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Student Autonomy: A Case Study of Intrinsic Motivation in the Art Classroom

Downi Griner

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

Student Autonomy: A Case Study of Intrinsic Motivation in the Art Room

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How might a curriculum based on Self-Determination Theory (SDT) influence student motivation and art making in a 9th grade art classroom? The researcher devised a negotiated curriculum called The Master Artist Program based on the SDT theory of intrinsic motivation. The implementation of this curriculum was designed to explore the question of how a curriculum based on SDT theory would influence student motivation and art making in a 9th grade art classroom. This curriculum was implemented in a ninth grade art class on an optional basis for the course of nine weeks. The results of data analysis, illustrated by relevant vignettes, revealed features indicative of intrinsic motivation as well as peer interaction and community.

Keywords: art education, intrinsic motivation, student autonomy, self-determination theory (SDT)

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Chapter I: Introduction

Thirty minutes into class I peer around the room to check on my students' progress. Alison is finished with the assignment and is now meticulously drawing a tropical fish on each fingernail using an assortment of thin tipped sharpies. I can see the faintly penciled letters Ali and the date on a paper that is lying three feet from her chair, face down on the floor. As I walk by I pick up the paper and brush the dust and pencil shavings from the front. As usual, Alison has executed her artwork flawlessly.

At the same table Kaylee and Tiffany are engrossed in a conversation about Facebook status posts. Tiffany has a habit of exerting a bare minimum of effort in her artwork, and today is no different. She has fulfilled all of the requirements, but her assignment is rudimentary and rushed; this does not represent the quality of work I know she is capable of doing. I know this work isn't too difficult for her. Her attitude and actions seem to border on apathy. Kaylee is a straight-A student, and she always turns in quality art work. She makes art seem effortless. However, each of her assignments ends up in the garbage after she scans the back to double check her score. It seems as though her artwork and art experience are more or less meaningless; art making is just a task to be completed. It pains me to see her artistic creations discarded amongst chewed gum, pencil shavings, and empty soda cans.

Two tables down I notice John writing feverishly on a sheet of paper. When I approach he looks up and explains that he will finish his assignment on time. Except for his name neatly printed in the corner, his assignment page was blank. John has yet to turn in an assignment this semester.

Although Trent is a student body officer, he is quiet and keeps to himself. He turns his assignments in on time, and they are always well done. The questions he asks only concern

points and grades. I remember teaching him years before when he was a short, little sixth grader. I know he has a solid background in art, and he needs something more challenging.

Suddenly, the sound of a slap followed by a pencil flying through the air interrupts my thoughts. Andrew and Josh immediately begin with a train of apologies and excuses. Andrew is a talented artist, but prefers to wave his banner of athlete, and Josh has a reputation as a trouble maker among his other teachers. He usually follows Andrew's lead, so I am not surprised to see a doodle of a football on both of their assignments. Josh has a harder time with basic art techniques. Sometimes I catch him trying, but if it doesn't turn out realistic then he resorts to goofing around with Andrew.

This is my third period advanced art class. Don't let the course title fool you, only a handful of the students have not had any previous art experience. The students enrolled in this particular class are here for a myriad of reasons: some really love art and want to continue learning, several students were kicked out of other classes and ended up in art, some students are enrolled for special needs reasons, some of the students are here to complete required art credit, a few students are new transfers to the school and it is too late in the year to place them in instrumental music, and there are even a couple of students enrolled because this is the only class that will fit in their schedules. I mention these reasons to point out the conglomerate nature of the class.

There are many different types of students and personalities in this class. Almost every social circle resides here: student body officer, athlete, artist, class clown, trouble maker, scholar, musician, etc. They all have different interests, levels of art skill, and experience.
Some of these students are obviously interested in art, but what is this class doing to enrich their interests and experiences?

The preceding description of my class was taken directly from my reflective teaching journal before I implemented any changes. My observations indicated apathy, disinterest, and a general lack of connection and motivation amongst these students. This was my most challenging class, and I spent many sleepless nights contemplating this languid, passive dynamic. I wanted my students to experience art in a relevant, poignant, and purposeful way. Mastering technique holds little meaning if students do not value their work or experience. The problem was that students did not value their work and they were not motivated to work.

Initial Response to the Problem

My first response to this problem was to examine and reflect upon my own experiences as a student. Was there an experience where I could relate to my students? What were the circumstances surrounding my apathy? One particular college painting course came to mind. The assignment was to recreate the provided still life using cubist techniques. The still life consisted of wax fruit, colored glass bottles, a large metal bucket, several flesh colored seashells, and three plastic sunflowers. Nearly half of a semester was dedicated to this assignment, the painting was well done, I received an A grade, yet it ended up in the garbage just outside the classroom. I painted it because it was a requirement; it was an exercise in jumping through hoops to get a good grade. This was part of the apathy and detachment I saw in my own classroom; to some a grade becomes the end goal rather than creation, experience, learning or communication. I had virtually no interest in the subject matter or process, and I found little value or meaning in the final product.

If I had been remotely interested in that assignment, then maybe I would have found value in my artwork. With this new information in hand, I was eager to make the necessary

changes to help my students. I paid attention to the type of artwork that interested my students, and I created a list including 3-D art, sculpture, and novel materials. I presented the idea of creating a sculptural window display using candy as the medium. Throughout the presentation I heard plenty of oohs and ahhs along with excited guesses of which candies the artist used. With the amount of work needed for the project and the expense of supplies, we would be able to create only one class display. As a class we talked about different themes and took a vote. The class decided on a winter theme with a snowman, cabin, a pine tree and skating pond. We decided to create four teams and divide the work into manageable pieces. Each team figured out what kinds of candy to use, how much candy they needed, and other construction supplies. What could go wrong?

The project was a disaster. Some of the students immediately lost interest after their choice of theme didn't win the vote. A few students saw group work as the perfect opportunity to goof off. I lost a few more once they discovered this type of art involved some math. A couple of the students chose to spend their time surfing the internet, pretending to look for information. The candy proved to be too distracting for others. I figured they would eat a few pieces as they were working, but I was dumbfounded when some ate candy and glue from the artwork. Three students persevered to the end, and they basically did the project on their own. When I asked them why they even bothered finishing, they told me they wanted good grades and it would be a shame to leave the display unfinished. Their actions were thoughtful, but not exactly the personal, meaningful motivation I was hoping for. I felt that there were students in this class with genuine interest in art, and as a teacher I was failing them. A very daunting issue I faced as a teacher was how to address different student interests as well as their lack of motivation and tendency to become easily distracted. In my teaching experience I have learned

that just because something fascinates me, does not mean that it will fascinate others. I have also learned through experience that I can't presume to know what will interest my students. I had observed my students and noted their interests, but in the end only a few students remained interested.

Subsequent Response and Research Questions

I pursued several different avenues of research, but I kept coming back to this class and the problem of student apathy. How can I structure a class to facilitate intrinsic motivation for different students with different skills, and different interests? I wrestled with this problem and developed relevant literature review research questions including: Why is art education important? Why are students unmotivated? What is the existing research about motivation? What does intrinsic motivation look like? Exploration into these questions helped me to develop my research question for this study: How might a curriculum based on Self-Determination Theory (SDT) influence student motivation and art making in a 9th grade art classroom? I designed a reconceptualized version of curriculum where students develop their own plans. This curriculum was based on the three supportive factors of intrinsic motivation: autonomy, competence, and relatability as described in Self-Determination Theory of motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). I called this curriculum The Master Artist Program. To further this research, The Master Artist Program was implemented in a ninth grade advanced art class for a period of nine weeks. This case study describes the implementation of this curriculum. It is intended to observe and examine the patterns and effects of an intrinsically supportive curriculum in an art room of students with mixed abilities, art experience, and interests. My fundamental research question is: How might a curriculum based on SDT influence students' motivation and art making in a 9th grade art classroom. My research aim is to add to the existing research supporting the benefits

and value of student centered learning curricula, methods, and techniques in the art classroom. My personal aspiration is to support and foster intrinsic motivation within students which will lead to a personal, meaningful, and enduring connection with art.

Chapter II: Literature Review

This literature review is divided into three different parts. Part One addresses the rationale and value of art education. Part Two explores the concept of motivation and lack of motivation amongst students. Part Three discusses the research concerning motivation in the classroom.

Part One: Rationale for Art Education

I find that even as a teacher in a school dedicated to the well-rounded education of students, I have to justify the need for art in the secondary curriculum. Why do we teach art? What is the value of art education? The purpose of this section is to describe and evaluate the literature about the purpose and value of art education in schools. First I would like to review the history of art education rationale, and then I would like to present current views on the rationale for art education.

Rationale for art education: a history. Since the 1800's art advocates have sought to justify the inclusion and point out the necessity of art in school curriculum. Arthur Efland (1990), professor and author of *A History of Art Education*, discusses the many proponents of art education and their supporting viewpoints. In the 19th century, Charles Callahan Perkins, art critic and author advocated art through industrial design. In the 20th century John Dewey, a psychologist and educational reformer, championed the importance of exploration and experience in art education. Harold Rugg and Ann Shumaker advocated art as an important means of expression in a progressive curriculum. Viktor Lowenfeld initiated art as psychology and therapy, and Howard Gardner argued that art was a means of growth for mental capacity.

Expressionist rationale. University of Georgia Professor Richard Siegesmund (1998) writes about different schools of thought in his article "Why Do We Teach Art Today?

Conceptions of Art Education and Their Justification." The expressionist perspective advocates art education as a necessary means of sustaining imagination, creativity and free expression. This ideology finds its roots in the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, who called for a reconnection with the simple and natural. Theorist and highly influential art educator, Viktor Lowenfeld advocated art education as a means to foster positive mental health. To Lowenfeld the purpose of art education, "is not the art itself, or the aesthetic product, or the aesthetic experience, but rather the child who grows up more creatively and sensitively and applies his experience to whatever life situations may be applicable" (Michael, 1982, p.xix). Art making, as a means of expression, contributed to a child's healthy social and psychological development.

> The child who uses creative activity as an emotional outlet will gain freedom and flexibility as a result of the release of unnecessary tensions. However, the child who feels frustrated develops inhibitions and, as a result, will feel restricted in his personality. The child who has developed freedom and flexibility in his expression will be able to face new situations without difficulties. Through his flexible approaches toward the expression of his own ideas, he will not only face new situations properly but will adapt himself to them easily (Lowenfeld, 1947, p.7).

During this paradigm, art was also advocated as a form of play, an area of possibility, free from rules and structure. Inside the school structure, art may be the only place where a child would be allowed these freedoms. A child needs to be allowed to release tensions, experiment, and find a place of safety and refuge (Siegesmund, 1998). The expressionist ideology, dominant between 1945 to 1960, advocated child-centered learning and creative expression in lieu of formal education, academic rules and social constraints (Efland, 1990).

Reconstructionist rationale. According to Efland (1990), the reconstructionist movement was popular throughout the 1960s and 1970s. This ideology had its roots in the progressive movement, and viewed education as a transforming force in society. Progressive education leader, William Heard Kilpatrick (1933), wrote that education

> should prepare individuals to take part intelligently in the management of conditions under which they live, to bring them to an understanding of the forces which are moving, to equip them with the intellectual and practical tools by which they can themselves enter into the direction of these forces (p.71).

More current reconstructionists see art as playing a vital role in helping students to develop critical thinking skills. A critical thinker should be able determine the surrounding power structures and be aware of the structures they participate in and the ensuing outcomes (Sleeter, 1996). Kerry Freedman (1994), a noted author on aesthetics, argues that Western society isolates an art object from its context; therefore, eclipsing cultural meaning and critical analysis.

Scientific rationalism. Scientific rationalism gave rise to educational accountability and seeks an empirical basis for art education. In the early 1980s, discipline-based art education (DBAE) was created to justify and give credibility to art education in terms of scientific rationalism. Art education was reformed to parallel academic disciplines and to create a standardized form of evaluation (Dobbs, 1998). In 1996 the San Francisco Art Commission conducted a survey of schools to see how they justified their art programs. The data showed that the large majority of schools used art as a means to teach or enhance other subjects as the rationale for art education (Siegesmund, 1998).

How art education is valuable for students. In his 2001 article entitled, "Should We Create New Aims for Art Education?" Eliot Eisner posed the following questions to art educators:

> How does one make the case that students are indeed learning something important when they work in the arts and that art teachers have something important to teach?
>
> How do we persuade parents and school administrators that not everything students study in schools needs to be appraised by its instrumental value, that there are some things whose intrinsic satisfactions are such that they are worth experiencing in their own right?
>
> How can we help them understand why the arts, for good reason, have been fundamental to human experience from the time images were put on the walls of the Lascaux caves 14,000 years B.C.E. to the very present? (p.9)

The accountability reform movement in education is a rational system based on prediction, control and efficiency. This type of framework does not easily fit a field that values surprise, individuality, ambiguity, feelings and expression. Eisner warns educators against justifying art in terms of what is attractive at the moment (Eisner, 2001).

There is no consensus on the instrumental value of art education on learning in other subjects (Brewer, 2002). Nevertheless, art education has an assortment of other benefits and should be included in school curriculum. Olivia Gude (2009), professor at The University of Illinois at Chicago and award winning artist, spoke about how art education allows students to develop a sense of self and of the world around them:

> Through art education, students develop enhanced skills for understanding the meaning making of others. Through quality art education, youth develop the capacity to attend to nuances of meaning. Most significantly, engagement with the arts teaches youth to

> perceive complexity as pleasure and possibility, not as irritating uncertainty. Heightened self-awareness is extended to heightened awareness of others . . .
>
> The vividness of art experiences blurs the boundaries between self-experience and the experiences of another. Through artworks, students absorb the perceptions of others—situated in other times and places, embodied in other races, genders, ages, classes, and abilities. Through art, the self becomes vitally interested in other selves, sensing the possibilities and problems of those selves within oneself (p.9).

In addition, art education has been found to support cognitive development including thinking, problem solving, concept understanding, information processing, evaluating, and self-reflection. In 2008 the Dana consortium report on arts and cognition published findings from cognitive neuroscientists at seven different universities indicating strong connections between arts education and cognitive development.

In their 2007 book *Studio Thinking: The Real Benefit of Visual Art Education* authors Lois Hetland and Ellen Winner find that students in art classes learn skills and habits not emphasized anywhere else in the school curriculum. These skills and habits include persistence, expression, the ability to make connections between schoolwork and the outside world, observation, innovation, exploration, and foresight.

Beyond the individual benefits of art education, Elliot Eisner (2001) encourages everyone to consider the nature of art education. Art curricula is often undervalued because it is relationship-based and process-oriented which is difficult to quantify and difficult to measure. The arts lend a much needed counterbalance to the rigid standardization in most school. Eisner implores all to consider the most important aspect and heart of art education:

> I have not mentioned a fact that I believe every teacher knows in his or her bones, namely: the teaching of art is about more than the teaching of art. Although we can emphasize in our discussions academic content, artistic forms of learning, and ways of dealing with accountability, ultimately we are concerned with students and with their overall development as well as their particular development in the arts (p.6).

Part Two: Why Students are Unmotivated

In this section I will lay the historical groundwork for this question by addressing the history and influences of traditional education in the United States. By traditional education I mean public education as it is generally practiced in the United States in the 20th century. A summary of the assumptions behind and values reinforced by the hidden curriculum in traditional education will follow.

History and influences in traditional education. John Gatto (2002) writes that the founding fathers of America supported self-education, because it fostered intellectual self-reliance and promoted open debate. Self-education was based on personal interest and choice. In fact, the Connecticut census of 1840 listed only one citizen out of every 549 as illiterate. Traditional education finds one of its earliest influences in Industrialism. Industry and working class revolution swept through Europe and powerful interests in the United States feared uprisings amongst the industrial laborers as a response to poverty. This panic and fear of revolution in the United States was referred to as the Red Scares of 1848 and 1819. According to Gatos (2002), the nation's Red Scares motivated the institution of compulsory education. The goal of education was to adapt children to the demands of industrial world and society. Working class children faced conditions of indoor hard labor, pollution, noise, machinery, repetition, crowded living conditions and time regulated by whistles. Traditional education created a

similar training environment. Schooling adopted a structure of authority, regimentation, grouping, and rigid procedures (Toffler, 1976).

Immigration also had an influence in the creation of traditional compulsory education. The late 1840's saw rise in Celtic, Slavic and Latin immigrants to the United States. American traditionalists viewed Celtic and Slavic cultures with disdain and viewed the Catholic religion as a threat. Some felt that the massive influx of immigrants threatened the democratic ideal. In 1918 the Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education specified human behavior, health, and vocational training to be the central goals of education rather than the previously established educational goal of educating the mind (Gatto, 2002).

Historian and social theorist, Michael Foucault (1972), upholds that "Every educational system is a political means of maintaining or of modifying the appropriation of discourse, with the knowledge and the powers it carries with it" (p. 227). Traditional education was established within the scientific paradigm that values the objective and rejects inner reality. This paradigm assumes knowledge to be finite, unchanging, and something to be possessed rather than experienced. Knowledge is transmitted from expert (teacher) to empty vessel (student) (Goble & Porter, 1977). In this framework authority rests with the teacher. Students are empty vessels and the teacher's role is to transfer or deposit knowledge to these vessels. Freire (1970) espouses that systems, such as traditional education, fail because they are designed with the author's view of reality which is then imposed on others. The assumptions behind psychoanalysis and behaviorism were also adopted by formal education. Freud put forth the theory that human beings are driven by irrational desires and must be controlled. Behaviorism put forth that learning is a matter of conditioning, and conditioning is accomplished through reward and

punishment (British Broadcasting Corporation [BBC], 2002). All of these assumptions make up the theoretical framework of traditional education.

This hidden curriculum of authority, control, punishment, and reward within traditional education undermines intrinsic motivation resulting in conformity, dependence, passivity, mindlessness, extrinsic motivation, status, lack of critical thinking, lack of creativity, short term thinking, competition, rote learning, and indifference amongst students (Deci, 1995; Holt, 1964; Freire, 1970; Gatto, 2000, 2002; Kohn 1986, 1990, 1999; Leue, 1992).

Part Three: The Research on Motivation

For the rest of this section I would like to discuss the research on motivation. Motivation is an extremely large and faceted topic within education. I would like to break it down into the following topics: external/internal motivation, autonomy, teacher role, and teaching today.

According to research conducted by Ulku Yuksel (2010), a marketing and behavior professor at the University of Sydney, many students are seen by educators as difficult to motivate. Edward Sturr (1982), Head of Art Education at Kansas State University, agrees stating, "Few students, however, are consistently self-motivated to make visual symbols…it is a mistake for an art teacher to assume that a mere request for art will cause a youngster to produce art" (p.12). For the purpose of this paper I will use the words of Manfred Keiler (1959), art education professor at the University of Nebraska, to define motivation: "Motivation pertains to the will to act, the will to work, or the will to create" (p. 6). Yuksel (2010) addresses the difficulties educators face with student motivation. The main challenge deals with initiating students' active learning to create deep learners. He goes on to explain that as educators our foremost goal is to provide environments that facilitate active student learning. Active learning

that leads to deep thinking would contribute to the goal of productive, motivating learning environments.

External versus internal motivation. Motivation can take on different forms which result in different outcomes, so it is important to understand the faces of motivation. We have all seen the comical cartoon of a donkey being enticed to pull a wagon in hopes of getting the carrot dangling from a stick just out of reach. This carrot is a type of extrinsic motivation. California State professor, Ronald Silverman (1971), writes that extrinsic or external motivation exists outside the individual and typically takes the form of punishment or reward.

The carrot is an external reward that motivates the donkey to move forward. Bestselling author and researcher Daniel Pink (2009), addresses the historical and scientific background of external motivation, and the ensuing consequences in his book *Drive*. Scientific theorists of the early 20th century sought to understand the principles underlying behavior. Scientists explained the motivation behind all behavior was the biological drive. Humans and animals acted in order to satisfy physiological needs such as hunger, thirst or reproduction. Behavioral psychologists further argued that behavior was also motivated by environmental rewards and punishments. Behavior could even be predicted because organisms are motivated to approach desirable outcomes and avoid unpleasant outcomes. Therefore, learning was merely the process of conditioning where behavior could be shaped or manipulated through the use of punishment and reward. One simply needed to reward the desired the behavior and punish the unwanted behavior, and the subject would respond in a rational manner. This type of motivation should be familiar, because human beings are certainly rewarded or punished for behaving in certain ways. If we are given a parking ticket, then we will not park illegally. If we turn in our library books on time, then we won't get fines. If we are promised a bonus, then we will work harder. This

paradigm assumes that all motivation is extrinsic which means all behavior is environmentally shaped, predictable and controllable.

This widely accepted and implemented behavioral paradigm was challenged toward the middle of the 20th century. Scientists observed subjects engaging in behavior without any external incentives. In 1950, psychologist, Harry Harlow, observed primates experimenting with and solving mechanical puzzles without the use of any outside incentive. Harlow explained this behavior as a whole new type of motivation. The primates solved the puzzles because the task of solving puzzles was intrinsically satisfying. The gratification of the problem solving process was the reward (Harlow, 1950).

Intrinsic or internal motivation is a self-initiated undertaking without an external incentive ("definition of intrinsic motivation," n.d.). John Marshall Reeve (2006), University of Iowa professor, characterizes internally motivated behaviors as those seeking out challenges, exercising skills, and pursuing interests. Now that two different types of motivation were established, researchers wanted to know how they interacted with one another. In 1971, psychologist Edward Deci conducted an experiment involving people, puzzles, and money. The participants who were offered money to complete the puzzle on the first day were not motivated to complete a puzzle the next day when no money was offered. The participants who were not offered money either day spent significantly more time trying to solve the puzzle. Deci observed that external rewards offered a short boost, but these rewards eventually reduced the subject's long term intrinsic motivation (Deci, 1971).

Over 100 studies in motivation have revealed the paradoxical consequences of extrinsic rewards (Kohn, 1999). Alphie Kohn, a leading figure in progressive education, spelled out these detrimental characteristics in his review of the available research. According to Kohn, people

who are offered rewards tend to choose the easiest tasks, are less efficient and illogical in problem-solving, and tend to be answer oriented. Although they put in more activity, their work is lower quality, contains more errors, is less creative, and more stereotypical than the work of those people not offered incentives (Kohn, 1999). Another glaring consequence of external motivation is the fostering of short-term thinking (Pink, 2009). This means that the individual will work for the reward, but only to the point where the reward is received. The only reason the donkey keeps walking is to get the carrot, and he will stop pulling the cart the second he reaches it. Why would he take another step if his only goal was the carrot?

> If the question is "Do rewards motivate students?" the answer is, "Absolutely: they motivate students to get rewards." Unfortunately, that sort of motivation often comes at the expense of interest in, and excellence at, whatever they are doing (Kohn, 1994, para. 11).

Sturr (1982), confirms these findings and further adds, "The latter [extrinsic motivation] and less desirable constitutes outside pressure such as contests and grades, while internal motivation is based on personal goals" (p.12). An internal motivation is the need to understand, the desire to explore, and the motivation to master one's environment (Silverman, 1971).

Self-Determination theory. Self-determination theory (SDT) is concerned with the motivation behind the choices that people make without any external influence. This theory focuses on the degree to which an individual's behavior is self-motivated and self-determined. Embedded in Self-Determination Theory are the following three assumptions: 1. intrinsic motivation is an inherent inclination that exists between people and activities 2. intrinsic motivation is catalyzed within conducive conditions 3. not everyone is intrinsically motivated for any particular task (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

According to University of Rochester researchers, Richard Ryan and Edward Deci, all humans are liberally endowed with intrinsic motivational tendencies, yet these proclivities are only manifest under certain conditions. SDT supports that intrinsic motivation is, "catalyzed (rather than caused) when individuals are in conditions that conduce toward its expression" (2000, p. 58). These conditions are those that nurture, facilitate and satisfy the innate and universal human needs of competence, relatedness, and autonomy. Competence is when an individual believes he or she has the necessary skills to succeed at a certain activity. For example, Deci (1975) found that giving people feedback on a task fulfilled the need for competence and increased intrinsic motivation. The second need of relatedness refers to the universal yearning to interact, connect with, and care for others. Often teachers are able to connect with and build positive relationships with students. Finally, autonomy is the need of personal choice and self-direction. Factors that restrict and control undermine autonomy and decrease intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Autonomy. According to renowned education reformer and philosopher, John Dewey (1938/1963), students, of any age, are individuals whose freedom needs to be respected. He further states that we must sympathetically understand individuals as individuals. In 1980, educational researcher, John Thomas, found that agency was a powerful internal motivational force. He concluded that a sense of choice gives students a feeling of empowerment and control over their own learning (Thomas, 1980). Researcher, Alison King (1983), investigated agency as a motivational factor for adolescent students in art. She asserted that agency was the link between control of learning and outcomes of learning. She divided sixth grade classes into student-choice groups or teacher-choice groups. Each group used the same art individualized, self-instructional learning kit. The teacher-choice groups had their learning experiences chosen

for them, while the student-choice groups were able to choose their own learning experiences including: objectives, content, materials, processes, topics, rate of completion, evaluation criteria, method and mode of evaluation. King's study revealed that student- choice groups outperformed teacher-choice groups. Student-centered groups also showed higher scores in achievement and positive attitude than did the teacher-centered groups (King, 1983). King concluded that personal choice over learning induces student empowerment, which leads to higher achievement and a more positive outlook of both the subject matter and self.

Famous art educator Viktor Lowenfeld (1959) believed in allowing children to find their own way and to make their own choices with art, "If children developed without any interference from the outside world, no special stimulation for their creative work would be necessary. Every child would use his deeply rooted creative impulse without inhibition, confident in his own kind of expression" (p. 12). Edward Sturr affirmed Lowenfeld's theories concerning children, but noticed a change as child moves to adolescent. He notes that younger children generally do not need prompting to create, but beyond the elementary level, some type of motivation seems necessary (Sturr, 1982).

According to educational researchers John Reeve and Hyungshim Jang (2006), "Autonomy represents an inner endorsement of one's actions-the sense that one's action emanate from oneself and are one's own" (p. 209). Students report feeling a high sense of volition, or freedom, when working on autonomy based activities (Reeve & Jang, 2006). Reeve (2006), reveals the following beneficial outcomes of autonomy in the learning environment: "greater perceived competence, higher mastery motivation, and enhanced creativity, a preference for optimal challenge over easy success, increased conceptual understanding active deeper

information processing, greater engagement, positive emotionality, higher intrinsic motivation, enhanced well-being, better academic performance, and academic persistence." (p. 228).

Teacher role. What needs to happen in order to achieve the previously listed outcomes with students? According to Reeve (2006), the level of student engagement depends on the supportive environment in the classroom. The teacher's function is to be a guide and structure learning opportunities that would nurture meaningful learning. Reeve (2006) describes this autonomy supportive teaching as "facilitating congruence by identifying and nurturing students' needs interests, and preferences and creating classroom opportunities for students to have these internal states to guide their behavior" (p. 228). Yuksel (2010), places the teacher in the role of a facilitator, "a supplier of ideas, a provider of information, an expert and a supervisor" (p. 3). In his book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (1970) upholds a student-teacher relationship of collaboration and balanced power when he writes, "Education must begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers *and* students" (Freire, 1970, p. 164).

What teachers say and do can have a substantial impact on the motivation and learning styles of their students (Gordan, Dembo, & Hocevar, 2007). Reeve (2006) outlines the following five autonomy-supporting teaching approaches: nurture inner motivational resources, rely on informational non-controlling language, communicate value and provide rationales, acknowledge and accept students' expressions of negative affect, and autonomy-supportive behaviors.

Nurture inner motivational resources. An autonomy-supportive teacher aligns her instruction with the interests of her students. She avoids external motivators such as incentives, deadlines, rewards, and strict compliance requests. If a lesson does not seem to be working then the teacher will rethink and adjust her approach. (p. 229).

Rely on informational, non-controlling language. The teacher communicates in an informational and flexible manner. She uses specific information when explaining and providing feedback on students work, behavior, etc. (p. 229).

Communicate value and provide rationale. The teacher can nurture autonomy by explaining to her students the value, purpose and usefulness of the particular lesson. The explanation needs to satisfy the students so they can internalize the meaning involved (p. 230).

Acknowledge and accept students' expressions of negative affect. The teacher needs to acknowledge her students feelings and show them understanding. Accepting their views validates the students and provides important feedback to the teacher. A controlling teacher counters the students' negative reactions, while a supportive teacher welcomes discussion (p. 230).

Autonomy supportive behaviors. Specific instructional autonomy-supportive behaviors include: listening carefully, creating opportunities for students to work in their own way, arranging learning materials and seating patterns so students manipulate objects and conversations rather than passively watch and listen, praising signs of improvement and mastery, offering progress-enabling hints when students seem stuck, responding to students' questions and comments, and communicating a clear acknowledgement of students' perspectives (p. 231).

Reeve (2006) found that "the more autonomy-supportive teachers were toward their students, the more their students benefitted in terms of subsequent classroom engagement" (p. 231). Reeve & Hang (2006) acknowledged that teachers can't give students a sense of autonomy, but they can develop supportive relationships with students which allow students to experiment and develop their own senses of autonomy.

Negotiated and directed teaching. A negotiated curriculum incorporates the autonomy supportive teaching techniques and approaches into a learning program. " In a negotiated curriculum, students have the freedom to make choices, to create personal meaning, to see curriculum as connected to something relevant, and to maintain control of their learning" (Yuksel, 2010, p. 1). Students are invited to exercise autonomy by negotiating and adjusting the curriculum. This type of autonomy directly related to the ownership principle, which stated that people are more apt to work for things they care about, want, or own. In this curriculum a teacher has to be able to take risks, compromise, and transfer power. Students are able to contribute their opinions and ideas to curricular objectives, contents of the subject matter, in and out classroom activities, methodology, resources, materials, and assessment (Yuksel, 2010).

In 1997 the NAEP conducted a survey about teaching strategies, motivational strategies, demonstration strategies, questioning strategies, and assessment strategies. The survey was given to a random sampling of secondary art teachers. The results of the survey showed that the majority of art educators incorporated a teacher directed approach rather than a student directed approach. Teachers preferred step by step, showing finished examples, and demonstration teaching. These teaching styles do not promote opportunities for student initiative, discovery, or inquiry (Burton, 2001). Open ended questioning, active listening, anticipatory sets and other student directed questioning approaches ranked amongst the least utilized. Burton (2001) indicates that the most popular questioning strategies were those that enabled the teacher to maintain strict control. Teachers neglect the opportunity to talk with their students about art and make personal connections. Understanding where emphasis is placed in current teaching can suggest where to enhance or support education. According to the survey, the majority of art instruction favors teacher centered approaches. In spite of this predominance of teacher centered

approaches, Researchers have determined that self-regulatory learners are highly correlated with academic achievement and effective learning (Gordan et al., 2007). These learners focus on mastery rather than comparison stemming from internal motivation.

Chapter III: Methods

Purpose of Research

The purpose of this research was to explore how an SDT approach to curriculum and teaching might influence, as a catalyst, motivation in an art class. The research plan originated from my experiences while teaching a class of students with mixed abilities, art experience, and interests. While teaching this class I observed apathy, disinterest, and a general lack of connection and intrinsic motivation amongst these students. This case study research was conducted to further explore and examine the effects, patterns, and singularities of an intrinsically supportive curriculum in an art class of students with mixed abilities, art experience, and interests.

Research Question

How might a curriculum based on SDT theory influence student motivation and art making in a 9th grade art classroom?

Research Plan

The plan of this research was to create a curriculum based on the three supportive factors of intrinsic motivation: autonomy, competence, and relatability as described in Self-Determination Theory of motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The researcher designed a reconceptualized version of curriculum where students develop their own plans. This negotiated curriculum was called The Master Artist Program. The Master Artist Program was implemented in a ninth grade art class on an optional basis. The research conducted was a case study based on an intrinsic motivation supportive curriculum in a ninth grade art class of students with mixed abilities, art experience, and interests. Data was gathered in the forms of observations, reflective notes, video tapes, student documents, and informal interviews. Coding and direct analysis of

the data sought to draw patterns and connections concerning intrinsic motivation. In addition the researcher administered a program evaluation to the participating students at the conclusion of the study in order to gain a student perspective of the strengths and weaknesses concerning the Master Artist Program.

Curriculum Design

The Self-Determination Theory (SDT) of motivation is the grounding framework for the curriculum design. SDT defines intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and their respective roles in both cognitive and social development. "Perhaps more importantly SDT propositions also focus on how social and cultural factors facilitate or undermine people's sense of volition and initiative, in addition to their well-being and the quality of their performance" (www.selfdeterminationtheory.org/theory). Ryan and Deci (2000) identify competence, autonomy and relatedness as necessary conditions to foster intrinsic motivation. The better these psychological needs are supported, the higher level of intrinsic motivation will ensue.

Master Artist Program. The Master Artist Program is a curriculum that allows students to regulate their own time, their own curriculum, their own assignments, and their own evaluations. This program hinges on student responsibility and trust. Teachers are legally responsible for the student in their classrooms; therefore, a level of trust is needed to ensure student safety and to allow students to work independently. The Master Artist Program is offered to all students under certain conditions. Students can request admission if they have all of their assignments in on time, a clear behavior record, and are earning at least a B grade. Any student can request membership once he or she is able to maintain the requirements for two weeks.

This curricular design allows students some freedom and control over their art education within certain constraints. A student in the program simply fills out a plan of action form for each new project he or she wants to undertake. The form is designed to aid students in the planning process, and to facilitate communication between the teacher and student. The plan of action asks the student to consider and record the following: a subject or theme, a medium, a size, materials needed, research needed, and timeline for each project. The lower portion of the form asks for a basic (5-10 minute) thumbnail sketch of the student's idea (see Appendix A).

A completed form is brought to the teacher and the student and teacher conference together to discuss the proposal. This conference time is an ideal opportunity to listen to students' ideas, thoughts, and needs and to build rapport. After the conference students are free to begin their art making. The Master Artist Program has students assess and evaluate their own artwork on their own criteria. Students are encouraged to reflect upon the process, their experience, and what they learned (see Appendix B). The teacher is encouraged to return the artwork to the student with a paragraph of handwritten comments.

Case Study Research Methods

A case study method was the methodology that best facilitated the goal of in depth exploring and understanding of intrinsic motivation within the specific art class context. A case study seeks to understand an issue in its complexity. Psychologist and philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey wrote that the importance of this understanding is often overlooked in science.

> Only from his actions, his fixed utterances, his effects upon others, can man learn about himself; thus he learns to know himself only by the round-about way of understanding. What we once were, how we developed and became what we are, we learn from the way in which we acted, the plans which we once adopted, the way in which we made

> ourselves felt in our vocation, from old dead letters, from judgments on which were spoken long ago. . . . We understand ourselves and others only when we transfer our own lived experience into every kind of expression of our own and other people's lives (Dilthey, quoted in Richman, 176, p. 163).

Author and case study researcher Robert Stake (1995) stated that it is essential to understand "important human actions are seldom simply caused and usually not caused in ways that can be discovered" (p. 39).

This case study was meant to examine the effects, patterns, and singularities of an intrinsically supportive curriculum in an art class of students with mixed abilities, art experience, and interests. This study was conducted in a ninth grade art class in a K-9 suburban charter school. The school was in its fifth year of operation, and the charter specified art education as part of core curriculum up through seventh grade. The course title for this particular class was Advanced Art; however, there were no suggested or required prerequisites for enrollment. This particular class was the only art course offered to ninth grade students, and it was classified as an elective. It was a small class consisting of fourteen students, with previous art experience ranging from one semester to three years. The data in this case study focused on the students who opted to participate in the Master Artist Program. The teacher in this case study also filled the role of researcher. Class periods were approximately ninety minutes on B days (every other day), so the researcher made observations during each class meeting on B days. The Master Artist Program was introduced to the class at the beginning of the third term, and the study was conducted for nine weeks or the period of one school term. Data was gathered in the forms of observations, reflection notes, student documents, informal interviews, and video tapes.

In addition, a program evaluation was administered to the participating students at the conclusion of the study in order to gain a student perspective of the strengths and weaknesses of the Master Artist Program. The evaluation consisted of two questions: What was most satisfying about this program? What was most frustrating about this program? In an effort to gain a more accurate response, students were instructed to type their responses, omit their names, and place their evaluations in a large manila envelope at the back of the room (Taylor-Powell & Renner, 2000).

The data from the case study provides insight into this particular case as well as adding to the body of research concerning the topics of student centered learning, autonomy in the classroom, and intrinsic motivation. The question spurring this research led to the creation of a curriculum designed to facilitate and nurture intrinsic motivation. This question was: How might a curriculum based on SDT influence student motivation and art making in a 9^{th} grade art classroom?

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

According to author and researcher John Creswell (2009), qualitative research lends itself to interpretive inquiry. The researcher makes interpretations within the context of his own experiences, background and understanding. Stake (1995), describes analysis as "A matter of giving meaning to first impressions as well to final compilations. Analysis essentially means taking something apart" (p.71). Finding meaning in raw data often involves searching the data for patterns; finding these patterns can be assisted through the use of coding tools (Stake, 1995). Award winning author and Arizona State professor, Johnny Saldana, discusses the background and strategies for coding data in his 2009 book *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers.* Saldana points out the importance of understanding that coding is not a refined science, but

rather an act or performance of interpretation. In their 2004 descriptive research study educational researchers Lawrence Sipe and Maria Ghiso, describe the nature of qualitative analysis:

> Building conceptual categories is an intellectual challenge that demands all the creative energies researchers can bring to the task; it is not a dull and mechanical exercise at any point. As we construct these categories through our coding, they should be heuristic for us, enabling us to see things we haven't seen before. All coding is a judgment call. Category-building involves our subjectivities: our personalities, our predispositions, our quirks. We are not lifeless cameras or scanners, and the subjective (and fallible) lens of our intellects is a part of the process of doing qualitative interpretive research (pp. 482-483).

Each study is bound within particular contexts and the data is unique, as is the researcher. In qualitative analysis a code is usually a short word or a phrase that summarizes or captures the attribute of the data to which it is ascribed. "Just as a title represents and captures a book or film or poem's primary content and essence, so does a code represent and capture a datum's primary content and essence" (Saldana, 2009, p.3). Coding is not a simple process of labeling, but rather a process of conjoining data to an idea. Coding aids researchers in breaking down raw data and categorizing the pieces into meaningful categories because they share the same characteristics (Richards & Morse 2007; Saldana 2009).

There are a variety of ways to go about searching for patterns and relationships within the coded data. In their book, *Educational Research,* authors Burke Johnson and Larry Christensen (2007) outline a coding process for qualitative researchers. The use of both priori codes (codes developed before examining the data) and inductive codes (codes developed by examining the

data) is suggested for initial coding of the data. After initial coding of the data, enumeration or quantifying the data helps researchers search for relationships and patterns.

In their 1985 book *Naturalistic Inquiry*, Yvonna Lincoln and Egon Guban confront scientific tradition and positivistic inquiry. Education professor at Texas A&M, Vice President of American Education Research Association and renowned author, Yvonna Lincoln, argues that there are facts that science cannot explain and advocates the use of a more naturalistic paradigm. She explains using ways of knowing such as reasoning and tacit intuition to group data that not only looks alike but feels alike. She argues that this type of knowledge should not be ignored or considered inferior to science (Lincoln & Guban, 1985). Saldana (2009) echoes the human aspect in finding meaning, "Qualitative researchers are not algorithmic automatons. If we're carefully reading and reviewing the data before and as we're formally coding them, we can't help but notice a theme or two (or a pattern, trend, or concept) here and there" (p. 13).

In their book, *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes,* Emerson Fretz, & Shaw (1995) advise researcher to consider the following list of questions during the coding process:

- What are people doing? What are they trying to accomplish?
- How, exactly, do they do this?
- How do members talk about, characterize, and understand what is going on?
- What do I see going on here? What did I learn from these notes?
- Why did I include them? (p. 146)

In an effort to provide a more balanced and complete view, the analysis process for this case study research followed both intuitive and regimented coding guidelines. As suggested by Johnson and Christensen (2007), the researcher initially coded the raw data using priori codes gathered from research questions and literature review. Inductive codes were developed by the

researcher during data examination. After the initial coding the researcher refined codes and developed a master list (see Appendix C). A master list of codes is strongly suggested. The researcher evaluated the data during the second coding process through the use of questioning techniques outlined by Fretz and Shaw (1995) in order to perceive a larger picture.

Tag cloud and text search queries were then used to enumerate the data. A tag cloud generates a list of the thirty most used words from the data, and includes a minimum length of characters to avoid common articles and pronouns. Enumeration in the form of frequency allowed the researcher to consider relationships previously unnoticed and to consider new patterns within the data. The researcher also enumerated the data using a text search query which allows the user to search groups of words, word stem generalizations, word stem specializations, and synonyms. This type of query points out connections and relationships amongst the selected words, which can lead recognizing new relationships and patterns or reconsidering old ones.

The researcher also used naturalistic techniques of intuition, experience, when reviewing the data to make connections, identify patterns, and locate relationships in context (Lincoln & Guban, 1985).

Chapter IV: Results

Part One: Case Study – Master Artist Program

How might a curriculum based on SDT influence student motivation and art making in a 9th grade art classroom? The researcher designed a negotiated curriculum supportive of intrinsic motivation called The Master Artist Program. This curriculum was implemented for a period of nine weeks on an optional basis to the students. The case study research was intended to examine the impact of The Master Artist Program in a ninth grade art class of students with mixed abilities, art experience, and interests.

This study was conducted in a ninth grade art class in a K-9 suburban charter school. The school was in its fifth year of operation, and the charter specified art education as part of core curriculum up through seventh grade. The course title for this particular class was Advanced Art; however, there were no suggested or required prerequisites for enrollment. This particular class was the only art course offered to ninth grade students, and it was classified as an elective. It was a small class consisting of fifteen students, with previous art experience ranging from one semester to three years. The evidence gathered for this research focused on the students who opted to participate in the Master Artist Program and included observations, reflection notes, student documents, informal interviews, and video tapes. Five of the fourteen students chose to participate in The Master Artist Program.

- **Alison-** Alison joined the first week of the program. She had been attending the charter school since it opened four years earlier. She had three previous years of art experience in school. I had taught her sixth grade art class. Alison was skilled at drawing and familiar with watercolors, colored pencils, and ink. She reported that art was difficult for her and took effort, but she enjoyed creating artwork. She was interested all types of art

and wanted to try everything. She reported having a little experience with acrylic, pastels and sculpture.

- **Trent**- Trent joined the first week of the program. He had been attending the charter school since it opened four years earlier. He has three previous years of art experience in school. I had a taught his sixth grade art class. Trent was skilled at drawing and 3-D art. He had several years of experience building with his father. He reported that he liked the technical aspect of art and was interested in designing architectural spaces and the surrounding environment. Trent was familiar with watercolors, colored pencils, sculpture, and ink. He reported having little experience with acrylic and ceramics.
- **Kaylee**- Kaylee joined the program in week three. This was her second year attending the charter school. She had one year of art experience in school. Kaylee was skilled at drawing and painting. She preferred to create art from her imagination rather than using resources. She reported that art came easy to her, especially drawing. She liked her whimsical style, but she didn't often get a chance to use it for class art projects. Kaylee was familiar with watercolor, pastel, drawing and colored pencil, and reported little experience with acrylics and pottery.
- **Josh**- Josh joined the program in week four. This was his second year attending the charter school. He had one semester of art experience at his previous school. I had discovered Josh was skilled with ceramics earlier in the year, when I had severely injured my hand. I was at a loss of what to do with my ceramics class, and he stepped up to co-teach the class with me. Josh reported that he hadn't really thought about it, but he liked art ok. He did not feel that he was very skilled, but he did enjoy making pottery and

drawing Celtic designs. Josh was familiar with pencil and ceramics, and reported little experience with painting.

- **Tiffany**- Tiffany was the last to join the program in week five. This was Tiffany's third year attending the charter school. She had two previous years of art experience in school. Tiffany was a skilled painter. She reported that art was fun for her, but it seemed like she had to do the same assignments every year. She was interested in painting on canvas, and she liked to do unexpected landscapes. Tiffany was familiar with drawing, watercolors, acrylics, and ink and reported little experience with ceramics and 3-D art.

The analysis of the data yielded both expected and unexpected patterns and relationships among the case study subjects. The results were organized in to two general categories: intrinsic motivation and peer community. Saldana (2009) reported that as a rule, comprehensive descriptions of coding development and analysis are rarely included in the final report.

> The majority of readers would most likely find the discussion tedious or irrelevant compared to the more important features, such as the major categories and findings. When you invite important guests to your home for dinner, you don't ask them to appear two or three hours before the scheduled serving time to watch you cook in the kitchen. They arrive just before the meal to feast on and enjoy what you've worked so hard to prepare (p. 30).

Given the vast amount of raw data, the results will be presented with relevant, illustrative examples in the form of vignettes.

Intrinsic Motivation

The design of the curriculum was based on the Self-Determination Theory of intrinsic motivation. Analysis of data gathered during this case study revealed patterns relating to

intrinsic motivation amongst the students. Overall, students participating in The Master Artist Program exhibited interest, ownership, responsibility, self-initiation, effort, experimentation, and minimal concern with grades.

Alison. Week 1. Alison joined the program immediately, and by the end of the first day she had designed her first project; a bust made from wire, Styrofoam, videotape film, and fabric. I had only seen Alison paint and draw up to this point. She spent thirty minutes in the computer lab researching her ideas and returned to class with photo-copied pages, computer printouts, and sketches. She must have gone to the office to get photo copies, because there is not a copy machine in the lab. Alison worked in the back of the room for the remainder of the period with wire, pliers, and the hot glue gun. When the bell rang she approached me with "head" in hand and asked if I could keep her artwork in my locked closet to keep it safe. Week 3. During our Plan of Action discussion, Alison told me she was dying to try charcoal. She asked me if I would teach her how to use charcoal so she could use it as the medium for her project. After the demonstration Alison went through dozens of sheets of paper practicing on her own. This is the second new medium Alison has incorporated into her artwork. Week 6. Alison stayed after school to show me the pictures she had taken of iron fences over the past weekend. She pulled up a chair next to mine, and explained that she had been taking pictures during her free time. For about forty-five minutes we discussed her photos. During Parent Teacher Conferences her mother jokingly apologized to me, because she suspected that her daughter consumes a lot of my time. She told me that Alison has always dabbled in art, but lately it was her passion. For Alison's birthday she wanted to go to the gallery stroll downtown, talk with the artists, and take pictures.

Alison's interest in art is indicated by the amount of her free time she spent taking photos discussing photography and her desire to spend her birthday immersed in art galleries and art making. Her mother even identified art as her daughter's passion. She demonstrated ownership by asking if her art could be locked up and safe. Earlier in the semester I remember finding Alison's artworks face-down on the floor while she painted her nails with sharpies. Alison experimented with new mediums in each of the examples including photography, charcoal, and found object sculpture. Her effort is noted by the time she spent practicing with charcoal.

Trent. Week 1. Trent joined the program immediately. His first project proposal was a 3-D model building built to scale. During our discussion, I asked Trent about the materials he envisioned using for this building, and he explained that he had already secured the materials he needed. He explained that had noticed some abandoned foam core posters in his English class a few months earlier. He was pretty sure that foam core would work structurally, and he had already talked to his English teacher that morning about using the posters. Trent had skills and interests that had completely eluded me before this project. Week 3. Trent was nearly finished with the structure of his building. He expressed excitement about the idea of using ceramic clay for texture on the outside walls. We discussed the pros and cons of using unfired clay. He decided to try it, and if it didn't work would figure out something else. There was one question that didn't come up during our discussion that usually did in the past – Will this affect my grade?

Trent demonstrated his personal interest in architecture with the design of his first project. He exhibited responsibility and self-initiation by contemplating and securing materials for his art project. The decision to cover his building in clay was risky and experimental, but Trent seemed concerned with the process and experience rather than his grade.

Kaylee. Week 8. Kaylee completed her artwork just as class was ending. It was a Friday, and she told me she couldn't possibly wait until Monday to take it home. As she was cleaning up she reasoned that I had seen her working on it, so couldn't I just remember what it looked like so she could take it home. Kaylee exhibited genuine excitement and ownership of her artwork. This was quite a change, considering Kaylee threw almost all of her graded and completed artwork in the garbage one term earlier.

Peer Community

For the purpose of this research, community is defined as group of two or more people sharing common characteristics or interests that learn to interact in terms of an interconnected "we" rather than an isolated "I." This enables them to communicate effectively and work together toward common goals (http://www.community4me.com/comm_definitions.html). Analysis of the data revealed unexpected patterns of interaction indicative of a community amongst the participating students. These aspects included peer idea exchange, peer teaching, artistic collaboration, group congregation, and shared group interest.

Josh. Week 4. Josh spent a fair amount of time staring at the form and looking around the room when he joined the program. He seemed lost and a little overwhelmed. I watched to see how he would handle the situation. Eventually he meandered over to talk to some of the other students in the program. I was unable to hear what they said, but the other students pointed to their own work and then around the room while Josh intently listened. The next day Josh asked me if he could move to sit by another student in the program. This was the first time I had seen Josh associate with anyone in the class other than Andrew.

Josh and Tiffany. Week 6. Josh and Tiffany presented a plan of action for a collaborative artwork. The document indicated that Josh would design and draw the artwork and

Tiffany would paint. Tiffany explained how she had admired Josh's Celtic designs, but drawing wasn't really her interest. Tiffany said that she jokingly suggested painting one of Josh's drawings, and Josh expressed a lot of interest in the idea. From that point they started planning an artwork together, and decided on a plan of action which even included the idea of both of their signatures on the final piece. With this project, Tiffany broke her pattern of doing the minimum amount of work to get by. This was also a breakthrough for Josh, considering he usually gave up on his own artwork and resorted to imitating Andrew's drawings and interests.

All students. Week 6. This week all of The Master Artist students moved their seats to sit next to each other. I walked into class and noticed three tables in the back of the room pushed together. I casually asked them about the new set up, and they explained that they all wanted to sit together so it would be easier to interact. My reflection notes at the time were not hopeful; I feared that their proximity would undermine their attentiveness to the art making aspect of the class. Week 7. The Master Artist Program students arrived to class early every day this week to work on their projects. The majority of their conversations revolved around art and art making. Tiffany gave Alison some tips on how to use acrylic paint, and Kaylee demonstrated to the group how she painted the speckled background in her tree paintings. I did not plan, suggest, or oversee any of these media demonstrations. I observed informal teaching amongst the group almost on a daily basis. Week 8. The Master Artist Program students turned in a group plan of action this week, spearheaded by Trent. They wanted to make group photo backdrops and decorations for the end of the year school dance. When we discussed the proposal, they told me they had been talking about how disappointing their experiences had been when it came to school activities. They wanted to make the last activity of the year special. The group explained to me that they had figured out what they needed to do and who they needed to see for

permission. The plan of action indicated that they had already secured the materials they needed and made storage arrangements.

These examples illustrate the different components of peer interaction. Tiffany and Josh exchanged ideas which led to their collaboration on an artwork. Josh was one of the first students to permanently move his seat next to another Master Artist Program student. Eventually all of the participating students congregated and pushed the tables together to form a more cohesive group. Peer teaching was illustrated by Tiffany helping Alison with acrylics and Kaylee demonstrating her painting techniques to the group. Trent, who previously kept to himself, demonstrated organization and leadership skills within the group. Finally, the students exemplified collaboration, idea exchange and interest as a group with their proposal to make their last school activity memorable by creating photo backdrops and decorations for the dance.

Part Two: Student Evaluation of Master Artist Program

A program evaluation was administered to the participating students at the conclusion of the study in order to gain a student perspective of the strengths and weaknesses of The Master Artist Program. The evaluation consisted of two questions: What was most satisfying about this program? What was most frustrating about this program? Students were instructed to place their unnamed responses in the completed assignment drawer. Responses are more accurate when students are allowed to remain anonymous (Taylor-Powell & Renner, 2000). The evaluation responses from the five participants are presented below in their original format.

- Having my own time and being given so much freedom was very satisfying. I was frustrated with the same thing. Even though I loved the freedom I feel I had a lot of responsibility because I had to make all the decisions.

- The most satisfying thing about the program was just being able to do projects without ending up in tears or hating everything about what I did (which is usually what happens with art). I really liked how my print making turned out. I think I applied myself because I liked the subject and wanted to create a book. The most frustrating thing is the feeling that I had nothing new to create. I felt like a lot of my work had the same things, because I couldn't look outside the box.
- The thing I found most satisfying was the teacher's easy going, very positive attitude. She boosted my confidence about my own art. I think it made me want to teach art in a similar way. The lax instructions were frustrating for the first couple weeks, but I learned to enjoy it because it made it a challenge for me to think and made me feel more accomplished because I did art on my own.
- I liked that we weren't graded on how artistically talented we were. As long as we tried and learned something then you [the teacher] were fine with that. It was nice to feel comfortable in an art class. The most frustrating thing was just me being hard on myself sometimes. I need to work on being ok with my work and to just keep trying.
- The most satisfying thing was just creating things from my own creativity. Even though they aren't perfect, it is rewarding to start with a stack of blank pages or a ball of clay and make whatever I want. I like being able to look back at all I've done. The lack of structure was a good but it was also frustrating sometimes. I did get frustrated when I saw other students' work and wished I could create something as beautiful. I had to keep reminding myself that with practice I can become that skilled.

The analysis of the student evaluation data indicated three satisfying categories and three frustrating categories. The satisfying aspects of The Master Artist program to the participating students included personal enjoyment, student autonomy and a positive learning environment. Enjoyment was associated with creating art, student autonomy was associated with freedom and choice, and a positive environment was described as relaxed and comfortable and associated with learning, thinking, challenge and accomplishment.

The frustrating aspects of The Master Artist Program included lack of structure, responsibility and expectations. Freedom and lack of structure were interchanged and used as synonyms. Responsibility was associated with decisions and freedom. Expectation often referred to self-expectations and comparisons, and was associated with lack of ability. An interesting relationship shows that students who identified autonomy as a frustrating aspect of the program also identified autonomy as a satisfying aspect.

Chapter V: Discussion and Conclusions

The research plan originated from my experiences while teaching a class of students with mixed abilities, art experience, and interests. While teaching this class I observed apathy, disinterest, and a general lack of connection and intrinsic motivation amongst these students. Informed by theories of motivation this study explored the influence of an intrinsically supportive curriculum in an art class of students with mixed abilities, art experience, and interests. The context of existing research was presented prior to the description of this study. This examination explored the value of art education, why students are unmotivated and motivation research, in order to respond to fundamental problems of motivation in the art classroom.

The fundamental research question of the study was: How might a curriculum based on Self-Determination Theory influence student motivation and art making in a 9th grade art classroom? Data analysis from this case indicated that student participants in The Master Artist Program exhibited interest, ownership, responsibility, self-initiation, effort, experimentation, and minimal concern with grades. This data supports the body of research concerning the topics of student centered learning, autonomy in the classroom, and intrinsic motivation.

The analysis of the data also revealed patterns of peer interaction among the participating students. These aspects included peer idea exchange, peer teaching, artistic collaboration, group congregation, and shared group interest. Participating students identified both satisfying and frustrating aspects of The Master Artist Program. The satisfying features of The Master Artist Program included personal enjoyment, student autonomy and a positive learning environment. The frustrating features of The Master Artist Program included lack of structure, increased individual responsibility, and less clearly defined expectations. It was interesting that students

who identified autonomy as a frustrating aspect of the program also identified autonomy as a satisfying aspect. This suggests that autonomy can be a complex issue for adolescents.

About four weeks into the program I approached a student in the class about joining the Master Artist Program. I was a little surprised that Heather hadn't joined already; I expected her to sign up the week I introduced the program. Her answer was not what I was expecting. Heather told me that she was really stressed out, and she liked art because it was relaxing to her. She explained that joining the program was more than she could handle; she just wanted to come to class and do the assignment.

The frustration level associated with autonomy seemed to be too much for Heather. If I had pushed her to join, then I may have jeopardized her positive experience and association with art. This experience introduced new questions concerning autonomy in the classroom: Is this frustration helpful or hurtful? Is there a way to ease this frustration? Should frustration be eased? Is autonomy frustrating in and of itself or is it simply a lack of experience dealing with autonomy? Why can autonomy be both satisfying and frustrating for students?

Even though the focus of this study addressed the participating students, as the teacher I was part of this study as well. I would describe my experience in this study as a journey and personal exploration into my teaching paradigm. I was excited to see students explore their interests, generate ideas, and initiate personally meaningful art making. Reflecting upon my experience I admit that as my central role diminished and I gave up more control, I noticed that insecurities, fears and conflictions bubbled to the surface. I gained awareness, wrestled with, and re-evaluated some of my own deep-rooted assumptions and biases.

I discovered that I was confused and a little threatened in my new role of facilitator. The following questions, fears, and worries circled in my head: What is my role as a leader? Can I admit that I don't know everything? Will my students think I am incompetent? Am I incompetent? Will my students still respect me? What is the line between teacher and peer? Will a more equalized relationship lead them to walk all over me? Will my supervisors disapprove? Will my supervisors view this unregimented curriculum as personal laziness? The tension I felt was complicated and confusing. I was elated to watch my students grow as they took on more and more responsibility and work together, but at the same time I felt somewhat left out and unneeded.

This study, experience, and reflection have given me the opportunity to re-evaluate my teaching paradigm. The biggest change I have made is my perception of authority in the student teacher relationship. I now view the relationship as reciprocal, meaning I can learn from my students, they can learn from me, and they can learn from each other.

I believe every art teacher wants their students to experience art in a personal, relevant and meaningful way. This study added further support and information to research concerning student centered learning and intrinsic motivation in the classroom. It has also raised questions and topics for further investigation. Only five students opted to participate in The Master Artist Program. Who is left behind and why? How did the non-participating students feel about group? The analysis of the case study data supported intrinsic motivation, but it also revealed patterns of peer interaction among the participating students including peer idea exchange, peer teaching, artistic collaboration, group congregation, and shared group interest. How are intrinsic motivation and this type of peer interaction related? What are the benefits of community in the classroom? What are the benefits of community in the art classroom? These questions suggest

that autonomy and self-determination are complex issues with important implications for student learning, motivation, and community in the classroom.

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Appendix A: Master Artist Program Plan of Action Form

Plan of Action

Theme /Subject Matter_____

Medium_____ Size_____

Supplies Needed_____

_____

Timeline_____

_____

Focus/Objective_____

_____

_____

Thumbnail Sketch

Appendix B: Master Artist Program Self-Evaluation Form

Self-Evaluation

What have you learned from creating this artwork?

What part of the process did you enjoy most? Why?

What part of the process did you not enjoy? Why?

Were you happy with the final result? Why or why not?

Choose one of the following questions and answer below

- What was the most difficult part about completing this piece and why?
- What part are you most confident about?
- What questions do you have?
- What was something you wanted to happen, but didn't happen?
- Where did you achieve something in spite of the problems?
- What were you trying to express or communicate?
- What would you like to learn more about?
- What excited you about this project? Why?
- How were you able to resolve moments of frustration?
- How did the work evolve from your initial plan?

Teacher Comments

Appendix C: Master List of Codes

Category

Intrinsic Motivation

Concepts

Ownership

Codes

Self-Initiative, Enjoyment, Interest, Personal Relevance, Responsibility, Possession

Interest

Codes

Enjoyment, Exploration outside of class, Engagement, Self-Initiation, Excitement, Curiosity, Experimentation

Effort

Codes

Perseverance, Problem solving, Challenge, Mastery, Self-Direction, Engagement, Collaboration, Self-Initiation

Responsibility

Codes

Self-Initiative, Self-Direction, Problem Solving, Care for materials

Intrinsic Reward

Codes

Little concern with grades, experimentation, risk taking

Master List of Codes

Category

Community

Concepts

Idea Exchange

Co-teaching, peer teaching, art related conversation

Congregation

Physical shared space, ownership of space, meeting outside class time, relocated group supplies

Shared Interest and Joint Effort

Collaboration, Group discussion, Relevant Group Issues, Group Initiative, Group Planning, Group Responsibility, Group Problem Solving, Group Engagement

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