

Study of the Outcomes of College Education in Art in Selected Colleges in Twelve Western States

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With the growth of art programs and the increase of studio classes in colleges, the problem of what outcomes should receive emphasis in the total program has become more basic than ever to evaluation. The primary purpose of this study was to make a contribution to objective and valid criteria for the evaluation of college art programs. To accomplish this goal, the study sought to identify major outcomes from education in art in college, to ascertain the relative emphasis these outcomes should receive in the college art program, to determine the extent to which these outcomes have been achieved in college, and to interpret some specific incidents in art in college from which might be formulated some critical requirements for more effective art training.

Certain widely accepted basic assumptions underlie this study of outcomes of education in art.

1. Under our democratic way of life the individual has the right to expect to be trained to express himself creatively in his own unique manner in his chosen medium as long as this expression does not interfere with, endanger, or abridge the freedom of others.

2. Art educators are searching for ways to train young people in art that they might contribute to and be happy in our democratic society. ". . . the aesthetic principle is deeply embedded in man and . . . its presence contributes to his well being."¹

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¹Arthur R. Young, "Art Education in Our Culture," *This Is Art Education* (Kutztown, Pennsylvania: National Art Education Association, 1951), p. 8.

3. Many factors growing out of a rapidly changing culture are exerting significant influences upon art programs in college.

4. The methods and procedures for effective art training in college are not clearly defined.

5. A study which identifies values from training in art, strengthens the role of art education in our culture to the extent it contributes useful criteria for the evaluation of college art programs through the alignment of expected and achieved outcomes.

6. A study of the incidents which are critical to the achievement or the thwarting of achievement, according to the student's point of view, can be useful in interpreting the study of outcomes.

From a survey which was made of the literature published in the past twenty years in the fields of art, aesthetics, and art education, twenty-eight concepts were abstracted which were stated by a majority of writers as kinds of knowledge, attitudes, and proficiencies which, ideally, college graduates in art should possess. These twenty-eight concepts represented the seven general areas of intellectual, psychological, manual, appreciational, educational, social, and integrational aspects of art education. The general areas were not mutually exclusive, and it was not intended that they should be, inasmuch, as the permeating ideal of art is integration, and exclusiveness among outcomes is neither possible nor desirable.

Intellectual Outcomes. The degree of excellence of art is controlled by the degree of intelligence of both the creator and the consumer. Irwin Edman expressed this as:

So far from having to do merely with statues, pictures, and symphonies, art is the name for the whole process of intelligence by which life, understanding its own conditions, turns them to the most interesting or exquisite account.²

Intellectual outcomes were stated as: (1) independent creative thinking as a part of art work, (2) interest in learn-

²Irwin Edman, *Arts and the Man* (New York: The New American Library, 1950), p. 10.

ing as related to art, (3) understanding of art processes, (4) knowledge of the history of art, and (5) understanding of aesthetic theory.

Psychological Outcomes. Because the creation and appreciation of art depend upon interpretation of sensory responses, awareness and use of feelings, and acuity of perception, outcomes from education in art which carry psychological implications were expressed as: (6) Sensitivity to aesthetic elements of environment, (7) personal satisfaction from art activities, (8) freedom of expression in favorite art medium, and (9) ability to sustain intensity of feelings during art work.

Manual Outcomes. Ernest Ziegfeld outlined the place of skill in creative activity as:

Creative activity in the arts, therefore, seems to involve a complex of closely related factors. There must, first of all, be a degree of sensitivity to the environment, a responsiveness to the experiences of living . . . In addition to emotional receptivity and awareness, the individual must possess an imaginative capacity which enables him to organize his responses into new and emotionally significant patterns and relationships . . . And finally, if the creative idea is to be given material form—there must be skill in handling the techniques and the materials of the artistic medium.³

Manual outcomes were stated as: (10) Facility in the use of the tools, equipment, and materials of art, (11) ability to design in one or more medium, and (12) skill in recording graphic symbols.

Appreciational Outcomes. Appreciational outcomes were concerned with the analysis and enjoyment of art and utilitarian objects which appeal to the eye. Melvin Rader wrote:

Although art is obviously a mode of self-expression, it is also social. . . . Just as scientific discourse is the language of descriptions, so artistic expression is the language of appreciations. Art is the expression of values, both individual and social.⁴

³Ernest Ziegfeld, *Art in the College Program of General Education*, (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1953), p. 81.

⁴Melvin Rader, *A Modern Book of Esthetics* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1952), p. xix.

Appreciational outcomes from art education were stated as: (13) Conviction of the importance of aesthetic considerations in selecting clothing, home appliances, automobiles, and so forth, (14) belief in the validity of contemporary art forms in modern living, (15) promotion of appreciation of art, and (16) appreciation of traditional art forms.

Educational Outcomes. Primarily, values from education in art in college which are vital to the teacher of art were included under educational outcomes. While outcomes listed in this area can add to the growth and satisfaction of any student, since they center around experiences in analyzing art, relations with people, and development of personality, they are indispensable to the teacher of art. Educational outcomes appeared as: (17) Confidence in criticizing the artistic endeavors of others, (18) ability to stimulate others to participate in or to learn about art, (19) ability to get along well with people, and (20) flexibility.

Social Outcomes. Of major concern in the group of outcomes categorized as social outcomes were evidences that the student in art was preparing to find a place in society as well as acquiring understandings which would enable him to grow in economic efficiency and become increasingly useful socially. Those outcomes with particular social implications were: (21) Knowledge of the vocational opportunities in art, (22) established professional goals as artist, art teacher, and so forth, (23) maintaining integrity in the use of creative abilities, and (24) recognition of the therapeutic function of art in our society.

Integrational Outcomes. The final four outcomes were concerned with areas of training in art which would indicate the ability of the student to consolidate his learning into a set of personal beliefs as a result of his experiences and training, and his ability to express himself in a somewhat mature style while working creatively and confidently. It was intended that these integrational outcomes would indicate functionally, the unity of the preceding outcomes. Integrational outcomes were expressed as: (25) A philosophy of art, (26) projection of individuality through plastic and graphic media, (27)

synthesizing of ideas, feelings, and skills in creative work, and (28) preparation to participate professionally in art.

The twenty-eight concepts became the basis from which questionnaires were constructed. These questionnaires were sent to eight hundred and twenty persons. This number was divided into three groups as follows: (1) Six hundred and two students who had graduated from college art departments during 1954-55 and 1955-56, (2) one hundred and seventy-seven art teachers, and (3) forty-one art specialists. Completed questionnaires were returned by four hundred and seventy-eight students, one hundred and forty-five art teachers, and thirty-three art specialists, making a total of six hundred and fifty-six or 80 per cent of the original number. Ninety-one letters were returned by the postal service marked not deliverable. The six hundred and fifty-six completed questionnaires represented 89.9 per cent of the seven hundred and twenty-nine persons who actually received questionnaires. Identification of the three groups reveals the varied scope of interests and achievements within the groups.

Identification of Student Group. Of the four hundred and seventy-eight students who completed the questionnaire, sixty had graduated from college with a Bachelor of Science degree, two hundred and ninety-six with a Bachelor of Arts degree, one hundred and nineteen with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, and three with a Bachelor of Education degree.

Responses indicated that at the time of the study, members of this group were engaged in the following pursuits: Eighty-one were enrolled in graduate study, seven were teaching art in college, two were directors of visual education in college, fifty-three were teaching in high schools and junior high schools, twenty were teaching in elementary schools, and thirty-seven listed their occupation as that of teaching but did not signify the level of activity. This was a total of two hundred graduates who were in educational activities. The listing of other occupations among the group indicated two were cartoonist inkers, sixteen were in advertising and advertising art, twelve were illustrators (two of these were medical illustrators), twenty-three were commercial artists, one was a

photographer, fourteen were craftsmen, ten were interior designers, eight were industrial designers, six were unspecified designers, fourteen were artist-painters, two were art therapists, two were art directors in television studios, sixteen were office workers, six were social workers, five were receptionists, five were clerks, seven were salespersons, three were librarians, two were steel workers, four were mechanics, one was an aircraft worker, two were store employees, two were buyers, one was a radio and television performer, one was an architect, one was a laborer, fifty-eight were housewives, forty-two were in the armed services, and nineteen respondents did not indicate their occupations.

Of the four hundred and seventy-eight students who completed questionnaires, two hundred and fifty-seven were females and two hundred and twenty-one were males.

Identification of College Art Teacher Group. Among the one hundred and forty-five college art teachers who checked questionnaires for the study, thirty-nine were professors, fifty-three were associate professors, and fifty-three were assistant professors. These represented thirty-six college and university faculties.

Identification of Art Specialist Group. Among the thirty-three art specialists who checked questionnaires for the study, eleven were art educators, eleven were art administrators, and eleven were artist-teachers. Of the eleven art educators, five were supervisors or directors of art from large districts in Pennsylvania, Oregon, New York, Colorado, and Utah; two were professors and one was an associate professor of art education from universities in California, Missouri, and Washington; one professor emeritus of art was from Washington, D.C.; one assistant professor of art education was from Georgia, and one professor of art education was from Illinois. The latter two were engaged in research in art education at the time this study was made.

Nine of the eleven art administrators were or had been chairmen of art or art education departments of large universities in Florida, California, Illinois, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, and Washington; one was director of the department of edu-

cation of a national museum in New York, and one was director of art education for a large city district in Washington. This latter juror had previously served as president of the National Art Education Association. The immediate past-president and the former national secretary-treasurer of the National Art Education Association were also in this group.

The eleven artist-teachers have made contributions to art as leading artists nationally and internationally. They have taught art and have shown vital interest in art education. Six of the eleven were, or had been associated with universities as chairmen, professors, or artists in residence; two were associated with museum schools. Painters, printmakers, designers, art historians, a sculptor, and a ceramist were included in this group. These artist-teachers were distributed geographically as follows: Alabama, California, Colorado, New York, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Washington.

Only leaders in their respective fields were invited to participate in the study as members of the jury of art specialists.

Sources of Data. Questionnaires sent to art specialists and to art teachers were divided into section "A" and section "B." Section "A" asked respondents to rate each of the twenty-eight outcomes according to the relative degree of emphasis each should receive in the total college art program. Section "B" of the questionnaire submitted to the jury of art specialists asked for the jury member's opinion on the degree to which each of the outcomes should be achieved in the college art program. Section "B" of the questionnaire submitted to the art teachers asked for the teacher's opinion as to the degree students were achieving the twenty-eight outcomes under the present college program.

The questionnaire sent to students was designed to obtain student opinion concerning the extent the twenty-eight outcomes had been achieved by them in college. In addition, students were asked to report an incident which had assisted achievement at a critical time and an incident which had thwarted achievement. Some critical requirements for improved training in art in college were sought through this critical incident technique.

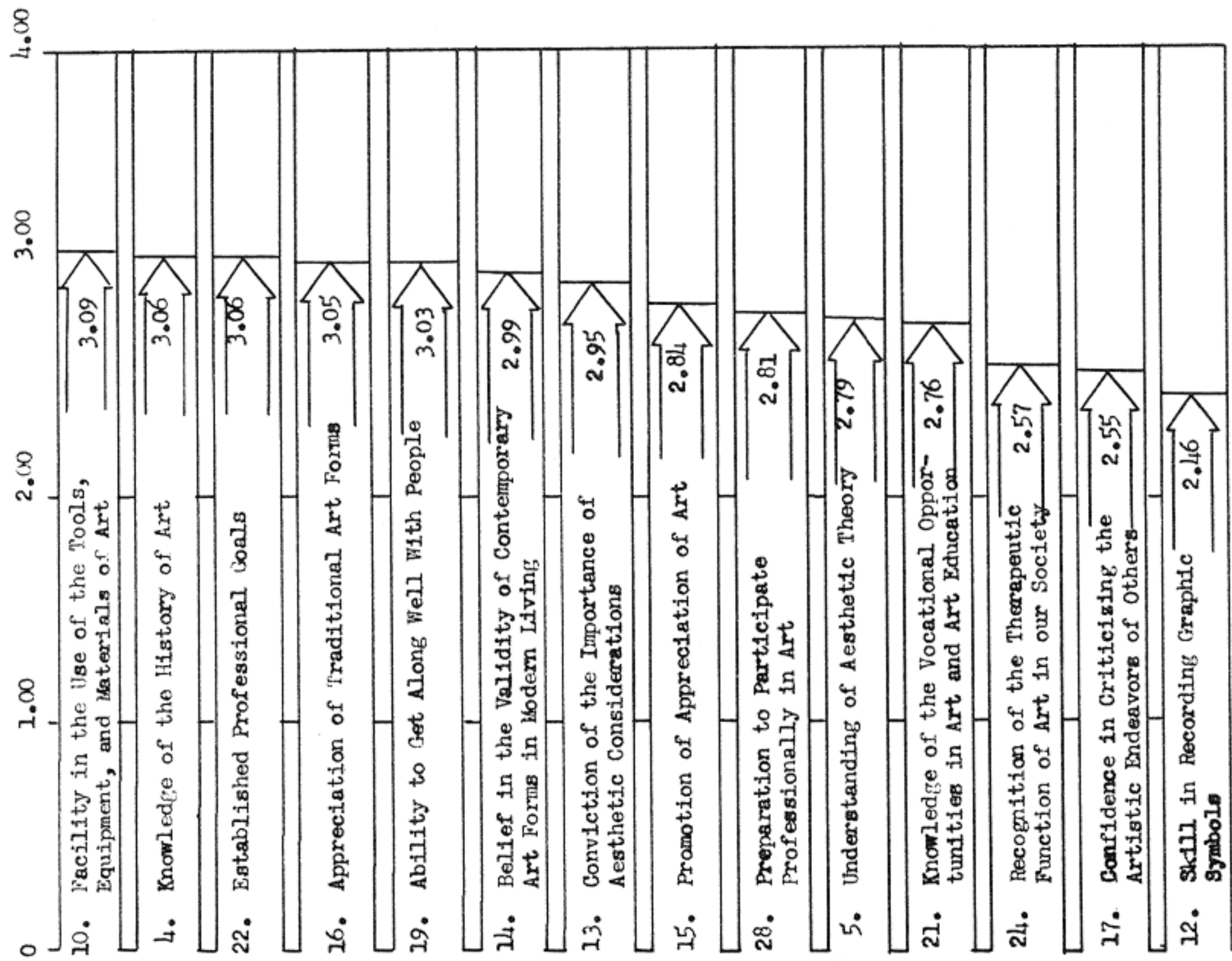


Figure 6 (continued)

Rank Order of Importance of Outcomes According to Combined Emphasis Point Averages Scored by Art Specialists and Art Teachers

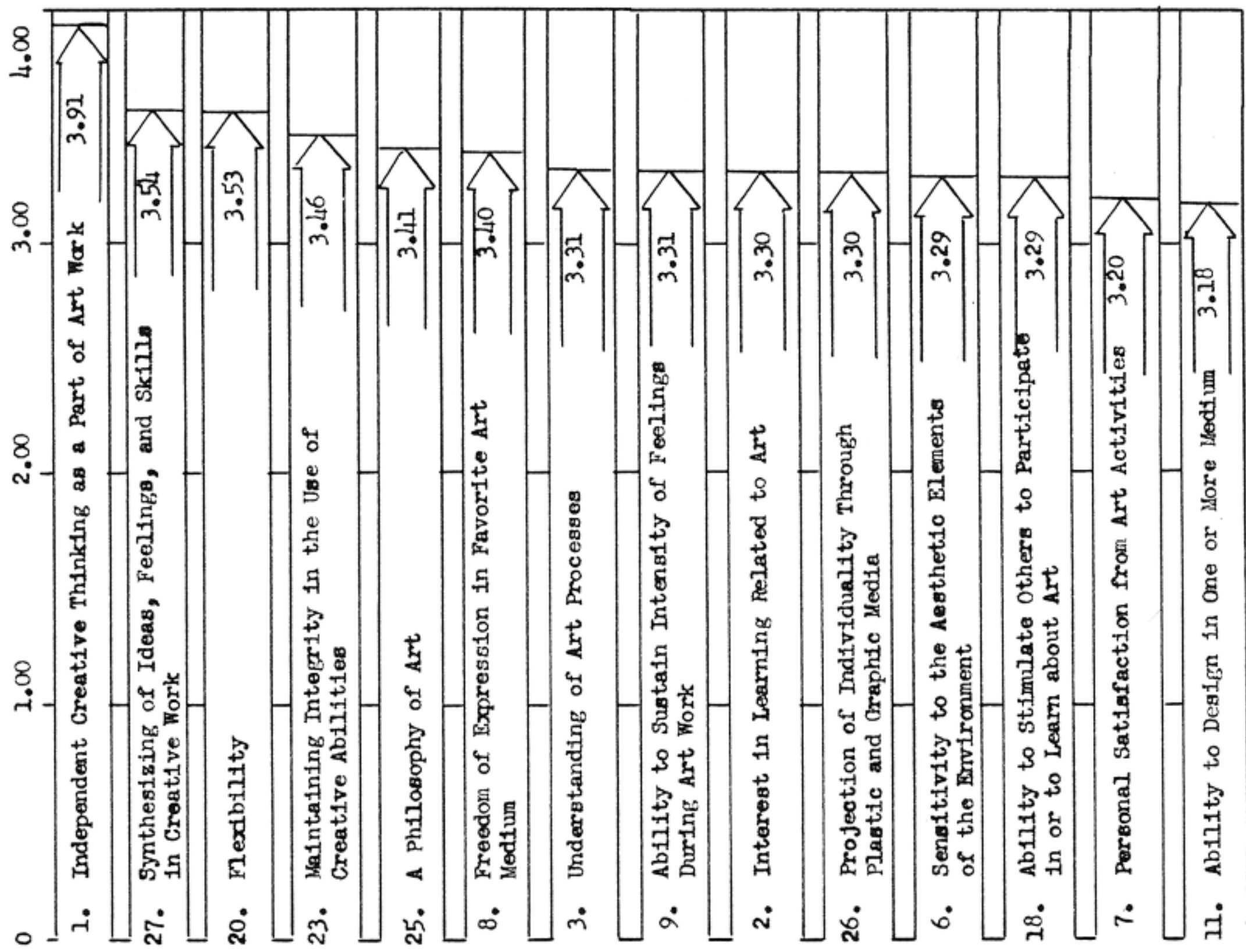


Figure 6

Rank Order of Importance of Outcomes According to Combined Emphasis Point Averages Scored by Art Specialists and Art Teachers

The Relative Importance of the Twenty-eight Outcomes. Since the twenty-eight outcomes expressed important concepts regarding art education in college as compiled from literature in the field of art and art education, it was assumed that all were desirable. This assumption received verification in the responses of the jury of art specialists and art teachers regarding these outcomes. An emphasis point average, determined by weighting responses, showed the consensus of opinion rated no outcome worthy of less than medium emphasis, and most outcomes were scored in the area of considerable emphasis. In general there was rather close agreement in the responses to the various outcomes by the art specialists and art teachers; however, the art specialists tended to be more emphatic, whether higher or lower, in reactions. The rank orders of emphasis to be given the twenty-eight outcomes as determined by returns from the art specialists and the art teachers, are shown in Figure 1. The number preceding the outcome in each case represents the serial order of the outcome. Emphasis point averages are shown for each outcome in the two lists. Combined emphasis point averages scored by art specialists and art teachers placed independent creative thinking; synthesizing of ideas, feelings and skills; and flexibility highest. Confidence in criticizing the artistic endeavors of others; recognition of the therapeutic function of art in our society; and skill in recording graphic symbols received the lowest emphasis point averages in the combined scale.

On the basis of the returns, it seemed apparent that in these twenty-eight outcomes we have basic criteria for establishing and evaluating college art programs, and unless these programs are set up to encourage students in individual critical thinking and creative expression, where there is a fine balance between the tangible skills and intangible ideas, and feelings of art, and ability in adjusting to elements with sensitive, constructive responses is fostered by the program, no amount of emphasis on skill in recording graphic symbols, confidence in criticizing the artistic endeavors of others, or recognition of the therapeutic function of art in our society will enable art programs to serve the purposes of art education adequately. By employing these outcomes as criteria for

checking practices and programs of art in college, some less important aims may be eliminated or minimized. The value of continued evaluation in art education is apparent when it is realized that the choices are among many desirable factors rather than between clear cut good and bad outcomes.

The Achievement of the Twenty-eight Outcomes in College Art Programs. Responses to the questionnaires indicated rather wide differences in levels of what was expected of students by the art specialists, the degree of achievement by students according to the art teachers, and student achievement according to their own opinions. For fourteen of the outcomes, the specialists expected greater achievement than either the students or art teachers indicated was being realized. For seven outcomes, in which subjective evaluations and personal standards were primarily involved, the students scored themselves higher than did the teachers and higher than expected by the art specialists. Students consistently indicated greater achievement of outcomes than did the art teachers.

All three participating groups scored the highest level of achievement for the same outcome, maintaining integrity in the use of creative abilities. Art students scored highest the outcomes, personal satisfaction from art activities, and conviction of the importance of aesthetic considerations in selecting clothing, home appliances, automobiles, and so forth; this was a healthy indication that students felt there was a real transfer of training from the classroom to daily living.

While responses from students generally showed a higher personal evaluation of their achievement than was observed by teachers, there was evidence that achievement in present college art programs falls short in several vital areas. This was evidenced in the importance rating exceeding the achievement rating for thirteen of the twenty-eight outcomes. The greatest differences between importance rating and achievement rating were shown for the outcome, independent creative thinking as a part of art work, and the outcome, synthesizing of ideas, feelings, and skills in creative work. Since these outcomes were placed first and second, respectively, in rank order of importance, it was indicated that college art pro-

grams need to be planned for a greater degree of achievement in creative experiences.

Critical Incidents in College Art Education. Of the four hundred and seventy-eight students who checked and returned questionnaires, four hundred and six students reported critical incidents which had happened in college to assist them in achieving an important goal or desire in art, and four hundred and twenty-eight students reported critical incidents which had happened in college to thwart them in achieving an important goal or desire in art. Categories for critical incidents grew out of sorting of student responses. There were seven major categories for critical assisting incidents; these were: (1) stimulating situation, (2) personal achievement, (3) new methods and media, (4) unusual motivation, (5) regular supporting influences, (6) direct instructor influences, and (7) recognition. Responses indicated instructor influences were the most potent force for assisting achievement in art, with personal achievement of students in second position. Critical thwarting incidents formed seven major categories, which were listed as: (1) limiting situations, (2) student inadequacies, (3) poor programs and facilities, (4) disruptive emotional factors, (5) rigid requirements, (6) inadequate instruction, and (7) unfair treatment by instructors. Responses indicated that inadequate instruction and student inadequacies were the most thwarting factors in art education.

Conclusions and Recommendations. Each of the twenty-eight outcomes is important in the college art program, and no one area should be emphasized to the exclusion of any other area. Designation of the relative importance of the twenty-eight outcomes is useful in providing qualitative criteria for improving art experiences.

In art teaching-learning situations, symbols for accomplishment are tangible, but the meanings of those symbols are illusive and personal and are arrived at in unique and individual ways; therefore, feelings are often near the surface, and the ego is readily threatened or rewarded. Student evaluations of their own achievement in creative work and in ability to get along well with other people are usually higher than teacher

evaluations in these same areas. Under present art programs, students develop respect for honest art production and recognize individual responsibility for maintaining integrity in the use of creative abilities. Unrealistic goals and attitudes, inabilities or fear of inability, limiting factors such as shortage of time or money, physical or emotional difficulties, and unproductive social relationships interfere with student achievement in art. Students gain feelings of security and confidence through art training which enables them to understand the relationship of art to life situations, to formulate realistic professional goals, and to adequately prepare for achievement of those goals.

Critical conditions and situations exist in college art programs, and should be recognized as potential factors in assisting or thwarting student achievement.

As bases for specific moves towards college art program improvement, the following recommendations are made:

1. Each of the various outcomes should be intensively studied in relationship to individual programs. For example, the elementary figure drawing class should be scrutinized to see if independent creative thinking is being thwarted by too rigid insistence on anatomical perfection. The question of whether the student is expected to be a recording mechanism or an individual aware of his potential as a responding, thinking entity needs an honest answer. Physical aspects of such a class need to be examined to determine if the student is visually motivated to seek simple, graphic truths which contribute to understanding of problems of life as well as art, or if stereotyped symbols encourage adjustment which is superficial and without understanding. In a more thorough manner than indicated here, each outcome should be applied to every offering in the art program and to the overall correlation of curriculum materials.

2. College art programs should be planned to encourage creative expression and critical thinking in all of the seven general areas of intellectual, psychological, manual, appreciational, educational, social, and integrational aspects of art education.

3. Scheduling of art programs should be examined in relationship to work involved, and sufficient time and opportunities should be provided for individual activities. Short interrupted periods, which curtail possibilities for entering the creative act, should be avoided.

4. Those individuals who possess ability to employ the information and materials of art and have an intuitive perception which prepares them to share creative experiences should be encouraged to enter the field of art education. Art teachers should be artist-teachers who are interested in and understand needs of individual students, and respect and know materials of art.

5. Teacher-student relationships should be conducive to realistic evaluation of student goals and achievements, and should encourage sincere, constructive production.

6. College art departments need to study means of developing stimulating, friendly, and challenging atmospheres where art has meaning as an integral part of life.