences of art. However, to become a good art teacher is a goal that is not acquired solely through education. It is an inward feeling coupled with knowledge and

⁶Keiler, op. cit., p. 45.

⁷Ibid., p. 49.

experience. The importance of the artist-teacher is well stated in

Understanding Children's Art for Better Teaching:

Creative work in art deepens the teacher's understanding of her pupils' work. It enables her to experience at first hand both the satisfactions and the frustrations that are part of all creative endeavors. From observation of her own difficulties in creative undertakings she can gain valuable insights into the problems her pupils face. From her way of overcoming difficulties, she can learn how to help children overcome theirs.⁸

Importance of introduction. Of the characteristics that point to a good teacher, one of the most important is the ability to motivate. Because of numerous new materials and techniques being developed, it is difficult for the teacher to keep informed and to be experienced with all of them. If a teacher is presenting a lesson using a new media or technique, the individual, if properly informed and motivated, can have a successful experience. The importance of good motivation at the introduction is stressed by Smith, Krause, and Anderson:

One of the teacher's major roles in instruction is to motivate the student. Establishing goals or purposes that are accepted by the individual often presents a problem.

The school itself can provide a setting that leads to intrinsic motivation. Activities that afford opportunities for the student to probe his own interests and his own particular aptitudes and talents. Such probing amid a variety of experiences often provides the stimulation that is needed in motivating students in the learning process.

Since motivation may be aroused by outside influences,

⁸Betty Lark-Horovitz, Hilda Present Lewis, and Marc Luca, Understanding Children's Art for Better Teaching (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Books, Inc., 1967), p. 189.

certain techniques or devices may be used successfully for this purpose. In introducing a new lesson or a new topic, teachers often refer to the introduction as motivation for the lesson. It is during this period that the teacher, as the outside influence, attempts to use his knowledge of the pupils' interests, needs, and abilities in arousing them to action. He hopes to establish purposes for the lesson ahead in such a way that students adopt the purposes as their own and are stimulated to action to achieve them.

The teacher may assume that interest alone will motivate the students only to find that although the students seemed to be highly interested in the topic or problem at hand, no action results.⁹

Teaching aids which can be used along with the teacher's motivation can also help if mechanical or other aids are used correctly. Here again, the teacher must be able to judge how much and how many examples to use as aids.

Class discussion. The alert teacher can tell by observing his class how long a discussion should last. Whether the discussion is during the introduction, a review, or a project critique, student interest can be held for only so long. During the introduction to a project, the students could be anxious to start working. When such restlessness begins, it is time to conclude the discussion or get them more interested in the discussion with a different approach if more information is essential. Observation of individual differences is important here. In the classroom situation, the attention span during a discussion will vary with each individual's interest.

During the discussion, whether it is during the introduction of

⁹Smith-Krause-Anderson, op. cit., pp. 584-585.

a unit or at a point within the unit, the objectives should be stressed continuously. The value of a clear knowledge of the purpose of the assignment or the objectives to give the students more interest is pointed out by Shumsky when he writes:

It is evident that guiding the students to formulate the lesson's objective tends to emphasize the common task facing the group, raises a meaningful goal to be achieved, and encourages freedom and initiative to think and participate. The cooperative identification of the lesson's objective is an attempt to alleviate a major difficulty inherent in a lesson planning the involvement of children learning.¹⁰

Points that might be included in a discussion are: (1) past experiences of the students and the teacher, (2) appropriate ideas for the materials involved, (3) numerous variations on a theme, if one is being used, and (4) the objectives or goals of the assignment.

Use of themes with discussion. With nearly any medium or technique, a theme may be assigned for a guide. Often a class will receive an assignment with a paint medium and not know what subject to paint. Natalie Robinson Cole says that, "The child must have his mind and emotions aroused. Time should be spent discussing past experiences to build up an interest for expansion of a subject matter."¹¹ Given one-word themes such as water, tree, or old house, students can come forth with many fine ideas. If the teacher selects one word and asks

¹⁰Abraham Shumsky, In Search of Teaching Style (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1968), p. 133.

¹¹Natalie Robinson Cole, The Arts in the Classroom (New York: John Day Company, 1940), pp. 3-4.

the class to see how many ideas can be derived from that one word, such as tree; they may respond with hanging tree, lone pine, windblown, gnarled, dead, logging camp, stump, orchard, and many more beginning ideas. Themes for holidays seem to be overworked; yet a new idea for an old custom always makes an interesting challenge. Other ideas for themes, which are unending, might include making music, haunted house, lost, the good old days, a wish, occupations, water, sports, transportation, weather, and fire.

Blanche Jefferson in her book, Teaching Art to Children, discusses using themes for motivating students and how much more enthusiasm they put into their art work after discussing them. "As a result of such motivation, Debby drew a much more complex, detailed, and interesting picture."¹² Jefferson also goes on to say, "Children need the suggestions that they gain from their classmate's statements, as well as the stimulation of their own thinking through the teacher's questions."¹³

Use of examples. During the discussion, or after, examples of work may be shown. Often a student wants to have some visual idea of what his final product or goal is so, therefore, the showing of certain techniques may be beneficial because the student could lack perception of what his goal is. Showing examples of an objective is not always desirable. So often when a student has limited ability or is self-

¹²Blanche Jefferson, Teaching Art to Children (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1965), pp. 64-66.

¹³Ibid., p. 67.

conscious about his work, he will tend to duplicate from examples or from parts of them. Many times when a teacher is emphasizing creativity, the showing of examples might inhibit the objective.

Here, consideration can be given to the objectives. Should just an explanation be given? Should examples of work be shown and then put away? Should examples of the objective be left visible throughout the unit? These questions can be answered by a teacher's observation of his class. He should know his class, his objectives, and the extent to which he should use examples. "If they do become fixed too soon, they may fall into a mannerism. They need most of all to remain open and flexible in the way they work."¹⁴ The importance of the teacher's judgment in the extent of his use of examples and ideas presented to students is noted by Hiram Williams:

The good art teacher passes on principles to his student, principles useful to the exploitation of ideas. As best as he can, the teacher helps the student recognize ideas and how to unfold possibilities. He makes an effort to stay out of the student's experience with unfolding form and gives advice only at that point where the student-painter is unquestionably bogged in a hopeless quandary. Above all, the good art teacher, tries his utmost to refrain from stifling the student with his own prejudices, his biases, and his style. The real task of the art teacher is to be what we might call a freeing agent.¹⁵

There are different ways of showing examples, just as there are different media to use for various demonstrations. Besides having two-

¹⁴Robert C. Burkart, op. cit., p. 9.

¹⁵Hiram Williams, "On Teaching Art," Art Education, Volume 21: Number 5 (May, 1968), 7.

