1969

A Study of Motivational Approaches for Use in the Transition Period from Childlike to Adolescent Art

Linda Hance
Eastern Illinois University

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A Study of Motivational Approaches for Use in the Transition Period from Childlike to Adolescent Art

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BY

Linda Hance

THESIS

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L.H.

I

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

Background of the Study

Interest in this study arose from the writings of Lowenfeld, Michael, and others which emphasize the importance of good art experiences for youngsters in 7th grade pre-adolescence. It is during these years that the individual is growing out of childhood and into adulthood. The psychological aspects these changes induce are profound, but alongside go the important physical aspects as well; herein lies the need for special treatment.

Studies have shown that successful art experiences during this period of change increase the ability of the individual to deal with these changes and make an easier and happier adjustment to adulthood. If art is to give the pre-adolescent the means for self-expression and identification he so badly needs, it must be molded to motivate him. Interest in art can wane at this age if the motivation holds nothing for him. The study investigated

certain types of motivation which might increase the quality of art expression at this age level and to determine how this motivation may affect certain aspects of the pre-adolescent's expression due to physical development, mental age, sex, and social development.

Description of the Study

This study investigated the effects of 5 selected motivations on the art products of 7th grade youngsters. The motivations were selected with the characteristics and interests of 7th graders in mind. The motivations were as follows: (1) Effects of materials, (2) Effects of personal involvement, (3) Effects of examples to present ideas, (4) Effects of group activity, and (5) Effects of peer-centered activity. After the art projects were completed, the 5 motivations were collected, labelled, and evaluated to compare the effects of one motivation as opposed to the others and to compare the results of a motivation on people of various traits--namely intelligence, social development, and physical development. The purpose of the study then, would be to determine which of the 5 lessons, if any, did the best job of motivating the students toward worthwhile creative art work.

Assumptions underlying this Study

The hypotheses to be proven are the following:

1. Certain motivations intensify art experiences in the 7th grade.
2. Certain motivations have a greater appeal to boys (or girls).
3. The level of physical development changes the effectiveness of a motivation within the group tested.
4. The level of social development alters the effectiveness of motivation at the 7th grade level.
5. The motivations stressing social factors (peer group and mural) is stronger at this age level.
6. No one motivation has the best effect on all students.
7. A variety of motivations are necessary to stimulate art expression at this age level.

II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE RELATED TO THIS STUDY

The aim of this study is to determine which motivational approaches result in producing the best all-around art achievement in this age group. By first surveying the characteristics of this age group with respect to art e ucation and second by surveying the results of related research in the field of motivation of art education, we may gain insight into what needs to be done.

Carl Reed points out several of the characteristics of this age group indirectly when he outlines the aims of the junior high school art program.

> 1. To develop a sensitivity to and an appreciation of art.
> 2. To provide creative art expression.
> 3. To teach fundamentals and techniques which help provide means of expression.
> 4. To develop satisfying avocational interests.
> 5. To seek out the talented and guide them.
> 6. To provide gradual tran ition from pre-adolescent art training to satisfy needs and interests of adolescents.
> 7. To provide for social experiences and opportunity for wholesome activity with the other sex.
> 8. To correlate art with the rest of the curriculum.
> 9. To develop relationship between contemporary art and daily living.
> 10. To help in the development of well-integrated personalities. (14:19)

The pre-adolescent youngster is a challenge to the educator because the experiences he has during this period largely account for his success in later years. Before we, as educators, try to determine what is the best way to go about teaching these youngsters we must try to understand what it is that makes this period an unusually difficult one in terms of art education. Excerpts from various sources may shed insight into what kind of crises confront the 7th grade youngster. Read states, for instance,

> Spontaneous imagination of the small child is replaced by the more controlled thinking of early adolescence. As a result, many children hesitate in attempting to express their creative thoughts and ideas during this period. (14:42)

Viktor Lowenfeld states the situation very clearly when he says,

> For the child, imaginative activity is unconscious, while for the adult it is conscious and controlled. This change in imaginative activity from unconsciousness to critical awareness, brought about in part by changes in the body, is one of the most important characteristics of adolescence. (10:87)

The value of study in this age group is heightened when considered in light of this statement in the NSSE 64th Yearbook on Art Education.

> If we fail to help the individual hold onto

creativeness at this time, his creative ability may become atrophied for the rest of his life.

> If we can get the child immediately prior to adolescence to express himself spontaneously, freely, and sincerely with an awareness, sensitivity, and confidence in his ability to do so through line, shape, value, texture, and color organized in a consistent manner, he will undoubtedly undergo the period of adolescence without difficulty, and perhaps even without hesitation in his creative art expression. (9:88)

The old adage about an ounce of prevention applies in this statement,

> Knowing the importance which the adolescent will attribute to his art product, the art teacher can help alleviate any negative feeling concerning his creative art ability by helping the ndividual before the advent of adolescence, to develop and to become aware of the many creative and aesthetic abilities, sensitivities, and skills shown in his work. (9:87)

In addition it says,

> Constructive activity and acceptance, thereof, permits the child approaching adolescence to create in the art class a manner which he feels is needed at the time. As a result, such art exp riences help him adjust and prepare for his new and forthcoming role as a mature person. (9:87)

The challenges of teaching this age group are encountered in statements such as this one,

> Potentially, he (the adolescent) is a very creative person due to his heightened sensitivities and emotional t n , and his tendency to reach out in a global way for new relationships and identifications. (13:19)

In Psychology of Adolescence for Teachers, it is pointed out that:

> . . . the adolescent is interested in himself. He is preoccupied with his status, problems, and position. Work in school, that gives him a feeling of significance, hence importance, will be of immediate interest. (1:78)

John Michael points out an important characteristic to be considered when choosing motivation for the youngster,

> Adolescence is a time when peer pressures for conformity are at their height, and the courage to be divergent in opinion or behavior without being labelled "abnormal" needs to be cultivated by students and protected by teachers. (13:99)

Michael goes on to point out,

> Another block to creative development in the arts, particularly strong in the adolescent male subculture, is the notion that the arts are "feminine" not "masculine" activities. (13:99)

The flexibility of the adolescent period is often frustrating to the teacher, but is understandable when these facts, pointed out by an NABA publication, are considered,

> All children do not reach adolescence at age 12 or become mature adults at 16 . . . In boys the growth process is somewhat slower than girls. (13:18)

This study aimed not only to look at the young adolescent, but more important to look at the motivations which would create a wholesome atmosphere for expression. The review of the nature of the youngster at this age level suggests a tendency of the student to lose self-confidence in his art work at this time and to become more self-conscious in expression; therefore, it is vital that the art teacher find the most effective means of motivation to attain the best results.

June McFee suggests some qualifications for motivation,

> 1. Motivation should have meaning for children of many backgrounds.
> 2. Motivation should be planned to allow for differences in visual and intellectual comprehension.
> 3. Motivation should begin where the children are in overall development.
> 4. Motivation should be sequential so one experience leads on from the preceding. (12:240)

Research into art motivation is limited, and while the findings point out certain tendencies, some results are in conflict. The question is, of course, what kind of motivation produces the creative expression desired. Clarence E. Kincaid's research indicates,

> It was found that more creative drawings resulted from motivations concerned with unusual objects than from motivations dealing with fam-

> iliar objects (e.g. the child himself). Therefore, a child's imagination can be definitely boosted by use of motivations wherein the child is encouraged to invent or imagine unusual forms (e.g. strange machines, environments, and animals.) (2:115)

Mattil states that the two basic approaches of process and product are important. Process, more important to the younger child, and the product more important with increasing growth. (11:3-4)

A study of several motivations used on 5th graders was conducted by Lawrence F. McVitty. McVitty used five basic motivations; the motivations included "Chores we do at home", a recording of a children's story, a play, a film, and a field trip. In contrast to Kincaid's findings, McVitty states that the personal factor proved to be the outstanding motivation. Mechanical devices of motivation fell short of success; the interaction of the pupil and the teacher strengthened the motivation. (15)

The U.S. Office of Education sponsored a study of the best method of motivation at different age levels. It is interesting to note that the grade level was a factor in motivation. The study involved an experiment of 30 process-motivated lessons contrasted to 30 subject-motivated and 30 combination lessons. These projects were

then evaluated on lesson effectiveness of the art quality achieved, and on the amount of student interest generated by the class. The results can be summed by the researchers themselves,

> Disregarding specific grade levels, we found that subject motivation produced slightly more pride, uniqueness, and involvement. Media motivation was least effective in promoting these qualities. Thus, if a teacher is seeking projects to personally involve the child, he may find subject and combination approaches more effective than media. (3:14-15)

The general conclusion of this study was that the combination method (subject plus process motivated) is the most effective rule of thumb for all grade levels, despite the differences which occur. (3:14-15)

III

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scope and Limitations of the Study

Any study which gives insight into better teaching is worthwhile. Little research has been centered on the pre-adolescent art student. While it has been recognized that this age group represents a critical period in art development, research has not been centered directly on the problems of motivation. The motivations used during this period have varied effects on the students. Discovery of which motivations were most effective provides insight for the art teacher in planning a successful program.

The population of this study consisted of 144 students-- 70 boys and 74 girls. The average age was 13 years with a few being 12, 14, and one even 15. The students attended North Ward School in Tuscola, Illinois which housed grades 1-8. Tuscola offers art instruction for all children in grades 1-8. The children come

largely from a middle-class environment.

The physical make-up of the Tuscola school facilities where the testing took place also represented a limiting factor, especially for the motivations using water color and wire. The classrooms used for the art classes were regular classrooms of student desks with small tops. The rooms were of medium size and were not conducive to flexible art needs. Also, the 25 minutes of the class period encompassed motivation, work, and clean-up; invariably time became a limiting factor which may have tended to counteract the motivation.

Despite the limits of this test, the results still represent tendencies for art educators to consider. Many more people need to be tested, but the results should surely point the way to clear tendencies which could improve art education in the pre-adolescent years.

Investigation

The motivations were given in five 7th grade art classes as part of the regular art program. No mention was made of the study involved. These classes met for 25 minutes every other day and the classes were held in the regular classroom where the regular routine was maintained

with no special teaching done except as mentioned. Because of the special nature of art motivation, which necessarily varies as the classroom situation warrants, the actual wording of the motivation can only be suggested, but a careful attempt was made to use a consistent approach in each situation.

The motivations were as follows:

Motivation No. 1- "Effects of materials as a source of motivation." First, each student was given a section of colored wire. The teacher began the discussion something like this: "One of the other students has brought a big box of colored telephone wire for us to use. I would like you to pick up the small piece on your desk and play with it as I talk. What are some of the things we can do with it?" The class was involved in discussion of the art possibilities; if the class did not point out all of the possibilities in their comments, the teacher mentioned creative attempts made by the students themselves. "What can you make with this wire? I have a box of wire here--you may help yourself and let's see what you can make." In the box the colored wire was available in various lengths. A pair of pliers and wire cutters were also included in the box; the presence of the cutters and pliers was not mentioned intentionally to see how many students would seek out tools without a suggestion from the teacher.

Motivation No. 2- "Effect of personal involvement." First, someone who obviously had a close friend was asked something like, "Who would you call if you wanted to have a friend spend the night with you? Who can you tell a secret to, and know that he won't tell anyone else? Who would you choose first for your side if you were captain of a game? I would like you to show on this paper your best friend and you. What could you tell me in a picture about you and your friend? What do you like to do together? Where is your favorite hide-out? Let's get started and see how much your picture can tell us about your friend." A discussion followed with the students offering ideas and asking questions concerning the project.

Motivation No. 3- "Effects of using examples to present ideas." Several reproductions of water color paintings--both realistic and abstract--were presented to the class for viewing. "Which of these do you like best? What makes this picture unusual? What did the artist do to get a different effect? How do you think it was done? What did they do to get white? Can you try some of the same techniques they used?"

Motivation No. 4- "Effects of group activity." "Have any of you noticed how drab the halls seem to be? What

could we do to brighten them? How about large pictures or murals? What kind of pictures could be made?" Suggestions ranged from upcoming school activities, holidays, famous people, etc. "Choose partners to form a group; you will need to decide on the subject of your mural, on the materials you will need, and who will do what."

Motivation No. 5: "Effects of peer-centered activity." "Who knows what our school colors are? What is our team mascot? Last year one of our 7th graders made a pennant to take to the basketball games and to hang up for our team. Would you like to do the same this year? Let's all make a design for a pennant in colored construction paper. What kinds of things would we expect to find in a good pennant design? Let's begin, and as you work think of your design as being the symbol of our school."

Interest was high at the start of all the projects, but each motivation met with varied results.

Motivation No. 1 created much enthusiasm the first two art periods. Almost every student thought of an idea he believed could be made of the wire. A large portion of students asked to keep their project to work on in free time; because the project was to be evaluated within its

limits, this was not allowed. Difficulties arose, not from lack of ideas or drive, but through an inability of some students to carry through their idea. For instance, one student wanted to make an ostrich, but gave up when the legs could not support the weight of the body. It was interesting to note that many of the boys who habitually did only mediocre work on their projects, became extremely intrigued in the intricacies of the wire; many students, in fact, came back to do wire projects in their free time with increased skill throughout the remainer of the year. This motivation produced two types of performance--very low and very high. Those who met with early success made creative and exciting pieces, while those who encountered difficulties either quit or did a slip-shod job. The statistics from this motivation derived its averages from the two extremes.

Motivation No. 2, concerning a picture of one's friend, produced interest, but not as much initial excitement as the first. The students tended to make a more careful approach in both their ideas and completeness of work. Everyone finished this project.

Motivation No. 3 initiated a curiosity to try different water color techniques. In some cases, the zeal

for the technique may have effected the overall art qualities. The students tested were not experienced with water color; in some cases, the results were rated poorly, however, the students themselves might not have considered them so. The fact that the students did experiment freely may have effected their overall score.

Motivation No. 4, group mural, met with excitement by all. The characteristics of 7th graders soon cooled some interest, in that personal conflicts developed. The superior students could not accept the bunglings of their friends. Lack of a set theme gave the immature students no sense of direction. Groups of like students met with the most success (e.g. a group of 4 low intelligence boys agreed on an idea of a drag-race scene and carried the idea through to completion without conflict).

Motivation No. 5 also resulted in a completed project from each student. While interest in a pennant for their own school was high, many chose to create a pennant for their favorite pro team, club, or personal interest. At the end of this project, the students voted on the pennant they wanted for their school flag, and it was made in felt and displayed in the school gymnasium. It was interesting to note that the selection of the best pennant

was made with great objectivity by the students.

The raw data of the study came from two sources; first, from the projects resulting from the 5 motivations given to the students, and second, from a 3-phase analysis of the tested students by three of their teachers.

The test results from the students themselves involved 616 art pieces. Because art work cannot be scored according to any standardized measure, a 10-man panel was established to rate the work. Judging was done by 10 graduate art students. Each individual had had experience teaching art and had worked with 7th graders. The work was scored on a 3-point scale; one was scored for high performance, 2 for average, and 3 for low. The criteria for scoring was overall success as an art work. The work was scored according to motivations so that the actual scoring involved 5 separate sessions. Before scoring began, the members for the scoring panel were given a description of the motivation. Some of the art work represented divergent paths from the original motivation (e.g., one boy did so much sketching on his watercolor project that he chose to ink it rather than paint it, in order to enhance the lineal quality); diversities like this were not to be scored down, but to be considered as presented. Each art piece

had a score sheet stapled to it with a number allotted each judge. After scoring, the individual judge could fold back his portion of the score sheet to avoid influencing the other scorers. At the end of scoring, the scores were tabulated and averaged to come up with a score which reflected a standard opinion of the judges. The scoring of the judgeswas fairly consistent, varying only a difference of one point between them.

The second evaluation considered the participants as individuals. Three 7th grade teachers were asked to score the youngsters regarding their personal traits--namely physical development, social development, and intellectual development. Again, no precise standard was used. The teachers, who were well acquainted with the students, were asked to rate the youngsters as high, average, or low in comparison to others in their age group. Each received a list of all names and 3 columns for scoring. Scoring the young people for physical development seemed simplest in that the scores reflected consistent agreement by the 3 teachers; possibly the level of physical maturity is easiest to spot at this age level. Social development seemed more difficult to judge, yet the 3 scores varied only one level. The score of intelligence was judged on overall academic competence rather than

tested IQ score, because the IQ scores were from group tests and not necessarily accurate. The scores from each teacher were then averaged to rate each individual student physically, socially, and intellectually.

An evaluation of one student's scores showed a wide performance range from motivation to motivation. This study, however, did not aim to treat the individual student, but 7th grade students as a whole. They were, however, several students, who lacking interest in most activities, did significantly better after certain motivations.

IV

PROCEDURE OF THE INVESTIGATION

Statistical Treatment of the Data

After arriving at the scores of the complete test, the different factors could be studied and evaluated. A score of 1.00 was extremely high and a 3.00 was extremely low; while some individuals scored in the extremes, the combined scores showed that as a group, the scores ranged from 1.55 to 2.48.

The combined scores of all students was as follows:

Painting	2.12
Mural	2.19
Wire	1.88
Drawing	2.07
Pennant	2.18

Sex, as a factor, brought about these results:

Drawings

Boys	2.14

Girls	2.00
Mural	
Boys	2.24
Girls	2.14
Painting	
Boys	2.18
Girls	2.06
Pennant	
Boys	2.11
Girls	2.26
Wire	
Boys	1.93
Girls	1.83

The intelligence factor resulted in this breakdown:

Drawing	
Low	2.25
High	1.55
Wire	
Low	2.15
High	1.75
Mural	
Low	2.34
High	2.00

Painting

Low	2.37
High	1.85

Pennant

Low	2.48
High	1.87

The factor of physical development showed:

Drawing

Low physical development	2.07
High physical development	1.91

Wire

Low physical development	1.83
High physical development	2.40

Painting

Low physical development	2.23
High physical development	2.11

The degree of social development showed these results:

Mural

Low social development	2.23
High social development	1.93

Painting	
Low social development	2.31
High social development	2.03
Pennant	
Low social development	2.38
High social development	1.81

Analysis of the Data

It must be understood that this study began on the idea that choosing motivations keyed to the characteristics of 7th graders might produce good art work in the classroom; therefore, the differences in scores were never expected to be spectacular. This study, being conducted as part of the regular curriculum, was carefully constructed to avoid any motivation which might prove detrimental to the students in any way. It was suggested in McVitty's study (23) that mechanical devices were a poor source of motivation and that pupil-teacher interaction strengthened the motivation; therefore, all 5 motivations used in this study included this premise.

The judging, based on a 3-point score of 3 for low, 2 for average, and 1 for high, shows the average score for all projects was 2.08. This score suggests

a basis on which the other scores can be compared.

When the average scores of all students were computed, it was shown that the wire project, using materials as a source of motivation, produced the best art project with a score of 1.88. The motivation stressing personal involvement placed second with a score of 2.07. The last three--example-centered with a score of 2.12, peer-centered with 2.18, and group-oriented with 2.19 were slightly below average. No score varied far from the average, suggesting that each of the five motivations has some merit in the classroom.

Sex differences in 7th grade tended to suggest that the pre-adolescent girl's earlier development proved an advantage in art work. Girls scored better on all motivations except the one which called for designing a pennant. This might have been due to the fact that the pennant stressed sports which particularly interest boys.

The intelligence factor created the greatest difference of scores. The results of the scores of each motivation found students of high intelligence working at significantly higher levels than those of low intelligence. The closest score between those of high and low intelli-

gence was .34, and this occurred on the mural in which many of the low students worked in a group with high students, which tended to raise the scores of the low students and lower those of the high students. The youngsters in the low group tended to begin work on a project later than average and tended to quit work on the project with the majority of the class, despite the project's stage of completion. This suggests that students of low intelligence might be helped by added motivation on an individual level and by encouragement to work at their own pace.

The level of physical development did not prove to cause a great difference on the projects. It is interesting to note, however, that while high physical development showed to be a slight advantage on the drawing and painting projects, low physical development scored better on the media project. This may be due to the fact that youngsters who have developed rapidly may temporarily find themselves awkward and uncoordinated when working with an unfamiliar material.

The changing interests of those nearing adolescence was reflected in the scores dealing with the social factor. The degree of social development seemed to affect

the quality of art work on the mural. Those rated high in social development tended to do better than those who rated low. Students who tended to score high on other projects tended to score high on the mural; however, most high students working with low students in the group, tended to score below their average. The converse was true of the low student. This suggests that if the groups had originally been formed by the level of social development, the scores might have been much more widespread.

The paintings further showed that students of high social development did significantly better. The peer-centered motivation's .57 score advantage echoed the tendency of the students of high social development to excel. This obvious trend tends to reinforce the notion that those who can express themselves most freely and well at this age are also able to adjust better mentally and socially, thus soft-pedalling the transition into adulthood.

In Hypothesis One, it was assumed that certain motivations intensify art experiences in the 7th grade. This study began with an educated guess that the motivations chosen would produce satisfactory results; consequently, the data cannot compare a poor motivation to a

good one. The researcher did find interest and enthusiasm high throughout the study. Because the original motivation was being tested, the students received no further assistance from their teacher either with their work or their ideas. In a normal classroom situation, further help would have been offered to the students; it is believed, therefore, that these motivations did increase student responses.

In Hypothesis Two, it was assumed that certain motivations have a greater appeal to girls (or likewise boys). While the scores show only a marginal difference of between .10 and .14 on all projects, it does appear that the boys were most highly motivated on the permant project on which the boys' average of 2.11 bettered the girls' 2.26. The boys also performed well on the wire project with a score of 1.93. The girls tended to do well on all projects. While the girls' score on the wire project tabulated most successfully, the girls themselves seemed to enjoy each project in turn.

In Hypothesis Three, the level of physical development was assumed to change the effectiveness of a motivation on the 7th grade level. The statistics tend to show that there was a difference in scores due to this

factor, as discussed earlier.

Hypothesis Four assumed that the level of social development alters the effectiveness of motivation at the 7th grade level. As mentioned earlier in this text, the scores did show that, in every case, those of high social development outperformed those of low social development.

The effects of social factors also were included in Hypothesis Five which assumed that motivations stressing social factors (e.g. peer-centered and group morals) were stronger at this level. This assumption does not appear to be true. While the mural and pennant projects were close in score to the others, their combined average scores came in fourth and fifth as compared with the other three projects. The students did enjoy these two projects, but did not produce work equal to their degree of enjoyment.

Hypothesis Six, which assumed that no one motivation has the best effect on all students, appears to be true. While as a group, the students' score was best after the wire project, the difference in scores was not significant. Each motivation tended to interest some of the students more than others; in other words, all the

students could not have been effectually motivated with only one project. This also involved Hypothesis Seven which assumed that a variety of motivations are necessary to stimulate art expression. The research of this study tends to conclude that a successful art program on the 7th grade level must contain a number of carefully worked out motivations to maintain a high level of art expression during the years between childhood and adulthood.

V

SUMMARY

The Problem

The purpose of this paper has been to study the effects of 5 different motivations on 7th grade children. A sound teaching approach is needed in the transitional years between childhood and adulthood. Private research is needed to supplement the lack of information concerning the pre-adolescent student. The problem of motivation was studied; namely, which motivation does the best job and what factors affect motivation at this age.

The Test

The study centered around five projects assigned to 144 7th grade students. Each project was motivated differently in order to study the effects of the motivation on the group. The projects included materials, personal involvement, example, peer-centered activity, and group

activity as sources of motivation. The finished projects were evaluated and scored by a panel of 10 experienced art instructors. The results were averaged and tabulated in regard to factors such as social development, sex, physical development, and intellectual development.

Major Findings

The significance of the study lies in the fact that the 5 motivations written up here can probably be used to insure growth through art in the 7th grade. Despite individual differences stemming from intelligence, physique, sex, and social maturity, the 5 motivations tend to maintain interest and satisfactory art expression. A steady diet of one motivation is not recommended, however; a well-rounded art program encouraged by various motivations keyed to the pre-adolescent should assure the art teacher of bridging the all-important gap between the child and the adult.

Recommendations for Further Study

Working on a practical level of this kind suggests many possibilities for further study. The most obvious direction from this study might include an identical test

in a different locale. Theoretically, the scores would be similar in any 7th grade class; however, no positive assumption can be made on a small study such as this.

Another approach which could be made, would be to follow one motivational approach through 5 classes, but to use a different project in each class to check the effect of the motivation without any influence by project choice. If the results remained the same, the value of the motivation itself would be assured.

Finally, the scoring might be improved; a 5-point range for evaluation of the art work might show tendencies more clearly.

If art education has a place in the school curriculum, no phase of the art program should be weak. Reinforcing the 7th grade projects with sound motivation can help keep the youngster interested and help keep the degree of art experience high. This study involved only a tiny area of needed research; yet, any research which increases better teacher understanding and better student response in the classroom is worth the effort.

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