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NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

ART, CRAFT AND DESIGN

IN TRANSITION YEAR

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Education

in

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by

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INTRODUCTION

I begin this dissertation with general information on the Transition year programme, its mission, goals and objectives. I then discuss the area of Art, Craft and design for the Transition year pupil, and the Art teacher's role.

I discuss two different school's approaches to Transition year paying special attention to the position of Art, Craft and Design in the programme.

In Chapter three I discuss and evaluate the results of a project I devised for the Transition year pupils in School B.

CHAPTER 1

TRANSITION YEAR

General Information

The Transition Year Programme is an option for most second level schools commencing this school year 1994/1995. Out of the 818 second level institutions in the Republic of Ireland, 437 have opted to provide Transition year after gaining approval from the Department of Education.

Transition year is not a new development. The idea of such a year within the school curriculum was put forward by Mr Burke, the Minister for Education in 1974,¹ "to stop the academic treadmill and release the student from competitive education pressures for one year"¹

Twenty years on, many schools have initiated and maintained successful Transition year Programmes. One such school is Newpark Comprehensive, Blackrock, Co Dublin which started Transition year in 1975 and teachers there feel that national recognition of this curriculum development project is to be welcomed. At the moment, the Department of Education is providing the new Transition year and wants it to play a bigger role in second level.

¹ Crooks and McKernan: The Challenge of Change - Curriculum Development in Irish Post-Primary School, 1970-1984
Institute of Public Administration. p26.

The following are Transition Year Guidelines for 1994/1995 as issued by the Department of Education.

Mission

To promote the personal, social, educational and vocational development of pupils and to prepare them for their role as autonomous, participative and responsible members of society.

Transition Year Guidelines '94/'95

1. Education for maturity with the emphasis on personal development including social awareness and increased social competence.
2. The promotion of general, technical and academic skills with an emphasis on interdisciplinary and self-directed learning.
3. Education through experience of adult and working life as a basis for personal development and maturity.

The aims and philosophy of Transition year should permeate the entire school.

Goals and Objectives

Schools providing Transition year programmes have responsibility for setting appropriate goals and defining the objectives necessary for their achievement. The schools should involve parents, work providers and the wider community as educational partners in all aspects of the programme and ensure efficient and effective delivery of the programme.²

The aims and philosophy are positive and highly recommended. Educators and parents realise the present social and economic climate conveys the need for this broader form of education. Transition year will help address this problem. The extra year in school means leaving school older, like their counterparts in Europe.

Two Important Points

The Department makes two very important points concerning the 'T.Y.P'. Firstly, programmes must adapt to the pupils requirements, having regard for the Guidelines. Secondly,

² The Department of Education, Transition Year Guidelines 1994-95. Dublin 1993 p41

Transition year must not be part of the Leaving Certificate and must not be used as a third year in teaching the Leaving Certificate syllabus. The A.S.T.I at its 1993 Convention stated, "It is essential to ensure that it (the Leaving Certificate) remains as a two-year programme as otherwise there is a risk of serious erosion in the Transition Year".³

³ The A.S.T.I. National Convention 1993, p7.

ART, CRAFT AND DESIGN FOR THE TRANSITION YEAR PUPIL

Aesthetics Education

The aim is to develop an awareness and appreciation of visual Art, music, dance, drama, photography, etc. Critical reading, viewing, listening and exposure to the living arts are worth promoting.

Achievement of the aim can be reinforced by the provision of suitable opportunities for creativity and innovation. Pupils could undertake work in one or more of the Art forms mentioned above and their experiences might be recorded and reinforced using selected media and approaches such as:

- Portfolio
- Audio/Videotape
- Photography
- Composing
- Performing"⁴

The above guidelines for Aesthetic Education provide Transition year with a choice in order to accommodate different schools approaches to the arts. Not all artistic disciplines mentioned have to be included in schools' programmes but there are advantages to crossing artistic disciplines with each other, since the arts amplify each other's importance and benefit education.

In his book, "Cognition and Curriculum - A Basis for Deciding What to Teach," Eisner supports the notion of exposing students to the arts.

...give students access to subject areas that cultivate and refine the sensibilities. The subject areas that do this best are the fine arts. The fine arts - visual arts, music, dance, drama - were developed because of our human need to receive and convey information in forms that capitalise on the use of different sensory systems...The prime virtue is that the apotheoses of human achievement have been couched in such forms.⁵

⁴ The Department of Education, Transition Year Guidelines 1994-95. Dublin 1993, p21

⁵ Elliot W Eisner; Cognition and Curriculum: A Basis for Deciding on What to Teach. New York: Longman Inc., 1982. p74.

My intention is to discuss the visual arts only, it alone has infinite possibilities for the Transition year pupil. The visual arts are valued for their multiple advantages in education. Under the heading, "The Arts in Education," the Curriculum and Examinations Board states in its "Rationale for the Visual Arts in Education,"

Education in the visual arts should develop those processes which function via imagery and visualisation. The visual arts help develop self-esteem, self-reliance and personal identity through creative achievement. This active process involves the whole person, mental, physical and emotional.⁶

The Art Teacher's Role

The Art teacher must guide, inform and encourage Transition year pupils giving plenty of room for their ideas or preferences. It is stated in the Introductory Note of the Guidelines that the Transition year.

provides a bridge to help pupils make the Transition from a highly-structured environment to one where they will take greater responsibility for their own learning and decision making. Pupils will participate in learning strategies which are active and experiential...⁷

The teacher has the task of designing a scheme of work which involves the learning of skills, vocabulary, self evaluation and self motivation for the pupil. Howard Gardner gives excellent advice in his book, 'Multiple Intelligences - The Theory in Practice'.

...Wherever possible, artistic learning should be organised around meaningful projects, which are carried out over a significant period of time, and allow a ample opportunity for feedback, discussion and reflection. Such projects are likely to interest students, motivate them, and encourage them to develop skills and they may well exert a long-term impact on the students' competence and understanding.

⁶ Curriculum and Examinations Board; The Arts and Education - A Curriculum and Examinations Board Discussion Paper. Sept 1985. pp16-17.

⁷ The Department of Education, Transition Year Guidelines 1994-95. Dublin 1993, p3.

⁸ Howard Gardner; Multiple Intelligences - The Theory in Practice. New York: Basic Books, A Division of Harper Collins Inc 1993. p142.

The phrase 'Meaningful projects' is important. The pupil will be encouraged to work creatively and thoroughly. The Art teacher has the responsibility of cultivating the pupils' sensibilities and creativity through projects which are of genuine interest to them..

CHAPTER 2

TWO SCHOOLS EXPERIENCES OF THE TRANSITION YEAR

For the purpose of this dissertation I will discuss two different schools' approaches to Transition year paying special attention to the position of Art, Craft and Design in the programme. I have previously worked in School A and am presently doing teaching practice in School B.

SCHOOL PROFILES

School A

School A is situated in Dublin's inner city. It is an all female convent secondary school with almost 500 pupils on the roll. Within the school there are problems with pupils' attendance and discipline. The general outlook for pupils is bleak, unemployment is widespread and many live in difficult social circumstances.

School B

School B is a southside suburban private convent secondary with a population of 500. Students enjoy comfortable homes, parental support and encouragement. The school building is far superior to that of School A, it has very good facilities. Like School A, Transition Year was introduced in September 94. But, unlike School B the agenda for providing the TYP is very different. School B has a highly motivated student body. It does not lack finance. Fees per student are £700 per annum.

School A: Debating the need for Transition Year Programme.

It was at one of the first meetings of the school year 1993/1994 that the Principal of School A informed the teaching staff of her interest in providing a Transition year as an option starting from September 94. I was present at the staff meeting, as I was employed as a part-time Art teacher.

The initial and general response from the staff was one of shock and horror. When things had calmed down the Principal read out the aims and objectives, gave a broad outline of the Department's views on the benefits of Transition year. The staff began to see some positive aspects to the proposal.

In a short time open discussion began in earnest, and each staff member took part in the debate. Some of the main arguments are as follows:

Views in Favour of Transition Year

1. It will provide new and interesting subject areas for pupils and teachers.
2. Pupils may have a chance at work experience and the responsibility that goes with it. Work experience may lead to future jobs/contacts.
3. It will mean that pupils are more likely to be confident leaving school.
4. TYP will be an example of teamwork, co-operation, productivity to the school as a whole.
5. It will provide a year of developing mental and practical skills without the pressure of exams.
6. It will increase numbers at a time when student numbers are declining.
7. Teachers can employ their specific talents.

Views Against Transition Year

1. We don't have the resources, i.e. teachers, finance, space or the time to plan such a programme.
2. There will be no interest in Transition year in this school. It is difficult enough trying to maintain pupil numbers to Leaving Cert. Parents are more concerned with their children getting employment as soon as they possibly can,

staying in school for another year would be a luxury for these pupils.

3. How can we motivate Transition year pupils without exams?
4. We cannot be expected to organise programmes and the like, we haven't got the time or the energy, we are stretched as it is.

I have summarised the main arguments in order to represent each side. The Principal, understanding the problems, assured the staff on some of the details, i.e. planning importance and in-service training would be provided promptly. The Principal again expressed her wish to provide TYP for the following school year. At the end of the meeting a vote was taken and a large number voted in support of Transition Year.

PLANNING TRANSITION YEAR PROGRAMMES

School A

Planning Transition Year

The next step was to organise those who wanted to have an active role in the TYP, i.e. the organisation, planning and teaching. Those who did not want to be involved were safe in the knowledge that their routine would not change.

By the end of the first planning meeting everyone seemed pleased with the outcome. The Principal had explained that one in-service day would be obligatory for the whole staff but that henceforth only those who were directly involved in the Programme would need further in-service. It was at this meeting that a working party was established along with two main co-ordinators.

The team held a brainstorming session with the staff in order to have ideas and activities from which to plan. The exercise proved to be extremely helpful to the organising team as it focused on the individual subject areas and their possibilities and interdisciplinary linkage for example, Art could be linked with French., The Art teacher may explore the French impressionist painters and use it as a source for classroom activity. The French teacher using the same theme to develop vocabulary and conversation.

It took several months of hard work by the co-ordinators and planning team to create a broad and imaginative programme to suit the school. The next step was to inform the parents and pupils.

School A Informing the Parents

A meeting was held in March '94 for parents of Junior Certificate pupils, they being the prospective Transition year. I was at the meeting along with about ten other teachers. We

almost outnumbered the parents but this poor attendance was expected.

A speaker from the Department of Education outlined the purpose of Transition year and gave his own personal views as a parent and teacher.

After this informative introduction the Principal related some of the recommendations made by the planning team, they were as follows:

1. Twenty four pupils would be taken on the programme in the first year.
2. If over twenty four pupils apply; selection by interview would decide.
3. Pupils will have a role in designing their own programme, i.e. during the interview stage pupils will be asked for ideas on subjects areas, sports, activities they wish to pursue.

The general consensus was that Transition year could be a positive force in any school. The questions asked by parents centred around cost and concern for academic work playing a smaller role in the programme's structure. The cost was a worrying factor for the Principal too, however it may not be such a burden now as the Department of Education gives a £50 grant per Transition year pupil.

School B

Planning for Transition Year

Like School A, this year is the first time School B have provided TYP. Unlike School A, teachers and management agreed early on to provide Transition year for all pupils and so henceforth all post Junior Certificate will take the Transition year programme.

Parents were advised of the benefits at a meeting similar to the one organised in School A. They willingly accepted the decision of the school.

The school had a large number of plan for, there are seventy pupils in TYP but planning timetables and time for trips was not as difficult as planning School A, simply because the Transition year group was counted as another year group. The activities, i.e. work experience, field trips, drama and sport, etc conveyed the need for triple class periods instead of the usual single or double and so this was accommodated in the planning stage.

This school has a history of success in various sports, most notably hockey and basketball. Sport is very important in the school curriculum. For instance, there are two PE teachers and a part-time basketball coach as compared with one PE teacher for the whole of School A.

Drama is another area that has always been an integral part of the school and has always been an integral part of the school and has the 'infrastructure' for Transition year programme.

School A: Art, Craft and Design

There are two Art teachers in School A, one permanent and one part-time. The permanent Art teacher has Transition years. At first she was anxious with the prospect as she felt the she was still coming to terms with the Junior Cert and the workload it presented.

The Principal made her life easier by acquiring a £2,500 kiln. It has taken pride of place in the artroom since its installation in September 94. The kiln was a wise and useful purchase in a school where finance is tight. To date the kiln has been used by all Art classes, Transition year and the adult Art groups who use the school facilities.

There are two spacious Art rooms, one a well planned purpose built, the other a renovated music room.

The Art teacher emphasises craft in her programme, she feels it is appropriate for her group as most have not done Art before and craft is her strong point.

Art Rooms - School A



1. The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country and the progress of the work during the year. It is divided into two main sections: the first section deals with the general situation of the country and the progress of the work during the year, and the second section deals with the specific results of the work.

2. The second part of the report deals with the specific results of the work. It is divided into three main sections: the first section deals with the results of the work in the field of agriculture, the second section deals with the results of the work in the field of industry, and the third section deals with the results of the work in the field of commerce.

3. The third part of the report deals with the conclusions and recommendations. It is divided into two main sections: the first section deals with the conclusions, and the second section deals with the recommendations.

4. The fourth part of the report deals with the financial statement. It is divided into two main sections: the first section deals with the income statement, and the second section deals with the balance sheet.

5. The fifth part of the report deals with the annexes. It is divided into three main sections: the first section deals with the list of the members of the committee, the second section deals with the list of the members of the sub-committee, and the third section deals with the list of the members of the working group.

6. The sixth part of the report deals with the index. It is divided into two main sections: the first section deals with the index of the report, and the second section deals with the index of the annexes.

School A: Transition Year Art Projects

Transition year has Art once a week for 2 hours 40 minutes, timetabled as a treble, a generous amount of time. It is not a modular subject so it remains unchanged for the year except of course for interruptions such as time out for 'musical' practice or work experience and the like, but any school providing the TYP have experienced this, it is to be expected.

So far the Transition years have completed a batik and ceramics project, the results were impressive technically, but there was no evidence of the design process, all images tended to come from secondary sources. I would be fearful that pupils direct themselves towards making a product and ignoring the learning.

Not to be too critical, the purpose of providing the Transition year Art, Craft and Design for school A was primarily to expose the students to the benefits of the visual Arts, to introduce them to another world. For example it is very unlikely that pupils from School A walked around an Art Gallery and it is not because they are any less visually literate than any other Transition year pupils in another school but simply because they are not exposed to the arts in general on a regular basis whether at home or in school.

Transition year is the ideal time to show pupils the relevance of Art and design in their lives, to give access to Art that surrounds them in everyday life.

Statistics show that School A does not have many students going on to third level and with respect to the visual arts, pupils from this school are less likely to go to Art college as compared to School B where on average there are at least two applicants for Art college annually over the past five years.

It is very important for the pupils of School A to have the opportunity to gain insight into the visual arts and arts in general while they are still at school. This can be achieved by developing the pupils practical knowledge which comes from

visiting various galleries, artist studios, graphic designs, important exhibitions, work experience in the Art area.

By introducing the pupils to aesthetics and need for the visual arts and crafts in our environment, they have knowledge and experience, a foundation onto which they can build.

School B: Art, Craft and Design

There is only one Art teacher in School B, and a need for a second part-time. The Art teacher is extremely talented in all the craft areas, this is reflected in the pupils' work which adorns every conceivable space in the two Art rooms. One room is for painting/drawing primarily and the other for crafts. The craft room has great large desks, and plenty of storage areas. There is evidence of all sorts of craftwork in progress from 1st up to 6th year, i.e. batik, screen print, creative embroidery, marionette puppets, ceramics etc.

The Art teacher has supervised portfolio preparation for her 6th year pupils, applying for the various third level colleges and usually has a high success rate. This year in fact, all four pupils who applied for NCAD core got accepted pending their exam results. One of the main reasons for the great tradition for Art in this school besides the good teaching and general ability of pupils is the fact that the former Principal, a Loreto Sister was an Art teacher. She always gave Art the high profile it deserved in an otherwise very academic driven school.

School B: Transition Year Art Projects

The Art department has proved to be a very popular subject with the TYP. All Transition year pupils have "arts and crafts" for a module, this consists of a double period per week for seven weeks. The crafts carried out in these modules include ceramic mirror frames, book binding and decoration, batik, paper and ceramic jewellery.

There are eight pupils who have chosen Art as a major area for their Transition year and they have Art for a double period every week throughout the year.

I had the pleasure of teaching these pupils for a few weeks and I will describe my experience in the final chapter. Firstly, though, I must give a brief summary of the project they

completed with their regular Art teacher to give an idea of the standard of work.

Art Rooms - School B



1. The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country and the progress of the work during the year. It is divided into two main sections: the first section deals with the general situation and the second section deals with the progress of the work.

2. The second part of the report deals with the results of the work during the year. It is divided into two main sections: the first section deals with the results of the work in the field of research and the second section deals with the results of the work in the field of administration.

3. The third part of the report deals with the conclusions of the work during the year. It is divided into two main sections: the first section deals with the conclusions of the work in the field of research and the second section deals with the conclusions of the work in the field of administration.

4. The fourth part of the report deals with the recommendations of the work during the year. It is divided into two main sections: the first section deals with the recommendations of the work in the field of research and the second section deals with the recommendations of the work in the field of administration.

5. The fifth part of the report deals with the summary of the work during the year. It is divided into two main sections: the first section deals with the summary of the work in the field of research and the second section deals with the summary of the work in the field of administration.

6. The sixth part of the report deals with the appendixes of the work during the year. It is divided into two main sections: the first section deals with the appendixes of the work in the field of research and the second section deals with the appendixes of the work in the field of administration.

7. The seventh part of the report deals with the bibliography of the work during the year. It is divided into two main sections: the first section deals with the bibliography of the work in the field of research and the second section deals with the bibliography of the work in the field of administration.

8. The eighth part of the report deals with the index of the work during the year. It is divided into two main sections: the first section deals with the index of the work in the field of research and the second section deals with the index of the work in the field of administration.

The Art teacher devised a project which stretched and challenged the imagination and skills of her pupils. Since teaching the same girls at Junior Cert level, she had a good understanding of their abilities. The scheme as you will see, includes most of the Art elements and the design process, it starts with 2d and ends with a 3d piece.

The project started with the concept of distortion. Each pupil made a large tonal drawing of her distorted face. The distortion was taken from a reflection in a dessert spoon. So working from this primary source pupils managed to represent their distorted image.

The next stage was to make another image this time using colour, again, it was taken from the primary source, i.e. the reflection in the spoon. See figs 5,6,7. Three examples of the paintings. The eight Transition years produced paintings which conveyed their sensitive regard for colour, some showing distortion of colour by employing high and low key colour and others using an almost monochromatic effect.

Distorted Face Paintings



Fig 5

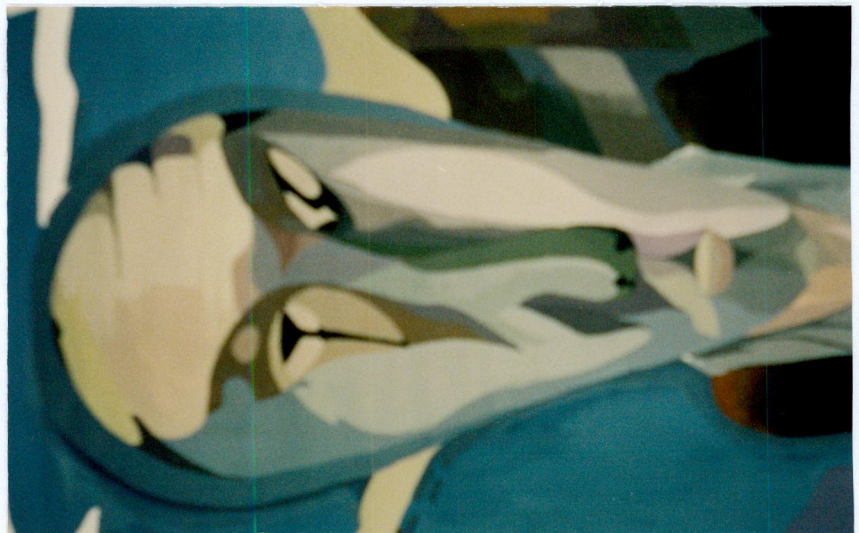


Fig 6

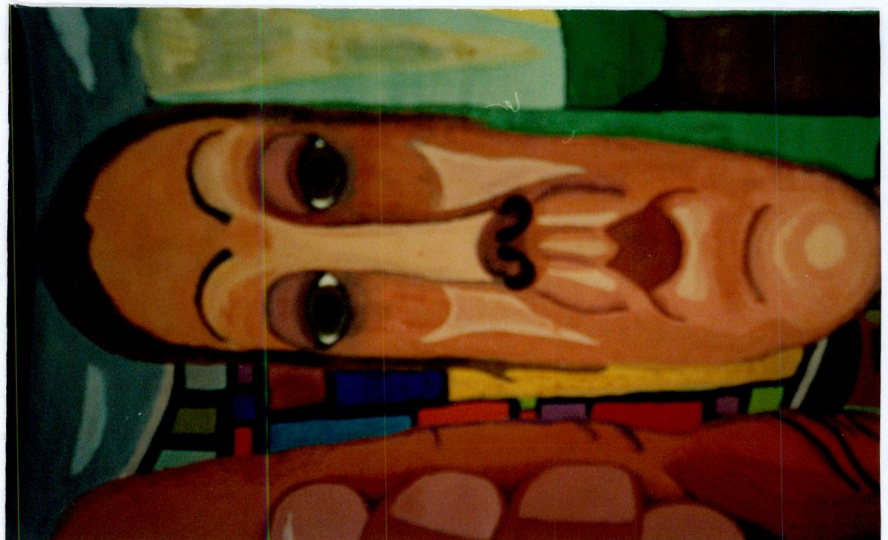


Fig 7

1. The first part of the report
describes the general situation
of the country and the
main problems which
are facing it. It also
mentions the main
achievements of the
government in the
last few years.

2. The second part of the report
describes the main
problems which are
facing the country
and the main
achievements of the
government in the
last few years.

3. The third part of the report
describes the main
problems which are
facing the country
and the main
achievements of the
government in the
last few years.

The final part to this particular project was the construction of a large mask at least 3' in height based on the theme of distortion. The pupils were asked to use the drawing and paintings as a starting point but to partly disguise the fact that the mask was based on the 'distorted face'. The pupils introduced animal markings, for example zebra and tortoise shell onto the surface of the mask. One student bringing in the theme of identity used her own blown up face print. The masks were constructed from chicken wire and papier mâché and finished with a variety of media, including collage. See figs 8 and 9.

The pupils enjoyed this project because it was based on themselves, they were encouraged to explore the history and cultural backgrounds of mask by gathering information from books, postcards, and magazines. The information gathered by the pupils helped them in developing their own ideas for their masks, in other words, promoted self-directed learning.

MASKS

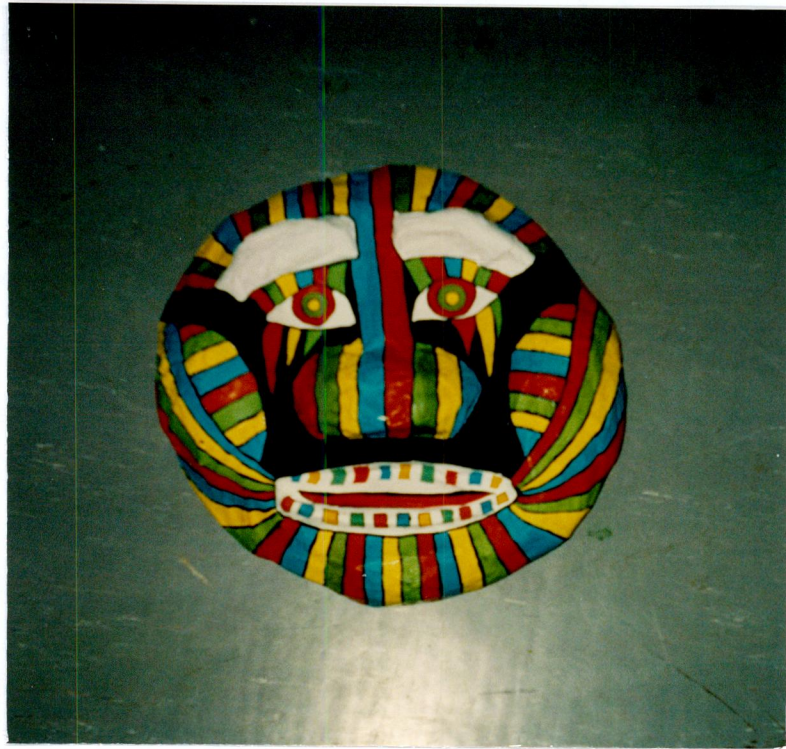


Fig 8



Fig 9



CHAPTER 3

Transition Year Project - Chair Design

In this chapter I will discuss and evaluate a project I devised for the Transition year pupils in School B.

My experience of Transition year was very short lived with regards to contact time with pupils, I was unlucky to have the Transitions years at a time when they were busy rehearsing for a musical. Out of eight double periods given to me for teaching Transition year, I ended up with only having four classes. Obviously my expectations for the project had to be revised along the way.

The following 'aim' along with its sequence of lessons is the project I had designed for the Transition year taking into account that I would have eight pupils for an eight week module.

The Aim

To design and make chairs (1' x 1' min) using found objects and natural materials.

The 'theme' throughout the project is 'simplicity the best policy.'

The 'Bauhaus' will be used as a starting point, providing students with a historical background. Pupils will keep a written and visual account of both the Bauhaus designers and their own original designs in a notebook format which will be assessed along with the finished chair at the end of the module.

Sequence of Lessons

Transition Year Project - Chair design

8 week module

Date/Time	Theme	Source	Element	Activity/Skill	Materials	Support Studies
7 Feb 11.00-12.45 (1 lesson)	Chair design, 'simplicity the best policy'	Bauhaus Chair Design	(Thumbnail sketches)	Brainstorm types of chair Functions	Pencil Paper	Video - Exhibition of chair design, London, '80s
21,28 Feb 11.00-12.45 (2 lessons)	Chair design	Bauhaus Chair Design	Drawing. 3D construction of small macquettes	Researching materials	Card, corrugated card, paper, glue gun, rulers, craft knives, hack saws, balsa wood, sisal, twigs, shells.	Chairs throughout history - Visual aid. Macquettes - visual aids
7,14 Mar 11.00-12.45 (2 lessons)	Chair design	Bauhaus Chair Design	Working drawings i.e. technical type drawings side elevation plan, isometric view	Basic Technical drawing	Pencil, paper, ruler, set square, compass	Demonstration on using set square
21,28 Mar (2 lessons)	Chair design	Bauhaus Chair Design	3D construction of chair, 1' x 1' min	Construction and treatment of surface		Samples of texture visual aid.
4 Apr	PUPILS OUT ON WORK EXPERIENCE					

The above sequence of lessons was the original plan of work for the chair project. I presumed, when planning, that I had left enough time in order for pupils to investigate, design and produce chairs i.e. I had allowed for two double periods for one lesson on 21st and 28th of February as the lesson needed a substantial amount of activity time, researching materials and constructing macquettes. Another two double periods were given over to technical drawings and with retrospect it was not necessary to have so much time given over to technical drawing. It was one of the areas I had to omit in order to keep up the momentum of the project. Although I left out the requirement of having a technical drawing of the final chair design, I did discuss with the pupils the need for designers to use technical drawings for scale, measurements etc. Whether they use computers or not, I had examples of my own technical drawings of macquettes I had made as visual aids.

In effect, I had tried to cover as much as possible by using visual aids, demonstrating and questioning pupils on aspects of the scheme like the technical drawing which was not particularly important to the main aim or goal. I gave adequate information in these areas where I felt I wouldn't have enough time to do the practical exercises.

The following are summaries of the four lessons I had with Transition year pupils. They follow the sequence but ignore the dates as I did not have the Transition years on the 21st and 28th of March because they were all involved in a musical and on the 4th April, pupils had work experience. On another occasion, 28th February, only two pupils attended my class, there was a lot of absenteeism on that particular day because of snow.

Chair project - Working with the Transition year pupils

Lesson 1 7th February

I introduced myself and gave a general outline of the project I explained to the group that I was using this project and them as the subject for my dissertation, where I would endeavour to identify the strong and weak areas in Art, Craft and Design in the TYP. I didn't go into any detail, naturally but I think they appreciated me telling them.

The first lesson was attended by five pupils out of a group of eight. This worried me as the first class was to be used as an introduction in the form of a brainstorming session, a discussion on the function of chairs and a video of an exhibition on chair design.

The class had to go ahead and include all the above methodology as I wanted to create an impact and interest for the pupil. I put the word chair on the board and asked the group to think of as many types of chair, including historical, or chairs designed for specific functions, i.e. dentists chair. They came up with a list.

Rocking chair	Throne
Kitchen chair	Dentist chair
Arm chair	Electric chair
Director's chair	Pullman seats
Swing chair (garden chair)	Plastic, stacking chairs
Baby chair (seat)	Swivel chairs
Wheel chair	Camping chairs
Car seat	Milking stool
Couch	Bar stool/high stool
Swinging chairs (carnivals)	Toilet seat

We then discussed the function of some chairs on the above list for example, describing the function of the 'Throne' - This is a symbol as well as being a functional chair. It can create a sense of importance by its size or decoration, it is usually a

piece designed and made by people recognised for their expertise and skill. It is certainly not mass produced.

The brainstorming and discussion which followed took about twenty minutes before I decided to proceed with the next part of the lesson. I placed a chair in the middle of the room. It was a grey plastic moulded seat with tubular metal legs, a chair which is mass produced and can be seen everywhere. I asked the pupils to think about its function, costs, durability and aesthetic qualities, if any. I found that I had to start with leading questions in order for the pupils to participate, they were very shy and I must say I had been forewarned by the Art teacher, she found them extremely good artistically, but extremely quiet. I persevered with the questioning and got some of their thoughts on the 'plastic chair'.

It's easy to clean

It's cheap to make

The colour is neutral

It's strong and durable

Chairs can be stacked

It is light to carry/move.

I wouldn't like it in my home, it's okay in a school hall/classroom.

I ended the class by showing a video of an exhibition on chair design. Unfortunately I do not have the exact title or dates because it was taped and I missed the very start. I do know that the exhibition was in London in the mid 80's. There were international furniture designers discussing their own design for chairs, some had original sketches and drawings blown up and used as backdrops to their exhibits. The programme was in a documentary style, the designers were interviewed about their personal work, the materials they chose and the themes or briefs they worked from. This I thought would be most helpful for the Transition years.

Lesson 2 21 February

This lesson involved planning and researching materials. I asked the pupils to work directly with materials, string, wire, straws, balsa wood so that they would be familiar with the different qualities of materials. The next stage was to make macquettes, i.e. small models. The lesson was activity based but towards the end of the class I have a hand-out to each pupil, it was a brief summary of design history, see appendices. I read through it first and answered any questions.

The class ended with an evaluation of work completed that day. The pupils thought the glue gun was a great device for fixing the types of materials they were using. They liked the fact that balsa wood was so easy to cut and the surface soft enough for scoring, texturing and making impressions.

Although no-one had finished a macquette, the class was a success in that working with the materials, increase skills and techniques needed for making the chairs. The next lesson was to be a continuation of the same however, only two pupils were present, we continued exploring possibilities.

Lesson 3 7 March

I had planned on demonstrating basic technical drawing skills in order for the pupils to transfer the macquette into working drawing. I decided we would not have enough time.

Instead I used visual aids to explain the function of such drawing i.e. scale, measurements, colour. We discussed the need for precision in drawings for factory production etc.

Most of the lesson was again activity based at this stage each pupil having completed three macquettes. They chose one design to increase in scale.

Lesson 4 14 March

On this occasion I had five pupils. It was to be my last time to have Transition years although I did not know at the time.

I hope to have two more classes with the Transition year at a later date in order to complete the project. I am happy with the scheme so far as pupils have learnt skills, techniques, the need for research and planning.

I feel it is important for all pupils to finish a project not for the 'product' but for the experience of working through to the completed stage which increases the pupil's sense of awareness, skills, creativity, ability for problem solving and the overall sense of satisfaction.

Transition Year Chairs



Fig 10



Fig 11



Transition Year Chairs



Fig 12



Fig 13

CONCLUSION

When I began researching for this dissertation I purposely took two schools which I felt were very different, one a financially stretched inner city secondary school, the other a financially secure suburban secondary school. I had the experience of working in the Art department in both schools.

School A - Transition Year Art Projects

All Transition years do Art, most have never done Art before. The purpose of providing the Transition year Art, Craft and Design for School A is primarily to expose the pupils to the visual Arts and encourage creativity. However, because 80% did not have Junior Cert Art, the Art teacher concentrated on craft areas neglecting basic Art elements. This in turn meant that pupils worked from secondary sources and did not use the design process.

Pupils did learn technical processes when working with materials and produced expert results. Most of these pupils regarded Art as a part-time or hobby activity.

School B - Transition Year Art projects

The eight pupils taking Art had received high grades at Junior Certificate Art. They chose Arts and Crafts as a major area of study for their Transition year. Four out of the eight wanted to end up working in the Art and Design area.

The projects designed for them were creative, challenging and required some self-directed learning.

Art, Craft and Design -

The Differences between School A and School B

Schools design programmes to suit the needs of the pupils.

Schools tend to have different agendas, subject areas in different schools have different agendas - In school A, all TYP pupils had to take Art, they had no choice. In School B all TYP pupils were given a choice.

In School A, pupils regarded Art and Craft as a leisure activity, something to work on in the Artroom. In School B, pupils brought work home, gathered support studies, materials and the like.

In School A, projects were assessed along with house exams. In School B, pupils worked towards deadlines given by the Art teacher, all projects were assessed individually.

Art, Craft and Design - School A and School B

Common problems

Both schools suffered some common problems. The main one being; missing class due to shows, field trips, work experience. Of course Art would not be the only subject affected on such occasions but Art needs time. It is a practical subject. There was no evidence of interdisciplinary work between Art departments and other subjects.

Transition Year

Suggestions for Art, Craft and Design

All Transition year pupils should have the choice of doing Art, Craft and Design.

The input of the pupils as to the themes for projects must be considered and valued, not only as an important motivating factor, but also as a factor which grants the pupils the responsibility to direct the course of their work, self-esteem, self-reliance and active involvement etc.

The teacher must take into account levels of ability and understanding of Art when working with pupils and in order to do this numbers should be small.

Interdisciplinary learning must be promoted by schools, there is little evidence so far, to show that it exists.

This school year, 1994/1995 was the first time four hundred and thirty seven schools provided Transition year. They now have the opportunity to examine their programmes in order to improve on the weak areas and strengthen the positive.

APPENDICES

APPENDICES

A brief summary of Design History

The Industrial Revolution in England, brought about by the exploitation of natural resources i.e. deposits of coal, and iron ore, coupled with the use of waterways for power and transport, brought about a tremendous social change in a relatively short period of time. In the space of 150 years, 1750-1900, England changed character, from an essentially rural country with small cottage industry, to an industrial nation.

The countryside became depopulated and the cities grew. The Revolution brought with it many problems, those immediately apparent were altered by legislation, i.e. factory acts, and by working class movements, i.e. Trade Unions.

But the changes happened so fast that no one really had a chance to think things out completely. Liberalism, ruled unchecked in philosophy, as in industry, and implied complete freedom for the manufacturer to produce anything shoddy and hideous, if he could get away with it, and he easily could, the new consumer had no tradition, no education and no leisure, and was, like the producer, a victim of circumstance.

In 1851, Prince Albert, Queen Victoria's husband organised, 'The great exhibition of works of industry of all nations' at the Crystal Palace. The history books tell the story in different ways, the exhibition shone a light on a problem, that is as yet unresolved. It is perhaps at this point, that the word 'design' achieves a significant place in the English language. It is possible that the design process begins with some theories regarding ornament. Ruskin, a prominent writer and thinker contends that 'ornamentation is the principal part of architecture, which impresses certain characteristics venerable of the beautiful, but otherwise unnecessary.'

The works exhibited in the Great Exhibition are certainly very ornamental and William Morris condemned all machine made things "as a condition of life, production by machine is altogether evil." He established a firm, Morris, Marshall and Faulkner, and was a key figure in the English Arts and Crafts movement. Ideas were to re-establish the artist as craftsman and vice-versa, his contention "all Art costs time and trouble and thought."

But manufacturers by means of the new machinery were enabled to turn out thousands of cheap articles in the same time and at the same cost, as was formerly required for one article.

Lewis Day 1845-1910, 'The machine will have something to say concerning the ornament of the future, it is practically settled by the public that they will want machine work. We may protest that they have chosen un-wisely, but they will not pay much heed to us.'

Walter Crane 1845-1915, 'Cheapness in Art and handicraft can only be obtained at the cost of the cheapening of human life and labour.'

The recognition of the machine was inevitable, and therefore the acceptance of new ideas.

Russel Sturgis 1836 - 1909, 'All recognised styles are more or less discredited by the sad misuse they have undergone, they simply do not apply to us.'

Otto Wagner, 'All modern forms must be in harmony with the new requirements of our time. Nothing that is not practical can be beautiful.'

England ceased to play a prominent part in the Design process after Morris's death, the emphasis shifting to the Continent and America. The subsequent monuments in Art and design exhibit an almost startling rapidity of change, from the soft flowing lines of Art Nouveau to the statement made by the Architect Sant'Elia - 'A house must be similar to a gigantic machine, made of concrete, of glass, of iron, without painting or sculpture, cold calculation, and the boldest audacity must unite forces.' Whatever else this statement is, it certainly would administer a shock to those 'souls in the enclosed romanticist nouveau garden'.

Henri Van de Velde 1863-1957, 'The powerful play of their iron arms will create beauty, as long as beauty guides them.'

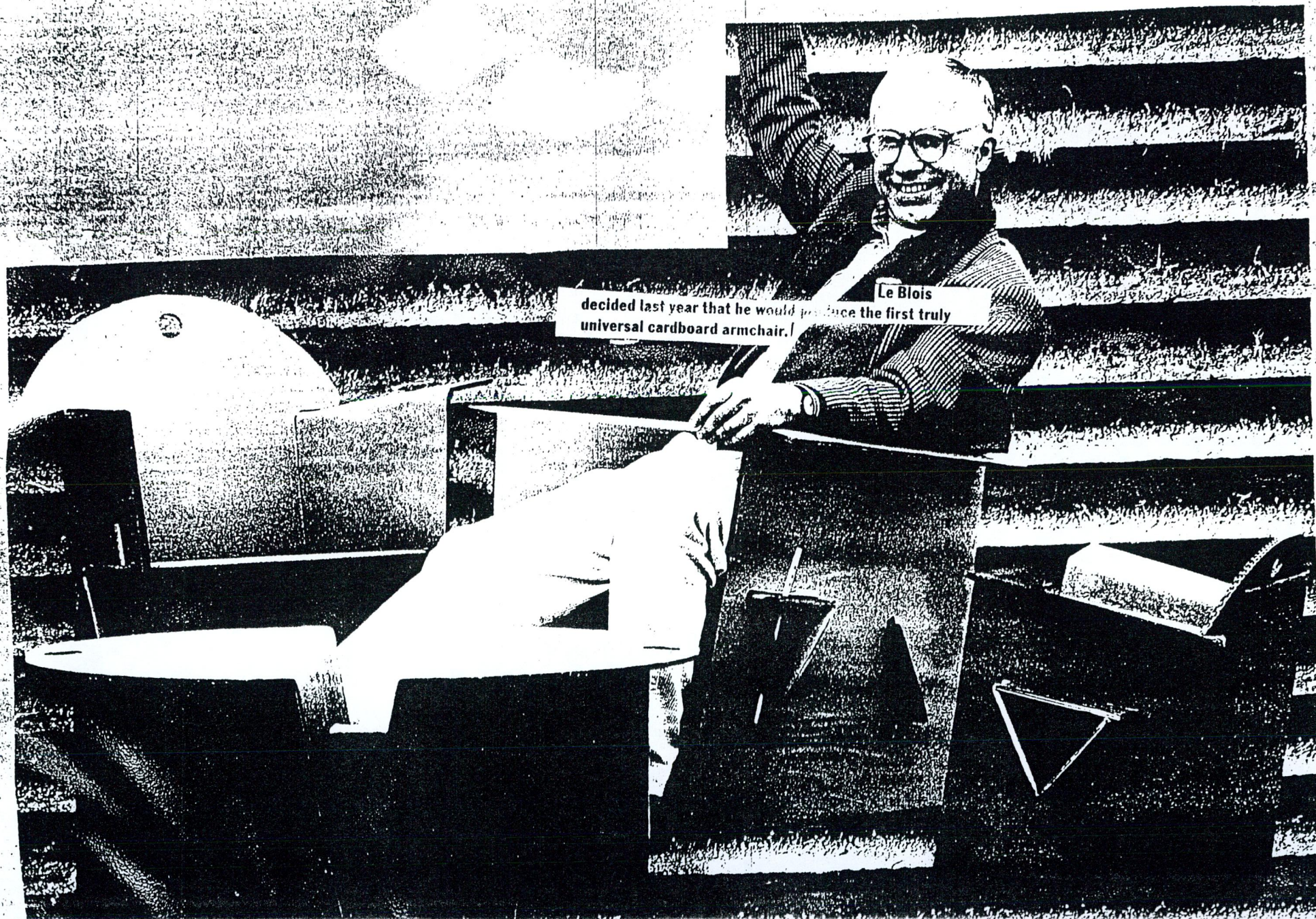
Adolf Loos 1870-1933

'The lower the standards of the people, the more lavish the ornaments.'

Harder sentiments are soon apparent in contemporary monuments. The Dutch painter, Theo Van Doesburg edited a magazine, entitled 'De Stijl', the style. The contributors included Mondrian, J.P. Crouwel, Rietveld and a new form became recognised.

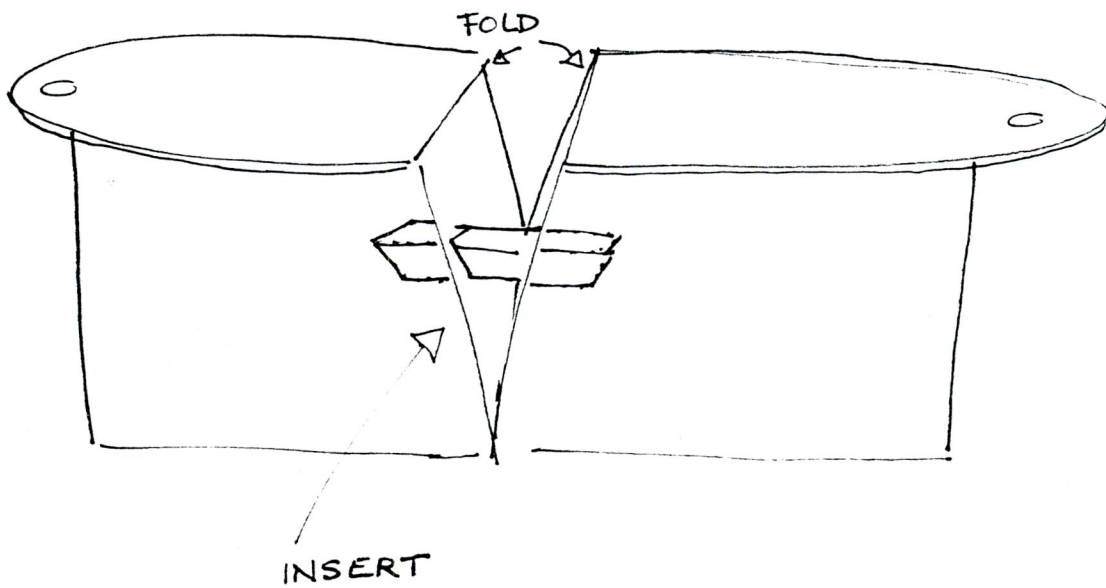
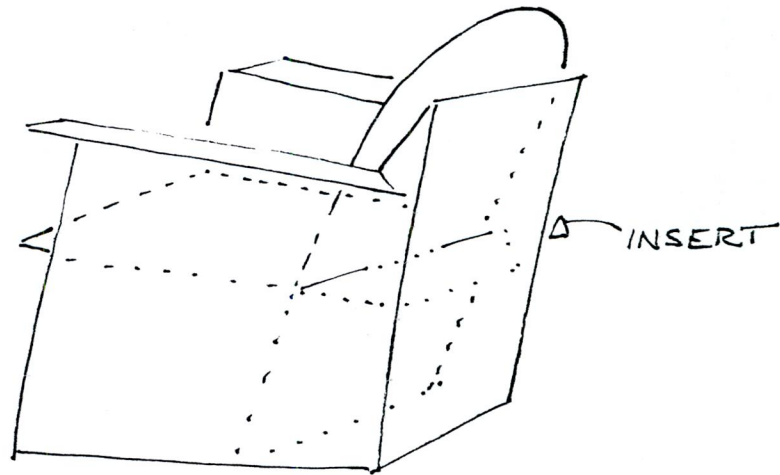
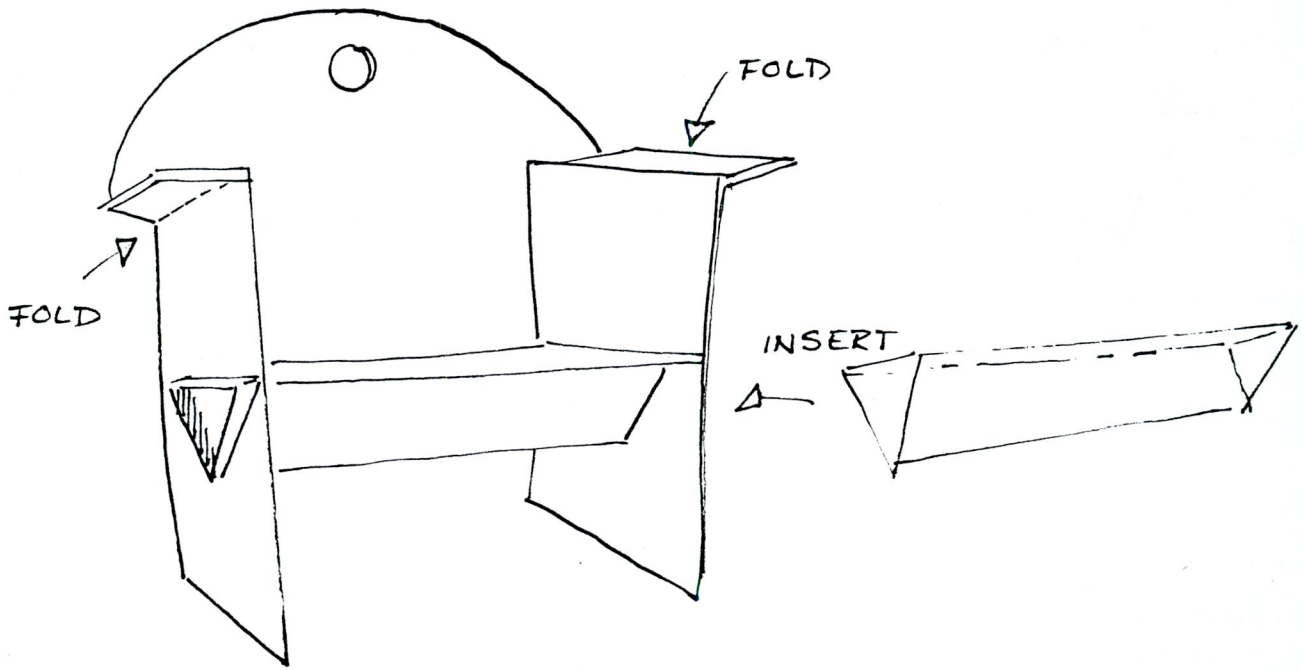
1917-1931

Walter Gropius in 1909, worked out a memorandum on standardisation and mass production of small houses. At the end of 1914 he began to prepare plans for the opening of the Bauhaus, the aim of this school exhibit a concern for the individual and 'all Art; as long as it is sound and healthy'.



Le Blois
decided last year that he would produce the first truly
universal cardboard armchair.

NO GLUE AND STAPLES USED.



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ART CRAFT AND DESIGN IN TRANSITION YEAR

CIARA KELEHAN DIP. ADT.

For this dissertation I discuss two schools approaches to transition year paying special attention to the position of Art, Craft and Design in the programme.

School A is situated in Dublin's inner city. The general outlook for pupils is bleak, unemployment is widespread and many live in difficult circumstances.

School B is a suburban secondary school. Pupils enjoy comfortable homes, parental support and encouragement.

In school A, pupils regarded Art and Craft as a leisure activity, something to work on in the artroom.

In school B, pupils brought work home, gathered support studies, materials and the like.

In school A, all TYP pupils must take art, they have no choice, 80% did not do Junior Cert art.

Whereas in school B the eight pupils who opted for art in the TYP had taken art at Junior Cert. level.

The purpose of providing art in the TYP for school A is primarily to expose the pupils to the visual arts. The emphasis was on the product rather than the design process as pupils worked from secondary sources.

The eight pupils who chose art for TY worked on sequential projects which were creative, challenging and required some self-directed learning.

I finish with some suggestions:

All transition year pupils should have the choice of doing art, craft and design.

The pupils ideas for projects must be considered.

The teacher must recognise levels of ability.

Interdisciplinary learning must be promoted by schools.

This school year, 1994/1995 was the first time four hundred and thirty secondary schools provided transition year. They now have the opportunity to examine their programmes and assess to see if they can improve on the weak areas and strengthen the positive.

