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An Investigation into Art Preparation for Teachers of Mentally Handicapped Children

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AN INVESTIGATION INTO ART PREPARATION FOR
TEACHERS OF MENTALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

(TITLE)

BY

LARRY D. WILSON

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
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PREFACE

"Don't climb a tree and say, 'it's mine';
take a root and plant it and then say, 'it's
mine'."

Henri Matisse (11:4)

CHAPTER I

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE RELATED TO THIS STUDY

Yoshihiko Yamamoto states:

"Mentally handicapped children face marginal lives, and many of them know it. They realize that life dealt them a short deck, that they are unlikely to shine in a world that values and rewards achievement." (16:72)

The emphasis of this study is on mentally handicapped children from the ages 3 through 21. Mentally handicapped children fall under the classification of special or exceptional children. The term "exceptional children" denotes all instances of significant deviancy: intellectual--including gifted as well as retarded; physical--including various orthopedic handicaps and chronic health problems; sensorial, i. e., the auditory or visually impaired; social; and emotional. (13:13) However, only the mentally retarded, the brain-injured--i. e., children suffering primarily from learning disorders--are considered in this study. Exceptional children tend to represent a unique group, apart and distinct from "normal" children. (4:28) They are defined as a segment of our society which falls below the mean for their particular age group. Since this is a very broad and encompassing categorization, this study will use the term "mentally handicapped" to refer to all degrees of mental deficit.

The impact of artistic experience on the mentally retarded has been relatively unexamined. My research has verified there is only a small amount of information published dealing specifically with art and the mentally handicapped.

Chester Alkema's book, Art for the Exceptional, proved to have many ideas which corresponded with the author's plan of study. His book reviewed the various types of exceptional children and their problems. Alkema supports the theory that art experiences, creative in nature, can be of tremendous value in the general development of the exceptional child. However, no publications were found that dealt primarily with the art preparation for teachers of mentally handicapped children.

CHAPTER II

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

Due to the public schools increasing concern to serve all children, more and more classes for the mentally retarded have been initiated. Art educators and teachers of special education classes are now faced with the problem of adequate art instruction to children whose developmental ages are lower than their chronological ages. (9:193)

The purpose of this study is to give help to the teacher who needs assistance in teaching art to the mentally handicapped student. Fortunate are the mentally handicapped students who are able to be integrated into a regular art program directed by a sympathetic, understanding, patient, and knowledgeable teacher. For those less fortunate who are denied for many reasons the opportunity of taking part in a regular art program it is essential that the special education teacher be prepared and willing to incorporate some type of opportunity for creative expression into the curriculum for these students.

It is essential that creative activity, through which a child gives vent to his emotional inner life and through which his thinking may be stimulated, be available to the mentally handicapped students at all levels. It is the author's plan to give suggestions which will be detailed and practical enough to use in developing an art program. These words

of encouragement should rid the teacher of his fears and help him to lead his students into valuable creative experiences.

THE NEED

Art is an age old and important avenue of expression for man. It is especially important for those who might need to translate an idea into visual rather than spoken form. The art for the handicapped program is a departure from the stereotyped follow-directions type of school art project. It places the emphasis on the child as a creative being, capable of communication in a wide variety of media and techniques.

The authors of the book, Creative art tasks for Children, state that:

"The exceptional child enrolled in a special education class, needs just as many art experiences as the 'regular or normal' child." (14:vii)

This is especially true if one considers emotional and social adjustments crucial to the mental growth of each student.

The mentally handicapped student may find it difficult to excel in any form of academic work. However, he may engage in some satisfying art activities which may tend to neutralize some of his intense feelings of failure and frustration which he experiences each day in school, at home, and in social situations. In Cornelia Hollander's book, Creative Opportunities for the Retarded Child at Home and in School, she states her feeling on the importance of art for the handicapped child by saying:

"All children love to make things, but too often the handicapped child finds there are many things he cannot do, and feels defeated before he even starts. But he can make something out of wood, or with a lump of clay, or with a paint brush, or just with his hands and some paint. It may be a primitive and perhaps unrecognizable object, but it's a tangible product he's made himself. And small successes tend to lead to bigger ones." (5:6)

My theory is that students who actively participate in art activities will gain satisfaction, enjoyment, and a sense of achievement he may not always--if ever--be able to find in other subject areas.

Zaidee Lindsay states:

"Art education for the handicapped child may be so directed that it becomes the means of inducing some response by increasing physical awareness in each situation, without which little educational or social development is possible. Creative activity can then be used for developing manual dexterity and patterns of movement; it encourages social communicability; it is psychotherapeutic in helping to restore confidence; it helps the child master his environment through control of tools and materials; it encourages observation, discrimination of color, shape and texture and stimulates imagination." (7:9)

Creative art experiences offer a multitude of values relative to the mental, social-emotional, and motor development of the mentally handicapped child. When a child is given the freedom to express his own ideas as they relate to his own thoughts and feelings, he learns to think independently. Mental development is fostered when the child is encouraged to be an individual in terms of self-expression. Through experimentation, the student learns to correct his "mistakes" as mental awareness increases. The need for the creative process helps

the child to organize his ideas in an ever-growing system of orderliness. He learns to use the elements of art, lines, shapes, colors, textures, movements, etc., so they become orderly, expressive and beautiful. Artistic expression encourages the child to observe his environment more closely and to recall more vividly that which he has seen. Art contributes greatly to the mental development of the retarded child.

The social-emotional development of the child is also fostered by creative art expression. Art can be therapeutic when the artist chooses his own experiences, repeats them and varies them at will. In choosing these experiences, the artist must face, relive and resolve his inner conflicts and fears. He can tell his hate as well as love and joy. Through art, he can effectively speak about himself. Any student of psychology realizes how important the art of self-expression can be in the development of the individual.

Chester Alkema, in his book Art for the Exceptional, states his feelings on the value of art in the development of the mentally retarded child:

"The need for art also plays a role in the motor development of the mentally retarded child. Better coordination and muscular control develop through the manipulation of a variety of art materials. Hand and eye coordination improves, for example, when the brush and paint are used to express oneself!" (1:1)

When need for creative activity can be used to encourage the fullest development of the reduced potentialities in those who are

handicapped, it becomes a fundamental part of their education through which they are able to experience not only a fuller physical awareness but also a mental awakening.

IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVES

The author recognizes the inherent values of an art program for the mentally handicapped and the need for the program to provide appropriate guidance in fulfilling the urge in those children to create.

The immediate objectives should include the following:

1. To stimulate interest in seeing new things by developing their powers of perception.
2. To help the student experience joy in doing.
3. To provide him with opportunities for creative thinking and doing.
4. To develop his ability to communicate ideas and feelings through the use of various media.
5. To develop a sense of responsibility in using and not in mis-using art supplies.
6. To provide opportunities for cooperation, socialization, sharing, and sincere praise by the teacher and the class.
7. To develop a sense of appreciation for his own work and that of his fellow students' art work.
8. To release and consequently alleviate the child's emotional tensions.

LONG-RANGE OBJECTIVES

One of the long-range objectives of an effective art program should be to enable the student to regain some sense of identity and worth as

an individual. Most handicapped students are isolated from the environment in one way or another. A physical handicap may cause physical isolation along with feelings of inferiority. Creative activity can be a means of overcoming this detachment by improving those sensory experiences which deal with the establishment of an improved self-concept, and emotionally by relieving tensions and inhibitions that stand in the way of the development of their potential abilities. With the mentally handicapped, their isolation is due to their inability to comprehend environmental factors together with a lack of self-identity. Through experiences of the self the individual gains contact and connection with the environment which can bring him out of his isolation and make him a more useful member of society.

Another long-range objective is the development of visual efficiency. People today need to be visually efficient if they are to derive the most from the visual components of a complex world.

Cultural identity is another outgrowth of an art education program. All students, but especially those who are mentally handicapped, need to know that they do belong to a way of life. Through art they can be helped to become more consciously aware of their surroundings and able to understand better what is excellent in their way of life. In like manner they can be helped to see what is not so excellent in their way of life and thus be aided in improving their surroundings.

A very important long-range objective is that of learning how to make the most effective use of leisure time. Time is a precious

commodity. Students today have more potential leisure time than the present or immediate past generation has had. It has been predicted that by the year 2000 leisure time will be doubled that required for necessities. Through conscientious endeavor on the part of the teacher, students can be guided in numerous ways to use their leisure time wisely. By nurturing favorable attitudes towards art, providing instruction in various artistic skills, and providing opportunities for inquiry and participation, confidence can be developed, pride in accomplishment attained, and a realization that art may be enjoyed outside of school.

A final objective would be to promote and sponsor talent should there be a student who is so gifted. Possibilities for using this talent vocationally should be explored and guidance for its use given.

THE LIMITATIONS

Modern educational theories have been promoting the idea of an individual approach to learning, that all students learn at a different rate of speed, that individual needs must be met, etc. It is the author's opinion that this theory is even more true with the mentally handicapped student for he possesses some characteristics which set him apart from the "normal" child.

One of the characteristics noticeable when working with the retarded is the shortened attention span. The student is unable to concentrate on any one thing for very long. He is easily distracted by the

noise or movement about him, so background noises claim equal attention with what he is creating. Ernest Siegel, in his book Special

Education in the Regular Classroom, states:

"A major characteristic of brain-injured children is an inability to focus their attention readily on the foreground, that is, on the task at hand. Obviously, learning cannot occur until the student's attention is engaged." (13:55)

If the art activity is too demanding or challenging the student will quickly lose interest or be distracted. Retardates cannot work well toward a goal or follow a plan as well as "normal" students his own age.

Another restriction of the mentally handicapped child is that of immature interests. Chester Alkema has stated:

"A mentally retarded individual does not have the mental capacity or the level of achievement reached by others of the same chronological age." (1:17)

This means the teacher must be guided in selecting projects by the mental age rather than the chronological age of his students.

A characteristic which often hampers the plans of the teacher is the student's lack of imagination. The mentally handicapped tend to lack originality and creativeness. Creativeness takes intelligence and the mentally handicapped child doesn't have as much as most children. So, don't expect the children to be creative beyond their ability.

A fourth characteristic is that of inadequate learning. The retarded may not see any relationship between one experience and another may tend to repeat the same error over and over again.

Most mentally handicapped children are limited because of some type of coordination problem. Some examples of such in-coordination are difficulty in scissor cutting, pasting or glueing, poor handwriting, and problems in manipulation of small objects.

CHAPTER III

MOTIVATING THE RETARDED

The author feels the need for proper motivation is stated in this quote from Chester Alkema's book, Art for the Exceptional.

"Procedures for motivating the retarded to express themselves in art should be considered carefully. The educator's ability, or lack of ability, in motivating the retarded has a direct bearing on the success or failure of the child's creative art experience. The teacher must set the stage and prepare the way if meaningful art expressions are to unfold in the art classroom. The retarded cannot create in a vacuum. They must have ideas worthy of expression in art. When motivating the retarded, the teacher must stimulate each child to relive his experiences so that ideas are brought into play." (1:19-20)

Listed below are two types of approaches which can be used to effectively motivate the mentally handicapped.

Indirect approaches are generally discussion stimulation which encourage the emotions of feelings, imagination, and intellectual problem solutions. This method relies upon prior experiences.

1. Recall previous experiences
2. Pretend and imagine
3. Solve problems
4. Place yourself in the position or circumstance

Direct approach relies upon immediate sensory stimulation.

1. Visual stimulation
 - a. Bring things into the classroom

- b. Trips, walks, visits
 - c. Visual aids - pictures, films, slides, photographs
 - d. Demonstrations using experimentation and exploration
2. Audio experiences
 - a. Listening to sounds
 - b. Reading stories
 - c. Singing songs, listening to music and records
 3. Tactile experiences
 - a. Feeling of objects and stressing the textural qualities of the materials

Marlene Linderman states:

"Each student's art work is 'talking' about him.
Everyone is worthwhile.
All art work is important enough to be looked at." (8:47)

The author feels that displaying the students' art work is one of the easiest and most effective ways to motivate the retarded child. By displaying his work you are saying, "Your art work is significant and important." This promotes a sense of achievement for every child. This type of praise speaks louder than words. (5:3)

The art product is a reflection of his concerns; of how the student views the world; how he feels about himself and the world and his experiences in the world. It is self-revealing, fulfilling, and genuine.

In working with the mentally handicapped it is important to bear in mind that success is more often in the doing and the making than in any apparent beauty of the finished product. Regardless of how crude it may appear every child's art work should be displayed. When properly displayed a child's most primitive attempt at art can become attractive. (2:6) A teacher's vanity of showing the best from a class

can easily destroy a child's concept of self and his desire to express himself. Displays should be for the betterment of the children not for the conceit of the teacher.

Bulletin boards and displays offer numerous values to the student and the teacher. They:

1. help present an idea graphically.
2. act as a means of publicizing the importance of art for the retarded.
3. enhance the surrounding environment in the classrooms, halls, windows, etc.
4. provide an opportunity for communication between the creator of art and the observer. (11:14)
5. incorporate the elements of design in the presentation of art work.
6. build the child's self concept.
7. provide for the sharing of ideas and thoughts of others.
8. provide evidence of growth from previous performances.
9. encourage the individual who has shown progress and "hard work."
10. provide a sense of achievement for every child.

It is important that these displays be changed with every two-week period. If they remain up for a longer period, they lose their value to both the teacher and the student.

Exhibitions of mentally handicapped student's art work can generate interest in any community. This is a fine method of exchanging creative ideas, cultural enlightenment, and public relations. This

type of exhibit can easily become an annual event. Such a show visually presents the exploration and self-expression of an art program for the mentally handicapped to the public. The author has included, in the Appendix of this paper, guidelines and information for initiating this type of art exhibit.

CHAPTER IV

DEMONSTRATIONS

The handling of art materials and the teaching of techniques for using them provides the teacher with many a challenge. The introduction of a new material may excite little interest in the child. The teacher may form a ball of clay into the shape of a head. He will then ask "where do you think the eyes should be? The ears?" The child will respond by physically forming the eyes and ears. When the child has become more secure in using clay, he should be encouraged to create objects completely of his own invention.

However, it is possible to reveal so much in a demonstration that the retarded have little chance to make discoveries on their own. Enough should be said to stimulate interest in using a new material or process and to provide a measure of security in proceeding on one's own, but comments should be limited so as not to stifle the creative energies of the child.

A teacher must know the child he is trying to motivate. (10:69)
Teacher demonstrations of materials and techniques must be carefully geared to the creative needs of the student. It is the duty of the teacher to completely as possible familiarize himself with each child's handicap. By doing this he will be able to realistically assess each student's

potential. Hopefully this will diminish the possibility of demanding too much or expecting too little from the retarded child. In making this assessment the first place the teacher is likely to turn is to the student's achievement level by referring to an I.Q. score assigned to him. The teacher should use the test scores only to establish general boundaries of each child's capabilities. Once the teacher is familiar with his students' creative needs and abilities he can effectively demonstrate selected projects geared to the mental age rather than the chronological age of the students.

It is important when planning a demonstration to implement and place emphasis on certain learning theories that are routinely used with "normal" children. The author believes it is safe to say that order, repetition and structure are of the utmost importance to the retarded. A new learning experience should be linked, and in fact should overlap, the previous experience so that repetition can reinforce the new learning. It is highly gratifying to a teacher and student alike when carry-over is realized, when a student learns that the scissors he used to cut paper for his art project may also be used effectively to cut material in a sewing situation or twine in work related activities. The carry-over which might seem ridiculously simple even intuitive for the "normal" child, could represent a monumental and highly reinforcing accomplishment for the retarded child. Generally it is conceded that a few structured, carefully planned art

experiences pursued in depth achieve better results than great numbers of different experiences.

It takes the retarded child a long period of time to fully explore the possibilities of his art materials. Learning takes place when repetition is not carried too far. There is the danger, however, that the repetitious use of materials and related techniques may bring about a standstill in the creative development of the child. If such is the case, the teacher may have to encourage the child to seek new ways of using his materials. He may have to hold the child's hand over a crayon and demonstrate how various hand movements result in dissimilar effects. If the older child persists in using the same paint brush and color, the teacher may want to remove both articles so that the student is forced to explore new tools and colors.

A more detailed demonstration is required for the retarded than would be necessary for a "normal" child. When introducing new activities or materials to retarded students it should be presented in as basic a manner as possible, keeping in mind that it is quite easy to overwhelm and confuse them with unnecessarily complex instructions and details. It is very important that they understand completely what is expected of them, where they are to work, what supplies to use, what the finished product is to resemble, etc.

Individual instructions are often quite necessary since verbal explanations to a group are not enough. Demonstrations to the class

are best given with the back of the teacher toward the students so the position of the hands, materials, etc., are the same as what the students will be using. Individual instructions should be given, when possible, by leaning over the shoulders of the students, using your hands in front of the student in the same position as his will be.

According to Cornelia Hollander, a good teacher should:

1. Explain each step involved in developing a specific skill.
2. Explain why something is done as it is done.
3. Tell exactly how to start and complete a project.
4. Name and explain the use of the materials and tools needed.
5. Demonstrate step by step each phase of the project. (5:3)

Edith Krammer, in her book Art as Therapy with Children, states her feelings on the function of the art teacher by saying:

"The art teacher must make himself the ally of the child's creative venture, lending both technical assistance and emotional support. By upholding the basic requirement that the material be used to produce works of art, the art teacher counteracts the tendency to waste time and play."(6:34)

The teacher's role is one of resource person, an explainer, an inspirer, an admirer, an organizer; he helps when he is needed. He should be warm, understanding, patient and knowledgable. The diverse needs of retarded children cause the teacher to constantly search for new and better motivational procedures and teaching methods, to discover more appropriate art materials and techniques for using them.

The great challenge of teaching the retarded child necessitates a constant search for new methods by which the important developmental values of art may be realized. This is accomplished by research, study, experience, patience and understanding common sense, and a love of mankind.

DEVELOPING A LESSON

The author has formed some suggestions for developing an effective art lesson. This list was compiled specifically for teachers of level two severely mentally impaired classes.

1. Plan fully (written plans): materials, activities, lesson development. Keep daily and long-range plans.
2. Keep unstructured time to a minimum.
3. Be prepared: have art materials and tools prepared beforehand. Hint: Meticulous organization is very important.
4. Motivation is important: where possible, children should see need for the lesson--this enhances interest and cooperation. Hint: Motivation should "shake up" the children.
5. Be fully aware of the time: Lessons should not end merely because the bell rings. Planned endings are important (summary, review, evaluation) Hint: Attention span is short--Don't get too involved.
6. Manipulative goals: Provide for growth and improvement in controlling and handling of materials.
7. The aim of the lesson should be appropriate (to the age and ability of each student); clear (to teacher and student); and suitable. Be aware of auxiliary aims as well (perceptual, motor, etc.).

8. Continuity is important: A new learning experience should be linked, and in fact should overlap, the previous experiences so the repetition can reinforce the new learning.
9. Plan structured activities: Start with a shape.
10. Perceptual goals: Offer experiences in seeing, touching, feeling, hearing, and creating.
11. Expressive goals: The way in which the student discovers and communicates his ideas, feelings, and emotions.
12. Art appreciation goals: Greater awareness of art elements and principles; learning art terms; and learning about artists and art works.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Mentally retarded children can use the same basic tools and materials as non-retarded children in an art program. (3:195) Art methods and the materials used for the handicapped differ only in degree from the methods and materials that will be used with the so-called "normal" child. Handicapped children are first of all normal children with all of the emotional, physical, social, and educational (mental) needs of the "normal" child. They are, however, children who deviate from the majority in the degree of their needs.

Before we can choose which art materials are best, we must first consider what we, as teachers, want them to do for the child, and then what use the child will make of them. These two considerations point toward five goals:

1. Art as relaxation and satisfaction.
2. Art as self-realization through creative expression.

3. Art as therapy.
4. Art as vocational preparation.
5. Art as a means of child study.

All five goals will be in the planning of the teacher, for it is his job to prepare the way for the child to use art for his own relaxation, satisfaction, and creative self-expression.

The first of these goals, relaxation and satisfaction, is perhaps the most applicable to all children. Any child who concentrates for long periods of time on studying, needs to unwind and release tensions. This is particularly true of handicapped children.

The retarded must use his muscles if he is to learn to control them. Students growth can be seen in his manipulation of the tools and materials used in a particular art project. As the student uses such tools as scissors, pencils, brushes, rulers, paints, etc., he becomes more familiar with them and his knowledge and dexterity with them increases accordingly. It is the teacher's responsibility to guide the child to materials such as clay, finger paint, wood, etc. From the teacher's point of view use of this type of material provides therapy; to the child it is fun, relaxing, and satisfying. He can do what "other children" do, and no one but the handicapped child can know how much that means.

The various textures of materials used in collage offer a satisfying and truly aesthetic experience for the handicapped. How can you teach a child the words "soft," "stiff," "brittle," "smooth," or

"rough" unless he has felt the textures? Sensitivity to material characteristics is provided for all children through various art activities which serve as a means for developing finer manipulative skills. (15:60)

The mentally handicapped child has a great need for all kinds of art materials. He will be unable to find success academically, so almost more than any other he needs much experience in working with his hands. He may depend entirely on his hands for his livelihood, so give him as much time and as many materials as can be found. Remember not to expect him to be creative beyond his ability. Help him to use art materials to develop muscular control, the fine finger muscles as well as the large.

All of these things have been for relaxation and satisfaction from the child's point of view. But from the teacher's, they have also been for therapy and possibly for a livelihood.

Art is also a means for studying children. The wise teacher watches and listens when a child loses himself in an art project, but he does not interact. He watches the tensions, the hostility, the fearfulness and the anxieties as well as the happiness, the security and the playfulness.

Perhaps all the author has been saying is this: Art for the handicapped is really no different than art for any child. It is the wise use of materials by teachers who know children's needs and desires, and who adapt the materials to satisfy those needs and desires. And isn't

that good education in any field? First of all know children, then know the medium for expression, and then help the child to know himself and express himself through that medium.

CHAPTER V

EVALUATION

Evaluation is an integral part of the curriculum in most schools today. For the teacher of mentally handicapped art classes evaluation would seem to involve two problems. One of these problems is on what basis is performance or achievement to be judged? The other is how can the judgment be measured?

It cannot be stated too often that when working with mentally handicapped students the success is more in the doing than in the finished product. (5:3) Judgment of an individual's work then must not be made on the completed project but upon all the facets of work which were employed in order that work result in a complete project. Nor can any degree of judgment or measurement be made by comparing one student's work with another's. Each child sets his own standard in art, and each child's work must be evaluated in relationship to himself, not other members of the class.

The success or failure of any program must be measured by the degree to which students change in their behavior with reference to the objectives which have been set forth for the course of study. Each child's growth in the specified objectives--both immediate and long-range--must be studied carefully.

The writer feels the use of number or letter grades, for comparison of artistic performances by each child should be avoided. At this level it is harmful to the child because it turns his attention away from creating to concern for the importance of the end product. For those who must give arbitrary grades and feel a need for some type of scale for measurement the following criteria are listed as a basis for evaluation.

1. Shows interest.
2. Puts forth effort.
3. Demonstrates some degree of originality.
4. Has ability to solve visual problems.
5. Has knowledge of art techniques.
6. Demonstrates ability to select appropriate media to express ideas.
7. Has manipulative skills.

Evaluation of art teaching is extremely difficult to do well and even at its best the results leave much to be desired. The artistic expression of the retarded will often appear crude, showing little or no concern for design principles. Teachers must learn to accept honest art expressions of the retarded, rather than try to enforce adult rules which will guarantee predescribed, sophisticated, adult-like performances. The value of creative art experiences for the mentally retarded lies in the act of creation, not the creation of beautiful art examples which please the adult. (1:34)

In teaching the retarded, the art instructor may be tempted to involve his students in "accidental" art activities in order to produce pleasing, sophisticated results. It is not uncommon to find the retarded dropping a string upon the surface of a paper and then coloring in the shapes accidentally made by the string. Such tricks or gimmicks could be of value if the retarded capitalized on the results beyond the accidental stage. But such is usually not the case. The technique becomes an end in itself. The how-to-do-it technique fools the student into thinking he has achieved something quite beautiful, when actually he has no part in being original or creative. The ideas are the teachers, and the children simply imitate them. Mental development is not fostered. The child is given the chance to react to his environment in his own unique way. Emotional feelings remain dormant. Such practices have little educational value in the teaching of the retarded.

CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS (STUDENTS)

Two criteria for success stand out in regards to those who are enrolled in a special education program. They are a self-realization and satisfaction. If students achieve these two experiences then the art program has been successful.

Success is a pleasant experience. It arises when a person realizes that he can perform effectively in certain activities. For most of the retarded this kind of experience comes too seldom. Small successes tend to lead to larger ones. Hence, the teacher is able to

generate learning by stimulating students' satisfaction in what they are doing. In this way they are able to gain insight into their own needs and abilities.

Self-realization and its acceptance on the part of the student is obtained when he attempts to create, for example, an attractive letter-form or when he mixes a color in order to match it with another and his degree of success is fed back to him by what he sees on the paper. If his letter-form is clumsily done in comparison to the model, or if his color obviously does not match, then he has two choices. He may attempt to change it or he may have to concede that his work is not right. If he chooses to attempt a change but finds his work still unacceptable to himself, he then begins to realize his own strengths and weaknesses. His acceptance of these strengths and weaknesses is the measure of success.

CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS (TEACHERS)

A teacher's performance as a teacher of art may be evaluated as the retarded child's art expressions are observed. If the art projects of retarded children are similar in construction, shape and color, one must conclude that the artistic ideas are those of the teacher, not of the children. If individuality in expression is evident, it would appear the teacher is allowing the retarded to think for themselves, express their own ideas. And here lies the value of art: if creatively taught, art can foster independence in thinking.

Also used to determine the success of the art program are the objectives set forth in Chapter II. If the students have been able to attain the majority of these goals--both long-range and immediate--then the teacher can rest assured that he has met with success.

SUGGESTIONS FOR A SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM

Teachers of the mentally handicapped are frequently guilty of curbing or handicapping the creativity of the ones entrusted to their care and guidance. There are many "do's" and "don'ts" to be remembered when working with the mentally handicapped. One should be careful not to dominate the student's expressions of ideas. One should avoid setting standards of accomplishment which are too high for the child to achieve, placing too much emphasis on perfect products, or giving too many patterns or models to follow. Other errors to be avoided might include:

1. Stressing skills and techniques too early or too exclusively.
2. Comparing unfavorably one student's work with another's.
3. Not letting the student explore the materials being worked with.
4. Making sure he completes every art project he starts.
5. Making "fun" of the student's efforts.
6. Asking "What is it?"
7. Expecting his art products to always be conventional and easily recognizable.
8. Giving little or no attention to his art work in progress.

9. Commending only adult approved projects.
10. Discouraging him with "faint" praise.

Nothing leads to greater success in art teaching and in the maintenance of classroom control than giving students the opportunity to do what interests and challenges them. Through careful observation of the students in the classroom instructional programs can be designed that not only meet the objectives of the course but also cater to the personalities and desires of the students.

DO'S AND DON'TS

DO'S

1. Do give thought and planning to projects and motivation.
2. Do encourage and praise good qualities in the child's art work.
3. Do attempt to make projects stimulating and challenging.
4. Do insist upon individual work and the development of creative ideas in order to promote effective learning experiences.
5. Do exhibit students' work.
6. Do provide projects which have variety of materials, techniques, and tools.
7. Do emphasize a spirit of personal enthusiasm.
8. Do provide success-oriented experiences designed to develop positive attitudes.
9. Do increase an understanding of the environment by providing opportunities to touch, smell, and see.

DON'TS

1. Don't "touch up" students' art work.
2. Don't hand a student a sheet of paper and say "do something."
3. Don't use copy, duplications, or mimeograph illustrations.
4. Don't insist upon your way of seeing objects.
5. Don't discourage students through destructive criticism.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY

It was the intent of this study to give help to the teacher who needs assistance in teaching art to the mentally handicapped student. The author has researched and summarized literature related to art and the mentally handicapped to present practical and detailed suggestions for initiating and developing an art program. It was the author's concern to help and encourage the neophyte teacher rid himself of the fears and anxieties so he may lead his students into valuable creative experiences.

The author feels the needs, objectives, and limitations of this study are stated through quotes and related research done by art educators throughout the country. It is evident through their statements that creative art experiences offer a multitude of values to the mental, social-emotional, and motor development of the mentally handicapped child. When need for creative activity can be used to encourage the fullest development of the reduced potentialities in those who are handicapped, it becomes a fundamental part of their education through which they are able to experience not only a fuller physical awareness but also a mental awakening.

I have noted that there are types of approaches which can be used to effectively motivate the mentally handicapped. Direct and indirect

methods of motivation are discussed in this study. Special emphasis is placed on the displaying of student art work as probably the easiest and most effective way to motivate the retarded child.

The author has hoped to show the importance of planning art demonstrations which are geared to the students' needs and abilities. Other areas of concern are the importance of stimulation of student interest, simple and basic instructions, repetition, and suggestions for developing an art lesson.

It is noted that the mentally handicapped child can use the same art tools and materials as "normal" children. It is the wise use of these tools and materials by teachers who know children's needs and abilities, and who can adapt the materials to satisfy those needs and abilities.

For those teachers of the mentally handicapped art classes, evaluation would seem to involve two basic problems. One of these is on what basis is performance or achievement to be judged? The other is how can the judgment be measured? This study reviews these problems and others in student performance. Criteria for success, of both the teacher and the student, are included as informative materials. A list of suggestions for a successful program and "do's" and "don'ts" to be remembered when working with mentally handicapped children are also included.

Throughout this study the author has tried to review the relative position of art in special education programs. Hopefully, the author

has offered some type of assistance to the teacher of the mentally handicapped child. This study discusses and summarizes existent research literature related to art and the mantally handicapped and presents the beginnings of a structural and sequential art program for the retarded.

APPENDIX

GUIDELINES FOR ART BY THE HANDICAPPED -
SPECIAL EDUCATION

1. ENTRY BLANKS: Each piece of art must be accompanied by an entry blank. Attach these forms to the back side of the art material or to an area where it would not detract from the display (such as three-dimensional work).
2. PARENT AUTHORIZATION: Every piece of art work must be accompanied by a parent authorization form.
3. ELIGIBILITY: All students enrolled in special education programs between the ages of 3 through 21.
4. STUDENT PROGRAM: Student's work will be grouped according to special education program. The art will then be subdivided into age levels. Programs include:

Level I	6 - 9 years
Level II	9 - 12 years
Level III	12 - 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ years
Level IV	15 - 21 years

 - a. Educably Mentally Handicapped (MMI)
 - b. Trainable Mentally Handicapped (SMI)
 - c. Early Childhood (EC) 3 - 6 years
 - d. Educationally Handicapped (EH)
 - e. Learning Disabilities (LD)
 - f. Behavior Disorders (BD)
 - g. Physically Handicapped (PH)
 - h. Multiply Handicapped (MH)
5. CATEGORIES:
 - a. water color (tempera)
 - b. pencil drawing
 - c. ink drawing

- d. pastels, crayon chalk, and charcoal
 - e. printmaking
 - f. textile design
 - g. sculpture
 - h. pottery
 - i. jewelry
 - j. three-dimensional design
 - k. free art (scribble drawings, fingerpainting, scratch designs, tearing, and folding, etc.)
6. JUDGING OF ART WORK: Art work should be judged by people who are aware of the capabilities of the special education child. In all fairness, these people should not be the teachers of the children. Judges should take into account the child's developmental level, condition and nature of handicap.
 7. SIZE OF ART: Two dimensional art should not exceed relatively 18" x 24". Three dimensional art should not exceed 20" x 20" x 20". (Size of art work depends on availability of space, size of mounting, etc. Use your own discretion.)
 8. MOUNTING: Teachers can mount their own children's work, or the art committee members can mount all the work. This would depend on the amount of funding and uniformity of the mounting of work.
 9. *DEPOSIT OF ART WORK: Teachers should bring all art work to a central location, preferably where one is holding the exhibit.

*PLEASE Bring material between (date) and (date)
 10. DEADLINE: Set a deadline. Allow time for mounting and judging of art work before actual exhibit.
 11. DATE OF ART EXHIBIT: (date) at (place)
 12. NOTIFICATION OF WINNERS: Local newspapers, special education newsletter, teacher letters to parents, and PTA bulletin.
 13. PUBLICITY: Local newspapers, special education newsletter, PTA Bulletin, organizations, radio, local TV stations, posters in school districts, flyers, teacher letter to parents.
 14. PRIZES: All entrants will receive a certificate of participation. Ribbons will be given to 1st Place (blue), 2nd Place (white), and

3rd Place (red). These prizes should be given within each level of each special education division.

APPENDIX 2

SAMPLE OF ENTRY BLANK

Student's Name	_____
School	_____
City	_____
Age	_____
Program	_____
	(EMH, TMH, etc.)
Level	_____
	(1-2-3 or H.S.)
Teacher	_____
Description of Art Work	_____

APPENDIX 3

SAMPLE OF PERMISSION SLIP

(PARENT AUTHORIZATION)

Dear Parents:

The ART FOR THE HANDICAPPED exhibit will be held on _____
(date) _____ at the regular PTA meeting. We hope
you will attend so you can see the fine creative effort of our young
people.

Please fill out the form below so your child can enter his art
work in this exhibit.

My child, _____, may participate in the
ART FOR THE HANDICAPPED exhibit. I understand that some of
the art work may become property of the school for a permanent
collection.

Parent Signature

_____ 19 _____
Date

APPENDIX 4

SAMPLE "SUCCESS LETTER" TO PARENTS

Dear Parents:

Looks like all the hard work and creative effort our class has put into their Art Projects has really proved to shine brightly! We have (number) "Art Winners" in our group:

<u>(name of student)</u>	<u>(1st, 2nd, or 3rd place)</u>	<u>(type of art)</u>
"	"	"
"	"	"

We're all so proud of these truly artistic and talented students!

At the PTA Meeting, (date) , the winners art work will be on display from the art fair, "ART BY THE HANDICAPPED." The exhibit will be at (place) , (location) . The PTA Meeting will begin at (time) , but the doors will be open at (earlier time) so there will be plenty of time to browse.

The rest of our class who participated in the art fair will receive certificates of honorable mention. The winners receive ribbons and certificates. Thank you for your encouragement and fine cooperation, and please try to come on out on Tuesday night! The children are so excited!

Thanks again.

Sincerely,

 (Teacher's name)

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