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COLAISTE NAISIUNTA EALAINE IS DEARTHA
NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

ART EDUCATION, DISADVANTAGE, AND THE SECOND-LEVEL CURRICULUM

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INTRODUCTION

This research study is concerned with the role and status of art education in second-level schools, and attempts to highlight the educational significance of the visual arts in particular. It proposes that a visual arts education is valuable in any school context, but suggests that it has a particular relevance for disadvantaged young people.

In order to test this hypothesis, case studies were carried out with nine pupils attending Saint Aidan's Community School in Brookfield, Tallaght. The study of this area presented in Chapter Four below describes some of the socio-economic factors affecting Brookfield. It is evident that resources are urgently needed in this area, and correlations may be drawn between Brookfield and those environments described as 'Disadvantaged' in Chapter Three. The sociological review in Chapter Three examines possible educational outcomes for pupils from disadvantaged environments and the findings are supported by the review of psychological literature which focuses on the disadvantaged adolescent and education.

An outline of Irish educational policy since 1878, when the State first became involved in second-level

schooling, is presented in Chapter One. The emphasis is on the origins and development of the arts in Irish education. The valuable contributions of a visual arts education in particular, are argued in Chapter Two, and the extent of its effectiveness in a disadvantaged environment is considered. The methods used to evaluate the benefits of art education in this area where the research study is based are described in Chapter Five.

Chapter Six presents the teaching programme in art carried out with the nine case study subjects during their sixth year in St. Aidan's Community School. The programme was designed to target the specific needs of disadvantaged young people, and the effectiveness of the programme is examined in Chapter Seven. This chapter also provides an analysis of the research findings in relation to the interviews and art activities.

The conclusions of this study are presented in the final chapter, along with recommendations based on the research findings.



CHAPTER 1

GENERAL EDUCATION, IRELAND:

THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF ART EDUCATION

Introduction

This chapter takes 1878, the year when the state first became involved in second-level education, as its starting point, and chronologically explores major developments in educational policy throughout the following century.

The role and status of art education is examined in this context. It is interesting to see how art education was perceived and provided for, from the time of "payment by results" and the examination-based curriculum, to the launching of the Junior Certificate in September 1989. Although much of the literature reviewed below provides sound arguments for the value of art education, it is evident that this subject has not been considered as a central element of curriculum planning in Irish education. Frequent reference is made throughout this chapter to the neglect of the arts in general, but most attention is devoted to a consideration of the visual arts in Irish education. It is a cause for concern that, despite the worthwhile contribution which this subject can make to the education of young people, it is still relegated to the periphery of the curriculum. The lack of regard for the benefits of an education in the visual arts evident in State educational policy from 1878 until the present day is identified below.

of regard for the benefits of an education in the visual arts evident in State educational policy from 1878 until the present day is identifed below. Aine Hyland tell us that:

> Until relatively recently, most young people attended only primary school-secondary education being the prerogative of the affluent who could afford to pay fees, and of the very small number of very bright children who won scholarships. (1)

Hyland goes on to explain that consequently the second-level curriculum applied only to a minority, and did not cater for a range of abilities. When, in 1878, the State became involved in second level education, it should have made a difference, unfortunately however, it did not significantly affect the narrow and academic bias of the post-primary curriculum. The public examination became all important. D.G. Mulcahy states that:

> The 1878 Act established a system of public examinations which has been from that time a central element and a controlling mechanism in secondary and, more recently, in all of post-primary education in Ireland. (2)

The emphasis on examination success was encouraged through grant aid paid by the State on the basis of pupils' results in annual examinations. According to Hyland:

> The examination syllabi for these examinations (which lasted until 1924) largely determined the curriculum of secondary schools and we have inherited this tradition of an exam-dominated curriculum (3)

Hyland is supported in this view by John Coolahan, who claims that the Act of 1878 "Copper-fastened the grammar-school approach by allotting great marks and rewards to the core subjects of that tradition". (4) Coolahan says that efforts to set up alternative courses in 1902-3 failed to alter the prevailing trend; in fact the academic bias of the second-level curriculum survived into the 1960's;-

> Very little change occurred in later decades. A tradition of non-specialised general education prevailed. In its report on the secondary school curriculum in 1960, the Council of Education identified and endorsed the curriculum as 'a grammar-school type-' humanistic and intellectual in character. (5)

The role of art in such a curriculum is referred to by Ciaran Benson. He refers to the new Intermediate and Leaving Certificate programmes which were introduced following the abolition of the "Results" system in 1924. Benson recognises the broader scope of the new programmes, but adds that the basic pattern of curricular imbalance continued " With art and music on the periphery of secondary schooling" (6)

The narrow focus of the new programmes is discussed in more detail later in this chapter. However, the peripheral role of art is perhaps not so surprising when one considers the political and economic situation in Ireland in the 1920's. The most hotly debated aspect of educational policy in the wake of the War of Independence

and the Civil War was the Irish language. The new government introduced the Primary Certificate examination in 1929. However, Hyland remarks on the prevailing academic focus of the new examination:

> Implicit in the entrance exam requirements was the assumption that only pupils of higher academic ability should be accepted in secondary schools and the syllabi for the various secondary school subjects were developed on this assumption. (7)

It was not until the 1947 publication of the Irish National Teachers Organisation's (I.N.T.O.) Plan for Education that provision for art education was considered in syllabus planning. Coolahan summarises the plan thus:

> Among its wide-ranging proposals for educational reform was one for a more child-centred focus for the school programme and a much wider subject range embracing literary, aesthetic, practical and physical education subjects. (8)

In the plan, the I.N.T.O. criticised existing educational programmes, and among their recommendations was the following outline:

> Education should be a preparation for complete life. It should cater not only for man's economic needs, but also for his individual personal needs - spiritual, mental, physical - and also for his needs as a member of a community and as a citizen of the State. It is concerned primarily with human beings, rather than subjects, and its aim should be the development and enrichment of the whole human personality.(9)

The proposals for a broader and more in-depth assessment of Irish primary and post-primary curricula were, unfortunately, not adopted, the only positive outcome of the plan being introducted of the Council of Education Act for primary education in 1950. The visual arts featured in a report presented to the Minister of Education by the Council in 1954; along with nature study and physical education. The Council of Education called for the inclusion of these subjects on a compulsory basis on second- level curricula, and suggested a more generous scheme of scholarships for pupil participation in secondary education. Coolahan observes that the report included " no fundamental or radical changes" and adds that "Even these modest proposals got little backing, and curricular policy remained much as it had been". (10) Mulcahy's view of the value of the report is equally unenthusiastic - he writes:

> Scarcely was the report published than its views on many of the questions on which it pronounced with authority were ignored in the face of growing demands for profound changes in post-primary education. (11)

Hyland suggests that, by the time the Council had published its second-level report in 1963:

> ....Events had overtaken its recommendations. The overall thrust of the report was conservative; it did not advocate a scheme of free secondary education since it regarded such a proposal as 'utopian' and 'impracticable for financial reasons no less than an educational grounds'. (12)

Certainly the educational policy of, and reforms by, the Irish government lacked the pioneering spirit evident in policies adopted by other countries at this time. Already Britain and Northern Ireland had introduced free second-level education for all, whilst in the United States the free education system was in existence from 1900 onwards. The American educational system was particularly innovative in its provision of a broad curricular framework. Laura H. Chapman describes the American programme of the early 1900's thus:

> ... many schools offered special programmes that would teach a useful trade, provide nonverbal success to children and draw on the ethnic traditions of the immigrants. Vocational skills were developed by manual training in the crafts of wood, metal, leather and clay. Cooking, sewing, weaving and embroidery were introduced as well.(13)

A vocational tradition similar to that described by Chapman existed in Ireland since the passing of the Agricultural and Technical Instruction Act of 1899, but only became a feature of post-primary education in 1930, with the passing of the Vocational Education Act.

Mulcahy describes the legacy of the two distinct traditions in Irish post-primary education which existed in Ireland in the 1960's:-

> In the place of a unified post-primary sector there existed two separate, almost segregated, systems. The one, secondary education, was highly academic, examination-orientated and inflexible in character. Tradition-bound and enjoying a higher status than its

> vocational counterpart, it attracted the generally brighter pupil and controlled the main access routes to the professions, the universities, the civil service and the church. Vocational education, on the other hand, was highly employment orientated in outlook. It took its bearing and starting point from a consideration of social and community needs of a local and national kind and of the interests and aptitudes of a large and somewhat neglected section of the post-primary school-going population. (14)

The lack of breadth and balance in post-primary education during this period is evident - a pupil's future was effectively determined at the end of primary school. S/he either left school altogether, or selected the employment-oriented vocational school, or the academically biased secondary school. The amount of time devoted to study of the Classics in secondary schools limited the amount of time which could be spent on aesthetic and practical subjects. These aspects of the education of the individual - so necessary for the enrichment of the whole human personality - were seriously neglected prior to the 1970's. The implementation of new plans for post-primary education in 1966 did little to alter the peripheral role of art in education, though in that year the first of the comprehensive schools was opened. In 1966 also, the Intermediate and Day Group Certificate courses commenced in vocational, secondary and comprehensive schools. The art, craft and design discipline however, did not benefit significantly from the provision of a comprehensive

curriculum, as Coolahan demonstrates in the following comment:

> Since the late 1960's all types of post-primary school have moved towards the provision of a comprehensive curriculum with a wide range of literary, scientific, practical and aesthetic subjects. The majority of pupils, however, still favour the academic and literary subjects. (15)

Whilst primary education enjoyed the introduction of The Primary School Curriculum in 1971, a simultaneous reappraisal of second-level education did not occur. Although a national curricular framework (which would provide a rationale and guidelines for implementation) was required in second-level as much as in the primary sphere, the government was reticent in this regard. Hyland asserts that:

> The department of education has always been cautious about setting out a rationale or a curricular framework for education at this (second) level. (16)

During the 1970's, therefore, there was little improvement in the status of the visual arts in second-level education. The opposite is true in fact, as may be seen from the conclusions of the National Council for Educational Awards (NCEA) in it's 1976 Report NCEA - Recognition and Awards for Courses in Art and Design

> The standard of art at second level is so mediocre that the results obtained in the subject at the Leaving Certificate examination are no indication of a student's potential (17)

Ciaran Benson reinforced this view in a 1979 report on the arts in education in which he states that "....the standard of visual arts education at post-primary level appears to be very low". (18) Benson argues that, with the 1970's initiatives, including the comprehensive and later community school concepts, there should have been "a much changed and more favourable framework for the proper cultivation of aesthetic education of the pupils' general education". (19) However, while Benson stressed the unique contribution which the arts make to education, he recognised how they were generally perceived and writes:

> Regrettably, there is a particular stereotype of the arts in many Irish schools. The arts are seen as more suitable for girls than for boys, and for the less intelligent rather than for the more intelligent pupils. They are often judged to be more interesting than useful, and their most significant contribution is frequently conceived of as a pleasant means of passing time. (20)

A key factor which influenced curricular policy in Irish schools and which is referred to earlier in this chapter was the promotion of the Irish language. Coolahan comments on the importance of the language in national schools:

> This was an important factor in the narrow subject range which prevailed in Irish national schools up to 1971. The cause of the Irish language continues to be officially espoused and the White Paper of 1980 emphasised the role of the school in

> helping to achieve true bilingualism in Ireland. (21)

The emphasis on the Irish language continued into the 1980's. Notwithstanding this, this decade saw an increase in interest in, and commitment to the arts in education. The promotion of the arts, and of a broader curricular framework in general, was achieved largely through the efforts of the Curriculum and Examinations Board (CEB). The Board was set up in 1984, under the direction of the then Minister for Education, Gemma Hussey, and its initial task was to review primary and post-primary curricula with particular emphasis on the junior cycle at second-level.In Issues and Structures in Education the CEB endorsed the proposal by the Arts Council that the arts should have a central role in education. The Board suggested that:

> Young people should be helped to develop an appreciation of their artistic heritage. The development of the arts can contribute in many ways to the development of the personality. It can also contribute greatly to the production of new products of good design, high quality finish and presentation, and tot he enhancement of the environment. The relevance of the arts to changing patterns of employment and leisure is also significant. (22)

Following the 1984 publication of Issues and Structures in Education, the Board considered the arts in education in 1985. In this later publication, a chapter was devoted to the visual arts.(23) Here, the Board highlighted the neglect of the visual arts at primary and post-primary levels and identified a lack of awareness

among teachers, parents and pupils of the intrinsic and practical advantages of a rigorous visual arts education. A detailed examination of the CEB's review of visual arts education is presented in Chapter Two, below, but certainly this 1985 discussion paper went some way towards developing more favourable attitudes towards this discipline. The CEB reported on the arts again in 1987, restating the aims of arts education thus;-

* To develop a love of, interest in, and value for the arts.
* To achieve a balance between artistic education (making art) and aesthetic education (receiving art)
* To acquaint the student with the traditions of art. (24)

Following a change of government in 1987, the CEB was dissolved and replaced by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). The new council set out to build upon the work of the CEB. Tony Crooks explains that:

> The terms of reference of the Council are broad and cover matters relating to both primary and second-level curriculum. In particular the Minister asked the Council to oversee the completion of the review of the primary school curriculum and to revise the Junior cycle syllabi for the new Junior Certificate Examination. (25)

The effort of the CEB to promote, amongst other areas, the arts, were not ignored, as Crooks points out when he adds "Although there are significant differences between the interim Board and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, there is also much continuity." (26) The recommendations of the interim CEB regarding a new unified assessment system for Junior Cycle to replace the Intermediate and Group Certificate examinations were therefore taken up so that in September 1989, the Junior Certificate was formally launched.

The implications of this new examination for the art, craft and design discipline were quite substantial. Kieran Meagher states that:

> The syllabus framework for art, craft and design provides schools with an opportunity to design appropriate courses based on the essential characteristics of the subject and relying on localised interests and needs. (27)

Previously, the subject was known as 'Art', a title which fails to take into account the inter-dependent nature of art, craft and design. The Junior Certificate provided clear aims and objectives for Art, Craft and Design - the Intermediate and Group Certificate syllabi, however, had omitted any mention of aims or objectives whatsoever, This was noted by Mulcahy some years earlier when he said:

> Quite a number of Intermediate Certificate and Leaving Certificate subjects for which a syllabus is offered in the *Rules* are not

> accompanied by any statement of aims whatever. This is true of science (syllabus A), home economics, art and commerce at Intermediate Certificate level. (28)

The previous syllabus for art was limited, and offered only very brief guidlines for teachers of art: the suggested preparation for the Imaginative Composition paper consisted of a mere sentence, while in the Still Life section, the emphasis was on the practicalities of postage, rather than aesthetic considerations. Under the heading 'Still Life' in Rialacha agus Clar was the following:

> Candidates will be required to draw or paint a group. The work may be in any suitable medium provided that the drawings or paintings can be packed and examined without smudging or sticking together. The group may be treated naturalistically, or, as the basis for a composition. (29)

The Intermediate and Group Certificate programmes suffered from the examination-orientated system which failed to appreciate the learning process involved, and emphasised the end product, rather than the pupil's educational progression and development through Art, Craft and Design.

The new Junior Certificate syllabus in Art, Craft and Design is concerned with working methods in the three disciplines and encourages an integrated approach through the use of themes. Meagher says that:

> Art, craft and Design education is seen in the new syllabus as an important factor in the development of 'Full-intelligence' where the

> practice and understanding of the subject are fundamental ways of organising and understanding the world, and call upon profound qualities of discipline and insight. (30)

The Art, Craft and Design syllabus for Junior Certificate deserves further discussion and in Chapter Two, of the present research study, the rationale and underlying philosophy of the new programme is more thoroughly examined. It is more appropriate in this chapter to continue to investigate general educational policy up to the present day.

Parallels may be drawn between the educational aims of the NCCA in its 1989 Guide to the Junior Certificate and the recommendations (forty-five years earlier) of the INTO in their 1947 publication Plan for Education.(31) The NCCA stated the aim of education in a similiar way in 1989:

> The general aim of education is to contribute towards the development of all aspects of the individual, including aesthetic, creative, critical, cultural, emotional, intellectual, moral, physical, political, social and spiritual development, for personal and family life, for working life, for living in the community and for leisure. (32)

Unlike the 1947 recommendations, the proposals of the NCCA were acted upon so that seven new syllabi for Junior Certificate were introduced in Irish port-primary schools in September 1989. Syllabi in a further range of subjects including woodwork, mechanical drawing, music,

home economics and shorthand and typing were to be phased in by September 1992. The initial seven syllabi in art, craft and design, business studies, english, geography, history and Irish and science contained a clear statement of aims and objectives, a description of syllabus structure and content, and a detailed set of assessment objectives with levels at which each course was offered. The underlying principles of the Junior Certificate were presented in a Guidelines for Teachers publication, which identified breadth and balance, relevance and quality of curricula as key issues. It was hoped that the new curriculum would "provide a wide range of educational experiences within a supportive and formative environment".(33)

Certainly the Junior Certificate programme appeared to herald a new and re-vitalised era in Irish educational policy, with wide-ranging and relevent curricula content. However, as Iseult Mc Carthy points out:

> Intimations of educational change typically evoke a variety of responses ranging from the enthusiastic and supportive, to the negative and reactionary. (34)

For many teachers it provided an opportunity to look afresh at their subjects, whilst pupils benefited from the continuity and progression which feature in the programme.

Whilst it is encouraging to see that the then Minister for Education, Mary O'Rourke, favoured syllabus development, there was concern regarding the rapidity of change, particularly as proposals for implementation left little time for in-service training. At a branch meeting of the Teacher's Uion of Ireland (TUI) an example of such concern was expressed in September 1991 when a motion condemning the failure of the Department of Education to issue sample papers, and regretting the Department's "lack of professionalism" was adopted. (35)

The mixed reactions to the introduction of the Junior Certificate programme were accompanied by requests for reform at senior-cycle level also, so as to ensure continuity and coherence throughout second-level education. The Green Paper of 1992 Education for a Changing World stated that:

> One of the major objectives of educational policy is to encourage and facilitate as many students as possible to continue in full-time education after the end of the compulsory period. (36)

It was noted, however, that for many students the Leaving Certificate examination was unsuitable and irrelevant. This criticism applied to low-achieving pupils in particular. In seeking to address this problem, the NCCA proposed the introduction of a less academically-orientated two-year senior-cycle programme, which would run in tandem with the Leaving Certificate programme. The new programme would incorporate and extend the

existing Vocational Preparation Training course (VPT). Other proposed options at senior cycle included provision of a three-year senior cycle with flexibility regarding core subject areas and possibly embodying a transition year.

In a review of the Green Paper, Edward Walsh argued that any re-organisation of Irish educational policy must address the needs of the open economy which Ireland had become. Walsh claims that "Central resources and energies will be focused on the Leaving Certificate", (37) and that what would be taught in Irish schools must have regard for the needs of Irish society as a whole. Walsh only briefly mentions the arts:

> Future prosperity, job creation, social stability and, indeed, support for the arts depend upon our sustained ability to produce and sell products and services that others wish to purchase. It is that simple. In the past we have relied heavily on imported multinational know-how to design our products and provide international markets. In future we must be more self-sufficient. (38)

What Walsh, and indeed the Green Paper, tend to overlook is the necessity of visual arts education, if Irish pupils are to learn to design products that others wish to purchase. The range of options proposed earlier for senior-cycle overlooks the role of art and design and relies solely on increases in technological, enterprise and science subjects to address the requirements of Irish society. Walsh observes that:

> However, Irish education has not been science or enterprise-orientated, or outward looking, and basic subjects such as physics and chemistry do not even feature amongst the top ten Leaving Certificate subjects. (39)

Whilst the importance of such subjects should not be undermined, the original plans for breadth and balance in education must also be attended to. The Green Paper advocated the development of skills which directly related to Art, Craft and Design education "Problem-solving, enterprise, initiative and creativity". (40) Despite this, reference to visual education ran to only one sentence: "Similarly, it is desirable that students are exposed to subjects such as art and music, that would develop their expressive abilities" (41)

If, as Walsh described, the Green Paper heralded "the start of a new era", (42) it was not one which promoted visual arts education. A feature of the Paper, in fact, is its lack of reference to this discipline, whether for its own intrinsic value, or as a link or contributor to other disciplines.

CONCLUSION

This chapter provides an outline of general educational policy in Ireland from the passing of the Intermediate Education (Ireland) Act in 1878 to the present day. It is evident that the public examinations system, established over a century ago, has continued to dominate second-level curricula in Irish schools. Consideration for the Art, Craft and Design discipline

has been lacking, despite efforts by the Curriculum and Examinations Board, the Arts Council and other interested bodies to promote the subject. There is reason to believe that the academic bias which has been a feature of second-level programmes in Ireland has tended to marginalise all art disciplines. Even in recent times, arguments for an appreciation of the arts in Irish schools have failed to discourage unfavourable attitudes to arts education.

There appears to be a tendency in Irish educational policy to cater only for limited aspects of the pupils' development, ignoring the vital aesthetic, creative, cultural, emotional and intellectual aspects of that development, which can be nurtured through art education. The next chapter aims to expend on the contributions of art education, and particularly on the value of a visual arts education in second-level curricula.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER I

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CHAPTER II

RATIONALE FOR ART EDUCATION:

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The review of general education in Ireland above gives some indication of the peripheral role played by Art, Craft and Design in Irish curricula to date. This chapter aims to provide a rationale for the arts in education based on literature from British, American and Irish sources.

Before looking at the role and status of art education in Irish schools, it is interesting to look, first, at some of the arguments put forward by art educationalists, identifying the valuable contributions made by this discipline. As is evident in Chapter One the arts are poorly provided for in Irish curricula and it is a matter of urgency that, "more positive attitudes towards the arts are developed by those engaged in the forming of educational policy"(1)

A study of the British and American literature on art education suggests that these countries face similiar difficulties with regard to educational provision for the arts. There is general consensus that, as Laura Chapman states "school art programs facilitate the child's quest

for personal fulfilment" (2) yet, despite this, unfavourable attitudes towards art education continue to persist.

This chapter proposes to explore the role of art education with regard to communication, intelligence, culture and disadvantage. The evidence bears out Howard Gardner's conviction that the aesthetic involves an attempt to communicate,(3) while equally strong arguments emerge for the cognitive and cultural contributions of art education. Tony Crooks points out that "the starting-point of every educational response must be the young people themselves, their needs, their potential, their energy",(4) and in this context, the ways in which art education can answer the needs of disadvantaged pupils are examined. The effectiveness of the visual arts in particular is considered insofar as they contribute to the intellectual, personal, social and aesthetic development of the individual. It is demonstrated also below that the cultural health of a nation relies to a great degree on the quality and extent of visual arts education in school programmes.

The neglect of the visual arts, and indeed the arts in general is a cause for concern, especially in the light of the rationale for arts education presented below. As long as resources for arts education are inadequate, and the notion that the arts are merely

"fads" or "frills" prevails, the full potential of art education will not be realised.

THE ARTS IN EDUCATION

The arts "should have a secure, unchallenged and central place in the curriculum" (5) - this is the view of John Eggleston who supports his statement by adding that "the arts, after all, offer experience in the essential qualities of developed humanity truth, beauty, integrity, taste, style and sensitivity" (6) For Eggleston, there should be no doubt about the place of the arts in the curriculum, and the life - enriching qualities of the arts which he refers to, are endorsed by the Curriculum and Examinations Board (CEB), in the 1986 publication In Our Schools. The CEB claims that "schools must develop the *creative and aesthetic* experience of the arts in students not only to help their own personal development and enrichment, but also to enrich the quality of life generally". (7) The contribution of the arts to the meaningful development of the individual is outlined in more specific terms by George W. Hardiman and Theodore Zernich. Along with "the enhancement of psychological growth, the cultivation of creativity, improved personal adjustment, preparation for making a living" (8), Hardiman and Zernich focus on other particularly valuable aspects of the visual arts such as:

> .....the value of the drawing for normal neurological development; the usefulness of art in diagnosing and treating handicapped or emotionally

> disturbed children; the necessity of art in the achievement of a balance between the functions of the left and right brain hemispheres; and the usefulness of art in programs of medical rehabilitation and in geriatrics. In addition, there are the mystical and transcendental values that are often claimed for art. (9)

The study of art is evidently a wholly worthwhile activity, contributing to a wide range of human needs. The notion of art as an educational "frill" is surely erroneous in the light of the mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual realms of human development which it promotes. Robin Morris believes that "what links us all is the value we place on the aesthetic dimension of human experience and the way in which the life of feeling is inextricably bound up and expressed through the creation and reception of works of art".(10) Nonetheless, the aesthetic dimension which Morris refers to seems to be disregarded in educational planning. If artistic action is as Eisner suggests "the product of a complex form of learning and is not an automatic consequence of maturation",(11) then art education ought to be a consciously planned and central element of school programmes. However, Morris is concerned that the aesthetic dimension of human experience is often overlooked in formal education, and feels that the "life of feeling" embodied in art education is not reflected in the place of the discipline in school curricula.(12)

The Role and Status of Art Education - Ireland

The arts in education is the topic of earlier research by Ciaran Benson on behalf of the Arts Council. Like Morris, Benson questions school systems with regard to their provision for the arts, and observes that " school systems can only achieve limited goals" at certain stages in the development of "wider political, economic, social and moral elements of the society at large" (13). Benson claims that, at such times "the place occupied by artistic subjects in the scale of priorities may not be high" (14). Benson's 1979 report on the arts in education presents a rather bleak picture of the status of the arts in Irish education, a reflection, perhaps, of the academic emphasis which has been a feature of Irish educational programmes to date. Mulcahy, writing in 1981, is equally aware that "academic education and qualifications are still a major attraction for parents and employers",(15) and wonders whether "adequate exposure can be given to the development of the skills of expression and appreciation in the arts through the study of literature alone".(16) John Coolahan refers to "the widespread concern about second-level curricula" (17) in his study of Irish education published in 1981 "It is felt", says Coolahan " that the arts are being seriously neglected in the education system" (18) The Curriculum and Examinations Board believes that the arts should have a central role in Irish education, and the Board provides a rationale for this belief in its 1984 publication,

Issues and Structures in Education. According to the CEB, an appreciation of artistic heritage should be encouraged in young people ; the Board also says that;

> .....development of arts can contribute in many ways to the development of the personality. It can also contribute greatly to the production of new products of good design, high quality finish and presentation, and to the enhancement of the environment. The relevance of the arts to changing patterns of employment and leisure is also significant. (19)

Clearly, the CEB values the affective development which education in the arts can promote in young people. An appreciation of the environment, through visual awareness; and the development of design and problem-solving skills may be fostered through an arts education, and the Board is concerned also with the vocational relevance of this area of study. A later publication by the Board in 1985 identified both intrinsic and extrinsic arguments for arts education, providing specific rationales for each art form. The Board recommend "an integrated approach to the arts in the curriculum and the provision of adequate facilities to enable the arts to fulfil their educational role".(20) The Board believes that the arts have a unique role in education, and explains that;

> ... the making and receiving of art in an educational context calls for human processes which, of their nature, are not required in other curricular areas such as the sciences, languages or business studies. (21)

The special value of arts education is espoused also by Martin Drury, who recognises "that many curriculur areas are capable of inviting and promoting creative thinking," but cites his "very particular commitment to the arts, and a particular conviction that the arts must be at the core of a young person's education" (22). Drury claims that "artistic education requires the student to engage personally with the materials of the art form and with their qualitative possibilities". (23)

The arts, therefore, contribute as much to a person's education as any other curriculur area, and indeed the utilitarian and developmental aspects of art education may provide more opportunities for meaningful growth than other subject areas. Yet the educational potential of the arts has not been realised. A 1989 report on the arts in education (24) by the Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO) exemplifies the prevailing and dominating attitudes towards artistic learning in Ireland. The writers of the report state that "subjects like mathematics, science, languages and history are thought of as core subjects", providing "essential knowledge and skills, while the arts are seen merely as providing a cultural rounding off..."(25). The 1992 Green Paper, Education for a Changing World, focused attention on the technological and vocational aspects of the curriculum, with only scant reference to the arts in education. Anne Clune claims that "the trend world-wide

appeared to be a renewed emphasis on the humanities and social sciences" and that therefore "Ireland, in modelling itself on the English/Welsh system and in emphasising technology and vocational training as the Green Paper does" (26) is out of line with prevailing trends. It may be worthwhile at this point to examine some of the literature on arts education in British and American schools. If Ireland, as Clune suggests, models itself on educational systems used by other nations, then a broader educational review may provide an understanding of the reasons for the narrow role and status of arts education, in Ireland to date.

The Role and Status of Arts Education in British and American Schools

"Creativity", says Peter Green, "is so often found only in the art room or weekly music lesson" (27). Green's concern for the peripheral status of the arts in British curricula is echoed by Peter Abbs, who argues that neglect of the arts in education is related to the way in which the arts are perceived. Abbs claims that the self-expressive aspects of an arts education have come " to falsely characterize the quintessential purpose of the aesthetic curriculum". (28) While Abbs believes that there is value in the expressive, and often therapeutic contributions of an arts education, he believes that other, more intrinsically valuable aspects of art education are not consciously developed. For

Abbs, the benefits derived from art education extend beyond the psychological domain:

> Good art is made out of a complex engagement, a reciprocal play between self and technique, between impulse and medium, between feeling and tradition. (29)

Other art educationalists share Abb's view that artistic endeavours involve many complex learning activities. Rod Taylor states that the expressive nature of art is complemented "by developing the more reflective and contemplative aspects of the subject and by helping pupils to become more critically aware" (30). Taylor is concerned with government papers which "made only passing and fairly dismissive reference to the place of the arts subjects in the curriculum" and adds that falling rolls "appeared to be having a disproportionately damaging effect on arts departments".(31) Taylor observes that despite the significant contribution of the arts to many aspects of human development, there was a constant need to justify the existence of arts education, as though it were only performing a minor function.

The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's report on The Arts in Schools referred to the minor role of the arts in education, four years prior to Taylor's observations. The report states that "the arts have an essential place in the balanced education of our children and young people"(32) and, like Taylor, makes reference to government papers and reports from Secretaries of State,

which give little attention to the place of the arts on the school curriculum. One report from HMI cites cuts in expenditure as specifically having "adverse effects on existing provision for the arts" (33). The rationale for arts education presented by the Foundation, is, in my view, one of the most convincing and appealing. The writers argue that;

> ....Society needs and values more than academic abilities. Children and young people have much more to offer. The arts exemplify some of these other capacities - of intuition, creativity, sensibility and practical skills. We maintain that an education in these is quite as important for *all* children as an education of the more academic kind and that *not* to have this is to stunt and distort their growth as intelligent, feeling and capable individuals. (34)

One might assume that the writers of The Arts in Schools had been influenced by John Dewey's educational theories. Dewey's view of American education during the first half of this century can still apply today: he refers to "our present education which is highly specialized, one-sided and narrow".(35) Dewey claimed that education appealed "for the most part simply to the intellectual aspect of our natures, our desire to learn, to accumulate information" and "not to our impluses and tendencies to make, to do, to create, to produce, whether in the form of utility or of art". (36) Dewey proposed a break with traditional education, which he felt was lacking in "the materials, the tools with which the child

may construct, create, and actively inquire".(37) Such activities were regarded as "fads" and "frills" and had "not even a definitely recognized place in education" (38)

Elliot Eisner also advocates a departure from the traditional type of art education. He says that "The visual arts curriculum at both the elementary and the secondary levels is highly saturated with activities that involve youngsters in the making of art forms. This traditional orientation to the art curriculum has been by far the most predominant one in American schools" (39) Eisner argues for "the productive domain - the making of art forms having an aesthetic and expressive quality" and for "the critical and historical domains as well" (40) According to Eisner ;

> ...the most valuable contribution that art can make to human experience is that which is directly related to a particular characteristic. What art has to contribute to the education of the human is precisely what other fields cannot contribute. (41)

The status of art education in American schools is poor in Eisner's view, and "is not now a central aspect of school programs" (42) Hardiman and Zernich support this view and add that "the schools are not especially interested in the uniquely valuable commodities we call works of art; they are interested in the educational progress of their students" (43). There is more than a

hint of irony in the dichotomy which Hardiman and Zernich draw between art education on the one hand, and educational progress on the other. The writers regard the efforts of the art teacher as ineffectual to some extent, and when "The school authorities examine the products created by the students", Hardiman and Zernich state that "They conclude that the students are not learning the Three R's from their experiences with paint, paper, and clay". (44)

Laura Chapman claims that in American schools:

> There are relatively few opportunities for young people to express how his or her life feels, to discover what its special meanings are, or to comprehend why it is like no other person's life. (45)

Chapman argues that art education "can acquaint children with more subtle forms of feeling and more precise images of the human spirit than they are likely to discover on their own"(46) If the purpose of a basic education is, as Manuel Barken states "to achieve some grasp of the full scope of human experience", (47) then Chapman's argument for art education is reinforced. Indeed, the rationales presented by the American educationalists reviewed so far demonstrate just how fundamental and vital an art education is for the individual. Ex-American Presidents Lyndon B. Johnson and Gerald R. Ford endorsed the arts, Ford spoke of the "millions of Americans who look to the arts for inspiration,

communication and the opportunity for creative self-expression". (48) Yet the arts continue to be neglected in educational programmes, in America and other nations, despite the repeatedly stated valuable contributions they make to the meaningful development of the individual.

Perhaps it is appropriate at this stage to examine more closely the ways in which an arts education can enrich aspects of human development. The CEB refers to intrinsic and extrinsic arguments for art education, and, with these definitions in mind, the following sub-headings have been selected for consideration;

Art Education and Communication
Art Education and Intelligence
Art Education and Culture
Art Education and Disadvantage

The emphasis in each section is on the visual arts, although much of the rationale could apply to arts education in general.

Art Education and Communication

> Art provides an avenue for awareness and understanding of the world and, as the universal language, it is a powerful means of communication (49)

Arnel Pattemore justifies art education in many ways, one of which is its use as a means of communication. He refers to its potential for "mass communication and media and social comment" (50) Pattemore states that communication is promoted by the nature of the art discipline, where pupils work with one another, and

consequently learn how to understand and appreciate each other. The National Endowment for the Arts say that young people missing out on arts education "learn neither how to communicate their thoughts and dreams not how to interpret the communication of the thoughts and dreams of others".(51) Unique forms of knowing and understanding are provided by paintings, sculpture and other visual media; images predate language and probably were man's earliest method of communication. As such, the visual arts are responsible for illuminating "significant and unique aspects of human experience", according to Barkan, who adds that consequently "they provide an essential dimension of basic education". (51)

John Berger also believes in the unique communicative possibilities of the visual arts. He says that:

> No other kind of relic or text from the past can offer such a direct testimony about the world which surrounded other people at other times. In this respect images are more precise and richer than literature. (53)

Berger cites examples of works of art which convey information on status, wealth, social and political issues to the viewer - the painting of "The Ambassadors" (1533) by Hans Holbein is one, where the sitters are posed amongst the most up-to-date inventions of the day, their wealth displayed by the rich selection of silk, marble, metal and velvet; Berger claims that "each time

what the eye perceives is already translated, within the painting itself, into the language of tactile sensation" (54). For Berger, the visual arts provide modes for defining not only personal experience "but also the essential historical experience of our relation to the past" (55). Berger frequently refers to the inadequacy of words when compared to the language of images, precisely because "seeing comes before words" (56).

Berger does not deny the potency of language as a means of communication, rather he emphasises the particular value of a visual format as a fundamental means of conveying information. The CEB is equally emphatic that communicative systems other than verbal or numerical modes do exist and must be recognized and valued. The Board claims however that "The symbol systems which dominate Irish education are verbal and numerical".(57) According to the Board:

> The apprehension, formulation and communication of meaning requires the use of symbols. The creation and sharing of meaning is a necessary condition for personal and social development, (58)

The Board observes that the arts are central among the other symbol systems which exist, and which are necessary for the individual to become a fully productive member of society. However, the Irish emphasis on verbal and numerical communication systems tends to exclude the use of aesthetic symbols in second-level schooling.

Peter Fuller refers to the immediacy of the aesthetic experience beginning "in the sense-responses of each individual" but emphasises its communicative potential which radiates out beyond the individual "to involve a community's most compelling symbols-what I would call its 'shared symbolic order'"(59). Aesthetic symbols have served fundamental human needs to know and understand since prehistoric times - images from sites such as Lascaux have provided information on the interests and lifestyles of prehistoric communities. If our society is to be aesthetically healthy, there is a need to recognise the significant contribution of aesthetic modes of expression, and this contribution can be realised most effectively through educational programmes. As Laura Chapman states " in our society the school is the only institution officially responsible for educating children in art,"(60) and if art education is neglected in the schools, it is unlikely that young people will ever have the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the use and interpretation of visual symbols. The visual arts, in particular, promote communication in two specific ways: through the human interaction which is a feature of artistic activities, and through the use of a visual language which enables the student to perceive and comprehend the experiences of people from other areas, and from varying cultures.

The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation argues that our capacity to communicate is part of the "uniqueness of human existence", (61) and that human rationality depends upon "various forms of thinking, communication and action". (62) The Foundation says "If individuals fail to enter into any of these 'communities of discourse', the development of their rationality will be, to that extent, lop-sided".(63) It is difficult, in the light of this comment, to rationalise the peripheral role of art in education, and to understand how it can be offered only as "an option". It is worthwhile at this point to examine some of the contributions which art education makes to human rationality.

Art education and Intelligence

Perhaps it is the very *practical* nature of art which fuels the belief that it is exclusively *practical.* It seems that the attitude which underpins curriculum planning disregards, or fails to recognize, the intellectual dimension of art education. Such an attitude was obvious to Ciaran Benson in 1979, when he wrote that "Many schools regard art as a subject which is more suitable for the less intelligent than for the more intelligent pupils". (64) Benson acknowledges the fact that art can contribute to the education and development of slow-learning pupils. However, he points out that "it can make a similarly important contribution to the education of the brighter pupil". (65) The 1989 report

of the Education Committee (INTO) reinforces Benson's argument in the following statement:

> The contribution of the arts can be as important to intellectual development as tot he development of feeling and of sensory and manual skills. They also, if accorded with proper place, lead to the development of aesthetic judgement in parallel with intellectual development and manual skills" (66).

The intellectual development inherent in the arts, and particularly, the visual arts, is a key justification which Peter Abbs puts forward for art education. Abbs defines "Aesthetic" which "derives from the Greek word "aisthetika" meaning "things perceptible through the senses".(67) The verb stem "aisthe" means " to feel, to apprehend through the senses", Abbs states that the aesthetic mode therefore, is concerned with "perception, sensing, apprehending, feeling". (68) Abbs writes that aesthetic response is cognitive in nature, providing a distinct category of understanding and sensuous mode of knowing which is essential for the life and development of consciousness". (69)

The cognitive aspect of aesthetic education occurs therefore through the senses which in turn inform and develop intelligence. Elliot Eisner argues that it is through the cultivation of the sensory system that the individual becomes acquainted with symbols and so with

ways of perceiving and imagining. (70) The cognitive value of art education is consequently related to a range of mental processes including imagery, memory, perception and problem solving and does not rely solely on the acquisition and storage of knowledge. Howard Gardner acknowledges the cognitive value of art education and listed it among a total of six forms of intelligence which are; linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinaesthetic and personal. (71) Gardner is concerned that school systems have a narrow view of what counts as human intellect, and believes that the emphasis on logical-mathematical intelligence tends to ignore the contribution of other modes of knowing. The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation also refers to the range of modes of intelligence and states "that human rationality comprises a number of different *forms* or *modes* of understanding and communication through which we interpret and make sense of ourselves, of others and of the world itself" (75). The Foundation thinks that an education in the arts is "a matter of logical necessity" and is "absolutely desirable because of the values which these forms of thought and action exemplify". (73)

Art educationalists frequently point out that the contribution which art education makes to human development can be made by no other discipline and in this respect the "logical necessity" of art education becomes apparent. If certain elements of intelligence

such as perception, reasoning and apprehending are unique to art education then the arts should be regarded as a key area of the curriculum. Eisner argues for the uniqueness of the visual arts in this context: he states that:

> ....while we recognized the fact that art activities can be used to achieve a wide variety of purposes - mental health, vocational training, the development of general creative abilities, concrete examples of ideas and artifacts for social studies - we considered the qualities that *only* the visual arts can provide to be its prized contribution to the education of children (74)

A similar argument for the visual arts is noted by Vincent Lanier in "Art and the Disadvantaged":

> ...it can be shown that the most consummately adequate model of proper education in all subjects is the model of the well-run art classroom: where each one's talents are relevant; where every child's products are valued equally insofar as they emanate from equally worthy children; where children are not pitched competitively against each other, nor denigrated or honoured for "higher achievements"; where each proceeds in accordance with his own unique tempo of development; and where at any given moment the child moves on to tasks for which he is ready, as defined by his own prior work and achievements. (75)

Lanier is quoting from a report by Judith Murphy and Ronald Gross on "The Arts and the Poor" (1968) and is more than a little sceptical about what others refer to as the "central function" of the arts in curricula.

Lanier *is* dissatisfied however with art education which he feels "has been unimaginative in generating concepts of curricula to confront today's problems".(76) The arguments which Lanier puts forward for art education in the context of disadvantage are interesting, and are returned to later in this chapter, and certainly he does not deny the cognitive value of aesthetic education. Lanier argues for a reformulation of curricula so that "cognitive and, in particular, perceptual competencies" (77) are developed through art education.

An aesthetic awareness demands knowledge and skill, an ability to be acquainted with imagery and symbols, and through this to perceive meaning and understanding. This does not exclude the contributions of other subject areas which enrich school programmes, rather it seeks to question the narrow notion of intelligence which is a feature of school curricula. Collaboration between art education and non-art subjects is one of the arguments which Stewart Kranz and Jospeh Deley put forward for "it is through art that basic subjects and skills, the so-called 'three R's', may be more readily and effectively taught". (78)

A good art education can enable individuals to function as problem solvers, self learners and independent thinkers because;

> Good art is made out of a complex engagement, a reciprocal play between

> self and technique, between impulse and medium, between feeling and tradition. (79)

The visual arts: in particular provide opportunities for the student to devise working methods which consider a variety of solutions to a problem. The CEB states that "The visual arts differ from many other school subjects in that they do not seek to provide ready-made answers, but to equip students with ways of working".(80) In this manner, the visual arts encourage cognitive development, as students are actively involved in perceiving, creating and understanding, using visual media and tools, and are enabled to manage their own learning. The visual arts teacher may control and direct learning, while at the same time permitting and encouraging students to make their own choices. Kieran Meagher believes that cognition is a fundamental characteristic of a visual arts education. He states that:

> ...the distinctive contribution which art education makes to the curriculum is based on the means by which it helps to develop in students an informed, inquiring and curious attitude about the world, how we perceive it, and how it can be assimilated visually. (81)

For Dewey the aesthetic experience was the "culmination of nature; an intelligent action integrating means and ends" and also the "greatest intellectual achievement in the history of mankind". (82) The value of art education is evident, yet Meagher observes "that the

subject 'Art' has suffered more than any other popular school subject, from inaccurate interpretations of its nature and role in education". (83) Art must be treated, at least with as much respect as other subject areas in the sense that it offers, as much as other disciplines, experience which are essential for human development. Eggleston claims that teachers, students and the educational authorities must negotiate regularly in order to "maintain the place of the arts in the curriculum" (84) while the CEB state that the neglect of art education in the school experience of most young Irish people is educationally indefensible.(85) One of the ways in which art education is most easily justified is in the cultural context and the contributions made by the subject in this area are examined below.

Art Education and Culture

"Is there a basic minimum artistic literacy or competence that all pupils should have as participants in a national culture"?(86) Michael Golby poses this question to art educators, though a search of the literature indicates that this debate extends well beyond art educators specifically. The former American President Lyndon B. Johnson referred to the "nation's most precious heritage"(87) without which, people would perish. Martin Drury observes that in Ireland there is "excessive separation between the arts and society" which he calls "cultural fragmentation".(89) For Mulcahy, a

nation's cultural health owes much to the education system - he writes:

> There is a long tradition of dissatisfaction with the attention given to cultural education of this kind in Irish secondary and post-primary education but some provision is made. (89)

According to Mulcahy, "participation rates in the two exclusively art or cultural subjects as they are called, namely music and art, are extremely low". (90) Along with the practical and vocational demands of living, there are recreational or cultural demands, and it is these that the arts have met most successfully (91).

Exactly what is to be gained by developing our cultural awareness? The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation says that;

> ...no proper understanding of the contemporary world and of our society is possible without having some knowledge and understanding of the roots of the traditions and the institutions which we inherit. Our culture stands on the shoulders of all that has gone before. For this reason, we can only fully appreciate the meaning of the present, and grasp the possibilities of the future by hooking onto the frameworks of the past" (92)

We need to familiarise ourselves with our traditions in order to understand ourselves and to make progress. The CEB claims that Ireland "is particularly proud of its literary reputation, but tradition is a living force and must be nurtured by education". (93) The Board points

out the important role which our cultural resources have to play "in building a sense of worth and confidence as a nation" (95). We have a rich cultural heritage in Ireland, and it is through education that a sense of continuity with tradition can best be fulfilled. Our artistic and musical heritage has a role to play in popular culture - in this regard, schooling effectively promotes the fusion and development of old and new. A cultural education has not, however, been a consciously planned element of curricula in the past, as Benson explains:

> ...the neglect of the arts in Irish education has meant that whole generations have lost the opportunity both of learning about their own artistic history and of acquiring the skills necessary to build upon it (95)

One would imagine that since Benson's report in 1979, a more enlightened approach to cultural education would have emerged, yet in 1991 Martin Drury spoke of the need for a renewal of "on the one hand, 'schooling' and on the other 'the arts'". (96)

Dewey argues that culture is the "democratic password" which links the school to the life of the child. Dewey believed that;

> Unless culture be a superficial polish, a veneering of mahogany over common wood, it surely is this, the growth of the imagination in flexibility, in scope, and in sympathy, till the life which the

> individual lives is informed with the life of nature and society". (97)

For Dewey, instruction in school was incomplete unless it incorporated the life beyond the classroom. Taylor emphasises the visual arts as a means of introducing different religions and cultures into the classroom and writes that:

> Living in a multi-cultural society as we do today, art education can have an important role to play in that it can be a vital means whereby pupils can, at least, gain a glimpse into the traditions and way of another person, the process maybe leading to an increase in understanding, sympathy and respect (98).

Taylor adds that culture is equally beneficial to all pupils "by helping them to see that they are part of a larger diverse community". (99) Abbs also identifies the visual arts as belonging "to a cultural continuum and a public world; it simultaneously includes and transcends the creative play of the growing child".(100) The visual arts are, for Eisner, " a unique aspect of human culture and experience" (101), while Ellen Dissanayake points out that the visual arts have been regarded as a central and necessary feature of life by societies and cultures throughout the world since prehistoric times,(102) thus emphasising the cultural continuum provided by a visual arts education. Dissanayake proposes "that the arts must have survival value", as "people everywhere value the arts and take the trouble to express themselves aesthetically" (103). It is through

this visual expression of cultures and societies other than their own, that pupils can familiarise themselves with the customs and interests of people from the past and present. Dissanyake believes that visual expression "contributes to human evolutionary fitness" (104) and this is demonstrated by the manner in which our own lives are enriched by an awareness of our own culture, and the cultures of others.

A visual arts education can promote individual expression and develop interest in diverse cultures - whether we examine Gauguin's Tahaitian scenes, Vermeer's interiors, or Lautrec's Moulin Rouge dancers, we are facilitated to "travel" through space and time as we visually appreciate and understand the concerns and lifestyles of other cultures. If, through visual artefacts, we learn something of the human quest for individual and group identity, or are introduced to important life events from other times and places, we may use this information to enrich, and find meaning in our own lives. Chapman puts forward a similar viewpoint when she writes:

> When children understand *why* people create objects and images, then they can see their environment not just as a physical entity but as a large scale expression of human needs (105)

The extrinsic arguments which justify the sustaining of culture should not be overlooked, if only because of their commercial appeal. One of the chief attractions

for those visiting Ireland is the cultural wealth which we possess. The CEB points out this fact, and states that "Such a culture can only be sustained and developed if careful attention is paid to arts education", (106) There are the recreational and pleasurable aspects of culture to consider also, as the Board notes, "the arts promote the engagement by people in activities that are at once enjoyable and educational".(107) Attention should be paid also to the industry which is created because of our rich heritage - the CEB refers to the small industry which employs hundreds of people; art teachers, graphic designers and "those employed in libraries, museums and galleries".(108)

It is evident that education in the arts makes a significant contribution to the survival and development of culture. In a sense, art education may be viewed as a cultural resource through which traditions and aesthetic values are nurtured and maintained. It is therefore a matter of urgency that the role of art education be reconsidered in school curricula. The ways in which the discipline can address some of the needs of disadvantaged pupils are examined in the following section.

Art Education and Disadvantage

A major premise of the present research study is founded on the belief that art education is valuable in any school context, however, my conviction is that art

education is particularly worthwhile in a disadvantaged area. A number of art educationalists have emphasised this feature of the discipline.

Lanier claims that:

> ...art curricula must be meaningful and relevant to pupils - to disadvantaged pupils and, by extension, to all pupils. These new ideas must engage the 'guts and hopes' of youngsters and through these excitements provoke intellectual effort and growth. (109)

Eisner maintains that "real deprivation occurs to students who are denied the opportunity in the curriculum to learn these systems of thought which would allow them to create other forms of meaning in their lives".(110) Foy recognises the cognitive value of art education, and is impressed by the way in which art, craft and design processes cater for the developmental needs of pupils, and particularly those from deprived environments. She states that in the art, craft and design syllabus "there is a sensitivity to ability, developmental stages, and previous experience. The starting points are the students" direct experience, real or imagined, of the natural, social and man-made environment".(111) Foy adds that disadvantaged pupils are "real people who need educational nourishment and a sense of achievement and competence, like every other student", (112) and refers to the hopes and talents of these young people which are "just waiting to be discovered and developed" (113).

Kranz and Deley also suggest that art education has specific value for disadvantaged pupils. They write:

> It is the premise of the authors that well structured elementary art instruction programs constitute a viable answer to the question of how to reverse the present trend toward ever increasing educational deprivation in our cities, and should be accorded a central place .... (114)

For Kranz and Deley, art education encourages pupils to manage and understand their environment, they see art as:

> ... an experience, as a creative means of expression, a way of studying and mastering one's environment, a means by which one grows within, and a reaction to life. (115)

Kranz and Deley point out that the pleasurable and rewarding aspects of art education can go some way towards combating the despair, lack of opportunity, self-hate and other states of which "the condition of poverty comprises".(116) Although a more detailed account of working class pupils is presented in Chapter Three of the present research study, it may be appropriate at this stage to point out certain characteristics of disadvantaged young people.

Crooks indetifies poor self-image, a lack of confidence and a reluctance to take on personal responsibility as characteristic of disadvantaged pupils, and states that their motivation may be weak, their attendance erratic and their achievement low.(117) Like

Kranz and Deley, Crooks is aware of the difficulties facing underprivileged young people in particular, he quotes from Bertrand Schwartz's description of these young people who are united by "their desperation, faced with absence of prospects". (118) Disadvantaged pupils have less access to "knowledge and experiences that accumulate to make school learning familiar and easy",(119) according to Biehler and Snowman. Rod Taylor refers to the "variety of emotional problems" and the "considerable learning difficulties" (120) experienced by disadvantaged pupils in South Wales. While the statements above may give a very dismal and one-sided view of disadvantaged young people, they very definitely reveal that conditions of poverty can have very serious educational consequences for pupils from underprivileged environments.

There are further arguments in favour of art education besides those mentioned by Kranz and Deley, Foy and Lanier. Art education contributes to the development of skills which the CEB say are "transferable into a wide range of non-arts contexts". (121) The Board refers also to the nature of artistic problems which require "a flexibility of approach and inventiveness which is essential in a society with rapid and unpredictable changes in employment patterns and in technology.(122) Art education therefore, may be a means by which disadvantaged pupils can maximise their opportunities to

enter the labour market. The art class encourages interaction between pupils and in this way helps to develop interpersonal skills. Lanier claims that the art class can help:

> ... in the process of exploring social relationships and developing alternative models of human behaviour in a quickly changing and, at this point in time, quickly worsening social environment. (123)

Eisner believes that only when the immense learning possibilities of art education are recognised "will the prognosis for fulfilling the cognitive needs of the disadvantaged child appear more helpful".(124) Eisner argues for "a wider view of what constitutes intelligence",(125) and a more central role for art education on school curricula. Taylor quotes from Bourdieu who believes that the working class pupil has less access to the mainstream culture and that "as long as art is an optional and low status subject, it is the working-class pupils who will be denied opportunities for the acquisition of the appropriate cultural capital".(126) Taylor is convinced that disadvantaged pupils can benefit from the compensatory nature of art education. He states that " art departments generally do a marvellous job in providing compensatory experiences for children who often feel unwelcome elsewhere in the school".(127) The CEB made a similar point when it stated that "communication through an art form may be one of the most important modes of contact with others", (128) which pupils with special needs can have. Perhaps

one of the most significant contributions of art education for disadvantaged young people is the enjoyable and rewarding aspects of this discipline. The CEB states that:

> The arts are accessible and welcoming to all pupils, irrespective of class, gender or level of academic achievement. Furthermore, arts education is enjoyable for most pupils; this is a key factor that is neither fully recognised nor utilised in educational planning and is particularly relevant to those groups of students who may be educationally at risk. (129)

There is general consensus among art educationalists concerning the value of art for disadvantaged pupils. In the disadvantaged area where the present research study is based, there is opportunity on a daily basis to see how much the pupils enjoy and benefit from the practical and intellectual aspects of art education. I believe that this motivation to learn and create must be nurtured, and that as long as art education is relegated to the periphery of the curriculum, we are failing to capitalise on this desire for knowledge.

Conclusion

In this chapter it has been demonstrated that the purposes of art education coincide with the broader aims of general education. It is evident that the arts do not occupy a place of prominence in Irish, British or American curricula. The review has focused on the visual

arts as a means of communication, and has described how art activities involve an intellectual as well as a practical dimension. The visual arts are seen as constituting an essential element of cultural education. The need to nurture and sustain traditions is recognised, and it is suggested that this is most successfully achieved through art education. The relevance of art education in a disadvantaged context is discussed and some of the ways in which the visual arts can help working-class pupils "confront and explore their own problems" (130) are examined.

The literature reviewed reveals that the predominant concern with conventional academic development has often meant that other equally important capabilities have been neglected in schools. It is argued that all pupils may suffer from this neglect in terms of personal achievement, and that the opportunities to explore a fuller range of their abilities are reduced as a result. It is suggested therefore, that art education be accorded a more central place in school programmes and that its contributions to the education of young people be recognised and appreciated.

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CHAPTER III

SOCIOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY:

A REVIEW OF IRISH, BRITISH AND AMERICAN LITERATURE

Introduction

The review of literature presented in this chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section, the sociological review, focuses on the links between sociology and education. Sociological literature from British, American and Irish sources is discussed which emphasises the relationship between low socio-economic status and education. These three sources are used in the second section also, but the focus in section two is on psychological literature insofar as it relates to the educational opportunity and achievement of second-level working-class pupils.

The sociological review is presented under two main headings - Material Deprivation and Educational Outcomes, and Cultural Deprivation and Educational Outcomes. Deprivation in the material and cultural spheres is identified as a major causative factor in educational inequality.

The adolescent is the focus of the psychological review. The developmental stage known as adolescence

is examined initially and following this, the literature which relates to disadvantage, education and the adolescent is presented. The notion of compensatory education insofar as it relates to disadvantaged pupils is explored using literature from American, British and Irish sources. Finally, an argument for art education in a disadvantaged area is put forward, and here also the emphasis is on the adolescent.

Sociological Review

The process of socialization, through which the child learns behaviour and attitudes appropriate for the society in which s/he lives, relies on two chief agents of socialization - the family, and the educational system. Jack Demaine says that the "sociology of education is concerned with the family, the education system, the economy and the polity, and with relations between them. It is concerned with social institutions and with the socialization process with which they are involved" (1) During the pre-school years, the child's socialization will be greatly influenced by the material and cultural resources which are available in the home. As these vary from one socio-economic group to another, we may question whether there are, as Demaine suggests "social class *differentials* in educational achievement" and if educational policy attends to "questions of access and

forms of organisation of education, in particular with reference to the 'working class'". (2)

There is evidence to suggest that due to a lack of resources, children from lower socio-economic groups may have limited access to and may only be able to participate to a limited extent in the educational system. This evidence is examined below, with reference to the possible educational outcomes for children from working class areas. Although the issues of material and cultural resources are interrelated, I have, for the sake of clarity, provided a sub-heading for each. Thus, the emphasis is on material deprivation initially with regard to educational outcomes, whilst the sub-section which follows that explores cultural deprivation and educational performance. Much research has focused on the interaction between social class and education. There is a sector of the population which, due to impoverished material and cultural resources, may be identified as "disadvantaged". The following operational definition of those who might be termed disadvantaged is presented in a 1987 publication by the C.D.V.E.C. Curriculum Development Unit:

- those who do not enter the junior cycle to second level schools
- those who leave school without completing the junior cycle and without taking any public examination.

- those who remain at school and who take public examination but who do not reach the minimum standard [defined as 5D's] (3)

This definition is of particular validity in the context of the present study since it applies to many pupils in the selected area.

Material Deprivation and Educational Outcomes

Research into the sociology of education identifies some of the factors which are associated with the disadvantaged in the educational system. The British were perhaps the pioneers in this field of study, as Demaine indicates when he writes:

> ....in British sociology of education the concept of 'class' has particular significance. The concept is used to describe differentials in educational opportunity and achievement, usually between the 'working class' and the 'middle class'. We have already noted that in various accounts these differentials are attributed to cultural and material resources, or some combination of these. (4)

Research into differentials in educational opportunity and achievement has been a feature of British sociological literature since the late 1950's. A study by Brian Jackson and Dennis Marsden published in 1962 makes the following comparison between middle and working-class children:

> So much that was naturally assumed by the middle class pupil or teacher, so much that was part of the 'normal' atmosphere of growth, needed to be discovered by, or explained to, the new working class pupil.(5)

Jackson and Marsden account for such differences when they write that:

> Together with the element of ignorance and the lack (in some) of initiative, we must add a note on financial unease. First of all some of the parents were under very real financial stress. This was especially so in the case of large families and of widows. (6)

Jackson and Marsden identified financial stress and large family size as two of the factors contributing to under achievement in school, and studies undertaken some thirty years later indicate that these problems still affect school performance. In one such study concerning the relationship between working-class environments and low educational achievement, Jo Mortimore and Tessa Blackstone state that "several studies show that overcrowded housing conditions and poor household amenities are associated with lower ability and attainment".(7) Similar findings arose in surveys conducted by Rutter et al. which were published in 1987. They ask:

> ....could it be that the differences we had found in school outcomes, and especially perhaps in delinquency rates, were in fact largely accounted for by differences in the home neighbourhoods from which the children came? (8)

There is further evidence in the British sociological literature to indicate that financial stress and poor household amenities may give rise to delinquency and low levels of aspiration and attainment. Mortimore and Blackstone list results of studies by Davies, Wedge and Prosser and Murray, amongst others, which state that:

> Poor housing may well affect educational progress as a result of the difficulties of studying at home, the lack of quiet or privacy and an inadequate night's sleep (9)

Many pupils attending school in the disadvantaged area where the present research study is based exhibit signs of fatigue regularly, and a fair proportion require supervised study periods in school due to disruption at home. The behaviour arising from these conditions has much in common with that exhibited by the pupils in Murray's studies where "overcrowding was found to be associated with aggression, lack of curiosity, impulsiveness and extroversion..." and, as with Murray's sample " the disadvantaged group did less well than the other children. The averages of their reading and mathematics scores were lower". (10)

Lack of material resources is referred to by the Plowden Committee in its 1967 report, reviewed here by Mortimore and Blackstone who write:

> Parents who are unskilled workers are likely to earn low pay and to have poor working conditions, and be subject to periods of

> unemployment. In addition, they will often have large families, live in poor housing conditions, have an insufficiently nutritious diet, be prone to ill health and have low educational attainment. (11)

Such was the Plowden Committee's concern for disadvantaged pupils that they recommended the setting up of Educational Priority Areas (EPAS) in order to ensure equality of educational opportunity. The aims here were not unlike those outlined in the American "Headstart" and "Follow Through" programmes, and suggested the allocation of specialist teachers and extra resources to designated areas of need.(12) Ideally, this form of positive discrimination should, as Robert Burgess suggests, provide an equitable system where

> social origins do not determine educational success, so that those born into a wealthy family are not automatically destined for high status. Equality of educational opportunity would, therefore break the chain of links between family background and social placement in adult life". (13)

However, the success of intervention programmes is difficult to assess due to the range of factors - some relate to lack of enthusiasm on the part of Governments, others to ambiguity in programme planning, and often to the fact that no workable criteria for success have been agreed in the first place. Some academic improvement was observed in candidates following the "Headstart" and "Follow Through"

programmes, but only for the duration of each programme. (14) The amount of literature on intervention policies and outcomes is vast, and in some cases there have been positive results. These are examined in greater detail in the review of psychological literature below. It is necessary now to focus on the educational outcomes of material deprivation in Irish and American schools.

The British literature on the topic indicates that lack of material resources may significantly affect academic performance, as well as giving rise to negative attitudes and delinquency. These findings are supported by American and Irish research studies also. In a discussion of socio-economic differences affecting educational expenditure in the United States, Christopher Jencks observes:

> We know that poor states spend less on education than rich ones, and that poor districts within a state spend less than rich districts in the same state. (15)

Jencks adds that children from rich families stay in school longer than children from poor families, and estimates "that America spends about twice as much on the children of the rich as on the children of the poor". (16) Irish studies, including the report of the Committee on Discipline in Schools, describe how insufficient material resources may result in poor school attendance:

> Poverty affects many children in spite of the availability of a

> range of social welfare payments. It results in many families having an inadequate amount of money to buy food, clothing and other necessities. Such children are less likely to benefit fully from attendance at school and some may in fact have a poor attendance record. (17)

Other research studies show that pupils from low socio-economic groups will, like those mentioned earlier by Jencks, be less likely to complete second-level education than their middle and upper-class peers:

> Overall, studies show that children from manual backgrounds and particularly those from unskilled and semi-skilled backgrounds are less likely than their counterparts from other social background to complete the post-primary junior cycle, to make the transition from junior to senior cycle, or to transfer to higher or third level education. (18)

This report of the National Development Plan (NDP) highlights the variations in educational participation between the socio-economic groups and identifies disadvantaged environments as areas with "serious multiple economic and social problems, and a low level of participation in third level education and training, in particular, far below the national average". (19) It is evident that participation in education is low in disadvantaged areas, but as Crooks observes , this is not the only problem for pupils from such environments. Crooks refers to "the angry; those who actively reject education and are hostile to it, manifesting this either by disruption in class or by truancy". (20)

Disruptive behaviour has serious implications for other pupils in the class; very often they may be prevented from reaching their academic potential. Linda Nielsen addresses this issue with regard to American adolescents when she writes:

> In summarising the data on achievement, it is clear that millions of adolescents, especially those from poor families and minorities, are performing poorly in math, science, and reading. It is now estimated that 30% of our nation's youths are failing to acquire the basic education and skills needed to obtain adequately paying and secure jobs. (21)

Chazan et al. record similar findings in their longitudinal study of disadvantaged infants, using middle class or settled working class schools as controls:

> Compared with controls the deprived area children were poorer in oral language, reading and related skills and mathematics. They were also considered to be not so well adjusted in school and to have lower levels of concentration. (22)

The pupil from a disadvantaged background is likely to be affected by deficiencies in these skills, due to the emphasis on educational credentials in the allocation of occupational positions. The National Development Plan states that "certified academic achievement operates as a selective mechanism within the labour market, effectively marginalising those with limited qualifications". (23) It would appear then, that working class pupils are not only negatively

affected by the lack of material and cultural resources in the school context, but also in their subsequent search for employment. The rising demand for educational qualifications, referred to as the credential effect, is, according to Dan Murphy, more pronounced in Ireland than in other European nations. Murphy observes that the extent of disadvantage and inequity in education is greater here in Ireland, and supports his findings thus:

> By all the major indicators - length of stay in education, entry to higher education, future employment prospects, the incidence of illiteracy- children are more acutely disadvantaged by the socio-economic status of their parents in Ireland than in most other member states of the European community. (24)

Murphy draws upon studies by Greaney and Kelleghan, and Clancy, which emphasise the significance of socio-economic factors in educational participation and achievement:

> ...the Greaney / Kelleghan study of 1984 showed that only one in two of the children of unskilled workers completed junior cycle education; only one in five completed the senior cycle, and only in twenty-five entered third-level education. And the Clancy study of 1986 showed that a mere 1.5% of students in higher education were the children of unskilled workers; the figure for universities was only 0.3%. (25)

Murphy also argues that the present method of assessing pupil attainment in post-primary education is deeply prejudicial to the interests of disadvantaged children.

This view is supported in a newspaper article by Fintan O'Toole, who uses the analogy of an Olympic race to describe the Irish educational system. O'Toole makes obvious reference to the disadvantaged pupil when he states that "The only problem is that half the athletes never arrive at the games, some of the runners will have to drop out because they don't have the right shoes", and believes that "the State plays a huge role in determining the distribution of privilege and social position, precisely through education". (26) In a sense, educational credentials have become a kind of cultural currency or "cultural capital" to use O'Toole's definition which, he says "is a property that is distributed by public, collective institutions (the Church and the State) and not the result of any kind of free competition".(27) The inequitable distribution of this property is clearly a feature of the American educational system also, as Kathleen Lynch indicates when she refers to the work of Randall Collins. Lynch cites Collins' claim that education can be viewed as "part of a system of cultural stratification", and observes that educational credentials therefore "certify one's possession of that type of middle-and upper-class cultural capital desired in particular by white-collar professions and occupations".(28)

If, as suggested above, educational credentials are used for occupational selection, it is essential

that our educational system be an equitable one, which offers equal opportunity for achievement to all pupils, regardless of their social status. However, this review of sociological literature indicates that disadvantaged pupils may not have the means of receiving this opportunity, and that due to factors in their early socialization, they are ill-equipped to achieve in the school context. We know that structural forces outside of school influence attendance and performance in school; this is confirmed in a statement by Lynch on the work of Bowles and Gintis which says that "The student's social class, race and/or gender all have significance in determining what kind of social experience s/he may have in school".(29)

Further support for this belief is presented by Brede Foy who attributes deficiencies in reading, writing, language and mathematical skills, and low levels of adjustment and concentration, to environmental deprivation. Foy quotes from an article by Dr. Tom Kellaghan which states that:

> ...low achievement in school by middle-class pupils is due to a low level of intelligence in the students. Their low intelligence comes before their low achievement. The reverse is true among disadvantaged pupils. In them low intelligence is due to low levels of achievement. Their low achievement comes before their low intelligence. (30)

It would appear therefore that the educational system tends to intensify, rather than reduce levels of educational inequity between the social classes. The disadvantaged pupil experiences failure in school largely due to deprivation in the home: through this sense of failure, a pattern of low-achievement evolves. In many cases, parallels may be drawn between learning disabled pupils and those from underprivileged environments. The description of the slow learner's home background which follows, for example, has much in common with a disadvantaged background:

> This typical boy lives in a council house; he is the third child in a family of four or five children; he shares a bedroom but has his own bed. He is the son of a semi-skilled or unskilled manual worker and he receives 15-20p to spend each week. There is a one -in-four chance that the boy's home is disturbed, with parents either separated or divorced. (31)

W.K. Brennan state that slow learners are unable to cope with school work considered normal for their age-group, despite the absence of any primary handicap to intellect.(32) The relationship between the pupil's ability to learn and the conditions in which s/he lives is evidently a key issue, and for many pupils attending the school where the present research study is based, direct correlations may be drawn between academic progress and home background.(33)

Material wealth has therefore a significant bearing on access to education, and on educational performance throughout schooling. It is likely to determine occupational position because of the credential effect, thus marginalising the chances of success for those from low socio-economic groups. When schooling becomes a mechanism for economic and social mobility, the consequences which follow mitigate against the disadvantaged in society. Deficits in material resources are closely linked to insufficient cultural resources in disadvantaged backgrounds. The literature reviewed below explores the cultural variations between the social classes and the possible educational outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

Cultural Deprivation and Educational Outcomes

William Tyler identifies four types of educational inequality, one of which "refers to inequality in educational background, usually in the family, which in turn may be related to the neighbourhood, the occupational group of the father, the region or an ethnic group".(34) Much of the American and British literature reviewed below is concerned with diverse cultural backgrounds, accounted for by the high percentage of ethnic minority groups in both countries. The Irish literature on cultural deprivation is more often associated with the occupational group of the father and environmental disadvantage. Whether related

to home background, race or colour, the evidence from all the three sources suggests that cultural factors have a significant bearing on educational opportunity and attainment.

Myron Dembo is concerned with the educational inequality arising from cultural differences between black and white students in the United States. Dembo observes that white students tend to score higher than black students and argues "that the poor performance on IQ tests by some black students stems from bias in the test items and administration". (35) Dembo claims that pupils from ethnic minorities may be tested on material which is not relevant to them. That is to say, black and Hispanic children may perform more poorly on items that are more familiar to white children". (36) It seems only fair that black children should be as familiar with test material as their white peers, and that cultural differences should be considered in the preparation of tests. The alternative is a form of cultural discrimination which is compounded by the fact the many ethnic minority groups are also financially disadvantaged. Linda Nielsen confirms the relationship between race, colour and poverty when she states that:

> Given that the fastest growing segment of our population are Hispanics and African Americans, who are the most likely to be growing up in poverty, the number of students who are at risk or truly disadvantaged is growing. In this sense then, we are 'a nation at risk'.(37)

The educational consequences for minority-group pupils are a cause for concern, especially when the following statement by Dembo is taken into account:

> However, children from low **socioeconomic status (SES)** groups or from ethnic minorities are more vulnerable to being labelled mentally retarded because clinical measures (primarily intelligence tests) are interpreted from a culture-based perspective. (38)

According to Dembo, intelligence tests are often a basis for discriminatory practices in schools "especially in the placement of poor and minority students in special classes for mentally retarded or slow students". (39) In such instances, those who are already underprivileged are forced to contend with severe discriminatory measures, related to their cultural difference rather than their lack of ability. Whether all pupils should be exposed to the same curriculum is an issue which might be addressed in educational planning. The rationale argued for art education in Chapter Two above emphasises the value of heritage and tradition, thus indicating that culture, no matter how varied, is inherently worthwhile. It is appropriate at this point to examine non-racial cultural differences, and to see if, and to what extent, cultural disadvantage occurs.

While cultural stratification and its educational consequences may be regarded as exclusive to nations with ethnic minorities, the evidence suggests that the

relationship between educational inequality and cultural disadvantage exists, regardless of race or colour. The Plowden Report, for example, describes a cultural attitude which refers to deprivation, rather than racial issues:

> In a neighbourhood where the jobs people do and the status they hold owe little to their education, it is natural for children as they grow older to regard school as a brief prelude to work rather than an avenue to future opportunities. (40)

It appears that educational achievement may be influenced by the prevailing perceptions within the community. The social institutions involving the family and the educational system "transmit culture from one generation to another", (41) according to Demaine, who regards this as fundamental to the socialization process. The writers of Fifteen Thousand Hours remark on the interaction between home and school when they state that: "schools are not self-contained institutions, and what happens within them will be affected by the communities they serve". (42) The predispositions of parents and friends are important cultural factors which form part of a "hidden curriculum" according to Lynch. The hidden curricular experience is, in Lynch's view, determined by the "students' social class, race and/or gender". (43) Lynch is concerned with selection procedures which some secondary schools engage in. "Such uncontrolled selection procedures", says Lynch, "reproduce class

inequalities by inhibiting those who are least familiar with the school's educational culture and its trappings (predominantly working-class parents with little formal education) from attending the selective sector".(44) The inference in Lynch's statement is that it is necessary to be a product of a particular culture in order to participate in the educational culture of the school. If parents are not well informed on educational matters, the attitudes which are transmitted to their children can be, at best, indifferent. Irene Caspari cites studies by Douglas and Pringle which suggest that:

> ...children's success or failure at school are very closely linked to parental attitudes and that children can be severely handicapped at school by lack of educational opportunities in the home. (45)

It is doubtful that those who are least familiar with the educational culture of the school would be in a position to provide educational stimuli in the home. There may be a lack of educational toys, games or books in working class homes, and resources may be too inadequate (in both the material and cultural senses) to provide for outings to museums, galleries or exhibitions. The studies by Chazan et al suggest that cultural deprivation may account for low educational achievement in disadvantaged pupils. Higher test scores by middle-and upper-class pupils were related to "the more adequate preparation of these children for

the demands of schooling by their parents" and "to relatively greater parental support and interest in their educational achievement". (46)

It is not an intention of the present research study to suggest that parents from low-socio economic groups show little interest in the educational progress and general welfare of their children. There are, however, strong similarities between the backgrounds of pupils attending school is the area where the present research study is based, and those who were the subjects of a British study of disadvantaged children entitled "Cross'd with Adversity". Eileen O'Connor refers to and identifies aspects of cultural deprivation including the "absence of books, few periodicals", and "overuse of television" (47) O'Connor adds that "cultural levels are minimal" as the "financial and cultural poverty of many homes inhibits pupils' interest and opportunities". (48) One critic of the notion of cultural deprivation is Vincent Lanier, who claims that "poor people respond to and produce their own culture" which "frequently embodies the same power and richness of image or phrase as middle-class art". (49) Lanier cogently argues the existence of a culturally disadvantaged sector and states that: "The first principal of education for the children of the rural and urban poor is to look at them as possessors of different advantages rather than as cultural paupers". (50)

Lanier's desire for a non-hierarchical continuum of competing life-styles where no cultural advantage or disadvantage exists is to be applauded, and, certainly, Lanier is conscious of deprivation and cultural differences between the various socio-economic groups. However, it is difficult, in the light of statements by Lynch, O'Connor and Foy amongst others, to support Lanier's belief that "except for those who are literally handicapped, there are no disadvantaged people". (51) Lynch referred to the educational culture which, she believes, is unfamiliar to many working-class families, and O'Connor cites examples of attitudes which are directly opposed to those which the culture of the school demands. These include "absenteeism with parental knowledge", (52) resistance to school rules by pupils, hostility and lack of discipline in classes, and parental indifference towards the school. Foy refers to deficiencies in reading , writing, and language and mathematical skills and to the low levels of adjustment and concentration skills common to pupils in disadvantaged areas. Foy quotes from studies by Bloom, and Bereiter and Engleman which list factors contributing to these deficiencies, such as "a high level of noise" leading to "an inability to listen, and to classify sounds", and "abbreviated speech with few conjuctions, adjectives, adverbs, qualifying phrases" and also "less corrective feed back in pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary". (53)

How can Lanier argue that cultural deprivation is a fallacy in the light of these and other such findings?

It is evident that culture varies according to class and race, and one of the premises of the present research study is that the traditions and heritage of a people should be nurtured. Yet it appears that cultural differences may negatively affect the working-class pupil with regard to education. O'Connor observes that "working class children have certain values, attitudes and perceptions which differ from the mainstream culture which is reflected in the way schools function".(54) If the educational opportunity of pupils from working class backgrounds is less than that of their middle and upper-class peers, (and the literature indicates that this is the case), then arguments against the use of terms such as "cultural deprivation" and "disadvantage" seem futile. The notion of compensatory education derives from the belief that young people from working class backgrounds are culturally and /or financially deprived. The psychological review below examines aspects of compensatory education and its outcomes for working class pupils.

Psychology: A Review of the Literature with Regard to Education and Disadvantage.

The review of psychological literature below focuses on four main areas - the developmental stage

known as adolescence, the education of disadvantaged adolescents, the disadvantaged pupil and compensatory education, and the benefits of art education for the disadvantaged adolescent. There is general consensus among psychologists that human development takes place in stages. Sigmund Freud identified five, through which the individual was driven by forces from within. This review relies more on the theories of Erik Erikson, who was influenced by Freud, but believed the individual to be a product of society and therefore concentrated "more on important sociocultural determinants of human development". (55) The developmental stages outlined by Jean Piaget are of equal importance to the present review; Piaget was concerned with the cognitive development of the individual and the multi-dimensional nature of intelligence.(56) The developmental stages which precede adolescence are also considered in this review in order to provide a context for the discussion on adolescence.

Erikson proposed eight developmental stages - the first, which he refers, to as "Trust vs Mistrust" describes how infants need to "think of their world as safe and dependable". (57) During the 2 to 3 year age range, children need to be encouraged to proceed " at their own pace and in their own way - but with judicious supervision by parents and teachers" (58), in order to develop a sense of autonomy. Initiative is a

feature of the next stage described by Erikson, when 4 to 5 year olds need freedom to explore, experiment and ask questions. Erikson's next developmental stage refers to the pre-adolescent period from 6 to 11 years of age, when the child learns to win recognition by producing things and "develops a sense of industry".(59) At each stage, Erikson calls attention to changes in types of behaviour that occur as a child develops, and whether there are positive or negative outcomes depends to a great extent on socialization factors. Biehler and Snowman point out that it was not Erikson's intention to suggest that only positive qualities should emerge at each stage of development, rather than " a *ratio* in favour of the positive is to be sought" (60)

Piaget holds that cognitive development is sequential, and describes the period from birth to two years as the Sensorimotor Stage when the infant "develops schemes primarily through sense and motor activities".(61) This stage is followed by the Preoperational and Concrete Operational Stages, occurring from 2-7 years and 7 - 11 years respectively. This period of development sees the child gradually increasing a range of schemes, while still relying on concrete rather than abstract experiences. According to Piaget a profound change in children's thinking occurs at 11 years, when they reach the Formal Operational Stage. Foy explains that "They change from

a concrete, simpler more rudimentary sort of thinking to a more sophisticated abstract form of thought" (62). With the approach of adolescence therefore, young people can conceptualise their own thoughts, they can take extenuating circumstances into account, they are capable of criticising and theorising about their world. (63)

Piaget believed in a hierarchy of developmental stages, where the learning of the earlier ones is assimilated and combined with each new phase of mental growth.(64) We may regard the adolescent consequently as an individual who has evolved through a series of developmental stages beginning at birth and culminating in adolescence.

Adolescence

"The term *adolescence* says Jerome Dusek "comes from the Latin verb *adolescere*, which means 'to grow up' or 'to grow to maturity'.(65) Dusek states that this growth refers to more than purely physiological development, and that biological, social and personal changes must be considered also. These changes are rapid, according to Brenda Lintner, and because of this "it is to be expected that emotional problems are common at this time". (66) Lintner claims that :

> Transient anxieties are common in adolescents because they are being faced with new situations and because they have lost their childhood belief that their parents

> are infallible, all powerful, and can be all-protective. (67)

Change of any sort may be accompanied by feelings of fear and anxiety, and for the adolescent, the transition from childhood to young adulthood may be a difficult period. Biehler and Snowman say that adolescents are concerned about what kind of person they are becoming as they "approach independence from parents and achieve physical maturity".(68) The need for security and confidence is important during this developmental stage and Biehler and Snowman also emphasise the need for caring, for a goal, for independence and the need to feel useful.

Like Biehler and Snowman, Linda Nielsen refers to Erikson's developmental theories - she says that "Children enter adolescence in a diffuse state. They are not sure of their attitudes, beliefs, and values". (69) A similar account of adolescence is presented by Sprinthall and Sprinthall, who also rely on Erikson's research and they note Erikson's view

> ....that adolescents are caught between two major systems, both of which are in flux. They have to cope with internal, cognitive, and glandular changes at the same time that they are confronting a series of inconsistent and changing external regulations. (70)

Sprinthall and Sprinthall go on to point out that adolescents must go through these changes "while simultaneously discarding the identity they had in the previous stage". (71) Childhood play is given up, and attitudinal change occurs as the adolescent no longer

views adults as being always correct. Adolescence is "often characterized as a stormy period" says David Shaffer:

> ... when all children experience **cross-pressures** - severe conflicts between the practices advocated by parents and those favoured by peers. How do they react to these conflicting demands ? It is commonly assumed that parents and other adults make a stronger impression on the young child but that peers gradually become more influential than parents as children approach adolescence. (72)

The evidence suggests that adolescents may often disagree with their parents during this period of development, at a time when they are striving to discover who they really are. It is a time when, according to Nielsen:

> ....they experience various situations, meet many people, experiment with various identities, and begin to integrate their previous and present identities into a meaningful sense of self. On the negative side, they have a sense of confusion about their identity or role in society. (73)

Perhaps the confusion which adolescents feel has to do with the many and varying influences affecting their lives at this time. Lintner lists some of the anxieties which are common in adolescents including:

- feelings of being physically unattractive
- having no friends
- being rejected
- leaving home
- becoming ill

- finding communication difficult with parents
- worry about parental arguments
- worry about death of a parent
- failure in examination
- looking a fool at an interview
- not getting a job or into university
- vague worries about whether life is worth living
- anxieties about sexual attitudes and behaviour
- death.(74)

Whilst accepting that adolescence can be a stormy and stressful period, it is worth keeping in mind that the various stresses on the adolescent do not all occur at the same time. Dusek reminds us "that adolescence occurs over a number of years," (75) allowing for adjustment to biological, social and personal changes. Erikson's belief that adolescents are provided with what he identifies as a psychosocial moratorium is also worth considering. Nielsen describes this psychosocial moratorium as

> ... a permissiveness on the part of society that allows young people to try different identities and to fail or have difficulties but that protects them from many of the consequences of their actions. It may be a time of adventure, academic study, troublesome pranks, wandering, or social action. For example, youths who tell their parents that they plan to quit their job because it's boring or

> because they simply don't want to work anymore expect that their parents will provide shelter and other support until they find another job. (76)

David Elkind states that the adolescent "because of the physiological metamorphosis he is undergoing, is primarily concerned with himself" and that "he assumes that other people are as obsessed with his behaviour and appearance as he is himself". (77) According is Elkind, the belief that others are preoccupied with his appearance and behaviour "constitutes the egocentrism of the adolescent". (78) Elkind bases his understanding of adolescent thought and behaviour on Piagetian theories of human development, as does Barry Wadsworth. Wadsworth also refers to the egocentrism of the adolescent which he describes as "the inability of the child to differentiate between thought and the 'real' world".(79) The adolescent, claims Wadsworth "becomes possessed with his new-found powers of logical thought" to the extent that "the criterion for making judgements becomes what is logical to the adolescent, not always what is realistic".(80) Egocentrism is not peculiar to the adolescent: Piaget states that each new plane of cognitive functioning is characterized by a type of egocentrism. However, what is significant about this developmental stage is that:

> After the appearance of formal operational thought, no new mental systems develop, and the mental structures of adolescence must serve for the rest of the life span.(81)

If the period of formal operations is, as Elkind suggests above, the culmination of the development of cognitive structures, then the role of second-level schooling and the educational experiences of the adolescent are of vital importance at this stage. Of course, the assimilation and accommodation of the cognitive structures which occurred prior to the stage of formal operations will determine the adolescent's educational experiences to a great extent. There are, nevertheless, grounds for believing that second-level curricula should be particularly challenging and relevant to young people, whilst maximising opportunities for the development of their full potential. Before examining some of the ways in which in which art education can respond to these needs, it is essential to take a closer look at the adolescent in school, and more specifically at the disadvantaged young person and education.

Adolescence, Education and Disadvantage

Biehler and Snowman say that:

> the most significant difference between some pupils is the degree to which they have been exposed to out-of-school experiences that equip, or fail to equip, them to perform academically. Only by acknowledging the nature of the disadvantages attributable to certain types of backgrounds can teachers arrange compensatory school experiences. (82)

The instance of disadvantage and under-achievement in school are closely related, as has been demonstrated in the sociological review above. Biehler and Snowman insist that background is a key factor affecting educational access and achievement, and that pupils "from lower economic backgrounds who had experienced difficulties at the beginning of their lives" (83) were likely to benefit less from education that their higher-income peers. Biehler and Snowman support this view with evidence from research studies by E.E.Werner et al. which conclude that:

> ...the single most important variable leading to retardation or aberrations in development in disadvantaged children is the poor environment in which they mature. (84)

The review of sociological literature earlier in the chapter also identifies parental attitude as a factor which determines pupil performance in school. Shaffer states that many lower and working- class parents

> ...encourage their children to 'get by' in school, while middle and upper-class parents are more likely to stress 'doing well' and 'getting ahead'. Parents from the lower socioeconomic strata are generally less knowledgeable about the school system and less involved in school activities, and his lack of participation may convince their children that school is really not all that important. (85)

While Shaffer points out that lower-class pupils do well in school with parental support, the importance of parental attitude is obvious and may be, as Caspari

suggests "very closely linked" to "success or failure at school". (86) Shaffer also notes how the influence of peers increases during adolescence, but he adds that "adolescents generally prefer the advice of *parents* to that of peers when ever the situation involves scholastic achievement, academic choices, or future aspirations." (87) It is crucial that when the teenager seeks advice in such matters, the parents encourage educational achievement, in order to counteract the role confusion associated with adolescence. Nielsen claims that " The major theme of this period reflects the determination of children to master whatever they are doing".(88) She refers to Erikson's theory:

> .... that many individuals' later attitudes toward work and habits can be traced back to the degree of a successful sense of industry fostered during this phase. In acquiring a sense of industry, children must feel competent in what they are doing while accepting their limitations". (89)

If adolescents are not positively reinforced in their educational endeavours, it is possible that achievement in school, and perhaps in later life, will be low. A lack of encouragement or even indifference may be reflected in the adolescent's poor performance in school. Nielsen observes that "a sense of inferiority is caused when the child is not ready for the challenges of school...." (90)

It is evident that teenagers from disadvantaged backgrounds may be handicapped at school by a lack of educational opportunities in the home, and that both limited financial and cultural resources may leave disadvantaged adolescents ill-equipped to avail of educational opportunities. In the area where the present research study is based, there is evidence of poor parental attitudes towards school. Low attendance at parent-teacher meetings and a failure to communicate with school staff are some of the ways in which these negative attitudes are transmitted. It must be made clear however, that many parents show unfailing commitment to their childrens' education despite the severity and extent of a range of social and economic problems. Any argument regarding parental attitude in a disadvantaged area must take into account the disadvantage of the parents as well as that of the students. Perhaps the school has a role here in helping parents who do show commitment to their childrens' education, but who through no fault of their own, fail to provide the necessary support.

Sprinthall and Sprinthall state that "as educators, we need to take special note of the challenge posed by the immensely complicated problem of adolescence", (91) but that challenge is much greater where disadvantaged adolescents are concerned. Biehler and Snowman claim that "In addition to having a low

level of aspiration and a low need for achievement, disadvantaged pupils from minority groups may also feel role confusion and have poor self-esteem".(92)

A disadvantaged adolescent who has no definite career plans after leaving school is, according to Biehler and Snowman:

> ...more likely to experience role confusion than a sense of identity achievement. If such an adolescent is unable to find a job (and the unemployment rate for minority-group youth is typically several times greater than the average rate for that age group), low self-esteem may contribute to the formation of a negative identity. (93)

This issue is taken up by Sprinthall and Sprinthall who say that negative identity formation in adolescents demands urgent attention as:

> ...we now realize that adolescent drug abuse is a symptom of the problem of personal identity formation, or in Erikson's terms, an attempt to solve the problem of identity diffusion. (94)

Nielsen points out that negative identity formation in adolescents can give rise to delinquency. She describes how some adolescents become delinquents "Choosing an identity that is the opposite of what society expects because they would rather have a negative identity that remain a nonentity". (95) Paul Henry Mussen et al. relate delinquency to underprivileged backgrounds and say that "Both social conditions and individual experiences contribute to

juvenile delinquency". (96) They add that adolescent suicide has increased threefold in the last twenty-five years (97) and refer to research which indicates "that economic deprivation is most likely to lead to crime and delinquency when it is associated with marked inequality in the distribution of society's resources".(98)

The literature suggests that adolescents from low-income environments are "at risk" in a number of ways, not least of which is in educational terms. Crooks identifies poor attitude, attendance and poor achievement as factors contributing to the low educational attainment of many working-class adolescents. He quotes from studies by Hannan and Breen which link educational failure with unemployment, bad housing, marital disharmony and substance abuse. (99) Mussen et al. refer to the vocational implications for "Poorly educated youth with few skills" who "will find themselves increasingly penalized in the years ahead".(100) This is compounded, say the writers, by the alienation from society which lower-class minority and poor white youth have reason to feel. (101) Dusek borrows from studies by Elliott, Voss and Wendling (1966) which suggest that lower-class students "can't or won't compete in the middle-class milieu of the school", there is more likelihood therefore that disadvantaged youth will drop out of school.(102) Dusek believes that a "variety of factors

influence success in the school environment",(103) but adds that socioeconomic background is an important issue, as is general home atmosphere. Dusek states that adolescents

> ...from backgrounds in which education is encouraged, in which parents provide a suitable atmosphere for learning, and in which the student is allowed to pursue education, do better. (104)

Nielsen describes disadvantaged adolescents as "at-risk-youths" who:

> ...seldom receive the same quality of education as students from wealthier families. Indeed, the quality of education any student receives can be predicted, to a large degree, by his or her parents' income. Schools serving predominantly poor and minority students generally have the least qualified teachers, the poorest facilities and the least innovative curricula and teaching techniques (105)

If we consider potential difficulties relating to identity formation in adolescence, and the effects of environmental deprivation on these young people, then we must acknowledge the existence of a major problem in educational terms for disadvantaged teenagers. The National Development Plan and Tallaght Report of 1990 states that social class variables dictate access to, and participation in education, but that the educational system, instead of levelling out social class differences, "has now come to function as the main mechanism through which the class structure is reproduced". (106) Crooks believes that school-related

explanations of disadvantage demand more adequate educational responses in the form of school and curricular organisation. (107) It is worth looking at some of the educational procedures and outcomes which have sought to reduce levels of educational inequality experienced by disadvantaged young people.

Compensatory Education and Disadvantaged Pupils

The sociological review above refers to the debate concerning compensatory education, and to some of the arguments against educational intervention. Dembo states that considerable federal funding has been used in American since the mid - 1960's to establish "... summer programs, special educational equipment, tutoring, trips and other extracurricular activities for children from poverty-stricken and low socioeconomic areas."(108) The rationale for this funding, says Dembo, "...was and continues to be based on the belief that children reared in poverty areas are not motivated to learn in school and are deprived of the stimuli that affect intellectual and cognitive development." (109) Dembo goes on to point out that:

> The proponents of compensatory education believed that improved environmental conditions could influence children's intellectual and academic development, and they attempted to equalize individual differences that existed before the children started school. (110)

Although he notes that a decline in achievement scores occurred following completion of the "Headstart" and

"Follow Through" programmes, Dembo observes that for the duration of the programmes, disadvantaged students scored significantly higher in reading, spelling and math than students who were not involved in the program."(111) Dembo himself would appear to be a proponent of compensatory education. He quotes from studies by Lazar and his colleagues (1982) which found that "..students who had participated in preschool programs were less likely to be assigned to special education classes, less likely to be retained in school, and had more positive attitudes toward achievement."(112) The effects of compensatory education appear to have positive educational outcomes which might alter the school performance of disadvantaged adolescents. Dembo refers to Barnett's investigation (1985) of students at age 19 which ...showed that students who attended a particular preschool program were more likely to finish high school, had a lower rate of delinquency, and were earning more money.(113) Nielsen also is in favour of educational intervention; she is discouraged by reductions in government expenditure on compensatory education, given the fact "that well-designed programs can have lasting effects on the academic performance of poor children." (114) These lasting effects may significantly improve the adolescent's educational opportunities. Nielsen explains that "...adolescents who attended preschool programs have shown greater

cognitive gains, higher vocational goals, and lower teenage pregnancy, delinquency, dropout, and unemployment rates than children with no preschool training from similarly impoverished homes." (115)

The setting up of Educational Priority Areas (EPAs) by the Plowden Committee was the British solution to educational inequality, as the sociological review above points out. Burgess says that British programmes differ from those used in the USA, in that resources were provided for EPA *schools*, (116) while the problems of educational access and opportunity were not consciously addressed.(117) Burgess tells us of Bernstein's argument that the concept of compensatory education "carried with it the implication that something was lacking in the family and the child". (118) Mortimore and Blackstone discovered further dissatisfaction with compensatory education in the work of Jensen (1969) and Jencks (1973) who argue "that compensatory education has failed and that the personal characteristics of pupils such as intelligence, social class and ethnic origins are more likely to be of greater importance for achievement and life-chances than schooling". (119)

The need for educational interventionary measures in Ireland is stressed by the National Development Plan which states that these should be in the form of "special programmes", provided for "target

categories"(120) and should address structural inequality in order to counteract educational disadvantage. Much of the Irish efforts at compensatory education have focused on vocational preparation innovations, although O'Connor suggests that vocational preparation "should ideally be available to all young people to help them make the transition from school to work". (121) Such programmes have a particular relevance to adolescents, and, by extension, to disadvantaged adolescents. In the school where the present research study is based, for example, a great many potential early school leavers, who might otherwise have left school at junior cycle level, have selected to register on vocational preparation training programmes. Projects in Ireland have been implemented by FAS, the Youth Employment Agency and by the CDVEC Curriculum Development Unit, which target disadvantaged youth and provide compensatory educational experiences in areas of need. My conviction is that art education can play a vital role in such programmes, and I propose to examine some of the more specific and unique ways in which a visual arts education can attend to the needs of disadvantaged adolescents.

Art Education and Disadvantaged Adolescents

It is a sad fact that the optional status of art education in our second-level schools results in many children receiving their last formal instruction in art

at the age of fifteen, and sometimes as early as twelve. The art rationale in Chapter two of the present research study suggests that the arts are welcoming to all pupils regardless of class, race or gender. This is particularly true in the case of disadvantaged youth, who can benefit significantly from school art programmes.

Rod Taylor observes that one of the glaring omissions from arts and educational debate is "the relations between social class and involvement in the arts". (122) He adds that "while the arts may not appear immediately meaningful to all, appropriate educational experience can help people to become familiar with and find meaning in art". (123) In a study of disadvantaged pupils conducted by Taylor in a school in South Wales, some of the characteristics found to be associated with underprivileged pupils are listed, including extremely limited vocabularies, extremely slow progress and development in language use, and difficulties in clarifying ideas through constructive conversation. (124) Following a visual arts critical awareness programme, Taylor noticed that the pupils were capable of identifying with artists whose work they had seen, and showed improvement in recognition and understanding skills. Taylor states that the pupils had "undoubtedly developed a critical awareness" and " the ability to derive genuine enjoyment from simply looking at paintings and

sculptures". (125) The enjoyment aspects of viewing works of art may be accompanied by increases in visual awareness which could, in my view, help alleviate the problems of vandalism which are associated with disadvantaged youth. Nielsen is aware: "that students who make the poorest grades and those who come from the poorest families are the most likely to steal, fight and vandalize their schools", (126)
and she believes that this may be related to their lack of confidence and self-esteem. Nielsen states that "embarrassed by their academic failures, these young people may deface and destroy school property and lash out against other students and teachers with their fists and weapons". (126)

Laura H. Chapman proposes visual arts programmes for adolescents which could go some way towards combating such negative behaviour. She notes the adolescents' "desire to feel useful, competent and needed", and recommends that the art teacher "arrange for students to engage in a community-service project for the elderly, handicapped or very young". (128) Chapman suggests that students keep a visual account of those they come in contact with in the course of their work, thus encouraging the development of empathy and respect for self and others. (129)

The rewarding and enjoyable aspects of art education have much to offer the disadvantaged

adolescent. Although Chapman points out that "Adolescents will not generally acknowledge that learning too is valuable", she believes that visual art activities enables them to "feel the sense of pride and delight in learning something just for the sake of learning it". (130) The appeal of art education for adolescents is a factor which Lintner feels should not be ignored by parents. She writes that

> It would be much wiser to concentrate upon the subjects which come more easily to the adolescent and plan a career around those. Parents should also accept the special talents a teenager may have in areas such as art and music, rather than trying to force them into what the parents might see as more conventional fields of study. (131)

While art activities are not, according to Stewart Kranz and Joseph Deley "a feature of traditional methods of teaching", they believe, like Lintner, that art education helps to "nurture rather than frustrate (that) precious urge toward knowledge". (132) Kranz and Deley further explain how art activities permit pupils to proceed at their own pace, and encourage the manipulation of materials in ways that are a healthy part of developmental training.(133) These findings are particularly relevant for disadvantaged pupils according to Rhodes and Brown who asked *why* it is that some children succeed despite the odds.(134) They discovered that Rutter et al had identified "protective processes" which were effective with children from high

risk environments. Rhodes and Brown refer to the findings of Rutter et al. which associate lower delinquency rates with a number of classroom management techniques including "allowing students to assume responsibility for their actions and activities, and the teacher maintaining a prosocial atmosphere". (135)

Dembo acknowledges the "General sensory deprivation" common in disadvantaged adolescents which he believes is due to "lack of sufficient auditory and visual stimulation".(136) Chapman states that art activities promote multisensory awareness (137) and aesthetic awareness so that adolescents can make informed decisions about the environment.(138) My conviction is that *relevance* plays an important part in school curricula; the more meaning which the content of a subject has for the pupil, the greater the motivation to learn. Shaffer notes that relevance is particularly vital for disadvantaged pupils, whose textbooks

> ...are clearly centered on the lives and experiences of middle-class people. These characters live in suburban homes, work at white-collar jobs, ride in fancy cars, take airplane trips, go on picnics, give parties, and are never unhappy - experiences that may seem unimportant or irrelevant to many disadvantaged children. (139)

Unlike many other subject areas, art encourages pupils to select and develop starting points of their own, and at the same time enables students to better understand their world. Art education stresses communication and

interpersonal skills; Chapman is aware of the benefit which adolescents derive:

> ...from activities that make them aware of the contexts influencing human behaviour. Examples can focus on subtle forms of interpersonal communication - body language, seating and traffic patterns - and large-scale symbolic means of communication - wearing jeans or having a certain hair style in order to avoid being conspicuous. (140)

Interpersonal skills are of particular benefit to disadvantaged pupils according to Shaffer, who recommends co-operative learning strategies which are:

> ... especially beneficial for at-risk youths. Having students of various abilities work together in teams encourages peer tutoring and enhances the self-confidence of students with lesser abilities. Within a team, students are assigned roles in which interdependence and sharing take precedence over competition and self-gain. Unlike traditional techniques that pit students against one another in ways where one student's gain is another's loss, cooperative techniques encourage students to help one another without losing anything in the process. (141)

Group projects are a regular feature of second-level art programmes, and by their very nature these demand interaction and team work between pupils and teacher.

The art rationale above provides many more examples of the ways in which art education can contribute to the worthwhile development of the pupil. "In the adolescent", says Chapman, "emotional

intensity, physical energy, and social awareness are delicately balanced against apathy, fatigue and personal loneliness". (142) Chapman concludes that:

> While art offers no panacea for the many and varied problems of growing up, it is one of the few subjects in which students can be actively encouraged to clarify and express their own feelings, thoughts, and perceptions. (143)

CONCLUSION

There is, thus, an abundance of evidence to suggest that pupils from working class backgrounds do not enjoy the same educational opportunity and achievement as their middle- and upper-class peers. The sociological review presented in the first section of this chapter identifies significant socio-economic differences regarding educational access and attainment, with pupils from deprived environments achieving least educational success. We have seen that material and cultural deprivation affects school performance and vocational opportunity.

The principal characteristics of the adolescent are described, with reference to the theories outlined by Erikson and Piaget. It is evident that this period or developmental stage may be one of confusion and trauma for the adolescent. It is suggested that the disadvantaged teenager is particularly vulnerable at this time, particularly with regard to his/her

educational endeavours. The literature on compensatory education indicates a degree of success in educational intervention, while the contributions of an art education are demonstrated to be wholly worthwhile for disadvantaged youth.

The inequities which exist in the Irish, British and American educational systems are a cause for concern. It has been demonstrated that schools are failing to compensate for socio-economic factors which allegedly affect educational performance, and that consequently, they are not succeeding in cherishing all their children equally. In the chapters which follow the value of art education for disadvantaged young people is examined from an empirical standpoint.

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CHAPTER IV

LOCAL AREA STUDY

Introduction

This research study is concerned with a consideration of the value of art education for second-level students in a working class area. This chapter aims to narrow the sociological perspective in order to focus on the particular circumstances affecting the selected area in Tallaght, Dublin 24. Reference to the sociological and psychological review (Chapter Three) will allow comparisons to be drawn between the educational experiences of the pupils in this research study, and those of disadvantaged pupils in the general context.

A physical description of the selected area is provided, which includes information on population, housing and facilities in Brookfield. The nature and extent of disadvantage in this area is evident from the responses in structured interviews by local agencies, including The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, the home-school liaison officers, The Garda Siochana, the local social welfare officers and the community workers. This information, along with findings from the literature on the selected area, provides a profile of the socio-economic problems affecting Brookfield.

In this context, the school situation is introduced, with emphasis on the links between school performance and socio-economic disadvantage. Again, the review of the literature in Chapter Three is used to reinforce evidence of lower-than-average educational attainment in areas such as Brookfield. The socio-economic review identifies a range of problems from slow-learning to poor attendance, which are common in pupils attending schools in disadvantaged areas. These problems exist also in the school in which the present research study is based. This chapter considers to what extent the pupils in Brookfield are educationally disadvantaged, and examines the lack of material and cultural resources which are associated with low educational achievement.

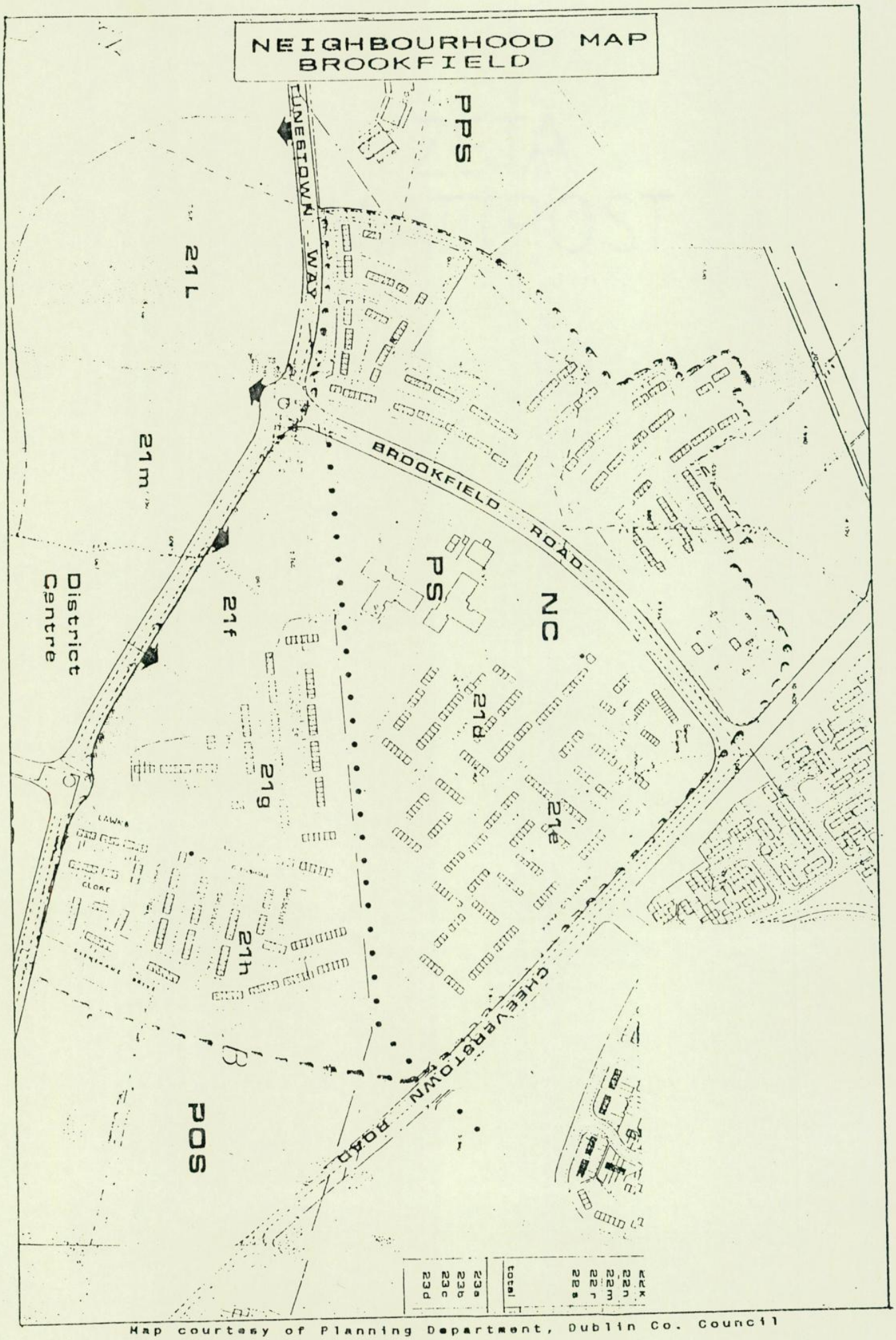
Brookfield, Tallaght, Dublin 24.

The map of the neighbourhood of Brookfield (Figure 1) shows that this area is situated at the western extremity of Tallaght, approximately three miles from Tallaght town centre. It is a developing area, comprising eight hundred houses, with a further one hundred and six houses currently in the process of being built. All the housing in this neighbourhood is local authority, and of very recent vintage: the oldest houses in the area were built in 1982.

Physical evidence of disadvantage exists in the obvious lack of facilities such as shops, hospital or sports complexes. The high number of households without a car and showing signs of vandalism, are also symptomatic of the socio-economic problems in Brookfield. This area is one of twenty four listed in the County Dublin Areas of Need (CODAN's) study, which was undertaken by the Community Department of Dublin County Council in November 1987, and is provided on page 121 (see Illustration 1).

The aim of the study was to locate the areas of greatest social need in County Dublin and was "concerned primarily with the incidence of *multiple aspects* of social need, aspects that tend to reinforce each other in a vicious circle of social deprivation". (1) The neighbourhood of Brookfield was identified as one of those areas where factors such as socio-economic status, housing conditions, and lack of employment indicated social need.

Volume II of the CODAN's report estimated the 1987 population of Brookfield as 2,680 persons. Although the population is likely to have increased in the five years following the 1987 study, it is difficult to gauge the growth, as the most recent census figures from the Central Statistics Office in Dublin do not provide a separately listed population for Brookfield.



Map courtesy of Planning Department, Dublin Co. Council

Illustration 1

It is possible to speculate on population growth in Brookfield based on increased figures in the neighbouring areas of Fettercairn and Jobstown, whose populations increased by 2,210 and 1,349 respectively, since the CODAN's 1987 study. (2) Similar increases are likely have occurred in Brookfield, although Volume II of the CODAN's study states, that "Many people... came from Ballymun, and some are reportedly moving back there".(3) The report also refers to the high number of single parent families in the neighbourhood, with over 70% of principal earners receiving state support. (4)

Improvements in facilities and services in the Brookfield area since the 1987 CODAN's report have been minimal. Although the community centre is now complete, it is underused, according to Ned Gibbons, a local community worker.(5) This is possibly because of two factors: firstly, the high incidence of crime makes both organisers and participants at social functions reluctant to avail of the centre, and secondly, as noted in the CODAN's study "... Brookfield is not a particularly organised community".(6) The CODAN's research team discovered that the few existing clubs had very small membership, and evidence from an interview with St. Aidan's home-school liaison officer supported the team's findings.(7) In the course of a number of structured interviews with home-school co-

ordinators, community workers, and school counsellors, the following findings emerged, regarding facilities and services in the Brookfield area:

1) There are very few areas of employment in Brookfield other than St. Aidan's Community School.

2) As the nearest supermarket is two and a half miles away, and the nearest swimming pool and sports complex is four miles from the neighbourhood, people are completely dependent on buses.

3) Public transport is essential in an area where only three in ten families own cars. However, due to crime and vandalism, the three bus routes (75, 76, 77B) which service Brookfield follow restricted timetables which finish before 8 p.m. As a result most residents are effectively imprisoned in the neighbourhood throughout the evening hours.

4) The expense of public transport ensures limited movement even prior to 8 p.m. Up to three family members may have to take the bus in order to carry groceries. Also, younger children cannot be left at home unsupervised.

5) Community associations and social gatherings in general, are not a feature of the Brookfield area. The Residents' Association no longer exists because of disputes between members. Attempts by the Concerned Parents Committee (disbanded since 1989), to rid the community of drugs failed, as many parents or their children were drug users. Attendance at Mass is lower than 6%, whilst social events attract fewer than 10% of area inhabitants. (8)

Residents of Brookfield have commented on the potentially damaging effects of shortages in recreational facilities in the area. Groups of youths collect in streets and threaten residents.(9) Inadequate amenities in urban communities are associated with lack of discipline in schools, according to the Committee on Discipline in Schools, which observes that "Central and local government and voluntary organisations have found it increasingly difficult to provide adequate recreational facilities for urban communities".(10) It is worthwhile to examine other aspects of deprivation which have been identified in the review of sociological and psychological literature above as contributing to disadvantage. These include crime, drug abuse, vandalism and family violence. The extent to which such deep-rooted problems as these are found in the Brookfield area is explored in the next section.

Living in Brookfield: Views of Local Agencies

There is evidence to suggest that inadequate material and cultural resources in Brookfield give rise to acute socio-economic problems in the area. Many of the factors selected as indicators of disadvantage in CODAN's, Volume I, may be found in Brookfield; these include family problems, single parent families, youths in trouble with the police, along with lack of skills, low income and unemployment. (11) Very often such problems give rise to associated difficulties such as drug abuse, violence and crime.

Economic deprivation is a key problem in Brookfield, according to Aine Campbell who is the local co-ordinator for The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul in the area. Campbell acknowledges high levels of dependence on charitable organisations by Brookfield residents. Help is required on a regular basis to provide for payments to the ESB, the County Council and Dublin Corporation.(12) The area profile presented in CODAN's Volume II reveals that substantial amounts are owed in rent arrears in the Brookfield area. (13) Campbell adds that the problem of outstanding bills is compounded by shortages of basics such as clothes, furniture and fuel. A high proportion (40%) of the households on the Society's books are single parent families, many of whom require weekly visits simply in order to "get by". (14) Acute economic pressures are

evident in the school also, where 90% of pupils rely on book rental schemes, and the comparatively low school registration fee often remains unpaid. The art department in St. Aidan's is subject to theft, and other subject areas report similar difficulties. The school itself is a regular target for larceny, despite the presence of a night watchman and barred windows. (15)

Larceny is the most common offence in the Brookfield neighbourhood, according to John Staunton, one of the Juvenile Liaison Officers for the area. Staunton, who has worked in this capacity since 1978, points out that schools, clubs and shops are prime targets for raids. He believes that the lack of other facilities in Brookfield explain the frequency of break-ins to St. Aidans. In Staunton's experience, a high percentage of offences are alcohol related, the most common offenders being male adolescents.(16) Since 1979, the Juvenile Liaison unit has expanded to cater for the rapid growth in population since the 1980's, and currently three full-time Juvenile Liaison Officers operate in the area. (17) A report by major health workers in Tallaght states that the J.L.O's aim is "to caution and supervise juveniles who are 'at risk' in the prevention of crime and generally keeping these young people out of trouble and out of court".(18) Much of Staunton's work, therefore, involves visiting the offender in the family home, and

his knowledge of the home circumstances of offenders is consequently considerable.

Staunton believes that most offences are a direct result of problems in the home background. Unemployment, low self-esteem, domestic violence and dysfunctional families are, according to Staunton, root causes of crime in Brookfield. Garda records show links between poor educational performance and crime; usually offenders are those who are low achievers in school, or have opted out of the educational system prior to reaching seventeen years of age.(19) Staunton refers to the high level of anger and frustration evident in these young people, and notes the dramatic rise in the incidence of crime in Brookfield. He believes that, since 1982, increases in crime may be associated with the growth in population in the neighbourhood, though peer pressure and rivalry during adolescence were mentioned as contributing factors. Staunton says that only 30-40 per cent of offenders were "hard-core", whilst the remaining 60-70 per cent became involved in crime as a result of peer pressure and unstable backgrounds. (20)

It may be useful at this point to refer to the sociological and psychological literature reviewed above in Chapter Three. The links between low socio-economic status and low educational achievement described in that chapter will be considered now with regard to Brookfield.

Educational Implications of Disadvantage, Brookfield.

Many comparisons may be drawn between the educational experience of disadvantaged youth in general, and these who attend school in St. Aidan's in Brookfield. Like Staunton, Tony Crooks categorises such students as "the angry" (21) and adds that their behaviour in class may reflect their hostile feelings towards school. Crooks identifies another category, whom he refers to as " the absent: those who have already 'voted with their feet' and rejected the system".(22) Crooks further states that traditional education has failed young people and offers this as an explanation for these students' sense of failure and their patterns of hostile behaviour towards school. (23)

Low levels of aspiration can be expected in disadvantaged pupils, according to Biehler and Snowman, who add that role confusion and poor self-esteem (and low levels of aspiration) are also associated with pupils from low-income environments. (24) These issues are frequently addressed at staff meetings in St. Aidan's as there is growing concern at the low levels of self-confidence and self-esteem in pupils. Working in groups, the staff plan strategies which may enable the pupils to develop positive self images (25)

The educational outcome for environmentally deprived Brookfield pupils is that attitudes towards

the educational system in the area are either negative or apathetic, and generally unsupportive. A certain amount of cultural deprivation can be detected in these negative attitudes of pupils and parents towards the educational system, and consequently, towards St. Aidan's.

The home-school liaison officer states that the residents of Brookfield display an apathetic attitude towards education, and that therefore the school and its role is *not* a high priority issue among adults in the community.(26) Unsupportive attitudes towards education and inadequate preparation of students for the demands of schooling are associated with a concentration of low educational attainment. (27) Lynch believes that these attitudes are determined by social class and form part of a 'hidden curriculum' which limits working-class pupils' participation and achievement in school.(28) The sociological and psychological literature review in Chapter Three above indicates that parental attitude constitutes part of a cultural phenomenon which is reproduced in the following generation.(29) On this basis, we can assume that many pupils attending St. Aidan's may not be motivated to achieve or participate in education due to inadequate preparation for schooling in their homes.

There is evidence to suggest that pupils attending St. Aidan's have to cope with serious material deficiencies and family troubles, which restrict their

participation in education, (30) Parallels may be drawn between Brookfield youth and those referred to in studies by the National Development Plan (NDP) where the likelihood of working-class pupils making the transition from junior to senior cycle in second-level schools is low.(31) Some of St. Aidan's pupils are kept at home to look after younger family members, others exhibit behavioural disorders which can be associated with severe family problems, whilst many more lack the basic materials and equipment essential for progress in school. (32)

Aspects of environmental deprivation such as poor attentional, integrational and development skills, poor language development, lack of listening skills, along with poor short and long-term memory, are evident in many pupils attending St. Aidan's.(33) In Chapter Two above, Brede Foy refers to studies by Bloom and also Bereiter which indicate that dificiencies in these skills are associated with restricted language in the home: there may be less naming of objects, less corrective feed-back in vocabulary, less classifying, comparing, explaining and differentiating (34) Deficiencies in language skills may account for lower-than-average reading and writing skills in many pupils attending St. Aidan's (35) A lack of ability in these areas is likely to affect many areas of learning, and therefore constitutes a significant educational disadvantage for these pupils.

Conclusion

The description of the Brookfield area presented in this chapter has focused on the nature and extent of the socio-economic problems which exist in this community. There is reason to believe that a lack of facilities, high levels of unemployment, and inadequate material and cultural resources, have a profound effect on participation and achievement in education.

It is evident that many pupils attending St. Aidan's are ill-equiped to avail of educational opportunities, and many other may under-achieve due to family problems and negative attitudes towards education in the home. The interviews with a variety of local agencies conducted as part of the present research, indicate a concern for youth in Brookfield, many of whom are considered to be "at risk".

The group of pupils selected as the sample for the present research study are representitive of typical adolescents in the Brookfield area. They are introduced in the next chapter.

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8 Sister Kathleen, community Worker, Brookfield, interview by author, October 1991 Sister Anne Home/School Liaison Officer, Brookfield, interview by author, March 1992.
Connaughton, Home/School Liaison Officer interview by author, May 1992
Bill Hicks, ex-Residents Association, interview by author, May 1992.
Non-teaching staff, St. Aidan's Community School, Brookfield interview by author, June 1992-February 1993

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CHAPTER V

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

A range of methods was used to assess the response of the sixth year pupils in St. Aidan's Community School, Brookfield, to their environment, to the school, and to the Art, Craft and Design discipline. The methods used included a survey of the pupils' art education to date, and informal and structured interviews which examined the pupils' socio-economic circumstances and family background. Monthly tests in art and other subject areas were a valuable means of recording the progress made by the sixth years from September 1991 until May 1992.

Before presenting an account of the methods used, it is appropriate to introduce the group of pupils who have been selected for the purposes of this research study. The next section provides a description of the senior cycle art class, with relevant educational information. The pupils socio-economic status is referred to, where it has a bearing on their performance at school.

Sixth Year Group, St. Eunans.

At the time of undertaking the empirical research, the selected group of pupils were in sixth year in St. Aidan's Community School in Brookfield, Tallaght. There

were ten pupils in the sixth year art class in September 1991, the total number who chose the Art, Craft and Design option at senior cycle.

These ten pupils were among a total of seventy-six first years who entered second-level school in St. Aidan's in September 1987. Sixty-one of these pupils were banded as mixed ability students, and formed two classes, St. Eunan's and St. Catherine's; comprising thirty-one and thirty students respectively. The remaining fifteen pupils had learning difficulties and formed a small class called St. Colmcille's.

The problem of early-school leaving and poor attendance which is associated with disadvantaged pupils is reflected in the high drop-out rates which occurred during the three years of junior cycle. Only twenty-one of the original seventy-six entrants stayed on in school for senior cycle. There were further indicators of disadvantage evident in St. Eunan's, the group selected as Subjects for the present research.

The home backgrounds of the ten pupils in the sixth year art class has much in common with those described in the Local Area Study above. Three come from single-parent families where material resources were lacking and problems in the home led to difficulties in school. The pupils punctuality and attendance were poor; this was compounded by emotional problems which impeded educational progress. One of these three pupils dropped

out of school before Christmas 1991. Another pupil came from a dysfunctional family with a history of both physical and alcohol abuse; he had behavioural problems and was extremely introverted. Only four of the chief wage earners in the two-parent families had employment, so that most of the pupils had part-time jobs. Study time was therefore limited and the pupils' concentration suffered as a result of fatigue. Some of the group complained of the lack of peace and quiet, and the lack of facilities for study. More than half the pupils in the class were actively seeking employment throughout senior cycle.

The sixth year art class were representative of typical Brookfield teenagers. However, this was not the only reason for selecting this group as Subjects for the study. Other factors which influenced the choice of this group were;

- the desire to examine the possible benefits of art education during the five years of second-level education, rather than over the three year junior cycle programme.
- the belief that sixth year pupils, who are in their final year of formal schooling might be encouraged to develop the dispositions and skills promoted by art education in their future lives.
- the size of the group; the small numbers allowed for a more in-depth study of each member of the class, thus providing greater insights into the

value of art education for disadvantaged youth in Brookfield, and in similar areas.

- the desire to emphasis the valuable contribution of this discipline in senior cycle, a time when many pupils opt for the more "academic subjects"

It was decided that a variety of methods would be used to obtain profiles on the sixth year art class. The first of these was a survey of the pupils' art education to date.

Survey: Art Education, St. Eunan's

The sixth year art class were given a set of questions in September 1991, which aimed to establish the nature and extent ot their art education to date. The pupils were asked if they had been involved in art activities in the pre-school years, and to recall how much time they had been devoted to art education in Primary school. They were questioned on the nature of art education in the Primary and Second-level curricula; on their familiarity with art processes and materials; and on their attitudes to the Art, Craft and Design discipline during schooling. The pupils were asked whether they saw links between Primary and Second-level education, if they viewed art as an important area of the curriculum, and whether or not they felt it could contribute to their lives then, and in the future.

This survey was conducted in advance of other methods used, such as interviews and tests, as it provided information likely to influence the pupils' performance throughout the year. The survey was also a valuable means of identifying those aspects of art education which most interested the pupils, and was useful in planning the art programme for the following year.

Structured Interview 1 (S.I.1), St. Eunan's

The first of the structured interviews focused on the sixth years' attitudes to the school and to their local environment. It was necessary to ascertain how representative the sample was and consequently, there are questions concerning family size, occupations and number of dependents. The pupils were asked to identify their chief needs in their present and future lives, and to say whether, and to what extent, their school education might answer these needs. Questions on the role of school and education in the context of the Brookfield environment provided vital information for the present research study. The pupils' descriptions of violence and crime in the area helped form a more complete picture of life in a disadvantaged environment; they also reflected the concern which the students had for socio-economic issues.

Perhaps one of the chief benefits of Interview 1 was the insight into, and the deeper understanding of, individual pupils which it provided. Questions concerning the cultural aspect of their lives were expanded upon in the second of the structured interviews.

Structured Interview 2 (S.I.2), St. Eunan's.

The emphasis in Structured Interview 2 was on the pupils' access to art. The pupils were asked to respond to visits to galleries and exhibitions which had taken place in Autumn 1991 and Spring 1992. These cultural visits were an integral part of the art education programme for the year, and they are explained in detail in the next chapter. The class were asked for their opinion on the art historical aspects of the Leaving Certificate art syllabus, and to say whether they would consider going on similar cultural visits out of school time.

An important component of the access to art programme was the inclusion of a first year art class who were tutored and supervised by the sixth year pupils. Many of the questions in Interview 2 are therefore concerned with the sixth year attitudes to the role of tutor. It was necessary to discover if, and to what extent, the sixth years may have benefited from this experience. It was also possible to ascertain whether visits to original artworks might have a specific value for disadvantaged pupils.

Structured Interview 3 (S.I.3), St. Eunan's

The third structured interview combined an analysis of the pupils' artwork with questions on their attitudes to the Brookfield area. The group of sixth year students had focused on the theme "Tallaght As I View it" for a local art competition. The artwork produced provided opportunities to compare and contrast the pupils' visual and verbal responses to Tallaght. As sections of the interview ran in tandem with the artistic work, it was possible to examine the techniques employed at each stage and to discover why some processes were selected in favour of others.

It was appropriate that the sixth years had an opportunity to relate their environment to their artwork; they were happy to express visually their attitudes to the local area. Some of the questions aim to establish whether a visual or a verbal mode of expression was considered most suitable in enabling them to interpret and convey their views on Brookfield. It was valuable also to see whether their use of tone, line, composition, colour and perspective reflected an understanding of the art elements. One of the key issues examined in Interview 3 was the pupils' choice of starting point, the view depicted by each student could provide a good deal of information about his/her perceptions of the area.

The analysis of work in progress encouraged the sixth years to be more specific about their environment and indeed, about their artistic endeavours. This interview was also designed to examine how conscious the pupils were of the communicative aspects of visual art, and to reinforce visual awareness.

Progress Reports, September 1991 - May 1992, St. Eunan's

The performance of the sixth year group was regularly assessed, using monthly and end-of-term tests. These tests helped to monitor the pupils' progress in the theoretical and practical aspects of art and indicated which areas of the syllabus needed most attention. The test results and weekly homework grades were combined so that a profile of each students' ability and progress was gradually formed.

Through discussion with teachers of the sixth year group it was possible to compare performance in art with that in other subjects areas. Informal interviews with these teachers were also worthwhile in that they helped form a fuller and more comprehensive understanding of the sixth years. In some cases, it was possible to devise co-operative teaching strategies so that the sixth years experienced a more integrated approach to learning. Tests were devised in order to examine the effectiveness of these methods.

Informal interviews with members of St. Eunan's art class contributed to an understanding of the pupils' progress throughout the year. These interviews took place in and out of art class and were useful in establishing a rapport with each member of the class. Initially the interviews were taped, but this method was discontinued as it tended to inhibit many of the pupils.

Conclusion

A combination of methods of inquiry was used to elicit responses from the pupils to their environment, their artwork, and to second-level education. In general the written answers to the survey of art education mentioned earlier, were referred to in the planning of the art programme for sixth year; they provided essential background information on the pupils' art activities during Primary and Second-level education. The responses to the survey were a useful reference throughout the year which aided analysis of artistic progress. Analysis and evaluation of the sixth year art work was concerned with two key issues:

- their familiarity with and understanding of art elements,
- the ability to use these to express attitudes in a visual way.

These issues were emphasised in Structured Interview 3.

It was necessary to identify the major socio-economic and cultural needs of the pupils, and this was largely accomplished through questioning in Structured Interviews 1 and 2. This information, combined with the progress reports from tests and homework grades, provided a comprehensive school and home profile of the sixth year pupils.

The research was planned to test my hypothesis that art education can make a valuable contribution to the lives of disadvantaged pupils. The variety of methods used in the research has been effective in determining to what extent this hypothesis is proven. The next chapter focuses on the major components of the art education programme which was carried out with the sixth year group from 1991 to 1992.

CHAPTER VI
TEACHING PROGRAMME

SCHOOL: St. Aidan's Community School,
Brookfield, Tallaght, Dublin 24.

CLASS : Sixth Year Art Class, St. Eunan's

DATES : September 1991 - June 1992

Introduction

The senior-cyle student of art is required to take four test papers in the Leaving Certificate examination. Art teachers frequently argue that the extensive art history course cannot be given adequate attention, and that many Art Craft and Design processes must also be neglected because of the time constraints. The art programme pursued in the academic year 1991 - 1992 with the sixth year group was designed so as to integrate both the practical and historical dimensions of art education. The pupils learned how to write in the Irish half-uncial style of calligraphy which was used to create the Book of Kells and the Book of Durrow; they examined Renaissance paintings and made compositions employing similar rules of perspective and balance; and they set up a mini-company which made successful inter-disciplinary links between business studies and art.

This chapter focuses on three major units of the art education programme. The first two units outline the

methods used to increase the pupils' access to, and appreciation of, aspects of culture, through visits to art exhibitions. The third unit demands a visual response by the pupils to their environment. A key aim of all three units was to fulfil Erikson's belief that "to assist growth we need to provide adolescents with increasing amounts of independence and responsibility " (2). The units are intended to be valuable in any school context. However, they may be parcticularly relevant to disadvantaged adolescents, who especially benefit from experiences which help to increase their levels of self-esteem and achievement, and from genuine opportunities to take on responsibilty.

Access to Art
Unit 1: The Kremlin Gold Exhibition, The Royal Hospital, Kilmainham, October 1991.

One of the most exciting artistic ventures during Dublin's year as "European City of Culture" in 1991, was the exhibition of gold artefacts loaned by Russia for display in the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham.

This collection, from the Armoury collection of the State Museums of the Moscow Kremlin, was created over a period of eight hundred years, from the twelfth to the early twentieth century. Both secular and religious artefacts are included . Gold was most typically used to create revered holy objects such as icons and crosses. Gold figured not only as a precious metal, but as an

ancient symbol of rule and power. Silver was popular also, as were precious stones and enamel.

The Kremlin Gold artefacts had much in common with those created in Ireland during the High Period of Irish Christian culture in the eight century. The sixth year group had been studying the work created during this era in school, and had already seen the Ardagh Chalice, the Tara Brooch and other artefacts from the seventh and eighth centuries on a visit to the National Museum in May 1991. It was possible that a visit to the Kremlin Gold exhibition would allow for a comparison and contrast of styles of work, whilst reinforcing the pupils' knowledge of the Irish artefacts.

A visit to the Kremlin Gold exhibition was planned for Monday, 21st October 1991. A feature of the visit was the company of a first year art class which comprised fifteen pupils. The inclusion of the first year group was intended to test specific aims of the visit:

- If the sixth year group could serve as tutors to the younger group.
- If there were benefits associated with tutoring for the sixth years.
- Is so, what these benefits were.
- If the visit would encourage greater communication within St. Aidan's as a result of the teaming youngest and oldest pupils in the school on a cultural outing.

- If the pupils would benefit from having this direct access to art.

The aims of this historical visit were outlined with reference to David Shaffer's rationale for peer- and cross-age tutoring. Shaffers claims that:

> ...if you have ever had a teaching position or made an oral presentation in the classroom, you may have experienced a feeling that is common among classroom instructors - one invariably learns by teaching others. The same is apparently true of children who teach their peers, for several studies indicate that low achievers who serve as tutors for younger students show an improvement in their own academic achievement.(2)

It would be interesting to see whether the sixth years' academic performance would improve as a result of tutoring their first year partners. It was particularly hoped that the sixth year group might derive other rewards from acting as tutors on the visit. This was based on Shaffer's belief that older tutors, especially low-achievers:

> ... acquire a new perspective on school as they begin to derive many benefits - prestige, rewards from adults, respect from their tutees, and so on - from their tutoring experiences. Indeed, children who serve as tutors often show an improvement in their *self-concepts* and their *attitudes towards school.* (3)

There is evidence in the psychological literature review in Chapter Three above to suggest that

disadvantaged adolescents in particular could benefit from activities which would promote positive attitudes towards school and increase feelings of self-esteem and confidence.(4)

A further aim of the visit to the Kremlin Gold exhibition relates to Rod Taylor's arguments for the value of a critical studies approach to art education. Taylor claims that pupils develop a heightened appreciation and enjoyment of the arts through art education, which in turn can educate pupils' perceptions of the whole of their environments, both natural and man-made. (5) Taylor feels that art historical visits and opportunities to view art exhibitions are most effective in promoting the development of critcal skills and aesthetic awareness. He adds that direct contact with art objects can make art education more meaningful.(6) Taylor's findings, based on studies of visits to art galleries with a disadvantaged group of pupils, indicate the particular value of direct access to art for the pupils who are the subjects of the present research study. (7) One of the central aspects of the Access to Art programme relates to the value of cultural visits for disadvantaged pupils. This unit provides an opportunity to examine whether, as Taylor said "all children, irrespective of background, can benefit from a critical studies approach to learning".(8)

As the first year pupils had only spent six weeks in St. Aidan's at the time of planning the Kremlin Gold visit, it was hoped that greater interaction between pupils from different school years would be encouraged. The sixth years, who were in their fifth and final year in St. Aidan's would perhaps help the first years feel more 'at home' and confident in the school. First years can have a difficult time when they make the transition from Primary to Second-level schools: this is a particularly true in St. Aidan's where some fairly unpleasant 'initiation' techniques have been employed.(9)

The sixth and first year pupils were introduced to each other during a first year art class on the 16th October 1991, one week before the visit to the Kremlin Gold exhibition. This also provided an opportunity to discuss the work which would be on view and to give information on the origins of the Kremlin Gold treasures.

The students were divided into teams. Each team was composed of one sixth year and two first years for the bus journey to Kilmainham the following week. During the journey, they were to examine the worksheet which was common to both years. The pupils were required the to name and date the artefacts which most appealed to them, at the exhibition, and to make line, tonal and colour studies of two of these. The necessary materials were distributed by the sixth years outside the Royal

Hospital, while the extrance fee was collected by some first years.

The exhibition was laid out along one main aisle of the building while rooms on either side contained more of the precious artefacts . The pupils looked at the entire exhibition initally, and then returned to selected items to make observational studies. The pupils were asked to take note of the diverse array of materials including gold, silver, sapphires, pearls, chasing and even fur which were used in the workshop of the Moscow Kremlin. A range of techniques were employed by these craftsmen during the eight centuries of production, so it was possible to see the development of "Niello" (black enamel), and "Cloisonne" which is the portrayal of saints in princely ornaments.

In the afternoon, it was decided that the students should view the work on display in the general exhibition area in the Royal Hospital. These exhibits were very different to the superb artistry of the Russian craftsmen which we had seen in the morning. The contemporary work on display there included exhibits by William Scott, Ben Sclonzeit and Mililitt; perhaps more of a cultural "leap" than a "step" for the first and sixth year pupils. There was a great variety of exhibits; painting, sculptures, mixed media and even an installation exhibit entitled "Strongbow". Again, the first and sixth years were

required to select a favourite piece and to make a sketch of this on their worksheets.

One of the attractions of visiting exhibitions at the Royal Hospital in Kilmainham is this very facility which allows the visitor to view a wide range of work in one centre. It was felt that the contrasts in scale, materials and themes between the contemporary work and the Kremlin Gold arefacts might have encouraged a broadening of the pupils' appreciative and critical skills. The range of work on view in the Royal Hospital is evident from the worksheet samples (see Illustrations 2,3, pp. 144, 145). Photographs of the first and sixth year pupils at the Royal Hospital (see Illustrations 4,5) are shown on page 146.

Access to Art
Unit 2 :Gateway to Art, Aer Rianta Arts Festival, Dublin Airport, February 1992.

The Gateway to Art exhibition is an integral part of the Aer Riannta Arts Festival which has been held in Dublin Airport since 1988. At the time of our visits in February 1992, the work of one hundred and twenty of Ireland's most accomplished and talented artists had been exhibited in the terminal, providing an Irish cultural gateway for foreign visitors. Over sixty Irish painters and sculptors displayed their work in the 1992 exhibition, which ran from the 31st January until the 19th February 1992.

It was decided that a coach would be used to transport the pupils and myself from Brookfield to the airport and back to St.Aidan's in the afternoon. There were fewer sixth years on this visit than on the previous one, as two were ill and one girl had dropped out of sixth year before Christmas. The first and sixth year pupils examined the Gateway to Art catalogue during the journey to the airport; the pupils had an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the sculptures and paintings which they were about to see. A great variety of contemporary work was on display including pieces in wood, metal and stone and two-dimensional work using oil, acrylic, pastel and water-colours.

The terminal which housed the exhibition in Dublin Airport was a particularly suitable venue as the left-hand side is almost completly glass, therefore providing excellent natural light for the exhibits. The two-dimensional work hung on the right-hand wall, and the three-dimensional pieces were arranaged on stands or were free-standing through the centre of the terminal. The airport staff provided badges and junior and senior level worksheets, while the first years distributed clouring pencils, crayons and pencils. The sixth and first year pupils had been asked to view the entire exhibition initially, and to make a study of their favourite piece, giving reasons for their choice on the worksheet.

The sixth and first year pupils were quite at ease with one another at this stage, not only because of their joint visit to the Kremlin Gold exhibition, but also because of the regular visits which sixth year pupils had made to first year art classes throughout the previous four months. The first years had been making puppets, a craft with which the sixth years were already familiar. The visit to the Gateway to Art exhibition aimed to reinforce feelings of responsibility and self-esteem which had been encouraged in sixth year pupils as a result of this tutoring. Sprinthall and Sprinthall claim that "teenagers learn to teach, counsel, and care for younger classmates" (10) during school programmes which involve peer and cross-age tutoring. Sprinthall and Sprinthall add that such responsibility stimulates the pupils' own leadership development and psychological maturation, which indicates that tutoring programmes are particularly relevant in second-level education.(11) Linda Nielsen is also an advocate of peer-and cross-age tutoring and believes that while "cooperative learning strategies have been proven more effective than competitive techniques with even the most talented students", they are particularly benefical for disadvantaged adolescents (12)

A further aim of the visit to the Gateway to Art Exhibition is related to Biehler and Snowman's conviction that disadvantaged children "typically have not been

exposed to a wide variety of experiences". (13) There is evidence also to suggest that disadvantaged pupils rarely get opportunities to enjoy cultural outings with their schools; Taylor states that "some pupils are rarely taken out on visits because of worry about their behaviour". (14) It was hoped that the visit to the Aer Rianta Arts Festival might encourage the first and sixth year groups to go on similar outings themselves. Perhaps the Gateway to Art exhibition would go someway towards compensating for the lack of such visits in the pupils' home and school lives.

Certainly the exhibition presented work of great quality and diversity. Both sculptures and paintings varied greatly in size, style, media and theme. The photographs (see Illustrations 6,7,8,9, pp. 163-164) give some indication of the range of work on view, and of the pupils' enjoyment of the visit. Samples of sixth and first year work sheets (see Illustrations 10,11) are provided on pages 165 and 166.

UNIT 3: The "Tallaght As I View It" competition, The Village Green Shopping and Leisure Centre, Tallaght, Dublin, June 1992.

It is vital that disadvantaged pupils, in particular, have opportunities to experience some degree of success in school. This unit emphasises that particular aspect of art education and presents a section of the teaching programmes which, it was hoped,

this would increase levels of motivation and self-esteem in the pupils.

One of the boys in the first year art class had won the £50 first prize in an art and essay competition sponsored by the Bank of Ireland in January 1992. The excitement generated by this success added to the motivation to compete in the "Tallaght As I View It" competition which was launched in March 1992. The organisers of the competition invited pupils attending community schools in Tallaght to express visually their feelings towards the area. Local businessman Kevin Molloy, the sponsor of the competition and a native of Tallaght himself, wanted to generate an interest in the area and was concerned with the promotion and development of talent and skills among Tallaght youth. In an interview in the local newspaper *The Tallaght Echo*, Molloy stated that he was delighted to be associated with a project which gave an outlet to the creative abilities of young people. At the prize giving ceremony, Molloy said that:

> Tallaght is now the most highly populated area of the country outside of Dublin city, and it is heartening to know that we have such a rich resource of talent in the area.(15)

The theme of the competition was ideal for the purposes of the present research study. The sixth year pupils had, in the course of a number of informal and

structured interviews, informal questions about their evironment, their school and art education. It would be interesting to see how their attitudes would be expressed in a visual way. Many key points could now be considered;

- How would the sixth year pupils' visual response to Tallaght compare with their verbal response ?
- What aspects of their surroundings would the sixth year pupils choose?
- What media would be selected by the sixth year pupils for their visual representation of Tallaght?
- Would they make use of particular art elements to communicate their attitudes in their art work ?
- Would the sixth year pupils find a visual means appropriate for conveying these attitudes ?
- Would the sixth year pupils benefit in any way from taking part in the competition, and from visually describing Tallaght ?

Taking part in the "Tallaght As I View It" competition was worthwhile for other reasons: links had been formed between local business, schools and community, which would possibly encourage further co operation on joint ventures in the future; a much needed forum for the artistic talent of Tallaght youth was provided through the competition, and by the public exhibition of entries which was to be displayed in "The

Village Green" shopping and leisure centre throughout the month of June. The theme of the competition promoted the use of starting points based on the pupils' direct experience of the natural, social and man-made environment, which reflected an interest in the attitudes and opinions of adolescents in the Tallaght area. It was possible that greater community spirit could be fostered through such events.

The sixth year group were asked to select a starting point in their home or school environment which best described their views of Tallaght. With the word 'Tallaght' written on the blackboard, the sixth years were asked to suggest words and phrases which related to the theme. The introduction of the theme also included historical reference to the work of John Constable and Jan Vermeer; Constable for his choice of high vantage points to portray broad panoramic views, and Vermeer for his ability to convey the essence and compositional beauty of interiors.

The sixth year pupils were judged in the fifteen to seventeen year-old age group, the senior category of the competition. Many of the first year art class, referred to in unit 1 and 2 above, also took part in the "Tallaght As I View It" competition in the Junior category. In the next chapter the work produced by the sixth years in response to this competition is examined.

Conclusion

A number of questions are posed in this chapter which relate to the particular value of art education for disadvantaged pupils. In units 1 and 2 the question is asked whether the sixth years could derive benefit from their roles as tutors to first years in, and what the possible benefits of tutoring might be. These units emphasise the value of cultural visits for diadvantaged pupils, who may previously have had few 'opportunities' prior to this, to avail of direct access to art.

The questions posed in Unit 3 of the teaching programme relate to the sixth year pupils' ability to express their views of Tallaght in a visual way. It would be interesting also to discover which aspects of their environment the pupils would choose to represent, and whether they would find a visual medium suitable as a means of conveying their attitudes on Tallaght to the viewer.

The teaching programme was intended to be of educational value, and aimed to help pupils achieve their full potential. Not only should the programme motivate the sixth years to progress artistically, it should also aim to answer a broader definition of needs, including the need to achieve, to promote self-confidence and to encourage independence and self-esteem. The effectiveness

of the teaching programme in addressing the needs of disadvantaged teenagers is considered in the next chapter.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER VI

1 Sprinthall and Sprinthall, Educational Psychology, p. 158.

2 Schaffer, Developmental Psychology, p. 682.

3 Ibid.

4 Rhodes Brown, Why Some Children Succeed, p. 32S

5 Rod Taylor, Educating for Art, pp. 98-99.

6 Ibid., p. 96.

7 Ibid., p. 107.

8 Ibid.

9 Reports by pupils of toilet duckings, bullying, at St. Aidans Community School, Brookfield, Tallaght, Dublin 24., September 1992

10 Sprinthall and Sprinthall, Educational Psychology p. 163.

11 Ibid.

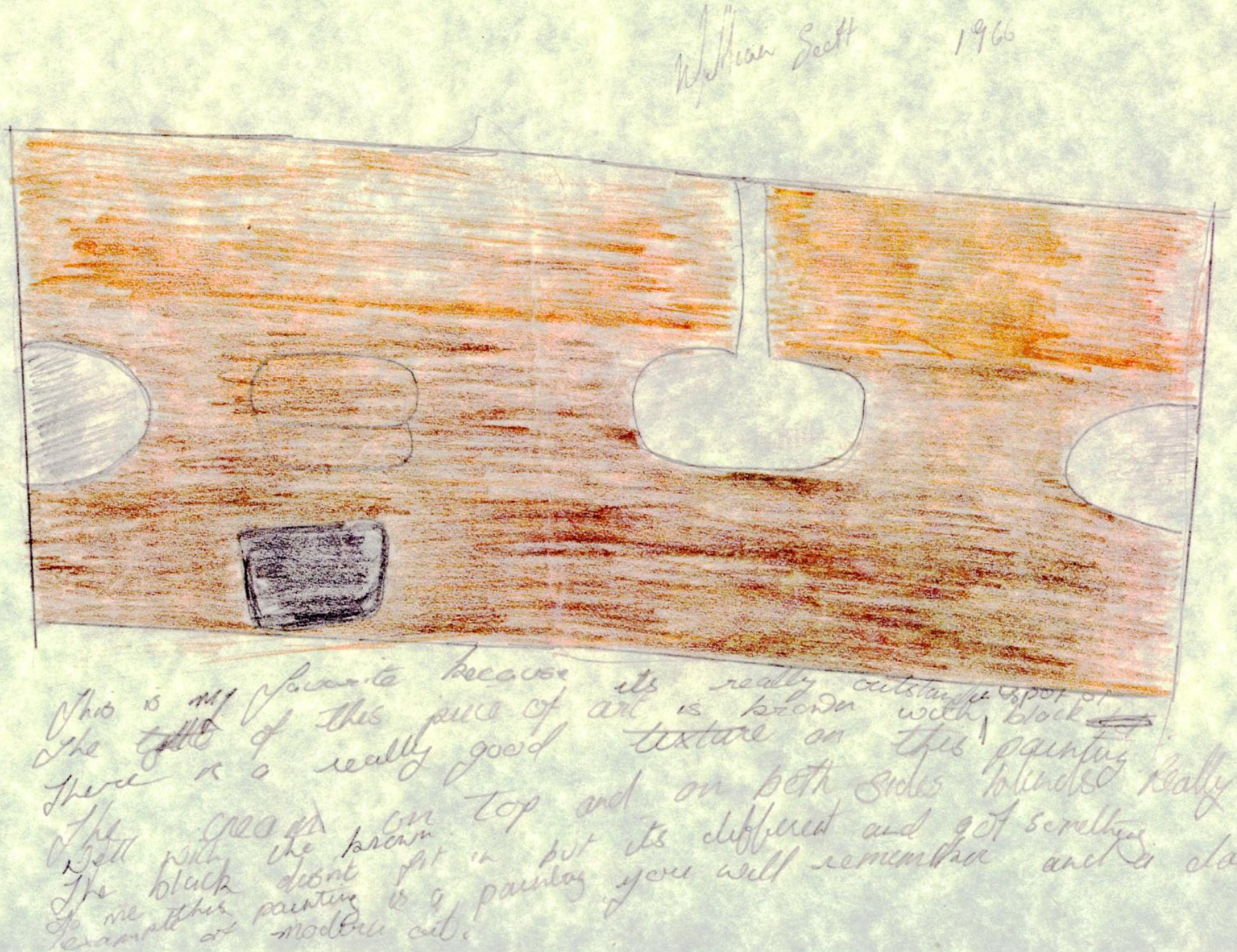
12 Nielsen, Adolescence, p. 269.

13 Biehler and Snowman, Psychology Applied to Teaching, p. 15.

14 Taylor, Educating for Art, p. 103.

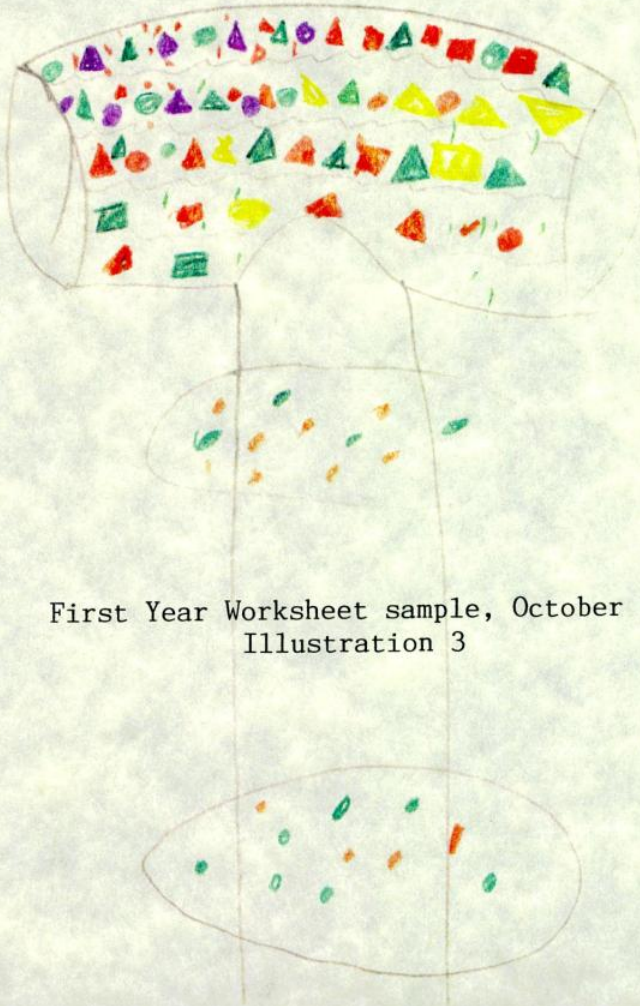
15 Kevin Molloy, The Tallaght Echo (Echo House, 48 Old Bawn Road, Tallaght, Dublin 24, week ending 3rd July 1992), p. 6. see p. 21 above.

Illustration 2



Sixth Year Worksheet sample, October 1991





First Year Worksheet sample, October 1991
Illustration 3



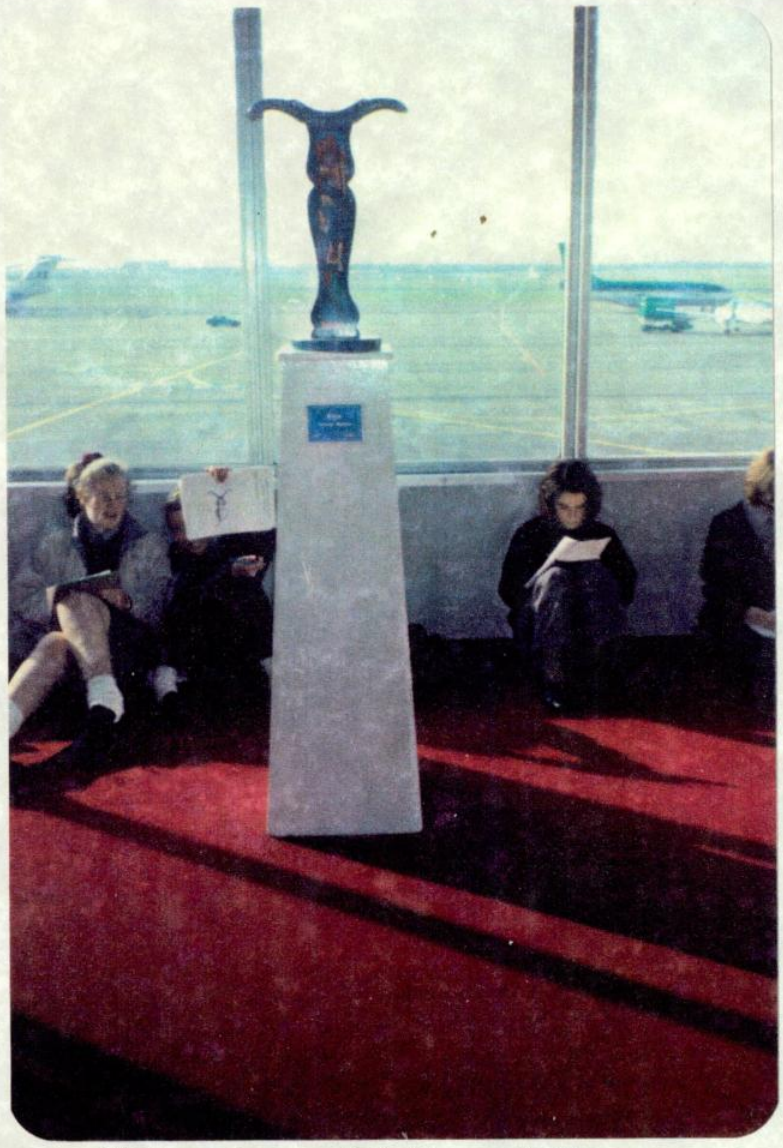
Sixth Years distribute materials in Kilmainham
Illustration 4



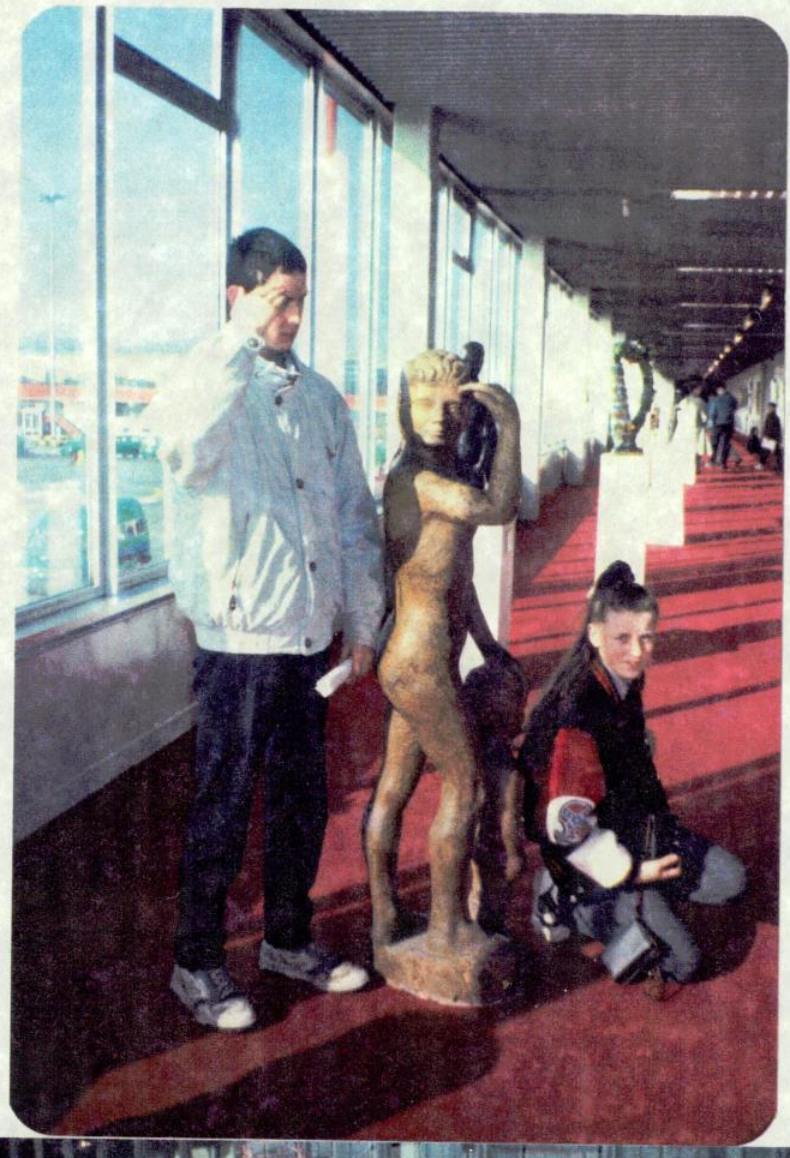
First Years pose beside sculpture
Illustration 5



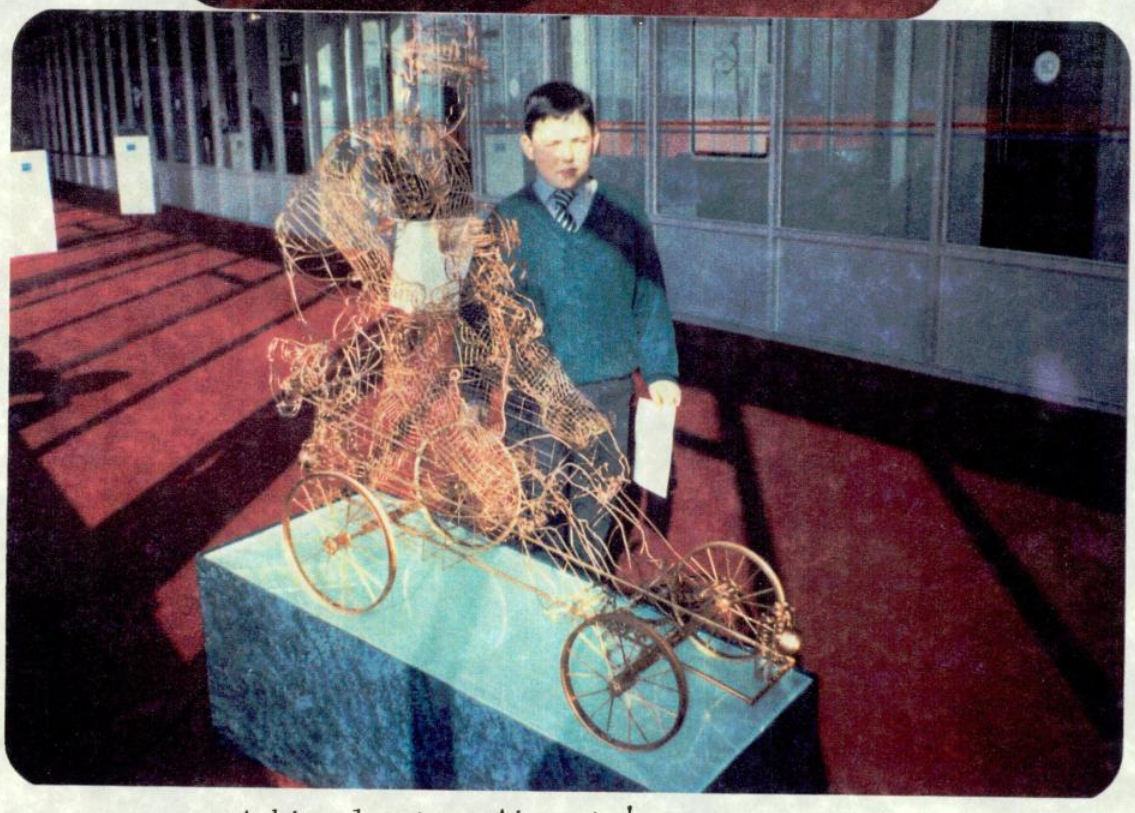
Dublin Airport, 1992
Illustration 6



"I love Iorcan Walsh's work !"
Illustration 7



Salute !
Illustration 8



A bicycle at an Airport !
Illustration 9

Aer Rianta Arts Festival Dublin Airport 1992

Impressions of "Gateway to Art"

Make up a story or a poem about the paintings and sculptures you see in the gallery.
Why not illustrate your words with sketches.

DEBBIE LAHIFFE



Title = fireplace + Jug by Ann. Lynch

£375

Sixth Year Worksheet sample, February 1992
Illustration 10

This painting was one of the more realistic paint
& using oils the Jug was in blues + greens
the back ground was grey and burgandy the



First Year Worksheet sample, February 1992
Illustration 11

Introduction

The results of the present research study are analysed under four principal headings which relate to the sixth year pupils. The first section aims to evaluate the socio-economic circumstances of the pupils and to determine the extent of disadvantage in their lives. This information was provided in the responses to Structured Interview 1, (S.I.1, Appendix 2).

The second section draws on responses to S.I.1 also, but the emphasis in this analysis is on the pupils' attitudes to their school, to the senior cycle curriculum and to education generally. The pupils' views on education provide a necessary context for an examination of their responses to art education.

A survey composed of eighteen questions presented to the pupils in September 1991 provided information on the Subjects' art education to date. The format and extent of this education is examined in the third section of this chapter, which also looks at the pupils' response to, and appreciation of, art education.

The fourth and final section concentrates on the art programme carried out during sixth year with the case study Subjects.

The results in this section are possibly the most pertinent to the present study, concerned as they are with the positive contributions of art education for pupils from low-income environments. In view of the small number of pupils studied, it is not possible to draw any conclusion from these results; it is, however, worthwhile to examine the attitudes of these Brookfield adolescents towards art and education.

Socio-Economic Factors and the Case Study Subjects.

A number of questions in Structured Interview 1 (S.I.1. Appendix 2) examined the socio-economic circumstances of the sixth year group. It was necessary to discover if the subjects were representative of Brookfield youth, and to determine whether their educational outcomes might be affected by any of the aspects of material or cultural deprivation outlined in Chapter Two above.

The Subjects' response to questions concerning their homes and environment indicated an awareness of the socio-economic difficulties affecting Brookfield. Some pupils had direct experience of unemployment: only four of the chief wage-earners among the parents had employment, and three pupils came from single-parent

families. Except for one pupil who was a member of An Slua Mhuire, each of the sixth years was searching for part-time work during the final year in St. Aidan's. They were concerned that their study time would be limited because of part-time work, but were adamant that they needed the income. The pupils were not hopeful of getting employment after school: one sixth year said that she "wouldn't expect to get work, even trying to get Summer work is very difficult", and another complained of the "lack of companies or any suitable employment in Tallaght". An analysis of the answers to questions concerning prospects of employment and home background reveals that pupils in the class believe that a Brookfield address will significantly affect their employment opportunities.

The sixth years felt that employers would be reluctant to hire young people from Tallaght. According to Tanya it was "because Tallaght has a bad name, that young people living there are believed to be troublesome". Audrey claimed that specific areas of Tallaght, such as Brookfield, were less attractive to prospective employers that others. She cited an example in which her brother had applied for positions, but only received replies when he used a sister's address at Old Bawn. There was a marked tendency in the sixth year pupils to make associations between their background and their employment opportunities, and to believe that the

Brookfield environment would continue to influence their life prospects in a negative way.

The sixth year Subjects were asked to list their chief likes and dislikes about Brookfield, and correlations can be drawn between many of their statements and the account of Brookfield presented in the Local Area Study in Chapter Four above. Only one of the sixth year pupils would consider living in Brookfield permanently, the rest of the class were too concerned with the high level of crime and unemployment in the area to contemplate staying. It is worthwhile to look at some of the pupils' statements about Brookfield, as they provide useful insights into the principle concerns of these young people, and at the same time highlight the extent and nature of disadvantage in the area.

Alan said that Brookfield was "a kip, it looks poor and underprivileged, it's very rough", while Paul expressed stronger sentiments when he said "I hate it: it's oppressive, there's so much violence. It has nothing to offer and it's too isolated". The pupil response suggests that each member of the class had experienced violence on a personal level within his/her environment. Vincent gave the following account of an occasion when he was harassed:

> There were a few of us at the disco, and one of the blokes in another group started mouthing off about me, saying I had grassed him up in work.

> I asked him if he wanted to do something about it and he backed down completely. He got a few more heads together and when we got outside they were waiting for us with iron bars. We were able for them, but we had only just taken them on when the Maria came screeching in and everyone scattered. That was unusual, the police coming, that disco is O.K whereas there's other that the cops wouldn't approach at all.

Paul also described an occasion when he was threatened, but this time by a girl, with an iron bar. He also said he had been threatened with knives and referred to other acts of violence which he was aware of:

> In the last two months I've heard of four murders in my general area. There's constant verbal and mental violence also, people staring you down, walking behind you in groups and trying to intimidate you. Then you have these massive gangs of eighteen or nineteen blokes walking through the centre of other groups and looking for trouble.

The girls in the class had been threatened on several occasions also. Elaine gave an account of two attacks on her in school and explained that she had been followed and harassed on many occasions in her neighbourhood. Another girl was very worried about joy-riding:

> They're robbing three and four cars every night now! They go tearing around the area, and drive all over the green ... they could be in their neighbours' cars, they won't bother going outside the area any more. It's awful, then they burn them ... there were four wrecks still burning this morning.

It is evident from the pupils' accounts that crime is a feature of everyday life in Brookfield. Further inquiry indicated that the pupils associate the high levels of violence in Brookfield with socio-economic issues. In line with Staunton's views outlined in the Local Area Study above, the pupils believed that youths in their teens were the main perpetrators of crime in the area, and that the root causes of problems in Brookfield arose from deprivation. Debbie stated that "the high population of young people increases the trouble: they've no self-confidence because of unemployment", while Paul believed that "prejudice and anguish over the fact that there's nothing to do in the area", were major contributors to crime in Brookfield. James was equally concerned about the lack of facilities in his neighbourhood; he was convinced that there was a relationship between inadequate leisure activities and joy-riding, and said that "young people have nothing to do, so they make their own entertainment". This view was supported by Vincent who spoke of those involved in crime in Brookfield;

> There's no money in the area, so they look for thrills in other areas, and robbing gives it to them... and it makes money too.

It was necessary to ascertain to what extent the Subjects' lives were influenced by the socio-economic difficulties affecting Brookfield. The sixth year response to questions concerning day and night time

movement in the area indicates that many pupils feel unsafe in the neighbourhood. One sixth year boy gave the following account:

> I often have to take the 'scenic route' to places. I would avoid the main roads because gangs hang out there, and stick to the less travelled routes. I'd avoid The Square also, especially the Bowling Alley unless I was in company.

Another boy said that:

> The fear of physical violence is the main threat, you could get beaten up for no reason, maybe just because the guys are out of their heads.

One of the girls claimed that she:

> would never go out at night-time alone. I keep away from laneways connecting housing estates and big, badly lit areas like fields and parks. I would take a bus if they were available, but they stop at half seven.

The sixth years also provided information on the type of crime which they were most familiar with. Aside from petty harassment such as stone-throwing and name calling, the Subjects noted the frequency of acts of violence such as fighting, murder, suicide, muggings and rape. Instances of joy-riding, larceny and general vandalism also rated highly as causes of disruption in Brookfield.

As already stated these observations of the sixth year pupils indicate an awareness of socio-economic difficulties in their environment. These are compatible with descriptions provided in the review of sociological

literature in Chapter Three, and the accounts of problems affecting Brookfield in Chapter Four. It is proposed to consider the relationship between environment and school in the following analysis of sixth year views.

Education and the Case Study Subjects

It is not unreasonable to expect, particularly in the light of the research findings which highlight low levels of appreciation of education in disadvantaged environments, that the sixth year Subjects' attitudes to school would be less than positive. Contrary to expectations however, the sixth years were unanimous in their appreciation of school. They were enthusiastic about the good atmosphere in St. Aidan's and "the friendly, down-to-earth approach" of staff. Tanya also liked "the range of activities" and felt that "communication between teachers and pupils is very good, which makes it easy to learn".

A high proportion of students believed that their educational performance could be influenced by socio-economic factors in their background. Elaine stated that "class differences have a big effect on education here we have a shortage of cash, so that we can't buy the materials we need, or spend on educational visits and school trips". Tanya agreed with Elaine's statement, and

gave an account of an occasion when, in her opinion, her environment negatively influenced her education:

> I remember when my cousin and myself wanted to try going to a school outside of this area. We applied to Loreto in Crumlin, but when we told them where we were coming from, I don't think they were impressed! Our interview ended quickly as soon as we mentioned Brookfield.

Tanya felt that her Tallaght background was not well received and had a negative influence on her educational progress. The other sixth year pupils supported this view, and admitted to using alternative addresses on their curriculum vitae and employment application forms.

There was a high regard amongst the sixth year pupils for those aspects of learning which are not strictly within the confines of second-level syllabi. The Subjects of this study regarded the development of interpersonal and communication skills as a priority in their education, and also rated independence, responsibility, initiative and self-confidence as vital elements in this process. Other abilities which the Subjects wished to nurture were those concerned with staying power, self-control, teamwork, caring and leadership. The sixth years were asked whether they felt their Primary and Second-level education had answered any of their needs, and their response indicates higher levels of satisfaction with Post-Primary than Primary schooling. One sixth year boy succinctly expressed the views of the group on this issue:

> You don't get much of a chance to grow as a person in Primary school, there are more opportunities in Secondary to take responsibility and to communicate with adults as well as pupils. There's also a better variety of subjects.

When the sixth years were asked to discern links between the skills and abilities which they considered important, and the Leaving Certificate curriculum, there was a marked tendency to relate practical subjects to the development of communication skills. Alan, who played basketball at an international level, said that teamwork was a priority and as captain of his team, he "needed to be able to communicate messages to the team from the coach". He rated physical education most highly among his school subjects, but was aware that interpersonal skills were encouraged in other disciplines such as construction studies and career guidance.

Many students emphasised the value of home economics, art and construction studies as contributing to the development of communication skills, and to the development of a sense of responsibility and co-operation. There was general consensus that the processes involved in these subjects encouraged independence and an ability to get on well with others, as well as developing practical and manipulative skills. English and business organisation were highly regarded, especially in relation to job-hunting and future

employment. Audrey said that her ability to express herself had improved through the study of english, while Tanya found it helpful in preparation for interviews. The sixth year pupils were generally satisfied with the senior-cycle curriculum, although they did have suggestions for improving this; Audrey wanted a greater emphasis on languages, Alan felt that much more time should be spent on preparation for the world of work.

The relevance of the senior-cyle curriculum and the importance of education were key issues of concern for the sixth year pupils. They were positive that the time spent in school had significant contributions to make to their general development. A more specific consideration of these contributions is outlined with regard to art education in the following section.

Art Education and the Case Study Subjects.

As the present research study is based on the hypothesis that art education can provide valuable learning experiences which are particularly relevant to disadvantaged pupils, it was essential that the Subjects' experience of art, and their attitude towards it, be examined. The eighteen-question survey to which the sixth years responded in September 1991 (Survey, Art

Education, Appendix 1) asked for details of art education to date.

The results reveal that the time allotted to art in Primary school was limited to one afternoon a week for six pupils, and one boy said that art classes might only occur once in every three weeks. Debbie said that "the art class was a privilege granted only if the class were good", and all sixth year pupils said that they had looked forward to art classes. The pupils were not experienced in a wide range of art processes; some had only used crayons or paint. This might be related to time restrictions in art education and to lack of resources, but the class were agreed that more time and instruction should have been devoted to art.

The sixth year attitudes to art education are probably best assessed by looking at some of the views they expressed in the course of this survey:

> I loved it, there was never enough time for art in school, but I used to do some at home. I liked drawing and painting, but I think I needed more preparation to be ready for art in Secondary school. (Elaine)
>
> Art develops your creativity; it makes school more interesting. Kids can develop artistic abilities and imagination, and it's good to learn young. (Debbie)
>
> I was never encouraged at art, I wasn't any good at it. I think it would help you learn in other subjects like technical drawing and

> you could get work doing airbrush work. It's good to know about colours also and their effects. (Vincent)

> You become more aware of what's around you when you study art. It wasn't varied enough in Primary school. I always liked to do projects on zombies, monsters and ghosts. It's a great leisure activity, and art appreciation helps you enjoy your leisure more. (Paul)

> I really enjoy the history of art. If I could, I'd like to be a historian, I'm really interested in information from the past. Art history goes very well with ordinary history; you've got the Renaissance, the wars and lots of links between the two. (James)

> Art is a great leisure opportunity. I would've chosen it as an option for the Inter (cert). If I'd known more about it, 'cos it's great. (Audrey)

Each of the sixth year Subjects found art welcoming and enjoyable. Alan had attended another school where art was not included on the Junior Cycle curriculum. He stressed the relaxing qualities of art education, but felt that it should also be appreciated for the fact that it helped develop skills in design and drawing. Paul felt that the skills he learned in art transferred easily into other disciplines including mechanical drawing and geography; he also believed that art education developed natural talent and "expanded" the individual.

The final section of the survey seeks to establish which aspects of art education the pupils found most fulfilling, and to identify areas which they would like to pursue during sixth year. An analysis of survey results indicated high levels of interest in art history projects and related gallery visits. Many sixth years wanted to develop drawing and painting skills while calligraphy was the most popular choice of craft for the Leaving Certificate. The survey responses were referred to in the planning of the teaching programme. The results of the art programme which are presented below are of considerable significance in the light of proposals put forward in the present research study.

Art Teaching Programme and the Case Study Subjects.

Certain needs of the sixth year pupils have been identified in the findings from Structured Interview 1 above. Many of these are caused by, or relate to, material deprivation. The review of literature in Chapter Two above refers to both material and cultural deprivation in disadvantaged areas.

It is proposed therefore to consider the cultural significance of the art programme with regard to the sixth year response to Structured Interview 2 (S.I.2, Appendix 3) and Structured Interview 3 (S.I.3, Appendix

4). The pupils' account of the practical and art historical elements of the teaching programme further emphasise the role which art can play in answering cultural needs.

Access to Art and the Case Study Subjects.

Initial investigation revealed that only two of the Subjects had experience of cultural outings prior to entering Senior Cycle in St. Aidan's. The boys mentioned other activities including sports and drives in the country, while trips to the zoo or park were the main alternatives listed by the girls. Analysis of results reveals high levels of interest in cultural visits; Elaine said that she loved cultural visits and that she "seemed to learn more by going to exhibitions and galleries and seeing actual artwork". Elaine's view is particularly relevant to the rationale for the Access to Art unit of the teaching programme. John Berger's belief "that all reproductions more or less distort, and that therefore the original painting is still in a sense unique" (1) is especially pertinent, as is Taylor's suggestion that "pupils obtain the maximum benefit from experiencing works of art and craft first hand". (2)

The visits to the Kremlin Gold and Gateway to Art exhibitions aimed to test this notion with regard to

disadvantaged pupils in particular. The response of the sixth year art class to these visits helps to identify some of the benefits of seeing actual artwork. Debbie observed that her enjoyment of gallery visits increased her enthusiasm for school-based art activities. There were obvious connections between the work on display in the Kremlin Gold exhibition and classwork in art.

The sixth years had been studying the items created during the high period of Irish Christian culture, and their choice of artefacts for observational drawing reflected the influence of classwork. A popular item was the highly decorated silver plate covered with intricate silver filigree, a technique the sixth years had admired on Irish treasures such as the Ardagh Chalice and Tar Brooch. Their appreciation for the quality of Irish craftsmanship soared when they realised that the Russian filigree had been created one thousand years later, in the eighteenth century. In a sense, therefore, the pupils' critical abilities increased as a result of viewing actual art objects rather than reproductions. Some of the pupils voiced their appreciation of opportunities to see artefacts; "You can learn far more in these places than you can from books or reproductions" was Paul's comment, while Audrey said that it was more interesting to view the work from a number of angles and to see its true size.

It would appear that the students' enthusiasm and interest in art increased in relation to the range of

works visited. As already mentioned, the pupils had looked at contemporary work in the general exhibition area of the Royal Hospital in the afternoon following the Kremlin Gold visit. In terms of the processes and materials used, and the size and themes of the contemporary work, the contrasts were huge. The pupils' worksheet (See Illustrations 2,3 pp.163-164) indicate an ability to be very flexible in their approach and a readiness to expand their views of art.

This versatility was encouraged in the later visit to the Gateway to Art exhibition hosted by Aer Rianta in Dublin Airport. Analysis of the worksheets on this occasion revealed the diverse interests of the sixth year pupils. Some chose to make tonal drawings of Declan Breen's paintings of mysterious figures in ambiguous monochromatic landscapes, while others selected the large paintings full of bright, searing colours by Michael Asher. One sixth year liked the futuristic appearance of Asher's work, another said that Breen's lonely figures gave her "a feeling of intrigue, loneliness and mystery". The sixth years were very interested in the catalogue which was examined during the coach journey to the airport; the fact that the artists were still living seemed to add an extra dimension to their enjoyment of the artwork.

Some pupils depicted three-dimensional work on their worksheets, from representational pieces such as "Sleeping Infant" by Derek Fitzsimons to abstract sculptures including "Mask" by Lorcan Walsh. Paul chose a wooden sculpture for its "lovely tones of blue, orange, red and lightish yellow..." and its shape and size. The response to gallery and exhibition visits made by the group during 1991-1992 were also indicative of the range and diversity of pupils' tastes. When asked which of the visits was most appealing and why, Alan said:

> The Aer Rianta exhibition is the one I liked best, because it had a greater range of work than the Museum, or the Kremlin Gold for example. I found it more interesting.

Paul most enjoyed a visit to the National Gallery, because;

> I enjoy looking at 2D work most. The work in the Gallery is varied, so you're not restricted to looking at one style, from one era. The Spanish room is one of the best.

An evening visit to the Royal Hospital in Kilmainham which included a lecture on Mainie Jellett and a exhibition of her work was favoured by James for a different reason:

> I liked the evening exhibition and the lecture on Mainie Jellett. It was nice to go out with friends to an interesting evening event. I enjoyed the lecture and I think that sort of thing would be good for college preparation, it would prepare you for further studies.

James found starting points for a lino-cutting in Mainie Jellett's work. (see Illustration 13, p. 206). The pupils were enthusiastic about attending a lecture based on work that they had seen. Tanya was particularly proud of the notes she had taken, as is evident in Illustration 12 on page 206.

In viewing artworks from the past and present which varied greatly in approach and style, the sixth years' appreciation of art was encouraged, so that they could discern cultural differences and a variety of art processes. Each student admitted that the experience of seeing actual artworks was more meaningful than looking at reproductions only. There is reason to believe also that the sixth years were facilitated to partake more readily in cultural activities as a result of the visits.

These findings arise from a question in S.I.2 which asked the sixth years whether their access to aspects of culture had increased as a result of the visits to museums, galleries and exhibitions Vincent's response to this question epitomises the views of many of his classmates:

> I didn't go to museums or galleries before because, well, I just wasn't interested. They're not the type of place where I think I'd fit in. It's funny though, when you do get in there; the Viking remains for example, they caught my attention and

> I thought Yeats' paintings were exciting. He must have used an awful lot of paint; did you see how thick it was ?

It appears that the experience of viewing art objects first hand may have led to more vivid memories of the work for Vincent and indeed the rest of the class. Vincent's belief that galleries and museums were not welcoming for him is worth considering, especially in the light of Bourdieu's researches which

> ... reveal that museums are associated most closely with churches in many peoples' minds, the association varying according to social class-but rising to 66 per cent of manual workers.(3)

Bourdieu's findings appear to correlate with Dembo's suggestions that disadvantaged pupils may be deprived of stimuli that affect intellectual and cognitive development. (4)

It is reasonable to expect that an unfamiliarity with cultural institutions, and a lack of cultural visits during childhood, might have significant consequences for disadvantaged young people. They are likely to experience feelings of discomfort, and as a result, could be disinclined to visit galleries or museums. The reluctance to visit galleries or museums experienced by Vincent and the other pupils may be a cultural phenomenon. This concept is explored in greater detail in Chapter Eight below.

It is evident that the sixth year pupils felt more inclined to visit art galleries and exhibitions as a result of their introduction to these during senior cycle in St. Aidan's. James said that he "would be more inclined to go on cultural outings from now on" and "to watch T.V. programmes on cultural issues". Debbie claimed that she had discovered "something very new and interesting to do at weekends, it is very enjoyable". Elaine felt that such visits "broaden your mind, I'll definitely go again. I've already been to the National Gallery by myself on a Sunday a few weeks back".

A further aim of the Access to Art unit of the teaching programme of this research study was to test the notion that disadvantaged youth benefit from tutoring peers or younger schoolmates. Shaffer points our some of the advantages of peer-tutoring for at-risk youths in Chapter Two above, and refers to the increases in self-confidence which are associated with this process. (5) The result of this aspect of the art teaching programme are examined below.

Access to Art, Tutoring and the Case Study Subjects

As is shown in Chapter Six above, a first year art class accompanied the Sixth year pupils on the visits to the Kremlin Gold and Gateway to Art exhibition. The sixth year response to a number of questions in S. 1. 2 indicate that they derived many benefits from tutoring the first year in the course of these visits. There was a positive reaction to the first years joining the class. Debbie said "It was different, but enjoyable", and Paul claimed that "although the first years can be a bit hyper, it's good fun being with them". Alan also believed that " It was a good idea to have the first years with us" as it helped "the sixth and first years to become familiar, and this helps school spirit".

The sixth years had been introduced to their first year partners in advance of the visit to

the Kremlin Gold and Gateway to Art exhibition. The sixth year response to a number of questions in S.I. 2 indicate that they derived many benefits from tutoring the first years in the course of these visits. There was a positive reaction to the first years joining the class: Debbie said "It was different, but enjoyable", and Paul claimed that "although the first years can be a bit hyper, it's good fun being with them". Alan also believed that "it was a good idea to have the first years with us" as it helped "the sixth and first years to become familiar, and this helps school spirit".

The sixth years had been introduced to their first year partners in advance of the visit to the Kremlin Gold exhibition and were agreed that the younger group could benefit from seeing actual artwork. According to Audrey, the first years would, "like ourselves, enjoy these trips, as they give a feeling for culture". She added that first years in particular would be impressed by "the whole occasion". James said that art historical visits would "get them accustomed to going out on school trips, and would have a great educational value", for the first years. There is evidence also to suggest that the sixth years were confident of the contribution they could make to the first years' enjoyment of these outings. Paul's statement below reveals how he regarded his role as a tutor;

> I think that it helped the first years to have someone close to their own age teaching them. Because we understand how they talk and behave, it is often better than dealing with a teacher, who might give a lot of orders. Teachers can be seen in a bad light, but a sixth year pupil would be respected.

Paul felt that sixth year students could encourage greater communication between teachers and younger pupils. He claimed that first years would find it easier to identify with older pupils with regard to practical work in art also:

> When they see our work in progress, they gain confidence because the sixth year is closer in age than the teacher. It might never strike them that they could do what a teacher does, but when they see a sixth year at work, they can appreciate that possibly in five years, they could achieve something similar.

It is clear therefore, that sixth year pupils were conscious of the contribution they could make as role models for the first years. "We can set an example" was Tanya's view, "also our knowledge of art and appreciation is greater than theirs, and we can offer them information". The sixth years believed that their behaviour could significantly influence first year behaviour on cultural visits. It should be noted that the visits to exhibitions would not have been so successful were it not for the co-operation and caring of the sixth year pupils. They were very positive in their

attitudes towards the younger pupils, and interacted well with them. The view expressed by Debbie describes the attitudes of the group "We can tell them about art and show them how to do things, but they learn also from our behaviour with each other; a mature approach is noticed by them".

Many sixth years remarked on the fact that their self-confidence increased as a result of being given the responsibility of tutoring the first years. James referred to the "morale boost" he had experienced on the visits and said that his feelings of responsibility had increased. In short, all of the sixth year art class noted increased levels of self esteem and independence because of their role on the outings. Many claimed that there were too few opportunities to mix with pupils from other years; it was important also that first years be welcomed to the school. The first years also benefited from the sixth year presence on visits to exhibitions. They had greater freedom to explore and opportunities to learn from the senior pupils.

There is reason to believe consequently that the co-operative learning processes which were a feature of the Access to Art programme, promoted feelings of confidence and self-esteem in the sixth year pupils. It is also reasonable to expect the sixth years' understanding of Art, Craft and Design to have developed and deepened as a

result of tutoring the first years. They were questioned by first years about techniques and themes in the work exhibited in the Royal Hospital and Dublin Airport; they were also asked for advice on practical processes. It is evident that a sense of responsibility and leadership qualities, stimulated through tutoring activities, were developed in the pupils as the art programme progressed. It is possible that the enthusiastic response of first year pupils to tutoring provided reinforcement of sixth year confidence. This in turn, provided for them, a sense of achievement, which led to greater communication and co-operative learning on the second cultural visit. Improvements in sixth year pupils' performance as tutors could be discerned as the art programme progressed; the sixth years would often visit the first year art class in the course of the year and naturally assume a tutoring role. In short, it would appear that the sixth year pupils benefited greatly from these learning strategies.

The results of peer-tutoring activities are correlated with evidence from the psychological literature in the next chapter. The effectiveness of such learning strategies for disadvantaged adolescents is highlighted, with regard to the benefits experienced by the students who were the Subjects of the present study. It is appropriate at this point to analyse the findings

of the final section of the art teaching programme for 1991 - 1992.

Tallaght As I View It

As previously stated, the "Tallaght As I View It" competition required pupils attending community schools in the Tallaght area to express visually their responses to their environment. The sixth year Subjects were motivated by the obvious interest which local business people had in their opinion of, and reaction to their local area. It is worthwhile to examine the preparatory and finished work, produced by the sixth year art class during Spring and early Summer of 1992 and submitted for this competition.

It is evident that a dichotomy exists between the verbal and visual interpretations of Brookfield offered by some sixth years. The verbal response seemed somewhat negative and this negativity was reflected in a selection of the most frequently used words and phrases offered by the Subjects during a consideration of the Tallaght theme in class and listed on the blackboard. These words echo the sentiments expressed in the first section of this chapter and included terms such as "joy-riding" "violence" and unemployment". There were fewer positive

words and phrases, yet these were the ones which seemed to take precedence in the resulting artwork.

Elaine's preparatory drawing focused on aspects of the environment such as "open space" and "hills and fields" rather than the more negative phrases which had been offered in the introductory class. Her choice of watercolour as a medium influenced her interpretation of the theme, but her observational drawing was in itself a work of great delicacy and detail. Two attractive trees dominated the foreground and framed the houses, and the mountains in the background. Fine lines were used to describe the patterns formed by the branches; Elaine demonstrated an awareness of composition and balance also in her symmetrical arrangement of verticals.

A number of questions designed to evaluate Elaine's use of art elements and her visual response to the theme provided some interesting outcomes. She had adopted Constable's use of a high vantage point and depicted the view from a bedroom window of her house. Her response revealed that she used artistic licence to reduce the number and size of the houses in the mid-ground so that she could "focus on the green areas, the side of Tallaght that isn't man-made". Great attention was paid to natural detail such as the lines of bark on the trees; paint was applied in delicate transparent layers of harmonious colour. The reproduction of Elaine's painting (see Illustration 14) is provided on page 207.

Elaine said she wanted to present a view to Tallaght which was peaceful and quiet, and to this end had selected soft hues of colour. "There are too many houses", said Elaine who felt that her viewpoint had allowed her to overlook "the way the place is so built up". Her response to S.I. 3. (Appendix 4) shows that she had also ignored the rubbish which collected at the base of the trees, and other unpleasant elements such as "broken phone boxes, graffiti and burnt out cars". In a sense, Elaine tried to manipulate perspective and compositional devices in order to "sell" a particular view of Brookfield. Elaine admitted that it was not a very realistic view of Tallaght "but it focuses on the open spaces and nature, and shows the things that I like". Other students adopted a similar approach in their visual interpretation of their area; many of the finished paintings conveyed a view of Brookfield which, like Elaine's, suggested a tranquil and harmonious environment.

The discrepancies between verbal and visual accounts of Brookfield were marked and required examination. Debbie said that her painting did not convey a realistic picture of the area and added that "the painting makes Tallaght look nice and it is,in fact, a bit of a dump". Alan had purposely chosen a viewpoint which "concentrates on natural areas, rather than housing schemes", and Vincent said that his painting ignored "the problem

areas, the robbed cars and general disorder". It is clear that artistic concepts had been manipulated so as to present the best possible view of Brookfield. Tanya said that she had used only "bright, lively colours to take away from the dull aspects of the area", whilst Audrey had focused on a new building, which occupied most of the picture plane, so that the composition allowed for little attention to aspects of deprivation in Brookfield.

It became obvious that the sixth years were aware of the contrasts which existed between their verbal accounts and visual representations of Brookfield, and they offered explanations for their conflicting views. Many felt it was inappropriate to make a picture based on unattractive features of the area; one pupil said that he "wouldn't dream of using the violence and dullness of Brookfield" as a staring point for artwork. Tanya stated that "drawing and painting are enjoyable activities and should give pleasure". Debbie's explanation of the discrepancies in her view of Brookfield indicate an awareness of the expressive aspects of art:

> I'd compare what I said about Tallaght to a report, or photograph. It's very matter-of-fact; you see the good and the bad, but you don't show your feelings. With painting, you have a chance to be subjective, you can present a certain mood. If gives you a chance to say what's important to you.(S.I 3, Appendix 4)

It appears that these pupils saw art as a means of expressing a very specific view of their environment. With the exception of two pupils, the sixth year Subjects sought to create a view of Tallaght which emphasised nature and the beauty of the area. Each used the art elements of line, colour, space and composition to reinforce the positive aspects of their environment. It would seem that they regard visual and verbal responses as two quite separate entities, with regard to the content of what is expressed.

Paul's response to the "Tallaght As I View It" competition was no less expressive, and certainly as competent in its use of artistic processes as the work done by others. He had not made his preparatory drawing at home, and was advised to select a view in the school grounds or from the classroom window. Instead, he produced a coke bottle; and made a tonal sketch of it on the centre of a horizontal sheet of white cartridge. It became obvious that it was not an ordinary coke bottle, a rag was jammed into the neck and there was liquid half way up (see Illustration 15, page 208). From observation also, Paul included a sketch of an ignited lighter, and the preparatory sketch of a petrol bomb was complete.

Paul explained how he arrived at his starting point during Structured Interview 3.

> My view of Tallaght doesn't describe a physical place. The picture is a

> symbol for the violence of Tallaght, things are always on fire here. A petrol bomb was thrown at us once.

Paul felt that his interpretation was a realistic one, although it presented "a bad view" of Tallaght. Paul's excellent draughtmanship would have made it possible for him to depict any aspect of Tallaght which seemed important to him. His response to questions on approach demonstrates his understanding of artistic processes.

He used the elements of colour and composition to convey a mood of menace; he said "the bottle is isolated on the sheet, it's a petrol bomb, to show how serious the situation is here". Paul chose to work with colouring pencils and explained:

> A light grey surrounds the coke bottle and gradually works out to jet black. The black is used to indicate that Tallaght is alone to deal with its own problems, nobody's doing anything about it.

Paul had purposely placed the bottle in the centre of the sheet for impact, and so that contrasts between the white rag and lighter, and the black surrounds, would be highlighted. For Paul, creative expression was "a way of conveying a mood, a message" and his view of Tallaght aimed to convey:

> ... that we have a huge problem here, it's like a cancer. Bitterness is spreading because it's being ignored. A creative work can capture that. A video would be good to give a sense of the area; nobody smiling, people afraid to look at each other ....fear.

The correlations which are evident between Paul's work and his verbal accounts of his area are found also in James' response. Though not as dramatic as Paul's, the view of Tallaght painted by James shows an equally desolate scene of wasteland and rubbish. Both works demonstrated the power of a visual response in reflecting the mood of an area.

The work produced for the "Tallaght As I View It" competition provided valuable insights into the life of a teenager in the Brookfield area. An obvious benefit of this unit of the teaching programme was the opportunity it provided to develop, and assess practical and critical skills in art education. The relevance of the competition theme is significant, not only with regard to the present research, but also for the sixth years who were encouraged to use their environment as a starting point for artwork. The distinctly different views of Tallaght produced by the sixth year Subjects demonstrate the versatility, and communicative power, of visual art . A further rewarding aspect of the competition was Elaine's success in the Senior category, where she took the first prize of £50.00. Elaine and the first year prizewinner (also a pupil of St. Aidan's) are shown with their entries on page 209, (see Ilustration 16). The photograph on page 210 (see Illustration 17) shows some of the contestants for the "Tallaght As I View" competition from St. Aidan's.

Conclusion

The results of S.I 1 indicate that the subjects have experienced varying degrees of socio-economic deprivation and that their family circumstances are typical of average homes in Brookfield. The pupils' responses highlight the problems of violence and robbery which are associated with inadequate resources and disadvantage. It is clear also that the pupils believe that their environment may exert a negative influence on their educational and life opportunities.

The findings demonstrate that the subjects have a high regard for education, many feel that the senior cycle curriculum is relevant, and that it attends to some of their needs. There is evidence from the Art Education Survey to suggest that the pupils value learning in art, and feel that this subject was neglected in their Primary school education in particular.

An analysis of the results of the art teaching programme reveals that aspects of art education have a specific value for these teenagers. The visits to exhibitions during 1991 and 1992 encouraged a cultural awareness and greater understanding and appreciation of art. The Subjects derived benefits also from the co-

operative learning strategies employed on these visits; increases in levels of confidence and self-esteem were noted by the group in relation to tutoring activities. There is reason to believe that learning in art can promote the development of a positive school spirit and of communication skills.

The communicative possibilities which are a feature of art education are especially evident in the final unit of the teaching programme. Discrepancies between visual and verbal communications about Tallaght are noted in the final section of results. It is clear that, for many sixth year pupils, the criteria for expression in a visual way differs from other modes of expression and tends to be more subjective. The Subjects demonstrated a willingness to use art processes to describe what they saw and knew and felt. The strength of the artwork produced for the "Tallaght As I View It" competition highlights the effectiveness of visual media in providing an enjoyable and meaningful means of expression.

The findings on art education, socio-economic circumstances, and these particular sixth year pupils are explored in the next chapter with reference to the literature reviewed in Chapters One, Two and Three above. The results of interviews and art activities carried out with the case study are examined in the broader educational context. However, the findings should be

considered in a conjectural manner due to the small number of students who comprised the Subjects of this study.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER VII

1 Berger, Ways of Seeing, p. 20.

2 Taylor, The Illuminating Experience, Critical Studies in Art Education, (Wigan: Occasional Publication No. 2, Schools Art Crafts Council, 1982), p. 5.

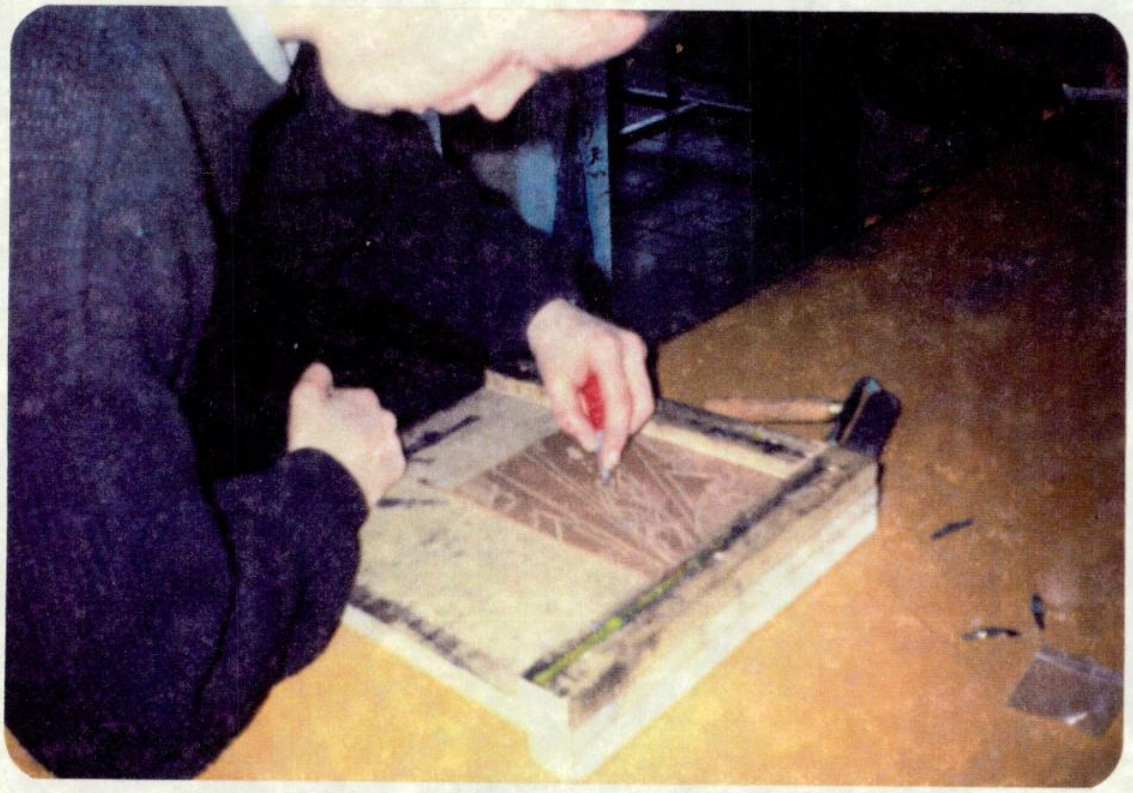
3 Bourdieu cited by Berger in Ways of Seeing, p. 135.

4 Dembo, Educational Psychology, p. 44.

5 Shaffer, Developmental Psychology, p. 33.



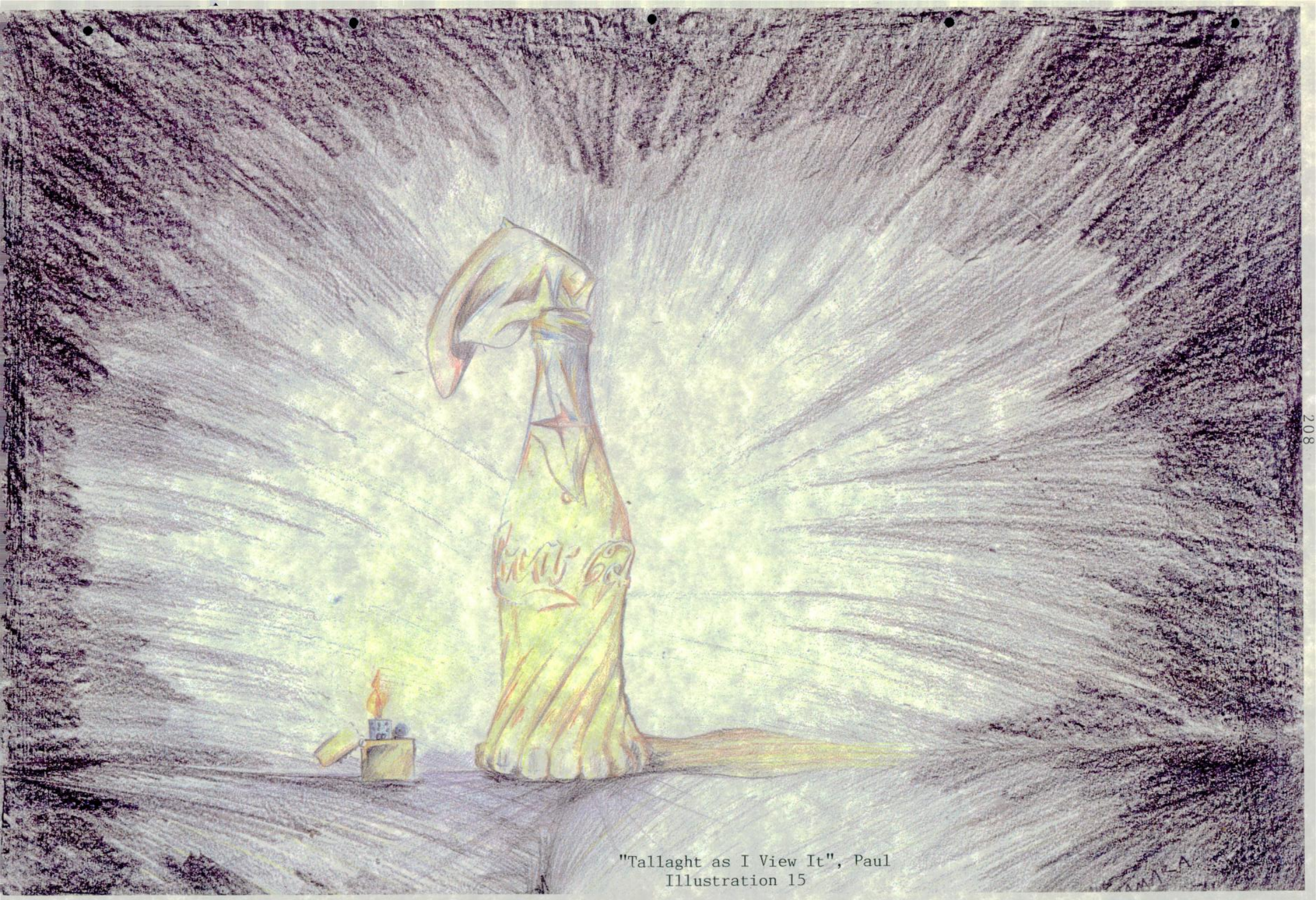
Mainie Jellett Lecture, February 1992
Illustration 12



Lino-cut based on Mainie Jellett's work
Illustration 13



"Tallaght as I View It", Elaine
Illustration 14



"Tallaght as I View It", Paul
Illustration 15



First and Sixth Year Prizewinners from St. Aidan's
Illustration 16



Contestants for the "Tallaght as I View It" competition
Illustration 17

CHAPTER VIII
SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

The belief that art education has a particular value for disadvantaged pupils is the central hypothesis of the present research study. In order to examine the extent to which this hypothesis has been proved in the course of the research, it is proposed to identify correlations between the findings with the sixth year Subjects, and those which relate to disadvantaged pupils in the general context. This chapter, therefore, focuses on two principal factors affecting educational achievement in disadvantaged areas; material deprivation, and cultural deprivation. The success of the art teaching programme with the sixth year group will be considered with reference to these factors, so that the educational significance of art in under-privileged environments be fully appreciated. The relevance of art education for disadvantaged teenagers is proposed in the light of the findings of this research with the sixth year group.

Before considering the particular contribution of art education in areas of need, it may be helpful to recapitulate the main conclusions which have emerged from the present study.

Summary of Conclusions

The outline of Irish educational policy presented in Chapter One indicates that the academic emphasis of Irish curricula has tended to marginalise the role and status of the visual arts in The curriculum. Reference to the 1992 Green Paper, Education for a Changing World, suggests that even more recent educational planning has failed to acknowledge the significant contributions which art education can make to the development of young people. Instead, the curriculum appears to cater for a narrow view of the individual, which neglects vital aspects of his/her development.

The ways in which an education in Art, Craft and Design can address some of the young person's developmental needs are considered in Chapter Two. Of particular significance to the present research study are the findings on art education and disadvantaged pupils. It is evident that the energy and potential of these young people may be effectively nurtured through learning in art; there is also reason to believe that Art, Craft and Design processes could be particularly relevant and rewarding in working-class environments. The benefits of the intellectual and communicative aspects of art education are emphasised, along with the cultural awareness promoted by this discipline.

The review of sociological literature in Chapter Three reveals that the school performance of disadvantaged pupils is affected by deficits in cultural and material resources. These findings are supported in the review of psychological literature which indicates that disadvantaged adolescents may be more vulnerable than their middle or upper-class peers in their educational endeavours. The consideration of art education and its effect on disadvantaged adolescents demonstrates how learning In art can encourage greater educational achievement in these pupils.

The description of socio-economic problems affecting Brookfield presented in the local area study in Chapter Four suggests that this particular area has much in common with those environments described as "Disadvantaged" in Chapter Three. There is reason to believe that many pupils attending school in Brookfield are likely to under achieve in the educational system as a result of material and cultural deprivation. The group selected as case study Subjects for the present research study are shown to be representative of Brookfield youth in Chapter Five. It is evident that each number of this sixth year class, St. Eunan's, was experiencing socio-economic difficulties on a personal level.

The results of the teaching programme, which targeted specific needs of disadvantaged youth, indicate

that the sixth year Subjects derived significant benefits from the study of art. It is clear that their levels of self-esteem and self-confidence increased in response to aspects of the programme. The pupils also acknowledged the opportunities for the development of communicative skills and the development of a sense of responsibility and independence provided in the programme. There is evidence to suggest that the pupils' cultural awareness and appreciation was enhanced through the study of art.

The findings from the sixth year group are compared below with relevant findings from the literature, so that correlations may be drawn between the Subjects' experiences of art education, and the outcomes which might be expected from other disadvantaged teenagers. For the purposes of clarity, the conclusions of the present research study have been divided into sub-sections which focus on a range of intrinsic and extrinsic benefits which the sixth years associated with the study of art. In view of the small number of students in the sixth year art class, it is evident that any conclusions drawn must be of a speculative nature. However, the relationship between the findings with the sixth years, and those outlined in chapter Two and Chapter Three above are worth noting.

Synthesis of Results

Disadvantage, Educational Performance and Life Opportunities:

There can be little doubt that the educational process is influenced by factors in the home environment. In Chapter Three above, Demaine suggests that educational access and achievement are influenced by "social class differentials".(1) In areas where there are a large number of social problems facing a school, it is not unusual for pupils to under-achieve, or to fail to fully participate in education. Material deprivation is one of the principal factors affecting school performance, according to the report of the National Development Plan, which reveals that pupils from unskilled backgrounds are "less likely than their counterparts from other social backgrounds" (2) to complete post-primary junior cycle, or to transfer to senior cycle or third level education. Poor attendance at school is a problem in disadvantaged environments (3) as are feelings of hostility toward education; Crooks claims that this is manifested by truancy or disruptive behaviour in class.(4) Whilst no hostility towards school was evident in the sixth year group, there were difficulties with attendance and punctuality, and one of the group dropped out of St. Aidan's before Christmas 1991.(5)

The Subjects of the present study were concerned that both their educational performance and their life opportunities could be influenced by socio-economic factors in their background.(6) They referred to the lack of material resources, and to the unfavourable attitudes of society towards the disadvantaged, which they felt would have a bearing on their educational and life prospects. These reports are consistent with Murphy's findings presented in Chapter Three above. Murphy claims that "length of stay in education, entry to higher education, future employment prospects and the incidence of illiteracy"(7) are significantly affected by socio-economic status. O'Toole points out the importance of educational credentials in "determining the distribution of privilege and social position",(8) thus indicating how vital the educational process is. If there are ways in which this process can be made more accesible and interesting for pupils, it is essential that these should be identified and utilised. The ways in which the sixth years' school experience was enriched through the study of art are outlined in Chapter Seven above. The findings are now compared with aspects of the literature which focus on the rewarding nature of art activities for disadvantaged pupils.

Rewarding Aspects of Art Education

The subjects of the present research study identified positive aspects of art education consistent with those described in Chapter Two above. They referred to it as a "great leisure opportunity", and they found it both pleasurable and interesting.(9) The Curriculum and Examination Board claims that the arts are welcoming to all, irrespective of class, gender or level of academic achievement and emphasise the rewarding experiences which are a feature of all arts disciplines.(10) The Board further claims that the enjoyable aspects of the arts are particularly relevant to students who may be educationally at risk.(11) The enthusiasm with which the Subjects responded to art activities indicates that the visual arts were particularly accessible for these students.

One of the principal needs indentified by the sixth year group as essential in their present and future lives was the need to communicate and to develop interpersonal skills.(12) The Subjects' ability to communicate through art has been documented in two ways: the visual mode, using art processes to express their views of Tallaght, for example; and the verbal mode, which emphasises the human interaction which is a feature of art activities. The development of communicative skills during the

teaching programme is examined below in relation to the review of literature.

Communication Through Art .

The communicative value of art is emphasised in the literature; Pattemore claims that communication is promoted by the nature of this discipline (13) and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation proposes that the rationality of the individual may be developed through communication in arts disciplines.(14) Hardiman and Zernich refer to the psychological growth and improved personal adjustment which are promoted by art education, (15), a concept which is reflected in the sixth year reports of increases in feelings of responsibility and self-esteem.(16) It is evident that the sixth years felt more confident as a result of the tutoring activities which were a feature of the art teaching programme. It is worthwhile examining some of the correlations between the findings with the sixth years, and the arguments put forward in the literature for peer and cross-age tutoring.

Communication and Tutoring in Art .

The increase in levels of confidence experienced by sixth years in the course of their tutoring duties with

first years are particularly significant with regard to the review of psychological literature in Chapter Three above. It is clear that teenagers need to be challenged and to feel useful at this developmental stage.(17) Disadvantaged adolescents in particular can derive benefits from experiences which reinforce levels of self-esteem. (18) The Subjects of this study associated feelings of responsibility, independence and confidence with their tutoring activities, and were aware that they had much to offer as role models for the younger pupils.(19) The rewarding nature of these experiences might compensate to some extent for the despair and lack of opportunity which Kranz and Deley. associate with the condition of poverty. (20) It is also possible that feelings of role confusion and low levels of aspiration, which are especially evident in disadvantaged youth,(21) might be addressed using co-operative learning strategies.

Shaffer emphasises the benefits of tutoring for "students with lesser abilities" (22) and believes that interdependence and sharing are encouraged through co-operative learning. As previously stated the St. Aidan's case study Subjects identified the development of interpersonal and communication skills as priorities in their education. It is evident that the pupils were aware of the potential for communication through art, (23) and the ways in which interpersonal skills were

developed in this discipline. According to Lanier, the art class can help in the process of exploring social relationships.(24) The art class is, in my view, a very sociable environment, where the pupil learns much more than art processes; s/he is involved in a sharing of ideas, and in an interaction with others which demands respect and co-operation.

The results with the sixth years indicate that they found communication with the first years rewarding; they were confident of their ability to communicate their knowledge of art, and to teach by setting an example(25). It is possible that other disadvantaged teenagers could be facilitated in terms of developing feeling of greater responsibility and confidence, using co-operative learning strategies. Nielsen believes that these strategies are particularly beneficial for disadvantaged youth.(26) Whilst peer and cross-age tutoring is not exclusive to art education, it is, in my view, particularly suited to this discipline. This view is related to Foy's claim that there is a sensitivity to ability, developmental stages and previous experience in the Art. Craft and Design syllabus.(27)

Visual Communication Through Art

Much attention has been devoted to the notion of art as means of visual expression, indeed Abbs argues that the self expressive aspects of art education have come to falsely characterize the purpose of art on the curriculum.(28) The work which the sixth years produced for the "Tallaght As I View It" competition did demonstrate the uniqueness of visual tools as a means of expression.

It is evident that the Subjects of the present study were conscious of the potency of visual processes as a means of conveying their views on Tallaght. Creative expression was described as a way of conveying a mood and a message.(29) Chapman claims that art is one of the few subjects in which students can be actively encouraged to clarify and express their own feelings, thoughts and perceptions.(30) A similar view is proposed by the National Endowment for the Arts; it is argued that young people who miss out on art education fail to communicate their own thoughts and to interpret the thoughts and dreams of others. (31) Certainly what the CEB describe as the apprehension, formulation and communication of meaning (32) was evident in the sixth year approach.

Paul chose to use images which were symbolic of the difficulties affecting Brookfield; both he and Elaine used art elements including line, colour, composition and

mood to describe their attitudes towards their environment.(33) The strongly contrasting views of Tallaght produced by these pupils demonstrate the versatility of visual media as a means of expression. Berger believes that communication through images is more precise, and richer than other avenues of expression,(34) and the sixth year reports of the expressive potential of art seem to reflect this belief. (35) The unique quality of visual communication is highlighted in the sixth year artwork which expressed the pupils' specific and very individual views of Tallaght.

While it is true that "art offers no panacea for the many and varied problems of growing up",(36) it is clear that it provided the sixth year pupils with an effective and alternative means of expressing their attitudes towards their surroundings. It is possible that adolescents from areas affected by similar socio-economic problems as those described in Brookfield could, like the sixth years, use a visual means to provide insights into their principal concerns about their environment.

The material deprivation which allegedly affects the school performance of working-class teenagers is compounded by deficits in cultural resources. The following section examines the possible relationship between the findings on cultural deprivation presented in

Chapter Three above, and the response of sixth year subjects in this regard.

Cultural Significance of Art Education for Disadvantaged Youth

The evidence in the literature suggests that pupils attending school in disadvantaged environments may lack adequate intellectual stimulation in the home.(37) A lack of educational opportunities combined with poor parental attitudes toward education (38) are further aspects of cultural deprivation found in many working-class areas. The response by sixth year pupils to questions concerning access to culture indicates that these pupils have had few opportunities to familiarise themselves with cultural pursuits. (39) The optional status of art on the second-curriculum may have serious implications for working-class pupils in particular, who, according to Bourdieu "will be denied opportunities for the acquisition of the appropriate cultural capital".(40) The findings with the Subjects of the present study suggests that it is unlikely that these pupils would have visited a museum or gallery had they not selected art as a senior cycle option.(41) As the school is "the only institution officially responsible for educating children in art"(42) it is evident that pupils who do not opt for

art in second-level schools may miss out on opportunities to acquaint themselves with vital aspects of culture.

The benefits of seeing art first-hand have been cited by the sixth year Subjects, who appreciated both the educational and enjoyable aspects of viewing actual artefacts.(43) It is worth noting, however, that many pupils had considered cultural visits to be uninteresting and conservative before going on such visits with the art class.(44) This finding could be representative of attitudes of disadvantaged teenagers in general, whose cultural levels are inhibited by the "financial and cultural poverty of many homes".(45) Dembo suggests that pupils from disadvantaged environments may be deprived of stimuli that affect intellectual and cognitive development,(46) and Bourdieu refers to the social class differentials in attitudes towards museums.(47) It is clear that the study of art could help these young people to respond to the recreational and cultural demands of living (47) identified by Mulcahy in Chapter Two above. The rewarding and educational experiences which the sixth years attributed to cultural visits demonstrate how art education "can help people to become familiar with and find meaning in art".(49) While many sixth years had preconceived notions that they would not "fit it" in galleries or museums,(50) they were enthusiastic about visiting these, once they preceived them as accessible. It is possible that other disadvantaged teenagers could

be motivated to participate more actively in cultural events, through the study of art.

Cultural visits could therefore be viewed to some extent as compensatory school experiences which, as Biehler and Snowman also note, improve academic performance in disadvantaged pupils.(51) The sixth year reports regarding the educational value of visits to exhibitions bear out this claim.(52) Their response to tests following visits show increases in critical awareness and less reliance on rote learning from books. It has been noted that the Subjects were enthusiastic about availing of cultural resources in the future; they were aware also of the recreational potential of cultural activities.(53) Taylor believes that it is through art education that pupils can gain a glimpse into the traditions and ways of another person, thus leading to increases in understanding, sympathy and respect.(54) Along with Abbs, Taylor argues that, in this way, the pupil becomes more a part of the larger, diverse community.(55)

The compensatory nature of art activities may have significant educational outcomes in areas of the curriculum aside from art. Certainly the Subjects of this study were convinced that learning in art could extend to and enrich other subject areas. James regarded the cultural visits as a means of preparing for further studies,(56) and many students discerned links between

art and subjects such as mechanical drawing, woodwork and home economics. It was evident that skills learned in art could transfer easily into non-practical curricular areas such as Irish, history, English and business organisation.(57) The CEB also argue that art processes are versatile, and require "a flexibility of approach and inventiveness"(58) which can lead to academic achievement, and to preparation for the world of work. These is reason to believe, therefore, that while the study of art is, in itself, intrinsically beneficial for disadvantaged youth, it may also contribute to and enrich other areas of the curriculum.

The conclusions presented above regarding the value of art education for the case study Subjects have been compared with findings from the review of literature presented in Chapters Two and Three of the present research study. The sixth years' experience of art during the teaching programme correlates with many of the findings on art education and disadvantaged youth put forward in the literature. On this basis, the following recommendations are proposed:

Recommendations

(1) The relevance of art education for disadvantaged pupils has been demonstrated in the present study. The ways in which art education can address the

needs of disadvantaged youth should be properly recognised.

(2) Educational achievement is often poor in pupils who are affected by socio-economic problems. As motivation is a key aspect of learning, it is vital that the rewarding and enjoyable aspects of art education be acknowledged and reflected in curriculum planning.

(3) The optional status of art on the curriculum is a cause for concern, in the light of its contributions to adolescent development. The ways in which art education encourages the personal, aesthetic, intellectual and social development of the individual must be highlighted regularly, so as to foster positive attitudes towards the discipline.

(4) Further study should consider the relevance of art education for disadvantaged youth in the wider social context. Programmes and teaching strategies should be devised in art which address the principal needs of these teenagers.

(5) Those involved in the promotion of art must negotiate constantly for adequate provision for art education in schools. There is an urgent need to emphasise the true educational potential of art

education and to dispense with the notion that art is no more than an educational "fad" or "frill".

(6) A more central role for art is essential if this discipline is to fulfil it contribution to the education of the individual. Provision must be made both at primary and post-primary levels of education, to ensure that a continuum exists in the pupils' understanding and appreciation of art throughout schooling.

The particular value of art education for disadvantaged pupils in second-level schools has been demonstrated on a small scale in this research project. It is possible that similar strategies to those employed in the present research study could be adapted in a variety of ways to meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils in the wider social context.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER VIII

1 Demaine, Contemporary Theories, p. 31.

2 National Development Plan, Agenda for Integration, p. 70.

3 Committee on Discipline in Schools, Report on Discipline in Schools, p. 13.

4 Crooks, "Overcoming Disadvantage", p. 44.

5 Chapter 5, "Methodology", p. 122.

6 Chapter 7, "Results and Analysis", p. 177.

7 Murphy, "Facing 1992", p. 12.

8 O'Toole, "Points Race", p. 8.

9 Chapter 7, "Results amd Analysis, p. 181.

10 CEB, Arts in Education, p. 4.

11 Ibid.

12 Chapter 7, "Results and Analysis", p. 180.

13 Pattemore, Art and Environment, p. 11.

14 Calouste Gulbenkin Foundation, The Arts in Schools, p. 19.

15 Hardiman and Zernich, Foundations for Curriculum Development, p. 75.

16 Chapter 7, "Results and Analysis", pp. 191-192.

17 Chapman, Approches to Art, p. 211.

18 Biehler and Snowman, Psychology Applied to Teaching, p. 216.

19 Chapter 7, "Results and Analysis, p. 193.

20 Kranz and Deley, The Fourth "R", p. 7.

21 Biehler and Snowman, Psychology Applied to Teaching, p. 216.

22 Shaffer, Developmental Psychology, P. 682.

23 Chapter 7, "Results and Analysis", pp. 192-193.

24 Lanier, Art as Social Revolution, p. 314

25 Chapter 7, "Results and Analysis", p. 193.

26 Nielsen, Adolescence, p. 269.

27 Foy, "More than one kind of Ability", p. 70.

28 Abbs, Living Powers, p. 44.

29 Chapter 7, "Results and Analysis", pp. 199-200.

30 Chapman, Approaches to Art, p. 203.

31 NEA, Toward Civilization, p. 23.

32 CEB, The Arts in Education, p. 36.

33 See Illustration 14, p.207, and Illustration, 15 p.208.

34 Berger, Ways of Seeing, p. 10.

35 Chapter 7, "Results and Analysis, p. 197.

36 Chapman, Approaches to Art, p. 203.

37 Caspari, Troublesome Children, p. 24.

38 Chazan et al. cited by Mortimore and Blackstone, Disadvantage and Education, p. 41.

39 Chapter 7, "Results and Analysis", pp. 182-183.

40 Taylor, Educating for Art, p. 99.

41 Chapter 7, "Results and Analysis", pp. 182-183.

42 Chapman, Approaches to Art, p. 4.

43 Chapter 7, "Results and Analysis", pp. 182-184.

44 Ibid., pp. 186-188.

45 O'Connor, Innovations in Compensatory Education, p. 2.

46 Dembo, Educational Psychology, p. 44.

47 Bourdieu, cited by Berger, Ways of Seeing, p. 135.

48 Mulcahy, Curriculum and Policy, p. 115.

49 Taylor, Educating for Art, p. 96.

50 Chapter 7, "Results and Analysis", pp. 186-187.

51 Biehler and Snowman, Psychology Applied to Teaching, p. 214.

52 Chapter 7, "Reults and Analysis",p 183.

53 Ibid., p. 190.

54 Taylor, Educating for Art, p. 119

55 Ibid.

56 Chapter 7, "Results and Analysis", p. 186.

57 Ibid, pp. 179-181.

58 CEB, Arts in Education, p. 5.

Appendix 1

SURVEY, ART EDUCATION

(1) Did you do any form of art-drawing, craft, painting etc. prior to going to Primary school?

(2) What percentage of the average school week in Primary School was devoted to Art, Craft and Design education ?

(3) List the materials which you would have used for art education in Primary School.

(4) What was your response during that time to art lessons?

(5) Did you ever pursue artistic activities in you own time at that period? Why?

(6) Were these particular projects which you found more enjoyable than others? Why?

(7) Would you have liked to spend more or less time on Art education in Primary school? Why?

(8) Do you feel that Art education is important in Primary school? Why? Is it important in Secondary School, and Why?

(9) Are there similarities between Primary and Secondary Art education (List)

(10) Did you choose the art option at Junior cycle? Why? What other option(s) was on offer?

(11) List any links which you see Art being with other subjects.

(12) Do you have an interest in art outside of school?

(13) List the subjects you are taking for Leaving Cert. in order of preference.

(14) Do you think that an education in art can be of benefit to you in your present life? Why? How?

(15) Could an education in art be useful after school, and in what way?

(16) List the art processes you have learnt during (a) Primary (b) Secondary schooling.

(17) List those areas in Art, Craft and Design which you would like to explore/learn.

(18) List the advantages / disadvantages of Art, Craft and Design by comparison with the other subjects you are taking for Leaving Cert.

Appendix 2
S.I. 1 : STRUCTURED INTERVIEW 1

(1) How long have you lived in this area?

(2) How long have you been attending schools in the area?

(3) How many people are there in your family ?

(4) What are their occupations?

(5) What are you impressions of this area ? List some of the things you like/dislike about it.

(6) What are you impressions of the school? List some of the things you like/dislike about it.

(7) Do you expect to get work when you leave school in June 1992, or have you some other plan?

(8) What abilities and skills are most valuable in you life now, and what abilities are most necessary for the future ?

(9) Did your Primary and Second-level education answer any of these needs?

(10) If so, to what extent has your school education answered your needs ?

(11) Are there particular aspects of the Primary and Second-level curicula which are answering you needs now, or which you feel might contribute to you future life? / Why?

(12) Are there any changes you would suggest in the Primary and Second-level curricula which would improve your present or future life?

(13) Do you want to continue to live in this area in the future? Why?

(14) Do you feel that your environment might have any influence on your education, or future prospects? why?

(15) If you answered yes, what sort of influence?

(16) Do you have or want a part-time job.

(17) If so, how much of your time is spent working? If not, Why?

(18) Are you aware of any crime in the area? If so, what sort?

(19) Are there areas you would avoid during the day or night? If so, Why?

(20) Have you ever been threatened in school or at home?

(21) If you answered 'yes' to question (18), what, in your opinion is the main cause of crime in the area?

(22) Who are the main offenders in the area? (What age group, sex). Why?

(23) Did you go on cultural outings, for example, visits to galleries, museums, plays, exhibitions - during your childhood?

(24) What alternatives were there?

(25) Have you been on such outings in recent years ?

(26) What is your attitude to cultural outings?

(27) What is you most regular leisure activity?

Appendix 3
S.I.2 : STRUCTURED INTERVIEW 2

(1) What is your response to these visits (Museums, exhibitions, galleries) in general ?

(2) Do these art historical visits have a function in your opinion?

(3) What do like most/least about these trips?

(4) Which one did you like best, and Why?

(5) Would you visit galleries, museums or exhibitions in your leisure time?

(6) How did you feel about the First years joining us on these visits?

(7) Do you think that there is a value in visiting museums, exhibitions and galleries for First Years?

(8) Do you think you can make these visits more valuable for First Years ?

(9) What in your view are the learning opportunities for First Years created by your presence on the visits with regard to (a) Art, Craft and Design (b) Other?

(10) Do you find it easy or difficult to communicate with the First Years in these situations?

(11) Would you normally have come into contact with the First Years apart from these visits?

(12) What do you feel that you have to offer these younger pupils?

(13) What do you think you have gained from joint visits with the First years ?

(14) What is your response to the art history aspect of Art, Craft and Design ?

(15) Has you access to aspects of cultural changed in any way as a result of art historical visits?

Appendix 4
S.I.3 : STRUCTURED INTERVIEW 3

(1) How did you select the viewpoint you use in your picture of Tallaght As I View It.

(2) Does it present a realistic picture of Tallaght as you know it?

(3) Are there particular aspects of the area which you focused on? Why?

(4) What sort of impression of Tallaght does it give the viewer?

(5) What was your approach to art elements including composition, perspective, line, tine, colour, scale in your work?

(6) Have you used specific art elements to interpret your view of Tallaght? How?

(7) Do you feel that visual art can effectively describe a place? How?

(8) What did you want to convey in your visual description of Tallaght?

(9) Are you satisfied that you have conveyed a picture of Tallaght as you know it?

(10) Are there other responses (written account, song, or other visual) which you feel would be appropriate to describe Tallaght as you know it?

Appendix 5
S.I A : STRUCTURED INTERVIEW A

(1) How long have you lived and worked in this area?

(2) Could you give a brief account of the area - it's history, the origins of it's residents, it's facilities, it's advantages and disadvantages.

(3) What do you perceive as the major drawback of the area?

(4) What is the nature of community work here, and what is the response to it?

(5) What sort of government or local finance is provided for Brookfield?

(6) How does this compare to community financing in other areas (of Tallaght, of Dublin)

(7) How involved in the community are the young people of Brookfield ?

(8) What sort of project might young people be involved in presently?

(9) What aspects of community work require development / improvement?

(10) What role do you see young people playing in the development of the community?

(11) What skills would they require in order to take a positive role in the community?

(12) What percentage of these skills are learned through schooling?

(13) What is the attitude of parents and young people to education and schooling in your opinion?

(14) What aspects of the second level curriculum do you think would best serve the needs of the community?

Appendix. 6

S.I.B : STRUCTURED INTERVIEW B

1. How long have you worked as a home/school liaison officer in Brookfield ?

2. What are the principal aims of home/school liaison officers in the area ?

3. What do you perceive as the major socio - economic difficulties affecting Brookfield ?

4. What are the chief areas of employment in this area?

5. Are there a high percentage of single-parent families in the areas which you serve ?

6. Are you aware of any of the family problems mentioned by Sister Kathleen, such as a "live for today" attitude, gambling, alcohol and physical abuse, and poor money management ?

7. Would you consider Brookfield to be a united community ?

8. How would you describe the role of the school in this environment ?

9. What are the predominant attitudes of parents in the area towards education ?

10. How do these attitudes compare with parental attitudes in middle-and upper-class environments ?

11. Do you think that these attitudes are reflected in the school performance of pupils attending St. Aidan's ?

12. Do you think that art education has a role in the general education of these pupils ?

Appendix 7.

S.I.C : STRUCTURED INTERVIEW C.

1. How long have you lived in this area ?

2. How long have you worked in St. Aidan's ?

3. Are you involved in community work here - if so, what kind of work ?

4. What percentage of the community would you say you are familiar with ?

5. The rate of unemployment in Brookfield is 80% - are certain areas of the community more affected than others ?

6. Is there a Resident's Association, and could you describe its role in the community ?

7. Could you give a description of a typical family in the area with regard to socio-economic status, employment, and attitudes towards Brookfield and education in this environment ?

8. What reason would you give for the high rates of dysfunctional families, unemployment, vandalism and other negative factors in the area ?

9. How much bearing does the home life of the child have on his/her performance in school in your opinion ?

10. What percentage of St. Aidan's pupils are affected by troubled homes/backgrounds ?

11. Would you say that differences exist between the home and school lives of St. Aidan's pupils, an the lives of pupils in middle-and upper-class areas ?

12. What in your opinion is the usual outcome of a disadvantaged background with regard to pupil attendance, punctuality, behaviour, progress and achievement in school ?

13. What access do St. Aidan's pupils have, in your opinion, to educational and cultural ctivities and achievements ?

Appendix 8.

S.I.D : STRUCTURED INTERVIEW D

1. How long have you worked as area co-ordinator for Saint Vincent De Paul in Brookfield ?

2. How many families in the area avail of your services ?

3. What proportion of these are single-parent families ?

4. What is the nature of your work in Brookfield ?

5. How regularly do you visit families in Brookfield ?

6. What are the most common difficulties experienced by the families you visit ?

7. To what extent can your service help alleviate these difficulties ?

8. What in your opinion, are the principal causes of socio-econimic problems in Brookfield ?

9. How would you describe the attitudes of Brookfield residents towards their environment?

10. How is education perceived in these homes ?

11. Is it likely that educational participation and achievement could be influenced by the socio-economic difficulties which these families experience ?

12. Has the population growth in Brookfield been reflected by increases in the number of families on your books ?

13. In what ways would you aim to address the problems in Brookfield ?

Appendix 9.

S.I.E : STRUCTURED INTERVIEW E

1. How long have you worked in this area ?

2. What size is the community you service in terms of population and area ?

3. Can you give a brief account of what your typical working day might involve ie. how much time are you there, what type of involvement - patrolling / other ?

4. Is there a high crime rate in the general Tallaght area ?

5. What proportion of this is focused in Brookfield ?

6. What age group are the offenders in general ?

7. What are the most common offences ?

8. What do you think causes crime in the area ?

9. Could you suggest some methods of intervention,or name some which have been tried in similar areas ?

10. What is the yearly rate of convictions here ?

11. How do you feel the residents of Brookfield deal with crime in the area, and what are their attitudes towards offenders ?

12. How much contact have you with St.Aidan's?

13. To what extent does formal education influence the pupils here in your opinion ?

14. What percentage of pupils attending St. Aidan's are involved in some way with crime ?

15. What aspects of their education would you emphasise in order to contribute to the welfare of the community, and the area ?

16. What role (if any) do you think art, craft and design education might have in this community ?

Appendix 10.

S.I.F : STRUCTURED INTERVIEW F

1. How long have you worked as a remedial teacher in St. Aidan's ?

2. Could you describe the role of the remedial teacher in St. Aidan's ?

3. What percentage of our pupils do you deal with?

4. What, in your opinion, are the major factors leading to low educational achievement in these pupils ?

5. Does home background have a significant bearing on educational performance ?

6. To what extent are the school lives of St. Aidan's pupils affected by difficulties in their home backgrounds ?

7. Could you list the chief skills which are lacking in the pupils you deal with ?

8. Are there particular teaching strategies which you use with remedial pupils, and could you describe these ?

9. In your opinion, are some subjects more relevant than others for remedial pupils ?

10. Do you think that art education can help address any of the needs of remedial pupils ?

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