



ABSTRACT

GENDER INEQUALITY IN THE ART ROOM

This dissertation aims to examine how gender perceptions are developed through socialization in the home and particularly the school environments. Paradigms of social and cognitive learning determine to a large extent, the way in which we see the world.

The information on Curriculum at Second level tells us that Art, Craft and Design is perceived as predominantly a 'female' subject. At Third level, we see this trend continue, where more females than males study Art, Craft and Design. The pursuit of textile based crafts at Third level further supports the perception that textiles, within the area of Art, Craft and Design, is considered a 'female' subject.

Through implementation of textiles based projects with three groups of male pupils I have attempted to expose pupils to an area which is often perceived as 'female'. Findings and observations are recorded from a questionnaire that is designed to examine pupils perceptions and exposure to textiles both inside and outside the Art room.

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GENDER INEQUALITY IN THE ART ROOM

A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Education

in

Candidacy for the

DIPLOMA FOR ART AND DESIGN TEACHERS

by

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JUNE 1995

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express sincere thanks to all those who aided in the completion of this dissertation.

Special thanks are due to Deirdre Raftery and Professor Iseult Mc Carthy for their invaluable help and direction.

Appreciation also to the staff and pupils of School 'X' to whom I am grateful for their significant contribution in the compilation of this research.

Finally, I thank family and friends for encouragement and patience.

INTRODUCTION

"Boys will be Boys" is an all too common cliché which has been used for decades and is an idea that has permeated society for centuries. Sociologists prove time and again that there are distinct differences between what we perceive to be 'acceptable' or 'traditional' behaviour. It is widely acknowledged that boys tend to be noisier, dirtier, more aggressive and play active roles whilst girls act in quieter, cleaner, more pacific and passive ways.

Sociologists have researched deeply into the way in which roles are differentiated by gender. In her book, Sex Roles and the School, Sara Delamont examines evidence supporting the idea that many aspects of human behaviour are not 'given' but 'made'.

In the following chapters, I will examine where and through what media these roles have become established; how stereotyping and gender inequality is often enforced in the school and home environments, and perception on gender roles colour and affect career choices. Furthermore, I will explore possibilities and processes for change. My research will relate specifically to the area of Art, Craft and Design, and record observation and findings from school 'x' where I will examine male attitudes regarding gender roles.

CHAPTER I

SEX AND GENDER - THE EVOLUTION OF PERCEPTIONS.

In many pieces of research, the words 'sex' and 'gender' are often used in confusing ways. Delamont (1980) says that the word 'sex' should properly refer to the biological aspects of male or female existence. Therefore, when speaking of sex differences, one should only be referring to physiology, anatomy, genetics, hormones etc.¹

'Gender', on the other hand, refers to all the non-biological aspects or differences between males and females. It refers to social and cultural patterns of behaviour.² It follows that we should not speak of sex roles, for the roles people play in society are related not to biology, but to social behaviour. Therefore, they should really be called gender roles. Gender identity refers to a person's self concept; that is one's own sense of being male or female.³

THE CAUSES OF GENDER INEQUALITY:

THE NATURE VERSUS NURTURE DEBATE.

The exact causes of gender differences and inequality are the source of much controversy. In the 1930's, psychology took a turning point with the behaviourist movement. The American psychologist, B.F. Skinner has spent over fifty years investigating learning. He argues

that psychologists must study the observable facts of human behaviour (ie. what people actually do) rather than introspection (ie. what people tell about their mental world).⁴ With these emphatic changes came a greater interest in learning, since the effects of learning can become apparent in a person's behaviour. It was argued that we become the people we are largely as a result of the particular learning experiences to which we are subjected from birth onwards. The view that intelligence was an innate quality began to give ground to the idea that it was an acquired one. The stress upon nature was replaced by a stress upon nurture.

Gender differences and inequalities are often perceived to be natural, and an unchangeable part of a 'natural order'. Feminist scholars such as Corrie Hutt (1972), Anne Oakley (1972), Sue Shaw (1976) and Sarah Lightfoot (1975), have disputed this and stressed the importance of looking critically at gender divisions in other societies and cultures. They have found that every culture discovered across the world has vastly different norms for 'masculinity' and 'femininity'.⁵ War and weapon-making are the only tasks which all primitive societies seem to have reserved for men, while being pregnant and giving birth are universally women's work. Child-rearing is not always a woman's task, but is often left to children of both sexes and the elderly.⁶

It follows therefore, that the way children are brought up in society is responsible for the vast majority of differences between the genders. In the light of this, the question could be asked whether, with the appropriate education, females could be taught to behave like males, and males could be taught to behave like females, or as Fontana (1988) points out, "...can our roles as men and women be modified by the kind of education we receive?".⁷

As mentioned in my introduction, traditional views associate the qualities of dominance, aggression and violence with 'maleness'. Fontana (1988) asks the question whether our western society today is pushing towards creating and turning women into male clones. He states that:

The pressing need now seems to be for an infusion of those qualities more traditionally associated with femaleness, such as sensitivity, compassion and peace. The debate should therefore be primarily about how to value females properly in society, and give them equal rights with men, rather than how to turn them into male clones.

These questions are essential if we are to study gender differentiation and possible developments and outcomes. There is no doubt that women are consistently assigned the subservient role in western society; they hold most of the menial and lower paid jobs while their average weekly earnings are only two-thirds of those of males .

Men own most of the property in society and control most of the wealth.⁸

In relation to Irish society, a woman's place is traditionally defined as being in the home. Under the constitution of Ireland, in article 41.2 it is implicit that the state views womanhood and motherhood as synonymous:

In particular, the state recognises that by her life within the home, woman gives to the state a support without which the common good cannot be achieved.

The state shall, therefore, endeavour to ensure that mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home.⁹

Women have however evolved from these forms of suppression and have become more active in the paid labour force (See Fig. A, overleaf). With greater paid labour force participation came greater financial independence.

We can see, therefore how traditional values, particularly Irish values are changing, and giving women a more equal standing in society. Society is changing and as Delamont points out:

If we want society to improve, to become more just and egalitarian, we must assume that a substantial part of any human characteristic, be it 'masculinity' or

intelligence' is cultural and hence open to change.¹⁰

In the following Chapter, I will examine how family, the home, and the school in particular, promote gender differences and male-female stereotyping.

PAID LABOUR FORCE	1971	1981	1991
TOTAL	1,125,400	1,272,000	1,333,500
TOTAL NUMBER OF WOMEN	289,300	370,000	429,100
MARRIED WOMEN IN PAID LABOUR FORCE TOTAL	39,200	112,000	190,700
AS PERCENTAGE OF FEMALE PAID LABOUR FORCE	13.6	30.2	44.4

Fig..A.: Changes in women's paid labour force participation 1971-1991. (1)

FOOTNOTE : CHAPTER I

1. Sara Delamont, Sex Roles and the School (London: Methuen and Co.Ltd., 1980), P. 5.
2. Lynda Measor and Patricia J. Sikes, Gender and Schools (New York: Cassell, 1992), P. 5.
3. Ibid.
4. David Fontana, Psychology for Teachers, second edition (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1988), P. 95.
5. Delamont, Sex Roles and the School, P. 7.
6. Ibid.
7. Fontana, Psychology for Teachers, P. 8.
8. Ibid., P. 9.
9. Sheelagh Drudy and Kathleen Lynch, Schools and Society in Ireland, Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1993), P. 67.
10. Delamont, Sex Roles and the School, P.7.

CHAPTER II

SOCIALISATION AND GENDER

STAGES IN SEX ROLE LEARNING

Socialisation is defined as "the process by which an individual learns to be a member of his or her society."¹ The process involves learning patterns of thought and behaviour considered acceptable in our society. As noted in Chapter I, these social patterns vary considerably according to region and nation. The family, other teachers and the mass media are all agents of socialisation. ²

Most societies have patterns of socialization which encourage males to become masculine and females to become feminine. There is a number of different theories on socialisation and how it works, which can be divided into two broad groups: social learning theories and cognitive development theories.

SOCIAL LEARNING THEORIES

These theories suggest that children learn about appropriate attitudes and behaviour from their parents, peers and teachers. Children are rewarded for good behaviour, for example, and punished for bad behaviour. Because children want love and approval, they come to accept and repeat what they have been taught.³

Theorists of social learning therefore, emphasise the importance of imitation and modelling, since children learn new behaviour by imitating both adults and other children.

COGNITIVE LEARNING THEORIES

These theories suggest that children develop ways of understanding the world as a means to gaining competence. Their world is fitted into categories about which they form rules. Gender is one of the most significant categories they use. Through everyday life, children are presented with images of what is masculine or feminine. Consequently, they sub-divide a cluster of attributes and label accordingly as masculine or feminine.

The main advantage of cognitive theories is that the child is an active participant in structuring his/her experience and formulating gender role concepts. Both social learning and cognitive development theories play a part in a child's gender-role socialization.

THE EARLY YEARS : FAMILY

A child's social life begins in the home.⁴ Our closest relationships are usually formed there so it is not surprising that the influence of home is of critical importance in the formulation of gender perception

during the early childhood years. Not only do children identify with the parent of the same sex; also they take over from the parent of the opposite sex, his or her notion of what is 'manly' or of what is 'feminine'. From both sexes they learn what is expected of them as boys or girls and tend to adhere to these stereotypes as they get older.⁵

When a child comes into the world the first thing that is determined is its sex. From here, gender stereotyping begins and he or she is given a name that is almost always gender specific. Spender identifies that "boys are given names which are 'hard-hitting' while girls are given fussy and pert names."⁶ He or she is then dressed in blue or pink respectively.

This different treatment continues throughout childhood where boys are encouraged to play with action toys that suggest adventure while girls are encouraged to play with toys that involve nurturing, cleaning and grooming. One has only to look at any T.V. advertisement to see the difference in the way in which boys' and girls' toys are projected to the consumer. Even though 'Action Man' and 'Sindy' are technically both forms of dolls, the 'Action Man', as its name suggests, portrays adventure in a 'hard-hitting' aggressive manner. 'Sindy' on the other hand is dressed in pink, is tall and slim, has an extensive wardrobe and can be a skater, ballerina, movie-star, singer etc. The importance of the media in this sense is

overwhelming. Advertisements like these are specifically directed towards children themselves, and since it is important to children to be accepted by their peers, they adopt, through cognitive or social processes, perception of what is masculine or feminine. Fontana (1988) discusses how children are often described as being essentially conformist:

....they like to feel accepted by their peers and quickly learn that such acceptance is often dependent upon being like everyone else.⁷

It is within the family also, that we learn many other social roles. Families, as group units are in turn, naturally influenced by the socio-economic groups to which they belong. However, even within these groups, there are enormous variations in the way in which families behave and treat each other.

The gradual decline of the nuclear family that is, the traditional family unit of father, mother and one to three children is a fundamental factor in the development of perceptions of gender roles. Family break-up, whether through divorce or separation, has led to massive increase in single-parent families. This, together with the increasing incidence of children conceived outside marriage, has meant that the traditional roles of father going to work and mother staying at home minding children, are fast disappearing. In single-parent families,

the roles are even less distinctive, as the mother or father assumes both roles.

Another important factor is the rate of high unemployment among adult males. This means that if either parent stays at home during the day, it is increasingly likely to be the father.

In the case of the extended family; that is, families that include second and third degree relatives (grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins), the most important change has been a decline in its importance.⁸ Extended families are broken up and small, tight-knit communities are disintegrated when many young people move away from the areas in which they were reared. Consequently, people who have 'broken away' from their extended families are subjected to far fewer of the pressures associated with social conformity. With regard to the issue of gender, this result obviously does not mean that these people have suddenly changed their perceptions of gender roles. What it does mean is that people come into contact with a broader social spectrum and are therefore exposed to a greater variation of gender perceptions.

Family conflict and problems can also determine a child's perception of gender roles. If a husband treats his wife in a systematically violent way, a child may well learn to understand aggression and violence as characteristic of the male domain, and aggression as a synonym for

masculinity. Witnessing habitual domination and subordination, the child (who identifies with the parent of the same gender), will, through the cognitive process store this information and tend to adhere to its inherent stereotypes as he/she gets older. Fontana points out that in domestic situations, where emotional and physical violence are the norm, children are never introduced to the paradigm of compromise or indeed the concept of the parental role-model as loving, caring, nurturing and liberating. As a result, adds Fontana, it "is no surprise that children of a broken home are themselves less likely one day to make happy and lasting marriages."⁹

In the following Chapter I will examine how school often reinforces the wider societies' value system regarding gender roles.

FOOTNOTES : CHAPTER II

1. Lynda Measor and Patricia J. Sikes, Gender and Schools, (New York: Cassell, 1992), P. 8 (citing Berger, 1976)
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., (citing Mischel, 1966).
4. David Fontana, Psychology for Teachers, second edition, (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1988) P.14.
5. Ibid., P.23.
6. Measor and Sikes, Gender and Schools, P.51 (citing Spender, 1979).
7. Fontana, Psychology for Teachers, P.23.
8. Ibid., P.14.
9. Ibid., P.16.

CHAPTER III

EDUCATION AND SOCIALIZATION

Education plays a vital role in the socialization of the young and the transmission of culture. As defined in Chapter II, it is a process that begins the moment we are born and continues until we die. This means that in an Irish context, education involves forming young people as humans and citizens with a specifically Irish identity¹. The formal curriculum at Primary and Secondary level is the means by which this formation is achieved. This Chapter will highlight the position of Art, Craft and Design within the curriculum at both Primary and Secondary level.

PRIMARY SCHOOL

Sally Shave (1978) in an article that was published in 'Spare Rib', 'The Daily Express', 'The Daily Mail' and 'The Sun', discussed 'Ten Ways to Counter Sexism in a Junior School'. The following examples from her research are set out below.

1. I teach on a one-to-one basis. It's exhausting, but it lessens the need for the children to conform.
4. I never, even for the slightest convenience divide the children into boys and girls for any activity.

7. In sewing and cookery, which the boys do, I always oppose suggestions (by parents or children) that the boys will grow up homosexual by asking why this would be such a bad thing anyway.
8. The children change for the P.E. and Swimming in mixed sex groups.²

Shave's ten-point plan caused much controversy at the time it was published. Even today, the idea that boys and girls should change in mixed groups may cause consternation among many parents and teachers.

A criticism of this plan was published in 'The Sun', September 29th, 1978. Jean Richie's column was headed: 'How can a Girl be Boy?', and began as follows:

For the benefit of liberated lady school teachers everywhere: My kids are boys and believe it or not, they're different from girls!

What's more, I don't want any feminist schoolmarm putting her ten-point plan to annihilate the difference between the sexes into practice in their classroom.

I'm happy that the girls are more articulate, want to play gentle games, and care about getting their clothes dirty.

I'm happy for, goodness sake, that they are different.³

Sally Shave's plan seems so outrageous because one realizes how segregated and distinct the two genders are kept, even before puberty when their physical and mental capabilities are very similar. It is clear that by the time children come to school, they have already acquired a set of attitudes and expectations about what girls and

boys can and should do. As I pointed out in Chapter II., children have acquired some of these attitudes from home. Research indicates that usually the school reinforces these stereotypes rather than challenging them, and perhaps this is why Shave's plan seems so outrageous.

To understand how most schools reinforce gender stereotypes, often more rigidly than the wider society in which they are embedded, we must examine research on schools and classrooms.

School organisation and gender separation are often very much connected. For example, lavatories, changing rooms, cloakrooms and even playgrounds may be segregated. Delamont (1980), and Measor and Sikes (1992), explain that pupils in Primary schools are often divided into single-sex groups for activities where gender is irrelevant. Pupils are commonly listed separately on the register, although there is no reason why there cannot be simple alphabetical order. Official record cards in schools may be colour-coded differently for boys and girls. In many Primary schools, boys and girls hang their coats separately and may even have separate lines in the playground and outside the classroom. Measor and Sikes conclude that "it may encourage children to assume that they should operate in single-sex groups."⁴ Delamont says that "the children are constantly reminded that they are

either male or female even when this is irrelevant to the activity in which they are engaged."⁵

TEACHING AND STEREOTYPING

Lisa Serbin (1978) spent five years observing fifteen pre-school classrooms, working in four schools in New York. Her observations show incidents with young children where the teaching is about social behaviour as much as it is about intellectual content. Unfortunately, the social behaviour is highly stereotyped. For example, Serbin offers an account of the build-up to Easter in 1971 as a typical example of teacher instruction in social behaviour.

The teacher played 'Here Comes Peter Cotton Tail' while the boys hopped all over the room. Then the girls had a turn as rabbits. Next, the teacher played 'In Your Easter Bonnet' while the girls paraded. The teacher said, solemnly, "Ladies, that isn't the way we have a parade. When we have a parade, we all walk very nicely, and we pick up our feet so we don't make lots of noise on the floor."⁶

When we look at this kind of comment as children may perceive it, we see how gender roles may be reinforced in school - no one said the boys should be quiet.

Serbin also came across an incident where teachers used toys in a way that reinforced sex segregation. When three new toys were introduced to the class; a fishing game, a sewing game and a counting puzzle, the staff told the

students that they could go fishing like Daddy and sewing like Mammy. Boys demonstrated the fishing game while girls demonstrated the sewing game.⁷

Questions arise regarding the implications of such incidents. Many people, such as Jean Richie (mentioned earlier), would maintain that schools are only doing what is 'natural', in distinguishing between natural differences and 'making' normal boys and girls. Researchers such as Delamont (1980), and Measor and Sikes (1992) suggest that such incidents are significant in the process of 'fixing' gender identity and limiting opportunities and life chances in the long-term. This topic will be discussed further under 'Curriculum at Second Level' later in this Chapter.

ART IN THE CURRICULUM AT PRIMARY LEVEL

In most Irish Primary schools the curriculum is largely the same for both sexes. Irish, English and Arithmetic form the main core. Although imaginative programmes in Music, Art and Craft, Drama, P.E. and dance are integral parts of the curriculum, later examinations such as the Junior and Leaving Certificate act as inhibitors, and edge out artistic and aesthetic subjects in Primary schools. Research indicates that there is a particular stereotype of the arts in many Irish schools. Ciaran Benson points out that "the arts are seen as more suitable for girls than for boys.... They are often judged to be more interesting than

useful.... It is no accident that Friday afternoon is such a popular time for Art and Craft in Primary school."⁸

In an evaluation of the new Curriculum of 1971, the association of Primary teaching Sisters states that "Teachers in general recognize the value of such crafts as cookery, needlework, knitting, crochet, embroidery, and these are usually well established and taught in schools.... Even those crafts....are not seen as appropriate for boys."⁹

The report proceeds to say that other crafts listed, such as pottery, weaving, tie-dying, screen printing and batik are common in boys' schools.

This blatant gender bias is also evident in research by Measor and Sikes. They observe that it is usually the craft and games areas in which children are offered different material, "boys were offered woodwork and girls needlework."¹⁰

Practices such as these ensure that children are given various messages which they bring with them to Secondary school. Firstly, they may associate Art with leisure and therefore feel that it is a subject which will hold no weight in later years for a prospective employer reading their Curriculum Vitae. Secondly they may receive the message that Art is a subject more for girls than boys. Boys may feel that crafts such as textiles, pottery and cookery are not useful to them, being more

beneficial to girls. This idea may be transmitted either through the fact that only girls participate in these skills or that they are in many cases not on offer to boys.

This area will be further discussed in Chapter IV where I will examine these ideas in findings from observations of school 'x'.

THE SECONDARY SCHOOL

The processes of gender socialization and differentiation that operate in Primary school carry through to Secondary level. Differential subject specialization becomes firmly established and gender differences are more pronounced. This fact is clearly represented through the research of Benson (1979), and Drudy and Lynch (1993). Their findings indicate that subject availability and choice demonstrate very noticeable gender difference. For the purpose of this discussion I will concentrate mainly on the marked differences between the availability and take-up of Art, Craft and Design. I will also set these against Home Economics and Technical Drawing, which are often viewed as being female and male oriented subjects respectively. Fig B overleaf demonstrates the relationship between gender mix in schools and availability of Leaving Certificate subjects.

Subject	% of single sex schools offering subject		% of mixed schools offering subject		
	Boys	Girls	Boys Only	Girls Only	Both
Home Economics (General)	1.9	33.3	--	7.9	6.5
Technical Drawing	62.3	3.2	47	--	37.5
Art (including Crafts)	64.8	95.8	2.1	4.4	68.8

Fig.B.: Relationship between gender mix in schools and availability of Leaving Certificate subjects.

Technical Drawing is rarely available as an option for girls, while timetabling in co-educational schools often means that girls are excluded (See Fig. B, above). Boys, on the other hand are rarely given the option of doing Home Economics. A high percentage of both are offered Art and Craft, but it is evident that Art and Craft is seen as a 'feminine' subject with 95.8% of girls' schools offering it to their students, and the lesser 64.8% of boys' schools providing it for theirs.

Further research of patterns of subject provision and take-up in relation to the subjects selected does not show any consistent reduction in sex-stereotypical pattern, depending on whether or not schools are organised along co-educational or single-sex lines. Drudy and Lynch demonstrate this in Fig. C overleaf.

These patterns appear to reject attitudes among schools and pupils concerning sex-appropriate subjects; the traditions of the three-school sectors, and the social class composition of the different types of school.¹¹ Girls' take-up of Technical Drawing, even where it is provided is still very low. It is interesting to note that where Home Economics is provided in boys' single-sex Secondary schools the take-up rate is higher than that in other school types. The take-up rate for girls of this subject is highest in vocational schools.

Subject	Secondary Single Sex		Secondary Co-ed		Vocational Co-ed only+		Comm/ Comp Co-ed only +	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
	%		%		%		%	
Home Economics	47.6	15.4	53.6	13.9	69.6	11.6	52.1	10.8
Technical Drawing	1.7	21.6	3.4	29.5	7.6	60.3	3.1	34.3

* Totals vary in each category.

+ There was a very small number of girls and boys in single-sex vocational schools, and a very small number of boys in single-sex community or comprehensive schools, in tables 18u, 18v, and 18w. these are excluded from the calculations.

Fig.C.: Girls and boys taking selected subjects as a proportion of the total female or male Leaving Certificate enrolment * in schools where subjects are provided to them, classified by co-educational and single-sex schools, 1990-91.

In relation to Art and Craft, Ciaran Benson also points out that "Art is seen as a subject more suitable for girls than for boys".¹² In Fig. D below, we see how over 18% more girls studied Art for the Intermediate Certificate than did boys in the school year 1975-76. For the Leaving Certificate, almost twice the proportion of girls took Art than did boys.

	Boys	Girls
Inter Certificate	7,173 (33.72%)	12,366 (52.10%)
Leaving Certificate	2,163	4,502

Fig.D.: Number of boys and girls who sat the Intermediate and Leaving Certificate Art examination, 1975-76.

Fig. D also tells us that there was a large decrease in the number of students carrying Art from the Junior to Senior Cycle. As Benson points out, this decline could not be attributed to the numbers leaving school after the Junior Cycle.¹³ The probable reason may have been with time at a premium in the second-level curriculum, the more 'established' academic subjects were the favoured priority. Consequently, Art would have been given a back seat as subjects such as Business Studies and Science for

example, were considered better qualifiers for the points system, university and employment opportunities.

The figures for 1992-93 below, indicate a similar decline in the number of students carrying Art as a subject from Junior Certificate to Leaving Certificate level.

	Boys	Girls
Junior Certificate	9,556	14,951
Leaving Certificate	4,115	6,552

Fig. E.: Number of boys and girls who sat the Junior and Leaving Certificate Art examination, 1992-93

The attitudes of parents, pupils and teachers are part of the 'hidden curriculum'. These attitudes are acquired outside of the school environment and reinforced within it. The issue of female alienation and detachment from the field of Technical Drawing for example is not resolved. Drudy and Lynch (1988) observe that "while lack of opportunity and encouragement, poor or indifferent teaching and negative attitudes may well have alienated girls from these subjects in the past and at present, part of the problem is undoubtedly the intrinsic nature of the knowledge and modes of thinking within the disciplines themselves."¹⁴

This observation, as applied to females, may also be applied to males. Previous figures support the idea that boys may be alienated and detached from the field of Home Economics and, Art, Craft and Design. From Drudy and Lynch's findings, one could surmise that lack of encouragement and opportunity are major contributors to this situation. Styles of teaching; negative attitudes from teachers, parents and peers, would also discourage interest and alienate boys from these subjects.

It is important at this stage to examine briefly the 'components' of subjects such as Home Economics and Art, Craft and Design. Both subjects involve theoretical and practical work. Elements of Home Economics include home management, cookery, needle-work, and biology. Art, Craft and Design involves developing aesthetic awareness and practical knowledge of elements, including embroidery, weave and print, which come under the sub-heading of textiles.

The participation of males in Art and Design at third level is, as at second level, much lower than that of girls. Research by Clancy (1989) indicates that while 5.7% of all new entrants to higher education in the field of Art and Design were female, only 2.4% of entrants to the same field were male (See Fig.F.,P.27) This further promotes the idea that Art and Design, as areas of study at third level are more feminine than masculine.

	Males	Females	Total no. students	Total % students	Representation of women
Art and Design	2.4	5.7	683	4.0	67.9

Fig.F.: Distribution of all new entrants to Higher Education by gender and representation of women within each field of study - 1986.

Examination of the participation of males and females within the Textile Design area of Art and Craft and Design reveals further gender inequality. From Fig. G., below, we see that the number of graduates of Textile Design at the National College of Art and Design for the years 1984, 1989, 1991 and 1994, account for only 5%.

From this research we can conclude that males are under-represented in the area of Art and Design at third level and further so in the area of Textile Design.

Award	Year	Total No. of Graduates	Total No. of Males
N.C.A.D. Diploma in Textile Design	1984	11	0
"	1989	14	0
"	1991	15	2
B.Des in Textile Design	1994	19	1
Total No. of Graduates:		59	
Total No. of Male Graduates:		3 (5%)	

Fig.G.: Number of male graduates in relation to total number of graduates of Textile Design at the National College of Art and Design.

I have shown how factors such as the home and school environment play an often latent role in conditioning males and females to conform to certain social codes. With regard to curriculum in school, we see that even when pupils are offered a full range of subjects, they continue to make sex-stereotyped choices.

It is clear from this research that Art, Craft and Design as a subject is perceived to be more 'feminine' than 'masculine', both at second and third level. Textile Design as a component of Art, Craft and Design is further underrepresented by males.

In the following Chapter I will demonstrate how I have implemented textiles-based projects in the Art room of a boys' school. I will relate my observations of male perceptions of textiles to previous research regarding sex-stereotyping.

FOOTNOTES : CHAPTER III

1. Sheelagh Drudy and Kathleen Lynch, Schools and Society in Ireland, (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1993), P.26.
2. Sara Delamont, Sex Roles and the School, (London: Methuen and Co. Limited, 1980), P.11.
3. Ibid., P.10.
4. Lynda Measor and Patricia J. Sikes, Gender and Schools, (London: Cassell, 1992), P. 54.
5. Delamont, Sex Roles and the School, P.27.
6. Ibid., P.29-30.
7. Ibid., P.31.
8. Ciaran Benson, The Place of the Arts in Irish Education, (Dublin: The Arts Council, 1979), P.20-21.
9. Ibid., P. 30.
10. Measor and Sikes, Gender and Schools, P.55.
11. Drudy and Lynch, Schools and Society in Ireland, P. 195.
12. Benson, The Place of the Arts in Irish Education, P.43.
13. Ibid., P.44.
14. Drudy and Lynch, Schools and Society in Ireland, P.196.

CHAPTER IV

OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS OF SCHOOL 'X'

While discussing 'natural' and 'man-made' environment with a first year remedial Group of male students, I learned some interesting insights into the thinking of these young minds.

Pupils were well able to give an abundance of examples pertaining to the natural environment; trees, grass, flowers, fruit etc. I asked the question "Are we natural or are we man-made?" This posed problems and I could see brains ticking over! Most pupils answered that we are natural. One student said no, explaining that God made us, while another said that mothers and fathers made us.

I was deliberately using the word 'man-made' to see if pupils would pick up on the word 'man'. So, without getting into a debate on evolution I said: "Give me some examples of man-made objects". Answers included bricks and chairs. When I asked a student directly, the most disruptive boy in the class, he answered that women make clothes, jumpers etc. With this there was an uneasy laugh, which I perceived to mean a number of things -

a) The student was deliberately trying to get this reaction, b) He genuinely thought that there were distinctive roles for men and women, or c) Most of the class had picked up on the idea that man-made, as a

word, meant manufactured and not necessarily made by man.

A mini-debate ensued where pupils started giving different examples of trades and jobs that involve both men and women ie., engineering, wood-working, etc. Pupils quoted television programmes such as 'London's Burning' in which there are female fire-fighters. This is in itself interesting in the light of the media's power to promote or dispel stereotyped roles. It was agreed that 'manufactured' was a better word than 'man-made!' I was surprised at the amount of students who felt so passionately about this issue; they were extremely verbal and were not afraid to argue constructively with each other.

The point of this observation is that these pupils are aware of the stereotyped ideas about male and female roles.

PROJECT INTRODUCTION

There are distinct stereotyped ideas about male and female roles evident not only in the above mentioned first year class, but right up to and including senior students. While a first year pupil was in line, waiting to enter the art room, a female teacher remarked on the fact that he was not wearing a tie. She announced that she had a pink tie in her bag which she would make him

wear next time he was seen without one. This raised tremendous giddiness and resulted in all kinds of sexual innuendo and comment being directed at the pupil. He was called everything from 'queer' to 'sissy' to 'bird' to simply because the colour pink was mentioned. This reiterates the point that gender inequality is indeed, reinforced in school. The comment by the teacher was deliberately meant to ridicule and embarrass. Because preconceived ideas of masculinity and femininity are foremost in this young adolescent's mind, they are reinforced by this comment, hence succeeding to ridicule and embarrass.

In the case of many Art rooms, I notice very little experimentation with textiles. If a pupil works with fabric, wool or thread, they are likely to be making a costume for a puppet. Similarly, in School 'X', a boy's school, there is little evidence of textile based projects; except for the aforementioned puppet costume. It was in light of this, together with the fact that textile design is considered, certainly at third level, more feminine than masculine, that I decided to design projects that include a textile element.

During the course of this Chapter I will outline the aims and objectives of three textiles based projects implemented in two second year and one first year class. Each project outline will conclude with an evaluation of the results of a questionnaire given to each pupil of each

class. This questionnaire is designed to examine pupils perception of textiles both inside and outside the classroom.

PROJECT OUTLINE : 2nd. YEAR; GROUP A.

My aim in designing this project was to promote an awareness of textiles as an important area of Craft and Design. I wished pupils to understand the basics of creative embroidery and applique using fabrics of different colours, textures and qualities. Over a twelve week period, I aimed to instil in pupils an appreciation of this craft and increase their vocabulary of technical and descriptive terms.

While discussing my intention of this project in the staff room, I was met with definite scepticism and comment that included "You're going to get the boys to sew?". Admittedly, this was a pertinent question. I was apprehensive myself of how they (the pupils) would greet the project. I had seen and heard enough to be convinced that many of these pupils were of the idea that Art, itself, was a 'less important' and 'sissy' class.

Before I introduced the project, I deliberately left my visual aid on the table as the pupils came in. Their reactions to the tactile qualities and colours of the appliqued hanging were exactly as I had hoped for. They looked at it more than once, they wanted to touch it and

they asked how it was done. Their interest was captured and I introduced and explained aims and objectives of the project. However, I deliberately omitted the word 'sewing', substituting it with the word 'stitching' and mentioning it only once as that process was not to begin until week 5 (see Appendix. A., P. 77-78).

Initial classes of designing a 'crest' and cutting shapes from paper were simple and based mainly on geometric forms for simplicity when stitching fabric stage arrived. Pupils were to base their 'crest' designs on the theme of Medieval heraldry. They were to observe motifs, shapes, colours and composition of examples pinned up around the room.

From the outset, there was no doubt that pupils were interested in the theme of the project. They were, I believe, slightly intimidated and daunted by the project they were going to undertake. I feel that the initial two classes where they worked with paper eased them into it and were ideal for demonstrating colour contrast, balance and composition.

Each pupil was to use his paper crest design as a basis for his fabric crest. Before pupils began working with fabric, I explained the properties of various types of fabric. When I asked if any pupil could name a fabric, most said silk. On questioning pupils what silk feels and looks like, many did not know. I explained natural and synthetic

fibres briefly and spoke about fabrics that fray, are more suitable for fashion and furnishing, and asked what the difference between a fashion fabric and furnishing fabric is. Many pupils were confused by this question until I showed them examples. I asked one of the visually impaired pupils to handle the two fabrics and explain the differences. He was able to point out the difference in weight and texture. This brought me on to discuss the tactile qualities of fabric. Pupils were able to give me examples of fabric or textiles that are rough, smooth, ribbed or 'bobbly'. I explained that the fabrics they would choose for their crests must compliment each other in terms of colour and texture - not more than four colours were to be used.

The third and fourth classes were spent cutting patterns and pinning to chosen fabrics. Pupils mastered this quite well. I had been concerned for the seven visually impaired pupils in the class (eighteen in all) and how they would cope with using pins. I gave special attention to them on an individual basis and demonstrated how to pin without cutting fingers.

Before I introduced stitching techniques, I showed slides of the Bayeaux Tapestry. I explained that this, of course, is not a tapestry but rather is an embroidery. Pupils were captivated by the 'story' of the Bayeaux Tapestry and how long it took to make. Many pupils remarked on the simplicity of line. I explained that embroidery can often

be imagined as drawing with thread. All the elements such as line, tone, texture and colour can be simulated using thread. From this, I asked pupils to point out different ways thread has been used, ie. different stitching techniques.

Pupils were able to describe simply how the thread was used but no-one knew the names of the techniques. During this class, I demonstrated running, chain, blanket and stem stitch. Each pupil practised these techniques on a 'sampler' for homework.

When each pupil had chosen their fabrics, paying attention to colour and texture, they were ready to complete pattern cutting, pinning and begin stitching. It was at this stage that pupils became frustrated and were more inclined to throw their work down rather than persevere and aim to overcome problems. It was necessary for me to constantly reassure and encourage pupils that they could do it. When I praised one pupil for work well done, his friend said 'good girl'. This comment was met with uneasy giggles from the rest of the class which succeeded in embarrassing the pupil. I decided that this was an opportune point to 'sound out' pupils opinions on textiles in general.

Many pupils admitted that they would associate sewing with females. When I asked why, they announced that it is mostly women who are seen knitting and sewing. I

asked what other crafts are associated with textiles, many pupils said crochet and patchwork. It is evident that they relate traditional crafts with textiles. This will be further demonstrated in the results of the questionnaire which I will discuss later on.

Although I explained that textile crafts and design encompass a broad range of techniques which involve both males and females, pupils were unwilling to accept this and called all male fashion designers 'queer'. In a class that is verbally dominated by a group of 5-6 pupils, I encouraged everyone to give their opinions. Some pupils felt quite strongly on the issue and said that when they were in Primary school, the girls would 'do sewing' and the boys would play football. Other pupils, while at Primary school, explained that both girls and boys learned to work with fabric and wool, there were no distinctions.

It was clear from this discussion with Group A that Primary school featured strongly in their perception of male and female roles. While the discussion was going on, pupils continued to work away stitching their crest hanging. Because they were involved in a task and conducting a discussion, I found that they worked consistently and needed less help and attention from me. They were, in fact, involved in the very area of working with fabric they were almost unanimously rebelling against!

The next eight classes involved cutting, pinning and stitching fabric. Pupils interest and motivation was, for the most part, low. They ranged from being rebellious to committed to lethargic and indifferent. Sporadically, there would be a spark of energy and interest but this manifested itself in the few pupils who were enjoying the project. I feel that because the class was only thirty five minutes long, it was extremely difficult for pupils to become involved in their work. However, I was very pleased with the visually impaired pupils, who although found the project difficult, were a lot more motivated and eager to achieve than their fellow pupils.

Overall, I feel that pupils were made more aware of textile crafts. They gained valuable knowledge of stitching techniques and colour balance, contrast and co-ordination. They produced finished crest hangings that display this knowledge and most pupils are proud of their achievements.

EVALUATION OF RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRE :2nd. YEAR: GROUP A

This questionnaire (see Appendix B, P. 79-80), was given to pupils during the textiles project. I encouraged them to answer the questions as honestly and accurately as they could. Questions were taken one at a time and each one was explained before pupils wrote down their answers.

Fig. H. (P.43) shows the representation of first, second and third choices of second year pupils, Group A, of selected disciplines of Art, Craft and Design. Eighteen pupils were questioned in all. Eleven of these chose ceramics as their first choice, four chose ceramics as their second choice and one chose it as their third choice. Sculpture came in second with five pupils choosing it as their first choice, eight as their second choice, and two as their third choice. Graphics is the only discipline which no pupil chose as their first choice. Textiles was chosen by only four pupils, one pupil chose it as their first choice. From this table we can see that of eighteen pupils, sixteen chose ceramics as their first, second or third choice. Ten chose painting as their first, second or third choice. Nine chose graphics as their first, second or third choice. Fifteen chose sculpture as their first, second or third choice and four chose textiles as their first, second or third choice.

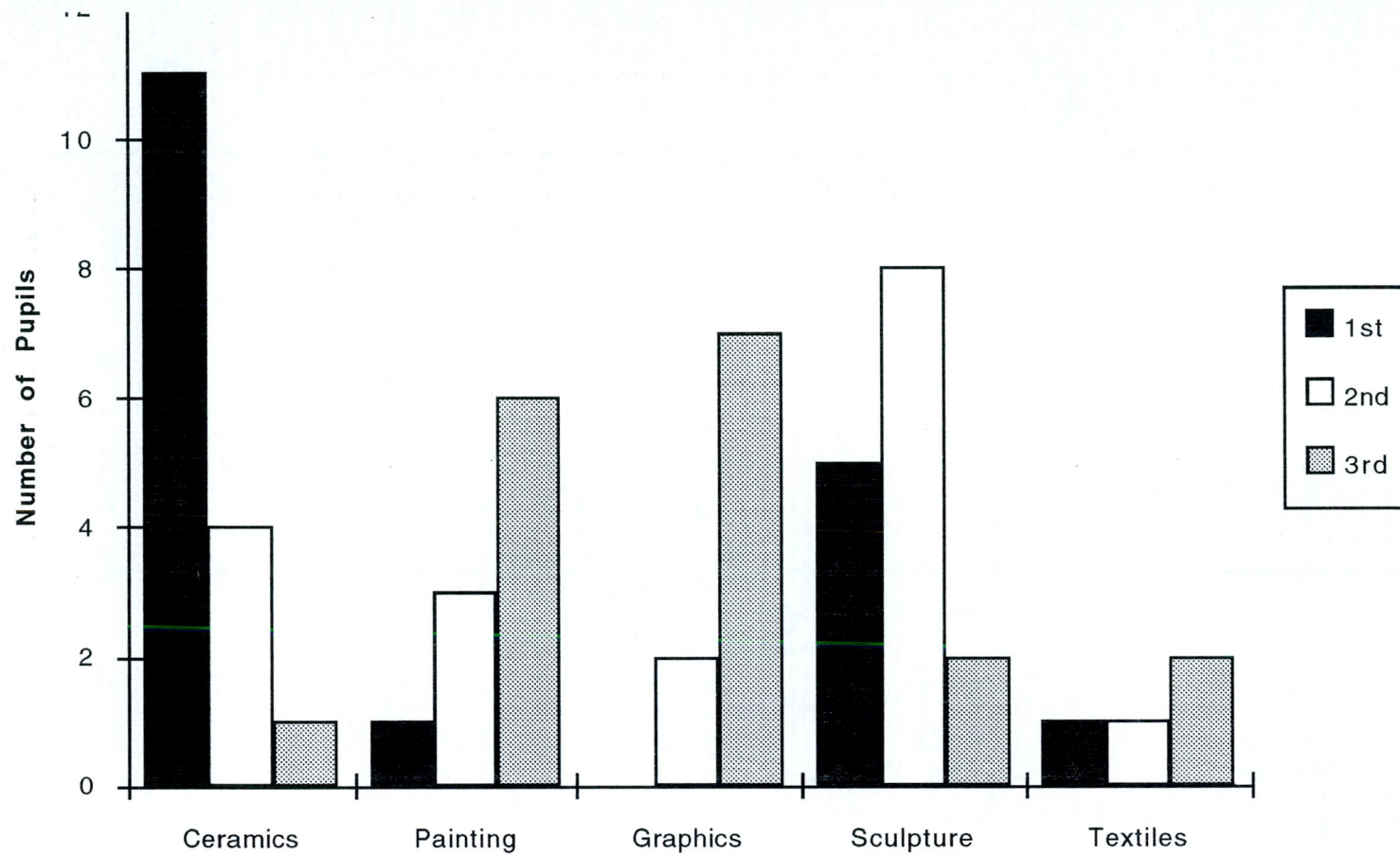


Fig.H: Representation of 1st, 2nd and 3rd choices of 2nd year pupils (weak ability) of several disciplines within art, craft and design.

Fig. I.(P.45) shows the representation of first choices of selected disciplines within Art, Craft and Design by the same pupils. Ceramics is undoubtedly the favourite with 61.1% of pupils choosing it as their first choice. Sculpture is chosen by 27.8% of pupils as their first choice. Interestingly, painting and textiles are on a par with only 5.6% of pupils choosing them as their first choice.

Fig. J.(P.46) represents the percentage of pupils who omitted textiles, sculpture, painting, ceramics and graphics from any of their first, second and third choices. Textiles accounted for the largest percentage with 39% omitting it from their first, second and third choices. Ceramics accounted for the smallest percentage with only 5.6% of pupils omitting it from their choices.

Questions 2, 3, 4 and 5 will be discussed collectively towards the end of the Chapter.

PROJECT OUTLINE : 2nd YEAR; GROUP B

Similar to the previous project, my aim was to promote textiles as a valid area of Art, Craft and Design. Pupils would learn that a project starting point could lead in many different directions. I aimed to broaden and expand the knowledge pupils gained during their previous 3D construction project. Over a ten week period, I aim to develop in pupils, an appreciation of textiles

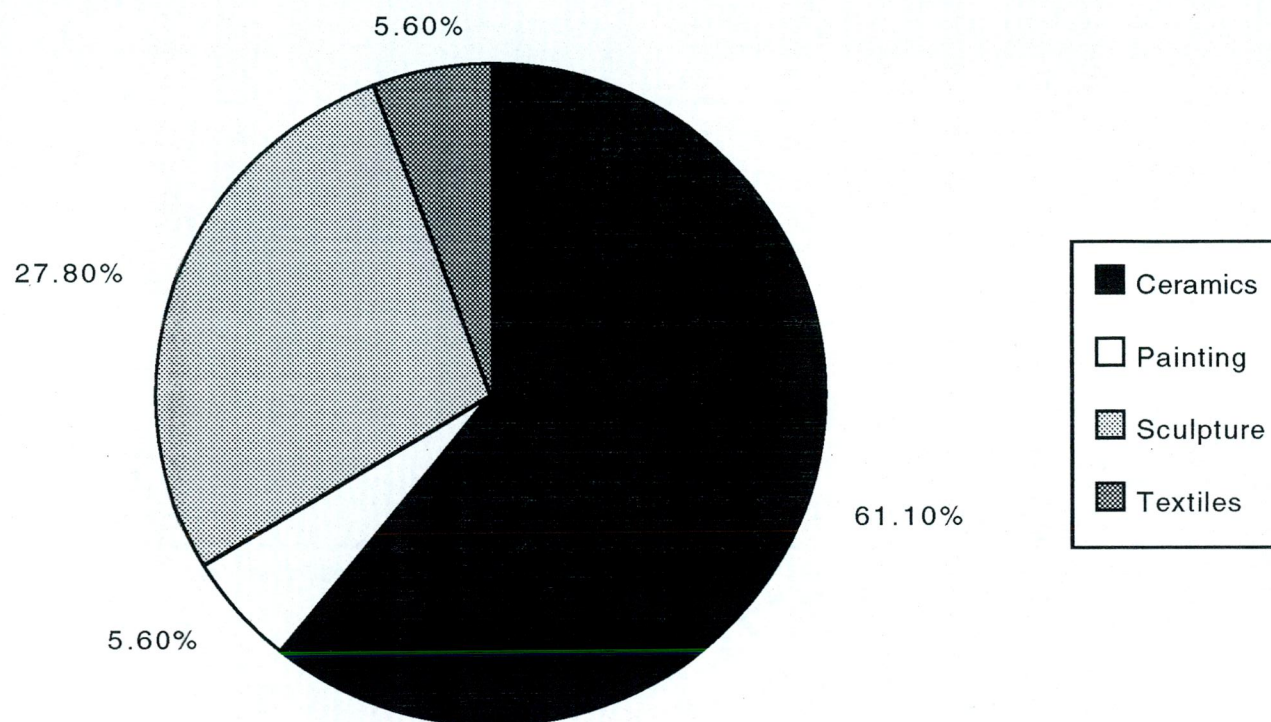


Fig.I: Representation of 1st choices of several disciplines within Art, Craft and Design by 2nd year pupils.

crafts and increase their vocabulary of technical and descriptive terms (see Appendix C, P. 81-82).

Pupils had completed a 3D construction project where they designed and made their own helmets from aluminium drinks cans. As mentioned previously they based their designs on a Medieval theme taking armour as their inspiration. This project was a definite success. Without exception, all pupils were well motivated and needed less attention as the project progressed. In light of this it was interesting to observe how they would deal with using materials and techniques of a totally different nature.

Pupils made this transition exceptionally well. Because a healthy sense of competition had generated in the class with the previous project, this carried over into the textiles project and ensured an excellent beginning.

The project began with each pupil making a shape drawing of their 3D constructed helmet. The first two classes of thirty five minutes each were spent making a shape drawing. Pupils then traced this onto newsprint which they cut out and used as their pattern. This pattern was pinned to fabric and cut out. Before pupils began to work with fabric I questioned them on how the properties of metal differ from those of fabric. the answers pupils gave me demonstrated the knowledge they had gained during previous project and that which

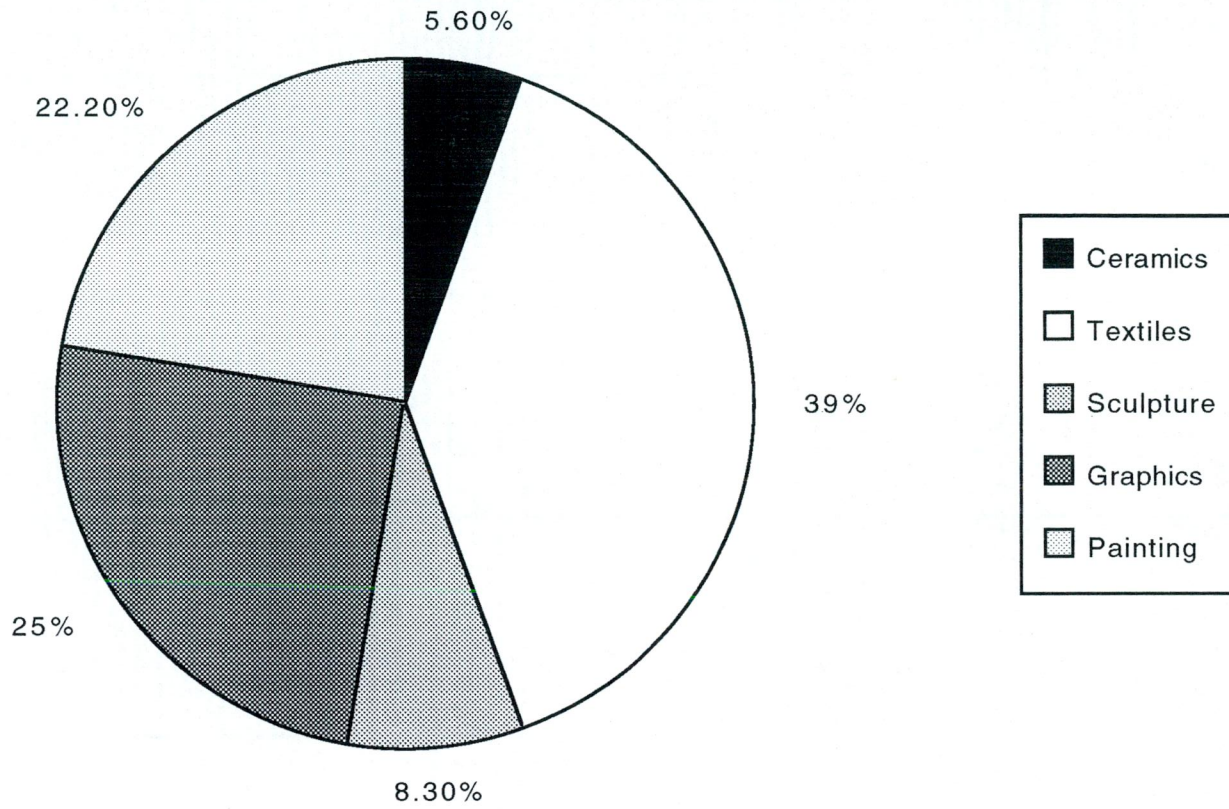


Fig.J : Representation of 2nd year pupils (weak ability) who omitted the above disciplines from 1st, 2nd and 3rd choices.

they possessed before beginning textiles project. They understood that when cutting, materials and scissors must be handled differently. I demonstrated how to use pins and showed that fabric could be stretched.

Pupils were eager to work hard and become involved and showed a willingness to learn from the outset. They adapted much better to the textiles project than their sister second year class did.

Week five of the sequence saw the beginning of the stitching stage. I demonstrated how to use a needle and thread and showed how embroidery threads can be separated. Pupils were shown in small groups of three to four, how to make a blanket stitch. When I asked them why an ordinary running stitch is not ideal for a fabric such as satin, they were able to describe how fabric frays and how a blanket stitch would prevent it from doing so. The vocabulary these pupils possessed was much more advanced than Group B. They seemed more aware of textile crafts and were able to describe textile crafts such as printing, weaving and embroidery.

The sixth week of the project began with a slide show of contemporary embroidered works. Pupils discussed these works under headings such as theme, subject matter, composition, colour, materials and techniques. Many pupils are able to use descriptive language. Since encouraging them throughout the year to critically

evaluate their own work they are now showing signs of being able to critically evaluate other works. They are able to describe why they don't like a certain section of a piece for example. They argue amongst themselves about what they think works or does not work within a piece. The attention of this class is well and truly captured. The question arises on how two second year classes working on similar textile projects differ so much in terms of temperament, commitment, dedication and ability. Group A is of a weaker ability with a greater number of visually impaired pupils. It also takes place first thing on a Monday morning yet, similar to Group B, is thirty five minutes long. Group B includes pupils that are of average to good abilities. There are less disruptive pupils and at least two very good pupils who set the standard for the class. Group A display a sexist view that textiles are more associated with females whereas Group B are more willing to participate in a textiles project. Most pupils of this class do not have such strong sexist views. However, it would be wrong to say that all of Group B are enjoying the project, moreso, they are committed to trying their best and giving it their best shot.

As the questionnaire results will show there are some interesting differences between the choices made by Group B and those made by Group A. Although this project is still in operation, it is evident that pupils are more open to textiles as an element of Art, Craft and Design. They entered into the project with a greater



Ill. (v).: Visual Aid (Group B)

knowledge of textiles and have since expanded this knowledge through hands-on experience, slide shows and discussion.

EVALUATION OF RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRE :

2nd YEAR: GROUP B.

Before the pupils in Group B began the textiles based project I handed out the questionnaire (Appendix B, P. 79-80). A total of sixteen pupils were asked to record their first, second and third choices of selected disciplines within Art, Craft and Design (see Fig. K., P.52) Similar to Group A, ceramics and sculpture rated the top choices with totals of twelve and fourteen pupils respectively choosing them as the first, second or third choice. Painting was chosen by nine pupils; with one pupil choosing it as their first choice. Graphics was chosen by seven pupils with one choosing it as their first choice. Textiles was less popular with five pupils choosing it as either their second or third choice but no-one chose it as their first choice.

Fig. L. (P.53) shows the representation of first choices of selected disciplines within Art, Craft and Design by Group B before the textiles project began. 50% chose ceramics compared to 61.1% of Group A. 37.5% chose sculpture as their first choice. Painting and graphics are on a par with 6.3 % of pupils choosing these disciplines as their first choice. Textiles is not chosen. It is interesting to note that

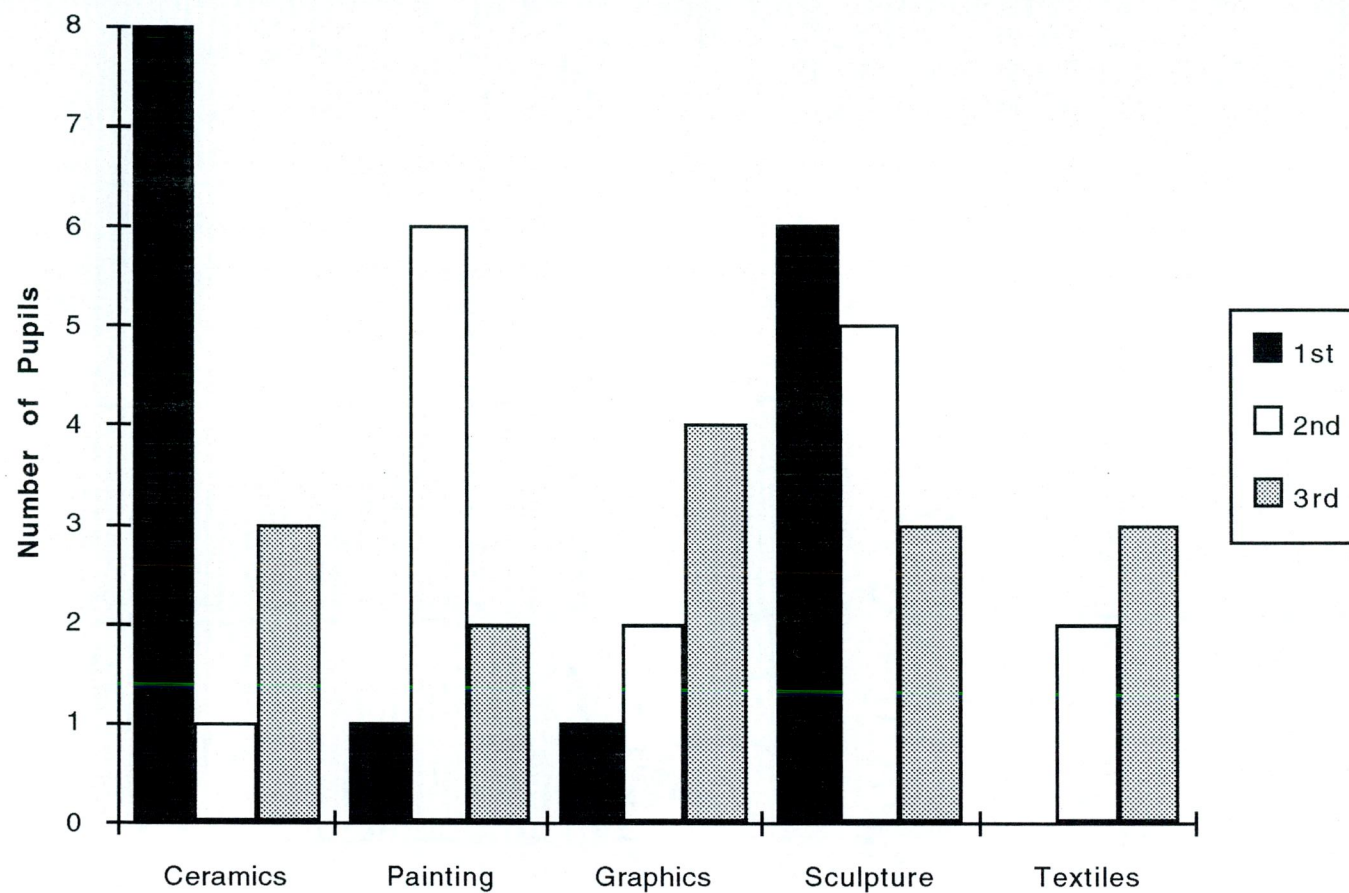


Fig.K: Representation of 1st, 2nd and 3rd choices of 2nd year pupils (average - good ability) of selected disciplines within Art, Craft and Design.

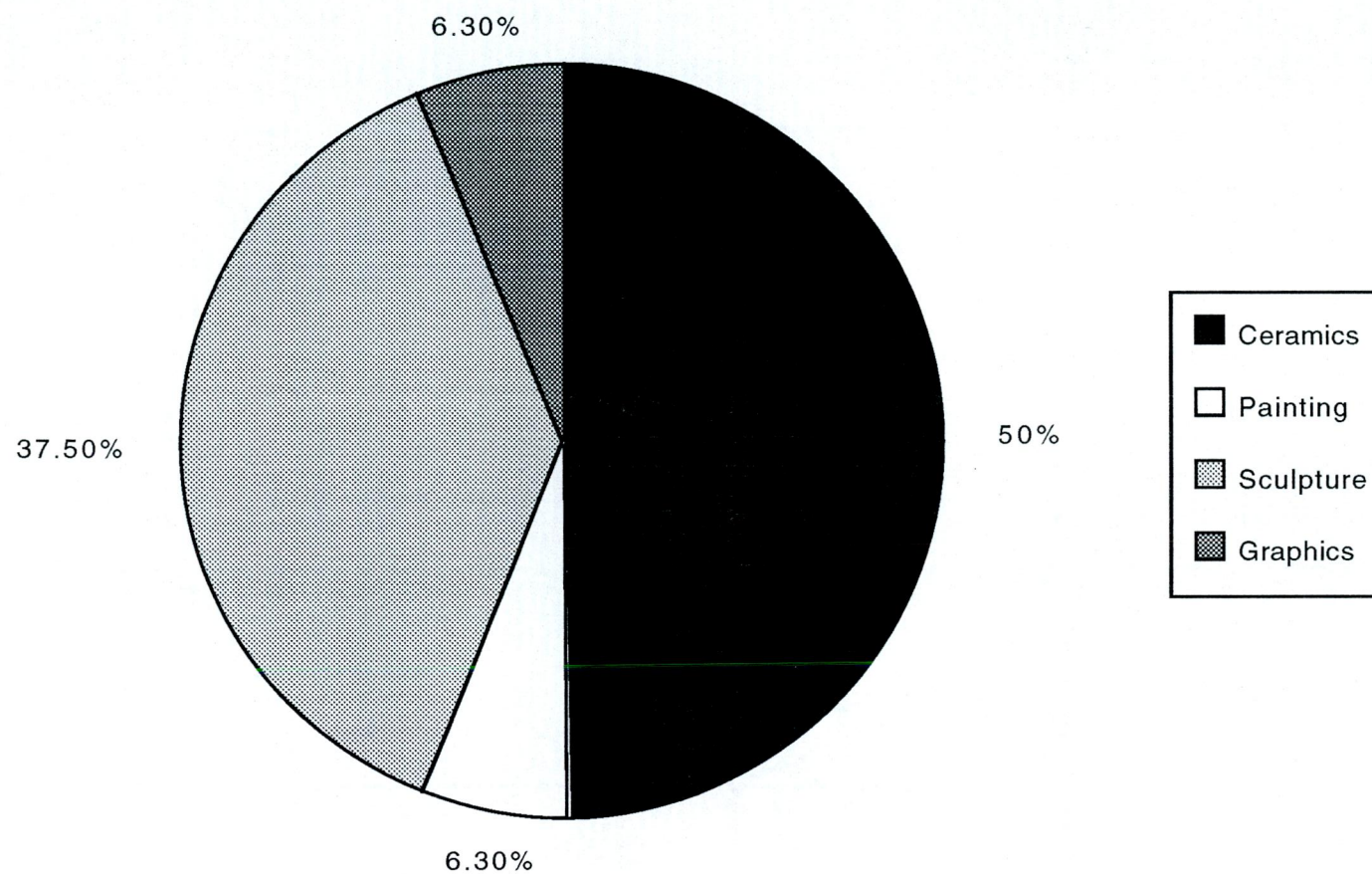


Fig. L : Representation of 1st choices of selected disciplines within art, craft and design by 2nd year pupils before textiles based project. (Pupil Ability : Average - Good)

in Group A, painting and textiles are on a par with 5.6% of pupils choosing them as their first choice. Graphics is not chosen.

During the textiles project I asked Group B to complete the questionnaire once again. Fig.M. (P.55), shows that ceramics stays constant with 50% of pupils choosing it as their first choice. The other results are markedly different from those compiled from the first questionnaire. The percentage of pupils opting for both painting and graphics as their first choice have almost doubled. In the second questionnaire, painting and graphics account for 12.5% each of pupils first choices as opposed to 6.3% each of choices in first questionnaire. Textiles, in the second questionnaire accounts for 6.25% of pupils first choice as opposed to 0% in the first questionnaire. This fact is encouraging and illustrates how a pupil's perception and interest can change and develop on being exposed to a subject. Although there isn't a huge change in textiles being chosen as either first, second or third choice, the evidence from Fig. M.(P.55). suggests that change is possible. Suggestions for change will be discussed in the latter part of this Chapter.

PROJECT OUTLINE : 1st YEAR; GROUP C

This project was designed to increase pupils' knowledge of textile craft techniques and terminology (see Appendix D, P.83-84). I aimed to introduce pupils to tie-dying,

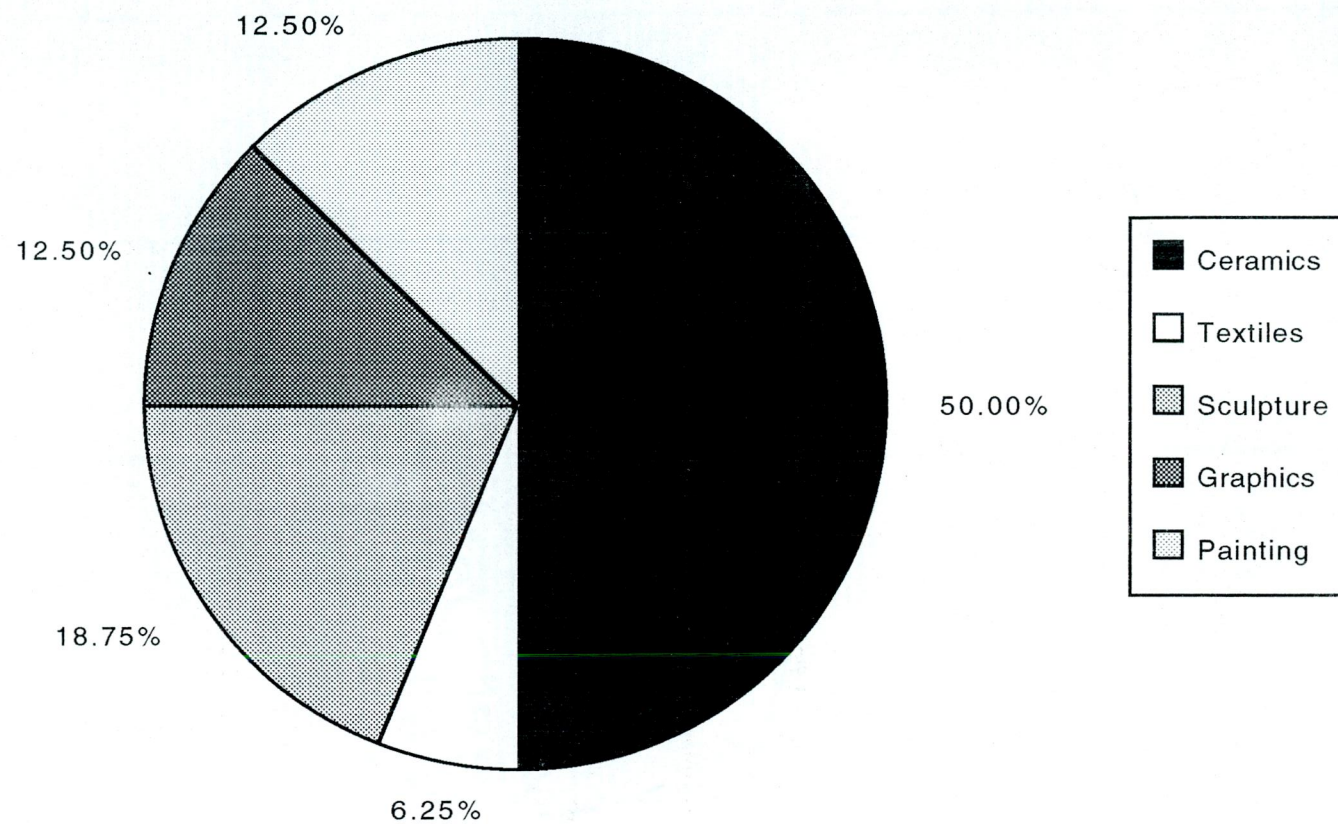


Fig. M : Representation of 1st choices of selected disciplines within Art, Craft and Design by 2nd year pupils during textiles based project. (Pupil Ability : Average - Good).

stencil cutting and screen printing techniques. (see Appendix D, P.83-84). Similar to Groups A and B, this first year class was of a thirty five minute duration. Pupil ability ranged from average to good.

The first two classes of this project were spent making black and white paper crest designs. Again, the theme of the project was Medieval heraldry. Pupils took their inspiration from the images and motifs used in Medieval heraldry and designed their own 'crest'. During these classes pupils learned about positive and negative shape, techniques of using a scissors and glue.

On the third week, pupils were introduced to tie-dying techniques. I was pleasantly surprised to hear that two pupils had experimented with tie-dye in Primary school. They were able to explain the process to the rest of the class who listened intently. I feel that this was an excellent starting point since pupils learn so much from each other. Between these two pupils and myself, we demonstrated how to tie the fabric in different ways and obtain different effects. I showed visual aids of these effects.

It was clear that pupils were fascinated with the results. They wanted to get started straight away. During this class, pupils decided on what method of tying they would use. They tied pre-dyed yellow cotton fabric and immersed in either red or blue Dylon dye for 15-20

minutes. I had asked questions previously on what colours would be produced if yellow was mixed with red and yellow was mixed with blue. Most pupils knew the answers. I demonstrated Primary and Secondary colours and asked them to make a chart for homework.

The following week pupils were eager to see how their tie-dyes had turned out. They were delighted with the results and this, I feel, gave added confidence and motivation for the next stage of the project. Weeks five six, and seven were spent tracing and cutting stencil for printing. I had demonstrated how the screen printing process works using a stencil. Some pupils were confused at first but understood when I demonstrated a second time.

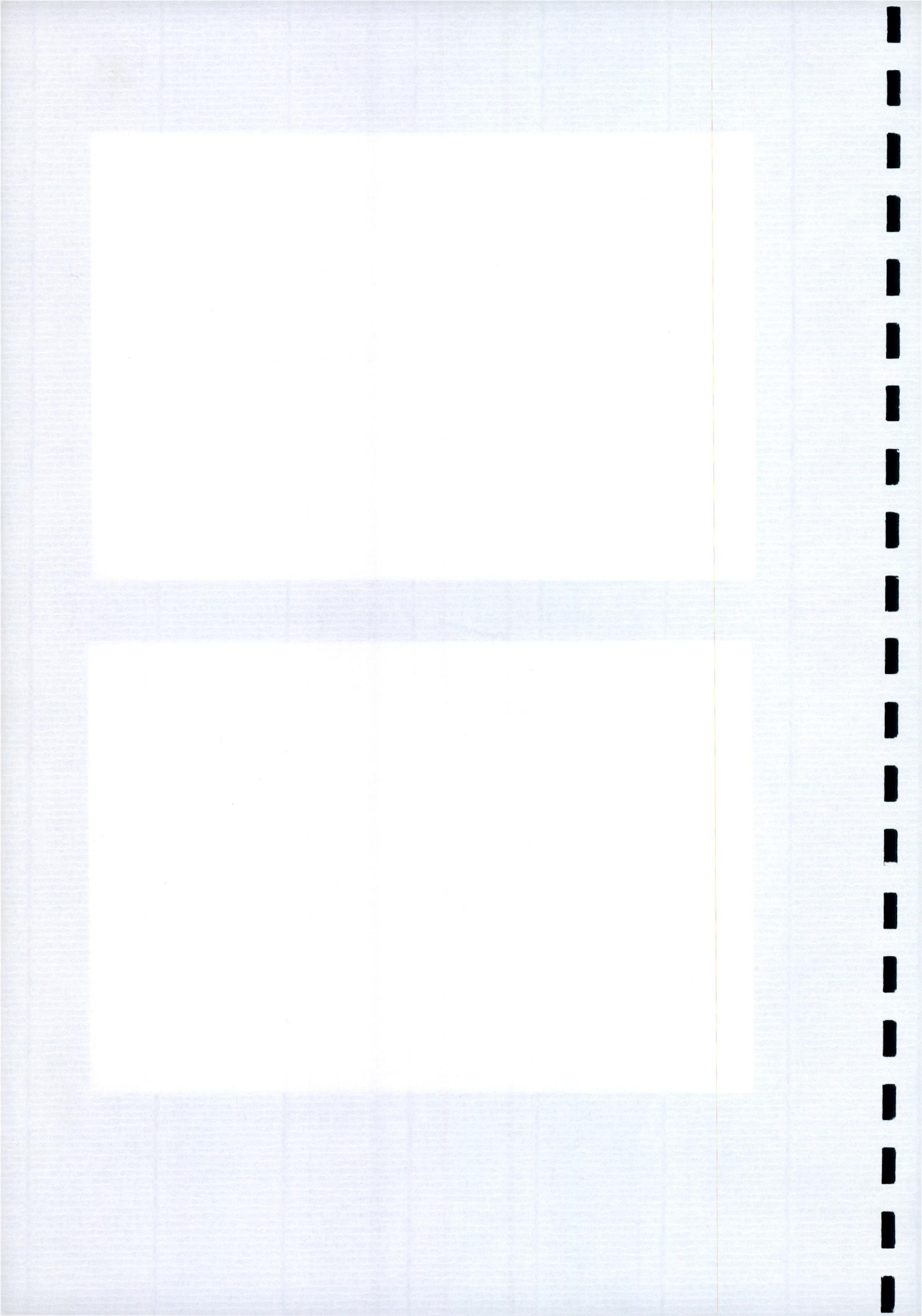
Pupils were eager to learn new techniques and enjoyed immensely the hands-on experience of working with fabric and the technique of screen printing. When each pupil had printed their one colour crest design on tie-dyed background, I sewed them together to make a large combined hanging. At this point, I asked pupils to describe their knowledge of textile crafts. As in Groups A and B, their perceptions were limited and their knowledge extended only as far as traditional crafts such as knitting and sewing. I explained that textiles can include many different techniques using materials such as fabric, thread and wool. I went on to explain such techniques as weaving, embroidery, soft sculpture (which can become puppets - an element of Art, Craft and Design



Ill. (vi).: Example of pupil's work.(Group C).



Ill. (vii).: Example of pupils's work.(Group C)





Ill. (viii).: Completed hanging showing selected works by Group C.

they are familiar with), rug making and batik. I showed examples of some of these crafts and asked them to complete the questionnaire (Appendix B, P.79-80)

EVALUATION OF RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRE :

1st YEAR: GROUP C

Nineteen pupils in total completed the questionnaire. All but one pupil included ceramics in their first, second or third choice; making ceramics, again, the most popular choice (see Fig.N., P.61). Sculpture came second with sixteen pupils choosing it as their first, second or third choice. Painting was chosen by eight pupils. Graphics was chosen by nine pupils, textiles was less popular with six pupils choosing it as their first, second or third choice. Fig. O. (P.62) shows that ceramics accounts for the highest percentage of first choices, as Groups A and B, accounting for 47.3% of first choices. Graphics similarly features more strongly with 10.5% making it their first choice. Sculpture, as the first choice of Group C accounts for 15.8%, as opposed to Group's A and B which account for 27.8% and 37.5% respectively. Textiles remain the lowest percentage of first choices with 5.3% opting for it.

COLLECTIVE RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRE FROM GROUPS

A, B AND C

Question 1 of the questionnaire, (Appendix B., P.79-80), has been discussed as individual results from Groups A, B

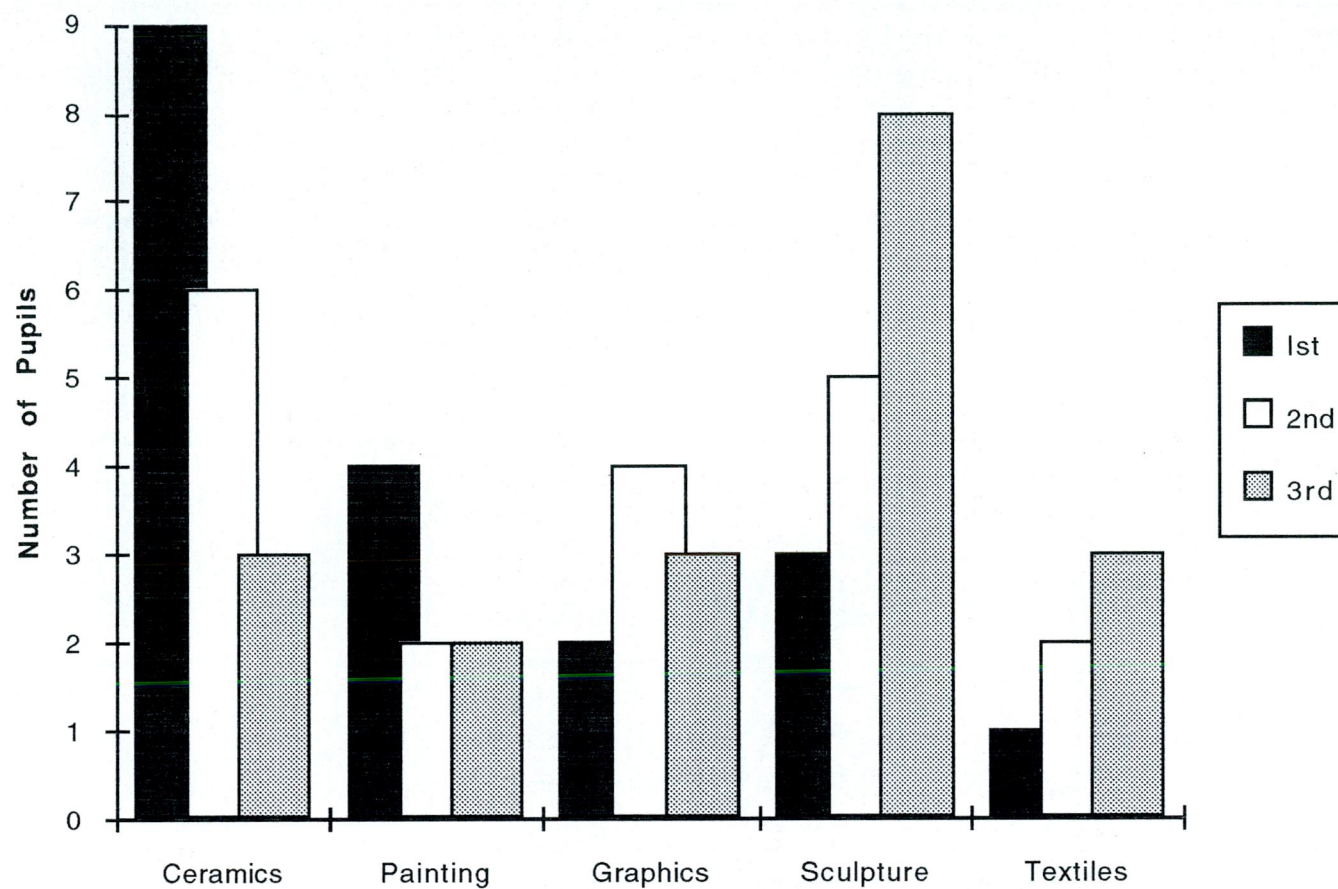


Fig.N : Representation of 1st, 2nd and 3rd choices of 1st year pupils of selected disciplines within art, craft and design.

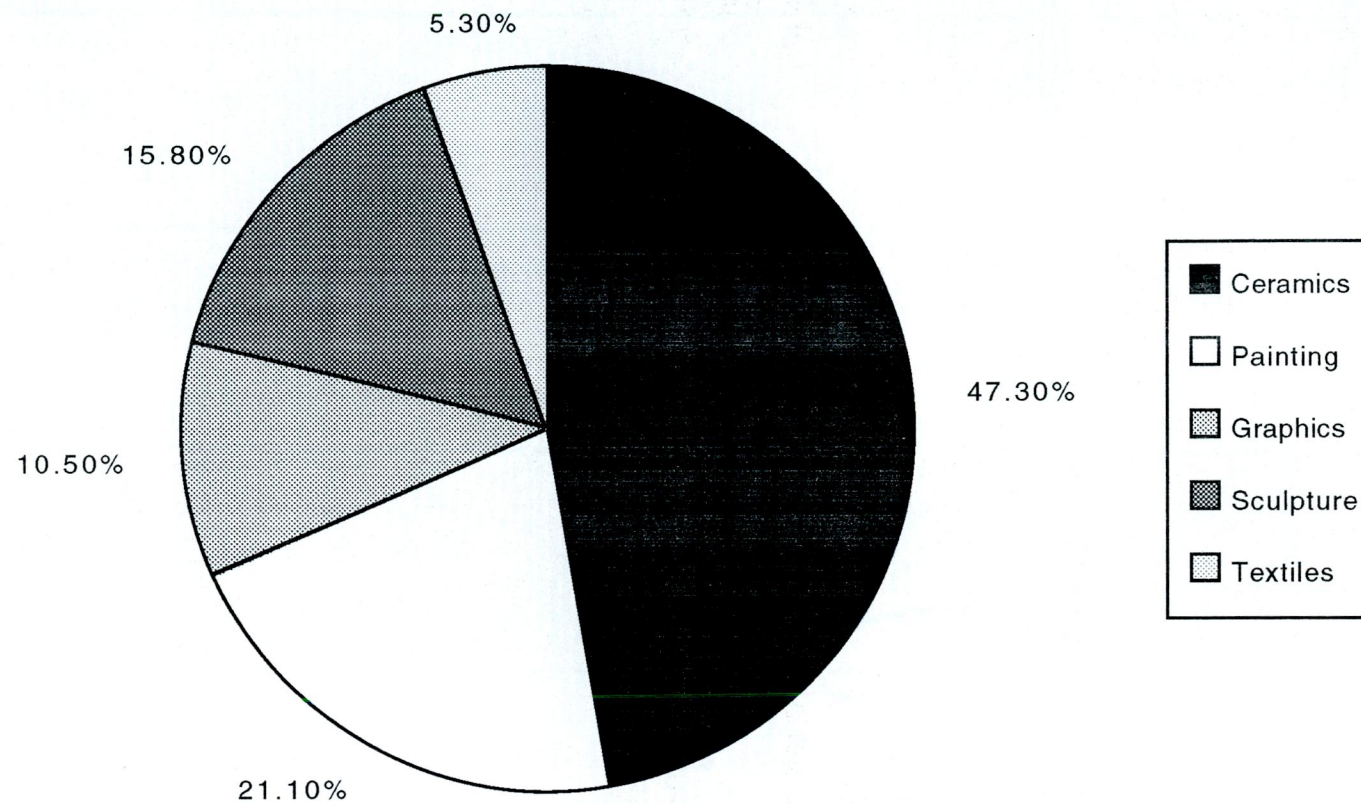
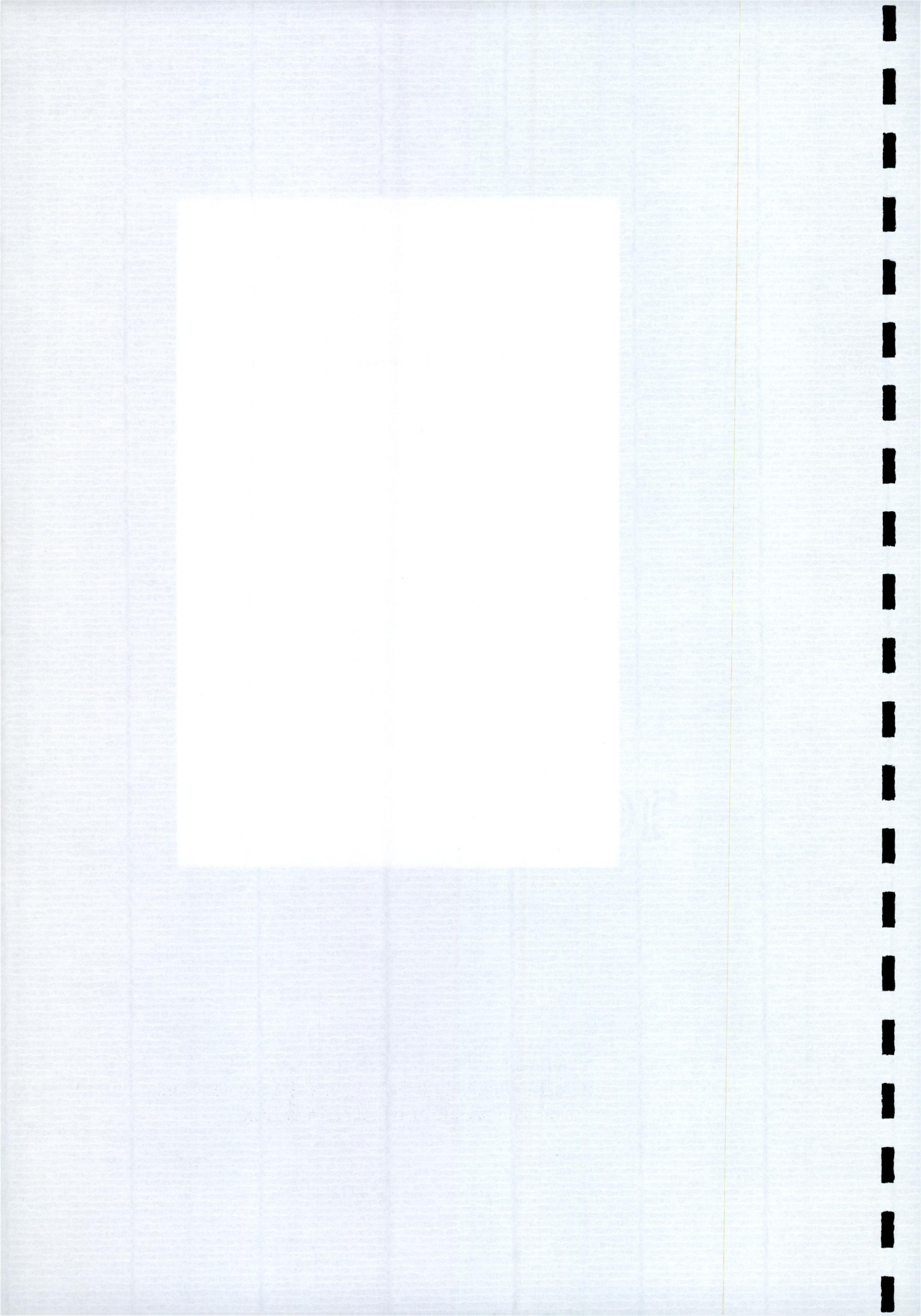


Fig.O : Representation of 1st choices of selected disciplines within Art, Craft and Design by 1st pupils - group C (Pupil Ability : Average - Good).



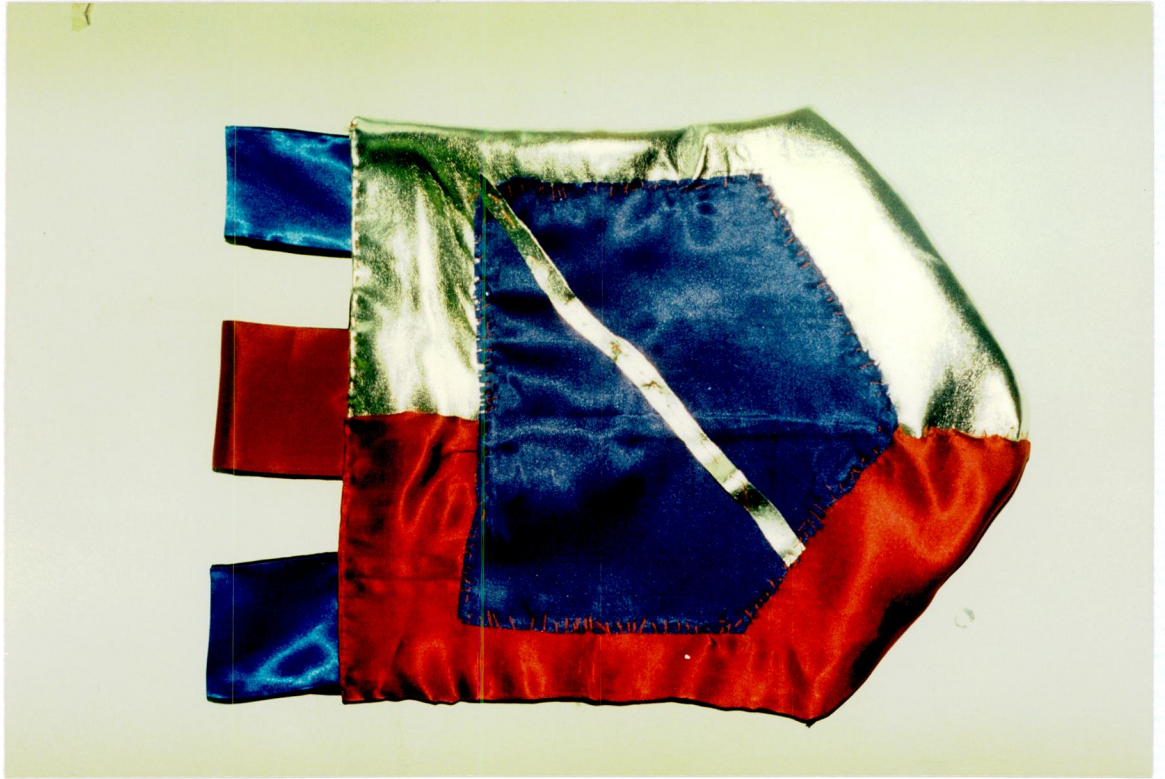
III. (i).: Visual Aid. Hanging demonstrating techniques of applique and embroidery. (Group A).



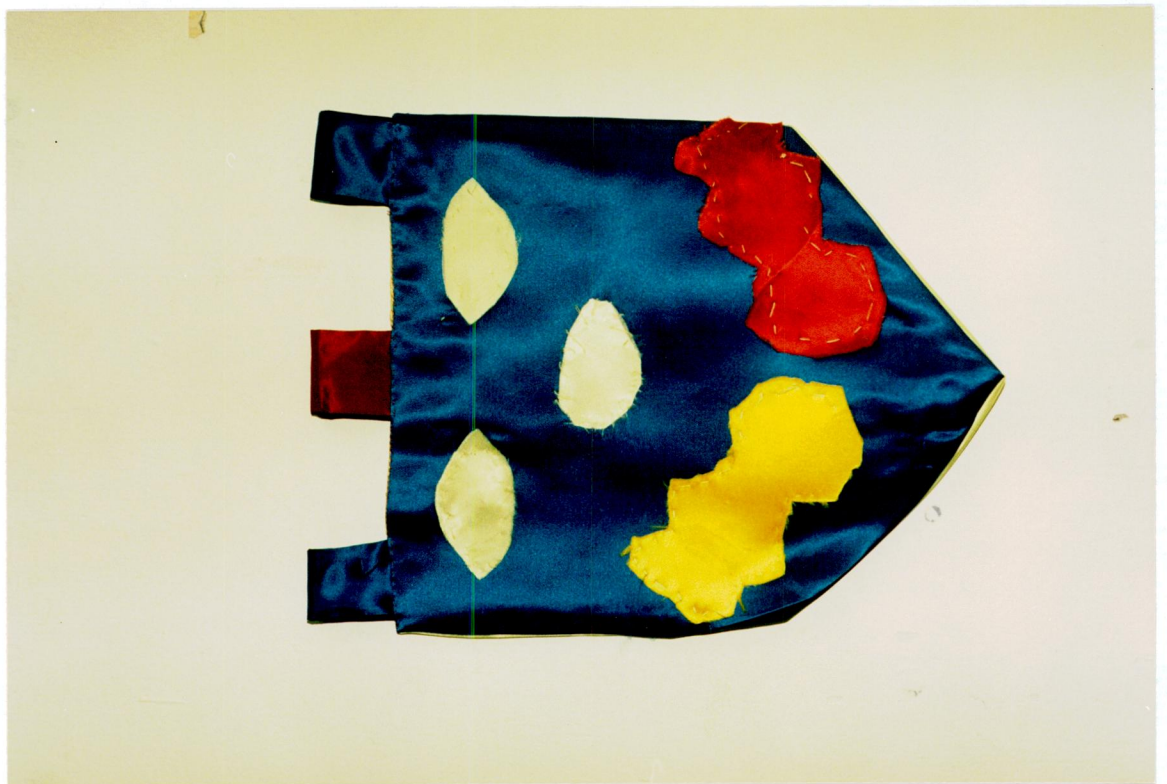


III. (ii).: Explaining how to make a tassle using Visual Aid as an example. (Group A).

CONQUEST



III. (iii): Example of pupils work. (Group A.).



III. (vi).: Example of visually impaired pupil's works. (Group A).



and C. Questions 2, 3, 4 and 5 are designed to examine the extent to which pupils are exposed to textile crafts. Fig. P. (P. 64) represents the percentage of pupils' family members that are good at textile crafts. This chart tells us that there are enormous differences in male and female family members whom pupils describe as being good at textiles. 73% of mothers and 24% of sisters are selected as being good at textiles, while only 6.5% of fathers and 2% of brothers are considered so. It is interesting to note that after these pupils (53 in total) have been exposed to textiles, 29% consider themselves good at textile crafts. 6% of pupils are in contact with another family member whom they perceive to be good at textiles and 10% say that there is no family member who is good at textile crafts

Since this questionnaire was given to Groups A and C during their textiles projects, the answer to Question 3 was 'Yes' for all these pupils. Before Group B worked with textiles, five of the sixteen pupils had never worked with fabric, wool or thread. Those pupils who had previously worked with these materials explained that many of their experiences with textiles occurred in Primary school or at home. Examples given include weaving table mats, knitting soft toys, French knitting and making cushions in Primary school. Their experiences in the home environment consist mainly of 'sewing a hole in their jumper, trousers or schoolbag.'

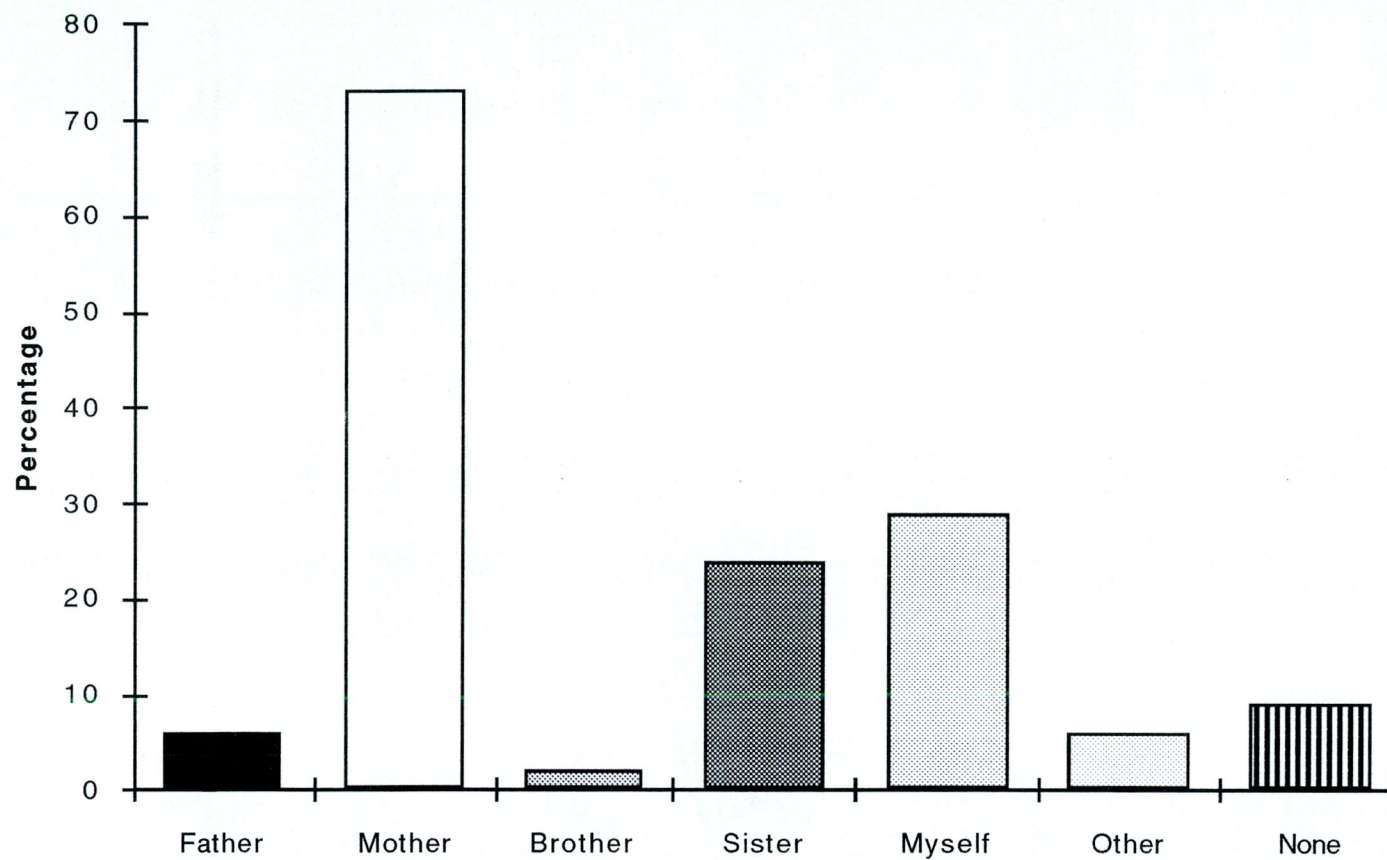


Fig. P: Percentage of family members that are good at textile crafts.

Fig. Q. (P.66) demonstrates the percentage of family members, teachers and others who have taught pupils how to use fabric, thread and wool. From this chart we can see that 76% of pupils were taught by a teacher in school. 25% were taught by their mothers. 10% taught themselves and only 2% were taught by their father, sister, or brother. 9% were taught by another family member.

Question 4 posed most problems for pupils. they found it difficult to speak about any other textile craft other than the one they had been doing. Some were able to name the crafts they had seen at home such as patchwork, knitting, making clothes, curtains, cushions etc. Others were perceptive in naming the textile crafts displayed in the Art room which were done by the other groups in the school. Many pupils needed to be reminded of the crafts they had seen on slide or these which I showed or discussed with them. Most of the visually impaired pupils had tried weaving at a previous specialist school.

Fig. R (P.67) demonstrates the sources from where pupils have seen textile crafts in operation. We see here that 87% of pupils are exposed to textile crafts at school. 55% have seen textile crafts in operation on T.V. in programmes such as 'Art Attack' and 'How Do You Do?'. 38% of pupils have seen them at home. 7% have seen textile crafts through other sources. I had previously explained to pupils that these other sources could include

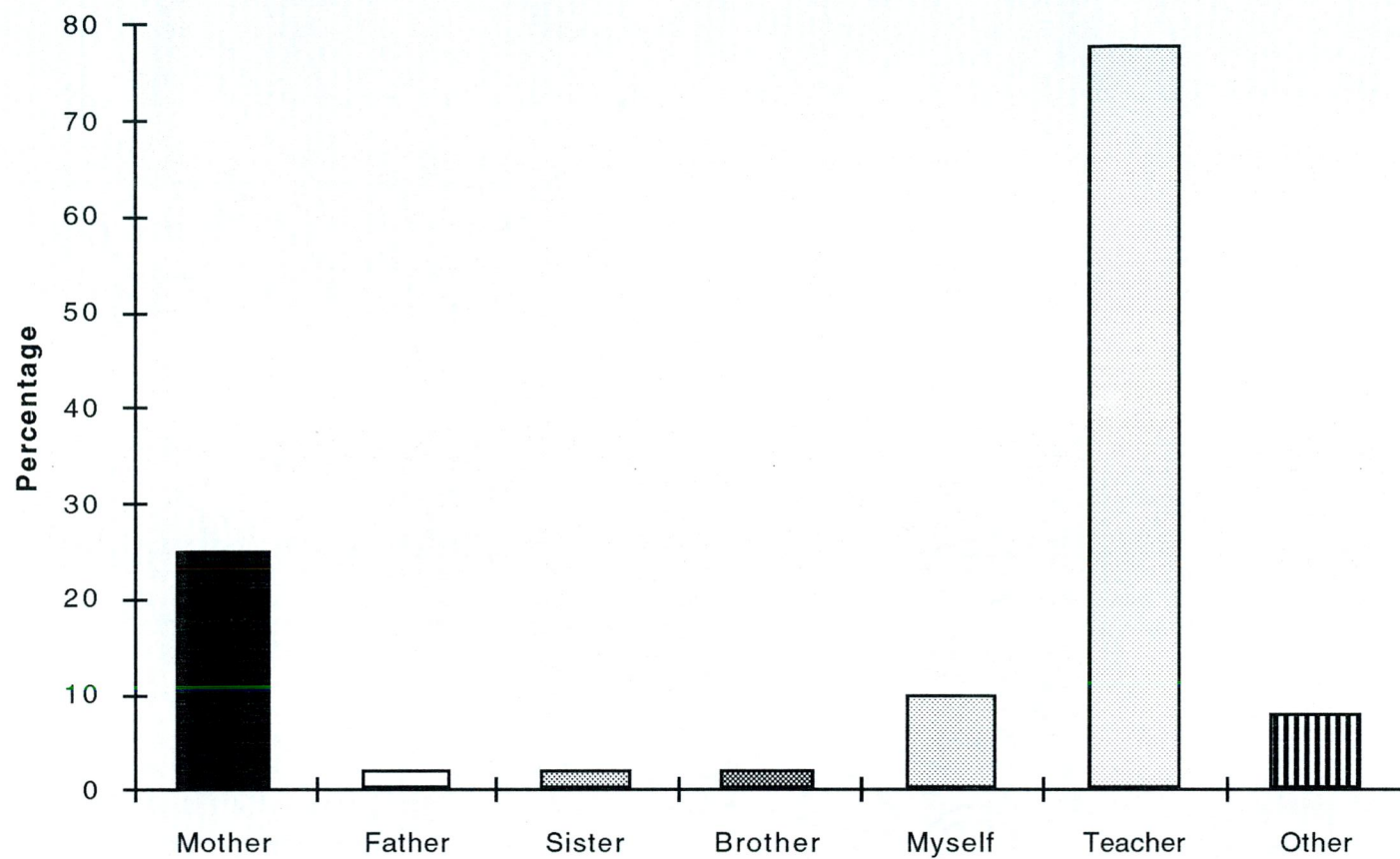


Fig. Q: Percentage of family members, teachers, and others who have taught pupils how to use fabric, thread and wool.

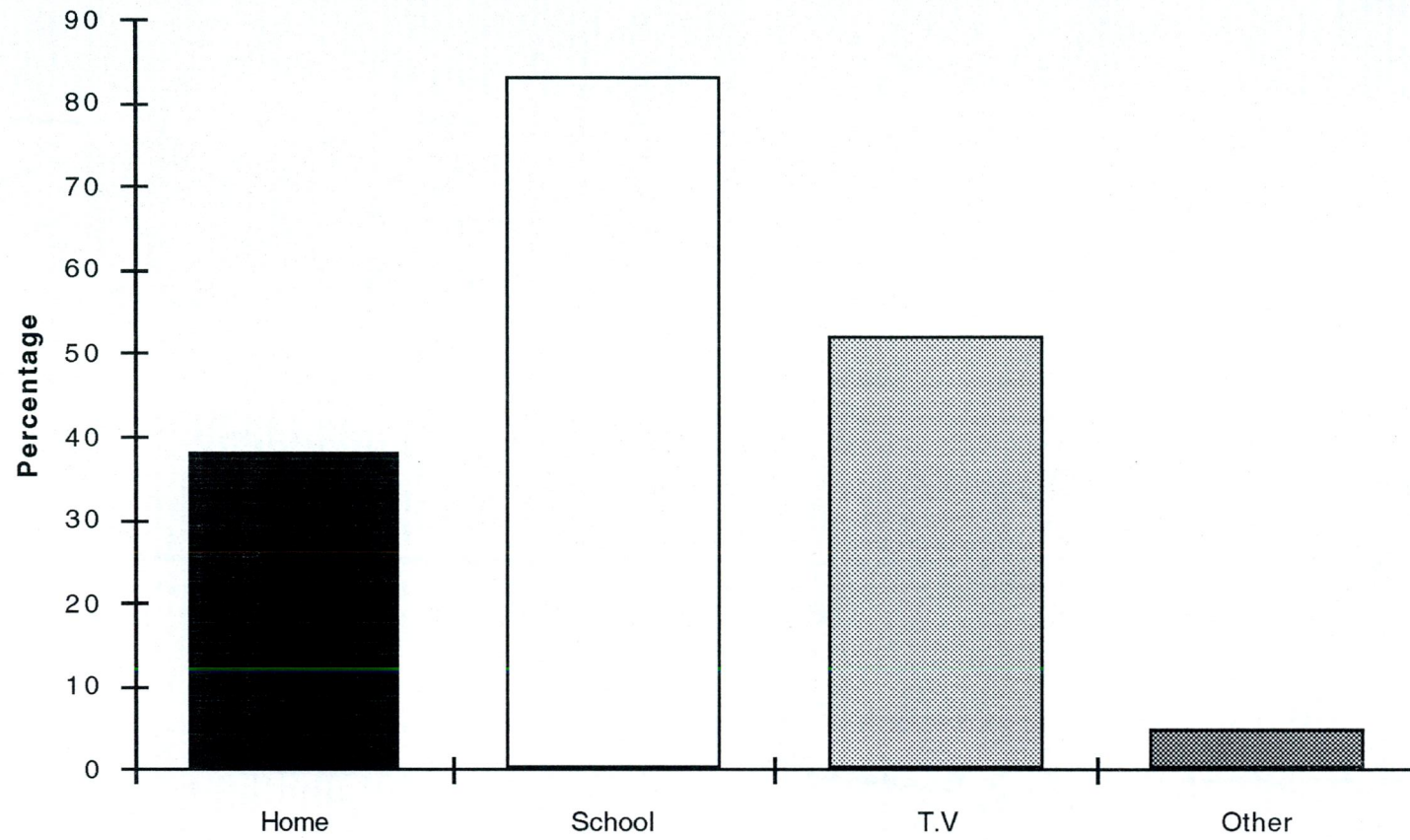


Fig. R : Sources from where pupils have seen textile crafts in operation.

a visit to a textile factory or seeing a demonstration of techniques and processes.

Collectively the results of this questionnaire give a broad picture of pupils perceptions, attitudes and experiences of textile crafts. The evidence compiled indicated that in the home environment more females than males are involved with textile crafts. In general, most of these male pupils perceive textiles to be a more feminine than masculine subject; this is more evident from the comments of second year rather than first year pupils. Although an average percentage of pupils are exposed to textile crafts in the home environment, a greater percentage have gained their knowledge from the classroom. These findings could be surmised to indicate that although male pupils have participated in textile crafts in the Art room, the number of pupils choosing textiles as a first, second or third choice remains low. The case for developing accessible textiles programmes for male pupils need to be further examined.

THE WAY FORWARD

Although the percentage of pupils choosing textiles as a first, second or third choice remains low, the results of this textiles programme have been positive. Pupils have gained a greater understanding of textile crafts through hands-on experience, slide shows, demonstrations and discussion. their experience of the projects may have

resulted in a broader understanding that may have increased or decreased their interest. I feel that the initial fear that some pupils held dissipated as the project progressed. There is no doubt that pupils' confidence grew as they became involved in their work. Through demonstrating and discussing textiles, pupils became more perceptive to tactile qualities and improved their vocabulary of descriptive and technical terms.

In their book Gender and Schools, Measor and Sikes say that "One of the newest areas of emphasis is on finding appropriate anti-sexist strategies for educating boy as well as girls".¹

Short and Carrington imply that

DIRECT teaching about occupational stereotypes may be optimally effective if it commences for the generality of children about the age of eight. The age of ten to eleven is when the majority of children are most receptive to explicit teaching about the role of the family in replicating this form of inequality. (Short and Carrington, 1989)²

Research findings of this kind can make an impact on practice, creating a more focused approach. From this research, one can surmise that, because of the ages suggested, the Primary school could be instrumental in teaching gender equality through implementation of programmes that promote equality.

Within the Art department of both Primary and Secondary schools, textile based projects can be implemented to create an awareness that these crafts can be enjoyed by both males and females. These programmes could include classroom based projects that involve external visits to textile factories and mills. Visiting artists and crafts people have much knowledge to offer pupils and teachers alike. Their presence in the classroom acts as a motivating factor. Pupils see them as being very different to the teacher and as part of the 'outside, working environment'.

The Arts Teacher's Handbook says that

More than anything else, the artists presence in school will help children to recognise the reality of being an artist, and that making a drawing, a tapestry or ceramic sculpture is 'real' work requiring serious thought and endeavour.³

Museums and galleries provide a huge range of material that can broaden the pupils knowledge and perception of ancient and contemporary textile craft. Not only are pupils exposed to crafts pertaining to their own culture but also those of other cultures. A cross cultural reference of textile crafts can demonstrate different uses of materials and techniques.

Exhibitions of textile works of both pupils and practising crafts people can involve the wider community and bring

greater focus to the school and the Art Department. A collaborative exhibition of textile works by a mixed, a boy's and a girl's schools would promote in pupils a greater awareness of other pupils perceptions of textile crafts. A project theme could be explored where pupils can view other pupils interpretations and use of material and techniques.

There is an abundance of variety of ways in which textiles can be implemented in the classroom. I believe pupils should experience working with textiles from their first year of Secondary school. According to their ages and abilities, projects can be designed that broaden and develop upon their existing knowledge of textiles gained at Primary level.

FOOTNOTES : CHAPTER IV

1. Lynda Measor and Patricia J. Sikes, Gender and Schools. (London: Cassell, 1992), P.143.
2. Ibid.
3. Robert Clement, The Art Teacher's Handbook, 2nd edition. (Cheltenham: Stanley Thornes, 1993), P.189.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this dissertation I have focused on the area of gender inequality in the teaching of Art, with specific reference to textiles. With regard to society, home and school in particular, I have examined how gender perceptions are developed through socialization. Unquestionably paradigms of social and cognitive learning determine to a large extent, the way in which we see the world.

Understanding school as a microcosm of society, it becomes apparent that values and attitudes are not only developed in school, but also brought to school from the home environment.

In the case of textiles, this observation requires an examination of the values communicated through the school curriculum and also those generated in the home.

Considering the information on Curriculum at Second level, it appears that Art, Craft and Design is perceived as a predominantly 'female' subject. The pursuit of textile based crafts at Third level further supports this perception.

The findings of the survey on textiles indicates largely that these crafts are also perceived in the home

environment as 'female' in orientation. Perceptions about textiles tend to be traditional and limited. Ironically enough, the survey names the teacher as the one form whom textile crafts are learned.

And so we arrive back at the "rag-and-bone shop of the heart"¹ - education. Education is undoubtedly a process of evolution. This requires vision in order for such a process to work in a liberating way. No evolution is without its problems and difficulties. Part of the whole 'journey' of education involves, not only dealing with problems that arise now, but also attempting to think ahead for the future.

Prerequisite to this enquiry is the idea that in order to become liberated from on-going problems such as gender inequality, we must firstly deal with their causes. If we tend continually to the symptoms or the effects without looking at the causes, we simply bandage the problem and hope it will go away. Fortunately, the evolution of education is teaching us that this is not an adequate pedagogy for liberation.

In essence, we must return to the drawing board and evaluate the design of things, the blueprints, and the structures that dictate, in order to establish the way forward.

In my estimation, real change takes place at a structural level. In order for it to be effective there must be on-going dialogue and evaluation.

Paulo Freire (1972) names this paradigm as 'praxis'². This requires that we should be constantly moving from reflection to action and back again. In this way the 'dialogue' begins to live and breathe as a tangible reality; a growing, evolving and maturing process.

FOOTNOTES : CONCLUSION

1. A. Norman Jeffares, Yeats's Poems .(Dublin: Gill and Macmillan Ltd, 1989) P.471., "Circus Animals Dissertation".
2. Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed. (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1972), P.60.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Lesson sequence for 2nd Year; Group A.

THEME: Crests/ Heraldry

AIM: To understand basics of creative embroidery and applique using fabrics of various colours and textures.

DATE	CLASS/ TIME	ELEMENT	ACTIVITY /SKILL	MATERIAL	SUPPORT STUDIES	H/WORK
28TH NOV. '94	2S:9.10- 9.45	Shape, colour	Designing, cutting using coloured paper	Coloured paper, scissors.	Chart:Irish family names Vis. Aid - Appliqued Crest	Use col.paper to make designs
5TH DEC.' 94	"	Shape, colour	As above and stick down shapes	As above and pritt stick	Paper crest designs	Render designs in colour
12TH DEC.' 94	"	Shape	Pattern cutting	Fabric, pins, scissors	Vis Aid- Appliqued Crest	-----
XMAS	BREAK	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
9TH JAN. '95	2S: 9.10- 9.45	Shape, colour	Cutting fabric from paper pattern, choosing complimen tary colours for inside shapes.	Newsprint pattern, fabric, pins, scissors	Newsprint patterns pinned to fabric	Cut patterns for inside shapes

16TH JAN. '95	"	Stitching	Stitching technique s	Fabric, needle, thread	Slides: Bayeaux Tapestry Sampler: Stitching Techniques	Complete sampler
23RD JAN. '95	"	Shape, colour	Cutting inside shapes from fabric using pattern	Newsprint pattern fabric, pins, scissors	Vis Aid- Appliqued Crest cut patterns	Sketch section of jacket where stitching is visible
30TH JAN. '95	NO CLASS MEETING	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
6TH FEB. '95	2S: 9.10- 9.45	Shape, colour	Cutting inside shapes form fabric using pattern. Begin stitching inside shapes to crest.	Newsprint pattern, fabric, pins, scissors	Cut patterns, Vis.Aid -Appliqued Crest.	Sketch towel draped on chair
13TH FEB. '95	"	Stitching	Begin stitching inside shapes to crest	Fabric, needle, thread, scissors	As Above	
MID	TERM	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
27TH FEB. '95	2S: 9.10- 9.45	Stitching	Continue stitching inside shapes to crest	Fabric, needle, thread, scissors	Vis.Aid -Appliqued Crest.	Continue Classwork
6TH MARC H '95	"	As Above	As Above	As Above	As Above	Continue Classwork
13TH MARC H '95	"	Cutting, Stitching	Cut loops and begin stitching to crest	Fabric, needle, thread, scissors	As Above	Continue Classwork
20TH MARC H '95	"	Evaluation	Writing a descriptio n			

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire designed to examine pupils perception, understanding and exposure to textile crafts.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Tick on the line after the answer you have chosen.

Q1: There are many types of art work.

Circle 3 types which you would enjoy.
Number 1-3 in order of your preference.

Ceramics (working with clay)	_____
Painting	_____
Graphics	_____
Sculpture	_____
Textiles (working with fabric, wool or thread)	_____

Q2: In your home, which of the following family members are good at textile crafts?

Father	_____
Mother	_____
Brother	_____
Sister	_____
Myself	_____
Others	_____

Q3: Have you ever worked with fabric, wool, thread?

Yes _____
No _____

If yes, explain how you used these materials.

APPENDIX B (Continued)

Who taught you how to use these materials?

Father	_____
Mother	_____
Brother	_____
Sister	_____
Myself	_____
Others	_____
Teacher	_____

Q4: Can you name any textile-based craft?

Q5: Where have you seen these in operation?

Home	_____
School	_____
Television	_____
Other	_____

Explain: _____

APPENDIX C

Lesson sequence for 2nd Year; Group B.

THEME: Helmet /Shape - Appliqued Hanging.

AIM: To understand the basics of applique and stitching using two fabrics of contrasting colours. To build a surface creatively using fabric thread.

DATE	CLASS/ TIME	ELEMENT	ACTIVITY /SKILL	MATERIAL	SUPPORT STUDIES	H/WORK
27TH FEB. '95	2RGV:10.5 5-11.30	Line/ shape.	Drawing/ Observing.	Pencil, paper.	Shape Drawing - helmet.	Begin collecting fabric samples.
6TH MAR' 95	"	Line/ shape.	As Above.	As Above.	As Above.	As Above.
13TH MAR '95	"	Tracing.	Tracing/ cutting.	Newsprint, scissors.	Paper pattern pinned and fabric.	Collect scraps of fabric.
20TH MAR '95	"	Pinning	Cutting/ pinning fabric.	Fabric, pins, scissors.	Photocopies : medieval textiles.	Design your own monogram.

27th MAR '95	'	Stitching.	Application of shape to fabric.	Fabric, embroidery thread, needle, pins.	Photocopies : contemporary textiles.	Review of work and continue.
3rd April '95	"	Stitching	As Above.	As Above.	slides : contemporary embroidery.	Perfect 'monogram'
	EASTER HOLIDAYS	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
24TH April '95	2RGV: 10.55- 11.30	Lettering	Tracing, cutting stencil.	Newsprint, pins, thread.	Photocopies : medieval and contemporary textiles.	Begin compiling display sheet of work produced in project
1ST MAY '95	BANK HOLIDAY	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
8TH MAY '95	2RGV: 10.55- 11.30	Stitchin.g	Embroidering monogram.	Needle, embroidery thread.	Handouts: embroidered lettering.	Complete Above.
15th MAY '95	Complete project.	Stitching.	Hemming sides and loops for hanging.	Fabric, needle, pins, thread.	As Above.	-----

APPENDIX D

Lesson sequence for 2nd Year; Group C.

THEME: Crests/ Tie-Dye.

AIM: To understand techniques of tie-dying, stencil cutting and printing.
To print crest design on tie-dyed background.

DATE	CLASS/ TIME	ELEMENT	ACTIVITY /SKILL	MATERIAL	SUPPORT STUDIES	H/WORK
6TH DEC. '94	1S:3.10- 3.45pm	Shape, contrast.	Cutting /sticking.	Paper/ scissors.	Vis aid: blk/white designs.	-----
13TH DEC.' 94	NO CLASS	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
-----	XMAS	BREAK	-----	-----	-----	-----
10TH JAN' 95	1S: 3.10- 3.45PM	Shape/con trast	Cutting/ sticking	Scissors/ pritt stick	Vis aid: Blk/white designs.	Make pencil drawing of design.

17TH JAN. '95		Fabric pleating, tying, scrunchin g.Shape, colour	Tie-dye.	Fabric, Twine, Dylon cold water dyes.	Tie-dyed samples	Make a Primary and Secondary colour chart
24th JAN. '95		Line	Tracing/ cutting	Newsprint, pencil, craft knife.	Vis Aid: pre-cut stencil. finished printed tye dyed design.	Sketch a cushion.
31st JAN. '95	"	As Above	As Above	As Above	As Above	Home in on section of cushion
7th FEB '95	"	As Above	As Above	As Above	As Above	As Above
14TH FEB. '95	"	Printing.	Printing.	Ink, Screen, squeegee, fabric, tape.	"	"
----	MID	TERM	-----	-----	-----	-----
28TH FEB '95	1S: 3.10- 3.45PM	1.Printing 2.Pattern	1.Printing 2.Measuri ng	As Above, paper, pencil, ruler.	Vis Aid: printer, tie-dyed hanging. and stages of pattern	Sketch a repeat pattern.

**N.B. AT THIS STAGE PUPILS WHO HAVE COMPLETED PRINTING
WILL BEGIN PATTERN WORKSHEET - PROJECT WILL RUN
CONCURRENTLY WHILE PUPILS PRINT IN TURNS.**

21ST MARC H '95	1S: 3.10- 3.45 PM	ALL PUPILS WILL HAVE COMPLETED PRINTING PROCESS.
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