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Student: **Joanna Brennan**

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This dissertation is designed to examine the extent to which sex differences exist in the artwork of boys and girls at post-primary school level. The role of parents. peers, the mass media and the school as determinants of sex-role standards and stereotypes will be discussed. I will try to establish how these social expectations influence art take-up and pupils' artwork. Sex differences in artwork; subject matter, content and its portayal, will be looked at, and any sex differences in relation to art ability will be analysed. Finally, I will recommend non-sexist approaches to art teaching.

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NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN
COLAISTE NAISIUNTA EALAINE IS DEARTHA
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"GENDER AND ARTWORK"

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE

B.A. DEGREE IN ART AND DESIGN EDUCATION

BY

JOANNA BRENNAN

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OT TABLES		iii
LIST OF FIGURES		iv
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS		vi
ACKNOWLEGEMENTS		vii
INTRODUCTION		viii
Chapter		
1.	GENDER DIFFERENCES: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE Sex-Role Stereotypes Sex-Role Determinants Facts and Fictions: Nature versus Nurture	1
2.	GENDER DIFFERENCES AND ART EDUCATION Sex Typing and Art Take-Up Sex Differences in Art Content Sex Differences in Character of Work Sex Differences in Art Ability Sex-Typing in Artistic Development Stereotypes and a Detatched Art Expression	18
3.	METHODOLOGY Background Information on School Details of Research Project	51
4.	RESULTS OF RESEARCH PROJECT Questionnaire Results Results of Worksheet 1: Statements and Adjectives Results of Worksheet 2: Who Does What? Results of Draw-A-Person Test Results of Teaching Practive Project	64
5.	CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS Synthesis of Results Non-Sexist Approaches to Art Teaching	113
APPENDICES		119
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY		139

LIST OF TABLES

1. Common Stereotypes of Men and Women 2

2. Role of Women at University 8

3. Number of Candidates who sat the Stated Subject in the Leaving Certificate in 1993. 11

4. Unfounded Beliefs about Sex Differences 12

5. Full-Time Undergraduate Students by field of study National College of Art and Design on 1st March, 1994. 20

6. Full-Time Undergraduate and Postgraduate Students studying to be Art Teachers at National College of Art and Design, on 1st March, 1994. 21

7. Leaving Certificate Art Results 1993. 30

8. Junior Certificate Art Results 1993. 31

9. Current subject Options Available According to year of Study. 56

LIST OF FIGURES

1. Name Your Favourite Book: Males / Females. 65
2. Name Your Favourite Type of Television Programme: Male / Female. 66
3. Name Your Favourite Hobby / Past-Time: Males / Females. 68
4. Name Your Favourite Game: Males / Females. 70
5. Percentage of Males and Females who placed Art in their list of Top 3 Favourite Subjects. 72
6. Influential Agents on Subject Choice: Males / Females. 73
7. How Easy do Males / Females find Art? 74
8. Percentage of Males / Females who named Craftwork as their first choice. 75
9. Do males / Females Prefer Drawing from Observation or Imagination? 76
10. Do Males / Females Prefer Drawing from Observation or Imagination? 78
11. Drawing Preferences of Males and Female. 79
12. Do Males / Females Prefer 2D or 3D work? 80
13. How Tidy do Males / Females like their Work to Appear? 82
14. Art Related Jobs as stated by Male and Female pupils. 84
15. Do you think Art is an important part of the School Curriculum? Males / Females. 87

16. Do you intend to go on to study Art at Third Level?
Males / Females. 89

17. Percentage of Males / Females who agree with
given Statement. 90

18. Results of Worksheet 1 Section 2; Adjectives,
Attributable to Males / Females: Girls. 95

19. Results of Worksheet 1 Section 2; Adjectives,
Attributable to Males / Females: Boys. 95

20. Results of Worksheet 2 , Who Does What? Boys. 97

21. Results of Worksheet 2 , Who Does What? Girls. 98

22. Results of Draw-A-Person Test. 100

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. The Lute Playing Woman 23

2. The Fallen Soldier. 24

3. Male Figure, drawn by second year boy. 101

4. Female Figure, drawn by second year girl. 102

5. Choosing Shoes, drawn by a female. 105

6. Choosing Shoes, drawn by a male. 105

7. Oh, I wish I'd looked After My Teeth, drawn by a female. 107

8. Hunger, drawn by a male. 108

9. The Graveyard, drawn by a male. 109

10. The Hedgehog, drawn by a female. 110

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INTRODUCTION

In this dissertation I propose to examine the relationship between gender and artwork, analysing how art education differs in respect to boys and girls. Below I have outlined the main areas of discussion according to each chapter.

In chapter 1 there appears a review of the relevant literature. Here the notion of sex-role stereotypes, their determinants, and the limiting effects of these on the general educational experience of pupils are discussed. Prime factors such as parents, peers, the mass media and the school, and their effects on gender roles are explored. The influence of the teacher in reinforcing stereotypes within both class content, and the hidden curriculum, as well subject provision within the school are considered, (both co-educational and single sex differences included). Finally I will examine the extent to which sex differences are based on established facts.

Chapter 2 examines gender differences in art education. The influence of sex typing on art take-up is examined, taking into consideration factors such as; the image of art as a feminine subject, the priority placed on job prospects by boys, the lack of male art teachers, and the influence of the pupils peer group. The influence of cultural expectation on art work is discussed, looking at sex differences in usual preferences (subject matter, imagery, and its representation). The disparity in the performance of boys and girls in art examinations is explored, as is sex differences in spatial ability. Evidence of sex typing on artistic development from childhood through to adulthood is traced,

giving particular attention to the plight of women in art. Finally I discuss how conventional sex stereotyping leads to a detached art expression with no personal identification or emotional growth.

Chapter 3 is concerned with methodology,. Firstly, on introduction to the school where I completed my teaching practice is given. A brief discussion of the school includes, school type, student population. school structure, facilities, and how subject options are offered to pupils. A description of how art is provided for within the school then follows covering details such as; facilities, number of teachers and sex ratio of pupils. I then give details of my research project, which consists of a questionnaire, two worksheets, draw-a-person test, and my teaching practice project.

The results of my research project are discussed in chapter 4. Here I will try to ascertain to what extent stereotypical preferences exist in student interests and artwork.

Results of the questionnaire are examined first, to analyse such information as; sex differentiated interests and subject choice, preferences in artwork (drawing from observation / imagination, working from natural / manmade objects, use of colour, desired neatness of work, activities, materials), familiarity with names of famous female artists, knowledge of jobs in the artworld, Junior Certificate results, and intention to go and study art at third level. Following on from the results of the questionnaire, are the results of worksheets 1 and 2.

These have been designed to see if students have different expectations of people because of their gender, and whether or not students assign them roles to conform to those expectations. The draw-a-person test, observes which gender pupils prefer to draw. My teaching practice project then examines sex differences in; pupils' chosen themes, colour schemes, portrayal of depth and use of texture.

Chapter 5 concludes the dissertation, offering a synthesis of results, and recommendations for non-sexist approach to teaching art, in subject content and in the hidden curriculum.

CHAPTER 1

GENDER DIFFERENCES:

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

SEX-ROLE STEREOTYPES

> "The distinction between male and female serves as a basic organizing principle for every human culture" (1)

The psychological literature reveals that when young children and adolescents are asked which psychological dimensions are masculine and which are feminine, they have no problem in categorizing qualities and listing characteristics for each gender. (2)

A sex-role standard, also called a gender role, can be defined in terms of the "behaviours, personality characteristics and attitudes that cultures find appropriate for each sex." (3) These gender roles describe how males and females are expected to behave and thus, as suggested by David Shaffer, "reflect the stereotypes by which we categorize and respond to members of each sex." (4)

Table 1 below exemplifies sex-role standards and stereotypes commonly attributed to males and females.

TABLE 1

COMMON STEREOTYPES OF MEN AND WOMEN

Competency cluster (masculine descriptions are considered desirable)

Feminine descriptions	Masculine descriptions
Not at all aggressive	Very aggressive
Not at all independent	Very independent
Does not hide emotions at all	Almost always hides emotions
Very subjective	Very objective
Very submissive	Very dominant
Very passive	Very active
Not competitive	Very competitive
Very home-orientated	Very worldly
Very sneaky	Very direct
Not adventurous	Very adventurous
Has difficulty making decisions	Can make decisions easily
Not at all self-confident	Very self-confident

Warmth-expressive cluster (feminine descriptions are considered more desirable)

Feminine descriptions	Masculine descriptions
Doesn't use harsh language	Uses very harsh language
Very tactful	Very blunt
Very gentle	Very rough
Very aware of other's feelings	Not at all aware of other's feelings
Very quiet	Very loud
Very neat	Very sloppy
Very strong need for security	Very little need for security
Enjoys art and literature	Does not enjoy art and literature
Easily expresses tender feelings	Does not easily express tender feelings

SOURCE: Data for the profile of stereotypes is taken from Best et al., 1977, quoted in David Shaffer, Developmental Psychology: Theory, Research and Applications, (Monterey, California: Brooks and Cole, 1985) p.516.

In the Collins Dictionary the definition of stereotype is "a standardized image or idea of a type of person." (5) In our own culture we have succeeded in polarizing the characteristics of the stereotypical male and the stereotypical female. This view is supported by Mary Cullen, who believes that todays stereotypical male is "active", "dominant", "competitive" and "aggressive". This is in direct contrast to the stereotypical female who is viewed as "passive", "subordinate" and "self-effacing". (6) Shaffer suggests that girls are then encouraged to assume a nurturant "expressive role" in society, where as wife and mother, they are "warm, friendly, co-operative and sensitive to the needs of others." Boys, on the other hand, take on an "instrumental role". As husband and father, they act as the "provider", where they are expected to be "dominant, independent, assertive and protective." (7)

SEX ROLE DETERMINANTS

Parents, Peers, Media

Sex Typing refers to the "acquisition of those characteristics and behaviours that one's culture considers appropriate for females or males." (8) Psychologists agree that parents clearly play a major role in sex typing. From the moment a child is born, it's gender stimulates parents (and society) to treat him or her in a specific way. Children are provided with "sex-appropriate" clothes, hairstyles and toys, and are encouraged to act appropriate to their gender. (9) Gilah Leder suggests that this acts as "an important reference for

childhood and adolescent socialization". (10) Constantina Safilios-Rothschild finds, in her research into socialization and sex-roles that,

> This projection into future sex role tracks permeates, ... every gesture, thought, and expectation of the parent for the child, and creates the climate for teaching sex roles. (11)

On discussing the importance of gender on the child's development, Safilios-Rothschild continues,

> Knowing that he is a boy, because his parents define and treat him as such, a male child goes on to learn from television advertisements, cartoons, and programmes, and from books, the things that boys do that he can imitate and the things girls do that he must avoid. (12)

Peers also serve as models for imitation and exert pressure towards sex typed behaviour. When a child is considered to have deviated from the approved sex-role standard, he or she is criticized and discouraged. As John A. Michael says, "Boys who relate to feminine activities are called 'Sissies' and girls who relate to masculine activities are called 'Tomboys'". (13) Shaffer points out that the taboos against feminine behaviour for boys are stronger than those against masculine behaviour for girls, he argues that,

> we live in a male-orientated society where 'tomboys' are at least tolerated while 'sissies' are ridiculed and rejected. (14)

Conformity to the masculine stereotype seems to be a matter of avoiding anything "sissyish". Atkinson, Atkinson and Hilgard suggest that young boys are interested in feminine activities but have learned to expect negative reactions for showing such interests. (15) Shaffer concludes that the:

> major accomplishment for young girls is to learn how not to be babies, while young boys must learn how not to be girls. (16)

Teachers

Relevant literature reveals that the process of sex-role identification continues at school. As Gilah Leder says:

> There are a number of ways in which schools and teachers within the schools, differentiate between students on the basis of sex. The former do so through their organizational procedures; the latter through their behavior, expectations and beliefs. (17)

Teachers play a crucial role in the transmission of sex-role stereotypes. According to Judith Whyte they do so,

> not only through the content of what they teach, but also through their behaviour in the classroom, their interactions with pupils, and in their assumptions about the different skills and abilities that girls and boys possess. (18)

Such factors will effect the functioning and performance of students as Gilah Leder explains, these "expectations in time become self-fulfilling." (19) And as Hannan and Breen suggest, children already carry with them, from home to school,

> clear sex differentiated expectations as well as likely differences in reactions to teachers expectations and the way they distribute rewards or sanctions. (20)

Relevant literature reveals that teachers do treat boys differently to girls, in ways which are reinforced in pupils reactions. Girls are expected to be better behaved in the classroom: "feminine" behaviour is promoted and "passivity and conformity" are rewarded. (21) Boys are expected to be more competitive and aggressive. Guy Lefrancois supports this view by saying:

> teachers expect more aggressiveness in boys and are more likely to tolerate and even encourage it. In much the same way, we expect more emotionality from girls and consequently tolerate and

> encourage it in ways that we would find less appropriate for boys. (22)

Teachers also have been found to spend more time interacting with boys than girls. This may give girls the impression that they lack ability or that academic success is not important for them. (23) Safilios-Rothschild agrees with this view, and she states:

> Teachers tend to give more directional and instructural responses and greater attention to boys rather than girls. Whereas boys receive greater criticism from their teachers, it is more often about their behavior and motivation than the quality of their work. The reverse is true for girls. Hence the implied message is that the effort is there, but not the brains. (24)

Hannan and Breen describe how teachers respond differently to the performance of boys and girls. Teachers are prone to attribute boys failure to lack of effort, and girls failure to lack of ability. (25) Shaffer believes that this undervalues the accomplishments of females (26), conveying the impression that women try harder to accomplish the same feats as men, and that girls are less competent than boys. (27) Safilios-Rothschild concludes saying that these factors "influence the more general characteristics of the personality of girls and boys, such as self-confidence and independence." (28) Both the behaviour of pupils and the expectations of teachers appear to reinforce sex typed attitudes.

Curriculum

Relevant literature shows curriculum structure and sex differences in school provision to be very important. As Hannan and Breen point out, although provided in the school, not all subjects may be offered on an equal basis to all

pupils in the same year or class group. (29) Again, parents, peers and media as well as the school authorities can effect this aspect of school life, influencing students attitude towards certain subjects. Phillida Salmon describes how "maths and science" are seen as "objective high-level, high status and essentially male subjects", while "languages, art and child development" are seen as "softer and less rigorous kinds of subjects, for girls rather than boys." (30) Phillida Salmon continues:

> Those areas of understanding which have an undeniably personal character, the expressive as against the instrumental spheres of knowledge represent the lower levels of the hierarchy, so in the school curriculum, art, music, drama and dance are subjects with typically lower prestige than maths, chemistry and physics. (31)

Hannan and Breen agree, suggesting that these are the "feminine subjects" into which girls are filtered, because they are seen as being "more congruent with their gender role". (32) Gilah Leder believes that this is why females feel "anxiety" when confronted with "masculine" tasks, that require mathematical or spatial ability. (33) Judith Whyte regrets the fact that most students are required to choose their subjects during early puberty, when the "pressure to maximise sex differences is greatest." (34)

Part of this stereotyping is the whole process whereby men typically end up teaching male subjects and women female ones. (35) Shaffer observes how employers who must choose between equally qualified male and female applicants will frequently "offer a more advanced position or a higher starting salary to the male." (36) All these factors seem to result in sexism also in school administration. Guy Lefrancois discovered that whilst the majority of

teachers are female, it is males who rise to hold positions of relative power. (37) A study by Dr Maire Mulcahy published in the Irish Times on the role of women in the University College Cork, shows the same resulting trend (see Table 2 below).

TABLE 2

MULCAHY'S "ROLE OF WOMEN IN UNIVERSITY"

A study into the equality of opportunity in Irish 3rd level institutional situation in University College Cork, 1987-89

MALE LECTURERS	92
FEMALE LECTURERS	37
MALE PROFESSORS	60
FEMALE PROFESSORS	2
ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF (LOWEST GRADE)	
MALE	6
FEMALE	108
ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF (SENIOR)	
MALE	13
FEMALE	4

Source: Results of study by Dr Maire Mulcahy taken from Irish Times, September, 1990.

Co-education and Single Sex Schools, a Comparison

Hannan and Breen state that there are "marked school differences existing in both co-educational and single sex schools." (38) Different curricula are allocated to boys and girls, and in doing so, traditional gender role differences are reinforced. It has been noted above that school authorities offer girls

In an all boys school, students are more likely to choose feminine subjects, like cookery and languages, if they are offered, than in mixed schools. But few all boys schools offer subjects like Home Economics, and if so, only to a certain group. (49)

To summarize the situation in sex-role determinants, the school is one of the prime agents of sex differentiation. It frequently reinforces barriers between subjects regarded as suitable for boys or girls only. These traditionalist attitudes confirm rather than challenge inequality between the sexes.

Table 3 below shows the number of candidates who sat the various subjects in the Leaving Certificate in 1993 in terms of males and females. It is clear from these figures that more girls that boys take art.

TABLE 3

NUMBER OF CANDIDATES WHO SAT THE STATED SUBJECT IN THE LEAVING CERTIFICATE IN 1993

Subject	Males	Females	Total
Irish	22732	2643	49135
English	27502	28853	56355
Maths	24513	25595	50108
Art	4115	6522	10637
Home Ec SS	2751	16386	19137
Home Ec G	39	685	724
Music - A	79	515	594
Music - B	129	438	567
Physics	8414	2665	11079
Chemistry	4191	3320	7511
Biology	8849	17694	26543
Engineering	4877	134	5011
Technical Dr	18009	341	8350
Accounting	6542	7470	14012
French	13265	20702	33967
German	3026	4816	7842
History	8229	6278	14507
Geography	12636	10075	22711
Business Org	10407	12050	22457

Source: Department of Education, Statistics section, Dublin, 1993

FACTS AND FICTIONS: NATURE VERSUS NURTURE

So far this dissertation has been concerned with discussing gender roles and evidence of stereotyping, both at home and at school. But how are these differences between the genders founded? What are real facts and what are mere assumptions?

A review of the relevant literature concludes that many common assumptions about sex differences have no foundation in fact. In Table 4 below, a study by

Macoby and Jacklin, as discussed by Shaffer, illustrates unfounded beliefs about sex differences.

TABLE 4

UNFOUNDED BELIEFS ABOUT SEX DIFFERENCES

Belief	Facts
1. Girls are more "social" than boys.	Research indicates that the two sexes are equally interested in social stimuli, equally responsive to social reinforcement, and equally proficient at learning through the imitation of social models. At certain ages, boys actually spend more time than girls with playmates.
2. Girls are more "suggestible" than boys.	Most studies of children's conformity find no sex differences. However, some researchers have found that boys are more likely than girls to accept peer-group values that conflict with their own.
3. Girls have lower self-esteem than boys.	The sexes are highly similar in their overall self-satisfaction and self-confidence throughout childhood and adolescence. However, men and women differ in the areas in which they have their greatest self-confidence: girls rate themselves higher in social competence, while boys see themselves as dominant or potent. Thus, males and females apply questionable sex-role stereotypes to themselves.
4. Girls are better at simple repetitive tasks, whereas boys excel at tasks that require higher-level cognitive processing	The evidence does not support these assertions. Neither sex is superior at rote learning, probability learning, or concept formation.
5. Boys are more analytical than girls	Overall, boys and girls do not differ on tests of analytic cognitive style or logical reasoning, although boys do excel if the task requires visual/spatial abilities
6. Girls lack achievement motivation.	Under "neutral" conditions girls actually score higher than boys on tests of achievement motivation. Under competitive conditions, the achievement motivation of boys increases to about the level that girls have already attained Perhaps the myth of lesser achievement motivation for females has persisted because males and females have generally directed their achievement strivings toward different goals.

Source: Data taken from David Shaffer, Developmental Psychology p.520.

Several popular sex-role stereotypes can be described as myths as they have no basis in fact.

The literature is in general agreement, as Hannan and Breen point out:

> that whatever innate differences in personality and ability may exist between the sexes, they are virtually impossible to abstract from socially learned and reinforced differences (58).

Implications

A review of the literature concludes that gender differences in behaviour and expectations are as Gilah Leder stated

> at the same time self-perpetuating and self-promoting, Societys standards, beliefs and expectations are ultimately reflected in personal beliefs that may affect functioning. (58)

However, it would be a mistake to assume that gender role identities have become as crystallised by secondary school age that they cannot be changed. As Hannan and Breen state,

> puberty and adolescence are developmental periods in which reflection upon childhood experiences and one's family socialization experiences take place, that the identity crises force at least re-conceptualisation, if not a break, with former relationship concepts and associated patterns of thought and behaviour. (50)

There is a strong need for teachers to be aware of and counteract, the many often subtle instances of sex bias that permeate our attitudes and society in general.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 1

1. Rita L. Atkinson, Richard C. Atkinson and Ernest R. Hilgard, Introduction to Psychology, 8th edition, (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1983), p.540.

2. According to this study, children agree as to what boys and girls should be like. Boys saw girls as more passive, weaker, more restricted in their activities, more emotional and burdened by menstruation. Girls viewed males as more active, less concerned with appearance, more aggressive, more athletic and better able to travel and develop a career. Guy R. Lefrancois reports on the study conducted by Travis and Baumgartner (1983) and Intons-Peterson's replication of the same study, reporting no major changes (1988). Guy R. Lefrancois, Pschology for Teaching, 8th edition, (California: Wadsworth, 1994), p.53.

3. Ibid., p.52.

4. David R. Shaffer, Developmental Psychology: Theory, Research and Applications, (Monterey, California: Brooks and Cole, 1985), p.516.

5. British Library Cataloguing, Collins Pocket English Dictionary, (Glasgow: William Collins, 1989), p.837.

6. Mary Cullen, "Knowledge and Power" in Girls Don't Do Honours: Irish Women in Education in the 19th and 20th Centuries, (Dublin: Argus Press, 1987), p.137.

7. Shaffer defines an "expressive role": as being of "a social prescription, usually directed towards females, that stresses that one should be cooperative, kind, nurturent and sensitive to the needs of others" . He goes on to define an "instrumental role" as being of "a social prescription, usually directed towards males, that stresses that one should be dominant, independent, assertive, competitive and goal-oriented." In his text he expands further on these roles. Shaffer, Developmental Psychology, p 516-517.

8. Atkinson, Atkinson and Hilgard, Introduction to Psychology, p.87

9. Shaffer, Developmental Psychology, p.515.

10. Gilah Leder, "Sex-Related Differences in Mathematics: An Overview", in Contemporary Issues in Educational Psychology, 5th edition, eds. H. F. Clarizo, R. C. Craig and W. A. Mehrens, (Singapore: McGraw Hill, 1987), p. 51.

11. Constantino Safilios-Rothschild, "Sex Differences in Early Socialisation and Upbringing and their Consequences on Educational Choices and Outcomes", in Girls and Women in Education, ed. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (Paris: OECD, 1986), p.30.

12. Ibid., p.32.

13. John A.. Michael, Art and Adolescence: Teaching Art at the Secondary Level, (London: Teachers College Press, 1983), p.71.

14. Shaffer, Developmental Psychology, p.524.

15. Atkinson, Atkinson and Hilgard, Introduction to Psychology, p.88.

16. Shaffer, Developmental Psychology, p.524.

17. Gilah Leder, Contemporary Issues in Educational Psychology, p.51.

18. Judith Whyte, Girls and Women in Education, p.75.

19. Gilah Leder, Contemporary Issues in Educational Psychology, p.51.

20. Damian Hannan and Richard Breen, Schooling and Sex Roles: Sex Differences in Subject Provision and Student Choice in Irish Post-Primary Schools, (Dublin: The Economic and Social Research Institute, 1983), p.14.

21. Safilios-Rothschild, Girls and Women in Education, p.39.

22. Guy R. Lefrancois, Psychology for Teaching, p.54.

23. Safilios-Rothschild, Girls and Women in Education, p.41.

24. Ibid., p.47.

25. Hannan and Breen, Schooling and Sex Roles, p.16.

26. Shaffer, Developmental Psychology, p.520.

27. Ibid., p.521.

28. Safilios-Rothschild, Girls and Women in Education, p.45

29. Hannan and Breen, Schooling and Sex Roles, p.4.

30. Phillida Salmon, Psychology for Teachers: An Alternative Approach, (London: Hutchinson, 1988) p.38.

31. Ibid., p.62.

32. Hannan and Breen, Schooling and Sex Roles, p.5.

33. Gilah Leder, Contemporary Issues in Educational Psychology, p.52.

34. Judith Whyte, Girls and Women In Education, p.76.

35. Phillida Salmon, Psychology for Teachers: An Alternative Approach, p.38.

36. Shaffer reports on studies conducted by Florisha and Goldman, 1981 and Terborg and Ilgen, 1975. This attitude stems from the myth that women must try harder to accomplish the same feats as men. Shaffer, Developmental Psychology, p.55.

37. Guy Lefrancois reports on studies conducted by Jones and Montenegro, 1988 and the National Center for Education Statistics, 1989. Guy Lefrancois, Psychology for Teaching, p.55.

38. Hannan and Breen, Schooling and Sex Roles, p.15.

39. Ibid., p.15.

40. Judith Whyte, Girls and Women in Education, p.74.

41. Gilah Leder, Contemporary Issues In Educational Psychology, p.51.

42. Judith Whyte, Girls and Women in Education, p.73.

43. Hannan and Breen, Schooling and Sex Roles, p.18.

44. Judith Whye, Girls and Women in Education, p.73.

45. Mary Cummins, "Girls 'Do Better' in Single Sex Schools", Irish Times 25,9,1992), :6.

46. Judith Whyte, Girls and Women in Education, p.73.

47. Ibid., p.73.

48. Ibid., p.73.

49. Ibid., p.74.

50. Atkinson, Atkinson and Hilgard, Introduction to Psychology, p.90.

51. Ibid., p.90.

52. Shaffer, Development Psychology, pp. 520-521.

53. Atkinson, Atkinson and Hilgard, Introduction to Psychology, p.90.

54. Safilios-Rothschild, Girls and Women in Education, p.30.

55. Atkinson, Atkinson and Hilgard, Introduction to Psychology, p.90.

56. Safilios-Rothschild, Girls and Women in Education, p.36.

57. Shaffer, Developmental Psychology, P.528.

58. Hannan and Breen, Schooling and Sex Roles, p.11.

59. Gilah Leder, Contemporary Issues in Educational Psychology, p.52.

60. Hannan and Breen, Schooling and Sex Roles, p.19.

CHAPTER 2

GENDER DIFFERENCES AND ART EDUCATION

It has been established thus far, that society is filled with messages from schools, teachers, parents, peers and the media for each gender to behave in certain ways. This traditional sex typing holds many negative repercussions as it restricts behaviour and expectations, even within the artclass. As noted previously in Chapter 1, pupils are frequently hindered in their choice of art as a subject and / or career. The persuasive influence of society upon the student may also inhibit those who do not take-up art. Students, in their reluctance to deviate from sex-role standards, will depend upon society's given stereotypes, and that which is seen as appropriate for their gender. preventing full emotional identification and self-expression in artwork. Boys may avoid that which could be considered a feminine content in their work, while girls may avoid that which could be termed masculine. John Michael observes,

> Men are reluctant to be gentle, sensitive, graceful and women are reluctant to be dominant, competitive, assertive. Both types of qualities are needed to create artwork. (1)

In this chapter, I propose to investigate further into the effects of sex typing on art take-up and artwork at post-primary school level.

SEX-TYPING AND ART TAKE-UP: JOB PROSPECTS

As noted previously (see page 7) art is considered a 'feminine' subject, with a low prestige within the school curriculum. According to Judith Whyte, not

thought to present any job opportunities for the school leaver". (2) Kathleen Lynch points out that it is "only the abilities that are highly prized in the labour market that will be valued in schools." (3) Thus schools are increasingly concerned with the development of skills in the "commercial, scientific and technological spheres". (4) Eisner also agrees with this view, he states that there is

> recognition on the part of both parents and teachers that the arts contribute to good living, enjoyment, and personal satisfaction yet both groups still believe that in school more attention should be given to the 'bread and butter' subjects than to others. (5)

It is these 'bread and butter' subjects that have won out at the expense of art, and in most schools, art is timetabled against them.

If we look back at table 3 we can see that a high degree of sex difference in subject take-up exists - 14,351 girls, 9,556 boys at Junior Certificate and 6,522 girls, 4,115 boys at Leaving Cert. It can be concluded that perhaps boys are discouraged from taking art and instead are filtered into more academic subjects, but as Judith Whyte believes, it may also be considered that "employment criteria may thus be more important for boys than girls." (6) This may relate back to the male stereotypical, and instrumental role of 'provider' (see page 3). Thus, as a result of the assumption on different subjects being appropriate for different genders, more boys take 'instrumental' subjects, while more girls take art, an 'expressive' subject at post-primary school level. This trend continues at third level education (see Table 5 below).

TABLE 5

FULL-TIME UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS BY FIELD OF STUDY, NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN AT 1 MARCH, 1994

Field of Study	Male	Female
Education	12	60
Art and Design		
Core Studies	40	79
Fine Art	59	102
Design		
Fashion	3	27
Textiles	2	63
Industrial Design	45	16
Craft	12	57
Visual Communication	34	42
Totals	187	446

Source: National College of Art and Design, Administrations Office, Dublin.

Lack of Male Art Teachers

Another influence on why more boys do not take up art as a subject may be due to a lack of role models. Cornelius Riordan tells us that "Boys, like girls, need adult approval from someone they respect and admire, someone with whom they identify". (7) In many schools boys are short-changed by a scarcity of male teachers within 'expressive' subjects such as art.

Table 6 shows how many male students were studying to be art teachers compared to females on third level Art Teacher courses. This disparity between male and female art teachers and student art teachers, again reinforces the image of art as a female subject.

TABLE 6

FULL-TIME UNDERGRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS STUDYING TO BE ART TEACHERS AT NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN, ON 1 MARCH, 1994

Field of Study	Year of Course								Totals	
	1		2		3		4			
	M	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**
Dip. For Art and Design Students	3	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Education (Art and Design)	6	20	5	14	1	16	0	10	12	60
	9	32	5	14	1	16	0	10	12	60

Influence of Peer Group

Another influence discouraging boys from taking art as a subject may be that of their peer group. As John A. Michael noted, it is at this time, at the onset of adolescence, that pupils "begin to look outside the immediate family to their peers". (8) Pupils feel a strong need for identification with others of their own sex and age group. John A. Michael continues "there is a feeling of strong conformity and concern for maintaining prestige among peers". (9) He goes on to describe how adolescents became "critical and sensitive" and frequently worry about the impression they are making on others. Being popular is very important. (10)

These values developed during adolescence are reinforced by the mass media. Lowenfeld and Brittain tell us that,

> This stage of development is one of very rapid changes. Girls discover that the mass media think they should be pretty and alluring. Boys' voices begin to change and most of them try to become very

> masculine; they are exposed to a diverse range of models to emulate. (11)

This lends extra emphasis to what Judith Whyte suggests,

> the choice of subject options offered to adolescents is one in which young people assert their masculinity or femininity. (12)

Therefore, another influential factor determining the image of a subject in a pupils mind, is how many other pupils of the same gender take it. It follows that pupils may determine which subjects are appropriate or inappropriate for their gender in terms of the value placed on it by their peer group. The resulting trend as noted in Table 5 is that more girls place value on the subject of art than boys. Art has been stereotyped as a "feminine" subject.

So far I have noted sex differences in terms of the choice of art as a subject. But to what extent are sex differences evident in the artwork of boys and girls?

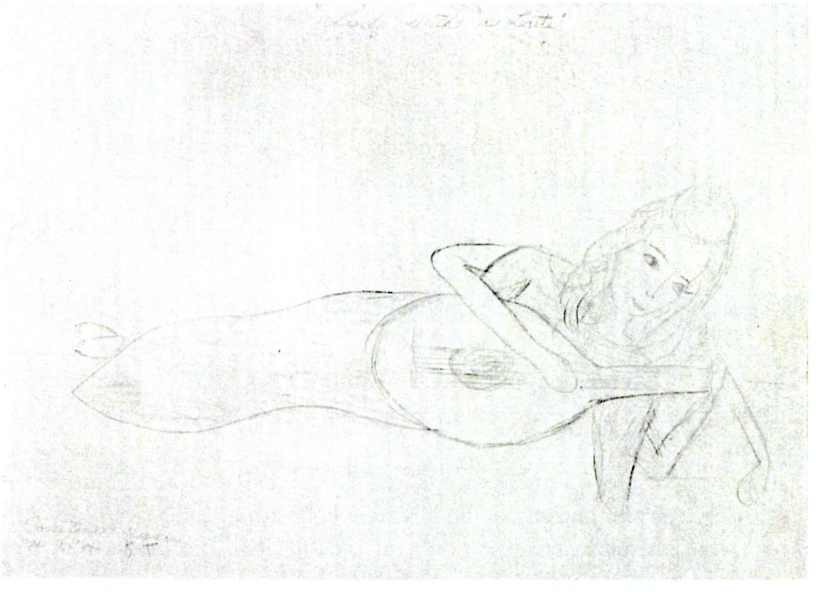
SEX DIFFERENCES IN ART CONTENT

Irving Kaufman draws attention to the fact that,

> A young girl will draw symptomatic forms that cast back her sexual role in society (relatively delicate, pretty - nurse, dancer - without any harsh overtones of clash and conflict) while a young boy will not inordinately create his own masculine but culturally derived images (sharper - bolder - active and concerned with 'manly' content). (13)

It seems sex differences do exist in young peoples artwork. Irving Kaufman gives the example of "The Lute Playing Woman" and the "Fallen Soldier", both pictured below, as typical of the distinction in form and content that are determined by the roles each sex is expected to maintain. (14)

"THE LUTE PLAYING WOMAN"



Source: Irving Kaufman, Art Education in Contemporary Culture, (London: Collier and Macmillian, 1966), p.128.

This girl's drawing is described as being,

> relatively soft, poetically evocative, romantic and rythmically contained with a charming content distinctly feminine in its imagery. (15)

"THE FALLEN SOLDIER"

Source: Irving Kaufman, Art Education in Contemporary Culture, (London: Collier and Macmillian, 1966), p.128

On the other hand however, the boys drawing is seen as,

> harsher, its lines sometimes discontinuous, it is direct and adventurous, mirroring all of the glory and gallant war stories with which boys feel compelled to be acquainted. (16)

Kaufman believes that each of the above pieces of artwork "derives primarily from cultural contexts that relate to sexual roles". (17)

The cultural background of children does seem to account for variation in sex differences from one geographical region to another. A study by Cora Dubois of East Indian children found that girls drew work tools four times as frequently as boys. Boys preferred figures, spirits and flowers. (18) This example indicates that sex-attributed interests can change according to the culture within which they develop.

The association between the sex of the artist and the particular choice of subject matter is not universal. Choices in subject matter are undoubtedly conditioned by the prevailing culture. Lark-Horovitz, Lewis and Luca suggest that in western cultures our present day technical achievements "fascinate boys and to a lesser degree girls." (19) They continue, stating that,

> Boys are attracted to machinery and start drawing it at an early age. Girls, if they draw machines at all, do so later. In construction and in some kinds of pictures, girls fashion things they can use as a toy or in make believe. (20)

Gaitskell, Hurwitz and Day agree that certain tendencies in subject preferences are apparent. They note how,

> some boys gravitate towards machines and speed symbols, acting out masculine roles in their drawings. (21)

Lark-Horovitz et al. go on to tell us how boys tend to show "mans' activities and his power" whereas girls draw what is "pretty" . (22) They continue, pointing out how "boys like to draw vehicles" while "girls seldom do", and also how girls are "more likely to choose still life as a subject than boys." (23) Claire Golomb also notes how themes of boys and girls differ, she comes across an interesting point when she states that,

> all the drawings that were characterized as having a violent content were made by boys. When children in a clinical sample were given the opportunity to draw a theme of their own choice, they frequently depicted violent scenes including tank battles, warships, mutilation, and hangings. (24)

This is in strong contrast to the themes favoured by girls. Golomb tells us that

> Girls employ imagery that is often derived from fairytales with kings and queens playing an important role in their drawings. Animals can also assume center stage and become the focus of repeated drawings. (25)

Golomb continues by saying,

> Boys and girls tend to elaborate upon different themes; the spontaneous production of boys reveal an intense concern with warfare, acts of violence and destruction, machinery and sports contests, whereas girls depict more tranquil scenes of romance, family life, landscapes, and children at play. (26)

In summary, boys are typically interested in machines, transportation and violent scenes; they are also interested in portraying movement and figures in action. The characteristics of girls themes, by contrast, tend to be static scenes with much detail and decoration, and their human figures are more detailed than those of boys.

Draw-A-Person Test

The most noticeable difference between boys and girls drawings, according to the research of Lark-Horovitz et al. was

> that, when given a free choice, boys seldom drew women, and girls rarely drew men. (27)

It was also noted that males drawn by boys exaggerate essentially male characteristics, while females drawn by girls glamorize feminine aspects.

Harris agrees that the majority of children draw their own sex first. He believes that this is probably because children,

> draw the figure of the sex group with which they have had more contact and thus are more closely identified. (28)

He goes on to note that among girls, the tendency to draw a male figure increases with age. Lark-Horovitz et al. observe that early adolescent boys avoid making pictures or sculptures of girls their own age. (29) These trends probably reflect the social values in western culture which give emphasis to the male role. Harris suggests "the male figure may be culturally more stereotyped and hence easier to draw." (30)

In his research, Harris notes that girls treat certain features in rather different ways from boys. For example,

> girls emphasised eye detail, cheeks, 'cupid's bow' mouth, curly hair, and arms no longer than head length. Boys were more likely to draw profiles, to put in the heel, to represent the figure in motion, and to draw long arms reaching below the knee. (31)

Harris continues, revealing that,

> On the drawing of a man, girls do consistently better on eye detail and proportion items. Boys are considered more likely to get the nose in two dimensions. Girls definitely excel on indicating the lips and giving the line of the jaw. Girls do better on hair items and on proportion of the ears. Boys excel consistently on the proportions of the foot and indication of the heel. Girls solve the problem of clothing or figure transparencies sooner than boys ... while girls definitely do better on motor co-ordination items boys are more likely to portray action in the arms. (32)

In the drawing of a woman Harris notes how girls are again more successful than boys on the majority of items. Harris records how,

> girls do better on most facial features, bit again boys exceed girls in depicting the nose in two dimensions ... girls score more often on

> points based on hair ...Girls are more likely to depict jewellery ... girls more frequently depict neckline and waistline of the female figure ... Boys are more likely to draw the female legs in such fashion that a distinct angle is indicated; this effect is often produced by separating the feet. Girls are more likely to draw the legs parallel ... Girls are more likely to score clothing and costume points. Girls also excel boys on the motor co-ordination items on both the male and female figure - motor co-ordination items evaluate the body contours, including in the female figure such secondary sex characteristics as breast, hip and calf of leg. (34)

This data, according to Harris, fits well with what is already known about sex differences in drawing performances. Earlier studies reveal how girls drew the human figure better than boys. (35) Girls include more detail in the figure than boys. In interpreting these results Harris wants us to take into account the fact that "girls do slightly better on fine motor co-ordinations" and also that "girls are often found to show greater awareness of and concern with people and personal relationships". Harris believes

> More than one of such factors is undoubtedly involved in girls superior drawing performance. (36)

SEX DIFFERENCES IN CHARACTER OF WORK

In drawing the figure, girls and boys respond in different ways. Lark-Horovitz et al. believe this is also true of other activities, they quote Lewerenz who found in his art ability tests that,

> girls were more original and better in colour recognition, but more conservative in other areas than boys. Boys are more analytical and daring; they are willing to take more risks but are more likely to fail in getting the results they hoped for. (37)

A study by H. Lasen observes that boys abandon the schema at around ten or eleven, while girls cling on to it until they are twelve or thirteen. Girls drawings are seen to "avoid perspective representations and lag behind boys in dealing with spatial representation". (38) Harris also notes how boys appear to excel on space orientation, comprehension and use, and how this has been repeatedly confirmed by studies of the so-called "primary mental abilities" in which boys excel on the space factor, and he tells us how McCarthy also found that boys were superior in the use of perspective. (39)

As to sex differences in modeling, Lark-Horovitz et al. tell us,

> boys are more interested in trying to show movement. Girls seem to be superior to boys in the use of the medium and technique and are more likely to show details. (40)

Perhaps the reason girls are superior in the medium is due in part to the earlier development of girls finer motor co-ordination abilities.

Lark-Horovitz et al. report on a study by Ansubal,

> Girls appear to be more susceptible to suggestion than boys, perhaps because they think they are expected to be compliant rather than independent. (41)

These sex differences in the character of artwork again seem to be a result of restrictions placed on each gender by sex typing. Girls fulfill their expected role of being more compliant, and open to suggestion. Boys fulfill their expected role of being more adventurous, and risk taking is more evident in their work. Girls fear or tend to avoid 'masculine' interests and lag behind in representing perspective.

I agree there are differences in content, interest and character of artwork by girls and boys, as suggested by Lark-Horovitz et al. (42) But are there sex differences in art ability?

SEX DIFFERENCES IN ART ABILITY;

Tables no. 7 and 8 shows evidence of girls consistently receiving higher grades than boys at examination level. But is this an indication that girls are more able artistically?

TABLE 7

LEAVING CERTIFICATE ART RESULTS 1993

Number of Candidates Receiving;

GRADE	MALE Higher-Level	MALE Lower-Level	FEMALE Higher-Level	FEMALE Ordinary-Level
A1	19	13	35	8
A2	84	49	124	69
B1	68	20	100	40
B2	129	39	236	72
B3	211	129	441	186
C1	184	102	479	151
C2	309	175	616	243
C3	393	289	739	400
D1	276	202	514	261
D2	267	263	441	344
D3	273	334	337	401
E	127	116	141	118
F	12	27	9	15
NG	3	2	-	2
Total	2355	1760	4212	2310

Source: Statistics Section , Department of Education, Dublin, 1993.

TABLE 8

JUNIOR CERTIFICATE ART RESULTS 1993

Number of Candidates Receiving

	Grade A	Grade B	Grade C	Grade D	Grade E	Grade F	No Grade	Total
Higher Level Paper Females	1320	2202	3378	1706	190	21	2	8819
Ordinary Level Paper Females	303	1004	2084	1762	250	102	21	5532
Higher Level Paper Males	489	910	1590	1179	265	40	6	4479
Ordinary Level Paper Males	169	598	1606	1932	487	235	50	5077

Source: Statistics Section, Department of Education, Dublin, 1993.

Eisner also raised the question "are there differences between the performance of boys and girls?" (43) He administered "art information" and "art attitude" tests to students at secondary and college levels in the United States of America. The art information test included questions on art terms, art media, art processes, artists and their work and also art history. The art attitude test dealt with voluntary activity in art, satisfaction in art, a self-estimate of art ability, and attitudes towards art and artists. In analysing the results and examining the performance pattern of boys and girls, Eisner found that "girls consistently receive higher scores than boys, for the population as whole and at each grade level". (44)

Eisner believes that the consistent differences in the performance of boys and girls on the aforementioned tests, are not likely to have happened by chance. He feels that the most reasonable explanation for the disparity in examination results is that:

> cultural expectations affect the inclination to learn in the visual arts and that the inclination and expectation accounts for the consistently higher scores received by girls. (45)

Eisner goes on to reinforce this view, stating,

> for many segments of the population, interest in art for males is something less than masculine, boys are supposed to e interested in manly things. (46)

Irving Kaufman agrees, saying that it is,

> probably justifiable to blame in part the emerging values that students are reacting to as a source of limiting aesthetic and creative activity. Particularly in the case of boys, the vague but insistent fear of being called a 'sissy' does not permit a smooth identification with artistic values (47)

Kaufman expands upon the concept of art being for females when he suggests,

> In the mass sense it is the women who are concerned with aesthetic matters, either in the home or socially within the community. (48)

As a direct result of this, it seems to be that,

> Girls generally accept the activities of the art class more openly and produce results more readily. (49)

Yet Lark-Horovitz et al. believe that there are no substantial sex differences in art ability. (50) Kaufman agrees, although he believes girls identify easier with the subject, he cautions that the work itself is not any "more advanced or skillful than that which boys produce in good situations". (51)

Eisner's research supports this view. He found that although differences do exist between the performance of boys and girls on "art information " and "art attitude" tests, as well as between the subject matters they prefer to draw, that in fact "their ability to deal with those subject matters are comparable". (52)

Studies of the drawing character of children's art have yielded no substantial differences in skill. Listed below are the four general factors that Eisner used in his evaluation of children's artwork, that appear to be related to the production of visual art forms.

1. Skill in the management of materials.
2. Skill in perceiving quantitative relationships among those forms produced in the work itself, among forms seen in the environment, and among forms seen as mental images.
3. Skills in inventing forms that satisfy the producer within the limits of the material with which he is working.
4. Skill in creating spatial order, aesthetic order and expressive power. (53)

SEX DIFFERENCES IN SPATIAL ABILITY

Noting point four above, Eisner has found no sex differences in creating spatial order. Here we encounter a dichotomy. As noted in Chapter 1, boys have been recorded as consistently scoring higher on tests of visual-spatial ability. Yet how is it that this has not emerged as a sex differentiated aspect of artistic ability in favour of boys? Whilst discussing spatial intelligence,

Howard Gardner states "the visual arts also employ this intelligence in the use of space". (54) Yet, on the contrary, we have noted how more girls achieve higher results at examination stages of art.

Gardner in his extensive studies on spatial intelligence observes that

> spatial intelligence entails a number of loosely related capacities: the ability to recognize instances of the same element, the ability to transform or to recognize a transformation of one element into another, the capacity to conjure up mental imagery and then to transform that imagery; the capacity to produce a graphic likeness of spatial information. (55)

Gardner goes on the say that these abilities are,

> utilized when one works with graphic depiction's - two dimensional or three dimensional versions of real-world scenes - as well as other symbols such as maps, diagrams, or geometrical forms. (56)

Perhaps here we have an example within the art class, of what Gardner discovered,

> sex differences in spatial abilities reported regularly in our culture can be overcome in certain environments. (57)

Gardner reports on a research study conducted on Eskimos, where equally high spatial abilities existed between males and females. (58) He concludes that spatial intelligence is largely environmentally defined.

If we take into consideration the role of our environment, we will note how art is regarded as a feminine subject. Therefore, perhaps girls feel no anxiety when confronted with this task of spatial ability and as a result their performance is not inhibited. The converse could be true of boys.

If we take into account a more mathematical, geometrical representation of space, i.e. the use of one point perspective, Harris reports that, McCarthy found boys to be superior in this domain. (59) Here then, we have an incident where male 'interest' and 'perceived ability' does not restrain their performance, so they can excel in comparison to girls who are reported to 'lag' behind. As Gardner states "Cultures highlight or thwart the possibility of artistic uses of intelligence". (60)

Thus in general, girls are less inhibited by environmental factors when studying art and therefore they perform as well or better than boys. But when the task becomes technical or "male" inclined, boys excel and performance is enhanced while girls will "lag" behind.

SEX-TYPING EVIDENT IN ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT

Differences in content, subject matter, interest and perceived ability between men and women's art all seem to be consistent with sex-roles as defined by their culture. This is apparent in the artwork of young children through to adulthood. In this section I wish to outline how males and females are restricted by sex typing in their artistic expression. I will also go on to discuss how important it is to express ones inner feelings without being constrained by these social conventions and expectations.

Whilst discussing the artistic development of children, I will refer to the stages of development as established by Lowenfeld and Brittain. (61)

In the earliest years of development, in what Lowenfeld and Brittain term the Scribbling Stage, from two to four years of age,

> very young children begin drawing by making random marks on paper, these random marks become much more organized and controlled. (62)

Gardner describes this stage as where,

> children achieve initial command of symbol systems, youngsters are exploring what the system can and cannot do, they are actively experimenting and toying with it. (63)

During this stage very little difference is discernible in children's artwork. But during the next stage, referred to as the Preschematic, spanning from four to seven years, where children make their first representational attempts, Gardner has noted that sex differences do exist. Even at this young age, young boys are preoccupied with different issues to girls. During this stage, the attention of Gardners own son, Jerry, was riveted by superheroes such as Batman and Star Wars, whereas his daughter Kay's inspiration did not come from the mass media, but through her own experiences with horses. (64)

Gardner goes on to tell us how children "do not execute these activities in total ignorance of the surrounding society". (65) As this stage correlates with an important step in a child's life, starting school, they 'gain a heightened awareness of , and concern with, the rules and standards honored by those

around them.' (66) During the Schematic stage, which starts around seven and lasts until about nine years of age, children in their drawings often,

> symbolize parts of the environment in a descriptive way; children usually repeat with some variation the schema that they have developed ... over and over again. (67)

Yet at this stage, Gardner warns how children are 'burdened' by an involvement with and 'immersion' in the practices of their society.

> Children became highly aware of the conventional boundaries between domains, the rewards of conformity, the risks of violation. (68)

Instead of becoming increasingly adventurous and interested in experimentation, children become more conformist in their work.

In discussing the following stage, Dawning Realism, from nine to twelve years of age, Lowenfeld and Brittain observe how peers become extremely important, and therefore this stage is sometimes referred to as the Gang Age. (69) "Their art work reflects their greater consciousness of themselves as part of society". (70)

Gaitskell et al. tell us that,

> because of the time and effort required to develop an advanced schema or program, most children (and adults) are able to draw some objects much better than others. It depends on what each person has developed during the schematic years. (71)

During this stage, therefore, artwork, expression and what the child is interested in become affected by activities and interests arising from the group, and is "particular to the sex of the child". (72) Tendencies in subject preferences are glaringly apparent, especially if the child is not encouraged to

avoid sexual stereotyping from inhibiting their variety of expression. As what John A. Michael notes, "it is at this age, that overt sex-roles emerge". (73) The Pseudo-Naturalistic stage, spanning from twelve to fourteen years, is where the young adolescent becomes increasingly aware of the self and his/her surroundings. There is a great deal of self-criticism. Drawings are often hidden from adults or appear in the form of cartoons. (74) If their own work falls too far below the standard they want to achieve, they often despair and cease artistic activity. This stage, and the Adolescent stage of fourteen to seventeen years of age, is a vital time. As Gardner states;

> The way we handle the educational challenge - the kinds of aids we give to children ... will determine how the children negotiate their way through the stage and what they will do once they have passed through it. (75)

In contrast and contradiction to desire for peer group conformity, there is also a desire for individuality, to discover ones own self and to develop self esteem. (76)

The teacher must utilize this. As maturity takes place, more and more emphasis is placed upon adult structure and phenomena in life, this social development for adolescents is a continuation process that began in early childhood. As a result, individuals identify strongly at this stage with particular sex-roles. Irving Kaufman cautions us about these cultural prescriptions, which,

> install themselves as primary attitudes in the developing personality. Since the person is also self-orientated and motivated by self-esteem, these cultural attitudes are organically accepted as the proper projection of ones self without too much questioning. Subsequently, the student engaged in expressive behaviour will reflect all of the ingrained values

> that have been derived from a particular environmental condition good and bad and perhaps more so than is normal in art because of the emotional directness with which art is implemented. Generally we can say life in the form of a characteristic culture largely coerces the nature of student response and expression. (77)

What happens during adulthood? The years following adolescence are harder to document. But if we turn our attention to the issue of "women artists", we can see how society has again restricted artistic expression, here in the case of adults.

Women Artists

Susan A. Basow records how, in art, females have been,

> depicted in the double image of either virgin or whore, with characteristics of either purity or sexuality. In recent years, the latter image has prevailed, with females almost completely becoming erotic images. (78)

She continues, stating

> although male nudes also have appeared, they are more often presented as the ideal of humanity and not as objects of pleasure. (79)

Basow describes how paintings and sculptures of nude men emphasize muscularity, solidity and sense of proportion. She gives the example of Michaelangelo's "David". Conversely, paintings and sculptures of nude women emphasize womens sexuality, here she cites the example of Manet's "Olympia". (80) Basow believes this trend is a result of the fact that most artists in the past have been male, and continues saying,

> Of course, most artists have been male because of restrictions on training, encouragement and economic support. (81)

Women were not regarded as capable professional artists. Even today, the term "artist" is usually equated in our society with the male. Mara R. Witzling tells us that,

> statistical analyses of gallery exhibitions show that only a small percentage of women's work is shown at major galleries. Comparisons of prices fetched for work by living artists indicate that men's work is worth more than that by women. (82)

Witzling continues stating,

> Art History courses in which no women artists are even mentioned are still taught. Even though more women artists are included in some recent documentary histories, it is hardly an equitable representation. The visions of women artists are only now beginning to be seen, and the impact of gender on the art of historical tradition has just begun to be assessed. (83)

Prior to the nineteenth century, when a woman attempted to establish a professional identity as an artist, she had to face disapproval from her family and society in general, as well as institutional discrimination. Basow describes how,

> until this century, women were socially prohibited from seeing nude men. Drawing them was unheard of. (84)

Linda Nochlin suggests that by depriving female students of nude models,

> it was indeed institutionally made impossible for women to achieve artistic excellence, or success, on the same footing as men, no matter what the potency of their so called talent, or genius. (85)

Women only had access to what were considered minor art forms. Susan Basow states,

> the classification of painting and sculpture which women traditionally had little access to, as 'high' art, and pottery, needlework, and quilting which primarily women did, as 'low' art, shows a distinct male bias regarding aesthetic standards. (86)

Whilst discussing the impact of gender on the making of art, Vasari, the great art historian himself, specifically concentrated on,

> those attributes of women's art that had more to do with diligence rather than invention, the locus of artistic genius. (87)

Here we have another example of where women are not considered as intelligent as men. Women have been constrained by social conventions and expectations in expressing their inner feelings. Western culture has granted women's experiences only "marginal status",

> Qualities associated with femininity have provided a set of negative characteristics against which to measure high art. (88)

Witzling goes on to tell us that women's actual body experiences of menstruation, pregnancy, lactation, penetration, all traits that are biological, have been considered unclean and imbued with negative value. (89) Other behaviours also identified as female have been devalued, i.e. caring, nurturing, and accommodating. These are seen as weak in both genders. Women have been discouraged from identifying with their own life, which is often necessary in creating artwork. Witzling suggests that accepting the above values as positive,

> would expand the cultural definition of a fully actualized human being, and facilitate the ability of all artists, women and men to find their voices and their visions. (90)

According to Witzling, to gain one's voice implies,

> that one is able to speak authentically, that is, to express one's inner feelings without being constrained by social conventions or expectations. (91)

STEREOTYPES AND DETACHED ART EXPRESSION

Evidence has accumulated to indicate that through artwork, the artist frequently gives outward expression to his / her inner thoughts and feelings.

Claire Golomb states,

> The act of drawing asserts control over the objects represented, it is the power to make and to unmake, to come to know the object more intimately and to possess it in unique ways. The approach to the world, in the child as well as the adult, is always effectively colored, and the drawings portray significant relations, concerns, desires, fear, and wishes, classifying major events as either good or evil, beautiful or ugly, attractive or repulsive ... Drawing and painting are expressive statements about what one knows, feels and wants to understand. It is a dialogue with oneself, and as all meaning, intrinsically affective. (92)

Artwork is not isolated from its creators, as Gaitskell et al. point out,

> the child who draws a picture of his interaction with the neighbourhood bully is emotionally more involved with the situation than with the outcome of the drawing as one finished piece. (93)

We are reminded that childrens art does not so much make visual statements as make experience visible. (94)

Lowenfeld and Brittain tell us how art experiences can aid the development of emotional growth.

> Within our society all too often, children's emotions and feelings are squelched. This is particularly true of boys, who at an early age are told not to be sissies. Even within a group of mates a boy usually has to conceal his true feelings in order to remain 'manly'. To be able to express sensitivity and to develop in emotional growth, children need to identify with their own experiences in their art. Children who constantly depend upon stereotypes are unable to express their true feelings. (95)

We have noted thus far how males and females rely on stereotypes within their work, how it influences their choice of subject matter and the manner in which they represent it. As Irving Kaufman tells us, the young pupils find it difficult to make the necessary adjustments in their maturing personalities to artistic values that stress a desirable uniqueness. He continues,

> More important, even if the choice and adjustments were conscious, as we have seen they largely are not, the student would not recognize a need to identify with values other than those commonly accepted because of the earlier unconscious internalization that has occurred. (96)

But relying on stereotypes implies repetition without questioning and real understanding. It leads to a detached art experience, with rigid, inflexible patterns of thinking. Lowenfeld and Brittain suggest that,

> a drawing can provide the opportunity for emotional growth, and the extent to which this is accomplished is in direct relation to the intensity with which the creator identifies with the work. Although this is not easily measured, the degrees of self-identification range from a low level of involvement with stereotyped repetitions to a high level where the creator is truly involved in portraying meaningful and personally important things. (97)

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have examined the influence of sex typing on the choice of art at post-primary school level. I then went on to consider the artwork itself. I compared sex differences in art interests, from subject matter to character and content. I have looked at the question of sex differences in artistic ability and artistic development, stressing throughout how culture imposes sex-roles and stereotypes upon artistic expression, restricting and inhibiting artwork and its development from infancy through to adulthood. I briefly discussed the case of women artists to illustrate how society can hinder artistic development.

Finally I noted that a cultures given stereotype, can lead to a rigid detached art experience with no personal identification or emotional growth.

In the following chapters, I will try to examine to what extent the above observations were found to be true in terms of my own teaching experiences. I will emphasise the role of the art teacher in counteracting harmful stereotypes and go on to recommend various non-sexist approaches to art teaching.

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7. Cornelius Riordan, Girls and Boys in School: Together or Separate, (London: Teachers College Press, 1990), p.52-3.

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30. Harris, Childrens Drawings as Measures of Intellectual Maturity, p.53.

31. Harris reports on Goodenoughs research into sex differences in the Draw-A- Man test, suggesting these points as the basis for a masculinity-femininity scale. Since that time a few investigators have examined these differences and reaffirmed them. Harris, Childrens Drawings as Measures of Intellectual Maturity, p.127.

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33. Ibid., 9.128.

34. Ibid.

35. Here Harris refers to the work of McCarthy, 1924, p.74, Harris Childrens Drawing as Measures of Intellectual Ability, p.128.

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CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter I will describe the procedures I employed in conducting my own research project. My research is based on my own teaching experience, questionnaires and worksheets, which I administered in the classroom. I will try to establish the extent to which the findings described in Chapter 1 and 2 are true of the pupils I teach. Placing my findings in the context of the school environment, I will try to ascertain to what extent stereotypical preferences exist in the interests, content and character of students artwork.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON SCHOOL

St. Thomas Community College is located on Novara Avenue, Bray. The College is situated on a five hectare site at the foot of Bray Head, admist playing pitches, tennis and basketball courts and a modern sports complex.

St. Thomas' Community College was officially opened in March 1981. It was originally designed to amalgamate both the male and female technical colleges of Bray.

St. Thomas' Community College is co-educational with a combined enrollment of nearly eight hundred boys and girls. The College is multi-denominational, catering for students from many religious backgrounds. It

welcomes all students regardless of background or social class. St. Thomas' Community College offers an excellent range of subjects, academic and technical, at Junior Certificate, Leaving Certificate and Post Leaving Certificate level.

St. Thomas' Community College caters for the all-round developments of it's students, from an educational, spiritual and cultural viewpoint. It is democratically controlled by a board of management and publicly accountable.

In the 1994-95 academic year, the student population, of the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate courses combined, is numbered at 474, 243 of which are males. and 221 of which are females. Thus the sex ratio of the student population is fairly balanced. 274 pupils are at present studying the Junior Certificate course, 159 males and 115 females. There are 200 pupils, 94 males and 106 females, on the Leaving Certificate course.

School Structure

St. Thomas Community College provides a student-centered system of education. The school is divided into six year groups (1st - 6th year), including an optional transition year. There is a year head in charge of each year group with a class teacher responsible for each class.

The class teachers role is a pastoral one. He / she takes a special interest in the class. The class teacher gets to know the students well and is able to help out

if problems or difficulties arise. The class teacher also provides encouragement and support when needed and he / she tries to bring the class along as unified and cohesive group.

The year head has responsibility for standards within the year group. He / she is responsible to the Principal for academic standards, discipline, attendance and punctuality of those students in the year group. The year heads meet once a week with the Vice-Principal to monitor progress in each of the year groups.

Students entering St. Thomas' Community College in first year are carefully assessed and streamed according to their educational needs. Regular meetings of teachers take place to monitor the progress of students and movement between streams is provided for if the performance of students warrants it. The first of these meetings takes place at the end of October each year.

Facilities

St. Thomas' Community College has fully equipped:

- Science Laboratories
- Language Laboratories
- Home Economics Rooms
- Art / Pottery Rooms
- Library
- Workshops
- Computer Rooms

- Typing / Word Processing Room
- Business Studies Rooms
- General Subject Rooms
- Administrative Offices
- Recreation Areas
- Sports Complex
- Training Office

St. Thomas' Community College has two highly qualified and experienced Guidance Counselors on the staff of sixty-five teachers. They are available to students to provide advice and practical assistance in subject and career choice as well as a counseling role.

Curriculum

The range of subject options provided at Junior and Senior Level varies from year to year but still it will be determined by the demand for subjects from students and parents. Care is taken by the school in preparing subject options to ensure that both boys and girls are provided with the greatest range of career opportunities possible when it comes to leaving school.

Current subject options available for each year are detailed in the tables below. Where choices change according to high or low streams I have included both in these cases there are no separate subject options lists for middle streams. People of average ability are presented with either high stream or low stream lists depending on their performance.

At Junior Certificate Levels, pupils from low stream classes do not have a choice of History and Geography, instead they are obliged to take a class entitled "environmental and social studies".

If pupils choose engineering as a career, they must also choose technical drawing. This means that they cannot choose art as a subject. According to the art teacher, Mrs. Butler, many students at Leaving Certificate level choose engineering as a career as there is an engineering company located nearby, where pupils are frequently taken in straight after school. It is pupils who dislike engineering that tend to take up art as a career.

TABLE 9

CURRENT SUBJECT OPTIONS AVAILABLE

ACCORDING TO YEAR OF STUDY

First year **Subject Options**

High Stream	Woodwork	Mechanical Drawing	Business Studies	Home Economics	Art
	Mechanical Drawing	Home Economics	Woodwork		
	History	Geography			

Low Stream	Woodwork	Mechanical Drawing	Business Studies	Home Economics	Art
	Mechanical Drawing	Home Economics	Woodwork		

Second Year **Subject Options**

High Stream	Technical Graphics	Business Studies	Home Economics	Woodwork	Art
	Metalwork	Woodwork	Home Economics	Business Studies	Art
	History	Geography			

Low Stream	Technical Graphics	Business Studies	Home Economics	Woodwork	Art
	Metalwork	Woodwork	Home Economics	Business Studies	Art

Third Year **Subject Options**

Metal Work	Home Economics
Business Studies	Woodwork
History	Geography
Art	Technical Graphics

Fifth Year **Subject Options**

Engineering	Art	Geography
French	History	Italian
Technical Drawing	Biology	Business Organistaion
Building Construction	Home Economics	

Sixth Year **Subject Options**

Engineering	Art	Geography
French	Building Construction	Geography
Engineering	Business Organistaion	
History	Business Organistaion	Italian
Technical Drawing	Physics	Art

Art

Art is provided for within the College with two art rooms, one of which is shared with a post-leaving certificate, portfolio preparation course. There are two art teachers, one full-time (who also teaches on the Post-Leaving Certificate course) and one part-time. Both are female. The art room provides materials such as paint, paper, scissors, rulers, glue and clay in limited amounts to each student. Other materials such as crayons, and pencils are to

be provided by the students themselves. Both art rooms are equipped with sinks, blackboards and large presses. Other facilities include a slide projector, overhead projector and a kiln. Often facilities are shared with the Post-Leaving Certificate course.

The total number of students studying art, including Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate course is 186, 76 of which are male and 111 female. Art is most popular at Junior Level where 106 pupils take art, 47 male and 59 female. At senior level only 80 pupils take art, 29 males and 52 females. Art is consistently more popular with females.

During my art teaching practice, I have taken one second year and one fifth year group. In second year there is a total of 37 pupils taking art. My group consists of 15 pupils, 7 males and 8 females. They are of mixed ability in art, but are mainly from the higher streams. Not all of these pupils actually chose art as an option, pupils from lower streams were generally obliged to take art.

In fifth year there are 22 pupils studying art, 9 males and 14 females. I take this group for art history classes. They are of mixed ability and are from both high and low streams. All chose art as a subject for the Leaving Certificate course.

DETAILS OF RESEARCH REPORT

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire consists of twenty-four questions for second years, and twenty-nine questions for the fifth years, The questionnaires are shown in full in Appendices 1 and 2 below.

Question 1 to 4 were designed to elicit basic information about the students themselves. Question 5 was devised to try and determine where student interests lie in relation to television programmes, books, sports, hobbies and past-times. I am interested to see if these reflect sex differentiated interests. Question 6 to 8 are related to students' subject preferences, asking why the student is studying art, if it was by choice, and if so, did anyone in particular influence them. Questions 9 to 12 are planned to find out if students find art easy or difficult, and which art activities they prefer and why. While questions 13 to 21 are designed to discover students' preferences, when drawing from observation of imagination, and natural of manmade objects, when working in two dimensions or three dimensions, and what subjects / topics they prefer to work from and in what material. Questions 21 and 22 are to observe if students have specific colour preferences, and how tidy they want their work to appear. Question 23 has been included to see if students can name famous artists, and in particular I want to see if they can name any famous female artists. Question 24 is to determine if students are familiar with many careers related to art, craft and design.

On the questionnaire for fifth years, I included five extra questions. I want to see how important students think art is as an option, as well as establishing how many students studied art for the Junior Certificate Examination and if so what result they achieved. Question 29 was included to determine if any students intended to go to study art at third level.

The questionnaires were completed by nine girls and seven boys from second yea, and also by nine girls and seven boys from fifth year, totaling thirty-two students, eighteen females and fourteen males all of whom study art.

The Worksheets

I administered two worksheets, shown in appendices 3 and 4. Worksheet 1 has been divided into two sections: section 1 consists of a list of statements. Students are asked to indicate whether or not they agree or disagree by making the appropriate box. The statements have been chosen to see if students have different expectations of people because they happen to be male or female, and whether or not students assign them roles to confirm to these expectations.

Section 2 consists of a lot of adjectives. Students were required to indicate whether or not they believed these objectives are attributable to males or females or both. This list was devised to see if students have any difficulty in discerning which characteristics are perceived as male of female.

Worksheet 2 includes a list of tasks. The student is to indicate where they think the responsibilities should lie, on the male, female both or neither. They then have to mark where the responsibilities actually lie within their own family. I am interested to see how aware students are of gender stereotyping. I want to examine how sex stereotyping tends to place people in roles and how this may be accompanied by pressure to conform, I also want to look at how sex stereotyping affects family roles.

Question for Worksheet 1 were based upon the Teachers Manual and Student Worksheets in Exploring Sex Stereotyping, while Worksheet 2 was taken straight from this manual. (1)

Draw A Person

As part of my research project, I asked pupils to draw a person. This was influenced by Goodenough Draw-A-Man Test. (2) I want to observe which gender male pupils prefer to draw, in comparison to which gender females prefer to draw. I would like to note how many males draw females and vice versa. It would also be interesting to note if any pupils concentrated on a particular character, for example, a superhero, a cartoon figure, or of they relied on any particular schema to represent males or females.

Teaching Practice Project

For my teaching practice project, I devise a scheme for my group of second year pupils. The scheme consisted of a group graphic design project which accumulated in a book of poetry designed by the class.

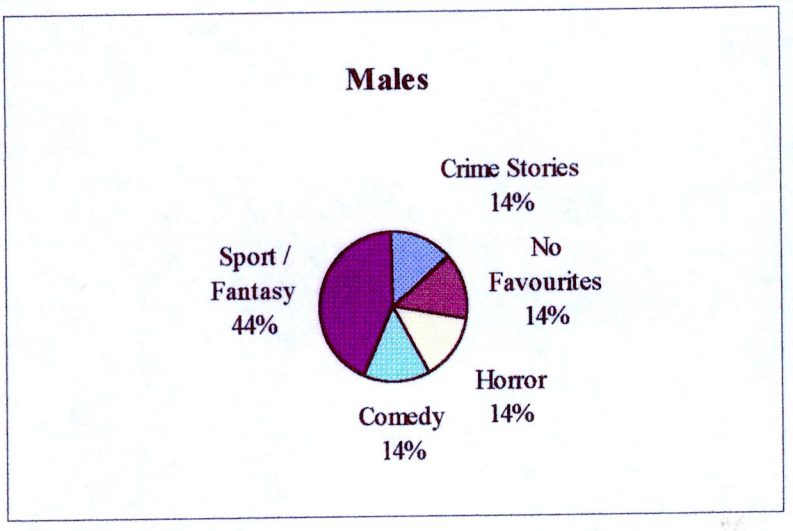
Each individual pupil chose their favourite poem from their English text book. Using this poem as their theme, each pupil went on to design a layout for one verse of the poem, which was later to be included in a book. The layout of the verse was to include both imagery and lettering relating to the theme. As each pupils theme was personal, I left it to the discretion of the pupil, which object and letter forms they chose to work from.

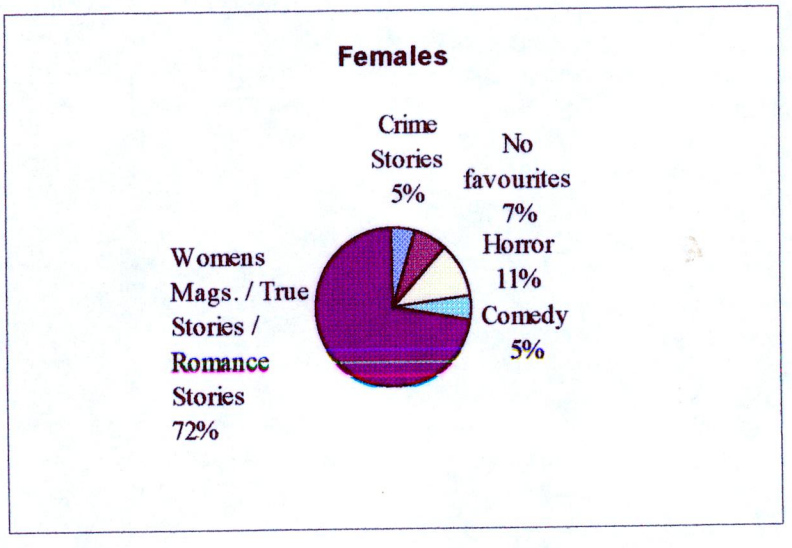
I am interested to see if there is any sex related differences in themes chosen and / or portrayal of these themes. I will also be keen to account for any sex differences of subject matter, content and character within pupils work

preferred fantasy style fiction and sports related books, all of which went unmentioned by girls. See Figure 1 below.

FIGURE 1

Name Your favourite book;



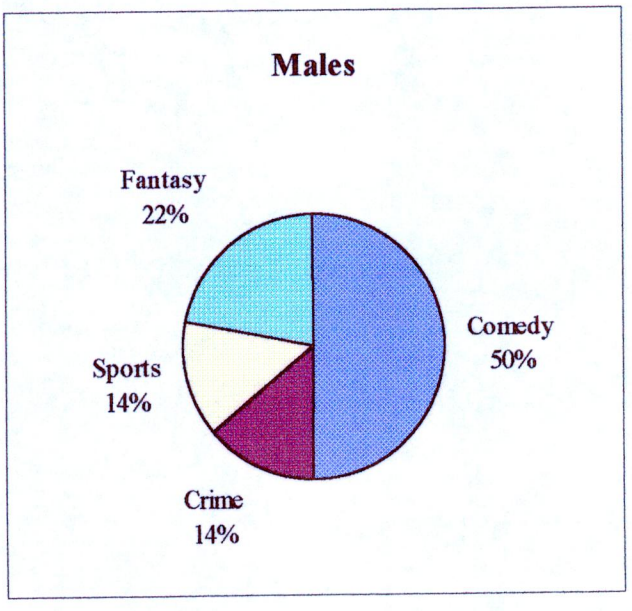


B Favourite Television Programmes

When asked to name their favourite television programme, the answers given by the boys and girls differed greatly. Programmes preferred by girls and not mentioned by boys included soaps and musical programmes. Whereas programmes not mentioned by girls yet favoured among boys included crime stories, sports programmes and fantasy based programmes. Refer to Figure 2 below for percentages.

FIGURE 2

Name Your Favourite Type of Television Programme;



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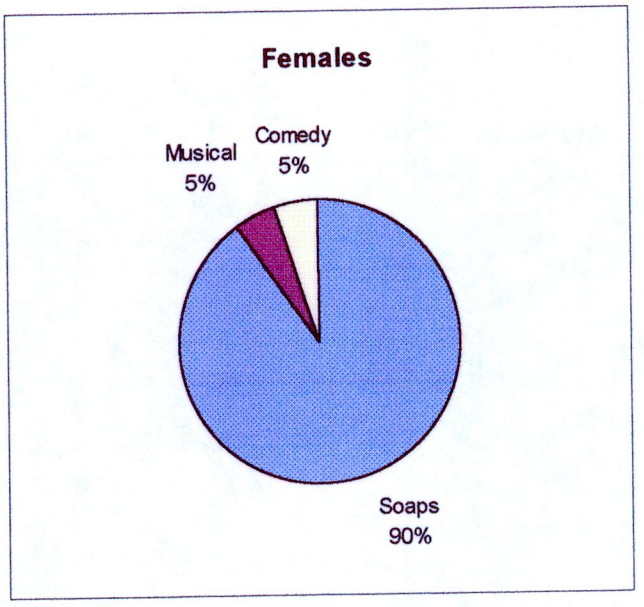

C Favourite Hobbies, Past-times

When questioned as to their favourite hobbies and past-times, the majority of boys listed sports related activities, while the majority of girls cited socialising and going to discos. As a group, neither gender rated art highly as their favourite hobby or past-time. See Figure 3 below for details.

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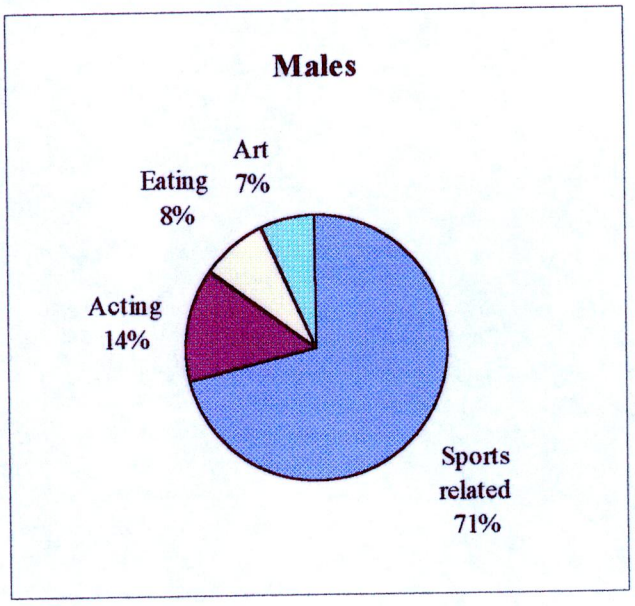
FIGURE 3

Name Your Favourite Hobby / Past-time;



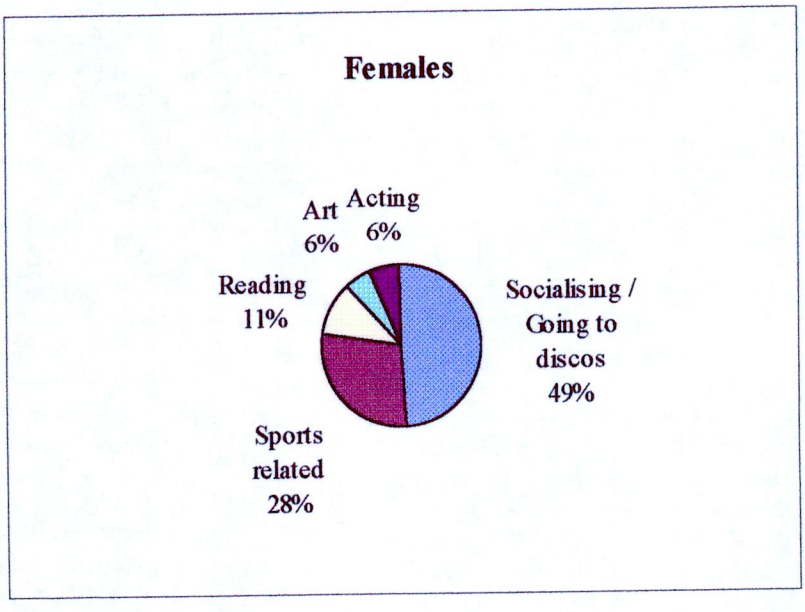


FIGURE 3

Name Your Favourite Hobby / Past-time:

D. Favourite Sports

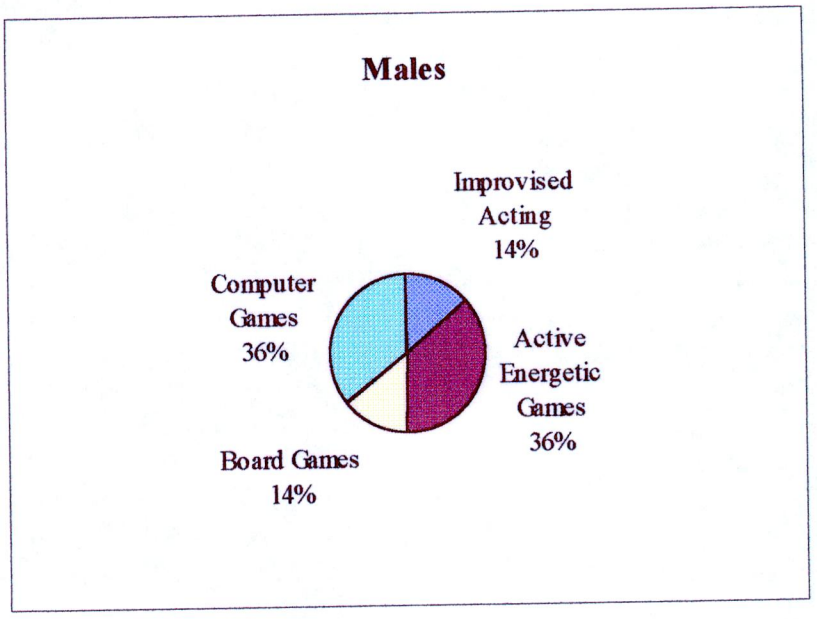
In response to the question of naming your favourite sport, 5% of girls, compared to 14% of boys did not participate in any sporting activity. Of those pupils who did; both boys and girls mentioned football, swimming and basketball, only girls mentioned ice-skating and line-dancing, while only boys noted boxing, golf, gaelic and darts.

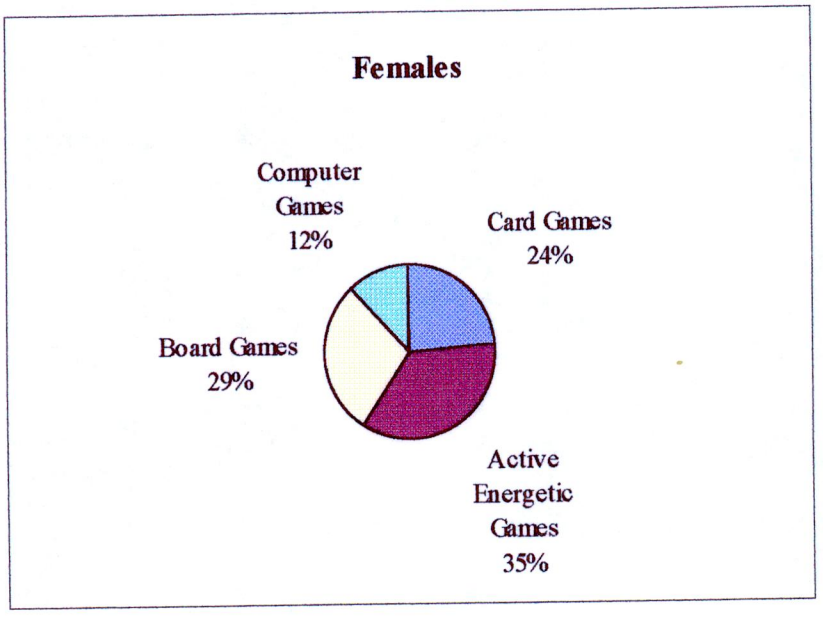
E. Favourite Games;

A fairly even number of girls to boys stated that their favourite games entailed being active and energetic and often related to sport. A larger number of boys preferred computer games, compared to a larger number of girls preferring board games. Games cited by boys and not girls included improvised acting, whereas games listed by girls and not boys included card games. See Figure 4 below for details of game stated by percentage of pupils, according to their gender.

FIGURE 4

Name Your Favourite Game;





Results of Questions 6 and 7;

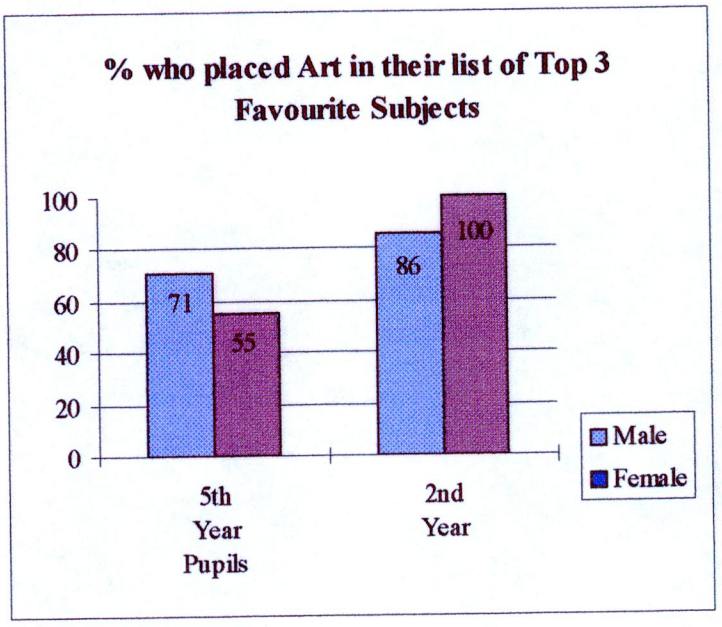
When asked to list their subjects in order of preference, the majority of both boys and girls placed art in the top three. Most girls chose English as their favourite subject, while most boys chose physical education.

When divided into year groups, all of second year girls placed art in their top three favourite subjects. A third of second year girls did not chose art as a subject, but were placed in it by the school. Of those who chose it, they did so because they liked it, enjoyed it, found it easy and wanted to learn more. Just over half of fifth year girls placed art in their top three favourite subjects, on further inquiry it was noted that most of fifth year girls placed art in the top four subjects, and the most common answer as to the reason why, was simply because they enjoyed it.

The majority of second year boys placed art in their top three subjects. Only 14% did not choose art as a subject. Those who chose it did so because they liked it and believed they were good at it. The majority of fifth year boys also placed art in the top three subjects. All of the fifth year boys chose art, mainly because they found being creative enjoyable, but one boy mentioned that it was because he did not like engineering.

FIGURE 5

Percentage of Males (m) and Females (f) who placed Art in their list of Top 3 Favourite Subjects;



Results of Question 8;

When pupils were asked "did anyone influence you in choosing art?", girls seemed to have consciously felt more influence than boys, especially from parents and the school. Figure 6 below illustrates the percentage of boys and girls and influential agents in subject choice, as indicated by pupils themselves.

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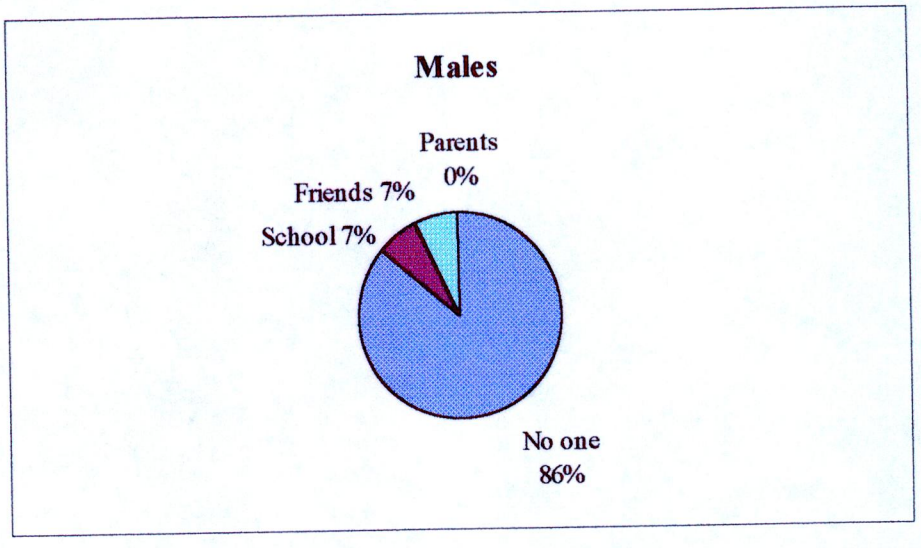
FIGURE 6

Influential Agents on Subject Choice;



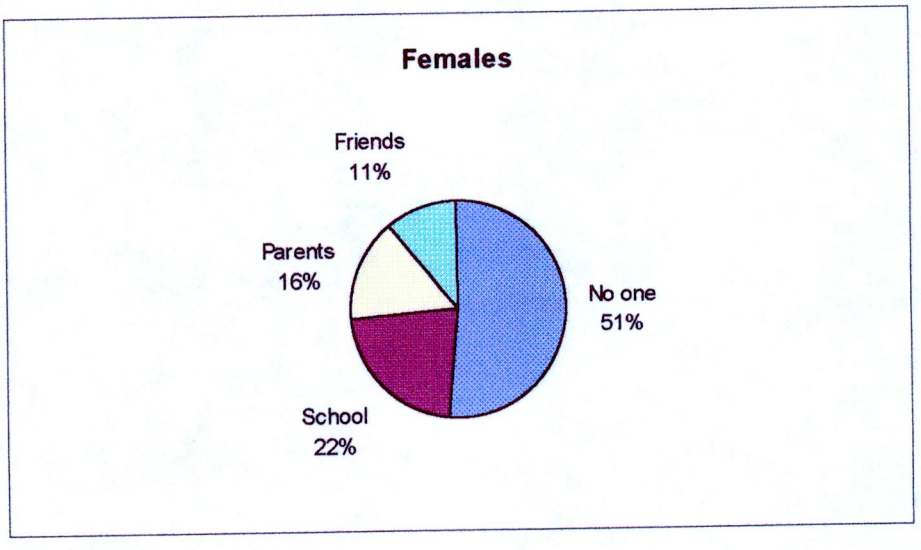


FIGURE 6

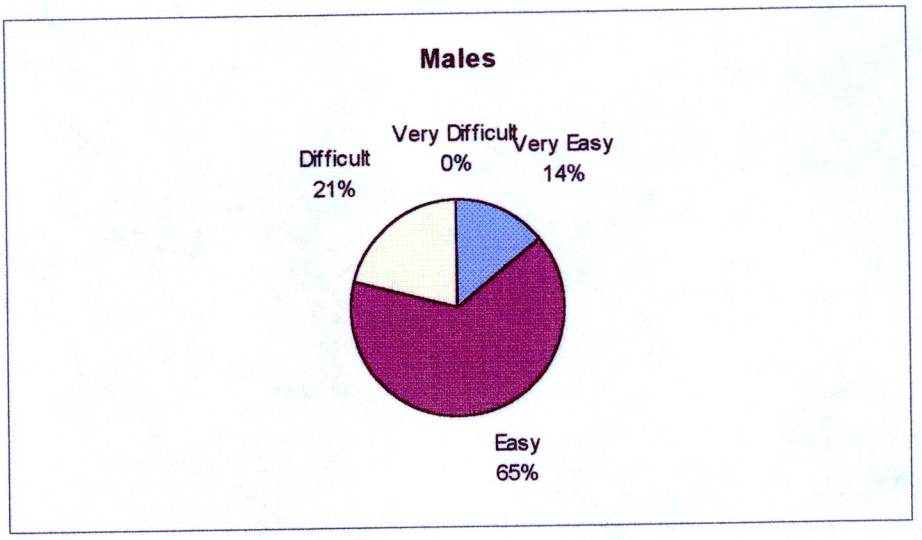
Influential Agents on Subject Choice:

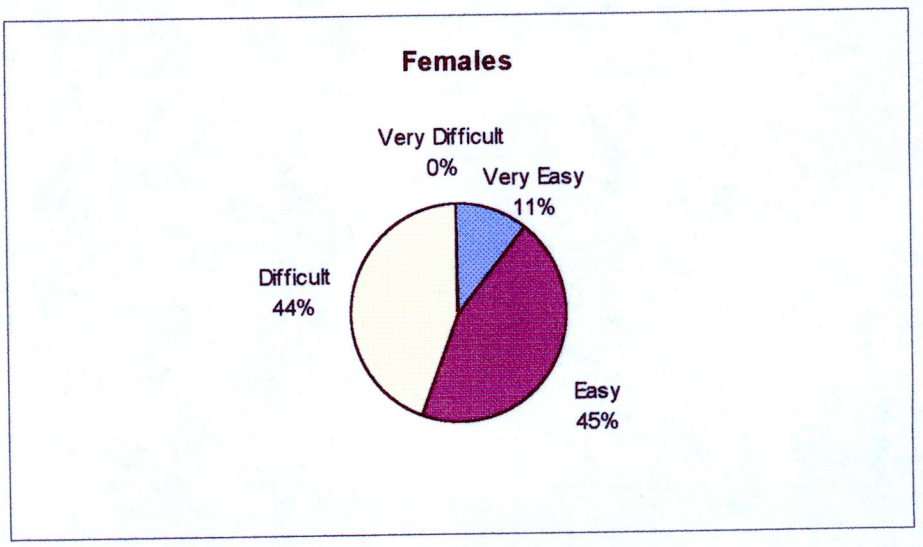
Results of Question 9;

When questioned if they found art very easy, easy, difficult or very difficult, neither boys nor girls noted that they find it very difficult. Figure 7 below show how boys find art easier than girls.

FIGURE 7

How easy do Males / Females find Art?





Results of Question 9.

When questioned if they found art very easy, easy, difficult or very difficult, neither boys nor girls noted that they find it very difficult. Figure 7 below show how boys find art easier than girls.

FIGURE 7

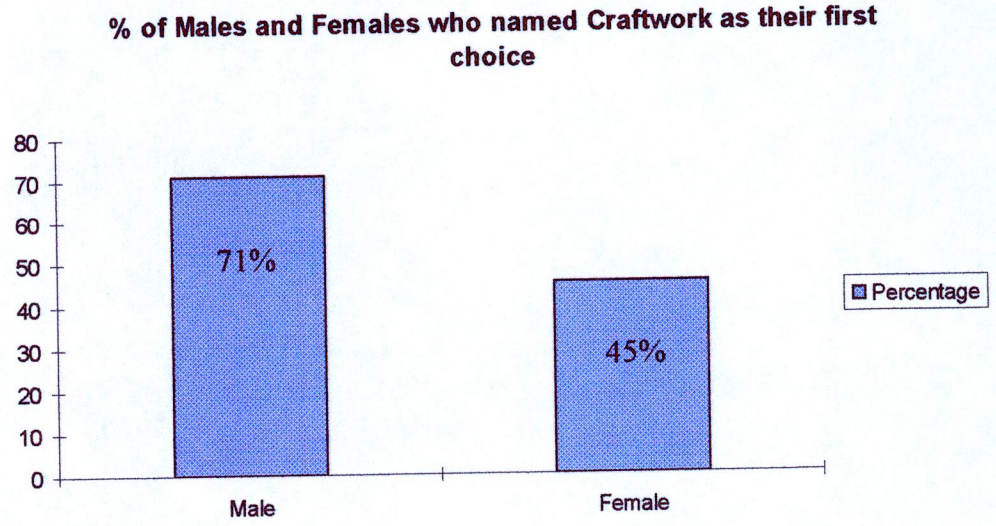
How easy do Males / Females find Art?

Results of Question 10, 11 and 12;

When asked to number a given list of art activities in order of preference, both the majority of boys and girls placed craftwork first; as they found it the most "fun" and they "enjoyed making things." See figure 8 blow;

FIGURE 8

Percentage of Males (m) and Females (f) who named Craftwork as their first choice.



The least preferred activity for boys was painting as it was thought to be too "messy". The least preferred activity for girls was designing as they felt it was too difficult.

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The least preferred activity for boys was painting as it was thought to be too "messy". The least preferred activity for girls was designing as they felt it was too difficult

Results of Question 13 and 14;

Figure 9 below illustrates how more girls prefer drawing from observation, while more boys prefer drawing from imagination. Those who stated they prefer drawing from imagination, generally do so because they find it easier, more personal and also more creative . Those who prefer drawing from observation, stated that it was because "it was easier to draw when it was possible to see the objects in front of you", and because one could "learn more".

FIGURE 9

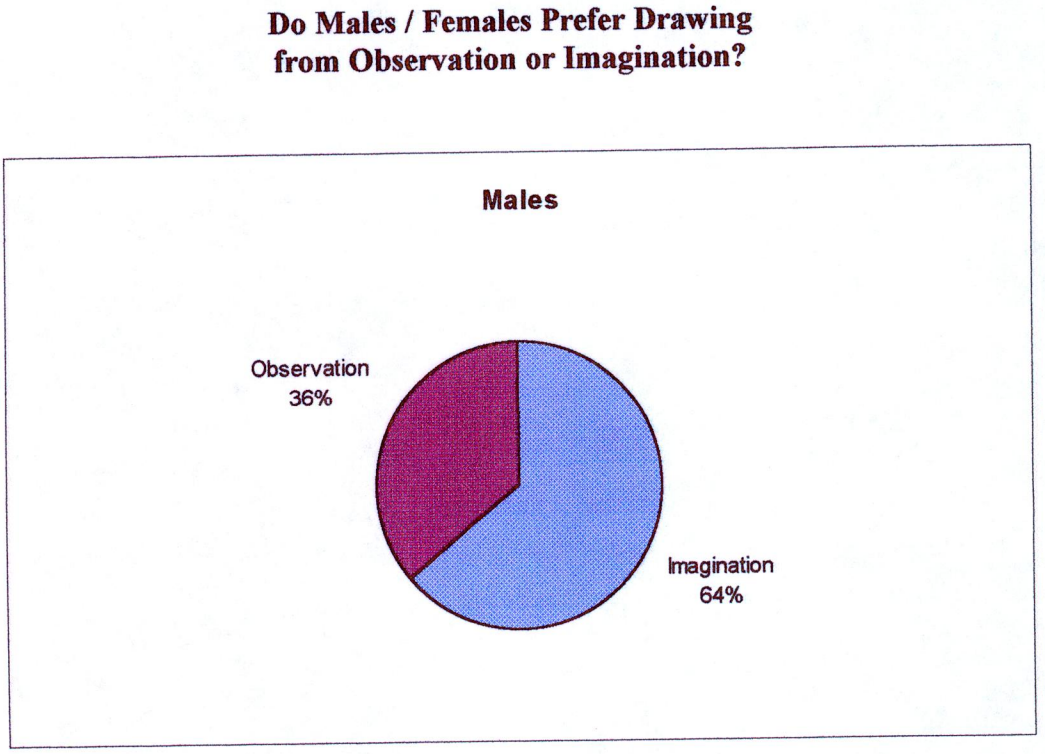

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FIGURE 9

Do Males \ Females Prefer Drawing from Observation or Imagination?

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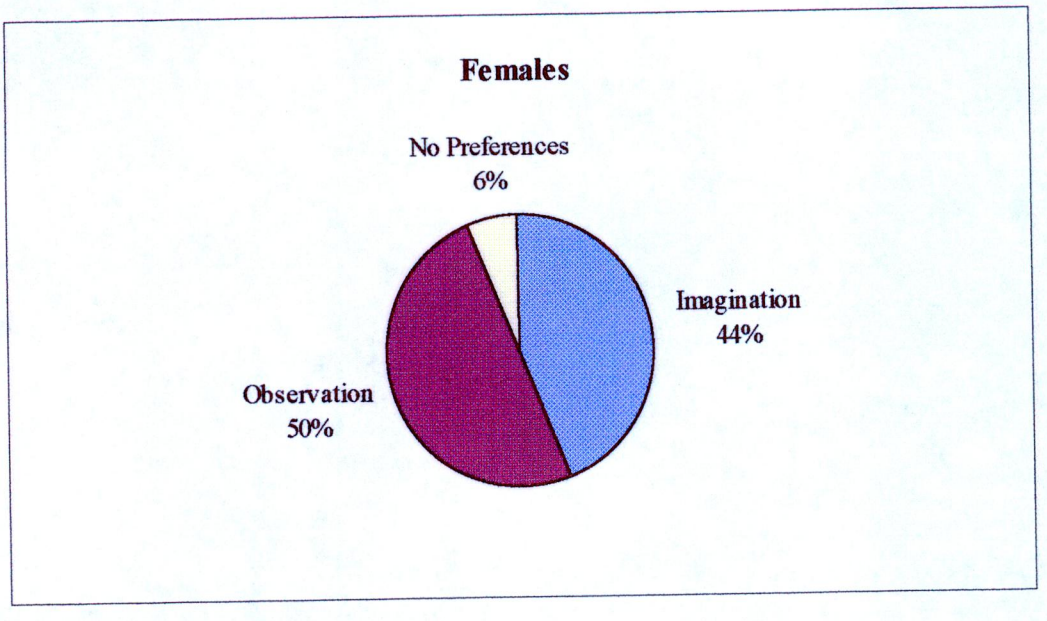


Results of Question 15;

When asked if they prefer drawing natural of manmade objects, the following results were found. See Figure 10. The majority of girls prefer drawing natural objects in contrast to the majority of boys who prefer drawing manmade objects.

FIGURE 9

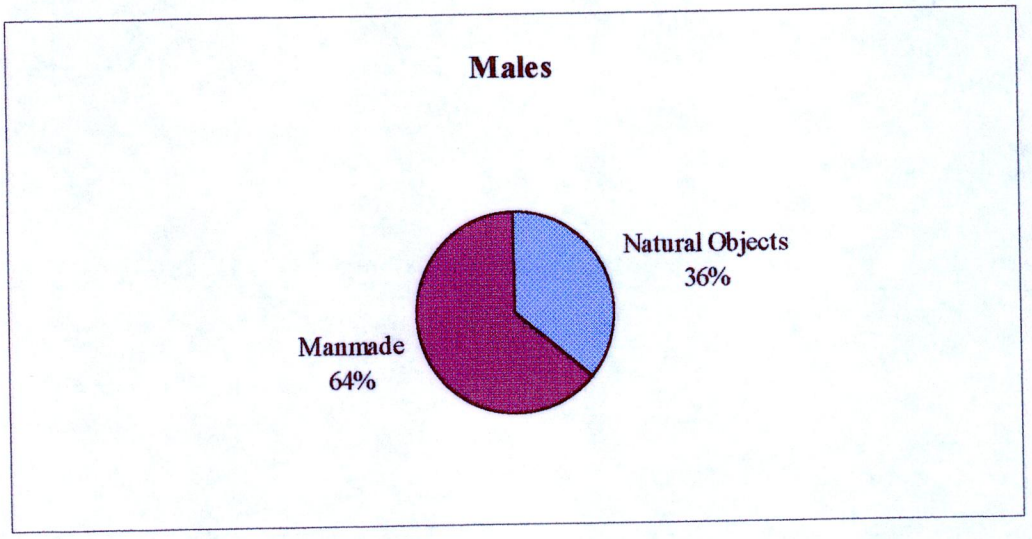
Do Males / Females Prefer Drawing
from Observation or Imagination?

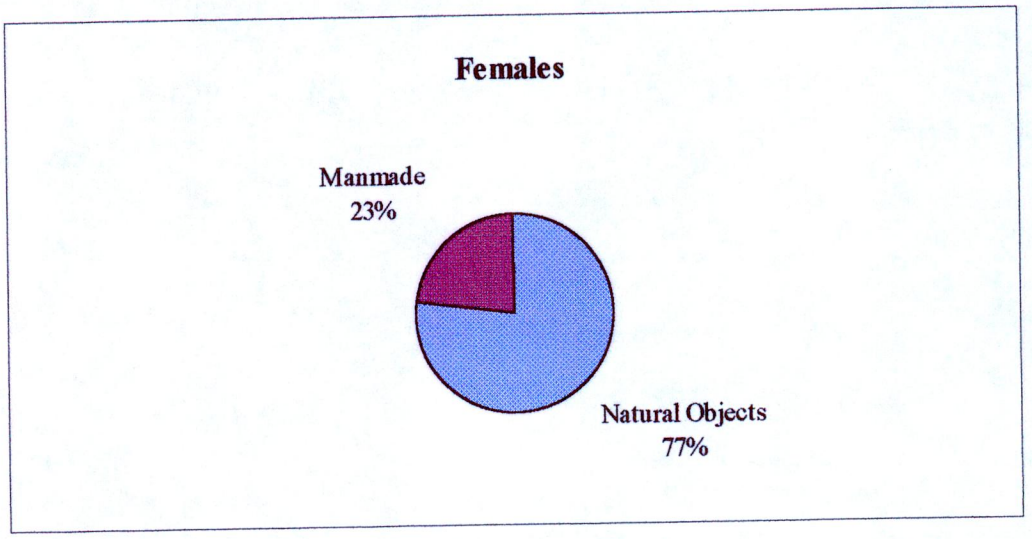
Results of Question 15:

When asked if they prefer drawing natural of manmade objects, the following results were found. See Figure 10. The majority of girls prefer drawing natural objects in contrast to the majority of boys who prefer drawing manmade objects.

FIGURE 10

Do Males / Females Prefer Drawing Manmade or Natural Object ?





Results of Question 16 and 17;

Pupils were given a list of objects including: person, vehicle, animal, building and plant/flower, and asked to rank them from 1 to 5 in order of preference.

The following results were found, Figure 11.

FIGURE 10

Do Males / Females Prefer Drawing Manmade
or Natural Object ?

Results of Question 16 and 17:

Pupils were given a list of objects including: person, vehicle, animal, building and plant/flower, and asked to rank them from 1 to 5 in order of preference.

The following results were found, Figure 11.

FIGURE 11

Drawing Preferences of Males (m) and Females (f)

Object

	Person	Vehicle	Animal	Building	Plant / Flower
1st choice: m	21%	36%	14%	7%	21%
f	33%	11%	5%	5%	44%
2nd choice:m	7%	14%	29%	36%	7%
f	-	-	7%	64%	29%
3rd choice: m	7%	21%	29%	29%	14%
f	7%	14%	43%	21%	14%
4th choice: m	21%	21%	7%	14%	36%
f	29%	43%	14%	-	14%
5th choice: m	43%	7%	14%	14%	21%
f	36%	21%	29%	7%	1%

Girls consistently rank plant / flowers highly in their preferences, stating that plants and flowers were "organic" and therefore "beautiful" as well as being easy to draw. In contrast, boys consistently vehicles, stating that they were "interested in cars and the like".

Results of Questions 18 and 19;

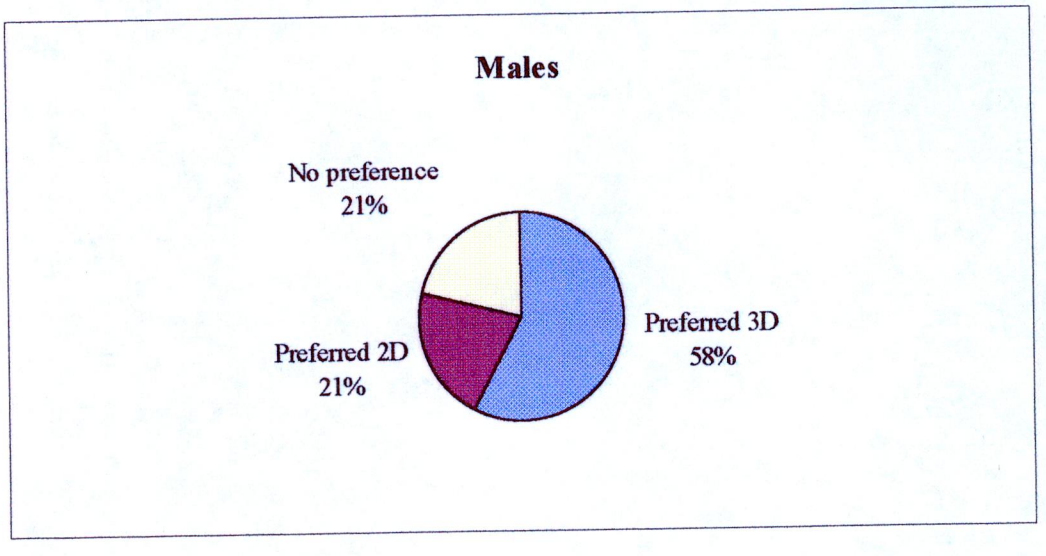
Pupils were asked if they preferred working in two dimensions or three dimensions. The majority of both boys and girls answered that they preferred three dimensional work. See Figure 12.

The most repeated reasons, given by pupils as to why they prefer working in three dimensions include the following; "it is more interesting to create your

own object ", "it van be viewed from all angles", "it is possible to get closer to the work", "it looks better", and "one can use the medium of clay". Those who selected working in two dimensions as their favourite, repeatedly reasoned that it "was easier", and "involved less work". Pupils who did not discern a preference, concluded that "it is good to do both types of work".

FIGURE 12

Do Males / Females Prefer 2D or 3D work?



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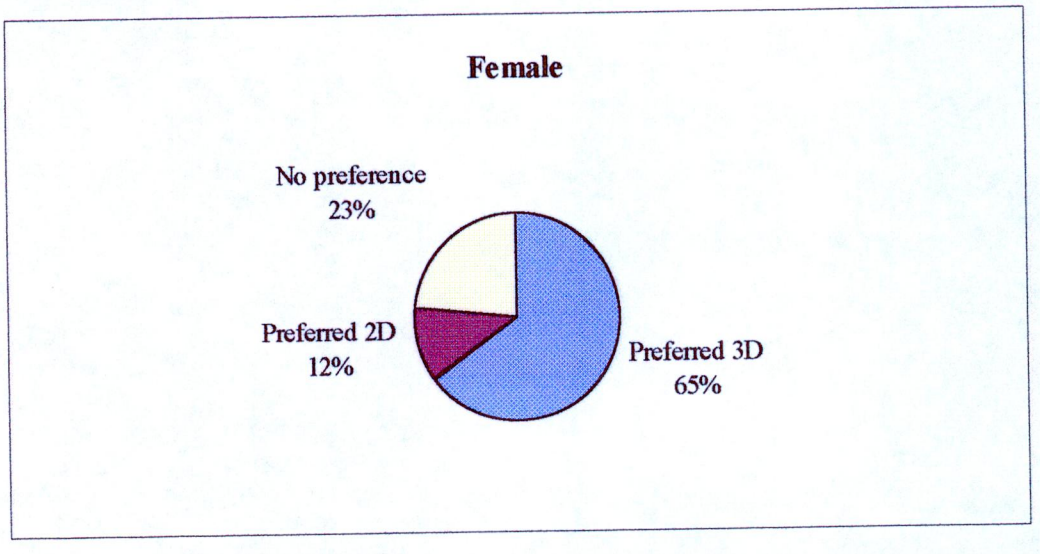

Result of Question 20;

There did not seem to be any major differences in preferred medium between boys and girls. Both genders listed clay as their first choice, and pencil as their second.

Results of Question 21;

Girls tended to favour bright, primary colours when asked to list the colours they most regularly use in their work. Boys frequently mentioned darker colours, most noticeably brown, black and purple, colours which were least recurrent in girls choices.

FIGURE 12

Do Males \ Females Prefer 2D or 3D work?

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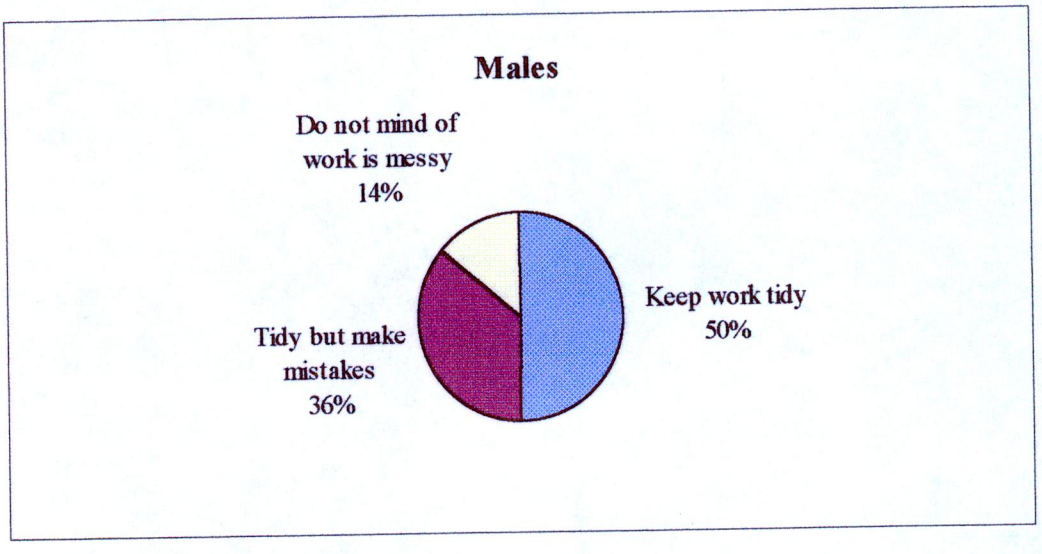
Girls tended to favour bright, primary colours when asked to list the colours they most regularly use in their work. Boys frequently mentioned darker colours, most noticeably brown, black and purple, colours which were least recurrent in girls choices.

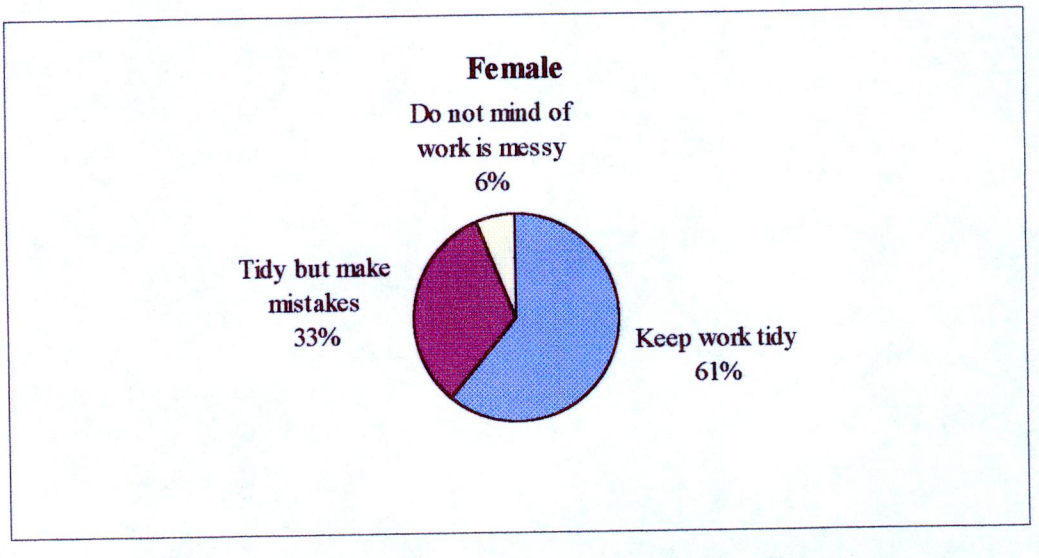
Results of Question 22;

Pupils were queried on how tidy they liked to keeps their work. The following results were found, see Figure 13.

FIGURE 13

How Tidy do Males / Females like their Work to Appear?





Results of Question 22.

Pupils were queried on how tidy they liked to keep their work. The following results were found, see Figure 13.

FIGURE 13

How Tidy do Males / Females like their Work to Appear?

Results of Question 23;

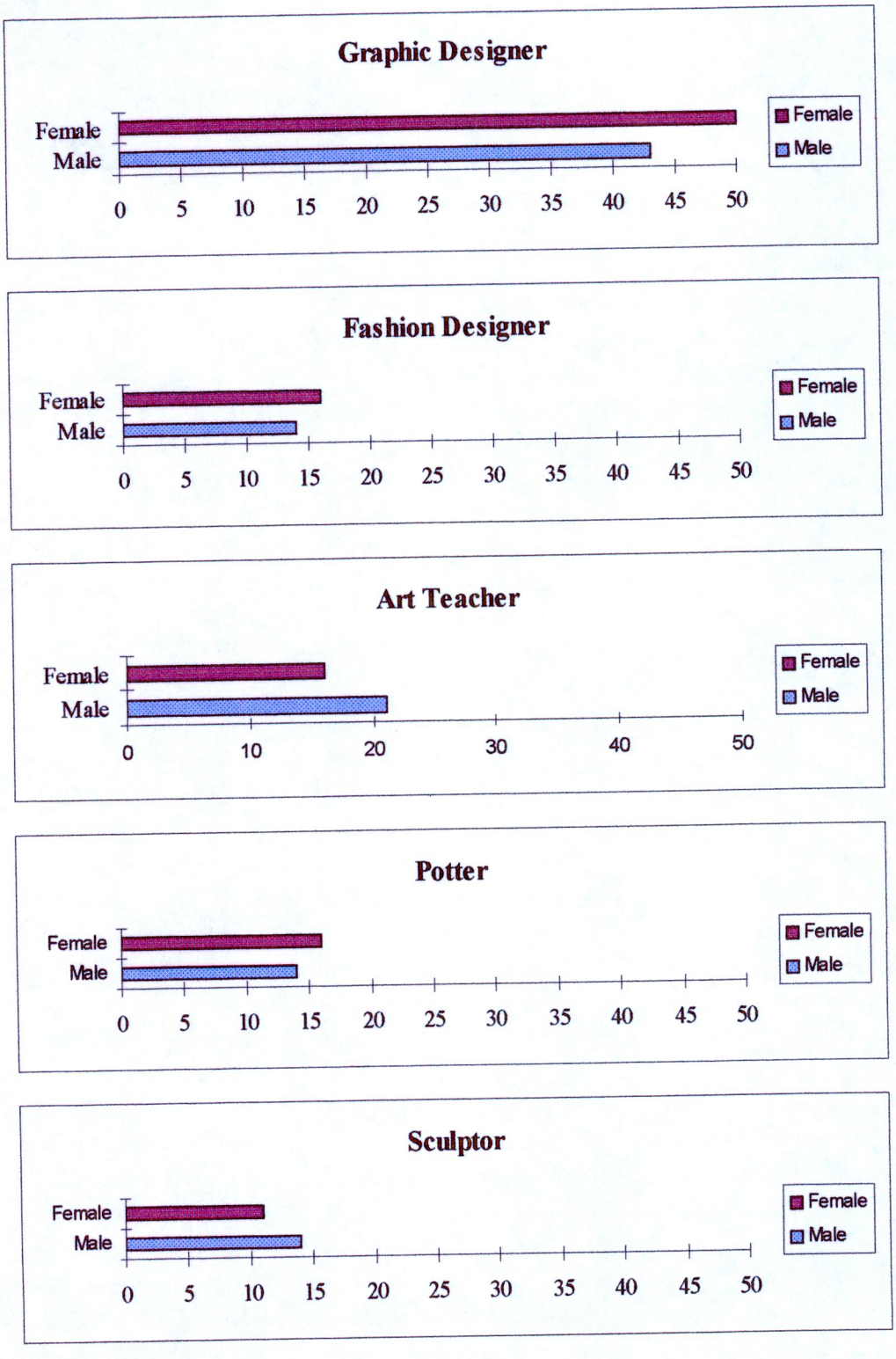
Out of the thirty-two pupils questioned, not one could name a famous females artist when asked to do so, but they had no problems in identifying famous male artists. When asked to name a male artist, the majority of boys (71%) mentioned Leonardo Da Vinchi. Girls answers were more far-reaching. On counting up their answers, the most frequently mentioned names were Leonardo Da Vinchi (22% of girls) and Botticelli (22% of girls).

Results of Question 24;

Pupils were asked to name three art related jobs. Figure 14 below indicates the jobs with which pupils identified and to what extent. On closer examination of results, discrepancies were found not only between genders, but also between age groups. A large number of second year girls (44%) could not identify three jobs in the art world. This number lowered at fifth year level (11% of girls could not identify three jobs). Boys scored higher on this section (29% of second year boys and 14% of fifth year boys could not identify three art related jobs).

FIGURE 14

Art Related Jobs as stated by Male (m) and Female (f) pupils.



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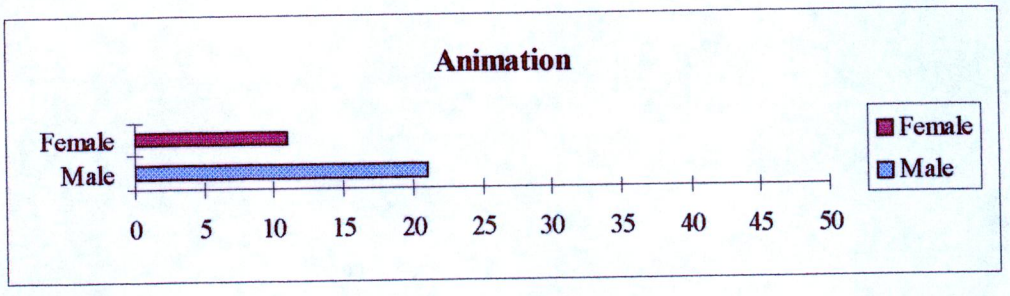
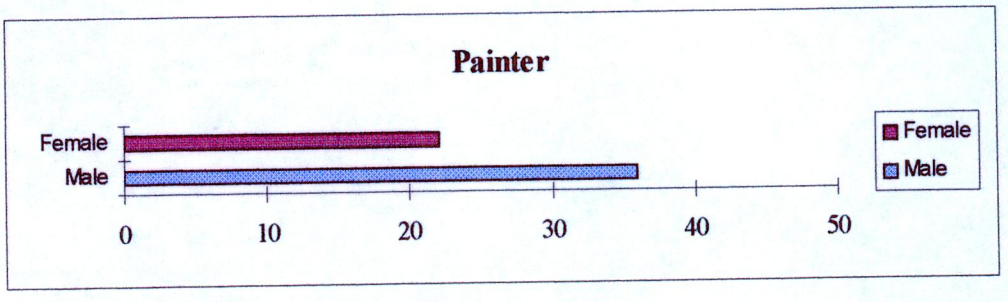
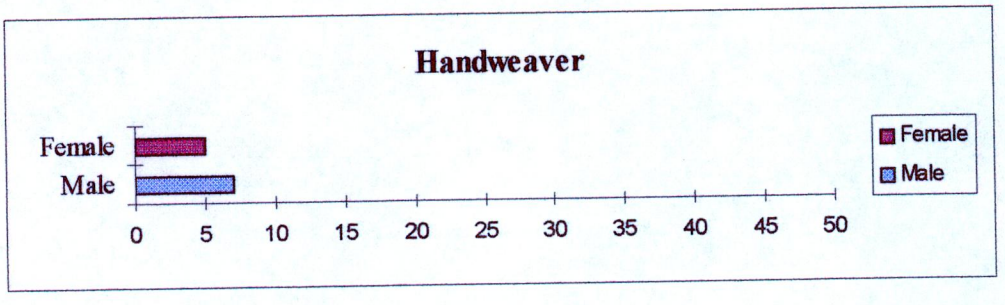
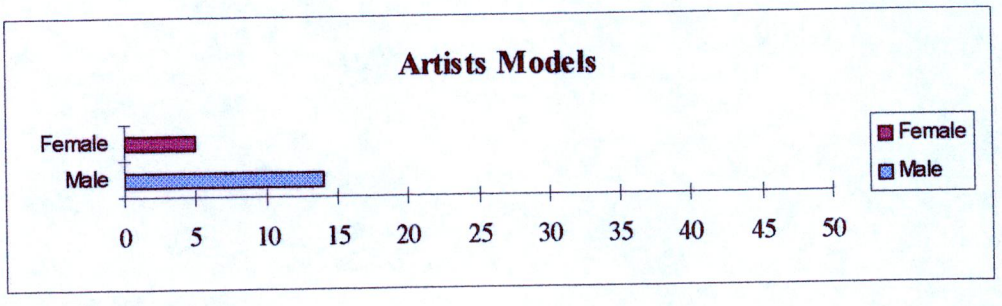
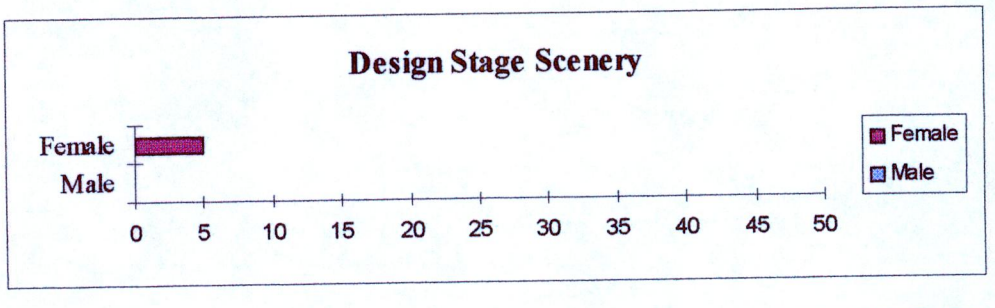
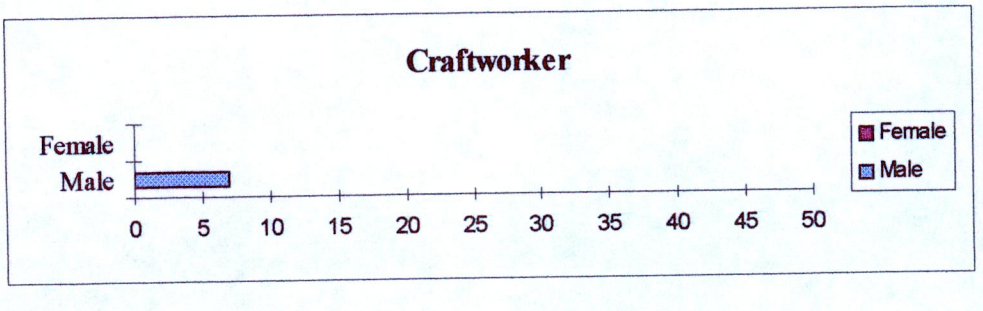

Animation
Female
Male
0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50
Female
Male


Painter
Female
Male
0 10 20 30 40 50
Female
Male


Handweaver
Female
Male
0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50
Female
Male


Artists Models
Female
Male
0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50
Female
Male


Design Stage Scenery
Female
Male
0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50
Female
Male


Craftworker
Female
Male
0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50
Female
Male

Animation
Female
Male
0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50
Female
Male

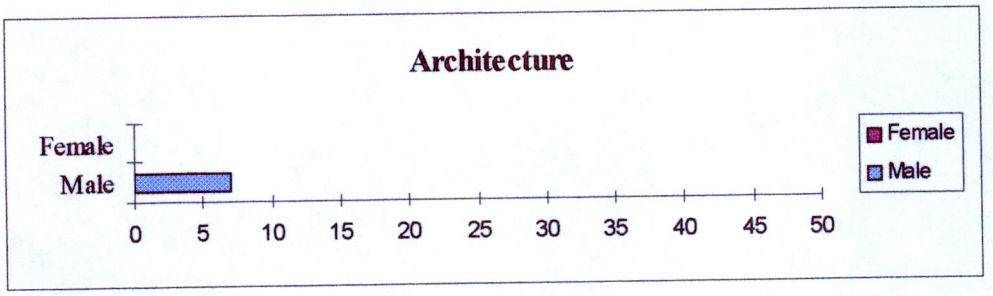
Painter
Female
Male
0 10 20 30 40 50
Female
Male

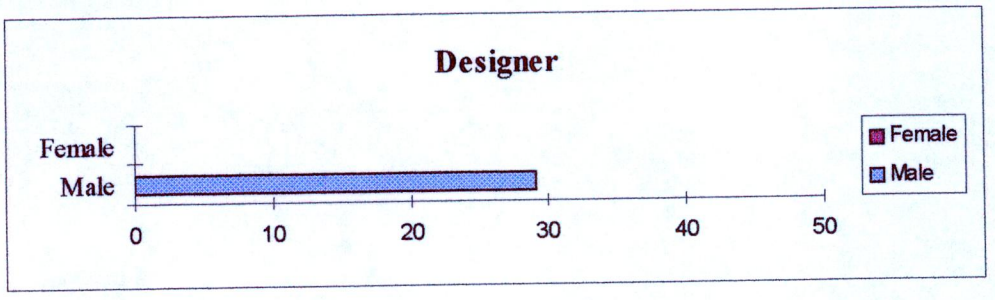
Handweaver
Female
Male
0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50
Female
Male

Artists Models
Female
Male
0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50
Female
Male

Design Stage Scenery
Female
Male
0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50
Female
Male

Craftworker
Female
Male
0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50
Female
Male





The following questions were put to fifth year pupils only;

Results of Questions 25 and 26;

Pupils were asked if they thought art was an important part of the school curriculum. The following results were found, see Figure 15.

Girls who agreed with the statement reasoned that art was an "important way of expressing oneself" and "being creative". It was also stated that art was "a good way of learning about culture and history". A small percentage of girls (12%) felt that art was not an important subject if you were "not good at" , or "interested in it".

Boys who thought art was important in the school curriculum, stated that it "helped one to think abstractly", "did not put any stress on you", and was

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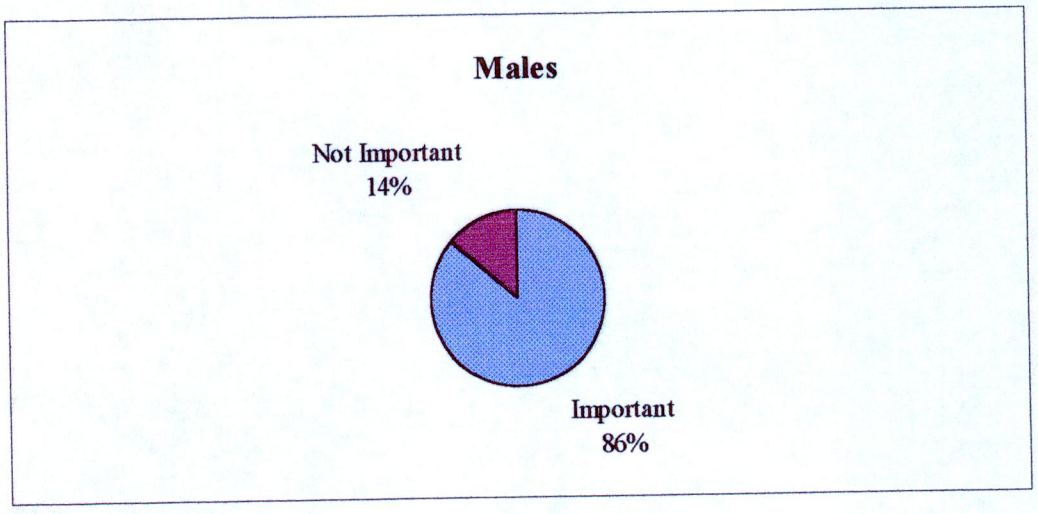
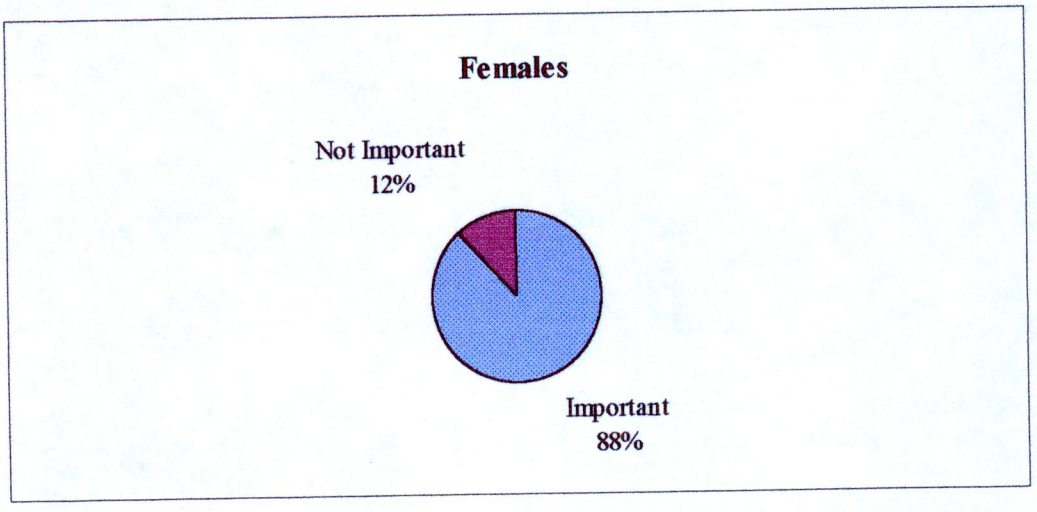
Boys who thought art was important in the school curriculum, stated that it "helped one to think abstractly", "did not put any stress on you", and was

"good fun". A small percentage of boys (14%) thought art was not an important subject if you did not want to pursue a career in it.

FIGURE 15

Do you think Art is an important part of the School Curriculum?





"good fun". A small percentage of boys (14%) thought art was not an important subject if you did not want to pursue a career in it.

FIGURE 15

Do you think Art is an important part of the School Curriculum?

Results of Questions 27 and 28;

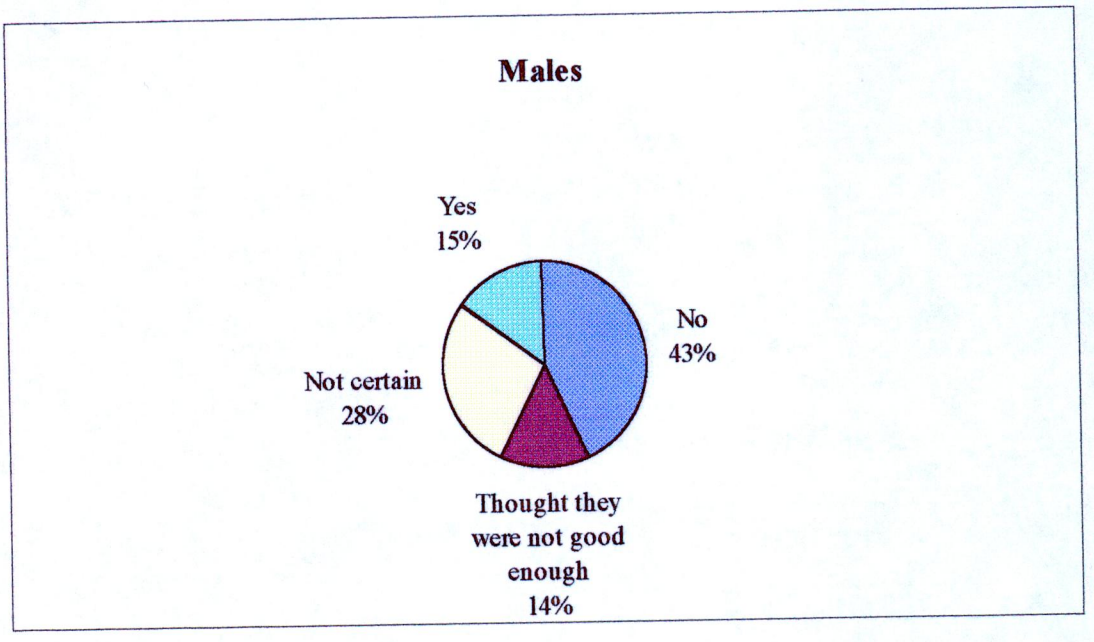
A larger number of fifth year boys (57%) compared to fifth year girls (11%) had not taken the Junior Certificate course . All of the boys who did not take the Junior Certificate course, took the ordinary level, achieving grades A, B and C. Half of the girls who did undertake the Junior Certificate course, took the higher level, achieving a grade C and B. Girls who took the ordinary level achieved a grade A and a grade C.

Results of Question 29;

Pupils were asked if they intended to go onto study art at third level. The following results were found, see Figure 16

FIGURE 16

Do you intend to go onto study Art at Third Level ?



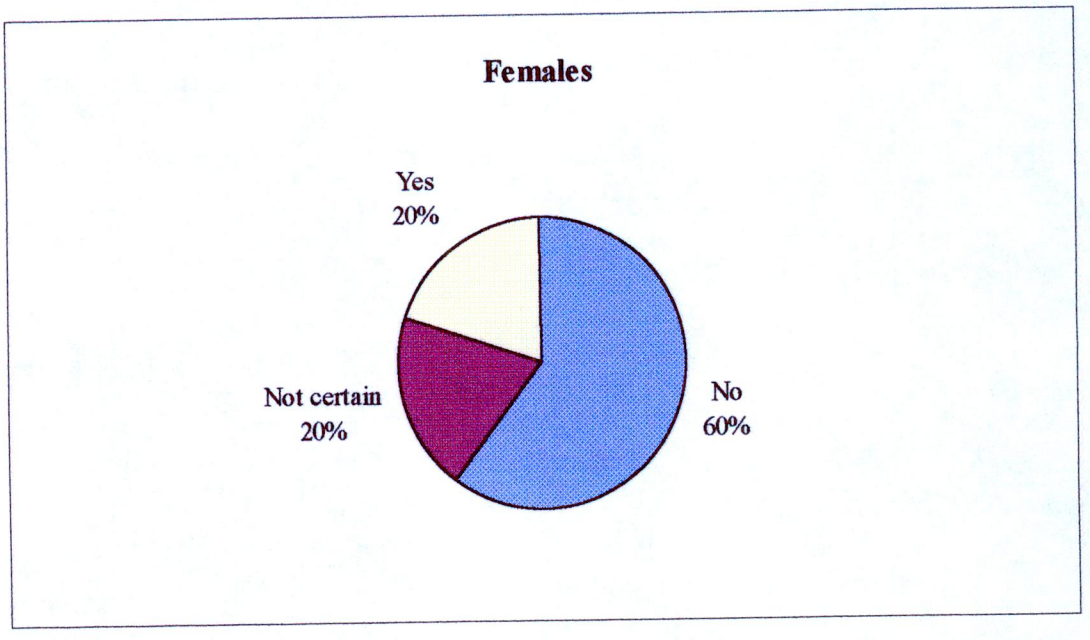


FIGURE 16

Do you intend to go onto study Art at Third Level ?

Males

Females

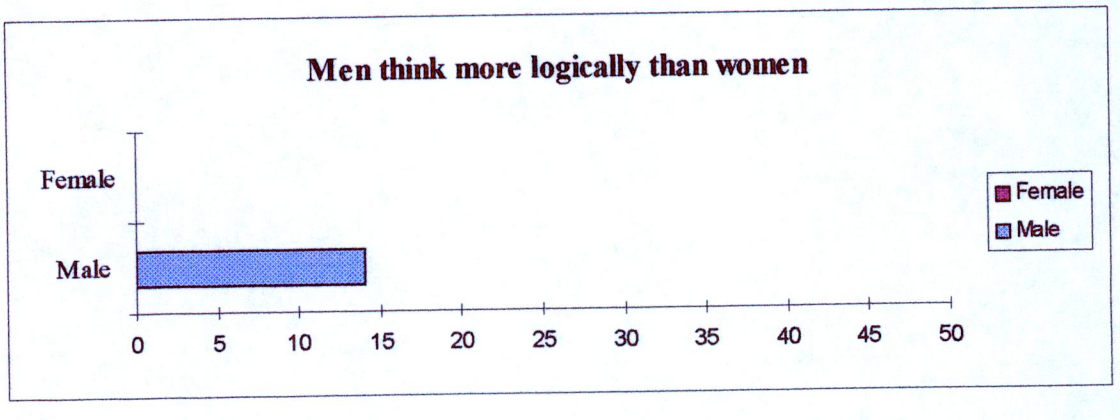
RESULTS OF WORKSHEET 1

Worksheet 1, Section 1 / Statements;

Pupils were asked to indicate whether or not they agreed with a given list of statements. The statements were chosen to discover if students have different expectations of people because they happen to be male of female, and whether or not students assigned them roles to conform to those expectations. The following results were found, see Figure 17.

FIGURE 17

Percentage of Males (m) and Females (f) who agree with given statement



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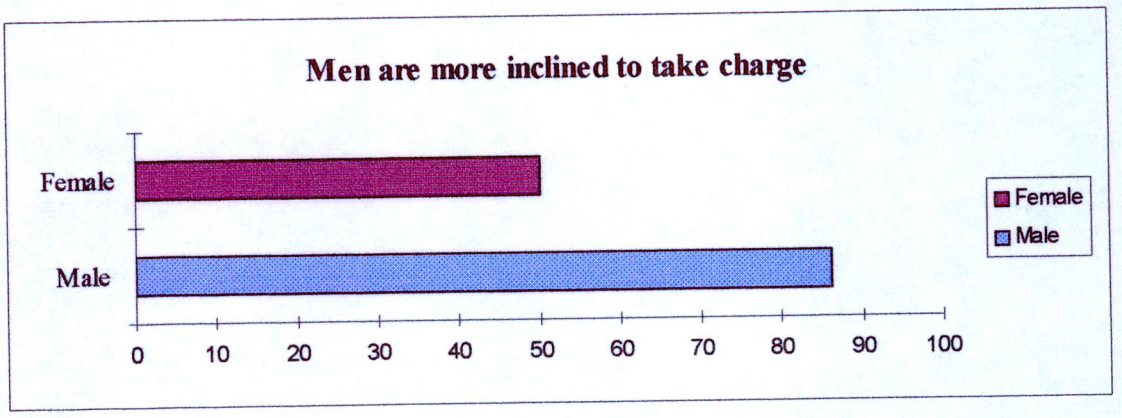
Men are more inclined to take charge
Female
Male
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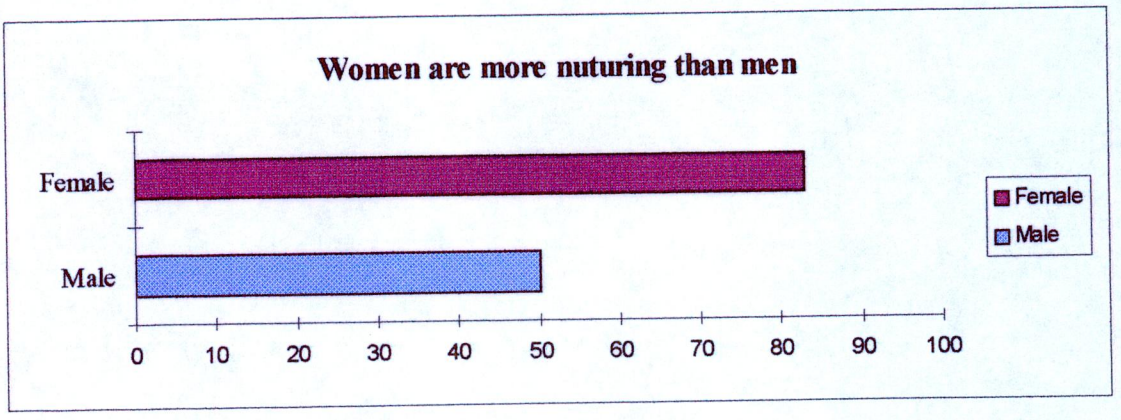
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
100
Female
Male


Women are more nuturing than men
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Male
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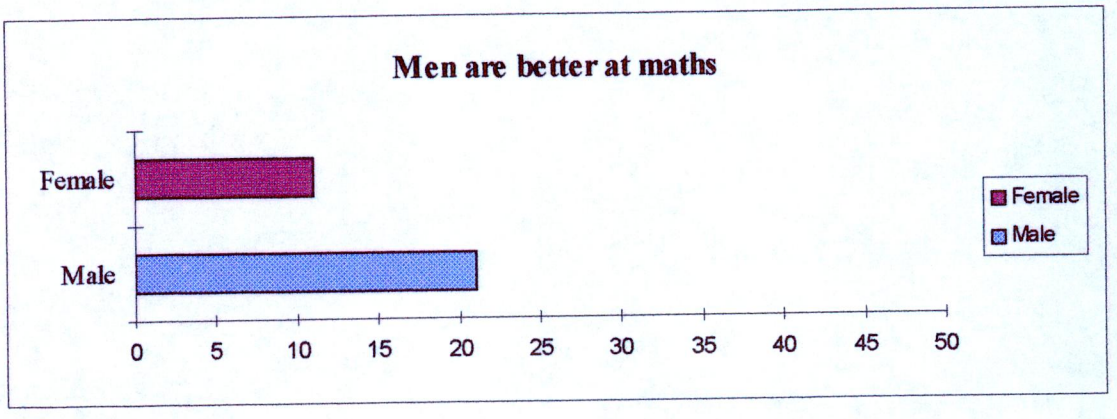
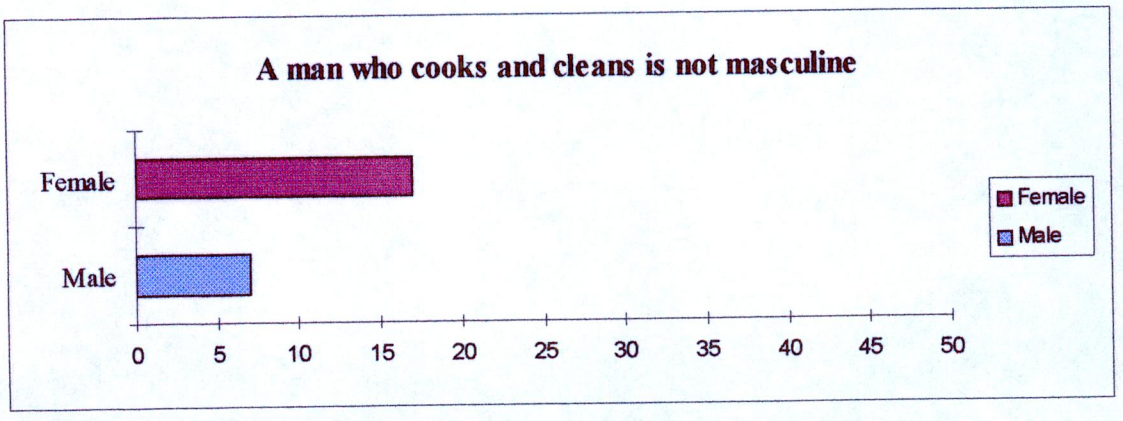
60
70
80
90
100
Female
Male


Men are better at maths
Female
Male
0
5
10
15
20
25
30
35
40
45
50
Female
Male


A man who cooks and cleans is not masculine
Female
Male
0
5
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15
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25
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35
40
45
50
Female
Male

Men are more inclined to take charge
Female
Male
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
100

Women are more nurturing than men
Female
Male
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
100

Men are better at maths
Female
Male
0
5
10
15
20
25
30
35
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A man who cooks and cleans is not masculine
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Male
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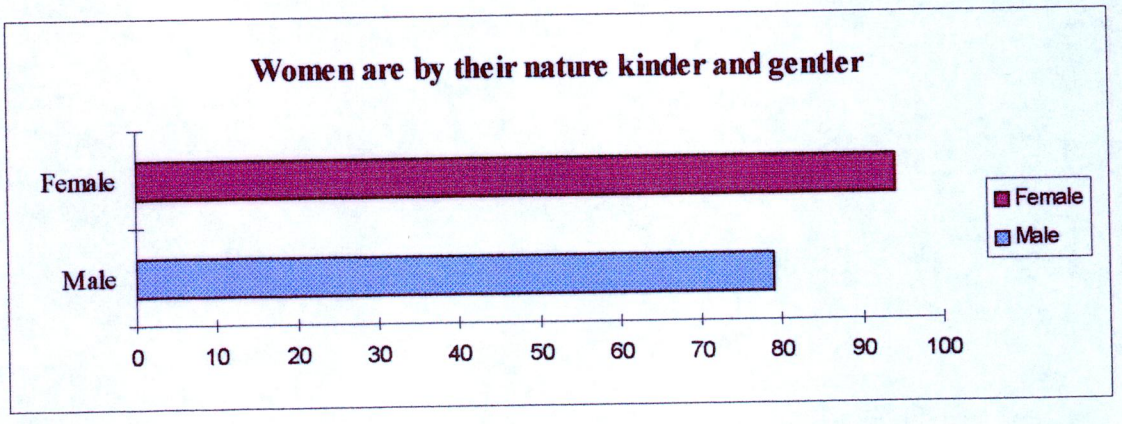
Women are by their nature kinder and gentler
Female
Male
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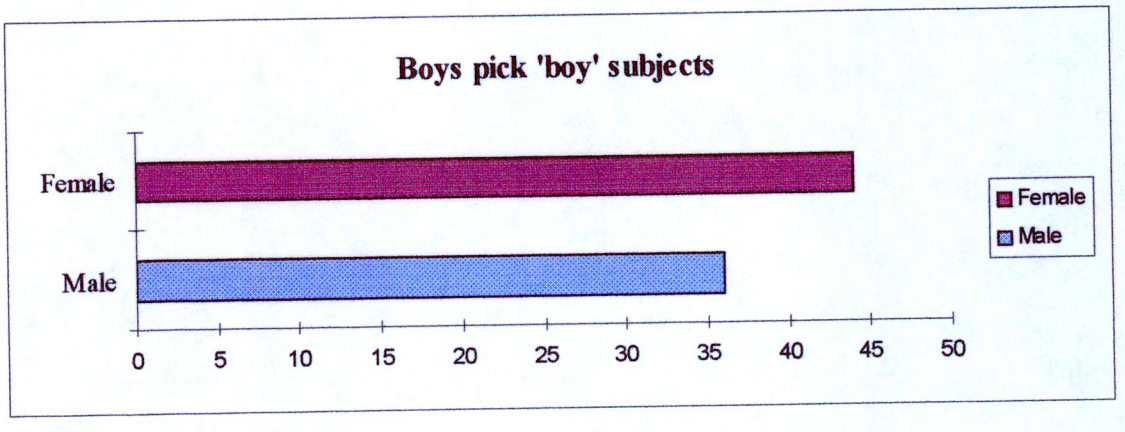
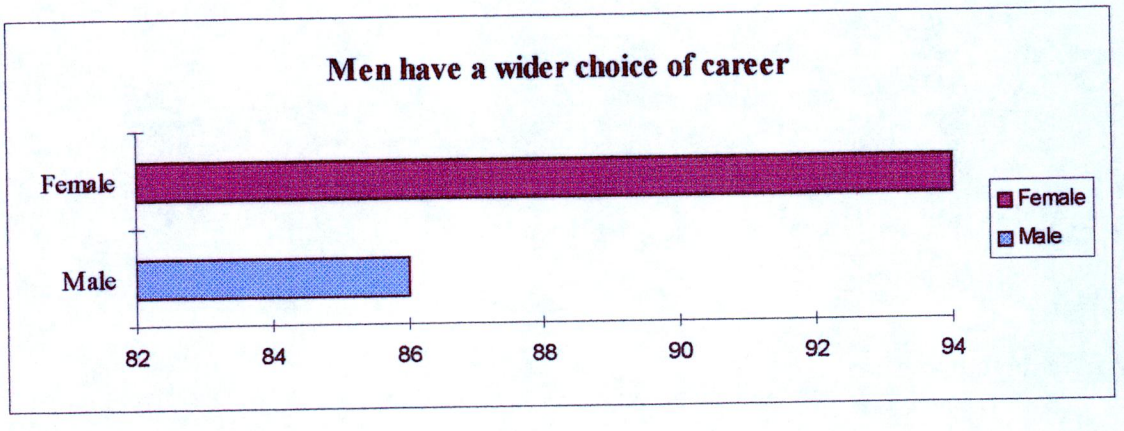
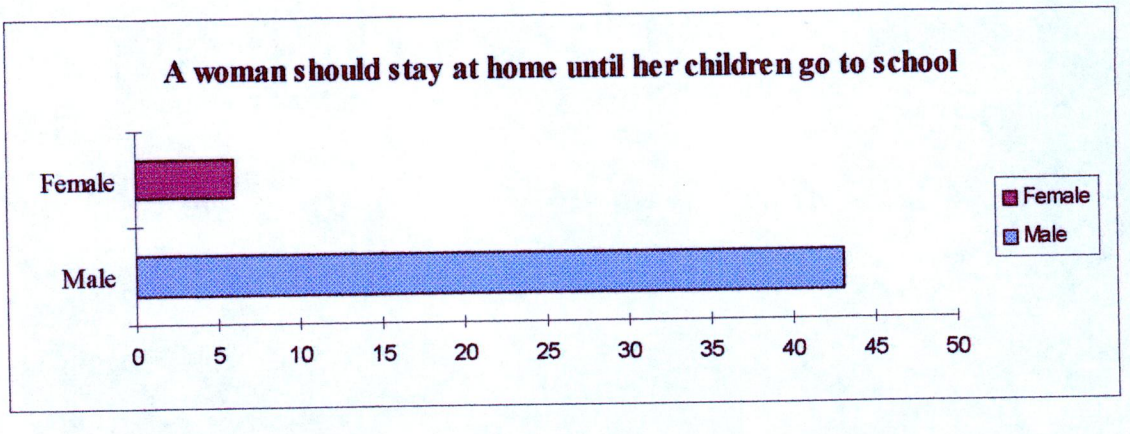
70
80
90
100
Female
Male


Boys pick 'boy' subjects
Female
Male
0
5
10
15
20
25
30
35
40
45
50
Female
Male


Men have a wider choice of career
Female
Male
82
84
86
88
90
92
94
Female
Male


A woman should stay at home until her children go to school
Female
Male
0
5
10
15
20
25
30
35
40
45
50
Female
Male

Women are by their nature kinder and gentler
Female
Male
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
100

Boys pick 'boy' subjects
Female
Male
0
5
10
15
20
25
30
35
40
45
50

Men have a wider choice of career
Female
Male
82
84
86
88
90
92
94

A woman should stay at home until her children go to school
Female
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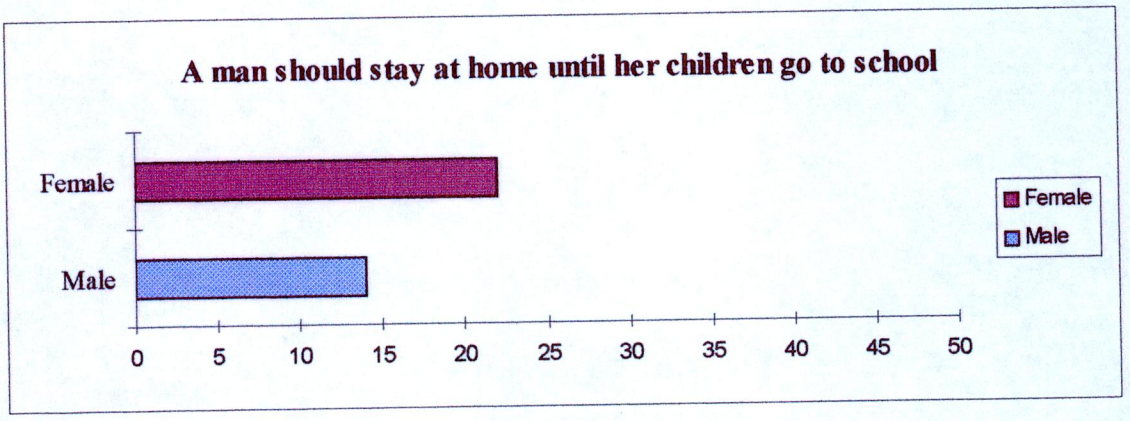

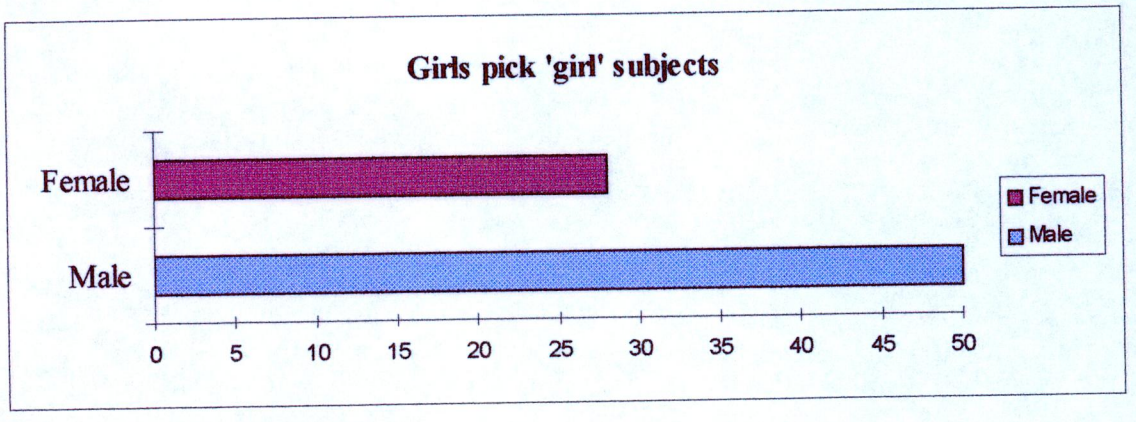

Both genders strongly agree with the following two statements;

"women are by their nature kinder and gentler" and statement 8. "men have a wider choice career". On further examination, it was discovered that all of second year pupils, male and female, fully supported these two views.

Statements with which both genders strongly agreed;

Statement 1, "men think more logically than women". All the female pupils disagreed. Statement 4, "men are better at math's", yet double the number of boys (21%) than girls (11%) agreed with this view.

Statement 5 "a man who cooks and cleans is not masculine", interestingly, more girls (7%) than boys (17%) disagree.

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Statement 5 "a man who cooks and cleans is not masculine", interestingly, more girls (7%) than boys (17%) disagree.

Statement 10, "a man should stay at home until his children to school". However a greater number of boys have the view expressed in statement 9, "a woman should stay at home until her children go to school".

Discrepancies between responses of male / female pupils exist for the following statements;

Statement 2, "men are more inclined to take charged". All of second year boys and a large number of fifth boys (86%) agreed with this statement. Only a small number of fifth year girls (22%) compared to second year girls (78%) agreed with this view.

Statement 3, "women are more nurturing than men". A large number of girls (83%) than boys (50%) support this view.

Statement 9, "a women should stay at home until her children go to school." A greater number of boys (43%) to girls (6%) support this statement.

More girls than boys agree with statement 7, "boys pick boys subject", in contrast, more boys than girls agree with statement 11, "girls pick girls subjects"

Worksheet 1, Section 2 / Adjectives;

Section 2;

Pupils were given a list of objectives and asked to indicate whether they believe these objectives are attributable to the male, female or both. The following results were found, see Figure 18 and 19.

Discrepancies were also evident in response to the following tasks; discipling, controlling the budget, and deciding where money is spent. These tasks were perceived as being suitable for the male, eventhough this was not necessarily the case in their own homes. Similarly the following tasks; child rearing, and providing affection where seen as feminine tasks despite the fact that many pupils admitted that these same tasks were undertaken by males within their own family environment.

The majority of boys believe it is a feminine task to cook, vacuum clean, iron, provide affection and baby / infant care. The majority of girls also believe it is the task of the female to be a homemaker.

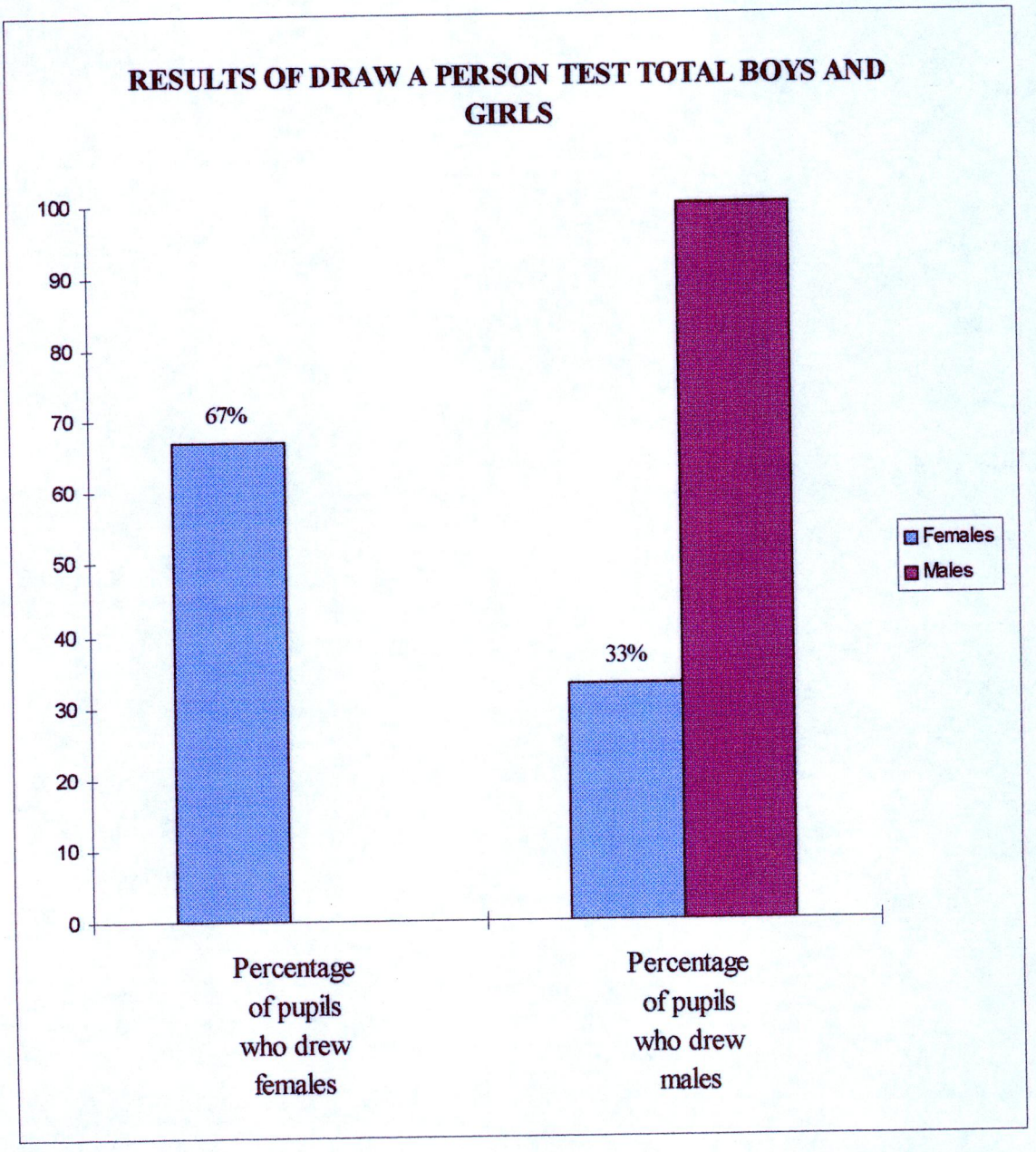
The results of worksheet 2, illustrate the characteristics noted in chapter 1, where it is suggested that girls are encouraged to assume a nuturant, expressive role in society, and boys the instrumental role of provider.

RESULTS OF DRAW-A-PERSON TESTS

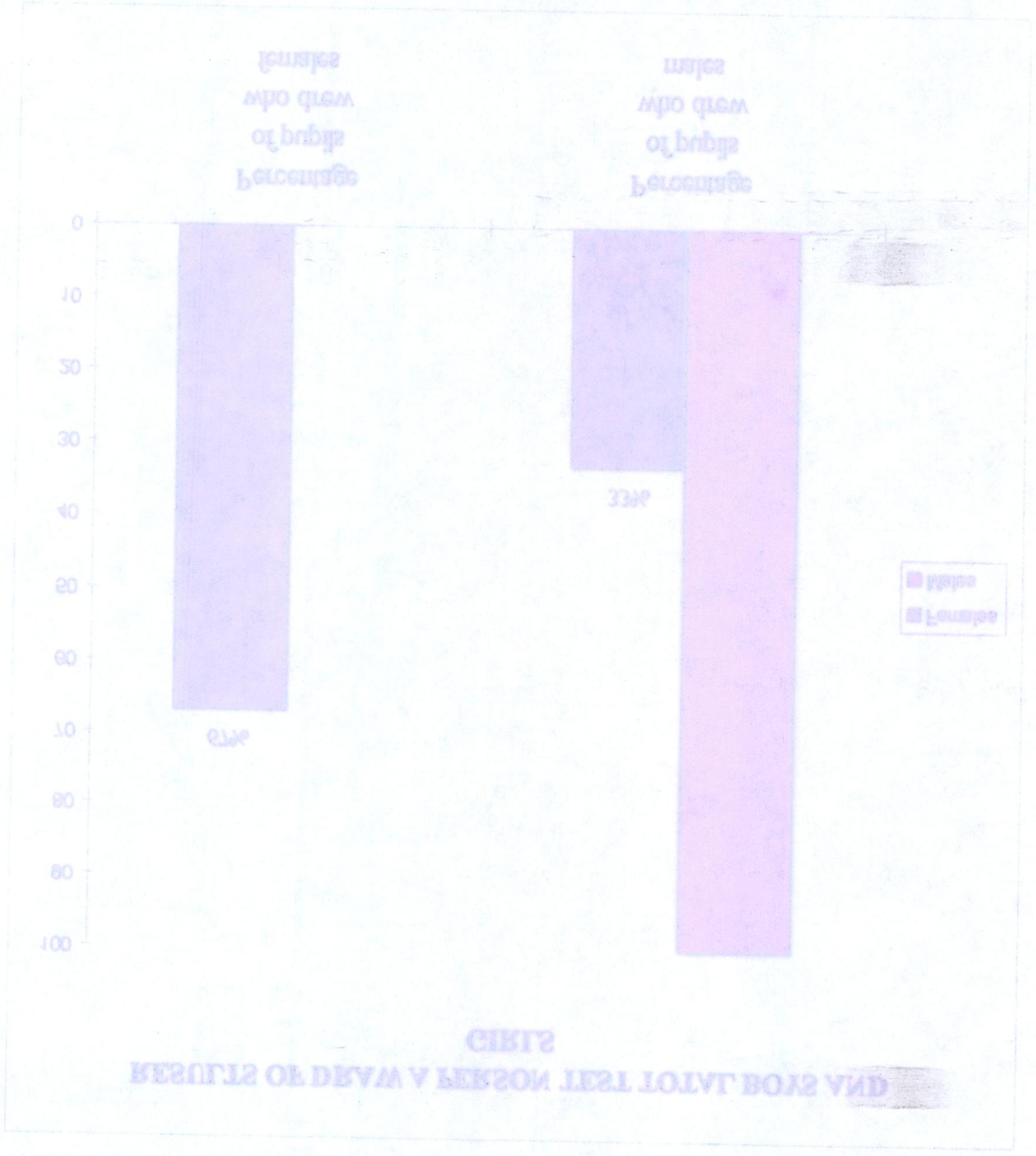
Pupils were asked to draw a person. The most commonly drawn gender was the male. See Figure 22. In total, all of the boys in the sample test males while the males, a third of the girls also drew males while remaining two-thirds drew females. This result coincides with the research of Harris in Chapter 2; the majority of children draw their own sex first, although some girls draw males,

adolescent boys as a rule avoid depicting girls of their own age. This trend may well reflect the emphasis of our culture on the male role.

FIGURE 22



The most common way of drawing the figure, was in the manner of a cartoon style drawing. Boys in particular tended to depict superheros, as influenced by


Percentage
of pupils
who drew
males
Percentage
of pupils
who drew
females
Males
Females

the mass media (similar to the research of Gardner as discussed in Chapter 2. Here the male "macho" image is exaggerated, see illustration 3.

ILLUSTRATION 3 - "MALE FIGURE"

Above: Male figure drawn by a second year boy

In contrast, girls tended to treat the figure in a more realistic manner, (as noted previously in conjunction with the research of Harris, Chapter 2. The majority of girls included details such as eyelashes, cupid-bow lips and hair items that 'glamourise' the female figure, see illustration 4.

ILLUSTRATION 4 - "FEMALE FIGURE"

Above: Female figure drawn by a second year girl.

RESULTS OF TEACHING PRACTICE PROJECT

Sex Differences in Chosen Themes

My group of second year pupils completed a graphic design project which accumulated in a book of poetry. The theme of this project was deliberately left quite open, as I desired for each pupil to individually select a poem from their English text book, upon which to base their work. This then provided me with the opportunity to compare poems chosen by male and female pupils.

Poems and their themes (in brackets) as selected by males include;

- Hunger (death and hardship),
- The Dustbin Men (the excitement of junk and other manmade paraphernalia),
- The Graveyard (horror and spookiness),
- The Sculptor (creation, power to mold),
- Choosing Shoes (buying shoes),

In contrast, poem titles and their themes (again in brackets) as chosen by females include;

- The Windsong (nature, landscapes, kites),
- The Hedgehog (nature, animals - hedgehogs),
- Shells (nature, shells),
- My New Puppy (animals - dogs),

- Oh, I wish I'd looked after my teeth (comedy, sweets),
- Choosing Shoes (buying shoes).

Here we see evidence of a difference in interests. Girls appear to be more concerned with nature, animals, light-hearted subjects, while boys show more of a preoccupation with man, his activities and a darker side to life i.e. death, horror.

Sex Differences in Content and Subject Matter

As pupils chose their own particular theme, they then went on to select what they considered suitable objects to draw. The subject matter depicted in the artwork of boys included; skulls, grave headstones, broken manmade items, hands manipulating lumps of clay, and running shoes. The subject matter depicted in the artwork of girls included; landscapes with kites, animals (as cited by Golamb in Chapter 2) in particular hedgehogs and puppies, shells, sweets and high heel shoes. In short, the content of boys artwork seems to be preoccupied with avoiding content that could be termed "pretty", a word which aptly describes the concerns and tranquil scenes depicted by girls. Reminiscent of a line from a well known verse "sugar and spice and all things nice, that what little girls are made of". If recall back to Chapter 1, I noted that boys must learn how not to be girls, here in their artwork, we have an example of boys conforming to sex-role standards, and that which is deemed appropriate for their gender.

It is interesting to note, that particular poem, "Choosing Shoes" was chosen by both male and female students. Although the subject matter was similar, the style of shoe selected to depict was quite different. The female pupil portrayed a distinctly feminine high heel shoe, see illustration 5, while the male pupil chose a running shoe, see illustration 6.

ILLUSTRATION 5 - "CHOOSING SHOES" - (Drawn by Female Pupil)

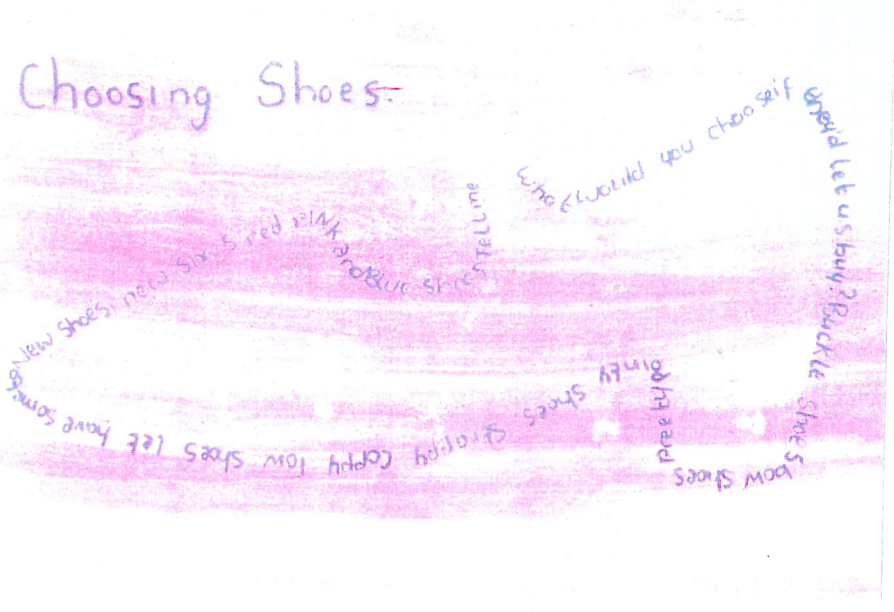


ILLUSTRATION 6 - "CHOOSING SHOES" - (Drawn by Male Pupil)

Sex Differences In Colour Schemes

As if to emphasise the suitability of the shoe style for their own particular gender, the male and female pupils who depicted shoes utilised completely different colour schemes. The male used predominantly blue, a colour still associated with the male gender, while the female used mostly pink, a colour which reinforces the association of the shoe with the female gender

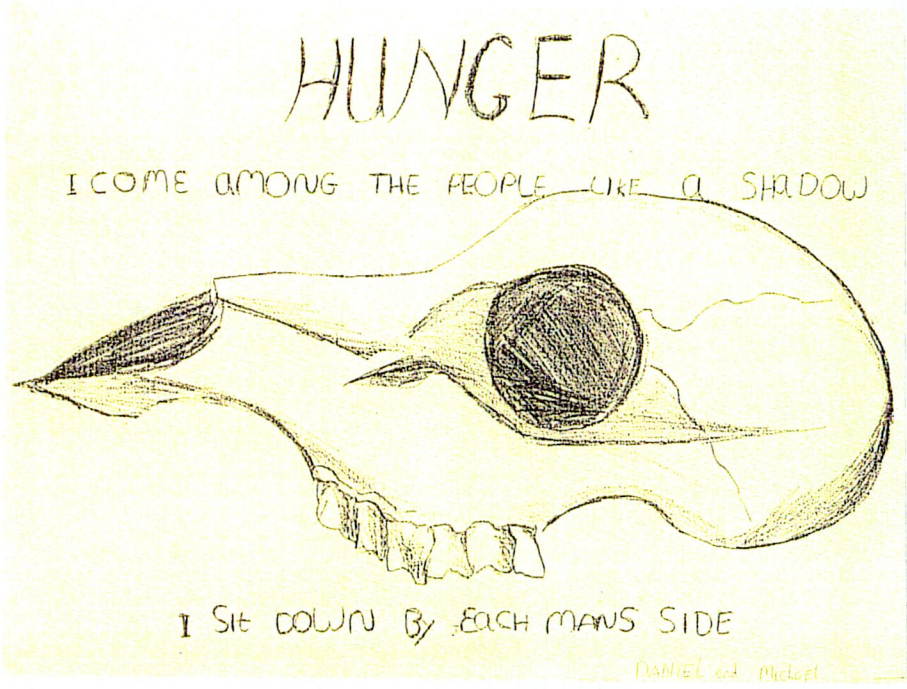
In general, the girl chiefly used warmer tones and a wider variety of colours, giving their work a brighter more colourful appearance, this result complements the research of Lewerenz, discussed in Chapter 2, who found girls to be more original and better in colour recognition. Boys tend to use cooler and fewer colours. See illustration 7 and 8.

ILLUSTRATION 7

"OH, I WISH I'D LOOKED AFTER MY TEETH"

Oh, I wish I'd looked after my teeth - drawn by a female pupil

ILLUSTRATION 8 - "HUNGER"

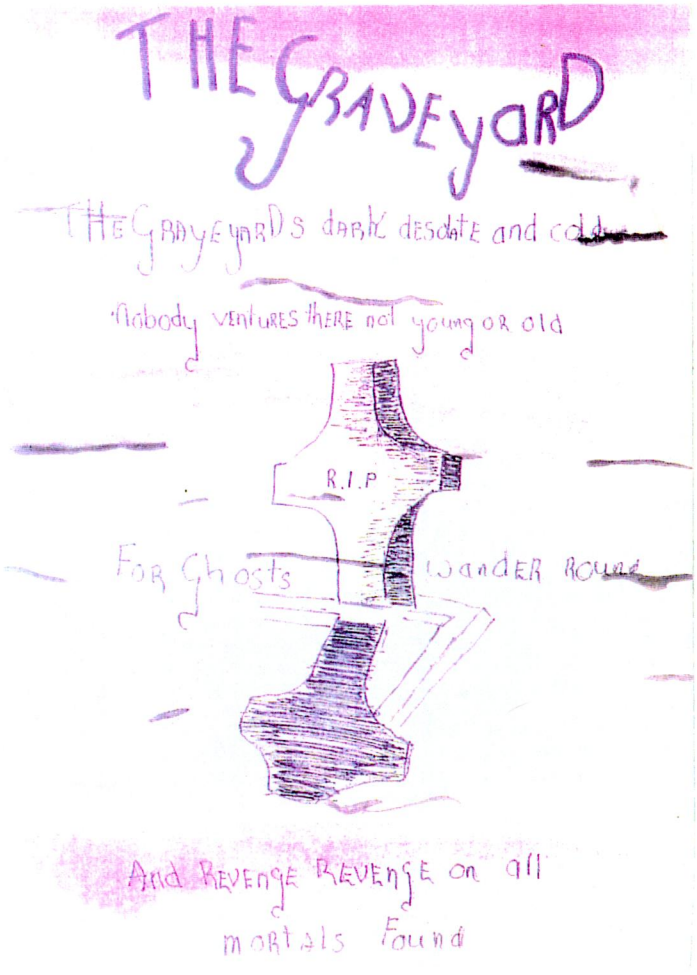


Hunger - drawn by a male pupil

Portrayal of Depth

All pupils seemed to avoid depicting the illusion of depth, except for one boy, who utilised a very simple method concerned with the placement of objects on the page, see illustration 9. (As a group, pupils have not yet explored mathematical or aerial perspective, so perhaps this could be one factor as to why more pupils did not experiment with tackling it.)

ILLUSTRATION 9 - "THE GRAVEYARD"

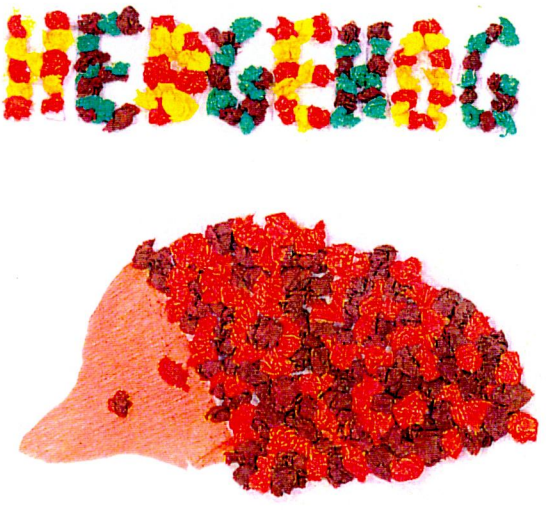


The Graveyard - drawn by a male pupil.

Use of Texture

Although as a group, we did explore creating textile texture, the only pupil to use it in their final design was a girl. See illustration 10. Here it has been utilised to add texture to the hedgehog.

ILLUSTRATION 10 - "THE HEDGEHOG"



The Hedgehog - drawn by a female pupil.

SUMMARY

In this chapter I have discussed the results of my research project. My investigation into the relationship between gender and artwork, is in agreement with and reinforces the research discussed in Chapters 1 and 2. Sex-role standards and stereotypes as imposed by our culture, have a definite influence on pupils' interests, expectations and performance within the subject of art. As is evident from results of the questionnaire, these assumed sex differences can manifest themselves in the interests, hobbies, sports. past-times and aspirations of pupils. If left unquestioned, these expectations permeate the art class, effecting subject take-up and performance.

In the school, St. Thomas', where I completed my teaching practice, a larger number of junior level girls than boys are obliged to take art as a subject. At senior level, when pupils are given a free choice, the majority of pupils are female. Boys tend to drop art for more technical subjects, in particular engineering and technical drawing. Art is then the domain of females. Perhaps this is why boys so adamantly avoided depicting a feminine or pretty content in their artwork, instead they wanted to assert a masculine image. It became clear from the questionnaire and scheme of lessons, that boys and girls have different preferences, not only within content and subject matter, but also in; colour, drawing from observation or imagination, working from manmade or natural objects and in their approach to figure drawing i.e. preference for gender depicted and type of detail included.

Areas in which I discovered no substantial sex differences include; ability, quality of neatness and preference for type of art activity. In the following chapter I will try to recommend approaches to art teaching to combat stereotypes and sex differences in art education.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SYNTHESIS OF RESULTS

In this dissertation I have examined the extent to which sex differences exist in the artwork of boys and girls. I looked at how social expectations do influence the work pupils undertake. I established how each gender relies on society's given sex-role standards and stereotypes, influencing their manner in which they represent it. I discovered that although males and females respond in different ways, their artwork yields no substantial differences in ability or skill.

In chapter 1, I concluded that it would be a mistake to assume gender role identities are so rigid that they cannot be changed. As Kaufman believes

> Art education at school can in fact help re-educate social and gender roles which the child may have learned from influential factors such as family friends and the media. (1)

In adolescence, reconceptualisation, if not a complete break with former patterns of thought occur. (2) At this time teachers can do much to counteract negative stereotypes. Such stereotypes restrict behaviour and inhibit creativity. If art education is to be effective and have a significant influence upon students, it requires a "creative freedom, free from impinging attitudes". (3) Kaufman points out,

> Perhaps if there were truly an atmosphere or real learning stimulation, the child would search out his own expressive resolutions to experience more readily than those that culture with such grim persistence,

understanding, through painting, other dry media and fabric manipulation. The art teacher can encourage colour, for both genders, as a means of evoking emotion non verbally, which may be beneficial for pupils conditioned to suppress their emotions.

Both boys and girls should be encouraged to explore artificial mechanical objects as well as organic objects in their artwork, becoming familiar and less intimidated by them. Themes chosen by teachers should be non gender specific and perhaps deliberately set to question and challenge stereotypical thinking. (See Appendices for examples of non gender specific stories.)

Teachers should also be aware of the under representation of women artists, and sexism within subject matter of artwork. In presenting support studies and art history to a class, artwork should be selective, including work from both male and female artists. Sometimes verbal explanations may be necessary to redress the balance giving deeper insights into the role of women in art, in the past and today.

Teachers can do much to make art education accessible to both genders, through a sensitive planning and presentation of themes, ideas, activities, materials, skills, techniques and art elements. "Regardless of sex, emphasis should be placed upon the expression of each individual". (7)

Class Management and Hidden Messages

As discussed previously teachers play a crucial role in the transmission of sex role stereotypes, not only through the content of what they teach, but also through their behaviour in the classroom and interaction with pupils. Hidden messages can be communicated to pupils through language. A conscious effort should be made to use in gender specific language as many phrases in art unwittingly contain sexism. (Words like manmade and mankind, and phrases such as draw a man, can be replaced by artificial, humankind and draw a person).

Teachers should avoid grouping pupils and allotting tasks by sex. For example at cleaning up time, boys and girls should co-operate and take turns in sharing all tasks.

Sex typed assumptions should be avoided interactions with pupils. Encouragement and praise should be distributed evenly and fairly, and instructional time should be given equally to both genders. Reinforcement of sex-typed behaviour should be applied to both boys and girls. Excessive aggressiveness should not be tolerated from boys, simply because they are boys, and similarly excessive emotionality should be equality in the treatment of and response to students, regardless of their gender.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 5

1. Irving Kaufman, Art and Education in Contemporary Culture, (London: Collier-Macmillian, 1966), p. 142

2. As discussed by Hannon and Breen, adolescence is a reflective period where identity crises force re-conceptualisation, if not a break with former patterns of thought and behaviour. Hannon and Breen Schooling and Sex Roles: Sex Differences in Subject Provision and Subject Choice in Irish Post-Primary Schools, (Dublin: The Economic and Social Research Institute, 1983), p. 14

3. Kaufman, Art and Education in Contemporary Culture, p. 72

4. Ibid., p. 124

5. Schools Council, Children's Growth through Creative Experience, (Germany: Van Nostrond Reinhold, 1975), p. 23

6. Ibid.

7. John Michael, Art and Adolescence Teaching Art at the Secondary Level, (London: Teachers College Press, 1983), p. 71

8. Elliot Eisner, Educating Artistic Vision, (London: Collier and Macmillian, 1972), p. 280

Teachers should be aware of key issues related to gender, such as inequality in education, how sexism restricts both males and females, and the role models pupils are exposed to from home, school and the media. Teachers should try to empathise with, and keep in mind, what it is like to be a male / female pupils in today's society.

So it can be seen that the art teacher can adopt many courses of action, to make art education more accessible to both male and females. There is much that can be done to counteract restrictive sex-role standards and stereotypes, allowing for more effective teaching and the full artistic and personal development of both boys and girls. Finally I would like to conclude with an observation made by Eisner...

> I believe schools ought to try to improve society and not just fit into society as it is. Further, I believe education at large is a process of pursuing a quality of life that is itself life enhancing. To do this requires attention to those social factors that detract from life, which impede its development, which tend to stifle the development of human potential. (8)

APPENDIX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR 2ND YEARS

QUESTIONNAIRE: 2ND YEARS.

Tick Box [ ] where appropriate.

1. NAME.....

2. AGE.....

3 MALE [ ] FEMALE [ ]

4. YEAR GROUP.....

5. NAME YOUR FAVOURITE:

A. BOOK.....

B. TELEVISION PROGRAMME.....

C. HOBBY/PAST-TIME.....

D. SPORT.....

E. GAME.....

6. LIST THE SUBJECTS YOU ARE STUDYING IN SCHOOL, IN ORDER OF PREFERENCE, YOUR FAVOURITE SUBJECT FIRST.

A)..... E).....

B)..... F).....

C)..... G).....

D)..... H).....

7. WHY DID YOU CHOOSE ART AS A SUBJECT ?

.....

8. DID ANYONE INFLUENCE YOU IN CHOOSING ART ?

A. PARENTS [ ]
B. TEACHERS [ ]
C. FRIENDS [ ]
D. OTHER [ ]
E. NO ONE [ ]

9. DO YOU FIND ART:

A. VERY EASY [ ]
B. EASY [ ]
C. DIFFICULT [ ]
D. VERY DIFFICULT [ ]

10. NUMBER WHICH ART ACTIVITY YOU ENJOY IN ORDER OF PREFERENCE:

DRAWING [ ]
PAINTING [ ]
DESIGNING [ ]
CRAFTWORK [ ]

11. NAME ONE REASON FOR YOUR FIRST CHOICE:

.....

12. NAME ONE REASON FOR YOUR LAST CHOICE:

.....

13. DO YOU PREFER DRAWING FROM:

A. IMAGINATION [ ]
B. OBSERVATION [ ]

14. GIVE A REASON FOR YOUR ANSWER:

.....

15. DO YOU PREFER DRAWING:

A. NATURAL OBJECTS [ ]
B. MANMADE OBJECTS [ ]

16. NUMBER IN ORDER OF PREFERENCE WHICH YOU WOULD RATHER DRAW:

PERSON [ ]

VEHICLE [ ]

ANIMAL [ ]

BUILDING [ ]

PLANT/FLOWER [ ]

17. GIVE REASONS FOR YOUR FIRST PREFERENCE:

.....

18. DO YOU PREFER:

2D WORK [ ]

3D WORK [ ]

19. GIVE A REASON FOR YOUR ANSWER:

.....

20. NUMBER IN ORDER OF PREFERENCE WHICH MATERIALS YOU LIKE TO USE:

PENCIL [ ]

PASTEL [ ]

MARKER [ ]

PAINT [ ]

CLAY [ ]

OTHER; SAY WHAT..... [ ]

21. NAME WHICH COLOURS YOU PREFER TO USE IN YOUR WORK ?

A).....

B).....

22. DO YOU LIKE TO:

A. KEEP YOUR WORK TIDY [ ]

B. DON'T MIND IF IT IS MESSY [ ]

C. KEEP IT TIDY BUT MAKE MISTAKES [ ]

23. CAN YOU NAME TWO FAMOUS ARTISTS?

A. ONE MALE .....

B. ONE FEMALE .....

24. DO YOU THINK THERE ARE MANY TYPES OF JOBS TO DO WITH ART?

NAME THREE:

A) .....

B) .....

C) .....

APPENDIX 2

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR 5TH YEARS

QUESTIONNAIRE: 5TH YEARS.

Tick Box [ ] where appropriate.

1. NAME.....

2. AGE.....

3 MALE [ ] FEMALE [ ]

4. YEAR GROUP.....

5. NAME YOUR FAVOURITE:

A. BOOK.....

B. TELEVISION PROGRAMME.....

C. HOBBY/PAST-TIME.....

D. SPORT.....

E. GAME.....

6. LIST THE SUBJECTS YOU ARE STUDYING IN SCHOOL, IN ORDER OF PREFERENCE, YOUR FAVOURITE SUBJECT FIRST.

A)..... E).....

B)..... F).....

C)..... G).....

D)..... H).....

.....

7. WHY DID YOU CHOOSE ART AS A SUBJECT ?

.....

8. DID ANYONE INFLUENCE YOU IN CHOOSING ART ?

A. PARENTS [ ]
B. TEACHERS [ ]
C. FRIENDS [ ]
D. OTHER [ ]
E. NO ONE [ ]

9. DO YOU FIND ART:

A. VERY EASY [ ]
B. EASY [ ]
C. DIFFICULT [ ]
D. VERY DIFFICULT [ ]

10. NUMBER WHICH ART ACTIVITY YOU ENJOY IN ORDER OF PREFERENCE:

DRAWING [ ]
PAINTING [ ]
DESIGNING [ ]
CRAFTWORK [ ]

11. NAME ONE REASON FOR YOUR FIRST CHOICE:

.....

12. NAME ONE REASON FOR YOUR LAST CHOICE:

.....

13. DO YOU PREFER DRAWING FROM:

A. IMAGINATION [ ]
B. OBSERVATION [ ]

14. GIVE A REASON FOR YOUR ANSWER:

.....

15. DO YOU PREFER DRAWING:

A. NATURAL OBJECTS [ ]
B. MANMADE OBJECTS [ ]

16. NUMBER IN ORDER OF PREFERENCE WHICH YOU WOULD RATHER DRAW:

PERSON [ ]

VEHICLE [ ]

ANIMAL [ ]

BUILDING [ ]

PLANT/FLOWER [ ]

17. GIVE REASONS FOR YOUR FIRST PREFERENCE:

.....

18. DO YOU PREFER:

2D WORK [ ]

3D WORK [ ]

19. GIVE A REASON FOR YOUR ANSWER:

.....

20. NUMBER IN ORDER OF PREFERENCE WHICH MATERIALS YOU LIKE TO USE:

PENCIL [ ]

PASTEL [ ]

MARKER [ ]

PAINT [ ]

CLAY [ ]

OTHER; SAY WHAT..... [ ]

21. NAME WHICH COLOURS YOU PREFER TO USE IN YOUR WORK ?

A).....

B).....

22. DO YOU LIKE TO:

A. KEEP YOUR WORK TIDY [ ]

B. DON'T MIND IF IT IS MESSY [ ]

C. KEEP IT TIDY BUT MAKE MISTAKES [ ]

23. CAN YOU NAME TWO FAMOUS ARTISTS?

A. ONE MALE .....

B. ONE FEMALE

24. DO YOU THINK THERE ARE MANY TYPES OF JOBS TO DO WITH ART?

NAME THREE:

A) .....

B) .....

C) .....

25. DO YOU THINK ART IS IMPORTANT IN THE SCHOOL CURICULUM?

YES [ ] NO [ ]

26. GIVE REASONS FOR YOUR ANSWER:

.....

27. DID YOU STUDY ART AT JUNIOR CERT?

YES [ ] NO [ ]

28. WHAT WAS YOUR RESULT?

.....

29. DO YOU INTEND TO GO ON TO STUDY ART AT 3RD LEVEL?

.....

APPENDIX 3

WORKSHEET 1

NAME ..... YEAR GROUP .....

WORKSHEET 1

	STATEMENT	AGREE	DISAGREE
1	Men think more logically than women.		
2	Men are more inclined to “take charge”.		
3	Women are more nurturing than men.		
4	Men are better at maths.		
5	A man who cooks and cleans is not masculine.		
6	Women are by their nature kinder and gentler.		
7	Boys pick "boys" subjects.		
8	Men have a wider choice of career.		
9	A woman should stay at home until her children are in school.		
10	A man should stay at home until his children are in school.		
11	Girls pick "girls" subjects.		
	ADJECTIVES	MALE	FEMALE
1	Patient		
2	Ambitious		
3	Confident		
4	Aggressive		
5	Independent		
6	Emotional		
7	Neat		
8	Sneaky		
9	Energetic		
10	Strong		
11	Home-orientated		
12	Creative		

APPENDIX 4

WORKSHEET 2

Who Does What?

Each family has different ideas about where responsibilities lie. In the following chart put an X where you think the responsibility should lie. Read the chart a second time and put and O to indicate where the responsibilities **actually** lie in your family.

Name: _____ Class: _____

Tasks	Male	Female	Both	Either
Provides Money				
Controls Budget				
Head of household				
Disciplines				
Provides Affection				
Cooks				
Vacuums cleans / irons				
Community involvement				
Homemaker				
Chooses holidays				
Child rearing				
Baby / infant care				
Family organiser				
Decides where money is spent				

APPENDIX 5

NON-GENDER SPRCIFIC STORIES

Department of Education. Non-Gender Specific Stories, (Dublin: Department of Education).

NON GENDER SPECIFIC STORIES 1

THEME

Promotion of equality of opportunity through challenging stereotypical thinking.

RESOURCES

Story

STORY

The red sports car screeched to a halt outside the busy airport. The driver jumped out of the seat and ran into the huge building. Tall with dark hair, the driver slipped through the crowd almost unnoticed..... almost.

From the other side of the lounge a person watched, tense, nervous, waiting. The driver seemed to be looking for something, or someone. Suddenly, out of the crowd, the driver spotted a figure in a long white coat. The driver reacted quickly and moved towards the target. The target turned towards the ticket office and spotted the driver. The driver moved in quickly, the target didn't have a chance, two seconds later a crumpled heap lay on the floor - knocked out cold with an injection. As the driver left the building, the watcher followed carefully. Once again in the sports car the driver pulled onto the motorway, the watcher stepped into a green car and gently pulled out of the car park, being careful not to go too quickly in case the driver noticed. Not carefully enough however, the sound of breaking glass caused many people to turn and stare. The figure in the green car gave up the chase.

The red sports car pulled into the driveway of a house after a short journey. A person ran from the house and warmly hugged the driver. The driver seemed embarrassed and looked around to see if anyone was looking. When the driver found out no one was looking the hug was returned.

by Anne Bermingham.

ACTIVITY

1. Without discussion and without looking at anyone else's work ask the children to draw:

a) a scene from the 'airport' section and

b) the ending of story. Emphasis should be placed on the people mentioned and label the figures DRIVER, TARGET, WATCHER and WAITING PERSON.

2. Discussion

e.g. Was the driver a cruel person? What kind of person was the driver, the target, the watcher, the waiting person? Was the driver a man? Why do you say this? Could the driver have been a woman? Why? Why not? Was the watcher a man or a woman? Was the person waiting in the house a man or a woman? Why? Suggestion:

This kind of story can be easily modified or adapted to suit many grade levels. Hopefully it will stimulate some very interesting discussion!

NON-GENDER SPECIFIC STORIES 2

THEME

1. Names which can be boys' or girls' names apart from a spelling difference e.g. Francis/Frances; Dara/Daragh; various shortened names such as Pat, Jo or Phil. An investigation of how these names influence how we see the person.
2. Discussing the concept of becoming good at a job by practice or even being given the opportunity to try it.

STORY

This story is about a couple, Ger and Chris, who don't believe that the other works as hard as they do. To prove it, they swap jobs for a day.

Chris and Ger were married for two years. Every evening Chris came in, sat down and said, "If only you realised how hard my job is". One day Ger got angry and said, "You must think I do nothing here at home all day. My job is every bit as difficult as yours".
So they made a bet and decided to swap jobs for a day. At seven o'clock, Chris got up and brought up Ger's breakfast to the bedroom. After making sandwiches for Ger's lunch, Chris was tired and went back to bed.

Ger arrived at the building site where Chris worked at eight o'clock. The foreman and the other workers stared. Ger explained that Chris had swapped jobs for the day. The foreman scratched his head and said, "Well, I suppose you could make the tea for the workers." Ger asked, "Is that what Chris does? Because I want to do what Chris does!" The foreman didn't really believe Ger but explained that Chris worked on the highest scaffolding. "No problem" , said Ger climbing up.

Halfway up Ger looked down. The ground seemed very far away. "I hope I won't fall", thought Ger. The men working at the top stared at Ger and showed a pile of bricks which needed to be moved. Ger pulled at them but they were too heavy so Ger carried them one by one. It took a long time and was very hard work. "I never realised before how hard Chris works", Ger said.

After break, the men asked Ger to mix some cement. "Certainly", Ger said, getting some cement, sand and water. But poor Ger wasn't exactly sure how to mix it properly and it turned out very runny. It was useless and one of the men had to remix it. Ger was very embarrassed and thought, "I'd never make a builder."

Next, Ger was asked to lay a brick wall. The nearest thing that Ger had done to this was playing LEGO, and when the foreman looked at Ger's wall he said, "No, that definitely won't do. It's completely crooked. We'll have to knock it again."

As soon as Ger had left for work, the baby started crying. Chris looked for a bottle, thinking that the baby was hungry. But there were no bottles and Chris hadn't a clue how to fill one so Chris brought the baby downstairs, gave him a cup of milk, which he spilled and then gave him some toys, which he threw around the place.

Chris decided to start on the pile of washing. First Chris packed all the dirty washing into the washing machine, so that the door almost wouldn't shut. When Chris took the clothes out of the machine later on they seemed to have changed colour. They were all pink, then Chris noticed the red socks. Next Chris plugged in the vacuum cleaner but couldn't find the switch for five minutes to turn it on.

However, when using the vacuum Chris didn't notice the little toys on the ground and they made awful noises when they were sucked into the machine. It took the longest time to unblock the tubes of the machine.

Just then, a mouse ran across the room. Chris got an awful fright and ended up standing on the table screaming, "I hate mice!". The mouse ran frightened into its hole. At this stage the baby began crying again so Chris climbed down from the table and picked him up. Already Chris was late making the dinner and so carried the baby into the kitchen. Now it is very hard to peel potatoes and hold a baby at the same time. Chris put the baby sitting on the worktop. Just then, the telephone rang and Chris went running to answer it. When Chris hurried back into the kitchen, the baby had a carving knife in his hands and was playing with it. Luckily he wasn't hurt.

Chris put the meat in the oven and the potatoes on the ring and went to set the table. Then Chris remembered that the beds weren't made and brought the baby upstairs. After a while, Chris noticed a peculiar smell - "The dinner, oh no!." Chris rushed back to the kitchen, the potatoes had boiled dry, there was a nasty burn mark on the bottom of the cooking pot, and the meat was burnt. "Ger will be really mad if there is no dinner." So Chris put some sausages frying on the pan.

Ger arrived home exhausted. After saying hallo to Chris, Ger headed straight for the telly. Ger sat down, relaxed with the newspaper. Chris went to check on the sausages and found that they had been taken by the neighbours dog. The baby was still crying, until Ger settled him down. "What are you doing just sitting there? Can't you help me?" shouted Chris. Ger looked up and answered, "But don't you come home from work every day and relax?" "Yes, but that is different," said Chris. "I never realised before what hard work you do in the house." "And I never realised how hard you work on the building site," said Ger. "I could get used to it if I tried, but for now I'll stick to my own job".

by Helen O'Reilly.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

Which was the man/woman?
How do you know? Could it have been the other way around?
Did Ger make a good builder? Discuss.
Was that just because she was a woman?
Is it impossible for women to be builders?
Would Chris get dizzy? Do men get dizzy?
If Ger practised making cement or building walls would she improve?
Why couldn't Ger lift the bricks? Could Chris?
Why didn't Ger want to make the tea? Why was she asked to make the tea since that wasn't Chris's job?
Why did the clothes turn pink? Could Ger have done that?
Would Ger have vacuumed up the toys?
What happened when the mouse came in? Was Chris scared. Would Ger have been scared?
Why was the baby still crying? Do you think he cried all day with Ger?
Would Ger have left the baby in the kitchen with the knife?
Why did Chris do that?
Do you think Ger burnt the dinner often?
Who had the hardest job? How do you decide which is hardest?

OCCUPATIONS 2

THEME
Looking at gender role stereotyping in employment.

RESOURCES
Pens and paper, blackboard and chalk.

ACTIVITY
Put the children into small groups and ask half of the groups to brainstorm and identify the jobs that men do and the other half the jobs that women do.

After ten minutes pool the information and make three lists on the blackboard, (**1**) perceived "men's" jobs, (**2**) perceived "women's" jobs, and (**3**) the jobs which appeared on both lists.

Examine the (**1**) men only and (**2**) women only, lists.
Are any of the jobs on list (**1**) done by women or could they be? Ask a similar question for list (**2**). Some children will have experience of females/males in "unusual" jobs.
With regard to the two lists, pick out jobs which could be done by the opposite sex but are generally not.
Discuss the reasons for this. Recall what was said in the introduction about different realities. Allow the children the space to have their own views, but not the space to think that their answer is the only right one and everyone who disagrees is wrong.

Ask the children to return to their groups and list the reasons that they see for the division of labour as it was shown in the three lists. Ask them to consider ways of changing this when necessary.

Regroup the class and ask each group leader to report back on the group's findings. The session could be finished off with a general class discussion on these conclusions.

SUGGESTIONS
1. Invite women who hold unusual or "low frequency" jobs to talk in class.

2. Stories about women in different careers, such as articles in newspapers and business magazines could be used as class materials and later displayed in the classroom.

3. A project could be organised based on the suggestions above.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY - all persons are given equal chances to develop to their full potential.

SUFFRAGIST - a person who agitated for votes for women at the start of this century.

WOMEN 7 - GET THE ACT TOGETHER

THEME

1. To challenge sexist language.
2. To provide the children with examples of non-sexist language.
3. To give practice at changing sexist statements into non-sexist statements.

RESOURCES

Paper and pens.

ACTIVITY

Working either in groups or individually the children are asked to rewrite the phrases/sentences below so that they are no longer sexist. The whole class then shares, discusses, and records the rewritten statements.

STATEMENTS

1. Susan Barry is a successful lady executive.
2. Peter listened patiently to the ladies' gossip.
3. Mrs. Duncan, mother of four and housewife, was a speaker at the science conference.
4. The lady doctor performed the operation successfully.
5. James, the lawyer, and an attractive blonde arrived at the reception.
6. You can always spot a woman driver.
7. She's good at darts, considering she's a woman.
8. The pioneers moved west taking their wives and children with them.
9. The ban-garda stopped the robber.
10. The man in the street.

SUGGESTIONS

1. As an activity examine a selection of newspapers / comics / magazines to find examples of sexist language and rewrite them.

2. Ask the children to note sexist language in T.V. programmes that they watch during the week/weekend. Consider alternative ways of saying these.

3. Write to the offending parties asking them to "get their act together".

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