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NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

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ENHANCING SELF-ESTEEM IN THE ART CLASSROOM

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in

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by

Karen Cotter

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## Introduction

In my dissertation I want to investigate ways to enhance the self-esteem of the child and how to use art as a means of self-esteem.

In Chapter 1 I will outline:

- What is the "self-image", "ideal self" and "self-esteem"?
- How does a high self-esteem produce: confidence, spontaneity and expression?
- How and why the teacher plays an important role in enhancing the child's self-esteem.

In Chapter 2, I will construct lesson sequences dealing with identity. The theme challenges the children to become aware and ask questions about themselves and the influence of their surroundings.

In Chapter 3, I will be assessing and evaluating the art work, achievements and responses of the children as a result of the lesson sequences. Did they enhance the self-esteem of the child? If so, why? If not, why not?

In the conclusion I will identify approaches to enhancing self-esteem in the Art class and why Art should or may be used as a vehicle to develop increased levels of self-esteem.



## CHAPTER ONE

### SELF-ESTEEM THE SELF-CONCEPT

#### What is Self?

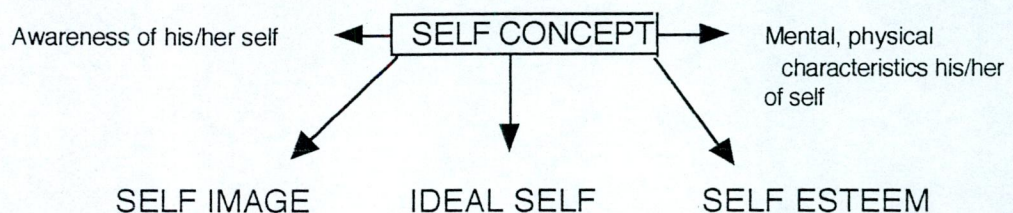
Our pictures of ourselves is not derived by sitting in isolation but is generated by our engagement with others. (1)

There are three aspects involved in the self concept:

1. Cognitive (thinking)
2. Affective (feeling)
3. Behavioural (action) (2)

The self concept is made up of mental and physical characteristics, and the individual's awareness and evaluation of him/herself.

Figure 1



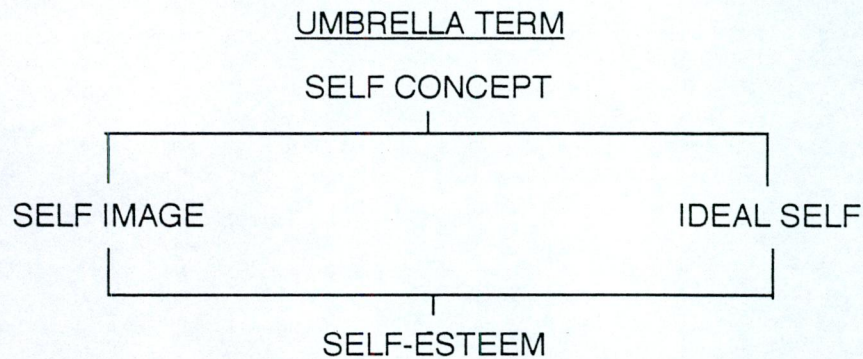
Source: Denis Lawrence, Enhancing self-esteem in the classroom, (London: Paul Chapman, 1988), p.1.

Individuals collect information on which to base their perceptions of themselves. To arrive at an overall or general picture of the self, the individual organises the information into categories of social acceptance, physical attractiveness, athletic ability and academic ability.

The "Self Image" is what the individual is. The "ideal self" is what the individual would like to be. The "self-esteem" is what the individual feels about the discrepancy between what he/she would like to be. (3)



Figure 2



Source: Denis Lawrence, Enhancing self-esteem in the classroom, (London: Paul Chapman, 1988), p.2.

The self image is the child's awareness of the combination of their mental and physical characteristics. This begins in the family; the parents allow the child develop an image of whether he/she is loved or not, or if the child is clever or stupid. Awareness of mental and physical characteristics are learned according to how rich and varied the child's school life is. The more experience the richer the self image becomes. (4)

The child forms an awareness of his/her capabilities in terms of cognitive development. The "ideal self" is what the individual would like to be, the individual visualises ideal characteristics that he/she should possess, ideal standards in behaviour and skills. The concept of the "ideal self" begins in the family and follows on through school experiences.

The self is made up of "self-description" and "self-evaluation" and therefore draw distinction between the "self concept and self-esteem". The self concept is the perception an individual has of the self.



The self-esteem is the value and judgment the individual places on self behaviour. Denis Lawrence says that the self-esteem is the evaluation of the discrepancy between the "self-image" and the "ideal self". But without this discrepancy, without levels of aspirations, the individual can become emotionless and poorly adjusted. The low or high self-esteem is created by the measure of the extent to which the individual cares about the discrepancy. (5)

The reaction to failure from the family and people who are close, is significant to the child's development. He/she begins first by trying to fulfil the parental expectation, but when the child fails to meet this expectation the child feels guilty. Failure is a part of growing up and is the first part of becoming competent. Trial and error develops learning and knowledge.

It is not failure to achieve which produces low self-esteem, it is the way significant people in the child's life react to failure. (6)

A young child trusts adults, he/she does not consider that they could be wrong or misguided. When children fail to live up to parental expectations, they blame themselves and they feel that they have let their parents down. This causes a lack of confidence. Unrealistic demands result in low self-esteem, but no demands may result in no achievement. Denis Lawrence and Denis Child both agree that there must be a balanced amount of pressure, enough to cause the child to care, but not too much so that she/he becomes distressed: Lawrence quotes William James who says that:

With no attempt, there can be no failure, no humiliation. (7)



In addition Lawrence says:

A child with a high self-esteem has a natural curiosity for learning and will be keen and enthusiastic when presented with a new challenge. (8)

Curiosity begins at birth, it motivates in a situation where conflicting responses are possible. A curiosity drive is generated and the child is motivated to seek further information to satisfy the drive. Learning begins in pleasure and thrives on curiosity.

The child with low self-esteem lacks confidence in his/her ability to succeed. The child avoids situations which are potentially humiliating at a personal level. To be punished and be seen as a hero is better than being seen as foolish. A child who is arrogant and boastful, or is shy and timid on the surface tends to have a low self-esteem. The child is avoiding the feeling of failure and humiliation. Fear of failure terrifies some children to the extent where they will not take any problem solving risks. (9)

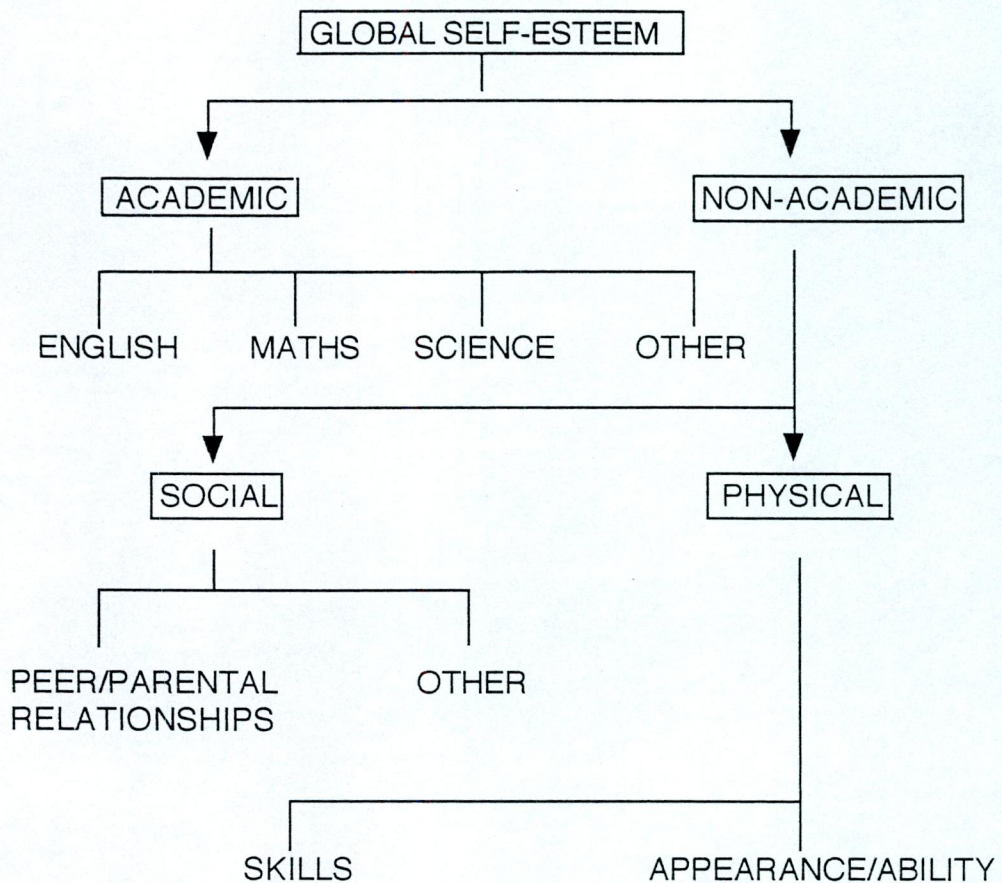
The child holds onto "safe" knowledge rather than curiosity, discovery and creativity. Even cognitive growth may be stunted. To be seen as a failure is a damaging image, failure repels and success attracts. A child with high self-esteem takes risks and aims at realistic goals. A child with a low self-esteem is afraid of failure and aims at unrealistic goals.

The "global self-esteem" is an overall view of self worth. If a child continually fails in areas which are valued by their parents the overall



self-esteem of the child is affected.

Figure 3



Source: Denis Lawrence, Enhancing the self-esteem in the classroom, (London: Paul Chapman, 1988) p. 9.

Stanley Coppersmith in 1968 investigated self-esteem. He began with a group of ten year old boys and followed them through to early adult life. (10) All of the boys were from a middle class background.

The boys with medium self-esteem had many of the high self-esteem qualities, but tended to be more conformist. They were less sure of their worth and more anxious for social acceptance. The boys with low self esteem were isolated, fearful and reluctant to join in. They were self conscious, over sensitive to criticism and under rated







themselves. They under achieved in class and were preoccupied with their own problems.

It might be though that the high self-esteem boys were more intelligent, or more physically attractive and came from wealthier homes and had other qualities that made them popular and better liked. This was not so, all the boys, whatever their level of self-esteem, came from a middle class background. But their relationship with their parents would differ: Self-esteem is always linked to parental behaviour.

The high self-esteem boys came from homes where they were regarded as significant and interesting. Parents had higher and more consistent standards. The boys regarded there parents as being "fair".

The boys with low self-esteem regarded their parents as being "unfair" discipline was considered to be too strict or too permissive, the boys were not sure where they stood. There was less clear guidance and the parents knew less about their children. These boys were considered less important at at home that the boys with the high self-esteem.

The child's self-esteem begins at home and is then influenced by the school and maybe the church. (11) This idea Carl Rogers has named "Orgasmic Reactions" - the parents, school and church's judgments are passed onto the child. These passed on judgments and values which hold love and approval. The child learns to have a basic distrust for his/her own experiences, the child learns others values







and adopts them as their own, even though they might be far from what the child is really experiencing. The child loses touch with his/her own valuing process and becomes insecure and easily threatened in his/her values. The child is unable to back up these values and judgments, as the child is merely repeating their parents, teachers or the church. The child is divorcing them self from the self. To enhance the self concept the child must experience his/her own feelings and those of others without being threatened by doing so. Each individual must possess freedom and freedom of choice to develop the "self", a self which is independent individualistic and confident. The Crutchfield's study (12) records the importance of the individuals freedom of choice. It is suggested or argued that non-conformists develop independence, confidence and a high self-esteem:

#### CONFORMISTS

- can be controlled
- cannot cope effectively with stress
- inferiority
- inadequacies
- lack of oneness and freedom
- emotionally restricted
- lack of spontaneity
- lack of insight into own motives and behaviour

#### NON-CONFORMISTS

- did not panic under pressure
- competence
- open/free
- spontaneous
- expressive nature
- good understanding of self
- represses own impulse

Young children want to discover and find out, they discover and collect information through all their senses. They are restless,



spontaneous, determined, collecting knowledge, perceiving patterns, acquiring language, improving skills, learning at a rate that they will never equal again. (13) It is therefore the role of the teacher to recapture the child's curiosity and desire for discovery.

Carl Rogers says that the teacher should ask him/herself:

How can I create a psychological climate in which the child will feel free to be curious, will feel free to make mistakes, will feel free to learn from the environment, from fellow students, from me, from experience? How can I help him/her recapture the excitement of learning that was once natural in infancy. (14)

The teacher can influence the development of a child's self concept by establishing a positive learning environment and by communicating effectively with the pupils. The role of the teacher includes helping the child to think positively about him/herself, to recognise and develop his/her strengths, to develop goals that will enhance his/her self concept and give him/her an awareness of personal value and worth. A teacher in a classroom replaces the parents. A teacher must always be concerned to help each child reach their potential and should do things in a way that the child's self-esteem is protected encouragement is vital, empathising at all times by actions and words retains the teachers concern and respect from the pupils. Within the teachers role, motivation plays an important element to construct a child's self-esteem and worth.

A healthy learning environment is important to establish, where the pupils feel free to ask questions and take risks. Trial, error and



curiosity are the main ingredients. It is important for the child to receive feedback, so that the child will begin to perceive him or herself positively. There must be room to take risks, this in return will give the pupils confidence to make decisions. The teacher must be fair to create trust between him/herself and the pupils. Each pupil will have a fair understanding of where he/she stands. The teacher must be non-judgmental and accept the pupils personality, a child must be accepted even though his/her behaviour needs to be corrected; the teacher may disapprove of the behaviour but should do so without devaluing the child. At all times the teacher should show empathy, the teacher must put him/herself in the pupil's position and consider the pupils thoughts and feelings.

A teacher with a high self-esteem will generally develop pupils with high self-esteem. Teachers with positive attitudes towards themselves are also likely to have a positive attitude towards others. A teacher should be genuine, show their real self, be relaxed and find time to relate to pupils, at all times acceptance, genuineness and empathy should be shown. (15)

The classroom should provide a novel and varied home environment, where curiosity is encouraged, the teacher is friendly and caring, the pupils learn new things, left on their own and with the teachers help. There must be room for spontaneity and each pupil contributes to group learning and is valued as a person. It is considered by Carl Rogers that group learning plays an important role in development of the self-esteem. Sprinthall says it is a myth that the human instinct is competition, an important social psychologist, Morton Deutsch found



that competition is an acquired motive, our culture chooses to reinforce competitive behaviour:

1. Students with higher levels of anxiety
2. Students who think less of themselves and their worth
3. Students with less than favourable attitudes towards their classmates
4. Students with a lower feeling of responsibilities towards others.

The more co-operative the group task pupils get involved in, the more positive will be the general classroom atmosphere. A "jigsaw" approach can be taken, this is when all the pupils work is put together to form one. (17) This destroys the competitive structure, pupils work towards a goal that none of them can attain by themselves, will help reduce competition. Sprinthall points out the conflicting influences pushed upon children:

The child also faces the cultural paradox of competitive achievement versus the judeo-christian ethic of "love thy neighbour". Our children are urged to compete, to win to succeed at all costs and yet they are told that this should not be a dog eat dog world and that they should be good Samaritans. (18)

It is first necessary to begin to enhance the self-esteem of the child at home. The development of self-esteem continues on to and throughout the child's school life. Therefore it is necessary for the teacher to develop a methodology to aid and enhance the child's esteem. The methodology should set realistic goals, encourage



problem solving, risk taking, curiosity and involve the child's "self" and surroundings. In Chapter 2, I will use Art as a vehicle to develop a methodology to enhance the pupils self-esteem in my Art classroom.



**Footnotes Chapter 1**

1. D. Bannister, quoted in David Fontana, Psychology for Teachers,
2. Denis Lawrence, Enhancing self-esteem in the classroom, London: Paul Chapman, 1988, p. 1.
3. Ibid., p. 2.
4. Ibid., p. 3.
5. Ibid., p. 5.
6. Ibid., p. 5.
7. William James, quoted in Lawrence, Enhancing self-esteem in the classroom, p. 6.
8. Lawrence, Enhancing self-esteem in the classroom, p. 6.
9. Sprinthall Norman A. and Richard C. Sprinthall, Educational Psychology, A development approach, 5th Edition, U.S.A. Mc Graw-Hill, 1974, p 533
10. Fontana, Psychology for Teachers, p. 239.
11. Ibid., p. 229.
12. Carl Rogers, Freedom to learn for the 80's, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 2nd Edition, p. 271.
13. Ibid., p. 130.
14. Ibid., p. 136.
15. Ibid., p. 167
16. Norman A. Sprinthall and Richard C. Sprinthall, Educational Psychology, A development approach, 5th Edition, U.S.A.: Mc Graw-Hill, 1974, p. 259.
17. Ibid., p 534.
18. Ibid., p 537.







## CHAPTER 2

### METHODOLOGY TO ENHANCE THE SELF-ESTEEM THROUGH ART

In this chapter I want to refer to the methodology and lesson plans I have chosen to centre around the pupil's "self", with the intention of enhancing the pupil's self-esteem.

I have chosen themes which involve the individual's unique identity. These themes/subject matters allow for an investigation and exploration into one's self. Both of the first year lesson sequences consider "identity", these challenge the pupil to investigate into the "self-image" and the "ideal self", humiliation and failure to a certain degree are eliminated, positive qualities within the individual's self and artwork are aimed at. I have chosen the subject matters carefully in order to attain relevance to the pupils life.

#### First Lesson Sequence:

#### 'Identity Cards'

The pupil will be recording their identity through the drawing of their thumb prints. Each pupils's end product will be slightly different, but successful in different ways.

Firstly, the class will work from enlarged photocopies of their thumb prints on a square card. This will involve scaling up, observation and the development of understanding contour lines. Each pupil will have a choice in the colour of crayon to be used. When each piece is finished the work will be joined together to become one artwork - the "jigsaw" approach. (1)







The class will make a group decision on the arrangement of these squares, therefore the end product will be a group end product. It will no longer be an independent or individual's end product. Competition will be diminished, it will involve group discussion, co-operation and decision making. The stronger pupils will help the weaker and maybe the low self-esteem pupils. The end product of the sequence will be an individual laminated identity card, with a thumb print and the pupil's stencilled initials. This subject matter is familiar to the pupils, yet not previously connected with art. This encourages the pupil to look at art in a different way, rather than the preconceived idea of art being "a picture on the wall, in the art room", the pupil is encouraged to take risks and explore. The art is brought outside the classroom and holds a function in everyday life. Each pupil can carry their art or identity card in their wallet and it continues to have relevance to him/her/self.

I will be asking the pupils to bring their laminated identity cards home to show their parents. I will record the parents response to the child's achievement and observe the effect. Without feedback and encouragement from home, the pupil will have less reason to strive for achievement.

**Second Lesson Sequence:**                      **"Clothes Line"**

The pupils will be recording their individuality and individual choice through painting and printing of a personal item of clothing. Each end product will resemble the shape of an ordinary item of clothing, but will differ in colour and pattern; each will express the pupil's individual choice and chosen identity.







Firstly, the class will bring in an of clothing belonging to themselves, whether it is a top, socks, trousers, etc., each item must have a pattern. A large piece of card will be given to each pupil, the shape of their item of clothing will be identified, drawn out on the card and cut out. It will then be flat printed in a primary colour. The next step, the shape of the pattern which exists on the particular item of clothing will be cut in relief from a potato and printed on to the card in a secondary colour. Following this, details such as stitching and folds will be painted onto the card.

Finally, a clothes line will be hung from one side of the art room to another, each artwork of clothing will be hung on the clothes line. The end product will become one artwork. Again the "jigsaw" approach is taken.

The end product could not be attained by an individual, the whole class's efforts and artwork's are necessary to achieve the clothes line. Group discussion, co-operation and decision making are required once again from the class. The end product will belong to each and every pupil on a equal and balanced level. This allows for the weaker, shy and low self-esteem pupil to become involved at the same level as any other pupil. Competition, yet again diminished.

I choose the theme of an "identity clothes line", because at the age of twelve or thirteen clothes play an important role in the child's life. The child is making an independent choice in which clothes he/she wears. Clothing becomes a vehicle for expression, independence and individuality. But competition is eradicated, as each pupil will be



cutting out the basic shape of an item of clothing. For example, one top shape will differ very little from another top, but the colour and pattern will differ, therefore in an artistic appearance each end product will differ but not so much in a social appearance. The evaluation of discrepancy is again limited.

The clothes line will be used to combine each pupil's individual artwork to create one artwork, but I have chosen an everyday subject matter which is normally associated with life outside the art classroom. It is a subject matter known to each and every pupil.

In both sequences the class starts individually and finally works in groups, it is important for this age group to work in groups because the ability of the class is mixed. Some pupils have done art before and some have not, therefore in group work there will be support, cooperation, teamwork, group decision making and problem solving.

In both sequences there will be an end product, but the emphasis will be placed on the process rather than the end product. This will reduce the fear of failure. But, at the same theme, the end product within a secondary school art room plays an important role to the pupil's sense of achievement. The end product must clarify the pupil's achievement. At all times the pupil must feel that they are reaching for a goal or aim, but this goal or aim must be a realistic one in order to achieve any level of success. It is important for the teacher to aid each pupil to strike a balance between the importance of process and the end product, the pupil must be able to acknowledge what he/she has learned and the importance of the learning process and the



pupil's efforts to create something worthwhile.

In Chapter 3, in order to evaluate the success of the lesson sequences in enhancing self-esteem through art, I want to record before the lesson sequences begin my own observations of each pupil's attitude to art and their ability in art. After the completion of the lesson sequences I will circulate a questionnaire to each pupil. Success will be measured by the pupil's attitude to their work. Did their attitudes change or not?

In the following pages I wish to outline the two sequences in which I have planned to encourage, question and challenge each pupil to develop a higher level of self-esteem.

### Lesson Plans for First Year

<b><u>Lesson Plan:</u></b>	First in a sequence of four
<b><u>Aim:</u></b>	For the pupil to describe an individual identity through line, print and lettering.
<b><u>Objective:</u></b>	To develop an understanding of outline and contour lines to describe the individuals hand.
<b><u>Theme:</u></b>	"Identity"
<b><u>Source:</u></b>	Pupil's hand.
<b><u>Activity:</u></b>	Contour line drawing.
<b><u>Visual Aid:</u></b>	Line drawing of hand and foot - drawn by myself.
<b><u>Materials:</u></b>	Paper, pencil.
<b><u>Procedure:</u></b>	Pupils must draw around the outline of their hand. Then draw filling in the shape of the hand with the contour lines of the palm and fingers.



<b><u>Lesson plan:</u></b>	Second in a sequence of four
<b><u>Aim:</u></b>	For the pupil to describe an individual identity through line, print and lettering.
<b><u>Objective:</u></b>	To develop an understanding of the use of contour lines to describe an individual thumb print.
<b><u>Theme:</u></b>	"Identity"
<b><u>Source:</u></b>	The pupils enlarged photo-copied thumb prints.
<b><u>Activity:</u></b>	Contour line drawing.
<b><u>Support Studies:</u></b>	Richard Long - hand print circle.
<b><u>Materials:</u></b>	Crayon, square card.
<b><u>Procedure:</u></b>	The pupils must observe their thumb prints from the enlarged photocopy - enlarge again onto a square card. Each pupil must choose a coloured crayon.
<b><u>Lesson Plan:</u></b>	Third of a sequence of four
<b><u>Aim:</u></b>	For the pupil to describe an individual identity through line, print and drawing.
<b><u>Objective:</u></b>	To develop an understanding of layout balance/ colour.
<b><u>Theme:</u></b>	"Identity"
<b><u>Source:</u></b>	The pupils photo-copied thumb prints.
<b><u>Activity:</u></b>	Contour line drawing.
<b><u>Support Studies:</u></b>	Other identity cards/advertisements
<b><u>Materials:</u></b>	Felt tip pen, card.
<b><u>Procedure:</u></b>	The pupil must observe where to place the thumbprint on the identity card. Each pupil



must take into consideration size, balance, layout and colour.

<b><u>Lesson plan:</u></b>	Fourth of a sequence of four
<b><u>Aim:</u></b>	For the pupil to describe an individual identity through line, print and lettering.
<b><u>Objective:</u></b>	To develop an understanding of layout, balance, colour, lettering and stencil printing to form an identity card.
<b><u>Theme:</u></b>	"Identity"
<b><u>Source:</u></b>	Typefaces, Lettering Grid.
<b><u>Activity:</u></b>	Lettering, cutting, printing.
<b><u>Support Studies:</u></b>	Expressionist posters, Advertisements.
<b><u>Materials:</u></b>	Pencil, craft knife, card, paint, brush.
<b><u>Procedure:</u></b>	The pupil can copy a typeface or create an individual typeface. Each pupil must experiment and investigate the lettering grid. When a pupil's name is drawn up and scaled to the size of the identity card, the pupil will make a stencil of their name and stencil print onto the identity card with the thumb print.

### **Lesson plan for first years**

<b><u>Lesson plan:</u></b>	First of a sequence of three
<b><u>Aim:</u></b>	An investigation into shape, printed pattern and colour to describe the individual's identity through the visual description of the individual's clothing.
<b><u>Objective:</u></b>	To develop an understanding of outline, shape, and flat application of a primary colour.







<b><u>Theme:</u></b>	"Clothes line"
<b><u>Source:</u></b>	Individual's clothes
<b><u>Activity:</u></b>	Drawing, cutting, painting.
<b><u>Support:</u></b>	
<b><u>Studies:</u></b>	Matisse - Cut outs.
<b><u>Materials:</u></b>	Card, pencil, paint, brush.
<b><u>Procedure:</u></b>	The pupil must draw the outline of their item of clothing. Cut the shape out and flat paint it with a primary colour.
<b><u>Lesson plan:</u></b>	Second of a series of three
<b><u>Aim:</u></b>	An investigation into shape, printed pattern and colour to describe the individual's identity through the visual description of the individual's clothing.
<b><u>Objective:</u></b>	To develop an understanding of potato printing, repeat pattern and secondary colours.
<b><u>Theme:</u></b>	"Identity Clothes Line"
<b><u>Source:</u></b>	Individual's clothes.
<b><u>Activity:</u></b>	Drawing, cutting, paint mixing and printing.
<b><u>Support</u></b>	
<b><u>Studies:</u></b>	Examples of potato prints/Fauvists.
<b><u>Materials:</u></b>	Potatoes, craft knife, brush and card.
<b><u>Procedure:</u></b>	The pupil must copy the pattern on their item of clothing, cut this shape into relief on the potato. mix a secondary colour and repeat print onto the card of the shape of the clothing.
<b><u>Lesson plan:</u></b>	Third of a sequence of three
<b><u>Aim:</u></b>	An investigation into shape, printed pattern and colour to describe the individual's identity through



the visual description of the individual's clothing.

**Objective:** To develop an understanding of contour lines to describe detail.

**Theme:** "Identity Clothes Line"

**Source:** Individual's clothes.

**Activity:** Painting.

**Support:** Klimt - Studies for the portrait of Adele Bloch -  
**Studies:** Bauer Koo.

**Materials:** Paint, brush.

**Procedure:** The pupil must observe and paint the detail of  
Stitching, zips, buttons, etc... on their item of  
clothing.



FIRST YEAR ART

**Q.1.** Do you like Art?

Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ No ☐

**Q.2.** Do you think you are

Good ☐ Average ☐ Bad ☐

at Art?

**Q.3.** Number from 1 - 9, which subjects are most important to you

English ☐

Irish ☐

Maths ☐

French ☐

Science ☐

Geography ☐

History ☐

Art ☐

Other (please state which) .....

**Q.4.** How do you think Art is rated by Newpark Pupils?

Important ☐ Average ☐ Unimportant ☐

**Q.5.** How do you think Art is rated by Newpark Teachers?

Important ☐ Average ☐ Unimportant ☐

**Q.6.** What did you learn from the Identity Card Project?

.....  
 .....  
 .....



**Q.7.** Did you like the thumbprint drawings when they were joined as one? Why? Why not?

.....

.....

.....

**Q.8.** Are you satisfied with your laminated identity card?

.....

.....

.....

**Q.9.** What did your parents think of your identity card?

.....

.....

.....

**Q.10** What did you learn from the clothes line project?

.....

.....

.....

**Q.11** Are you satisfied with your potato printed item of clothing?  
Why? Why not?

.....

.....

.....

**Q.12** Did you like the work when it was joined as one?  
Why? Why not?

.....

.....

.....



**Q.13** Which project did you prefer?  
Why?

.....

.....

.....

**Q.14** Do you think your ability in Art has improved?  
How? Why?

.....

.....

.....



**Footnotes Chapter Two**

1. Sprinthall & Sprinthall, Educational Psychology, p. 534.
2. Ibid, p. 534.



## CHAPTER 3

### EVALUATION OF SEQUENCES - SUCCESS OR FAILURE?

In this chapter, I will be evaluating the two first year lesson sequences on "Identity".

I have used a questionnaire as a device to analyse and indicate the level of success in enhancing self-esteem through Art. The questionnaire asks questions ranging from the pupil's own personal opinion, to peers, teachers and parents opinions on Art and success through Art. I will be evaluating the questionnaires as a whole and selecting particular pupil's comments.

Firstly, I would like to point out that this first year class of twenty two pupils began Art after Christmas. They had previously completed a three week block in Art and other optional subjects before Christmas. Therefore each pupil in this class has chosen to study Art. Streaming does not take place in Newpark School, the classes ability is mixed. Apart from the previous "taste" of Art the two projects on "Identity" are the first projects that the class have completed so far this year.

Before the first project began, I asked the class what they thought of Art and did they enjoy Art. The general reply was that they had never done Art before, but enjoyed what little Art they had done. None said that they did not like Art, but it would have been strange had they done so, since they had just chosen to study Art. The class did not have any preconceptions of what Art is or should be. Their only guidelines to Art was the artwork which was hung up around them in the Art room. The introduction of homework did not come as a shock to the class.



Given the broad view of the ability range of this class, opportunities of increasing the level of self-esteem began to look possible. Each pupil had chosen Art and preconceptions of Art did not exist. I did not have to step backwards in order to strive forward, the class began to study Art from a clean slate.

After completing the thumb print identity card and the identity clothes line projects, I circulated the questionnaire. These are some of the responses:

- Twenty     ————→     liked Art  
       Two        ————→     sometimes liked Art  
       Zero       ————→     did not like Art
  
- Four        ————→     think that they are good at Art  
       Eighteen   ————→    think that they are average at Art  
       Zero        ————→    think that they are bad at Art
  
- Art rated in importance against other subjects:  
       1 - 3        ————→     Seventeen  
       4 - 7        ————→     Five  
       8 - 9        ————→     Zero
  
- Art rated by Newpark pupils (peers)  
       Important    ————→     Fourteen  
       Average      ————→     Five  
       Unimportant ———→     Three
  
- Art rated by Newpark teachers  
       Important    ————→     Four  
       Average      ————→     Fifteen  
       Unimportant ———→     Three



To summarise the above: the majority of the class like art, think that they are average at Art and rate Art as an important subject. The class believe that their Newpark School peers look upon Art as an important subject and that Newpark teachers are seen to rate Art to be of average importance.

I will begin with referring to four pupils, Paula, Ruth, Paddy and Thomas. I have chosen these four in particular because of to their parents response or lack of response to their identity cards, keeping in mind that a child's self-esteem begins at home: as quoted in Chapter 1, Lawrence says:

It is not failure to achieve which produces low self-esteem, it is the way the significant people in the child's life react to failure.

(1)

#### PAULA:

Paula always likes art, she considers herself average in ability and Art is rated third in importance of her subjects. In Paula's opinion art is rated important by her peers in school and average in importance by New park teachers.

Paula wrote after showing her parents her identity:

"My Mum was quite interested and asked more about the project and my Dad said oh!"

Paula's Mother was supportive and enthusiastic, but her Father's response maybe showed no support or interest. Paula shows interest and excitement in the classroom, she works hard and enjoys "experimenting" and spontaneity. (2) A natural curiosity is aroused.



Paula is not afraid to point out her mistakes and learn from them. She is honest and open in her evaluation of her work, but this does not defeat or stamp on her confidence. Her honesty and openness increases her confidence to do better and therefore increases her level of self-esteem. It is clear that Paula has a fairly high self-esteem, with a good understanding of her capabilities and sets herself realistic goals. She has tasted failure and success in the two projects:

"Identity Card"

"I am not satisfied with my identity card because the my initials cover the print too much"

"Identity Clothes Line"

".....It turned out better than I expected, but you'd never know that it was a beret!"

As Denis Child indicates:

Children tasting success and failure in that order are most likely to continue to struggle to achieve. (3)

Paula acknowledges the positive qualities in her problem solving and improvement in skills:

"I can do reasonable line drawings now and I know more about colour."

RUTH:

Ruth likes Art, she considers herself to be average in ability and Art is rated second in importance of her subjects. In Ruth's opinion Art is rated average in importance by her peers in school and unimportant by Newpark teachers.

Ruth wrote after showing her parents her identity card:

"My parents thought it was very good and liked the and liked the way we used our thumbprints to show



our identity."

Ruth's parents showed a keen, supportive and understanding attitude and acknowledged her achievement. Again, this pupil, like Paula, shows interest in problem solving and evaluates her work with honesty and openness.

"Identity Card":

Ruth learnt...

".....That every one has a different print, which I have never thought of before."

She was satisfied with her identity card because:

".....It shows my own thumbprint which nobody else has"

"Identity card"

"Yes, I'm satisfied, but my potato prints smudged a bit so that was disappointing."

Ruth seems to have a high level of self-esteem. When asked if her ability in Art had improved or not, she answered freely and honestly.

"Sort of, I don't know if I'm any better at Art or not but, learning the difference between primary and secondary colours and which go best together will help me when I'm painting in the future."

Here, Ruth reveals confidence and a keen ability to move forwards in gaining knowledge and pursuing problem solving.

PATRICK:

Patrick always likes Art, he considers himself average in ability and Art is rated first in importance of his subjects. In Patrick's opinion Art is rated important by his school peers and average in importance by the Newpark teachers.

Patrick wrote after showing his parents his identity card:



"They thought I was capable of doing a lot better work"

Patrick's work fell short of his parents expectations of his capabilities, but rather than searching for positive elements, they choose to point out the negative elements. Patrick claims that he "always" likes Art and Art is rated first in importance of his subjects. But at times Patrick shows lack of insight into his own motives and behaviour (5), he said that he always likes Art, but further down the questionnaire he wrote that he was not satisfied with his identity card:

"because I did it wrong, and I messed it up because I found it boring and I put no effort into it."

He was "kind of pleased" with his potato printed item of clothing because

"..... I forgot to bring in my original shape to copy and I didn't remember it well"

He learnt that

"That you can create really nice colourful patterns very easily."

It appears that Patrick does not like to confront a challenge and prefers situations to be "easy" and too readily finds problem solving "boring" because he is not willing to make an effort. But reading through what appears to be a low/medium self-esteem, Patrick acknowledges that his "ability has improved in printing" and that he preferred the identity clothes line project:

"because it was nicer to do, not as boring and was more imaginative."

This more positive opinion is a step forward to increasing Patrick's level of self-esteem. An imaginative approach may be the key.







THOMAS

Thomas sometimes likes Art, he considers himself average in ability and Art is rated second in importance of his subjects. In Thomas's opinion Art is rated important by his school peers and average in importance by Newpark Teachers.

Thomas chose not to show his parents his identity card and has now lost it. He shows no concern about losing the card. Throughout most lessons I have to approach Thomas more so than other pupils. He daydreams and can be difficult to motivate at times. He needs a constant push to produce work, I would generally find that I have to spend more time motivating Thomas than any other pupil. He did not like the thumbprints joined together as one:

"Because they were boring, unattractive and didn't stand out."

While doing this lesson Thomas showed a lack of spontaneity and refused to challenge himself. He did not care about the outcome of his weak efforts. But later, before he lost his identity card, he was satisfied with it:

"I think it looked nice and I liked my choice of lettering and I carry it around and show it to anyone"

I remember being shocked when I came to Thomas while he was designing the type-face for his initials. Firstly, no push to motivate was needed and secondly his lettering was of a very high standard. When I step back and evaluate this, it appears that functional Art challenges and motivates Thomas. He was pleased with his potato printed item of clothing, he thought that it was "bright and colourful", and when all the work was hung up as one on the clothes line he



thought:

"it brightened up the Art room".

Thomas does not think that his ability in Art has improved:

".....I think I always have had the ability I have and I can learn to use it better."

Maybe Thomas has always had this ability, but motivation and striving were certainly not his strong points. Art with purpose and function has developed Thomas's curiosity for challenges in problem solving.

To summarise, I feel that each of these four pupils benefited from the projects which in return increased their level of self-esteem. Paula has gained confidence in line drawings and knowledge of colour. Ruth considers that her colour knowledge that she gained will aid her in the future. Patrick feels that he knows more about printing. Thomas does not seem to think that his ability has improved, but as a viewer upon his progress, I feel that his work has improved immensely and in time with further improvement Thomas's level of self-esteem will increase when he acknowledges this improvement.

To rejoin these four pupils with the rest of the classes response to the project, it would appear that Art is a worthwhile method to enhance the self-esteem. The majority of the class like Art, rate it important and enjoyed the identity clothes line project and appreciated the work when it was hung as one on the clothesline.

Even though the classes ability is mixed the projects lent themselves very suitably; neither of the projects were too demanding in drawing



skills, but allowed the stronger pupil to expand and express themselves, for example, a higher degree of lettering, stencilling, potato printing and drawing with contour lines were open to them. But the weaker pupil was not left behind, both the projects guaranteed a certain level of success. When all the work was joined together the class were very proud and realised that each pupil's work was important in the making of the clothesline. The work no longer an individual artwork, it had become a group art work. With both projects the pupils enjoyed the new and different view of what Art is.

I have found through teaching that it is important to consider:

1. A project which will involve and interest abilities ranging from the weak pupil to the good pupil.
2. A project with a subject matter which evolves around the the pupil's self, to encourage creativity and give importance to their voice.
3. A project with a new and different approach to Art.
4. A project which involves individual work to be joined together as a group Art piece. This joins the weaker to high ability pupil's work as one.

Art can be used as a vehicle to enhance the level of self-esteem. Success in one area will build confidence. This confidence may flow over into other area of the pupil's life, whether it is in other school subjects or outside school.



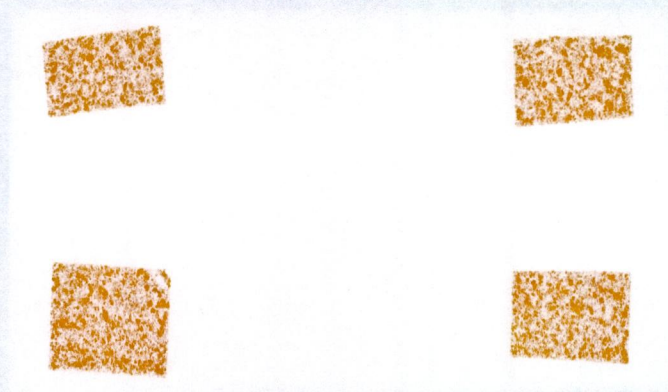
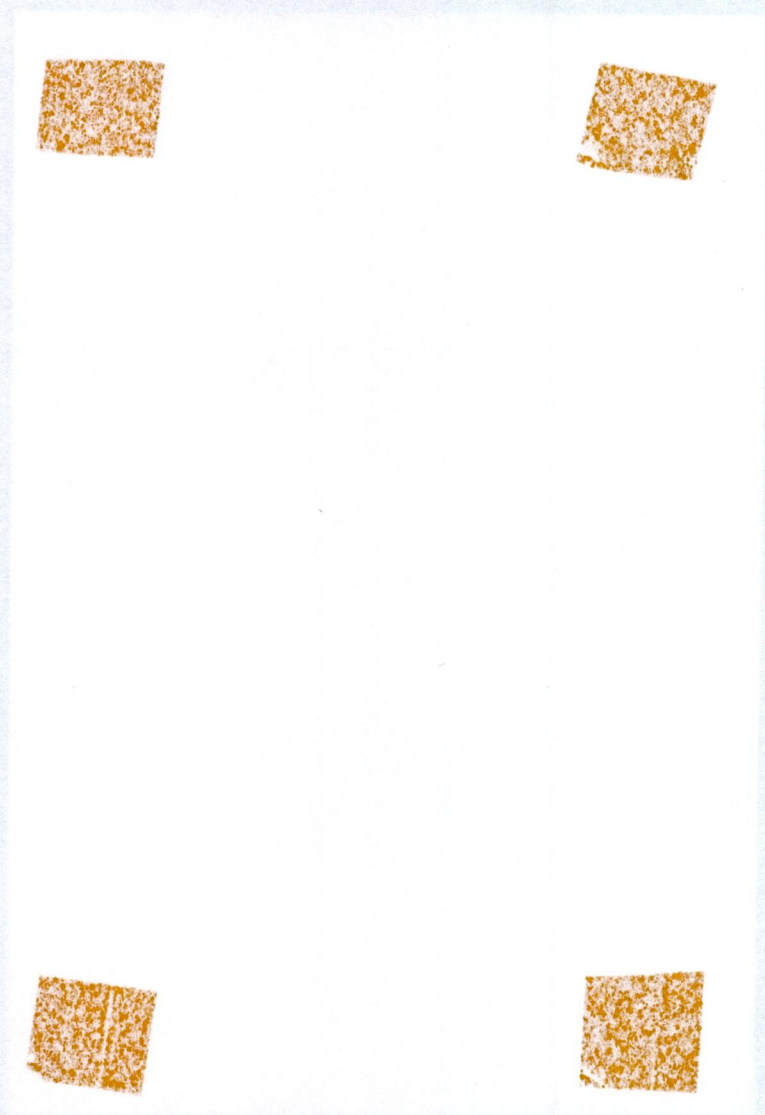




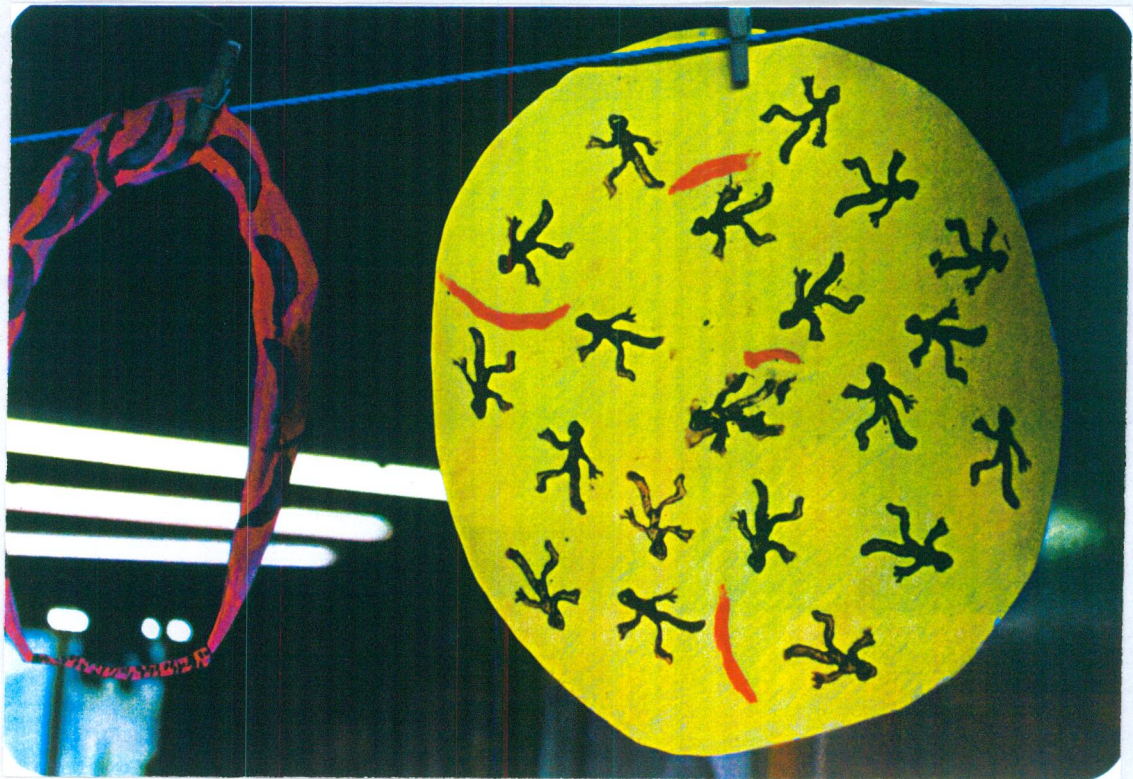
Paula











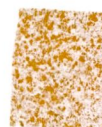
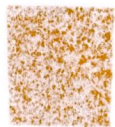
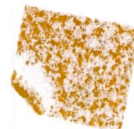
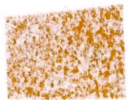






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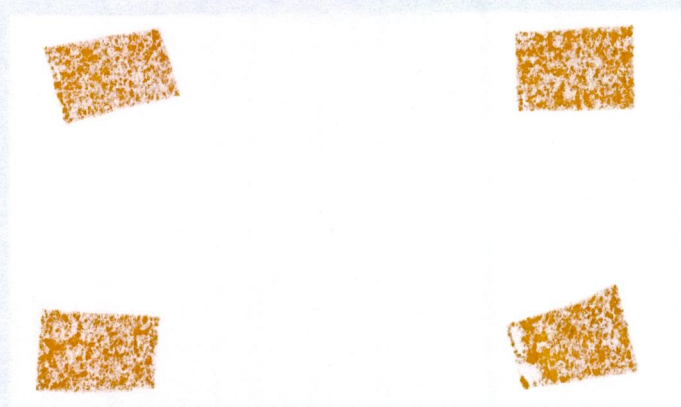




Ruth



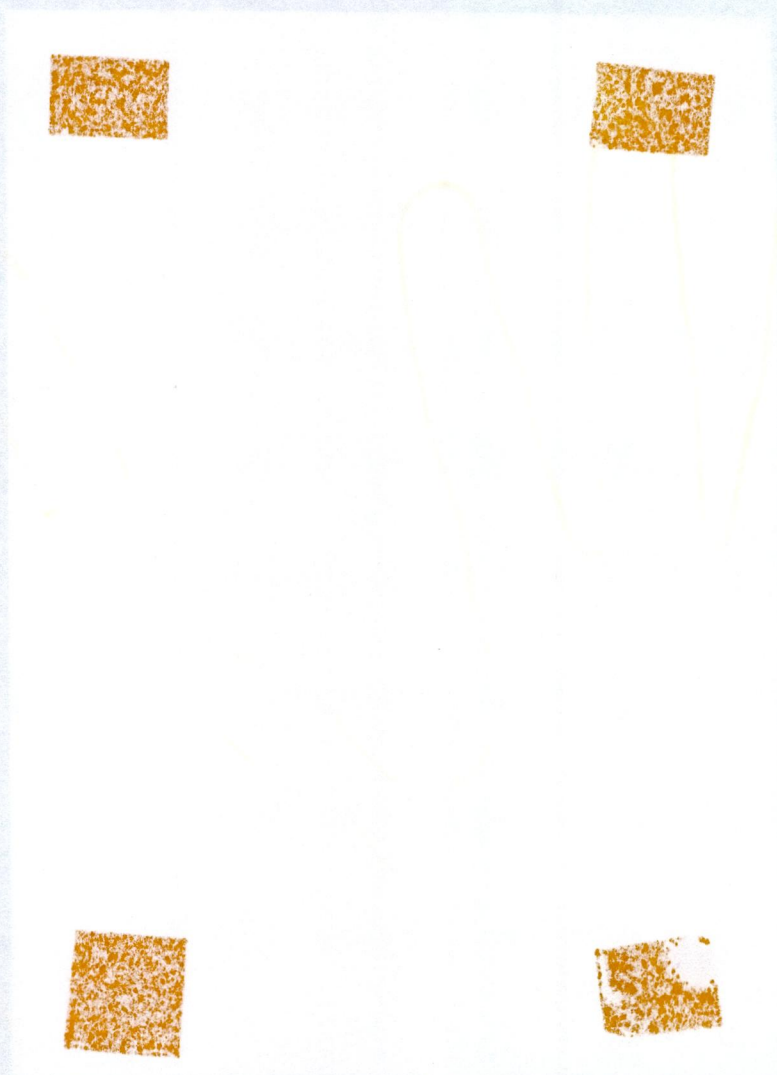




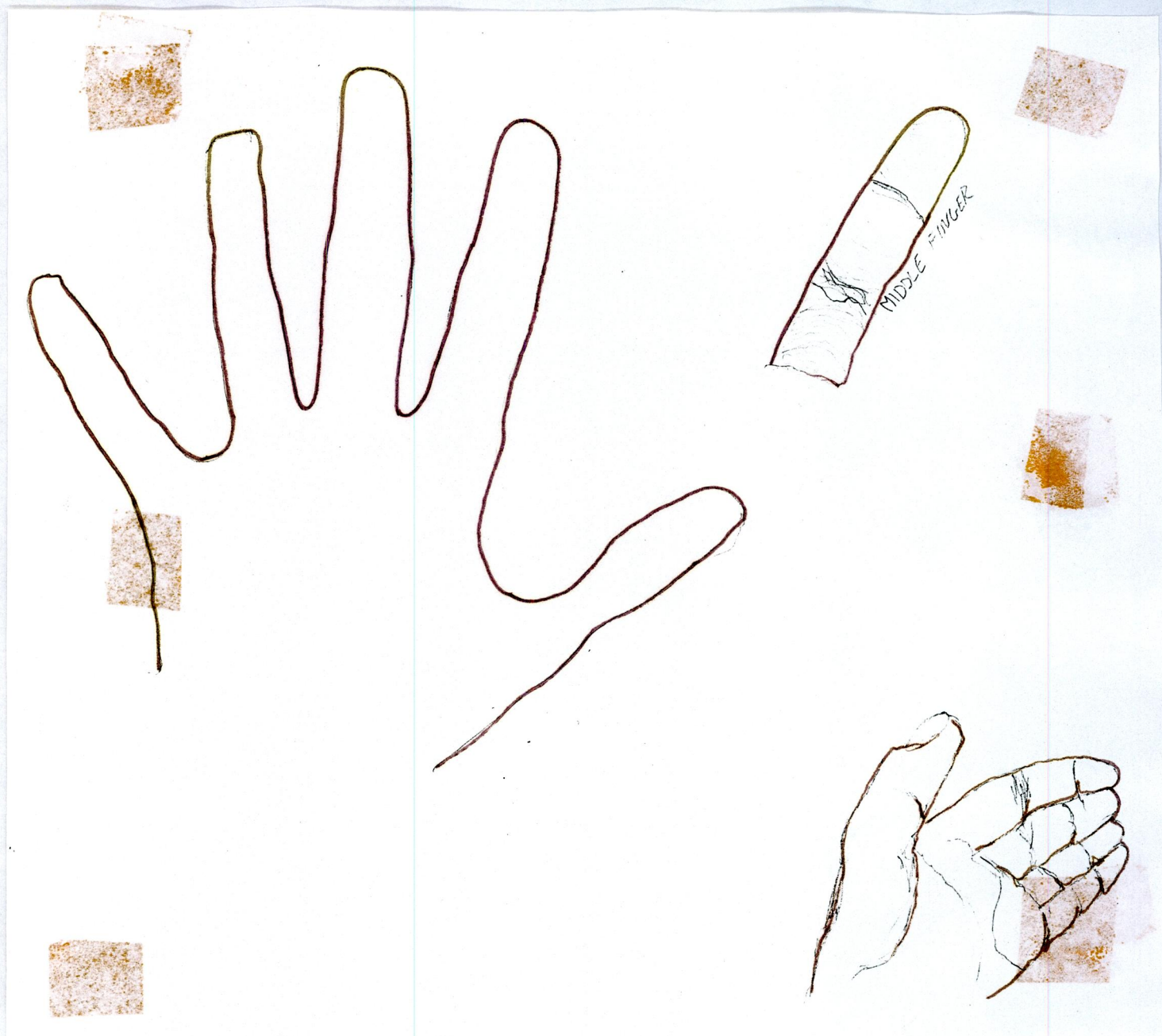






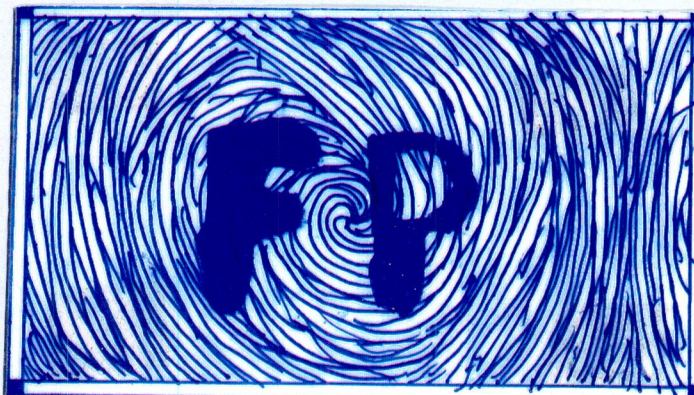




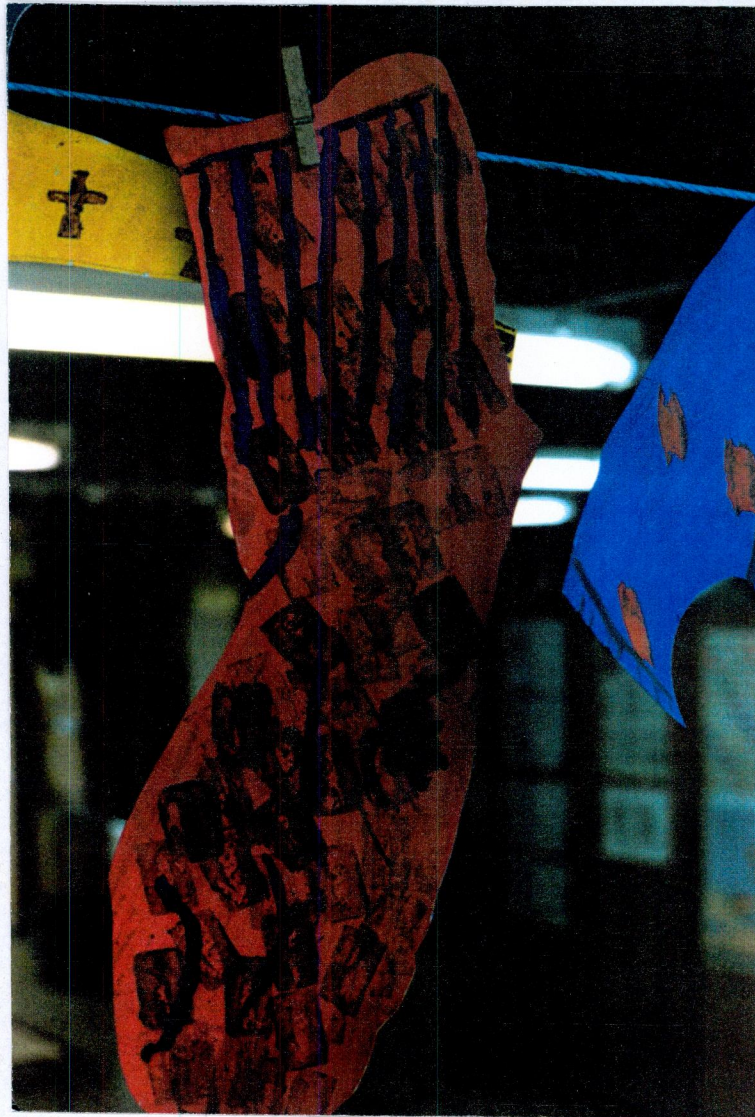
Patrick



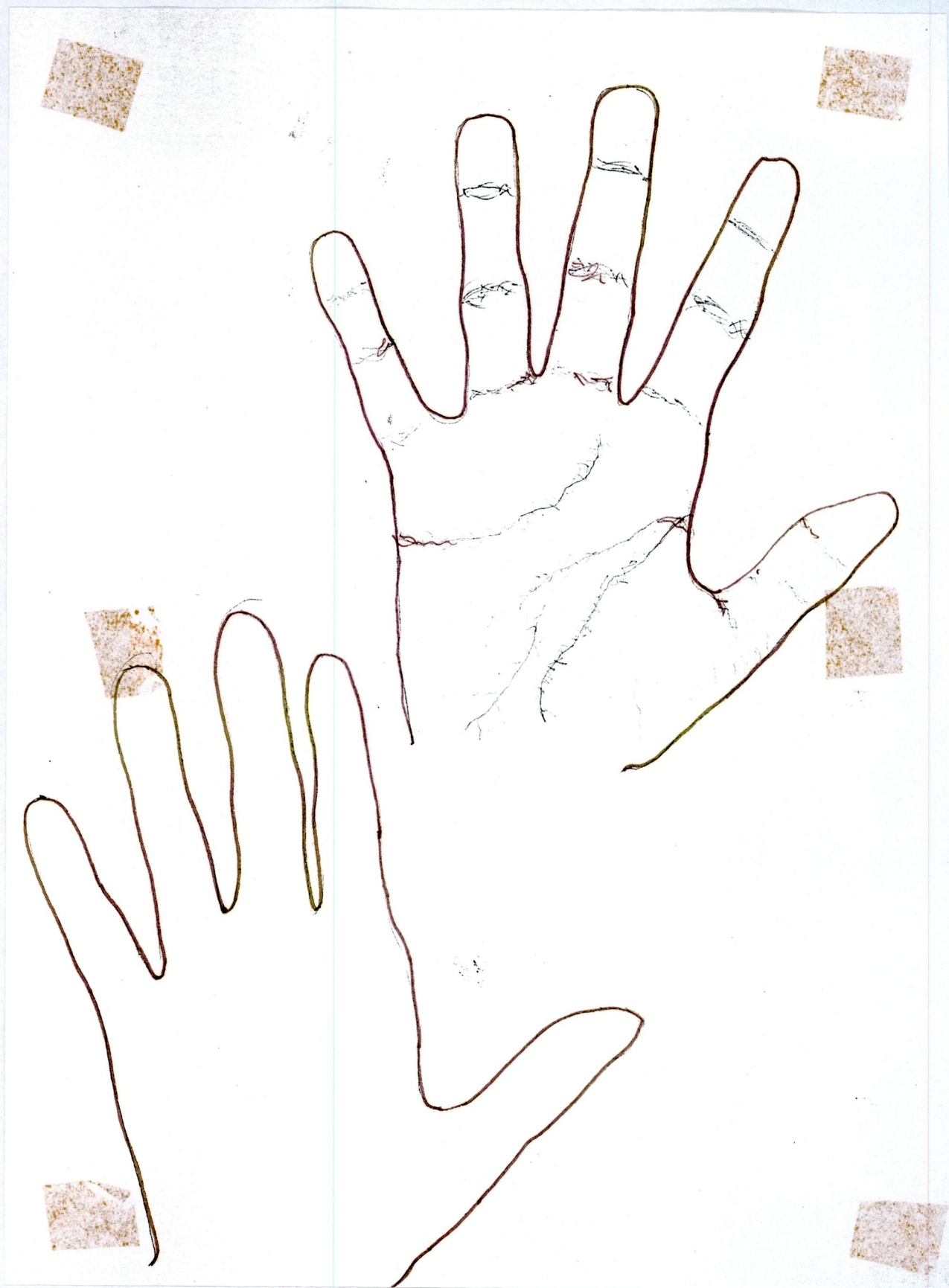
Patrick









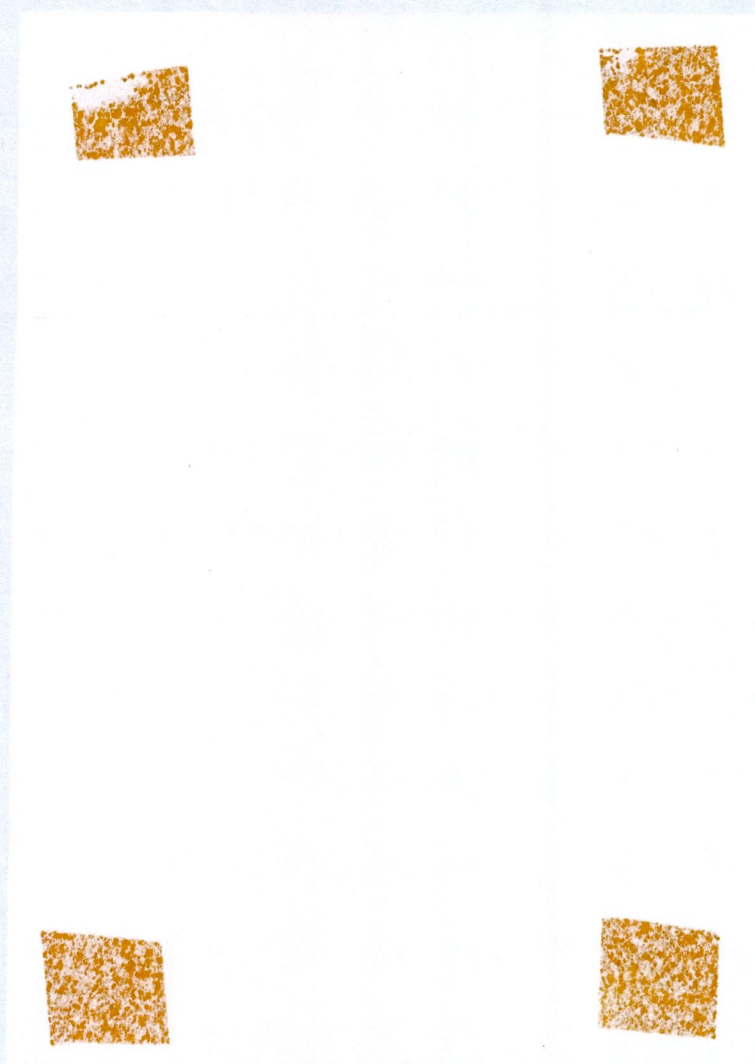
Thomas



Thomas



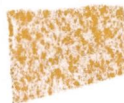
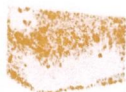








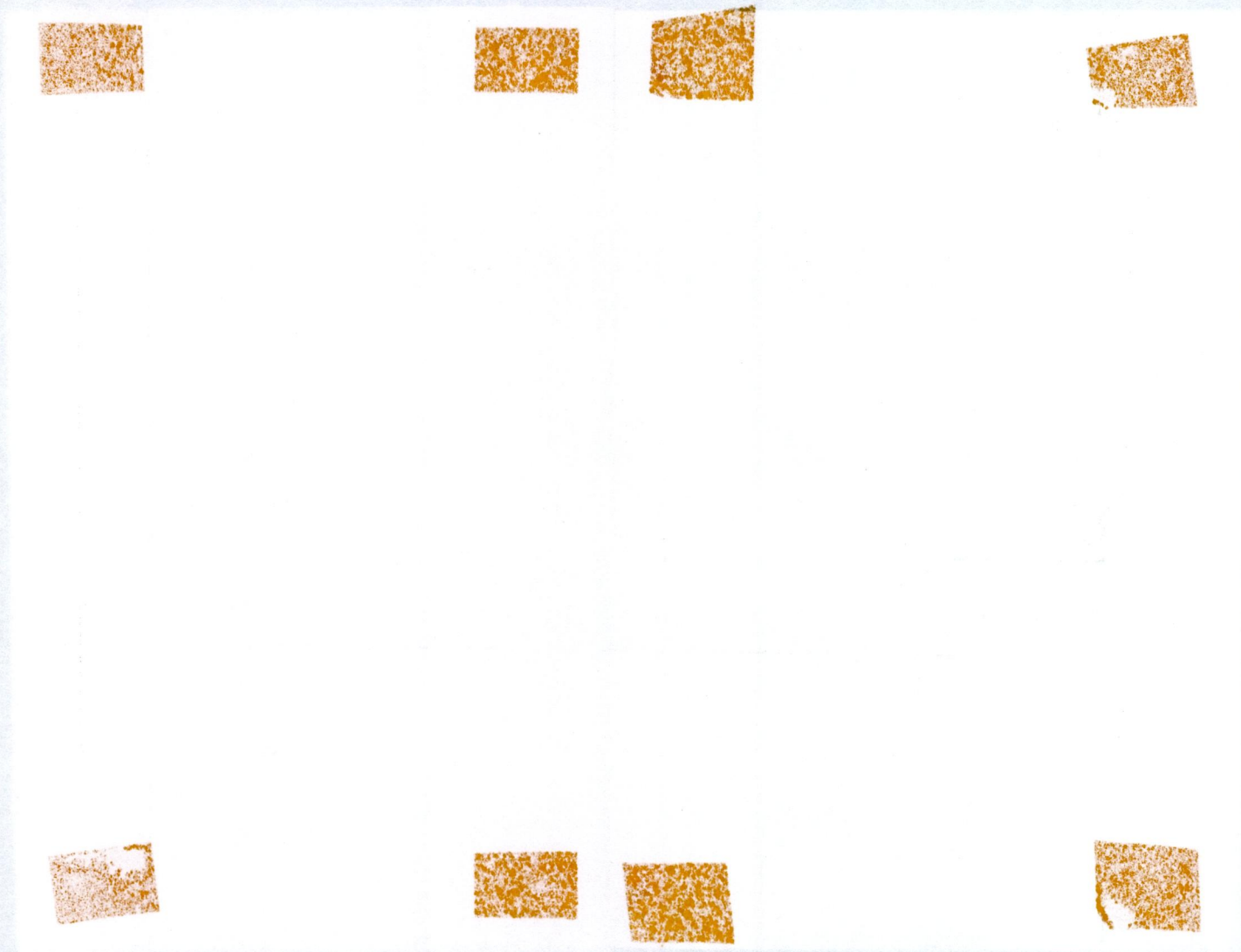






Jigsaw approach

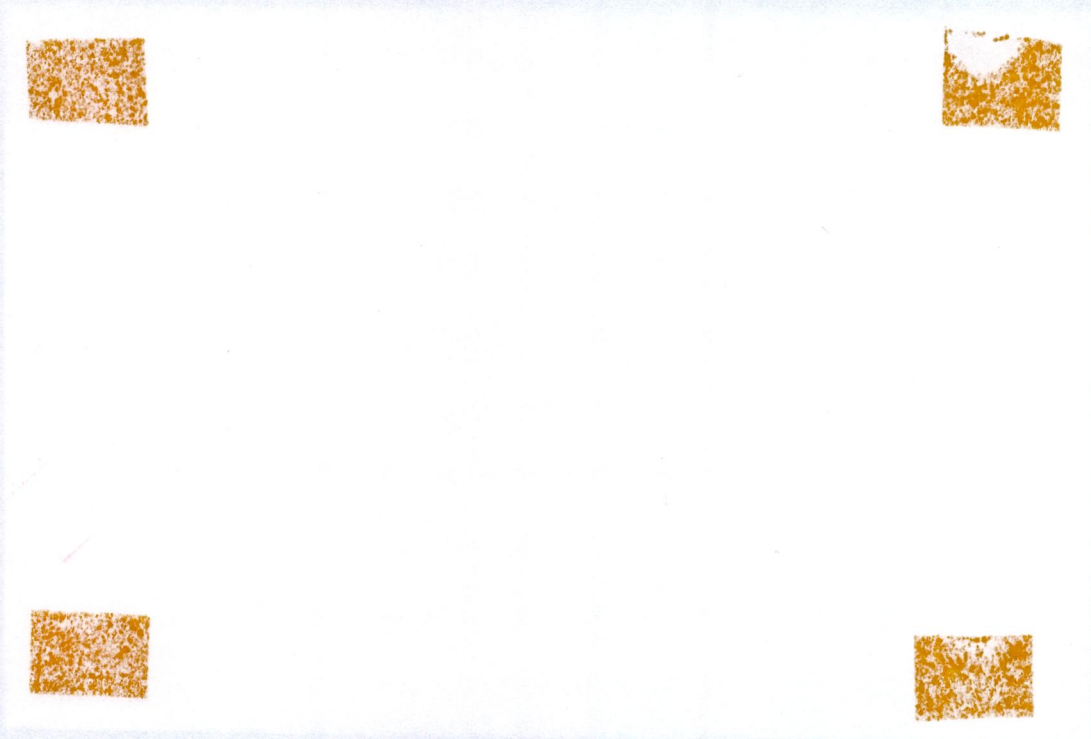






Jigsaw approach







FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 3

1. Denis Lawrence, Enhancing the Self-Esteem in the Classroom, (Paul Chapman, London 1988), p. 5.
2. David Fontana, Psychology for Teachers, (Antony J. Chapman & Antony Gale, Macmillan) 2nd Edition, p. 276.
4. Denis Child, Psychology and the Teacher, (New York: Holt Rheinehart and Winston, 1986) 4th Edition, p. 570.
5. Fontana, Psychology for Teachers, p. 276.



## Conclusion

Art Education can offer a broad opening for the pupil to develop lateral thought. There are many roads to explore and choose from, this in return allows for individual experience, decision making and expression. The child is free to investigate.

Both lesson sequences examined and challenged the notion of identity. Each pupil discovered that their thumbprints record their unique identity. Each identity card was different; no one thumbprint matched another. Each item of clothing differed and reflected the individual's choice.

Group work combined with the 'Jigsaw' approach brought the class together to function as one. The pupils ranging from a high self-esteem to a low self-esteem worked together to produce one piece of Art. One pupil's work was as important as the other in order to produce the final product. Competition was diminished and all abilities were taken into consideration.

Art can be a lubricant medium to develop the child's confidence and ability to gain knowledge. It is beneficial to child centre the subject in order to succeed in changing the pupil's self-evaluation. Art provides the opportunity for each child to express what is unique and worth while about themselves. Which in return concocts the enriching ingredients and opportunities to enhance the child's self-esteem.



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