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ABSTRACT

The subject of this dissertation, is an inquiry into the concept of schools as agencies of socialization - whereby schools are supposedly a means to which children can escape from the restricting aspects of the social backgrounds from which they come. Education has been seen as a means of equalization - reducing the disparities of wealth and power by providing young people, with skills to enable them to find a valued place in society. The primary aim of this dissertation was to discover, if in fact there is a close link between educational attainment of children from under - privileged backgrounds, at school, in the area of art, understanding and recognizing the limitations encountered in dealing with small numbers, through research, in areas considered poor, underprivileged or socially disadvantaged.

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COLAISTE NAISIUNTA EALAINÉ IS DEARTHÁ
NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

“EDUCATION AS A MEANS OF EQUALIZATION?,” THE LINK
BETWEEN SOCIAL DISADVANTAGE, AND UNDERACHIEVEMENT
IN ART AT POST PRIMARY LEVEL

A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Education

in

Candidacy for the
Diploma in Art and Design Education

by

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June 1995.

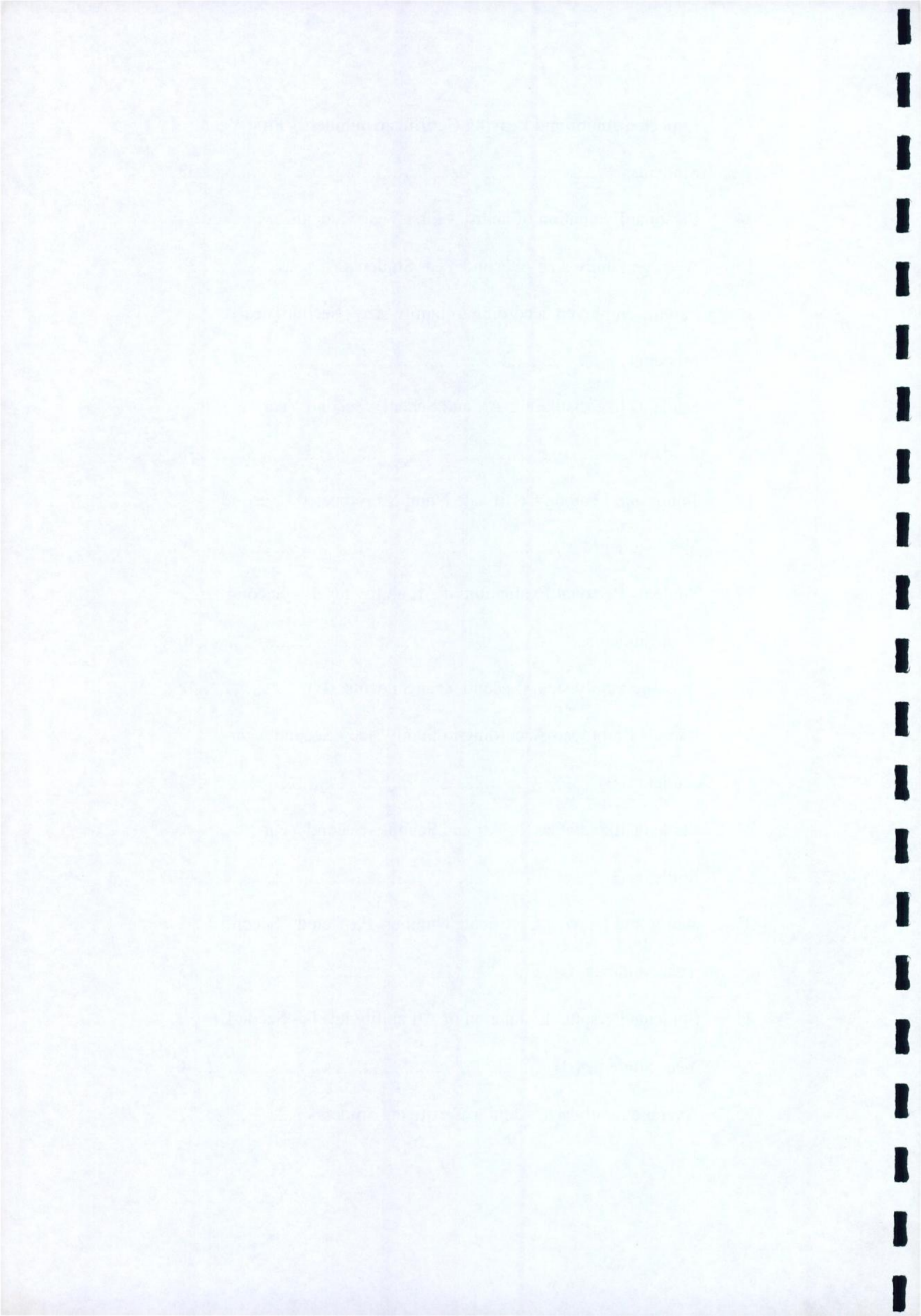
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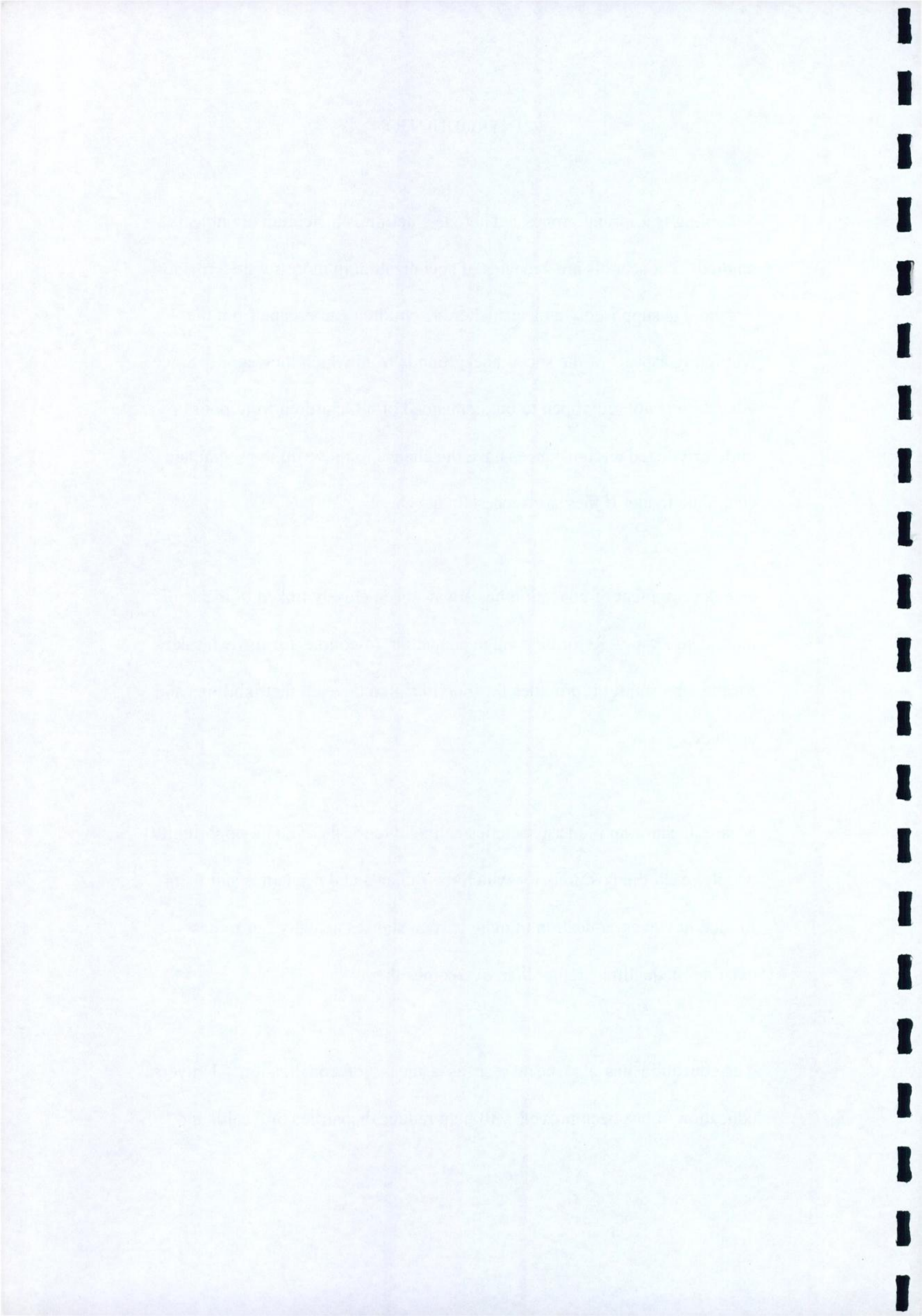
INTRODUCTION

Schooling is a formal process: There is a definite curriculum of subjects studied. Yet schools are agencies of socialization in more subtle terms too - A school is supposedly a means whereby children can escape from the restricting aspects of the social backgrounds from which they come. Since education is not only open to but demanded of all, children from poor or underprivileged circumstances have the chance to move up the social and economic ladder if they are successful at school.

The development of education has always been closely linked to ideals of mass democracy. Reformers value education, of course, for its own sake - for the opportunity it provides for individuals to develop their abilities and aptitudes.

Mass education in modern societies is linked to ideals of equal opportunity - people reach the positions for which their talents and capacities suit them. In fact, however, education in many circumstances actually reinforces existing inequalities, rather than overcomes them.

Yet education has also been seen as a means of equalization. Universal education, it has been proved, will help reduce disparities of wealth and



power by providing able, young people, with skills to enable them to find a valued place in society.

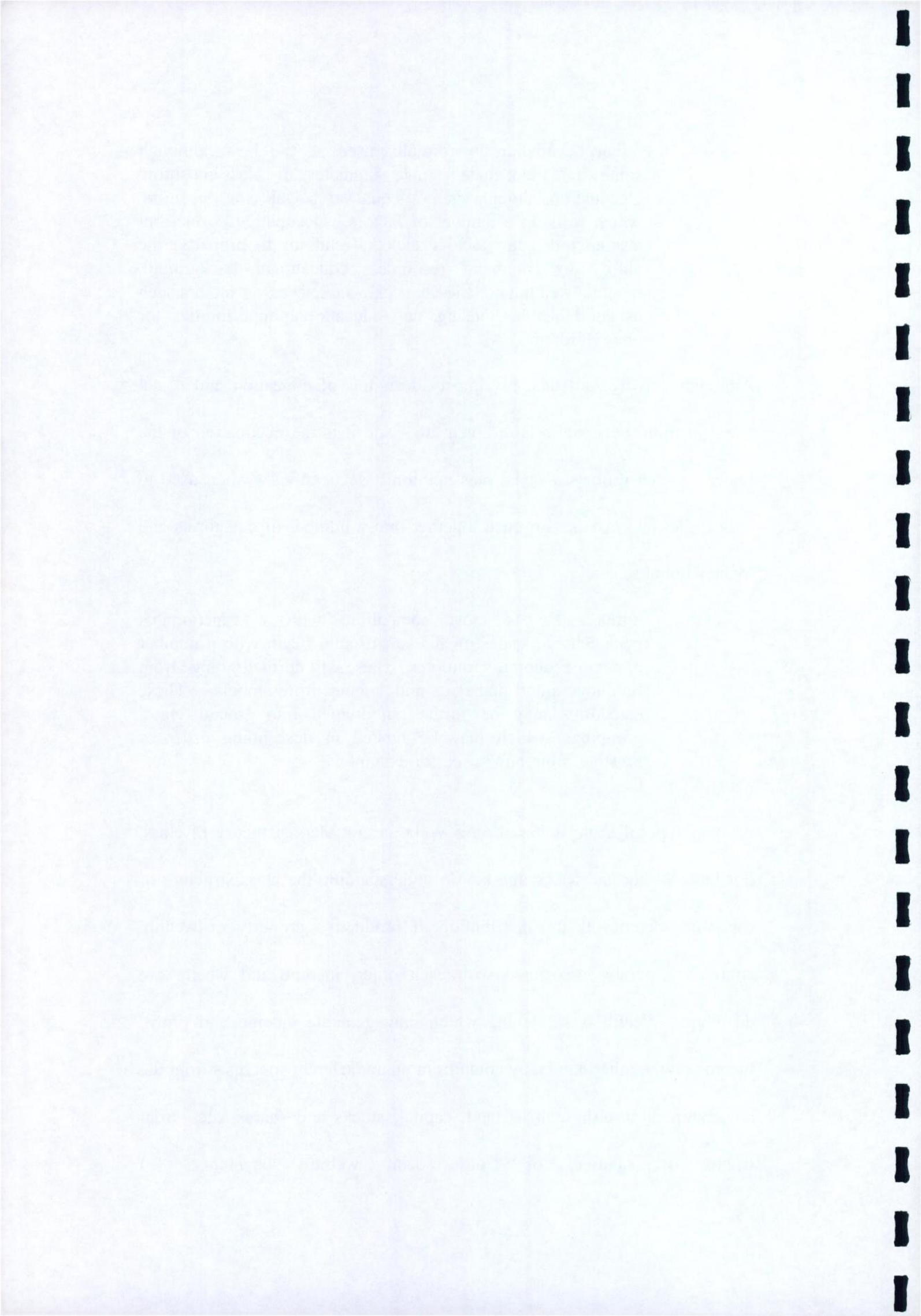
How far has this happened? What research has been carried out in order to answer these questions? By carrying out research, interviews and questionnaires, I intend to determine if in fact, education tends to express and reaffirm existing inequalities, far more than it acts to change them, and also to discover if in fact there is a close link between educational attainment of children from under-privileged backgrounds in the area of art education, and parental occupation, understanding and recognizing the limitations encountered in dealing with small numbers in research.

...that occupation is normally used as the best, although somewhat inadequate, single indicator of class position. Occupation, though, is not equal to social class position, which rests on a number of factors. Occupation is one, but also included are factors such as relations to property, the ability to command resources, educational background, income, wealth and 'life-chances' - i.e., access to factors such as good health, housing, and educational opportunities for ones children... (4)

Although, having said this, in almost all studies of education and social class position, occupation is the measure - and it is the occupation of the father - which reflects a sexist bias opinion. Occupations - when used to indicate social class are grouped together into a number of categories and 'occupational scales.'

...this scale is most compatible with a functionalist perspective... scales of this sort usually begin with a number of socio-economic groupings. These will normally range from 'employers and managers and 'higher professionals.' These categories may be further subdivided into 'social class' groupings, which may be ranked in descending order of prestige, from one to six, for example. (5)

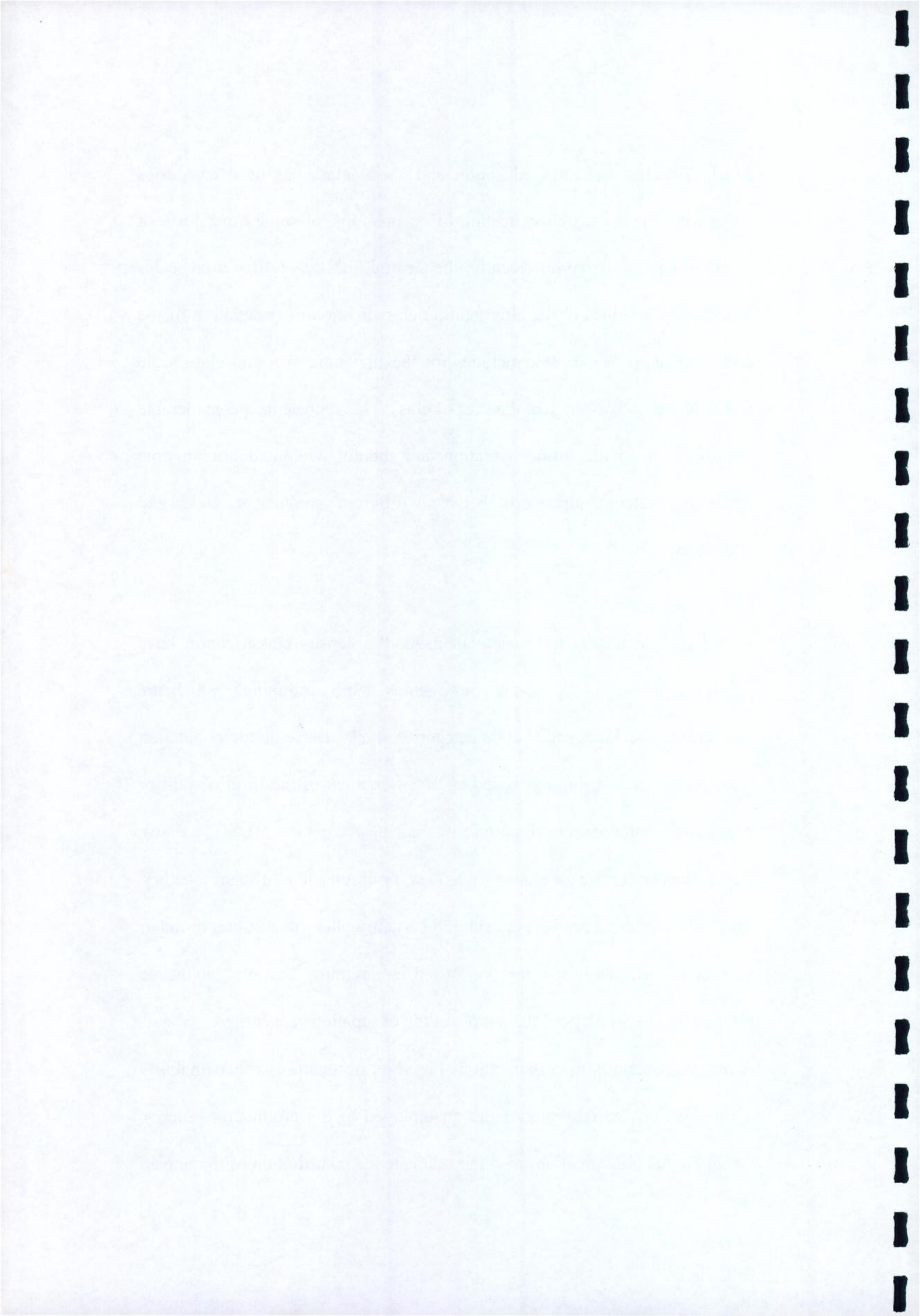
Another type of scale is based on a Weberian or Marxist theory of class. For both Weber and Marx, the key to understanding the class structure of capitalist societies is the distribution of productive property or wealth, although generally associated with each other, income and wealth are different. Wealth is something which may generate income and profit. Income on the other hand may come from many different sources - from the ownership of wealth such as land, capital, stocks and shares, etc., from wages or salaries, or from social welfare payments. (6)



Much Irish research into education and social class has used categories taken from the census classification of occupations, or some other form of prestige ranking. Up until recently, the Central Statistics Office used scales based upon this idea only., although the classification of occupation of the 1986 census, (CSO, 1988), includes for the first time, a social class scale that is based on sociological theories of class. This represents a considerable improvement on the former situation and should, without doubt, in time result in better comparisons between different studies of class and education.

In the past, educational researchers using the census classification have relied on the census 'socio-economic status' (SES) groupings, which are not, strictly speaking, social class categories at all. These divide population into eleven major groupings based on an assessment of the level of skill or educational attainment required by each occupation (CSO, 1986). Researches either use all eleven categories, or group some of them together. The SES categories are very useful and certainly allow us to observe major educational inequalities; they do not tell us anything, however, about the relationship to property of the people in the occupations concerned.

A major problem with classifications based on occupation is their inability to theorise on the relations of the unemployed to the production process. Occupational classifications also fail to locate the contribution of the unpaid



(mostly female) labour to the generation of wealth. This means that in countries such as Ireland the use of these classifications fails to explain the social class position of approximately 300,000 unemployed people and about 700,000 home workers (99% of whom are women). These two groups combined are equivalent to the paid work force. The problem of the unemployed, home workers and others not in the paid labour market is perhaps better dealt with by neo-Marxist scholars than by those from other perspectives. In neo-Weberian class theory, in Ireland at least, these groups are treated as a 'residual' category, on the grounds that they are not regular participants in any form of economic activity. However, these groups are seen as a more integral part of the class structure by neo-Marxist theorists, who see them as a 'reverse army of labour' on which capitalist enterprise may call during times of economic expansion but that will leave the labour market, without too much social upheaval (for the capitalists) during times of economic recession. (7)

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER I

1. A. Giddens, Sociology 2nd ed. (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1976) p. 235.
2. Ibid., p 138.
3. Sheelagh Drudy and Kathleen Lynch, Schools and Society in Ireland (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1993) p 138.
4. Ibid., p 138
5. Ibid., p 139.
6. Ibid., p 139.

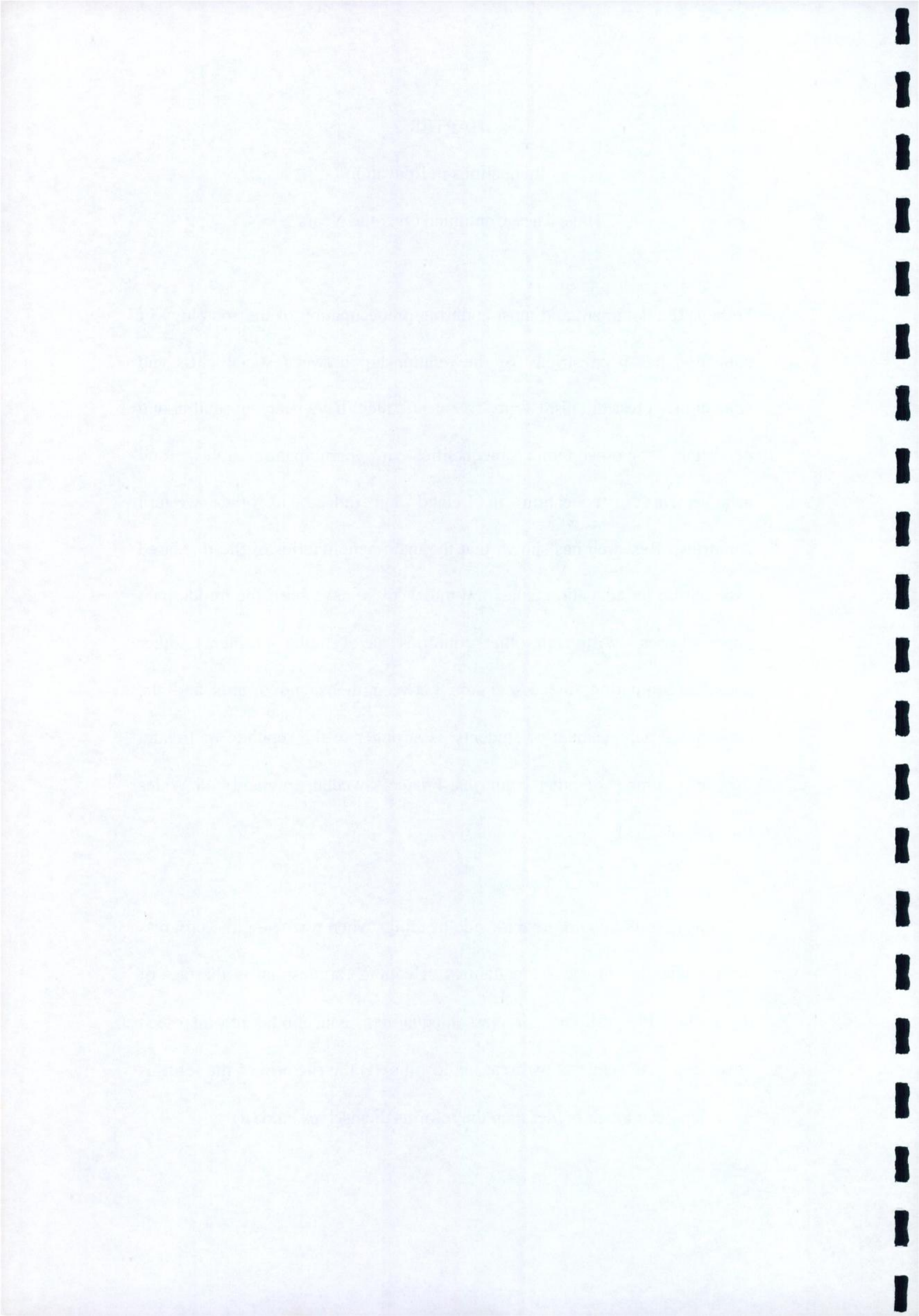
CHAPTER 2

Inequalities in Education

Have They Continued Over the Years?

Perhaps the dominant and most enduring preoccupation of the sociology of education has been strictly of the relationship between social class and education. Over the last twenty-five years, there have been substantial and persistent socio-economic inequalities in participation rates, and achievements in education, in Ireland and indeed, in other western countries. Research has shown that the main beneficiaries of the increased expenditure on education, since the mid 1960's, have been the middle and upper classes. Although other countries have similar problems, other research comparing, the association between the social origins and the educational achievement of students, is stronger in the republic of Ireland than in a number of other countries, France, Sweden, England and Wales for example. (1).

One has to look toward the dark side of things when reviewing the progress on the reduction of social inequalities. Heath (2) argues that in the face of the remarkable resilience of class inequalities, educational reforms seen powerless. He suggests two reasons for this, (i) the rhetoric of the reforms has often been much bolder than the reforms themselves, and (ii)



educationally ambitious families can adjust their children's chances under any new rules of the game. Research indicates that 'educationally ambitious families are predominantly middle class. By and large, they have the economic and cultural resources to adjust their plans to new rules, but what of children from less privileged backgrounds.

There is a close link between educational attainment and parental occupation. School leaver studies show (3) that over 90% of children from professional and managerial families, stay on at school to the leaving certificate examination; whereas just over a third of children from semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers do this. On the other hand, less than 1% of the children of professional and managerial families leave schools, with no qualifications, compared with almost a fifth of children from semi-skilled and unskilled parental backgrounds, (See Fig. 1).

		PARENTS OCCUPATION			
		Upper- Non Manual	Lower- Non Manual	Skilled Manual	Semi- Skilled Manual
Educational Level	Leaving Certificate/%	93.0	74.5	53.2	37.6
	No Qualifications %	0.7	4.4	10.0	17.9

Fig. 1. Data for the link between educational attainment and parental occupation. (3)

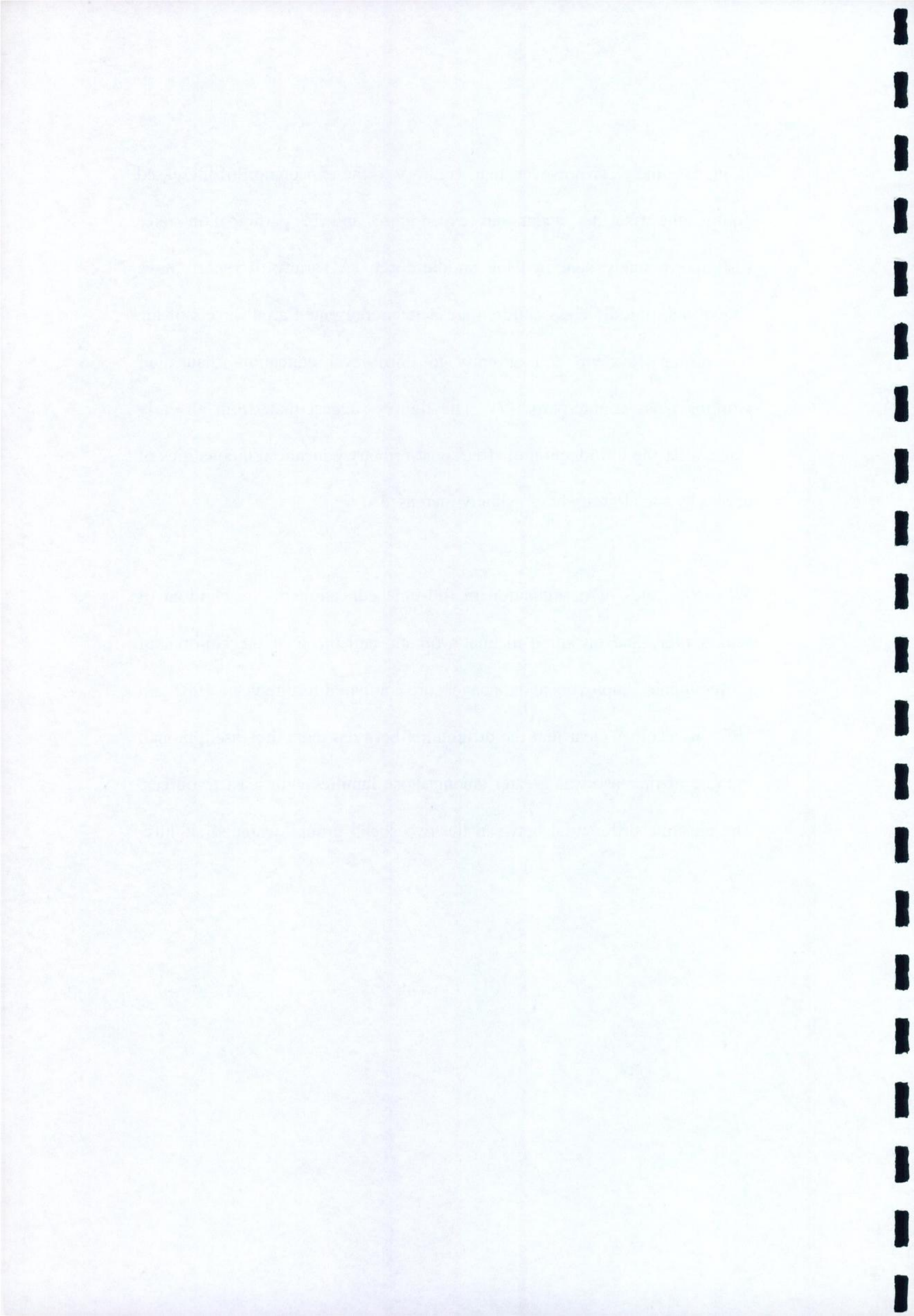
These inequalities have persisted in spite of greatly increased educational expenditure since the 1960's. From a figure of £29.5 million in 1961/62.

(4) Government expenditure on education increased to £307.5 million by 1977, until by 1990, the figure was £1,274 million. (5) Total annual expenditure on education by the state is exceeded only by expenditure on social welfare, and on health. (6)

It has become clear however, that, contrary to the expectation of increased equity, the rise in educational expenditure and in participation rates disproportionately benefited the middle class. A variety of reports have shown that, middle class children are better represented at all levels of the post-primary system, and at entry to third level education, than their working class counterparts. (7) The figures suggest that, from an early stage, after the introduction of 'free' post-primary education, inequalities of access by social group have actually increased.

When the rates of participation in full-time education of the children of semi-skilled, and unskilled manual workers, and those of the children of professionals, employers and managers are compared for the years 1961 and 1971, it becomes clear that the differential between them increased, though the rate of increase was greater among those families with least resources. The absolute differential between the two social groups widened slightly.

(8)

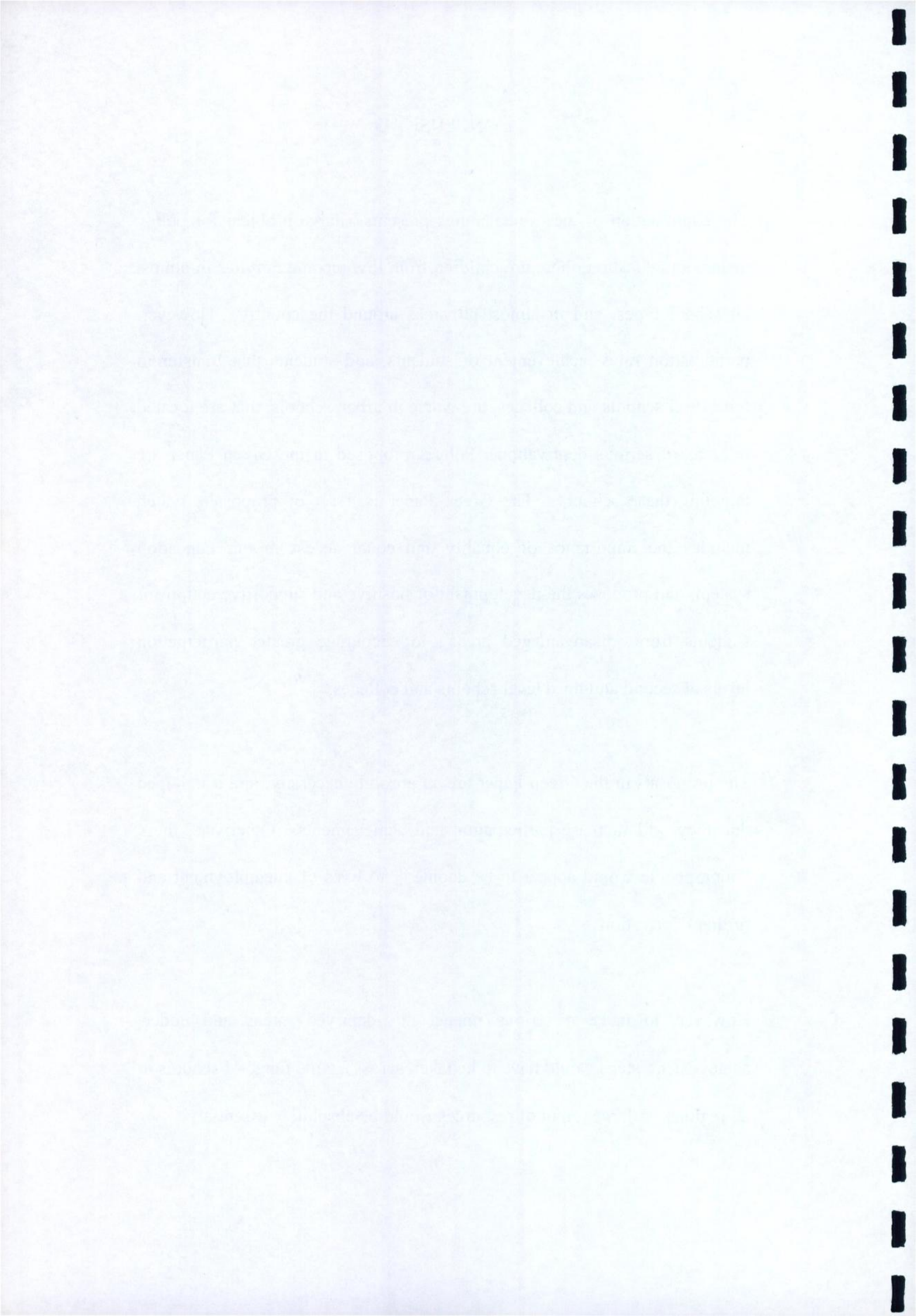


CONCLUSIONS

The continuation of these inequalities presents a large problem for policy makers in education, there are children from low income families in almost all school types, and in almost all areas around the country. However, participation rates, achievement of students, and students that transfer to third level schools and colleges, are worse in urban schools, that are located in areas of serious deprivation. Policies proposed in the Green Paper are targeting these schools. The Green Paper is a set of proposals, which includes the importance of equality and equal access in our education system, and proposes the development of positive and supportive action for students from 'disadvantaged areas', to encourage greater participation levels at second and third level schools and colleges.

The proposals in the Green Paper are an absolute necessity, and it is hoped that they will increase participation and achievements. Otherwise, these young people would appear to be doomed!, to lives of unemployment and further deprivation.

However, to make a serious impact on 'deprived' areas and under-achievement, steps would have to be taken across a wide range of schools in all regions. A large input of resources would be absolutely essential.



In addition (9) we need to assess the impact of schools organisational practices, such as streaming and selection, on the reproduction of inequalities.

This problem probably cannot be tackled only from the educational side of things. A point acknowledged in the green paper; where there must be a close link between education, health, social welfare, labour and training agencies is suggested.

.. because of the close link between poverty and under-achievement, there is a need for economic and social welfare measures which are genuinely redistribute if educational measures are to have any effect. (10)

The fact that the more secure, or well paid sector, of the working class in Ireland (skilled manual workers), have higher participation rates in third level education, than other working class groups, might suggest that working class people, can achieve well in the system, when they have the resources to do so, and when the economic conditions make education essential for labour market participation.

If income and wealth differentials were eliminated, it is likely that the problem of working-class 'failure' in education would be significantly reduced.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 2.

1. Whelan, C.T. and Whelan, B.J., Social Mobility in The Republic of Ireland: A Comparative Perspective. (Dublin: Economic and Social Research Institute, 1984).
2. A. Heath, Class in the Classroom: School, Work and Equality (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1989,) pp. 184 - 188.
3. R. Breen, Student Performance in the Senior Cycle of Irish Post-Primary Schools. Dublin: Economic and Social Research Institute, 1986.
4. D. Murphy "Studies in Education," Equality in Education 9 (1993) : p.5.
5. Ibid., p.5.
6. Ibid., p.5.
7. Ibid., p.6.
8. Ibid., p.6.

9. K. Lynch, The Hidden Curriculum, (London: The Falmer Press, 1989) p. 89.
10. Idem, "Studies in Education," p.8.

CHAPTER 3

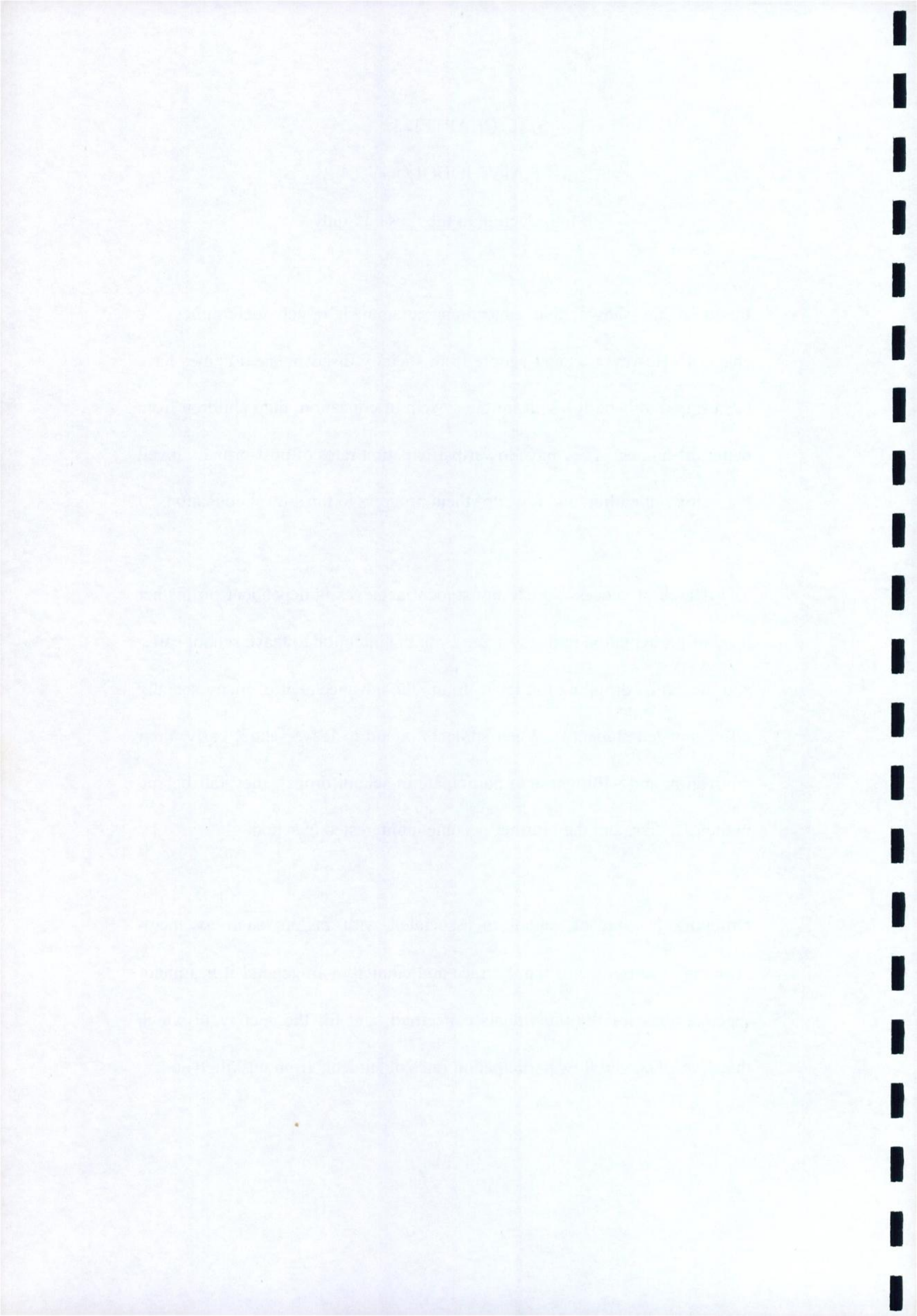
METHODOLOGY

Introduction to the Present Study

Research has shown, that educational attainment largely determines life chances. However, young people from socially disadvantaged homes have been found to benefit less from the system of education, than children from better off homes. They have lower participation rates of post-primary level; they drop out earlier, and fewer of them progress to third-level education.

The degree of success which any student achieves is dependent on his/her level of participation in the system. Both the intention to leave school early, and the act of dropping out itself, limits the advancement of many socially disadvantaged students. When students intend to leave school early, their motivation and willingness to participate in school drops; they fall behind in their studies, and they further become uninterested in school.

Dropping (1) out of school is associated with factors such as socio-economic status, size of family, race and ethnicity. In general it has major repercussions for the individuals concerned, and for the society in which they live. The very low participation rates of students from unskilled and

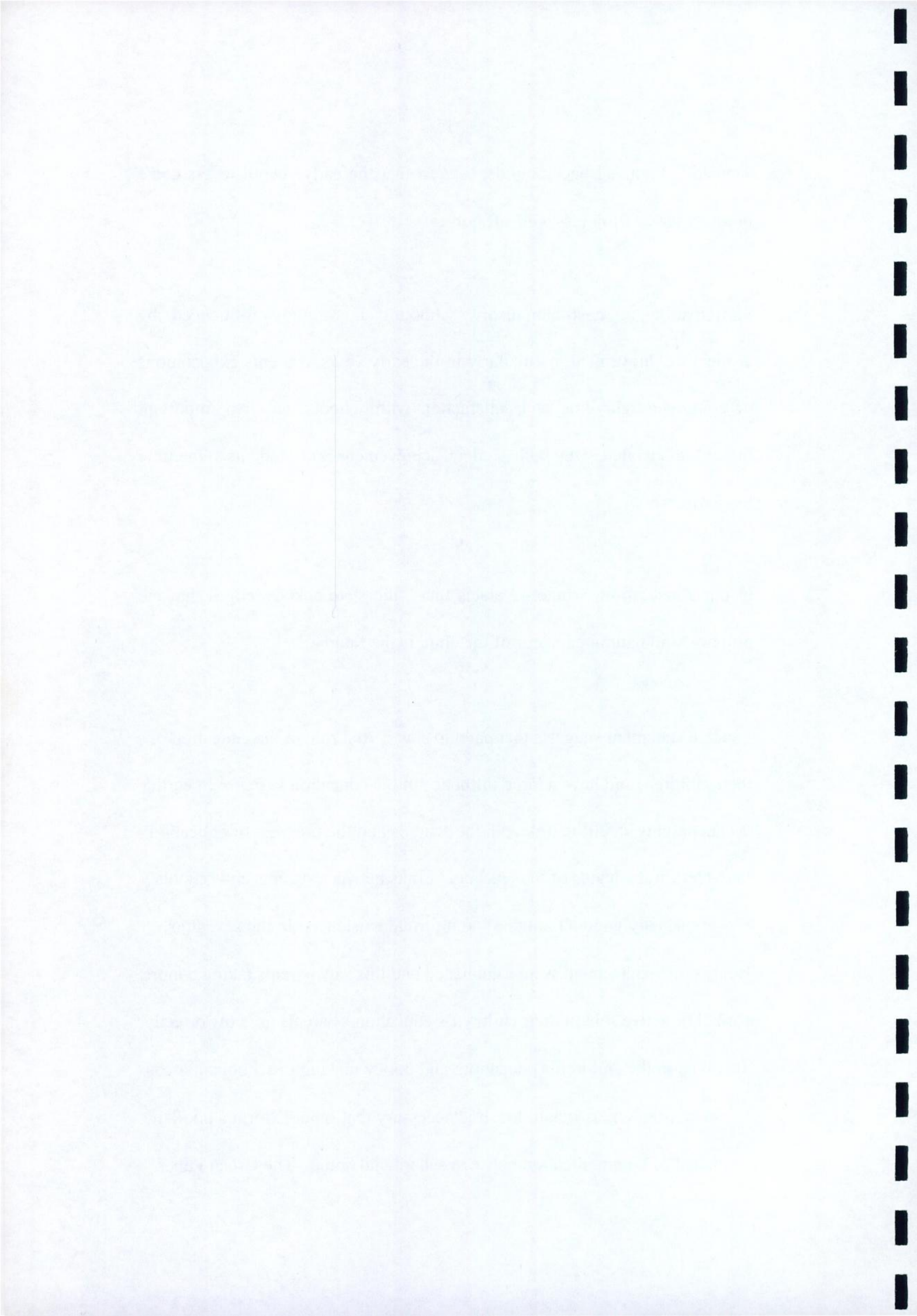


semiskilled manual backgrounds, suggest that the early school leavers come predominantly from less well-off homes.

Participation in post-compulsory schooling is strongly influenced by academic achievement, particularly in the early years. Parents expectations of continued schooling and satisfaction with schools, are two important factors, associated with both student achievement and students remaining longer in school.

In our constitution, article 42 states that, "the state acknowledges that the primary, and natural educator of the child is the family."

Such a statement suggests that parents play a vital role in the education of their children, and have a large influence in the education system. In earlier years parents had little link with the schools and the progress of education was left in the hands of the teachers. Links between parents and schools were usually good although of an informal existence. In the seventies, Boards of Management were established and this saw parents taking a more formal or active role in their children's education. Parents are now directly involved in the children's education, and policy making in schools in areas such as parent associations. It is necessary that schools form a good channel of communication between school and home. The Green Paper

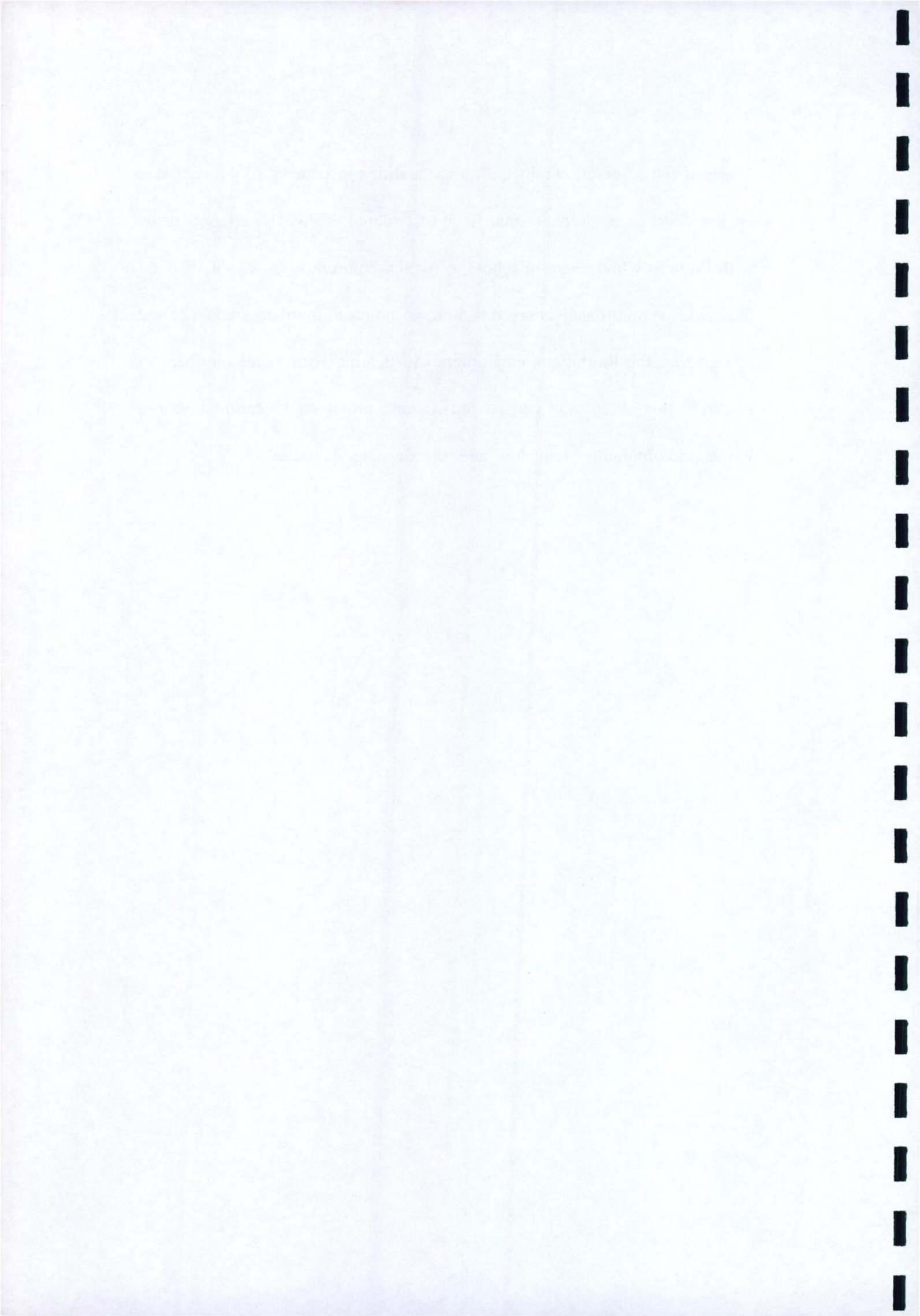


suggests that this contact should commence at an early stage in the child's education. Schools should therefore produce a clear policy on how they propose to stimulate parental involvement.

The Green Paper proposes to develop pre-schooling programmes as part of the project for parental involvement. At present, this author is scheduled, for two days a week, teaching practice, in a school which is considered to be placed in a socially disadvantaged area, and the author see at this stage, a serious lack of interest shown by parents, towards their children's education. The teacher is looked upon as the 'baby-sitter', which, was stated by one of the full-time teachers, in their position for over ten years, in this school. No clear proposal is outlined in the document as how to involve parents with such an attitude - this attitude is then passed from parent to son/daughter and is clearly evident in their approach to their school and their work.

Parental involvement could be approached in different ways, example; (i) Parents could be seen as interested partners in the educational system, (ii) Parents could be consulted more on educational policies, and have an influence on its implementation.

Much of the research conducted on inequalities in education, concentrates on the children or students that have left school. This dissertation deals with students who remain in school, or who are presently in school. Taking the evidence that 'disadvantaged is more pronounced in urban areas' (2) and recognizing the limitations encountered in dealing with small numbers in research, this study was carried out, in one urban co-educational school with a predominantly 'remedial' and 'disadvantaged intake.'

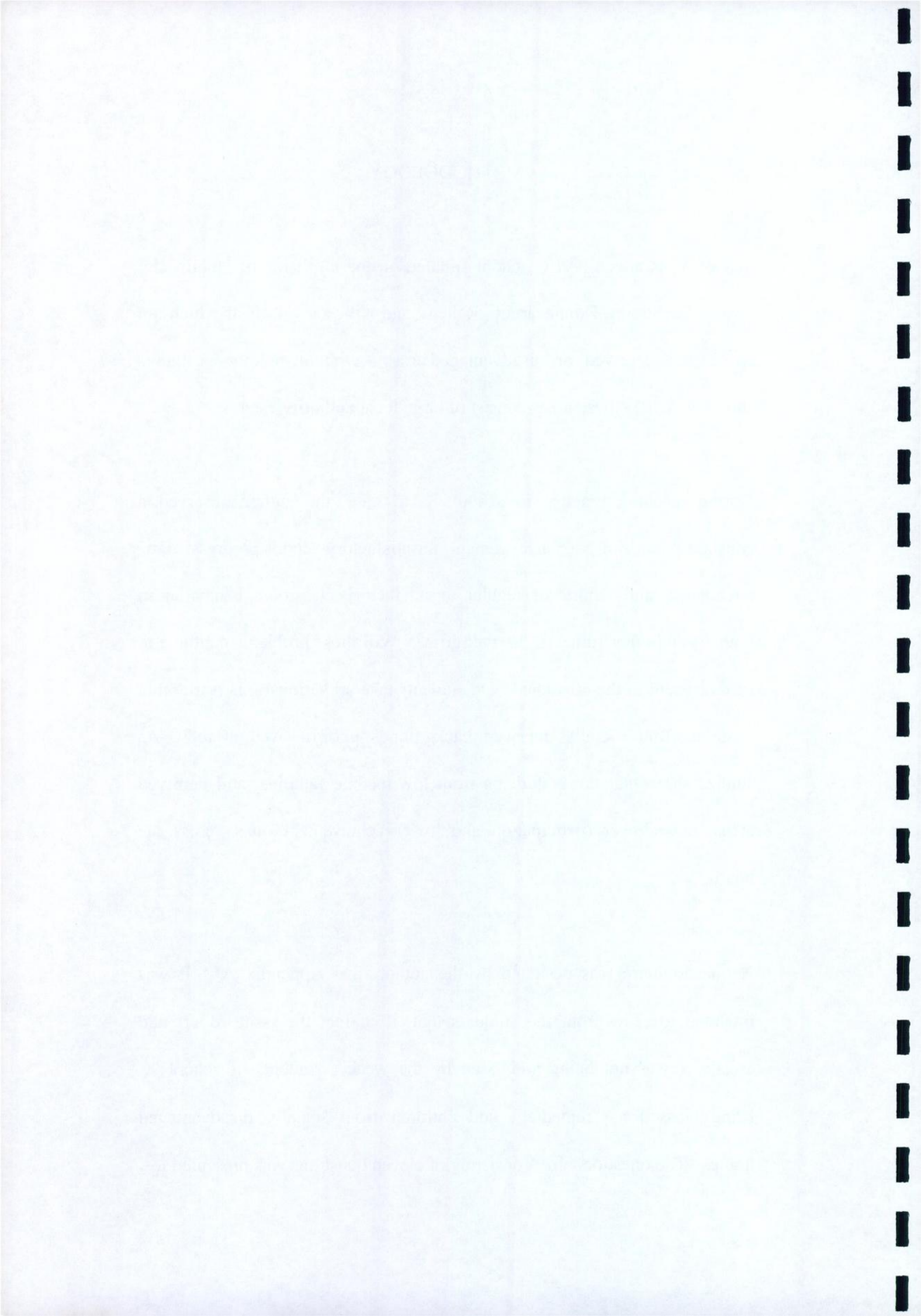


METHODOLOGY

School X, is a small VEC school situated on the northside of Dublin city centre, facilitating Donnecarney, Raheny and Killester. Two of which are considered 'deprived' or 'disadvantaged areas' - with unemployment figures showing at 70% these areas consist of large local authority estates.

During teaching practice in school X, to date, the author observed a constant pattern of poor achievement, unsatisfactory school progress, 'fair' attendance, and reports of regular unsatisfactory classroom behaviour in both art and other subjects. Is it all grim?. Will these problems continue to be consistent in the art room?. Do students take art seriously, is it true that students from socially deprived backgrounds perform well at art? As studies show that these students from low-income families, and deprived areas, have lower participation and lower achievement rates across the board.

A questionnaire was designed by the author (See Appendix A). It was intended to draw from the students that, if in fact the issue of art and creativity was not being addressed by the weaker students of school X, being classed as 'remedial', and children from socially disadvantaged homes. The questionnaire, consisting of eleven questions was presented to

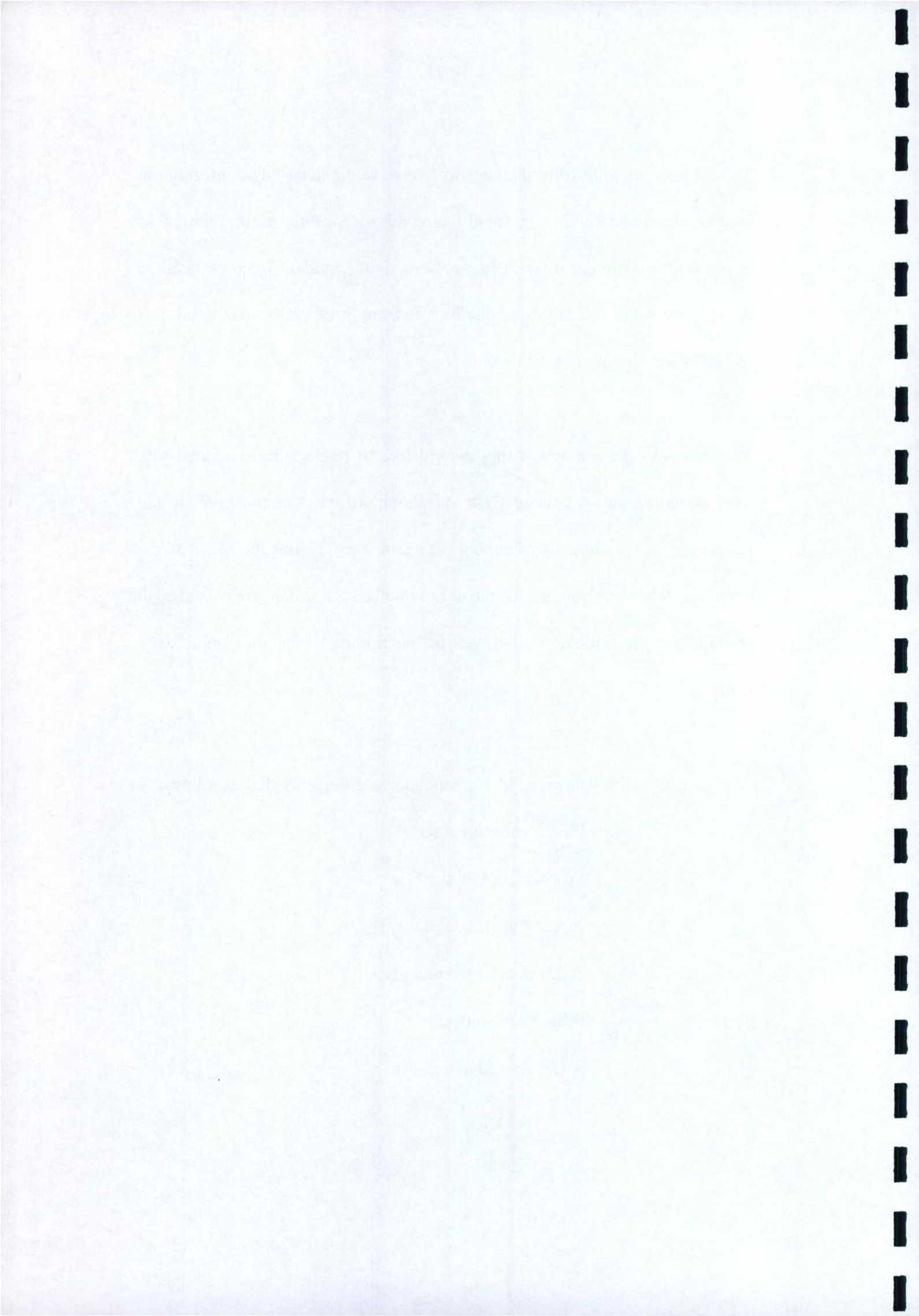


165 students ranging from the ages of twelve to nineteen. The information sought was concerned with family circumstances, education, relating to junior and leaving certificate examinations, if the student liked or disliked art in general and asked to rate themselves from three categories; good, fair or bad? (See layout of questionnaire).

Students were then asked if they would like to pursue an art related job, after attending an art college. The questionnaire was administered by the researcher to the students of school X, again, recognizing the view of the evidence that disadvantage is most pronounced in urban areas and also recognizing the limitations involved in the findings from this small scale study.

This questionnaire was given to 165 students in groups divided as follows:

28	-	First Year Students
27	-	Second Year Students
20	-	Junior Certificate Students
25	-	Transition Year Students
40	-	Fifth Year Students
17	-	Sixth Year Students



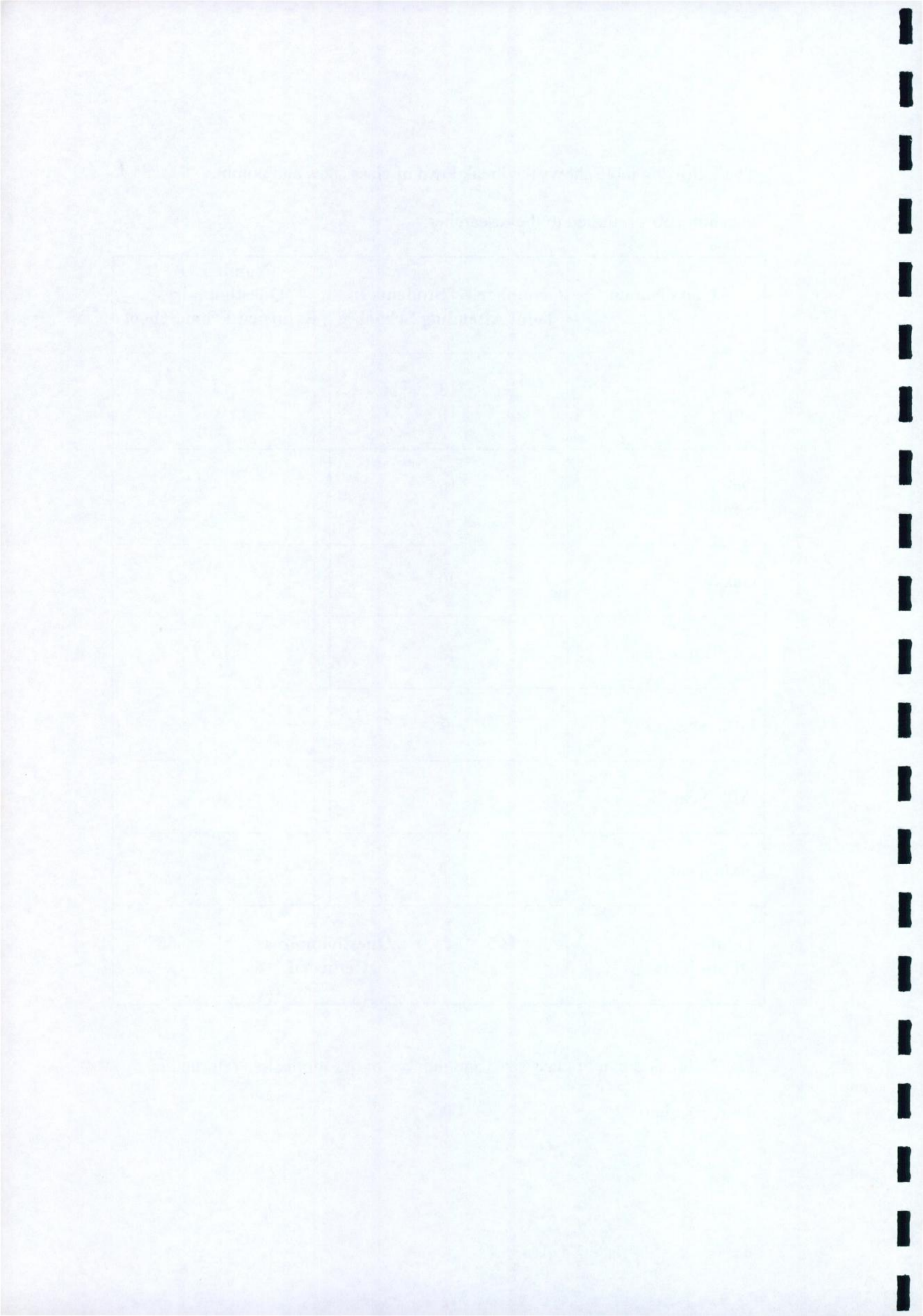
In early January 1995, only 88 students completely filled copies of questionnaire because of illnesses and a high rate of absenteeism.

The school has the students broken into levels of ability, as follows; 2 first year classes, named after trees - Oak. 1 and Elm. 1. Oak 1 would be the "high remedial" and Elm 1, the "lower remedial" stream. This continues with second year - Oak 2 and Elm 2. There is only 1, Junior Certificate class, consisting of 20 students in total, 1 Transition year class with 25 students. Two 5th year classes, with students broken into "5G" and "5T" - according to choices taken in subjects for the leaving certificate. Remaining is 1, 6th year class with a total of 17 students. (See Fig. 2).

The following table shows the breakdown of class sizes and number of questionnaires returned to the researcher;

Class Name	Number Of Students In Total Attending School X		Number Of Questionnaires Returned From School X
Oak 1. Elm 1.	18 10		14 0
Oak 2. Elm 2.	16 11		14 8
Oak 3	20		12
Transition Year	25		16
Fifth Year 'G'	17		5
Fifth Year 'T'	23		10
Sixth Year	17		9
Total No. Of Students	165	Questionnaires Returned	88

Fig. 2; break down of class sizes and number of questionnaires returned to the researcher.



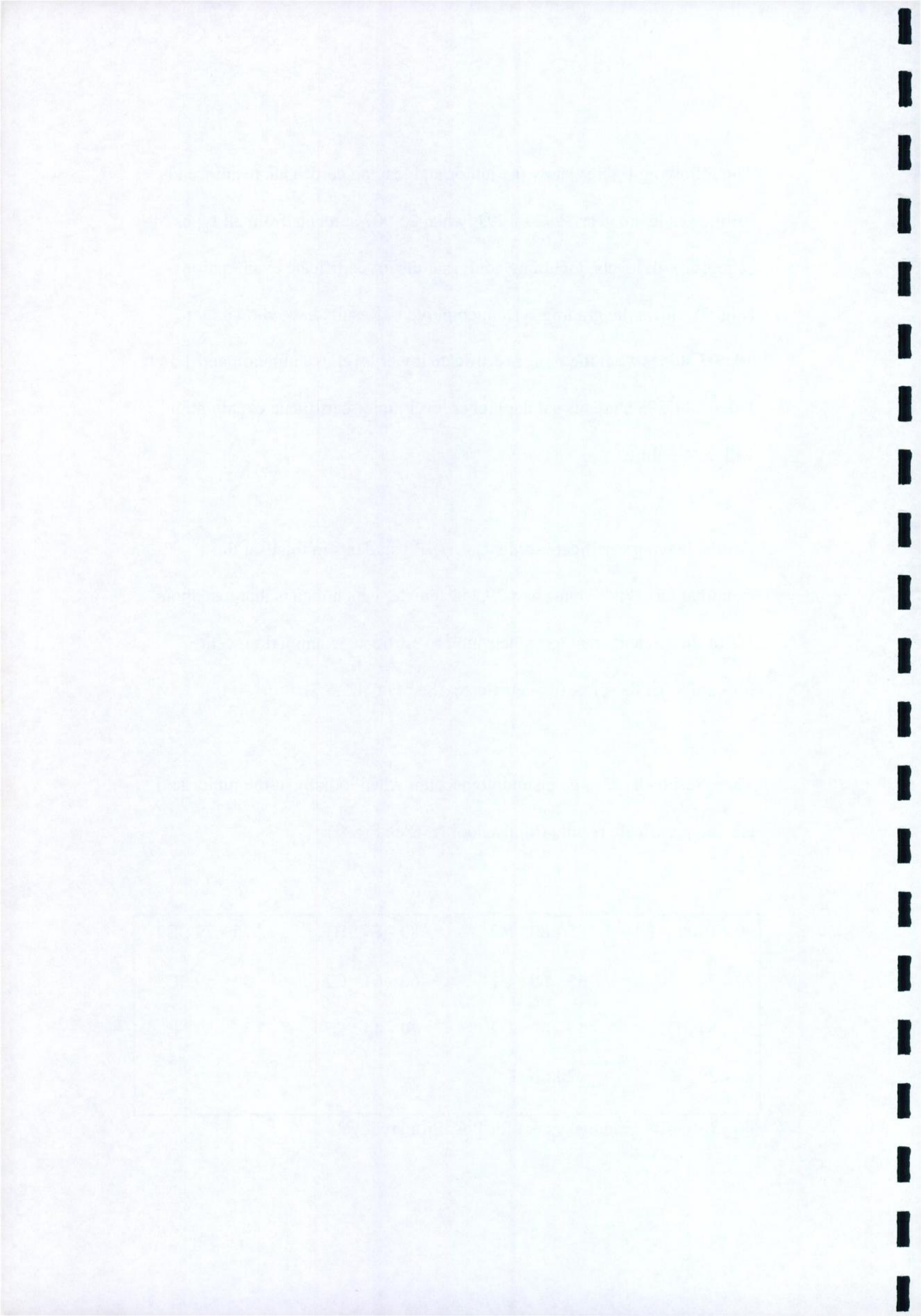
The following figures show the junior and leaving certificate result trends for the academic year 1992 - 1993, when 23,907 students from all types of schools of all levels, including adults sat the art certificate examinations. (Fig. 3) shows the grading system employed. Results have shown that 10,607 students sat the junior certificate lower level examination and 1,151 failed. 11,298 students sat the higher level junior certificate examination, with 524 failures.

For the leaving certificate students - 57,230 students in total sat the examination, 27,977 male and 29,253 female, which means that just about 1/2 of the students that took their junior certificate examination went forward to sit their leaving certificate. (See Fig. 4,5,6,7).

These results have to be taken into account when looking at the junior and leaving certificate results from school X. (See Fig. 3).

90 - 100 : A1 →	85 - 89 : A2 →	80 - 84 : B1	75 - 79 : B2
70 - 74 : B3	65 - 69 : C1	60 - 64 : C2	55 - 59 : C3
50 - 54 : D1	45 - 49 : D2	40 - 44 : D3	30 - 39 : E
20 - 29 : F	<20 : NG		

Fig. 3: Shows grading system for Post Primary levels



Total Students Male	5077	Total Students Female	5530
Total Students Failed	772	Total Students Failed	337
A	169	A	303
B	598	B	1004
C	1608	C	2004
D	1932	D	1586

Fig. 4: Junior Certificate Lower Level Results (1992 - 1993)

Total Students Male	4479	Total Students Female	8819
Total Failed	311	Total Students Failed	213
A	489	A	1520
B	910	B	2202
C	1590	C	3378
D	1179	D	1706

Fig. 5: Junior Certificate Higher level results (1992 - 1993).

Total Male Students	1760	Total Female Students	2310
Honours	816	Honors	1169
Pass	799	Pass	1006
Fail	145	Fail	135
A ₁	13	A ₁	8
A ₂	49	A ₂	69
B ₁	39	B ₁	72
B ₂	129	B ₂	186
B ₃	102	B ₃	151
C ₁	178	C ₁	243
C ₂	289	C ₂	400
C ₃	202	C ₃	261
D ₁	206	D ₁	344
D ₂	334	D ₂	401
D ₃	360	D ₃	410

Fig. 6: Leaving Certificate lower level results (1992 - 1993)

Total Male Students	2355	Total Female Students	4212
Honors	1397	Honors	2678
Pass	816	Pass	1265
Fail	142	Fail	150
A ₁	19	A ₁	35
A ₂	34	A ₂	84
↓		↓	
Increase in Numbers	→	Increase in Numbers	→

Fig. 7: Leaving Certificate Higher level results (1992 - 1993)

The Following Figures show the Junior and Leaving Certificate Results for the Same Academic Period of 1992 - 1993, from School X

Total Number of Students failed		69	
Total Number of Students		30	
Honours	17	Pass	52
C	1	A	3
		B	5
		C	9
		D	6
		E	14
		F	1

Fig. 8: Junior Certificate (higher and lower) results 1992 - 1993.

Total Number of Students		33	
Total Number of Students failed		14	
Honours	8	Pass	25
A ₁	0	A ₁	0
A ₂	0	A ₂	0
B ₁	0	B ₁	0
B ₂	1	B ₂	0
B ₃	0	B ₃	0
C ₁	0	C ₁	1
C ₂	0	C ₂	2
C ₃	3	C ₃	3
D ₁	0	D ₁	1
D ₂	0	D ₂	0
D ₃	2	D ₃	3
E	2	E	0
F	0	F	1

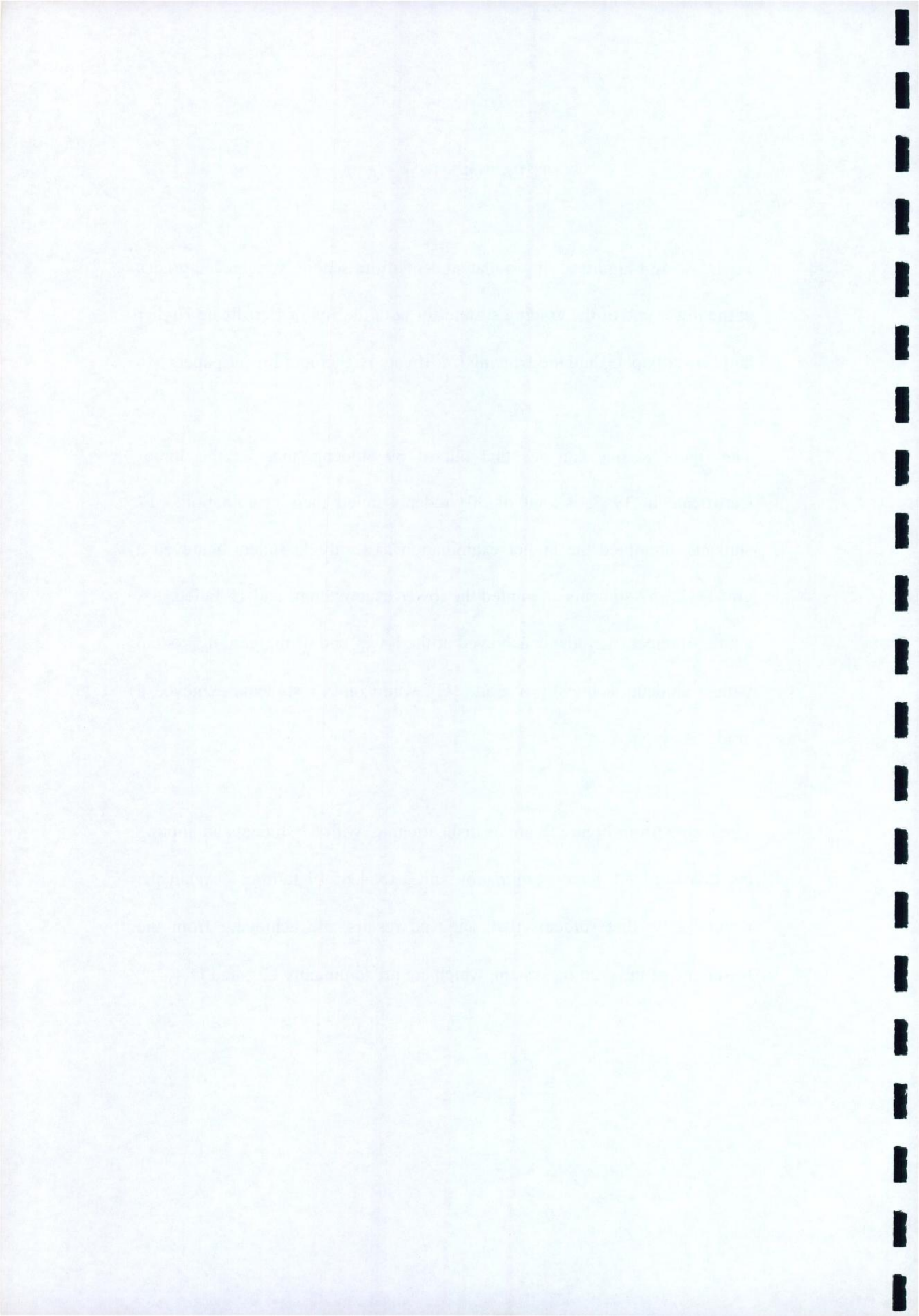
Fig. 9: Shows the Leaving Certificate Higher and Lower level results from school X, for the same academic period of 1992 - 1993.

TREATMENT OF DATA

Figure 8. And Figure 9, shows that students from school X, achieved grades at the lower end of the grading system for both the Junior Certificate Higher and Lower papers, and the Leaving Certificate Higher and Lower papers.

The figure 8, one can see that out of 69 students that sat the Junior Certificate in 1993, a total of 30 students failed their examination. 17 students attempted the higher examination and only 1 student achieved a grade 'C'. 52 students attempted the lower examination, and 15 failed. A greater number of students achieved at the lower end of the grading system with 9 students achieving a grade 'C', while only 3 students achieved a grade 'A'.

The results from Figure 9, are as disheartening, with 33 students attempting the Leaving Certificate examination and a total of 14 failures. Again the results show that students that achieved results, are achieving from the lower end of the grading system, which are predominantly C's, and D's.



CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Students, Family Size And Parental Occupation

The questionnaire designed by the author (See Appendix A), was intended to draw from the students that, if in fact, the issue of art and creativity was being addressed by the students of school X, and if there was to be a connection to be made between the performance of students from larger families, in areas of high unemployment and socially deprived backgrounds, and their attitudes to school in general, and also their attitudes to Art as a subject. From the previous chapter, we can see from the evidence, that these students from disadvantaged urban areas are obviously no beneficiaries of the increased expenditure on education, as the results show high failure rates and marginal numbers of low grade achievers. The following figures are a breakdown of groupings of students questioned from school X, their answers have been tabulated and are as follows;

A class of first year students, aged from 12 to 14 years of age, consisting of 8 male students and 6 female students (See fig. 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14).

First Year Students

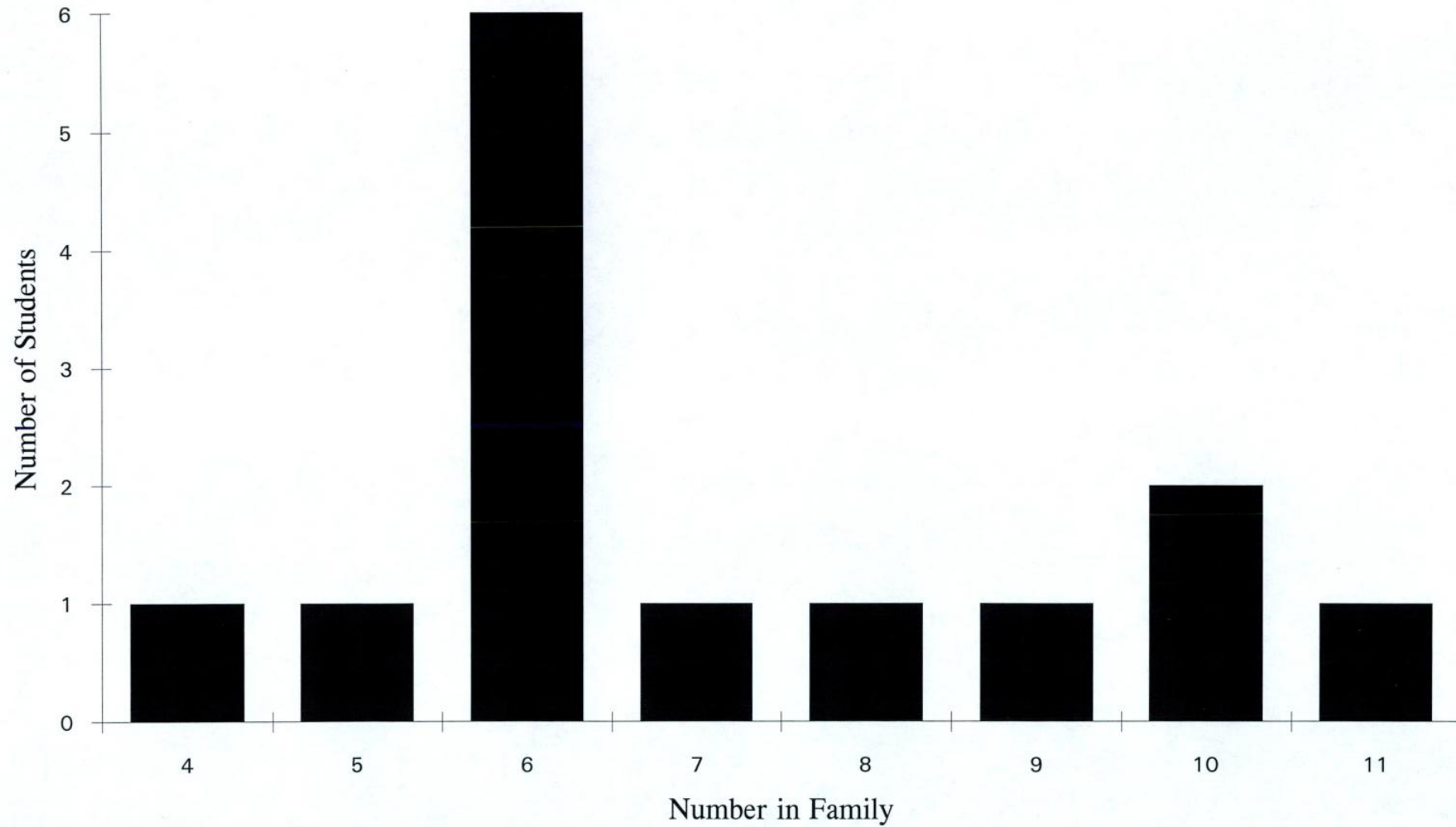


Figure 10: shows average numbers in family unit - (7.14). Source: Data has been derived from a questionnaire in this Dissertation.

First Year Students

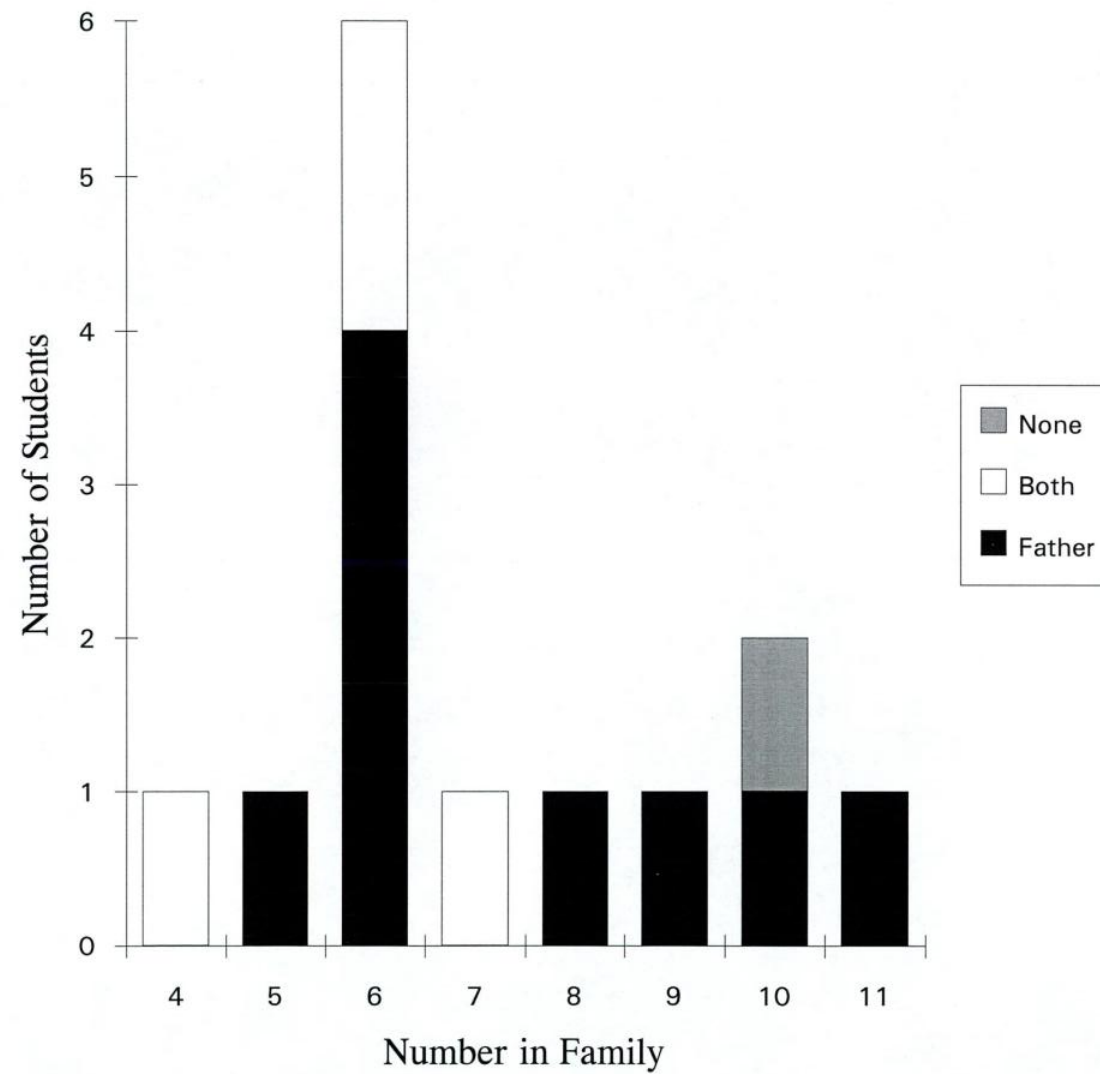


Figure 11: shows numbers of parents who work per student family.

First Year Students

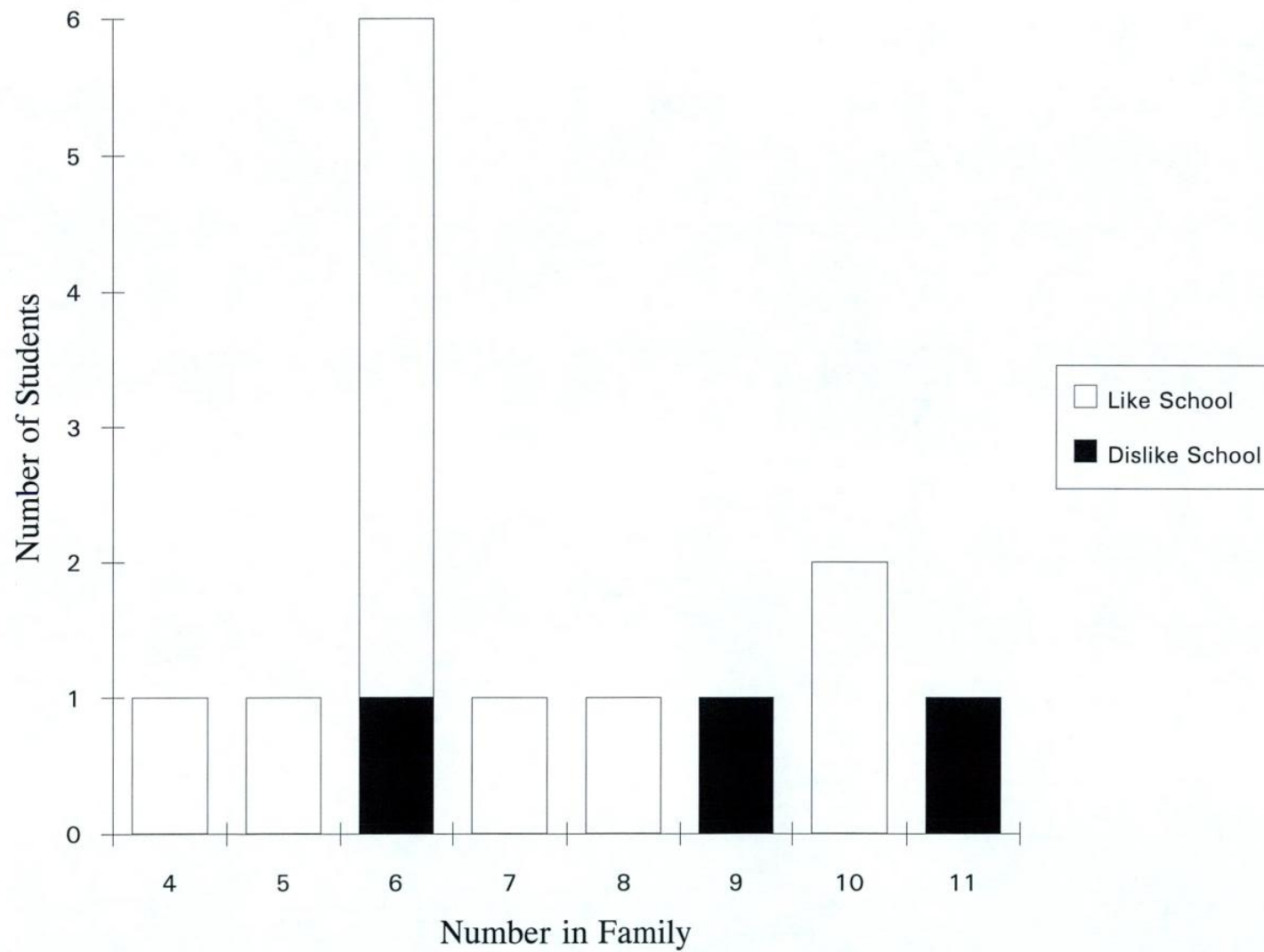


Figure 12: shows the number of students who like/dislike school according to family size

First Year Students

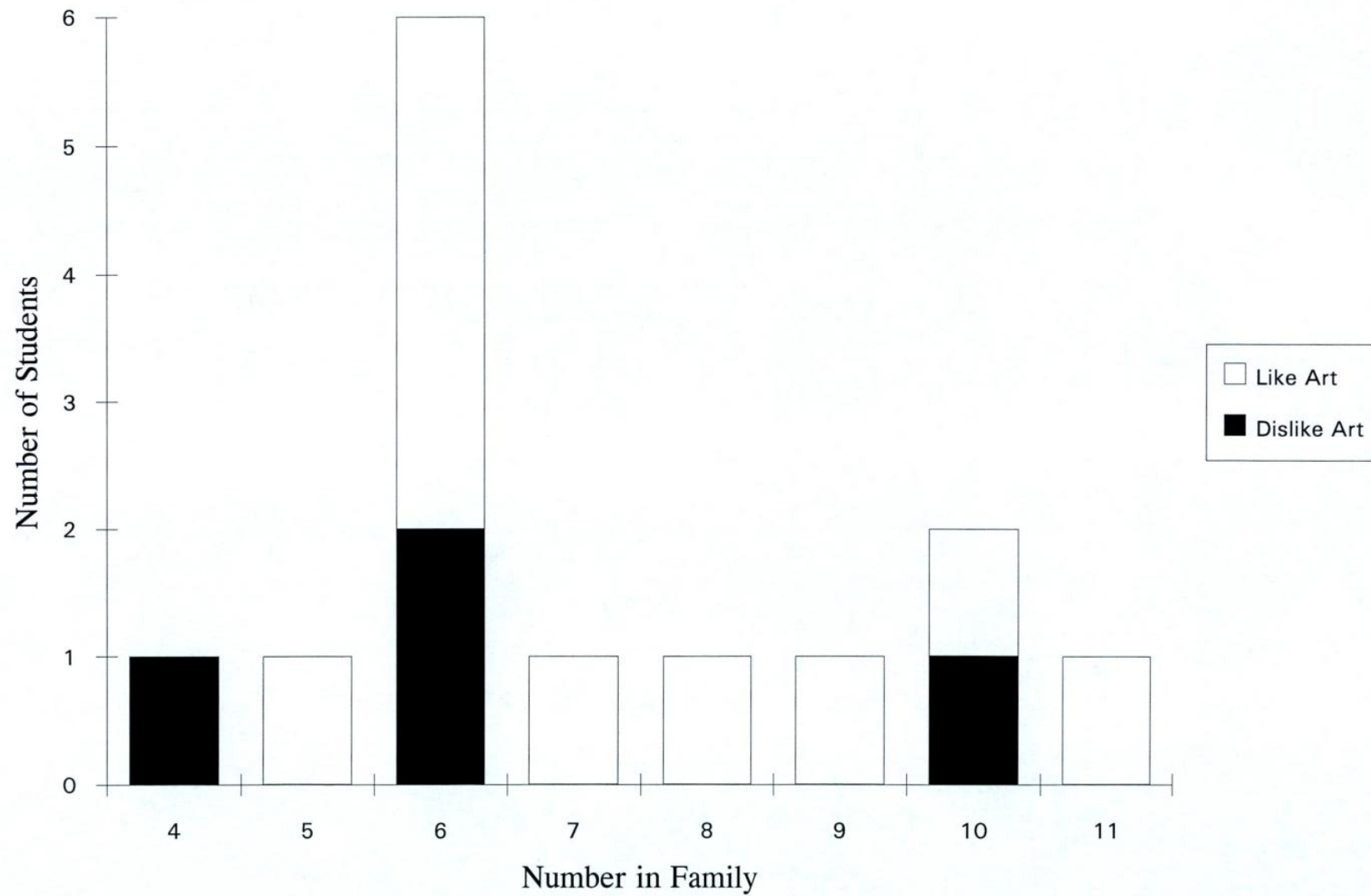


Figure 12: shows the number of students who like/dislike Art according to family size

First Year Students

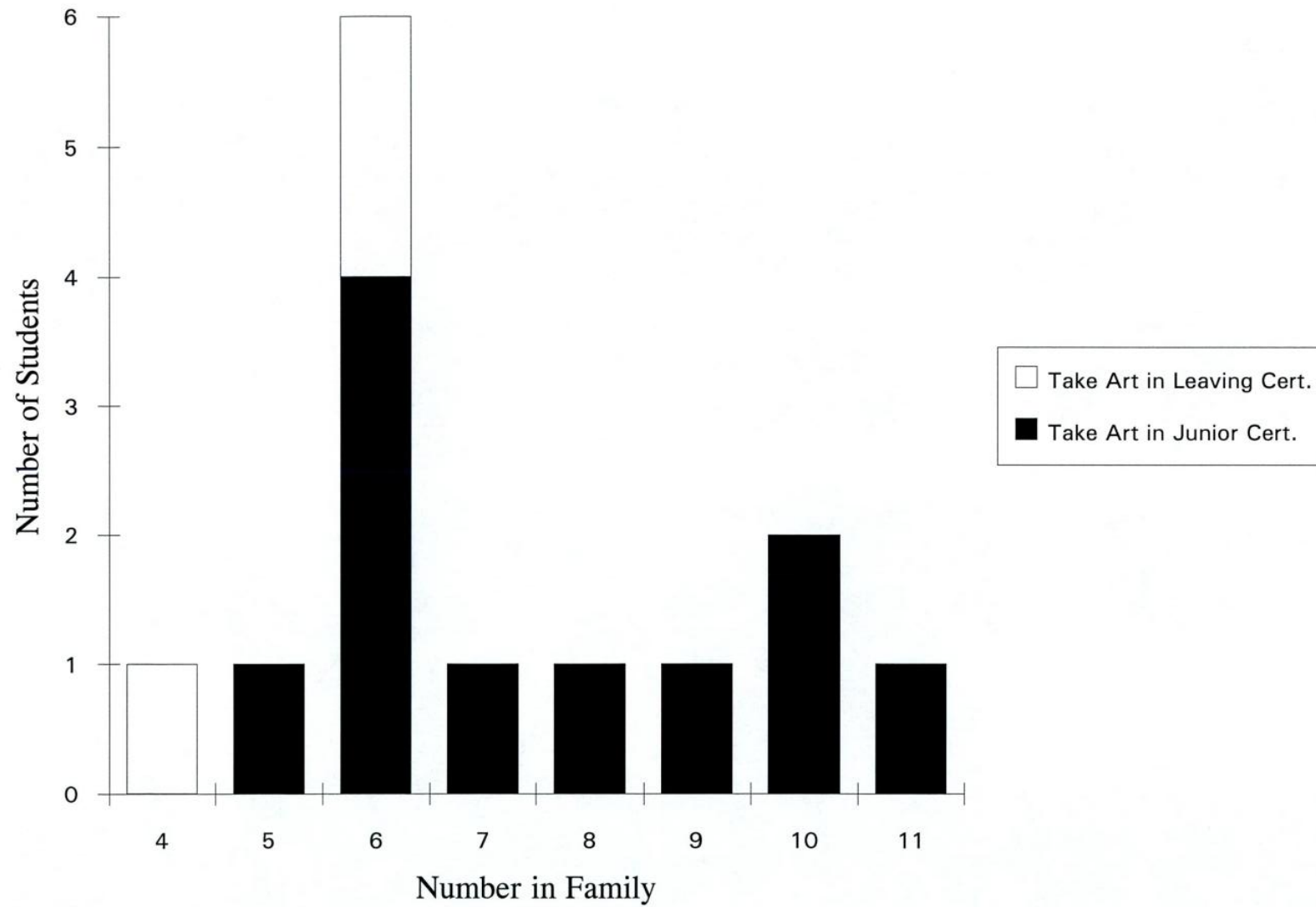


Figure 13a: shows number of students that will take Art for Junior Certificate, according to family size.

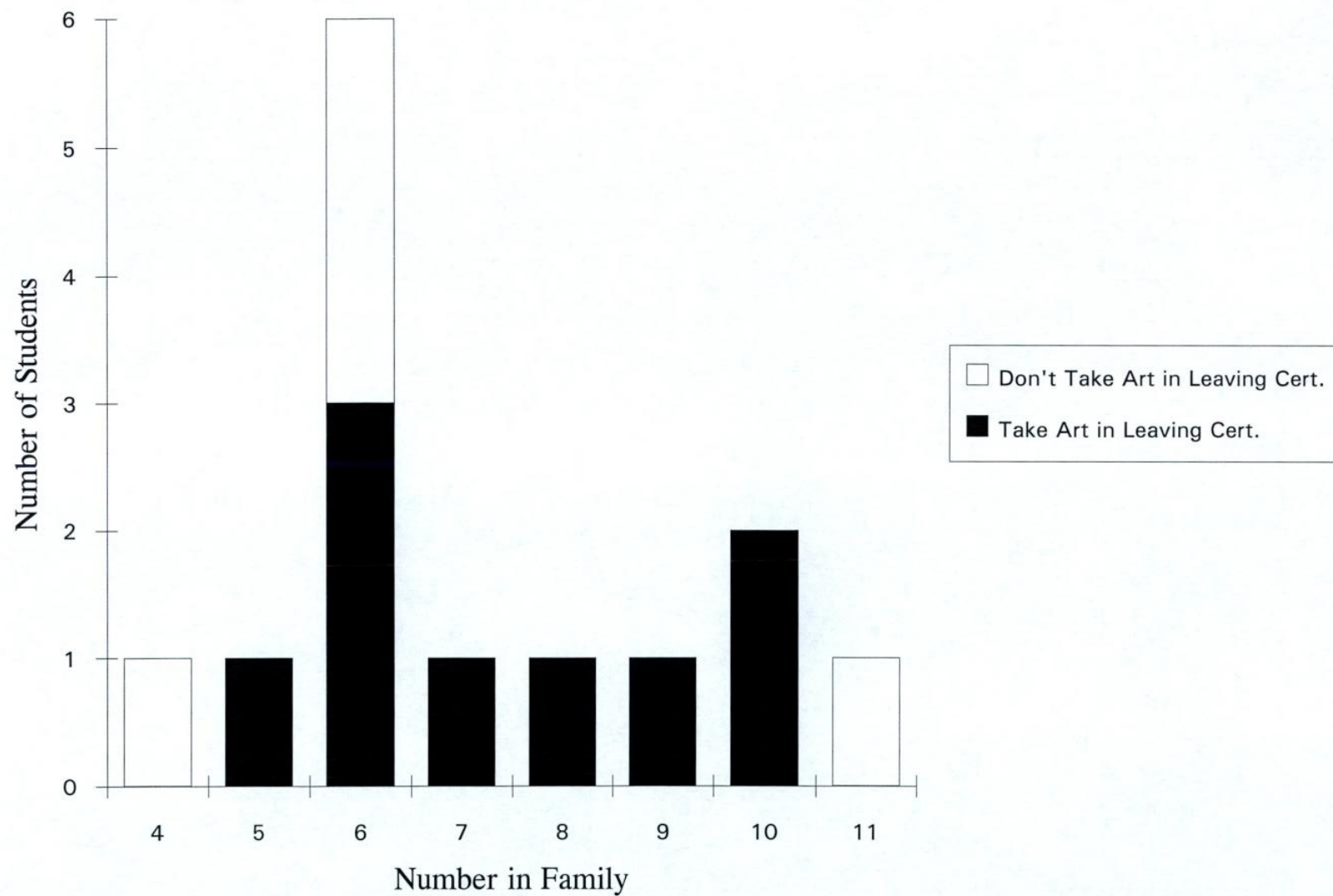


Figure 13b: shows number of students that will take Art for Leaving Certificate, according to family size.

First Year Students

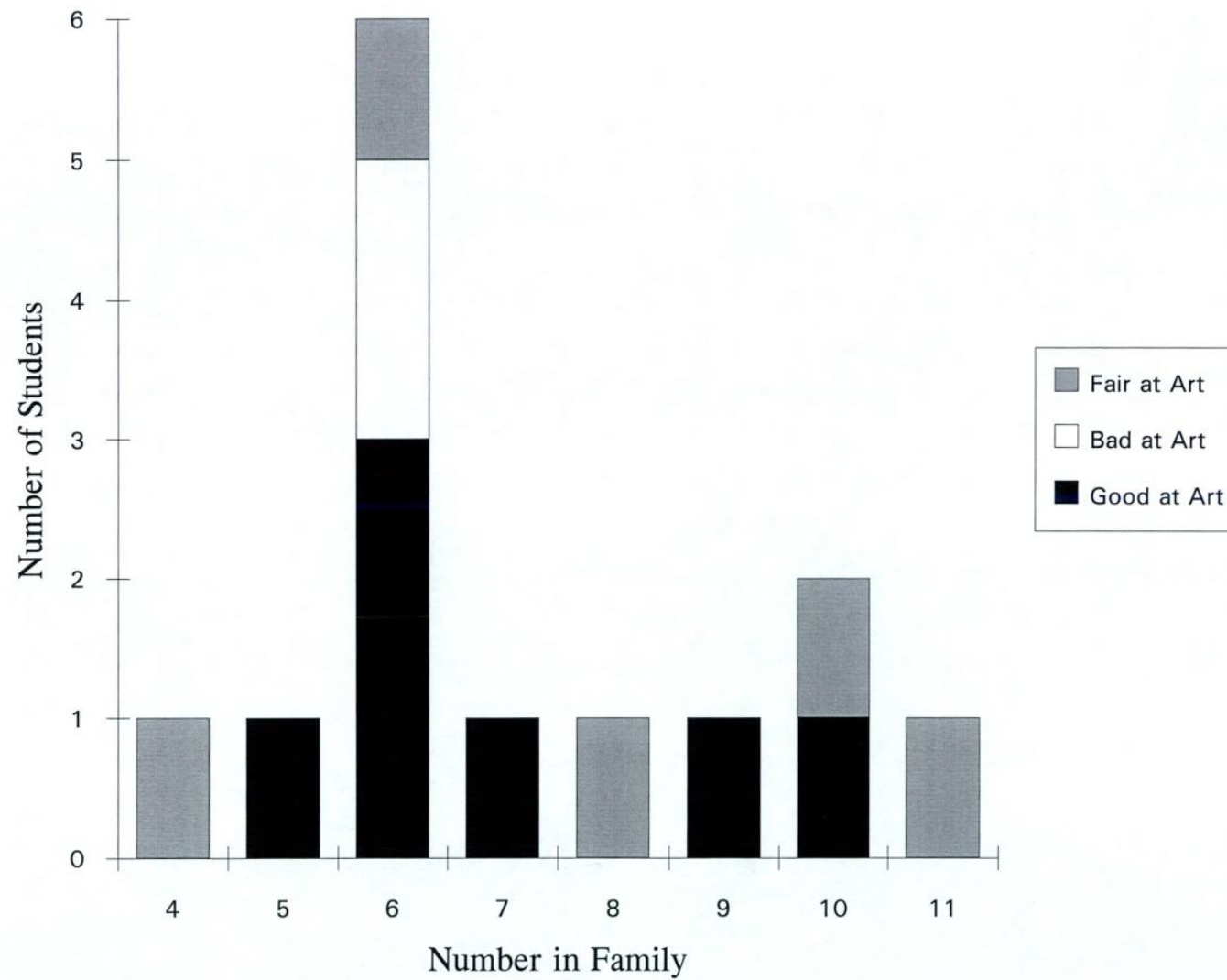


Figure 14: shows individual students personal evaluation of Art ability level. Source: Data has been derived from a questionnaire in this Dissertation.

RESULTS A

The results from this first year group of students, ranging in ages from 12 to 14, presently attending school X, shows that the average family size is 7.14 individuals. In general it is the income of the father that is supporting the family. As regards students liking or disliking school students from larger families tend to like school and almost all, liked art at this junior level, this may be due to the fact that despite the problems faced by students from poor homes, a large proportion of them appear to look forward to their time in school because they like the work involved in Art at this junior level, they enjoy learning in this area, and being with their friends. Some of these students from obviously poor homes and disadvantaged social backgrounds may very well attend school for compensatory social rather than educational reasons. Students from this grouping that come from the larger families tended not to wish to take art for either the junior or Leaving Certificate Examinations and considered themselves 'fair' to 'bad' at art.

The second group of students interviewed from school X were 8 male students in second year, of 14 and 15 years of age and are considered top stream. Figures 15 to 19 show that the average family size is 7.3 individuals.

Second Year Students

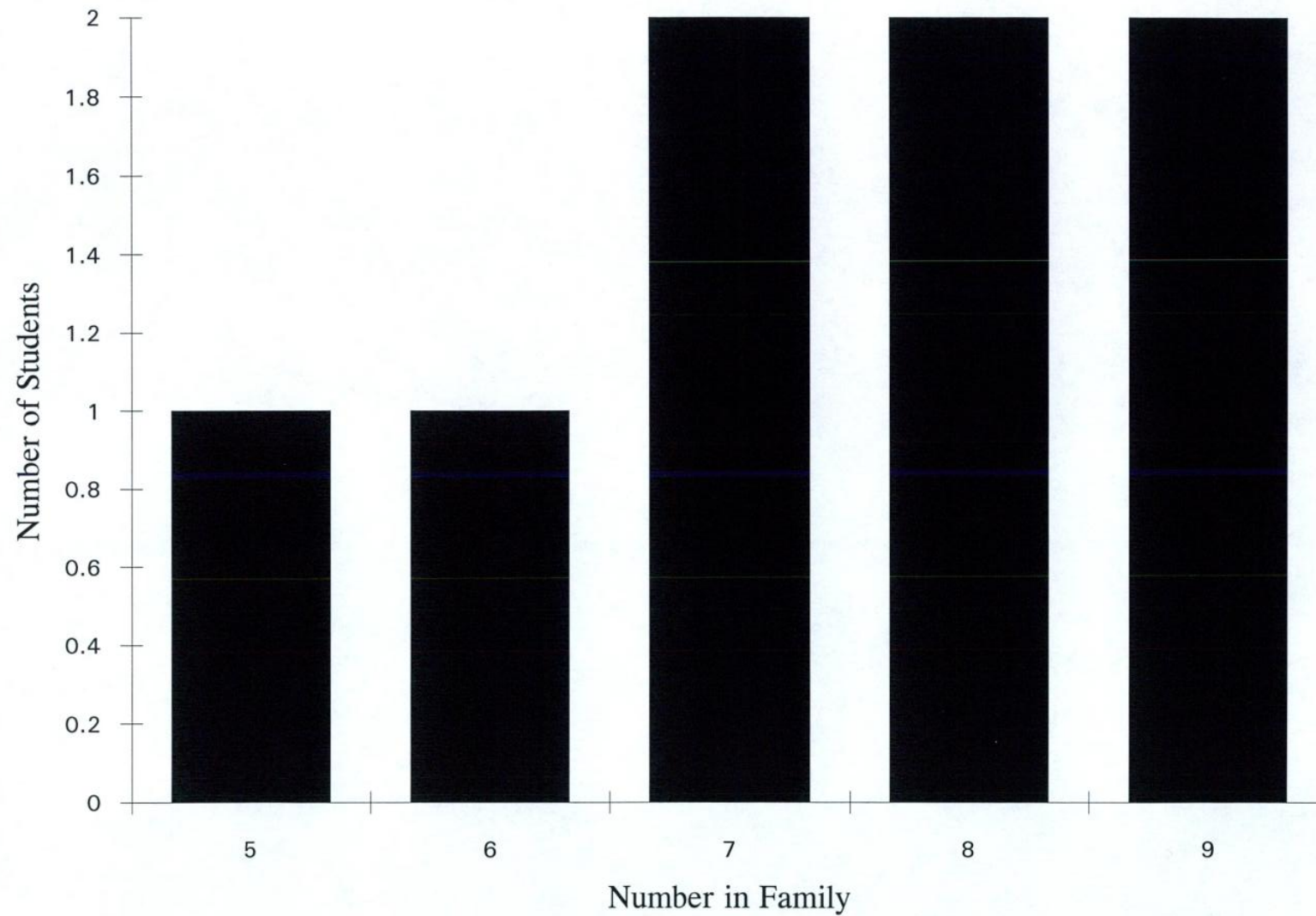


Figure 15: shows number in family according to number of pupils - (7.3). Source: Data has been derived from a questionnaire in this Dissertation.

Second Year Students

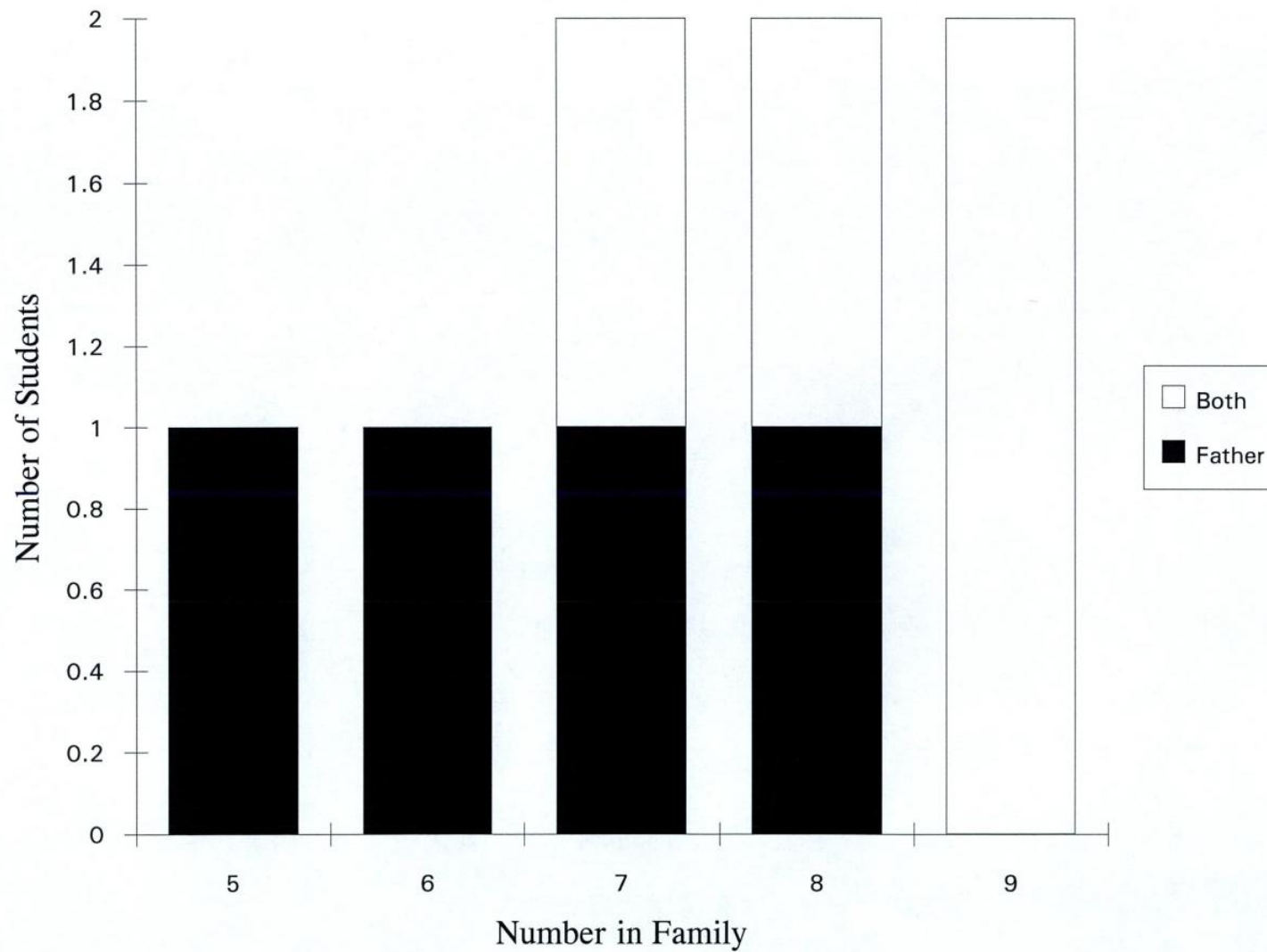


Figure 16: shows number of parents employed according to family size.

Second Year Students

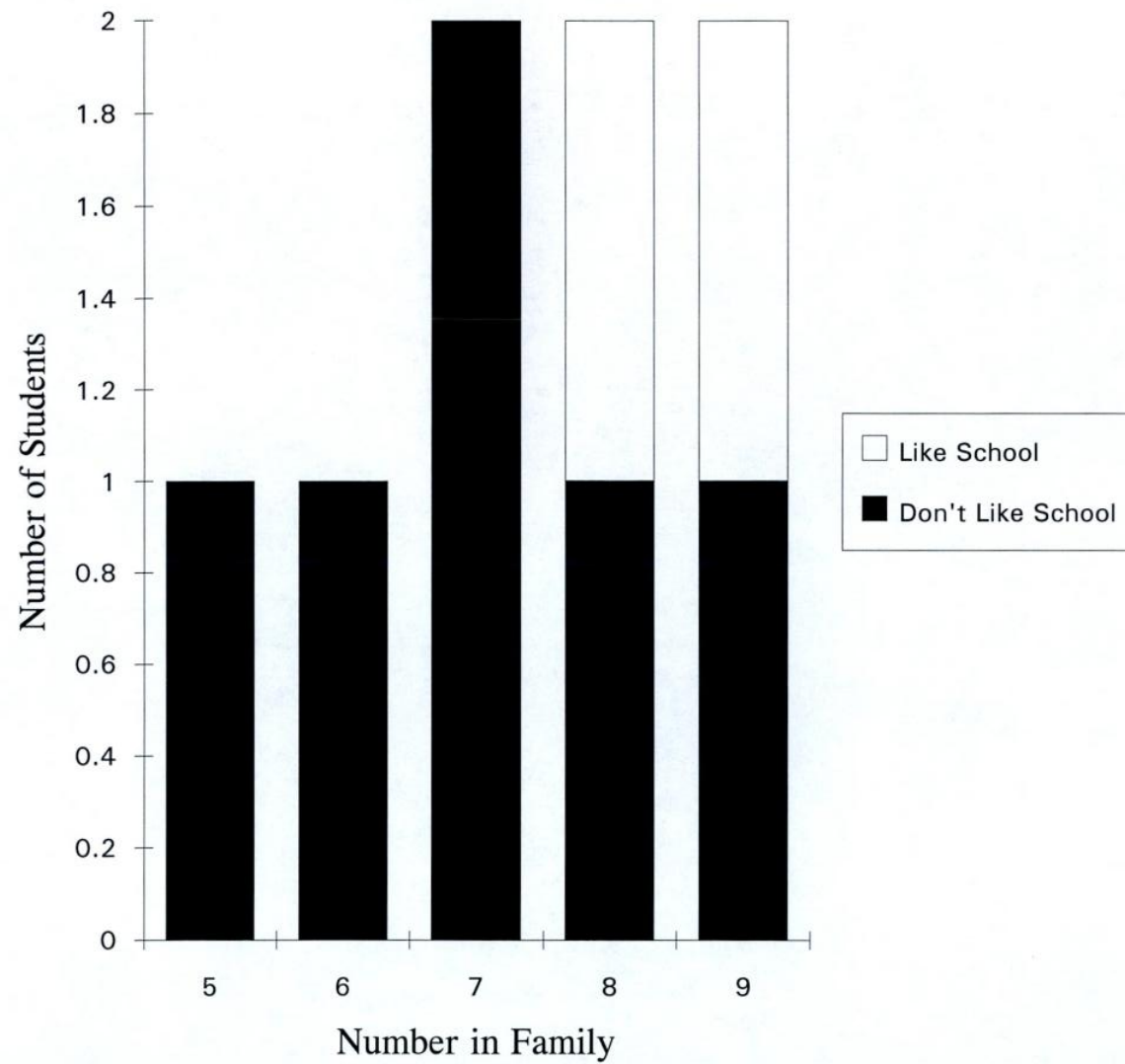


Figure 17a: shows students like/dislike for school, according to family size.

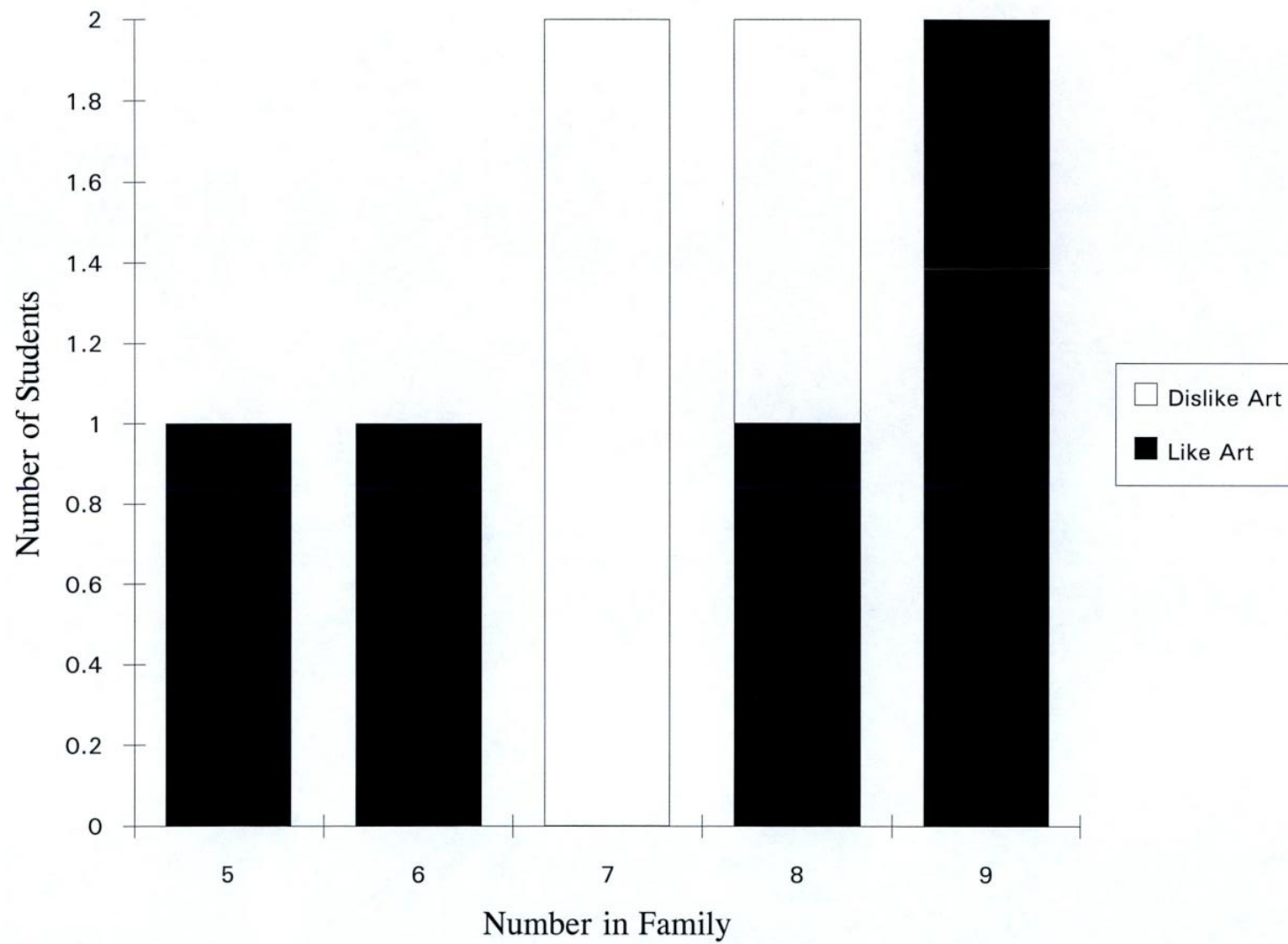


Figure 17b: shows students like/dislike for Art at school, according to family size.

Second Year Students

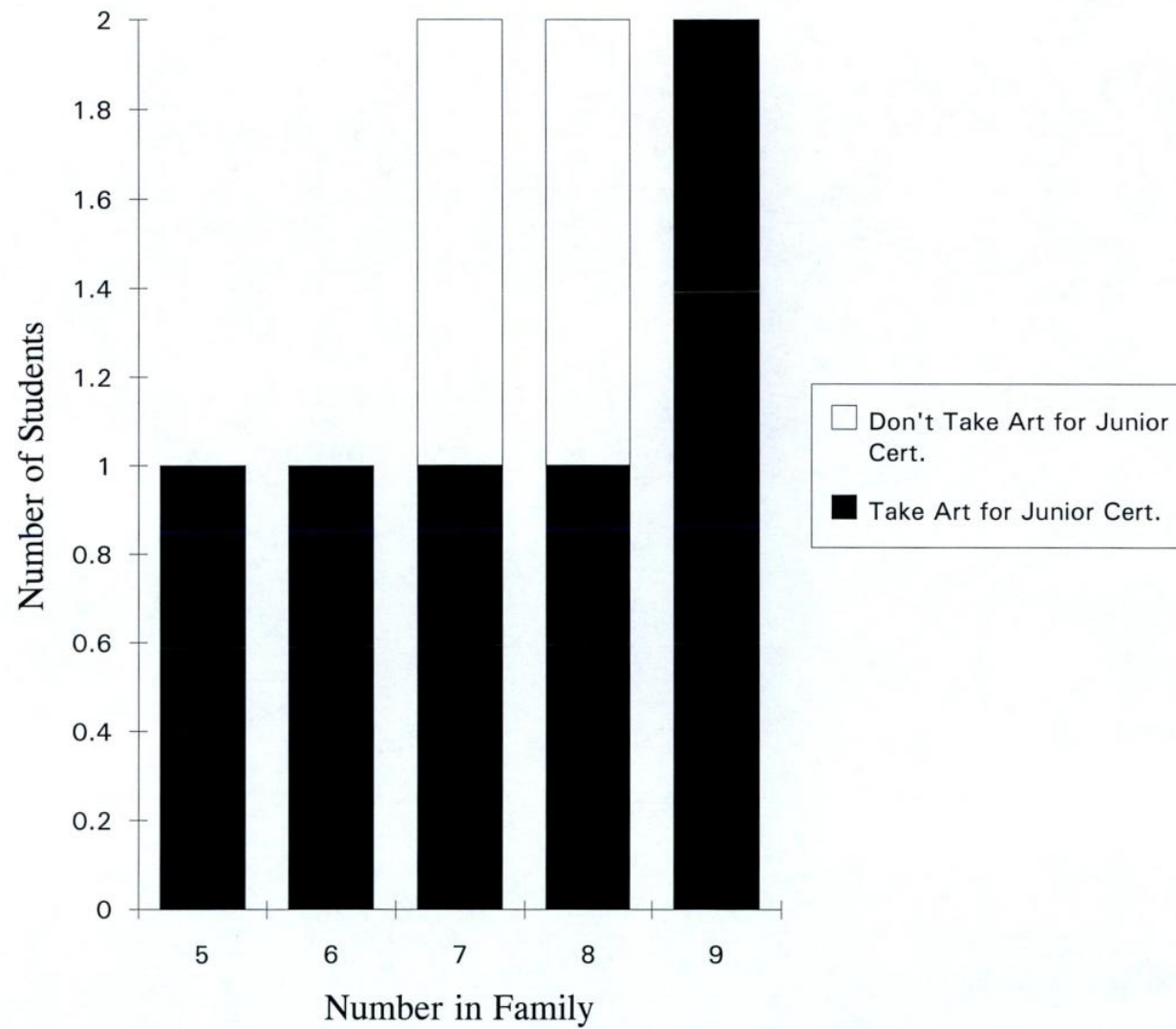


Figure 18a: shows students who wish to take Art for Junior Certificate Examinations, according to family size.

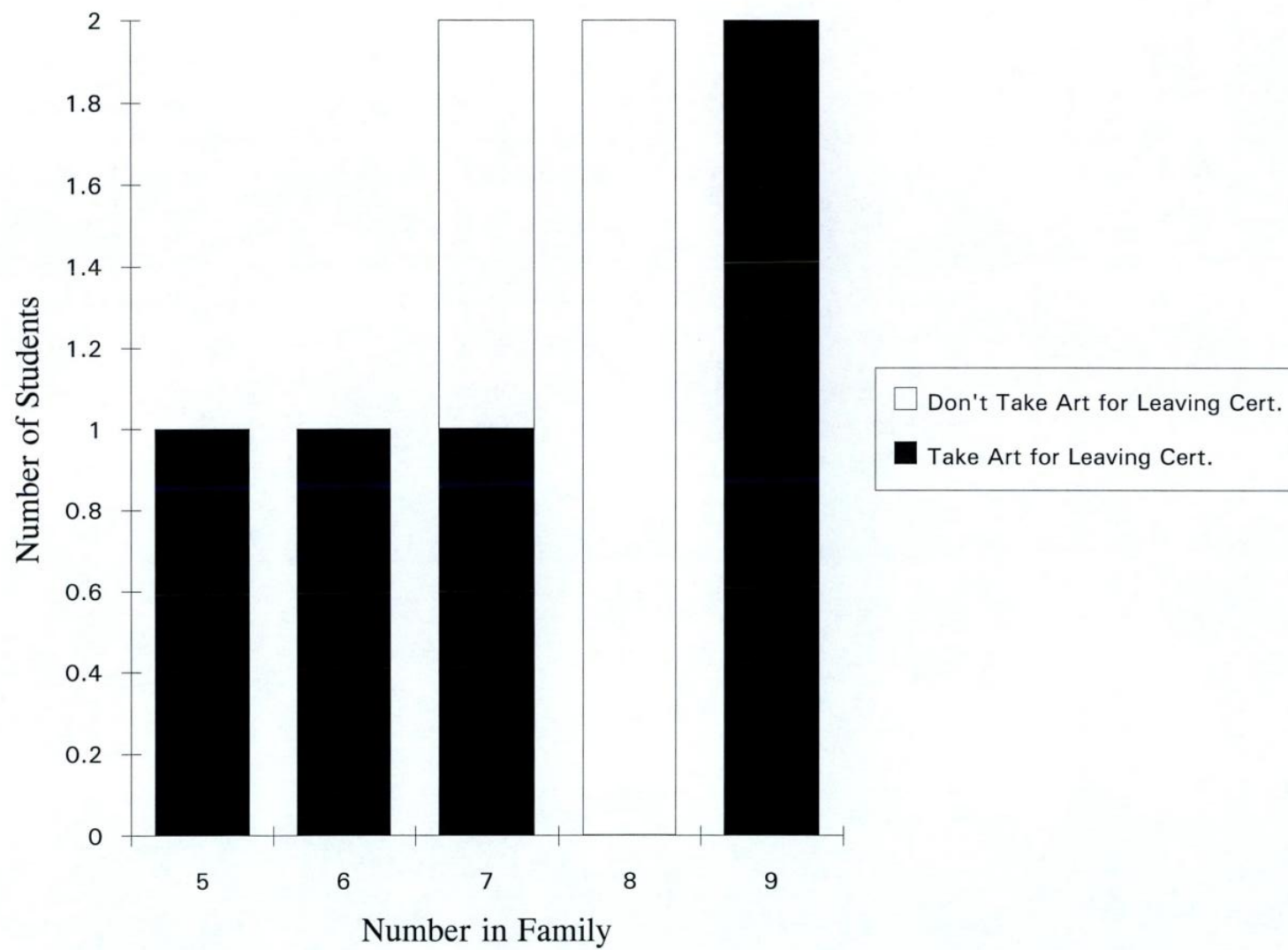


Figure 18b: shows students who wish to take Art for Leaving Certificate Examinations, according to family size.

Second Year Students

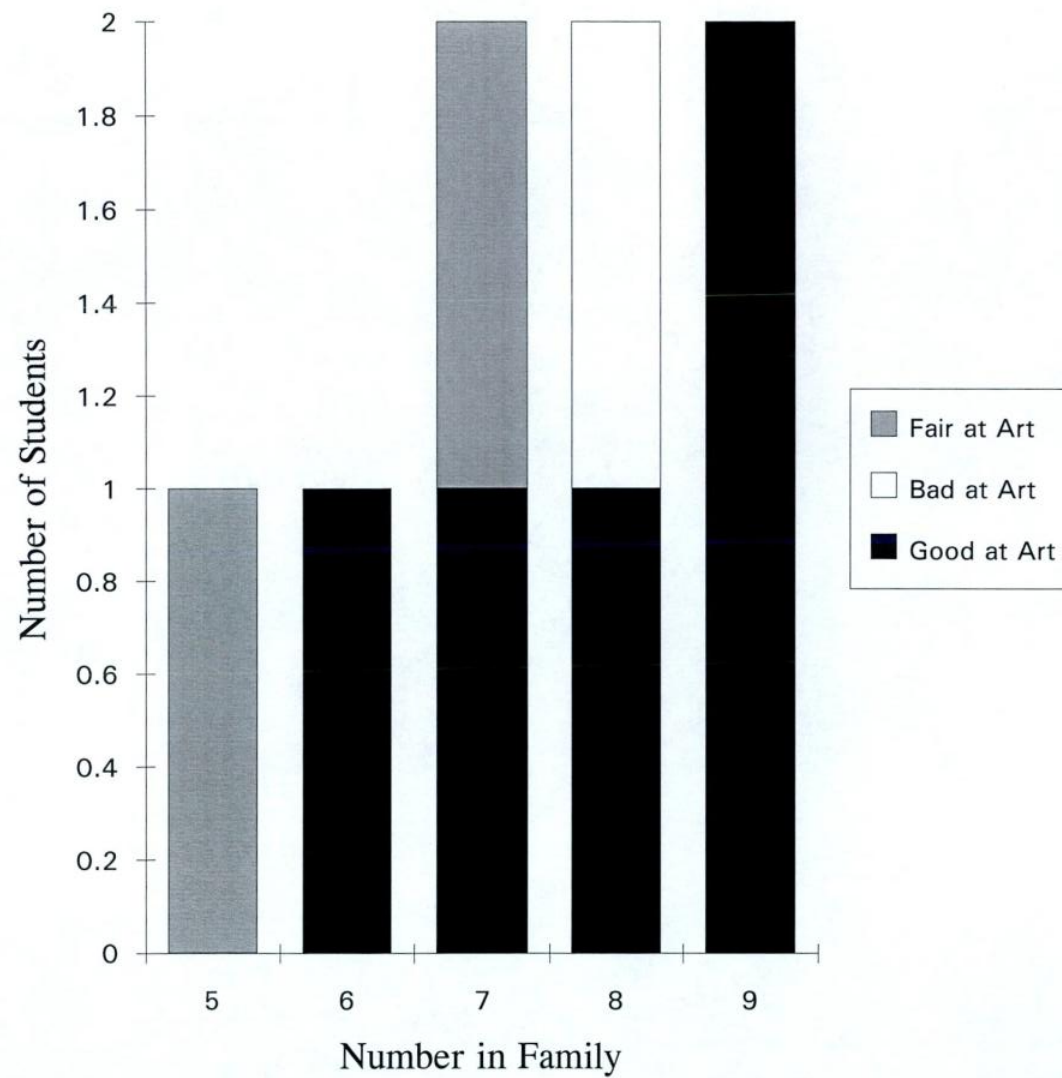


Figure 19: shows students personal evaluation of art ability levels according to family size. Source: Data has been derived from questionnaire in this Dissertation.

RESULTS. B

Figure 15. Shows on average of 7.3 individuals per family in this small group of 8 male, second year students attending school X. In this group, there was no family where there was no source of income. Families had either the father, or in the case of the larger families - both parents employed. Almost all students claimed they did not like school, but the students from the larger families did. This again may be due to the fact of what was concluded in the first results given in this chapter. (See results - first year students). 6 out of 8 students wished to take Junior Certificate Art Examinations, but 7 out of 8 students had no desire to take Leaving certificate Art Examinations - these students came predominantly from the larger families of seven and eight individuals in the family.

The third and fourth groups of students that completed the questionnaire are second year and third year students show respectively. This second group of second year students consisted of 11 males and 3 females, 14 in total. The group is considered as the 'remedial class.' (This is almost twice the amount of students, as in the top stream second year class.) Students range from 13 to 15 years of age. '15 yrs.' Being considered quite old for a second year student although average for a 'remedial second year student.'

The numbers in the families, averaged out to be 6.4 individuals. (See Fig. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24.).

The fourth group of students is a class of 12 male students, ranging from 15 - 17 years of age. (Again, 17 yrs. being considered 'old' for a Junior Certificate student. These students taking the Junior Certificate Examinations in the summer of 1995 are termed as "very weak kids." The average number of individuals per family is seven. (See Fig. 25, 26, 27, 28, 29).

Second Year Students (B)



Figure 20: shows average family size of second year students. (Average = 6.4 individuals per family) Source: Data has been derived from questionnaire in this Dissertation.

Second Year Students (B)

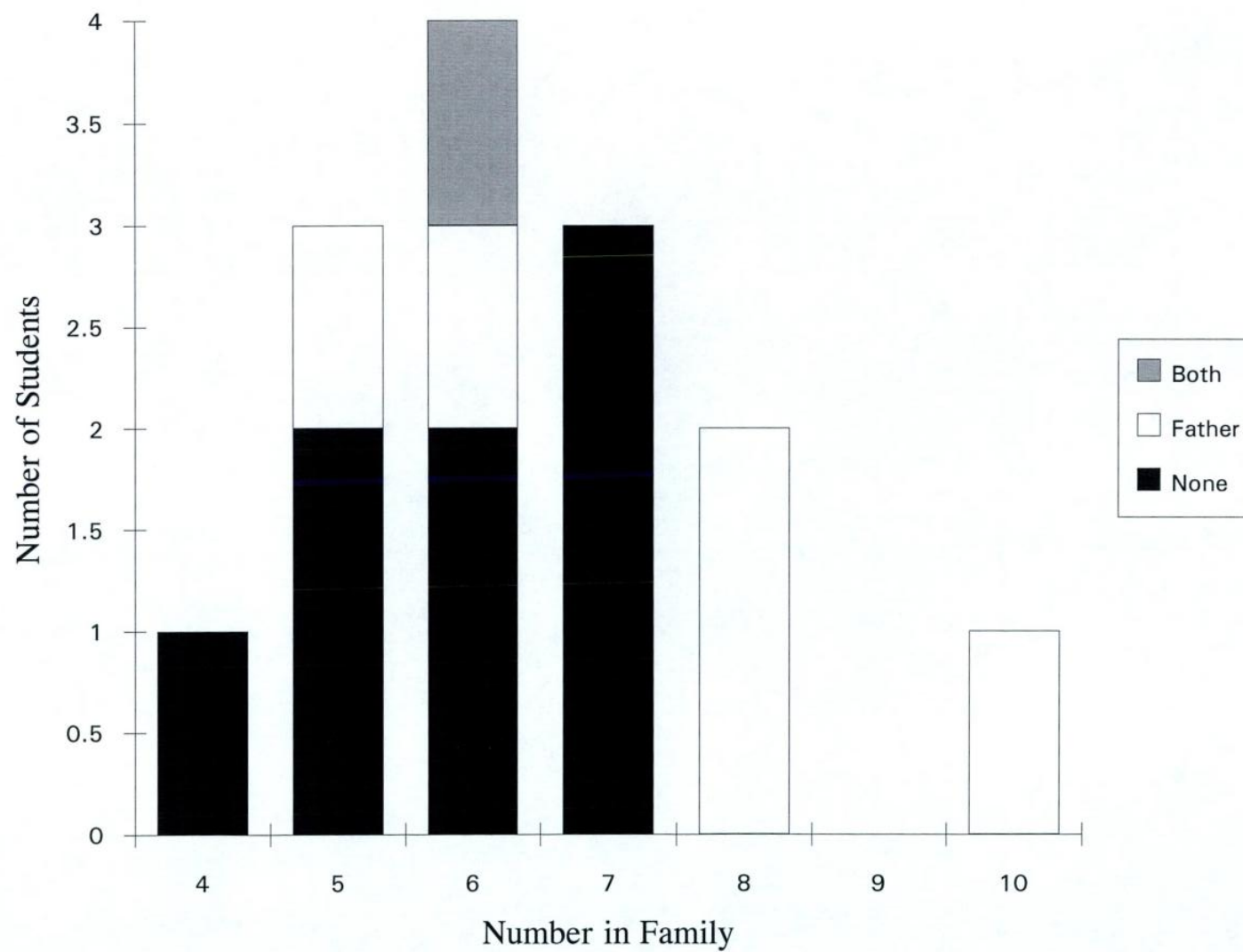


Figure 21: shows numbers of parents who work according to family size

Second Year Students (B)

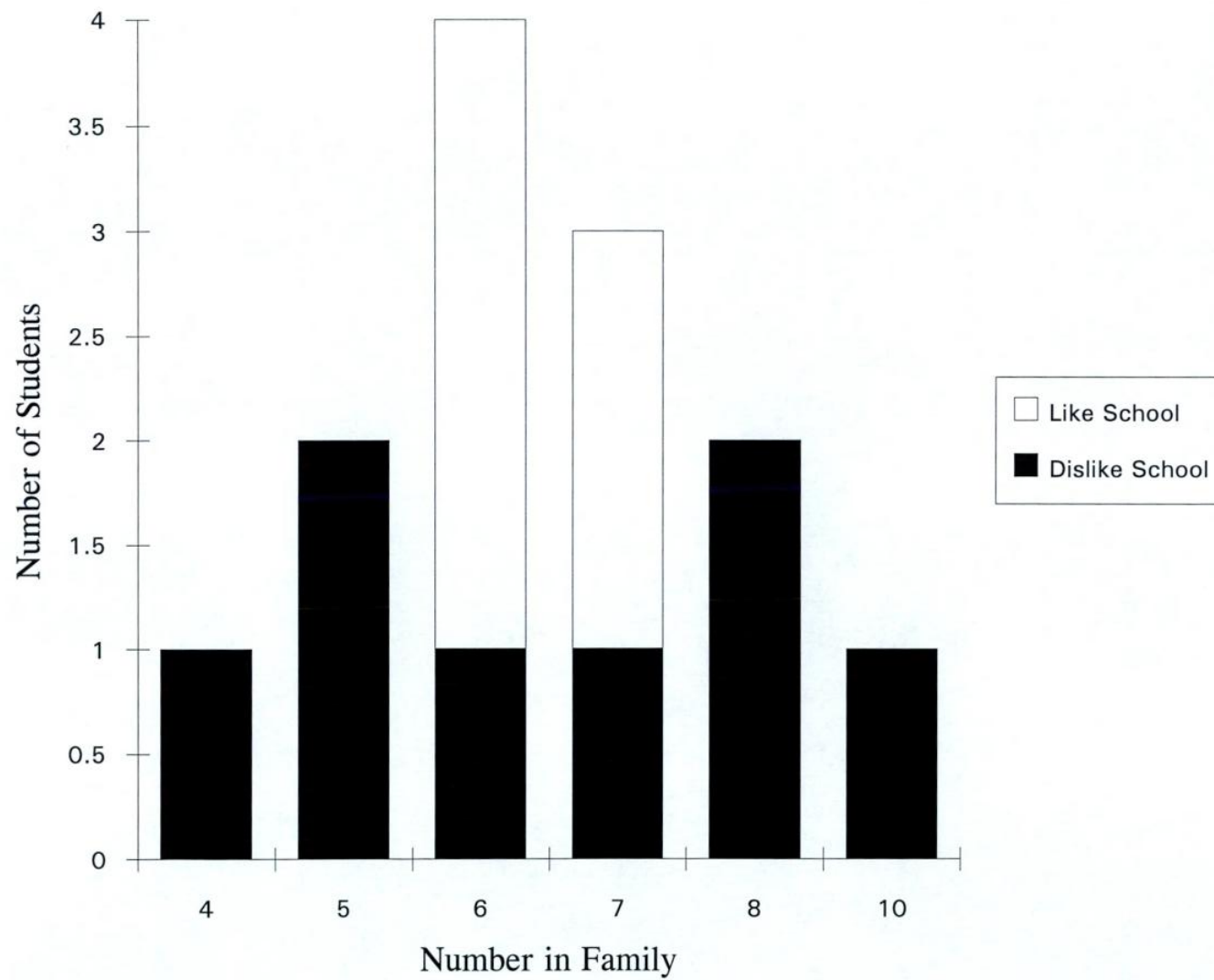


Figure 22a: shows students like/dislike for school according to family size.

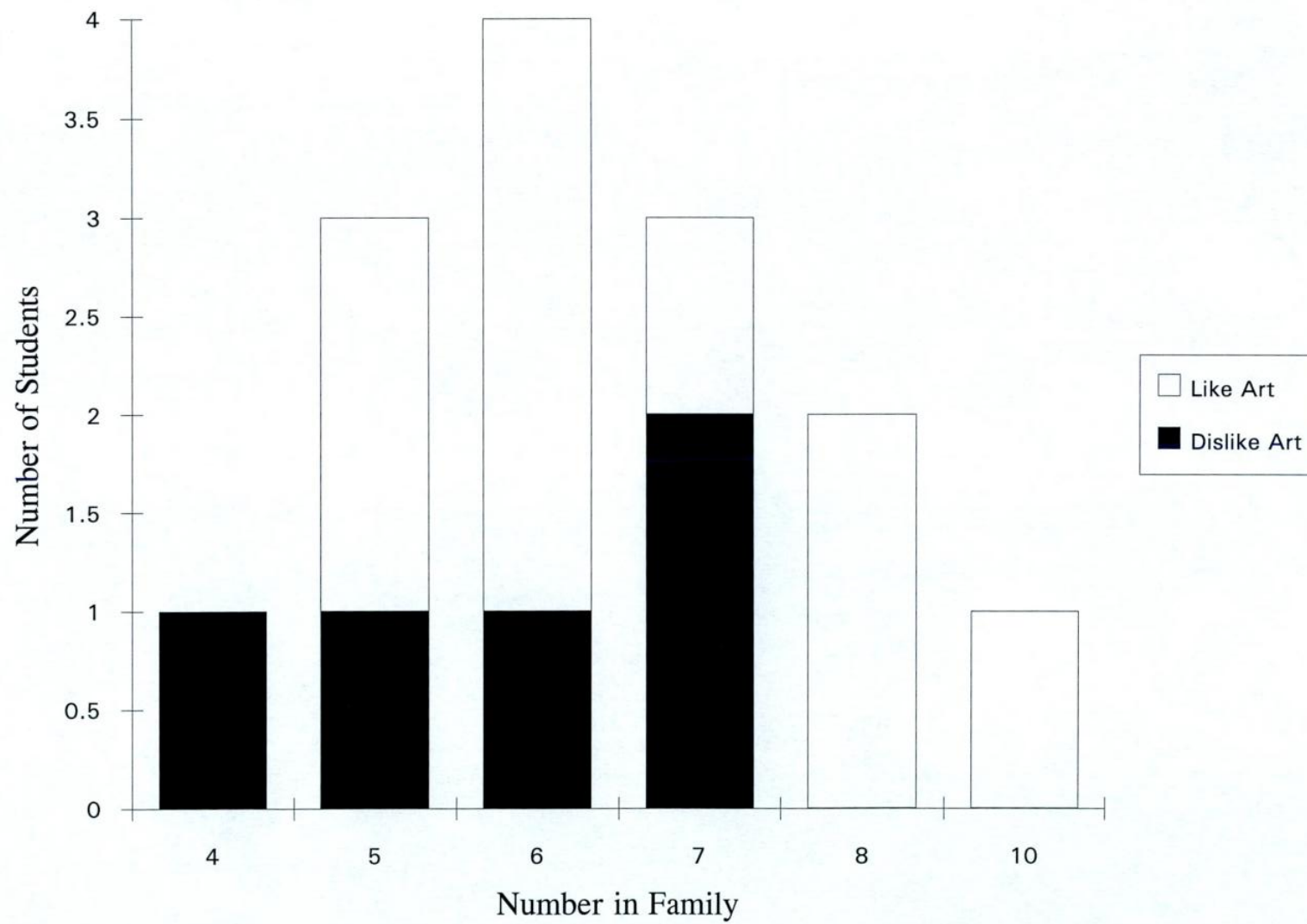


Figure 22b: shows students like/dislike for Art in school, according to family size

Second Year Students (B)

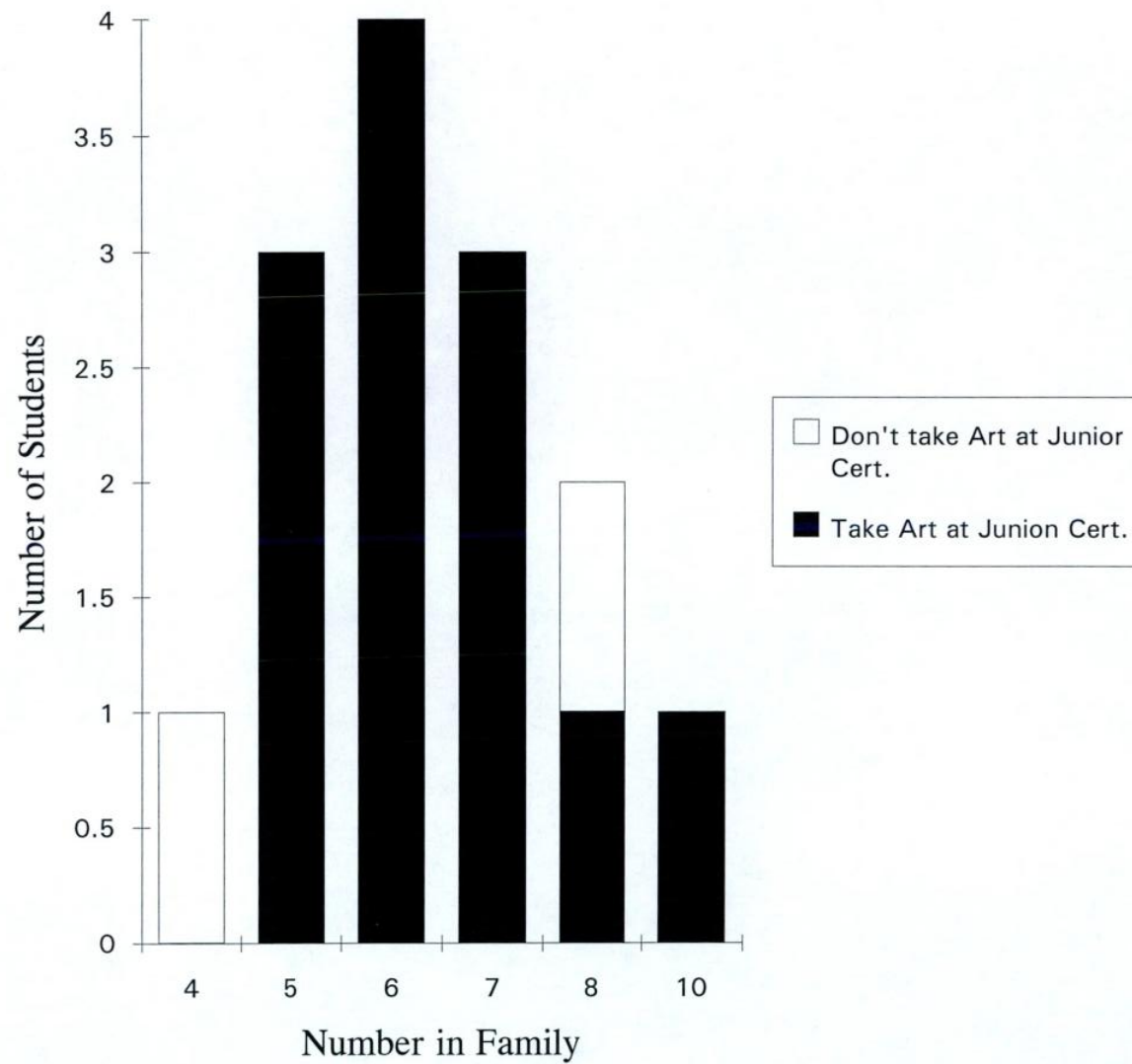


Figure 23a: shows students decisions to take Art for Junior Certificate, according to family size.

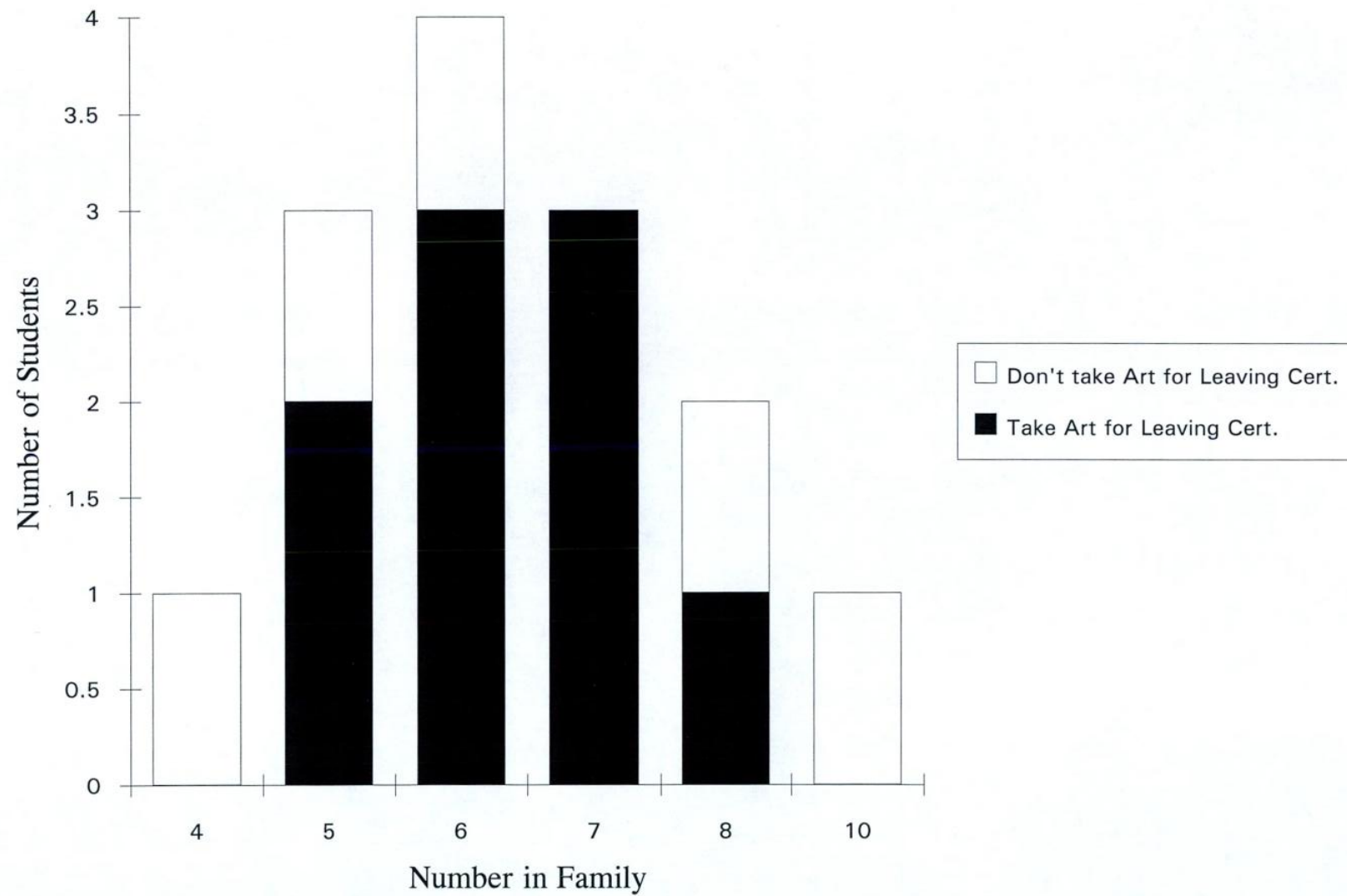


Figure 23b: shows students decision to take Art for Leaving Certificate, according to family size.

Second Year Students (B)

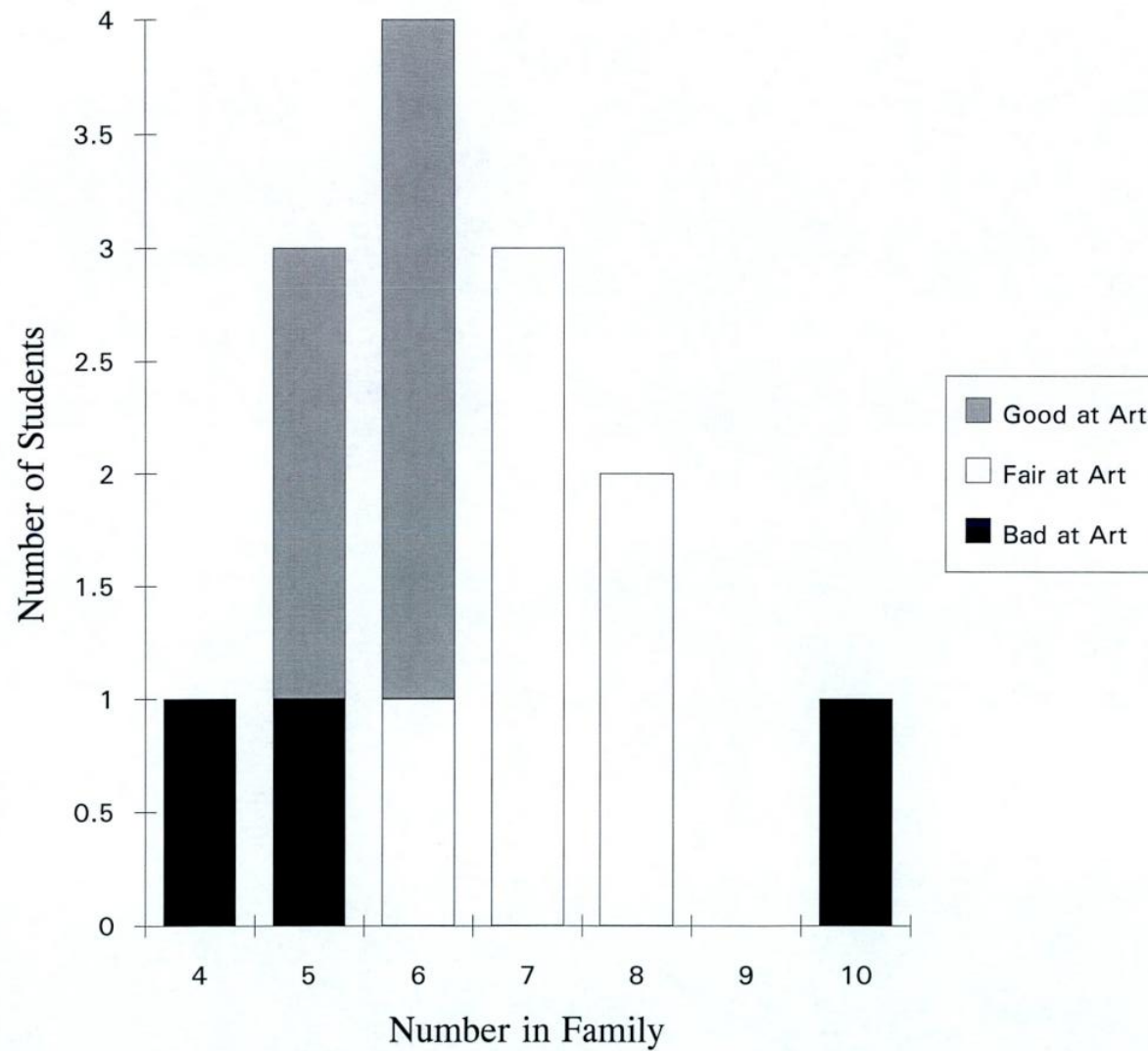


Figure 24: shows students personal evaluations on Art ability levels. Source: Data has been derived from questionnaire in this Dissertation.

Junior Certificate Students

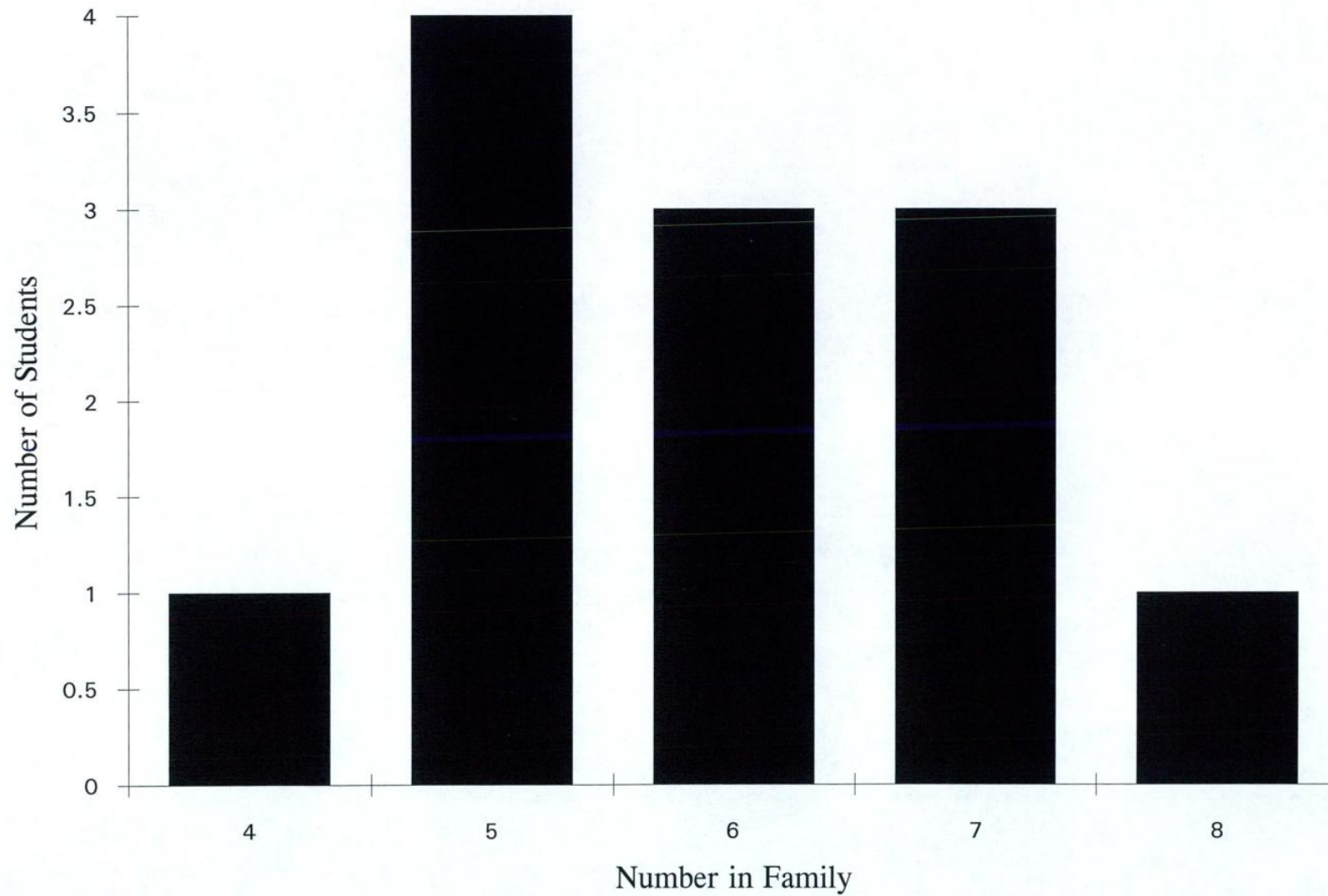


Figure 25: shows number of students and family sizes. (Average = 7 individuals per family)

Junior Certificate Students

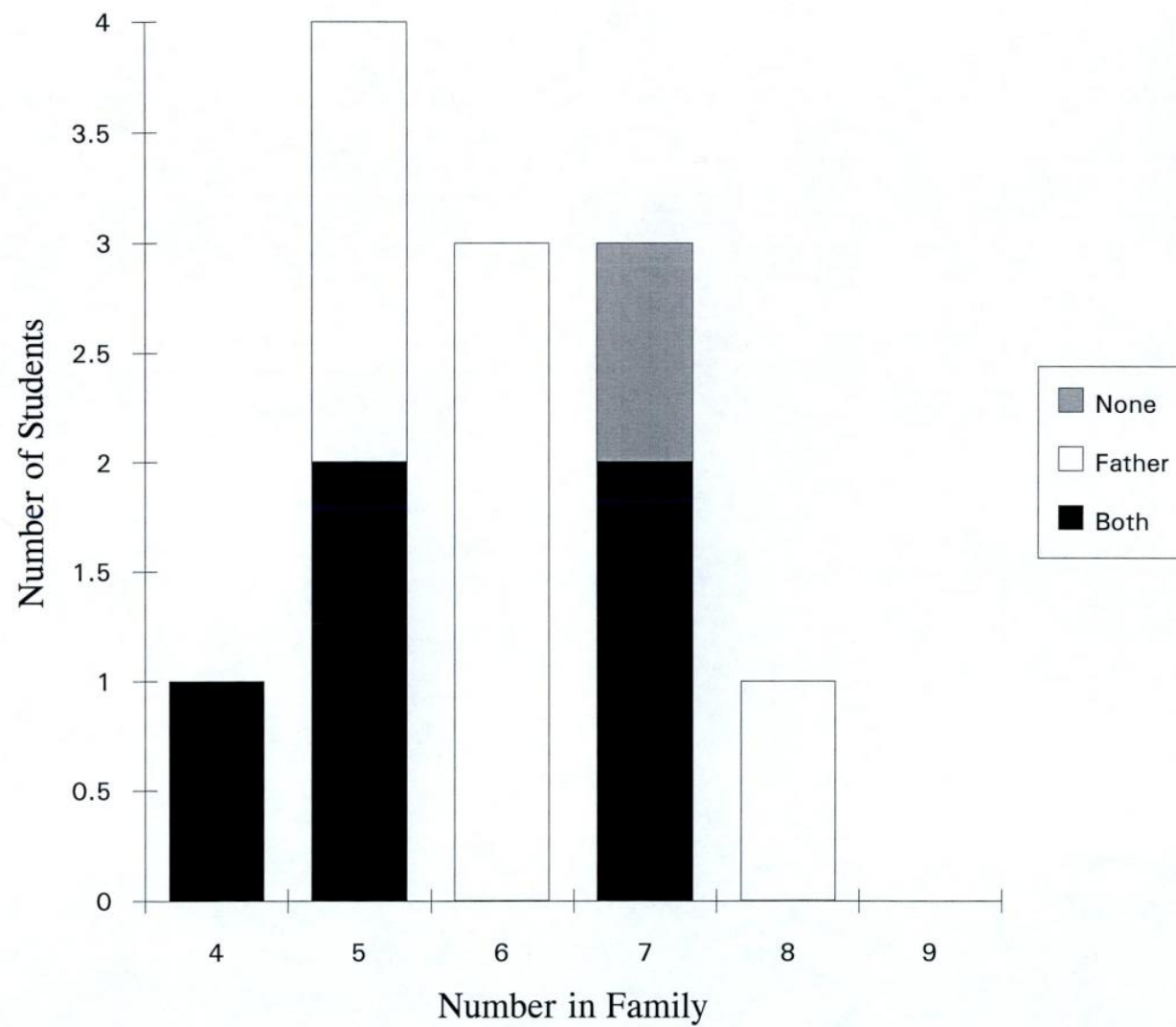


Figure 26: shows number of parents who work according to family size.

Junior Certificate Students

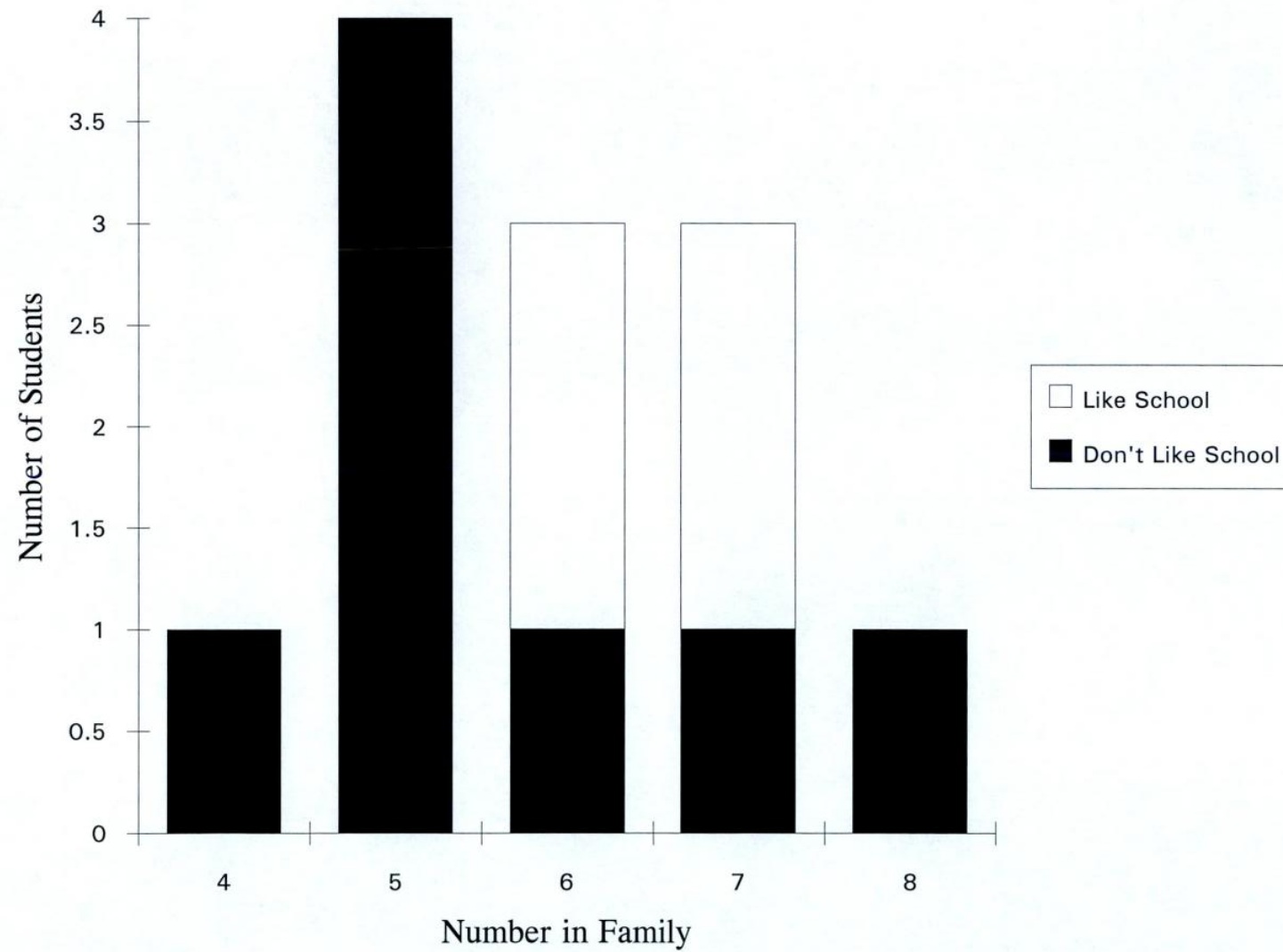


Figure 27a: shows students like/dislike school, according to family size.

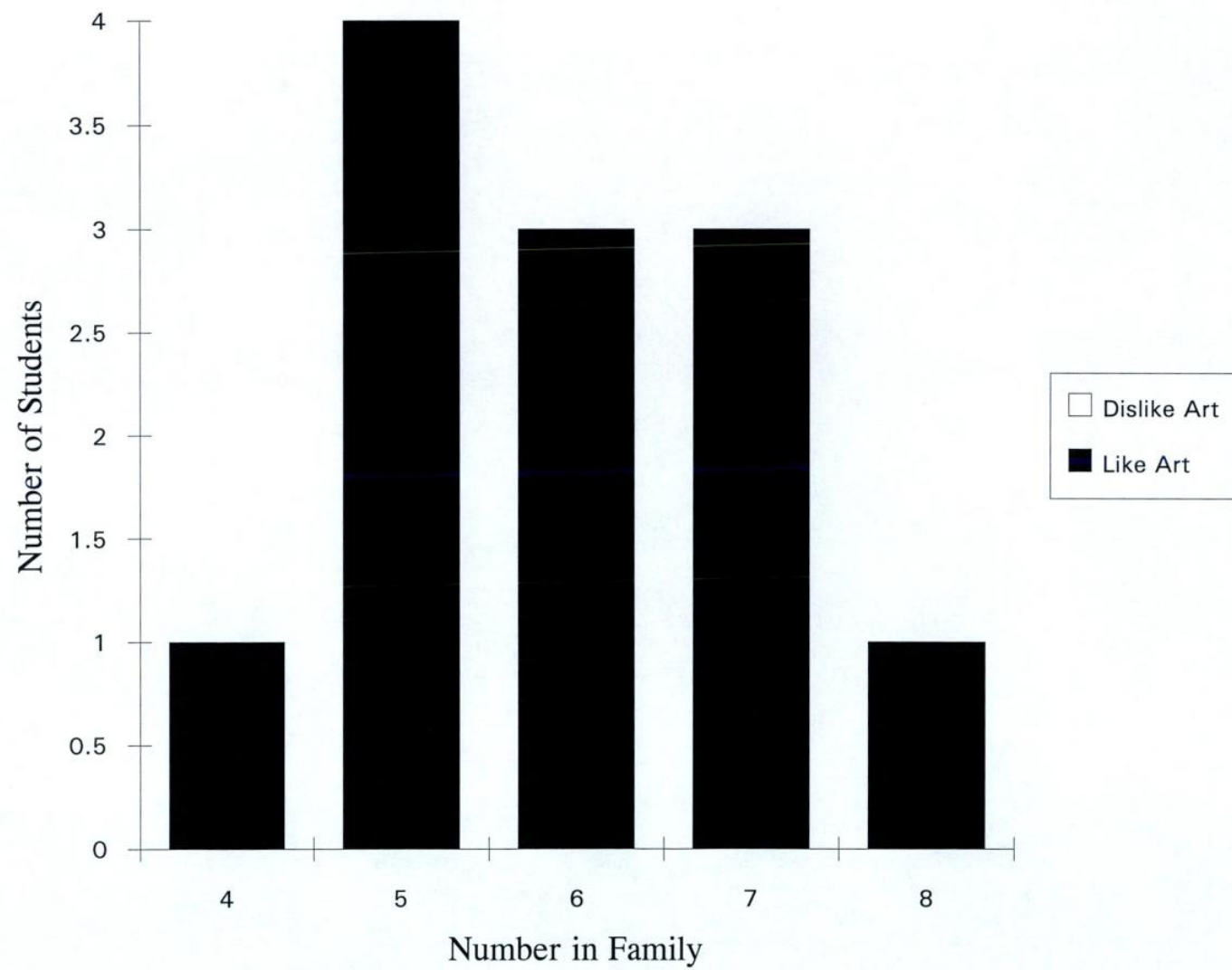


Figure 27b: shows students like/dislike for Art, according to family size.

Junior Certificate Students

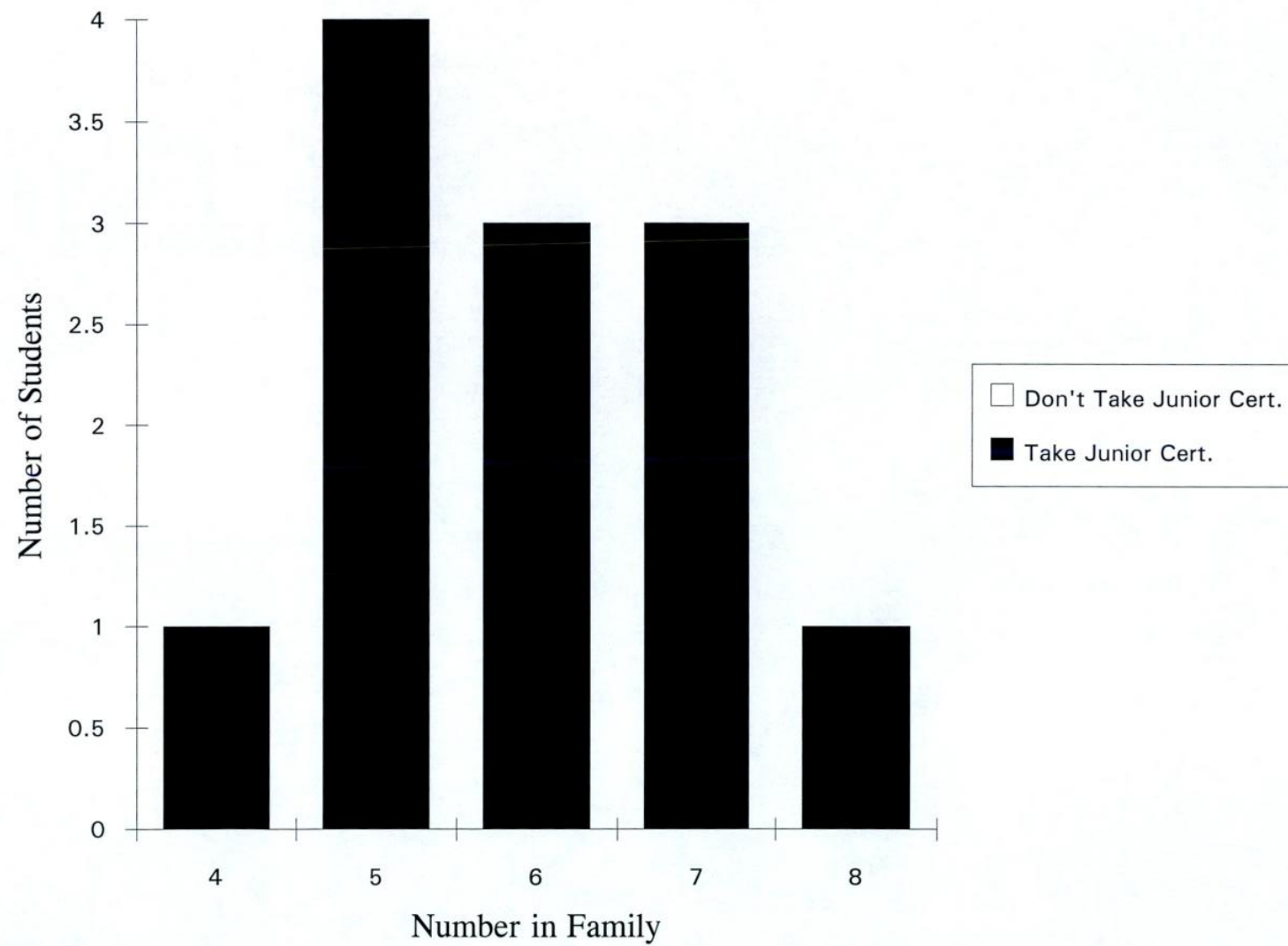


Figure 28a: shows students taking Junior Certificate Examinations in Art, according to family size.

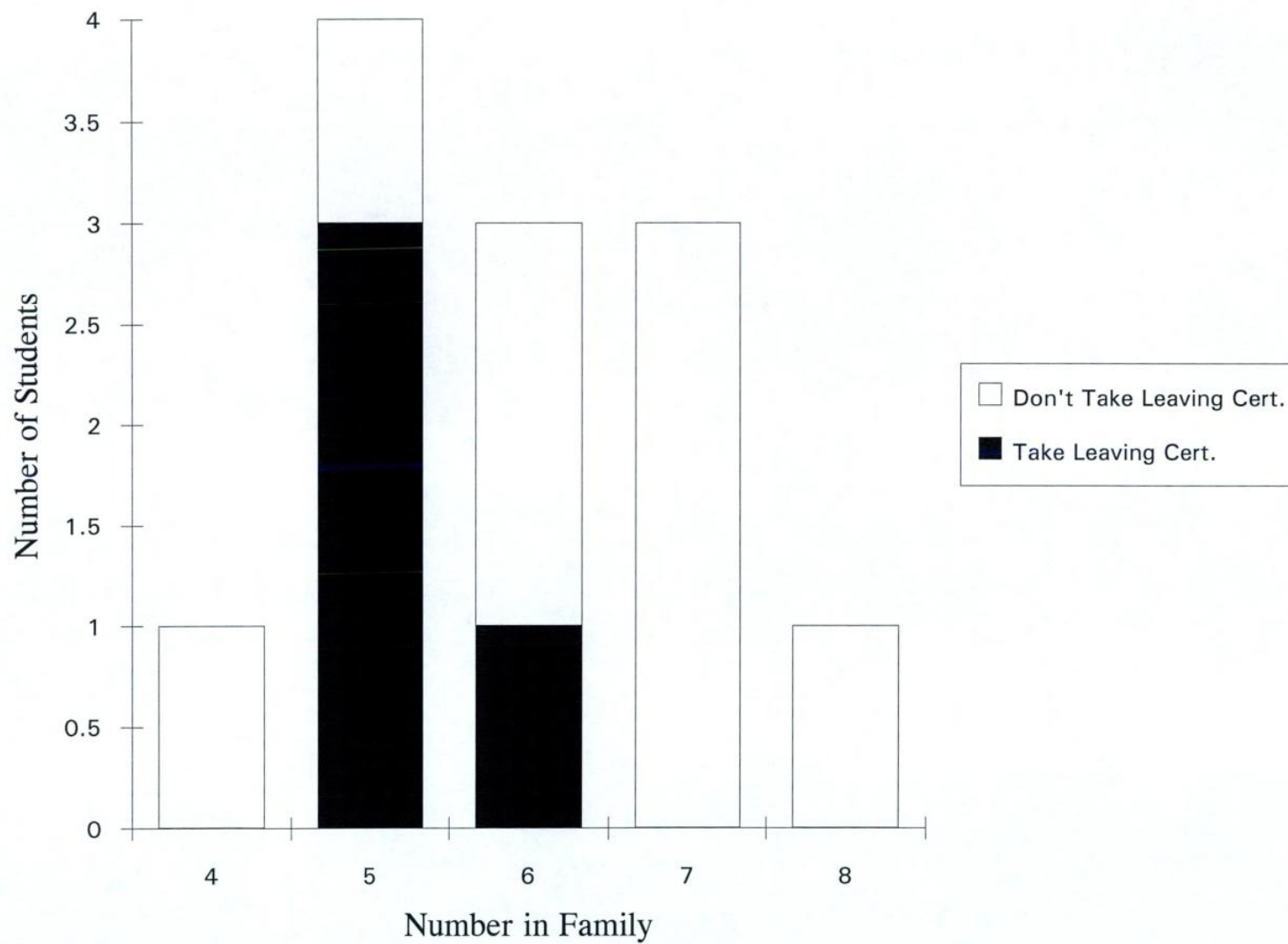


Figure 28b: shows students taking Leaving Certificate Examinations in Art, according to family size.

Junior Certificate Students

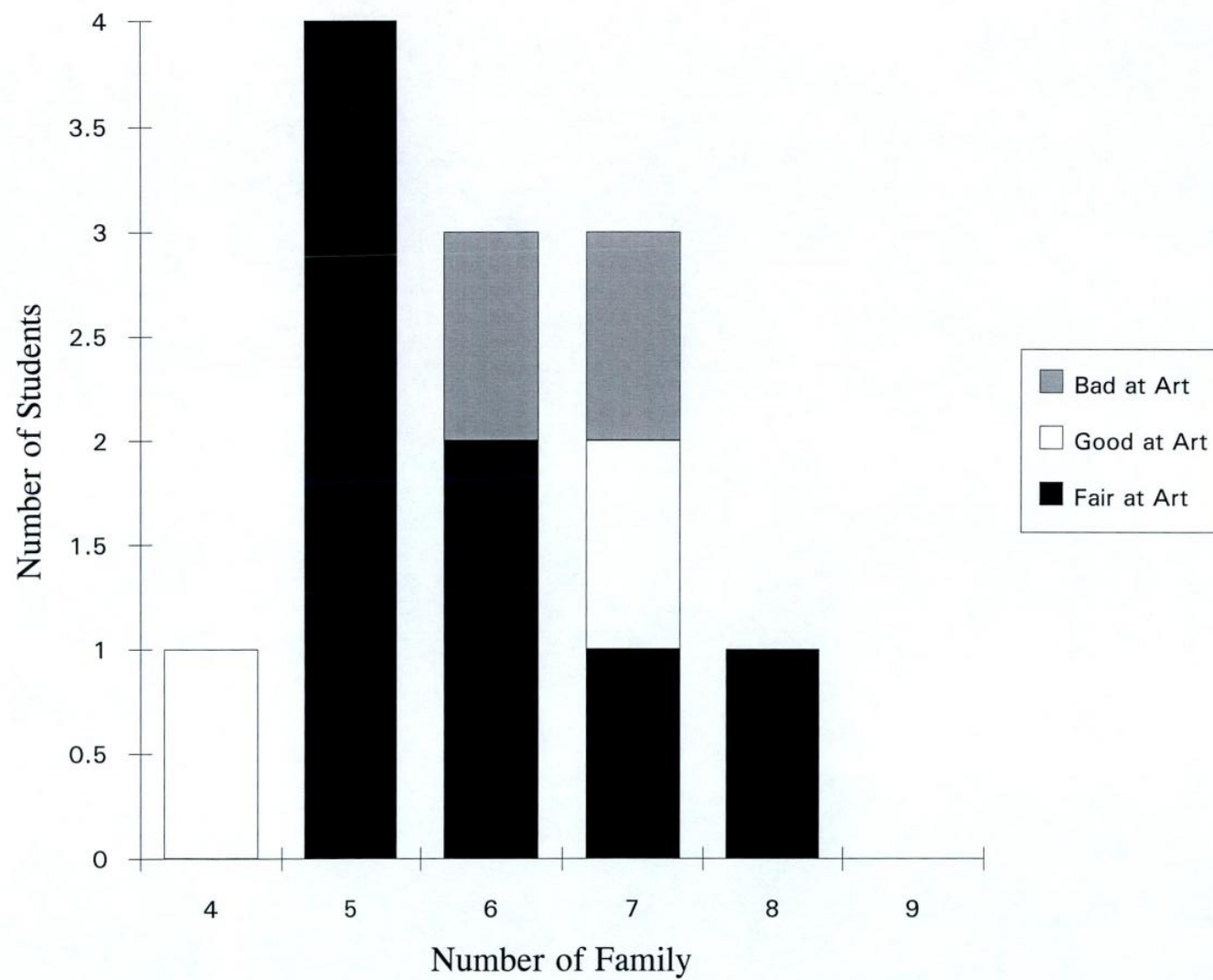
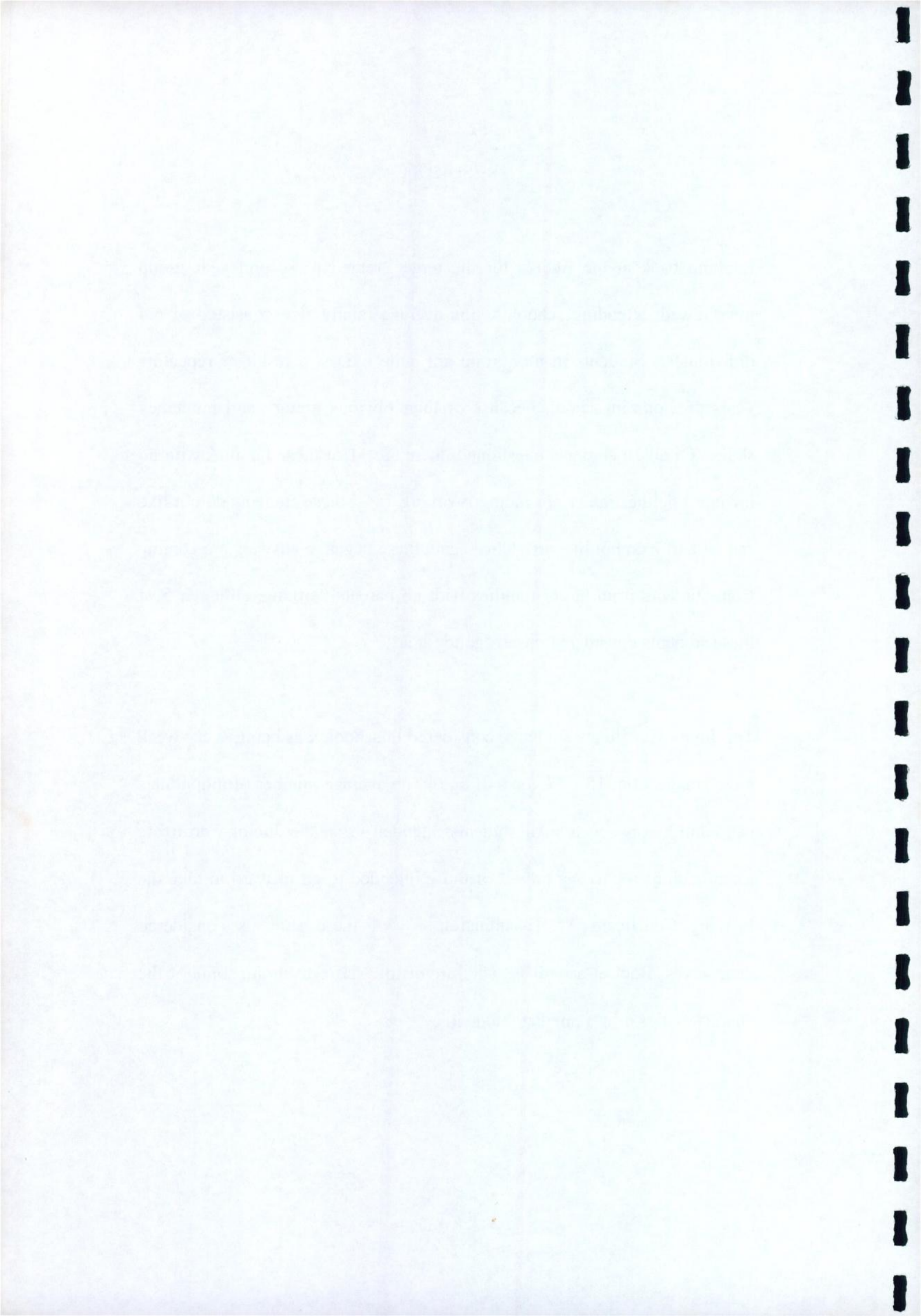


Figure 29: shows students personal evaluation of Art ability levels.

RESULTS C

Looking back at the figures for the target 'remedial' second year group interviewed, attending school X, the average family size consisted of 6.4 individuals. Students in this group are quite old, as a result of repeating years previous in school, because of their obvious literary and numeracy skills. Of all 14 students questioned, there are 11 of these families with no income - neither father nor mother working. 8 of these students do not like school and 7 do not like art. Once again these negative answers are coming from students from larger families with no parents working, although 5 of these students considers himself 'good' at art!.

The Junior Certificate students, considered in school X as being "very weak kids," range from 15 - 17 years of age. The average number of individuals per family, was seven. All students intended to sit the Junior Certificate Examinations in Art but only 3 of those intended to go forward to take the Leaving Certificate Art Examination. 8 of these students considered themselves 'Bad' at art - fear of failure of low self esteem are some of the characteristics of a 'remedial' student.



The remaining two groups of students interviewed are a group of fifth year students, and a group of sixth year students, also presently attending school X. The most noticeable difference between these senior groups and the junior groups is that average family sizes are lower ranging from 5/6 individuals per family unit. Figures 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, show the research findings on the group of 5, fifth year students, that returned copies of the questionnaire from a total class number of 12. (High absenteeism and truancy are evident at school X).

Only 9 copies out of 16 questionnaires were returned from the last group of students interviewed from school X. These students are sixth years and in general, are difficult to deal with as a result of lack of concentration, apathy, and often with a total dislike of staff members. (See figures 36, 37, 38, 39, 40).

Fifth Year Students

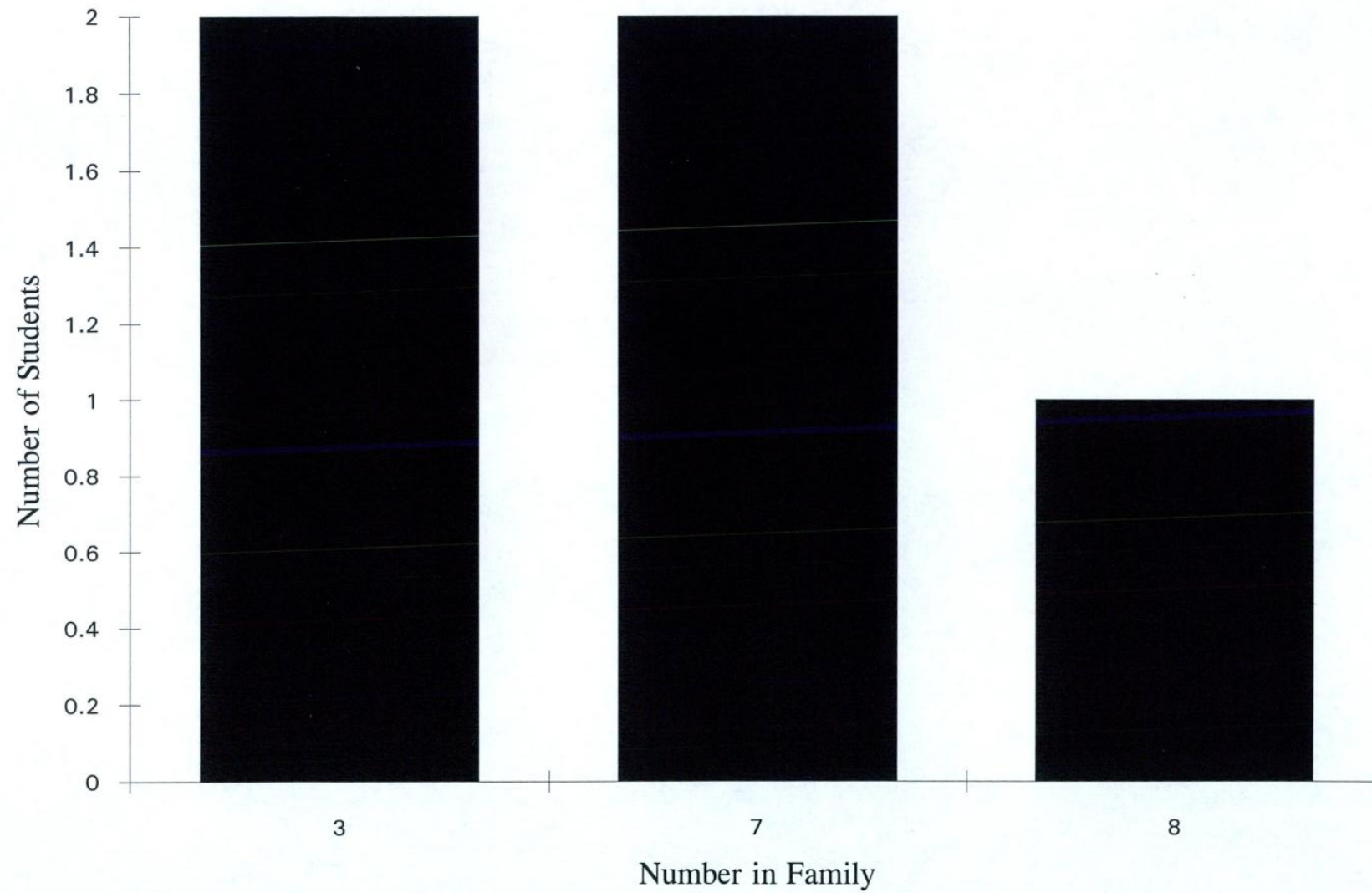


Figure 30: student numbers and family size. (5.6)

Fifth Year Students

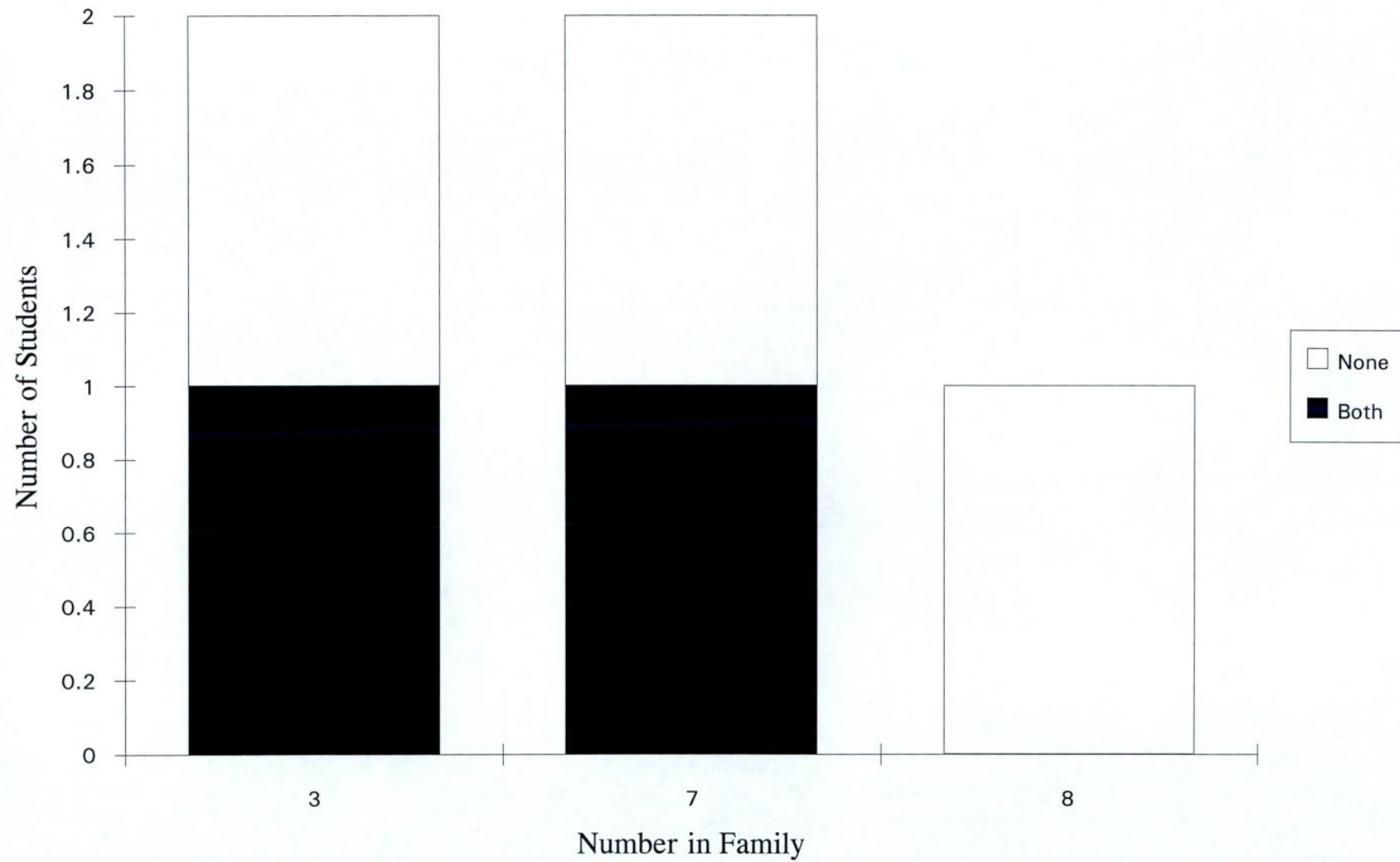


Figure 31: student numbers and parents working according to family size

Fifth Year Students

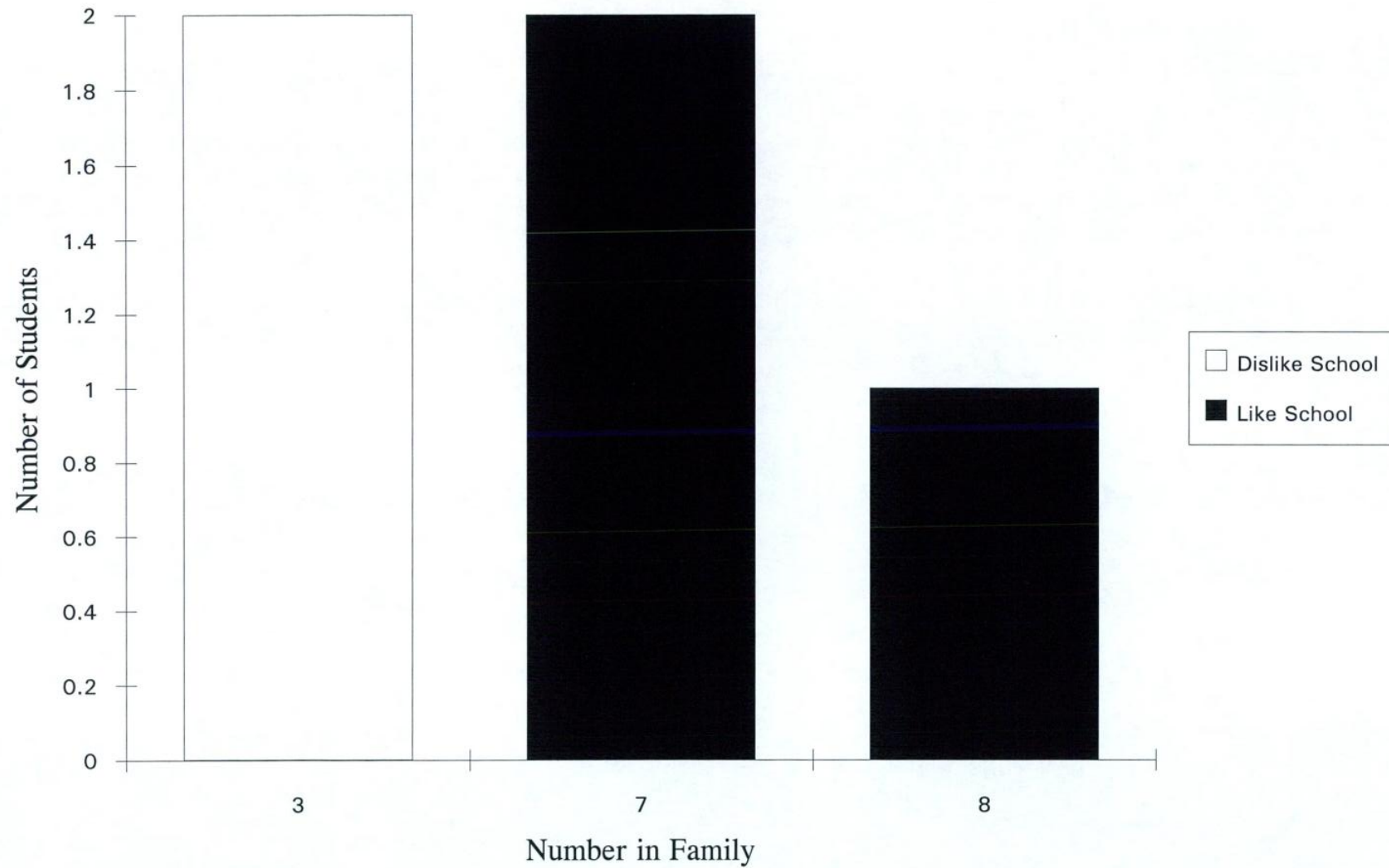


Figure 32a: shows students like/dislike for school, according to family size.

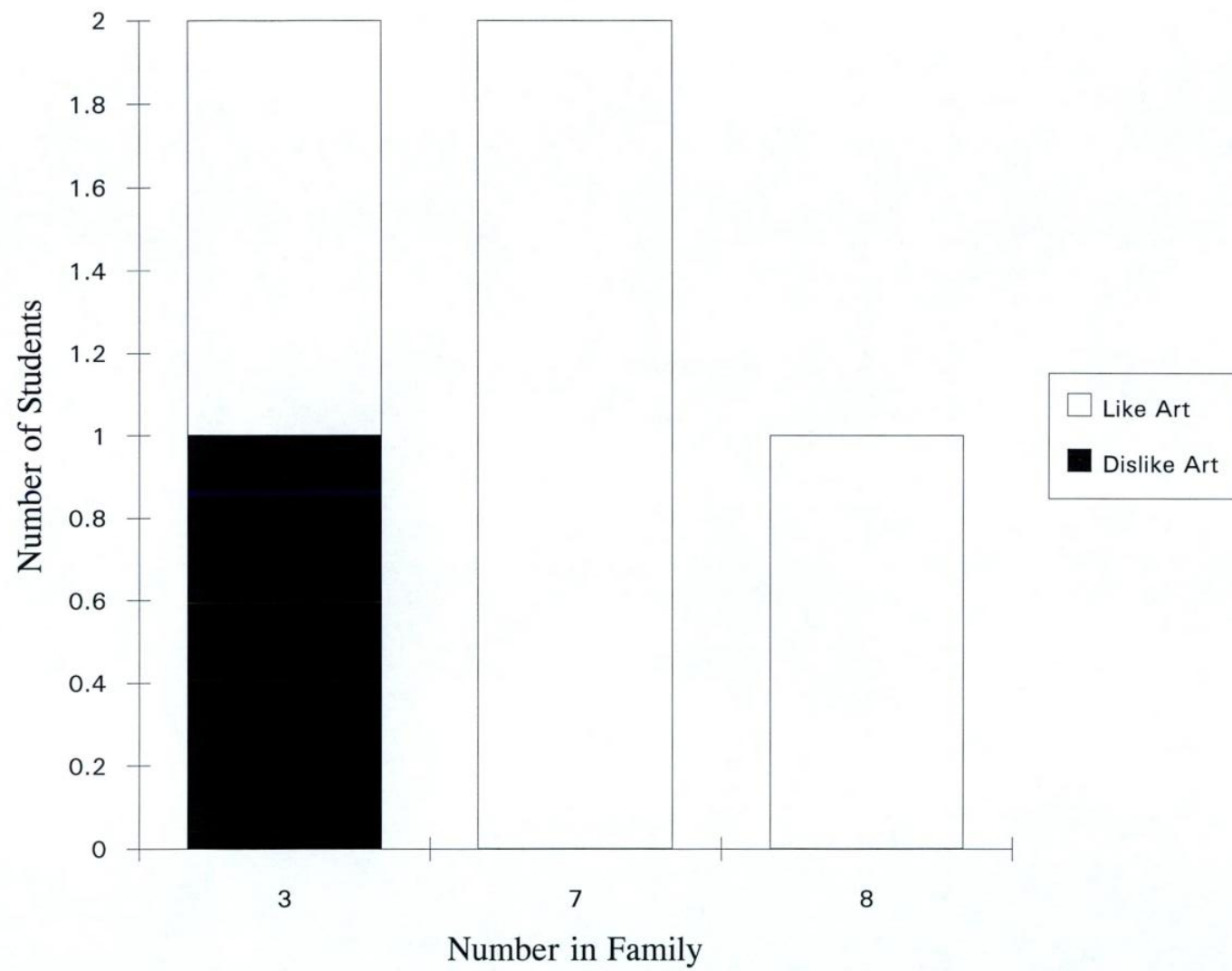


Figure 32b: shows students like/dislike for Art in school, according to family size.

Fifth Year Students

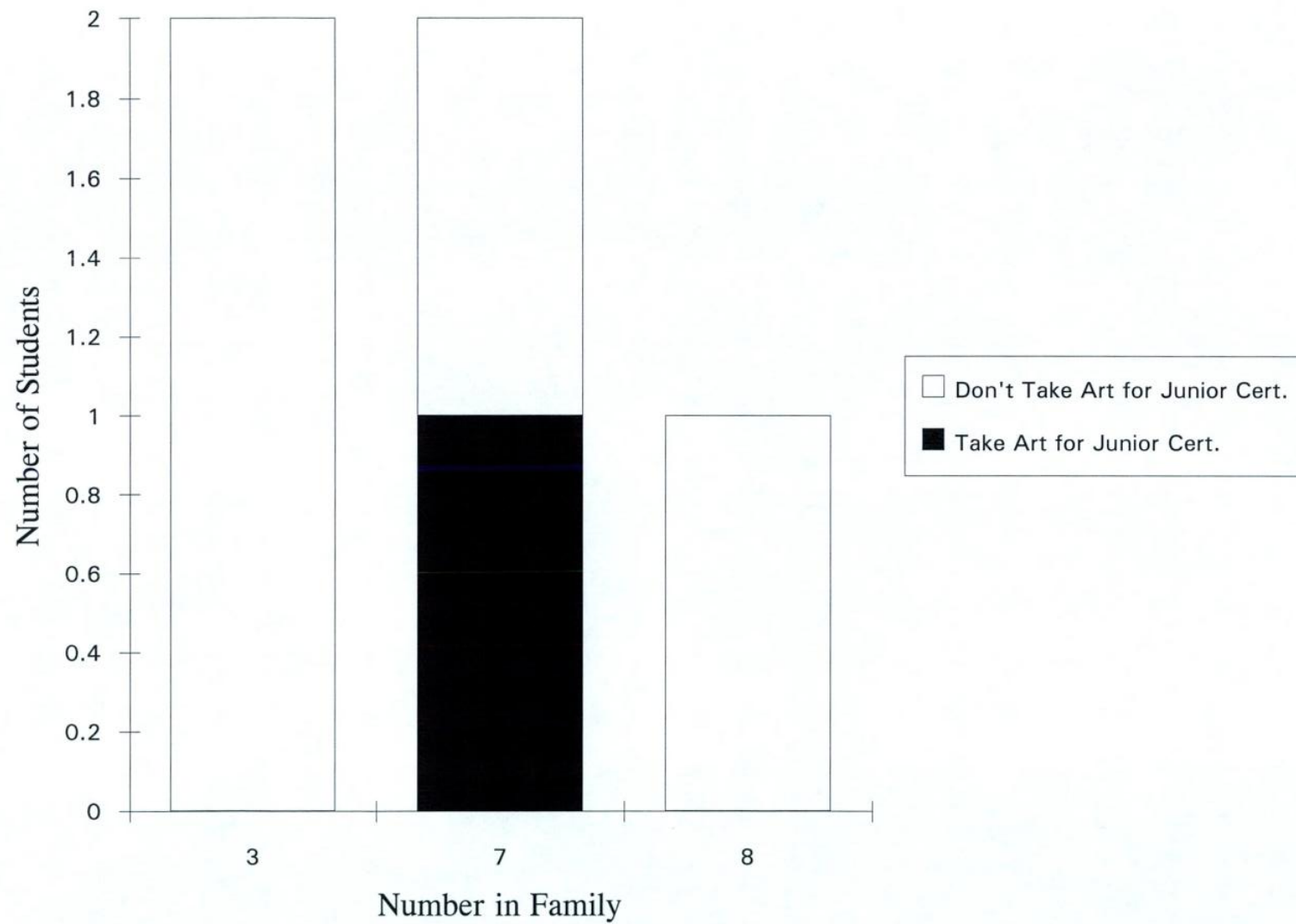


Figure 33a: student numbers taking Junior Certificate Art Examinations, according to family size.

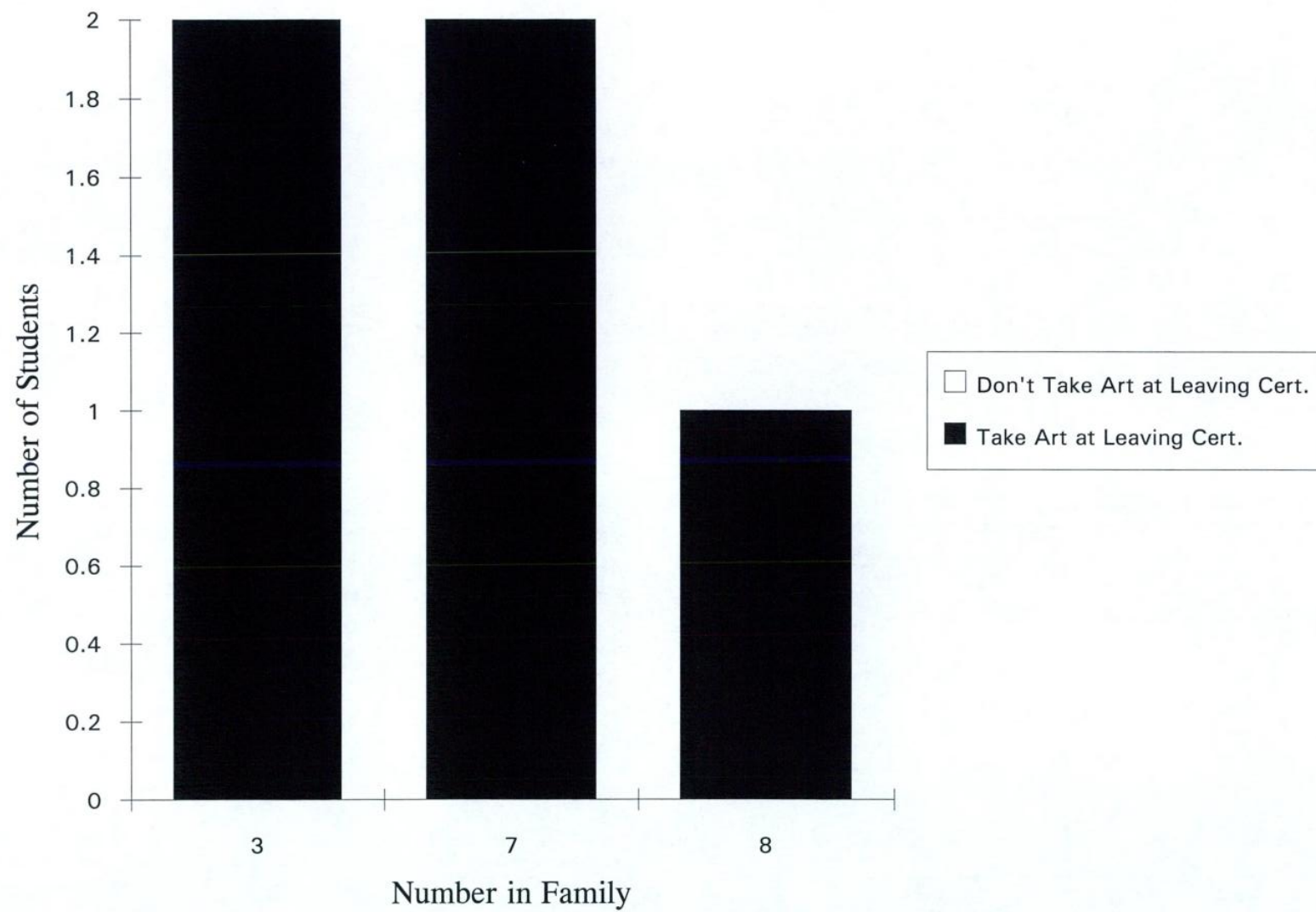


Figure 33b: shows students taking Leaving Certificate Art Examinations, according to family size.

Fifth Year Students

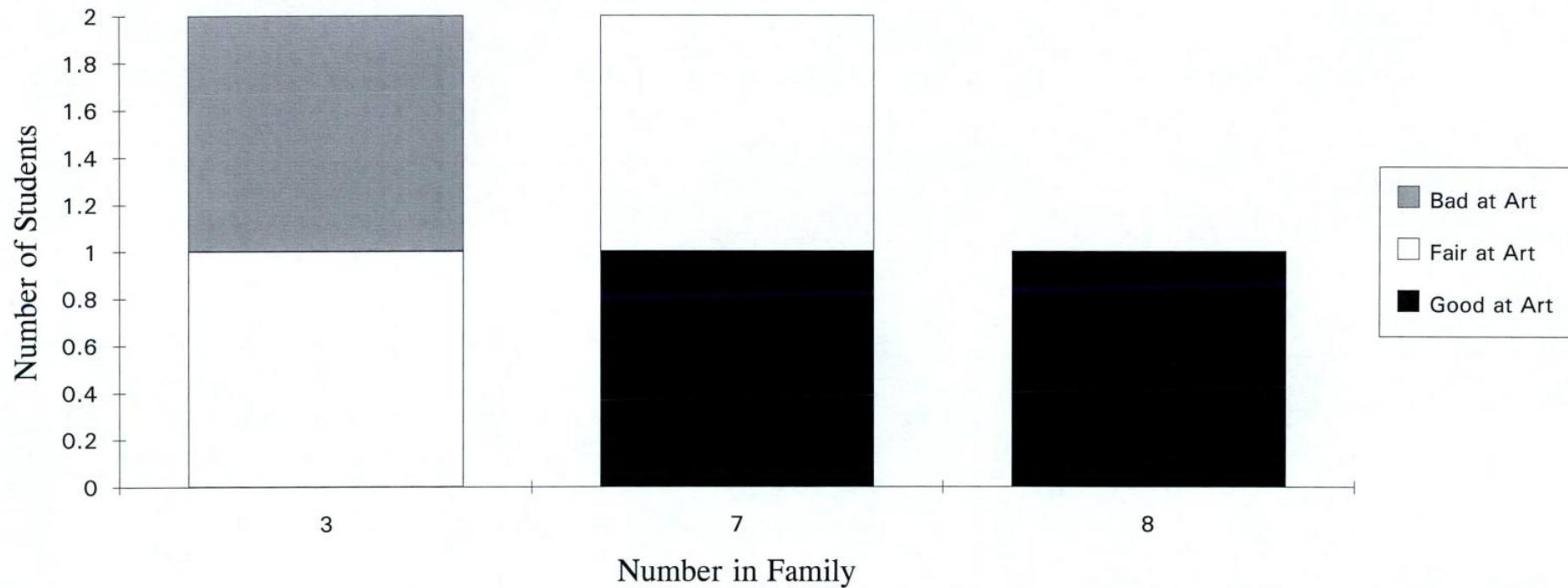


Figure 34: students personal evaluation of Art ability levels according to family size. Source: Data has been derived from questionnaire in this Dissertation.

Sixth Year Students

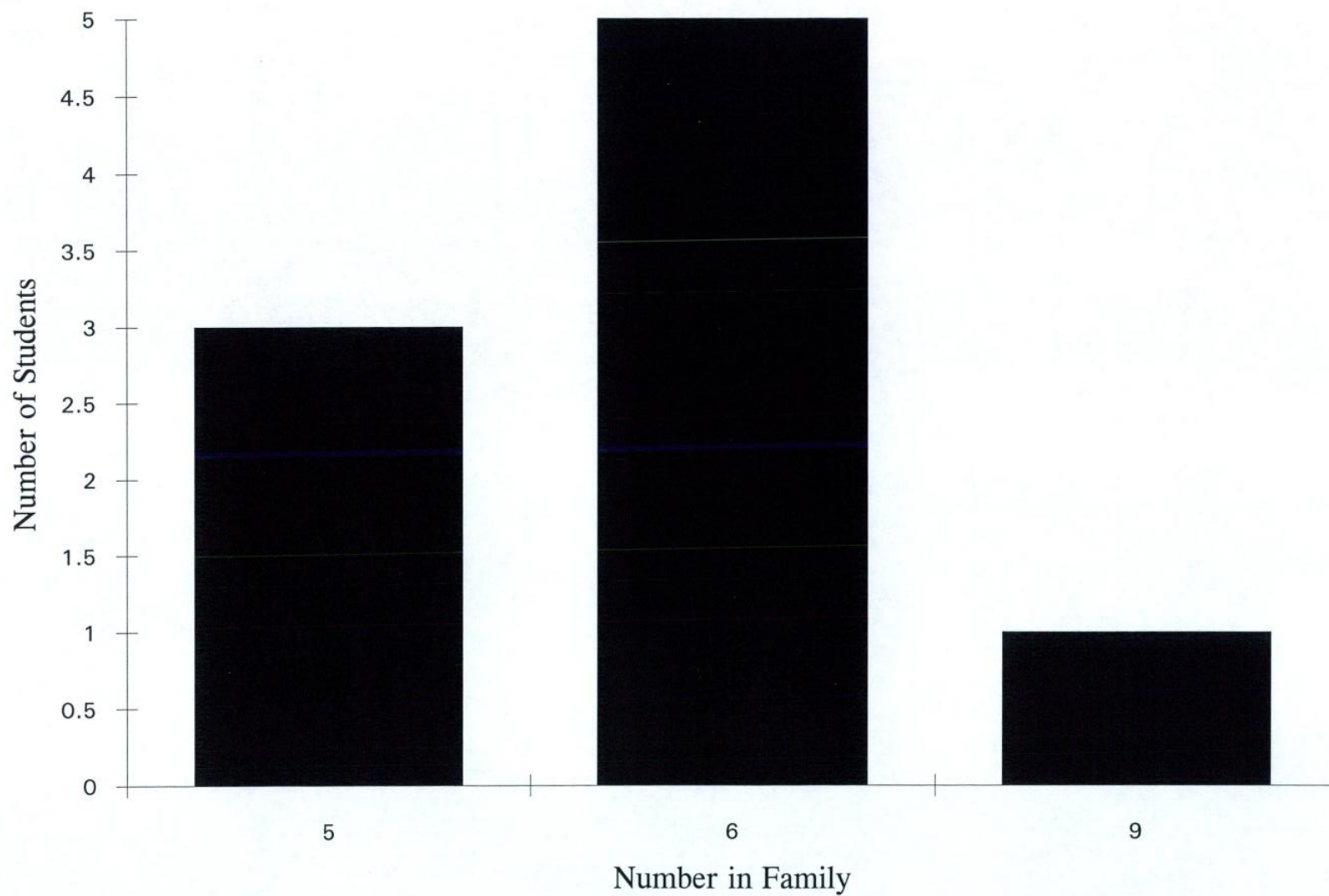


Figure 35: shows number of students and family size. Source: Data is derived from questionnaire in this Dissertation. (See Appendix A)

Sixth Year Students

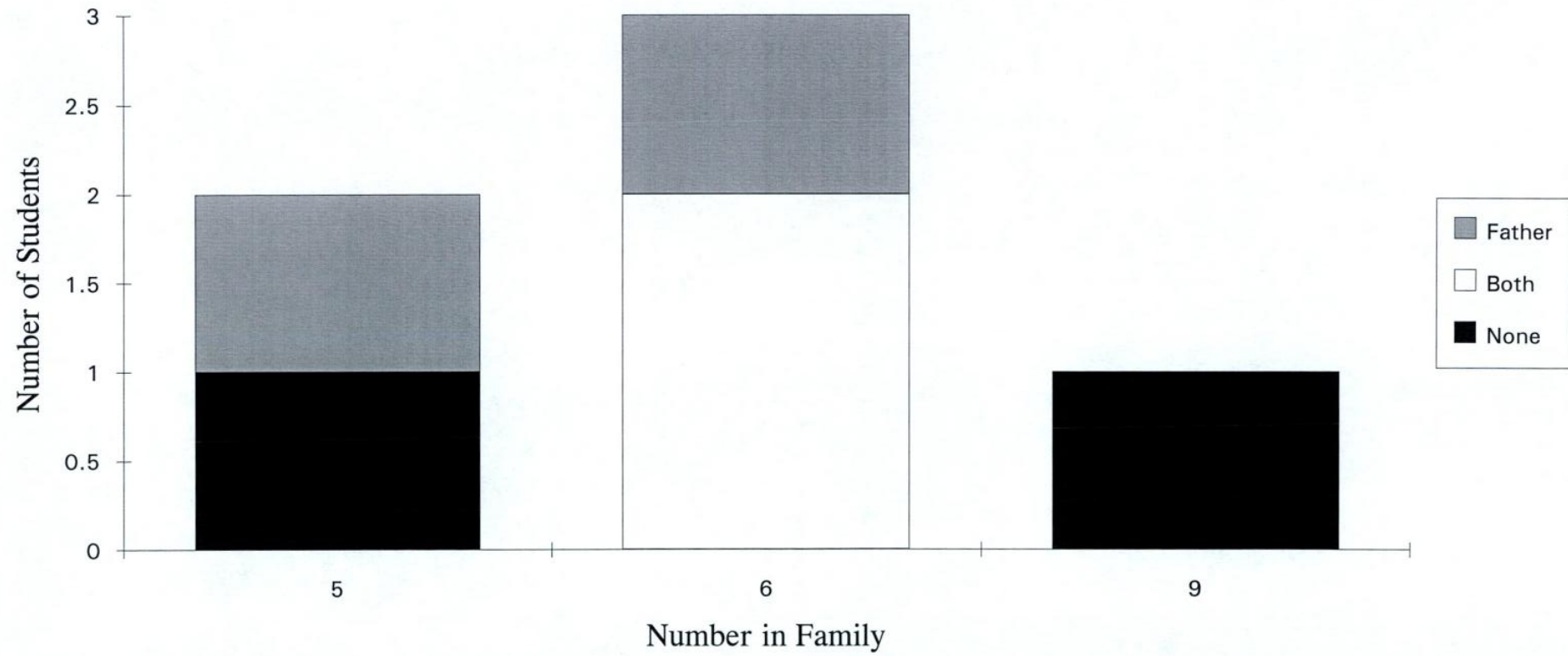


Figure 36: shows family size and number of parents employed.

Sixth Year Students

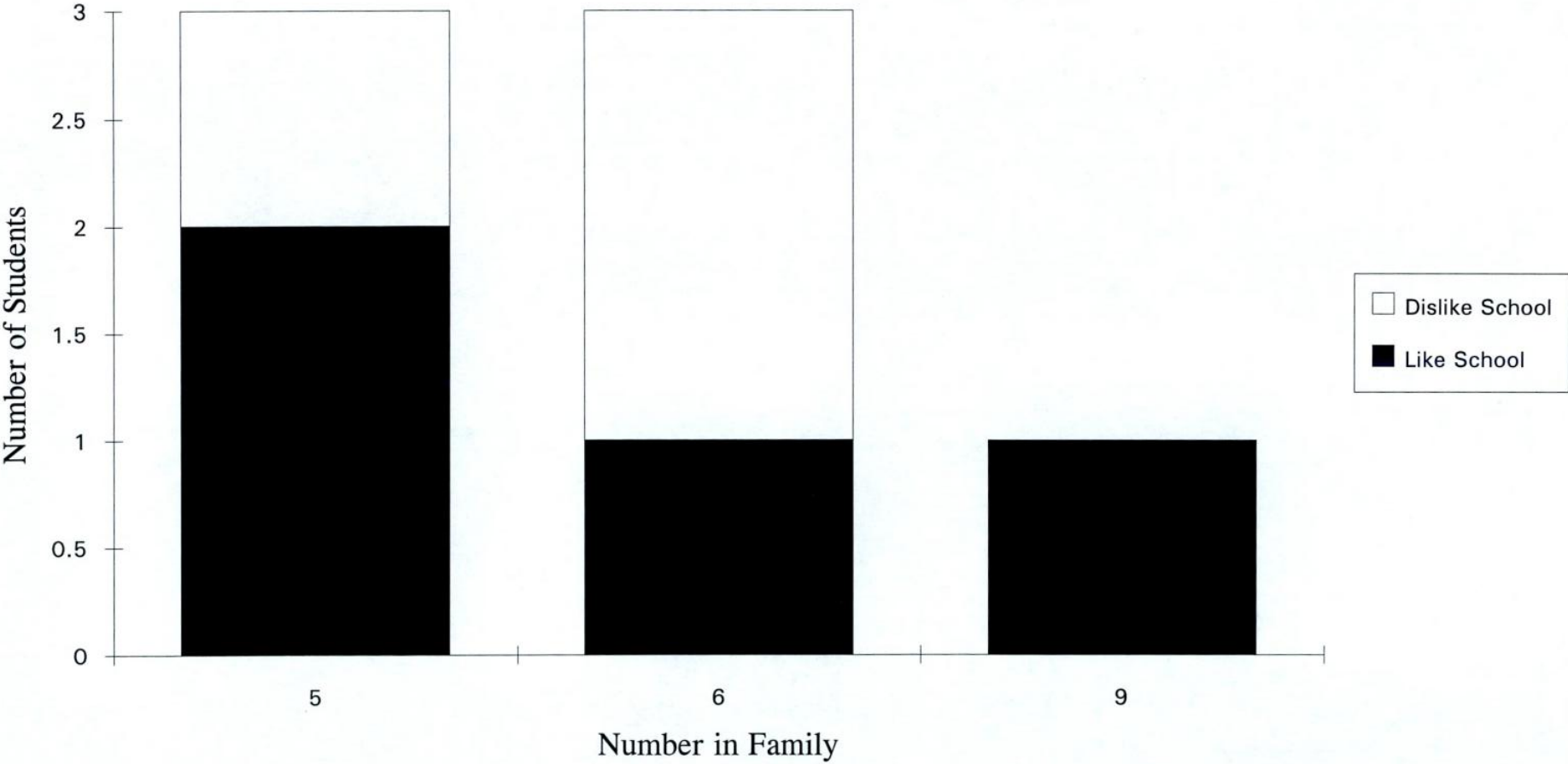


Figure 37a: shows students like/dislike for school, according to family size.

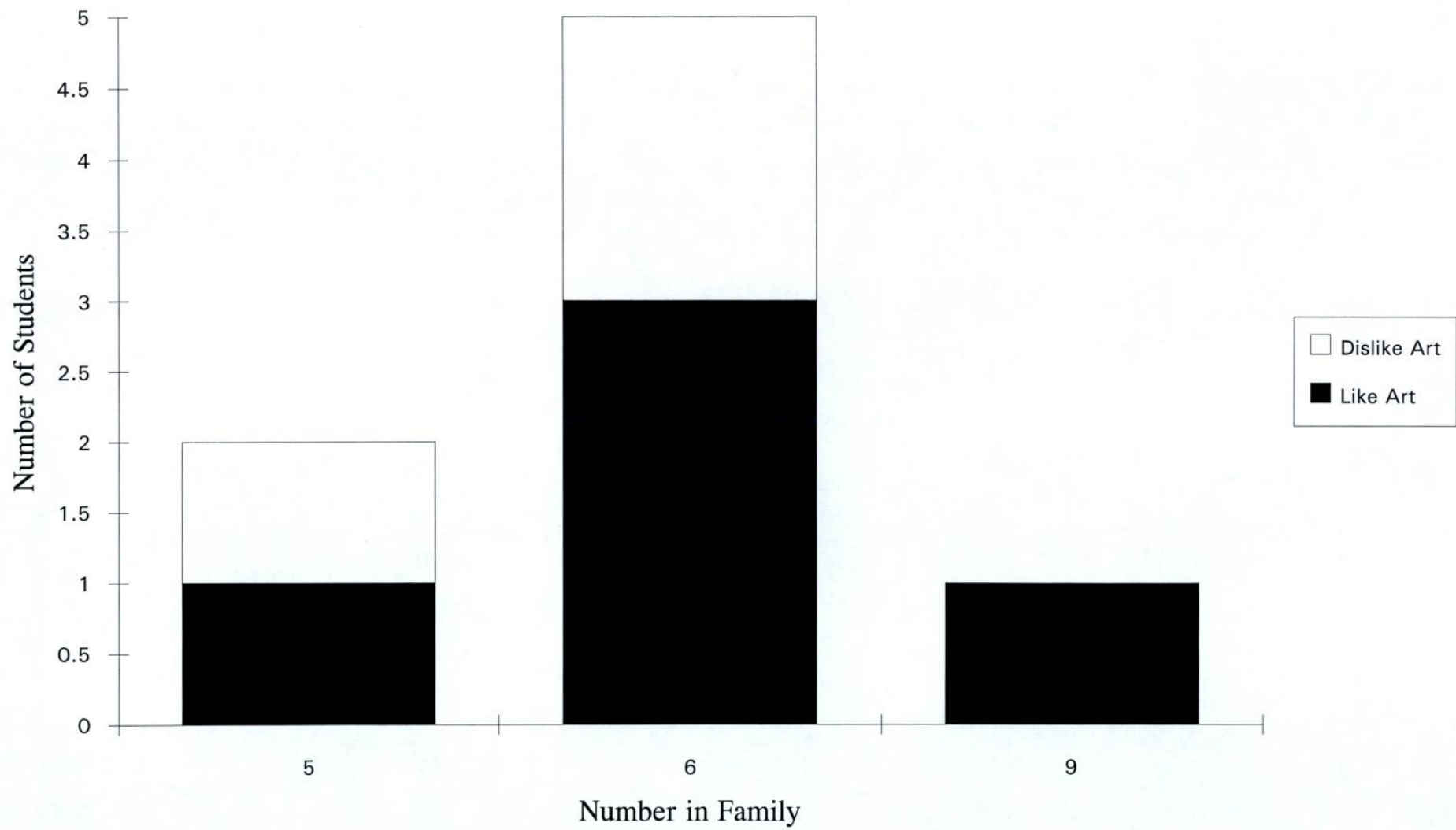


Figure 37b: shows students like/dislike for Art at school, according to family size.

Sixth Year Students

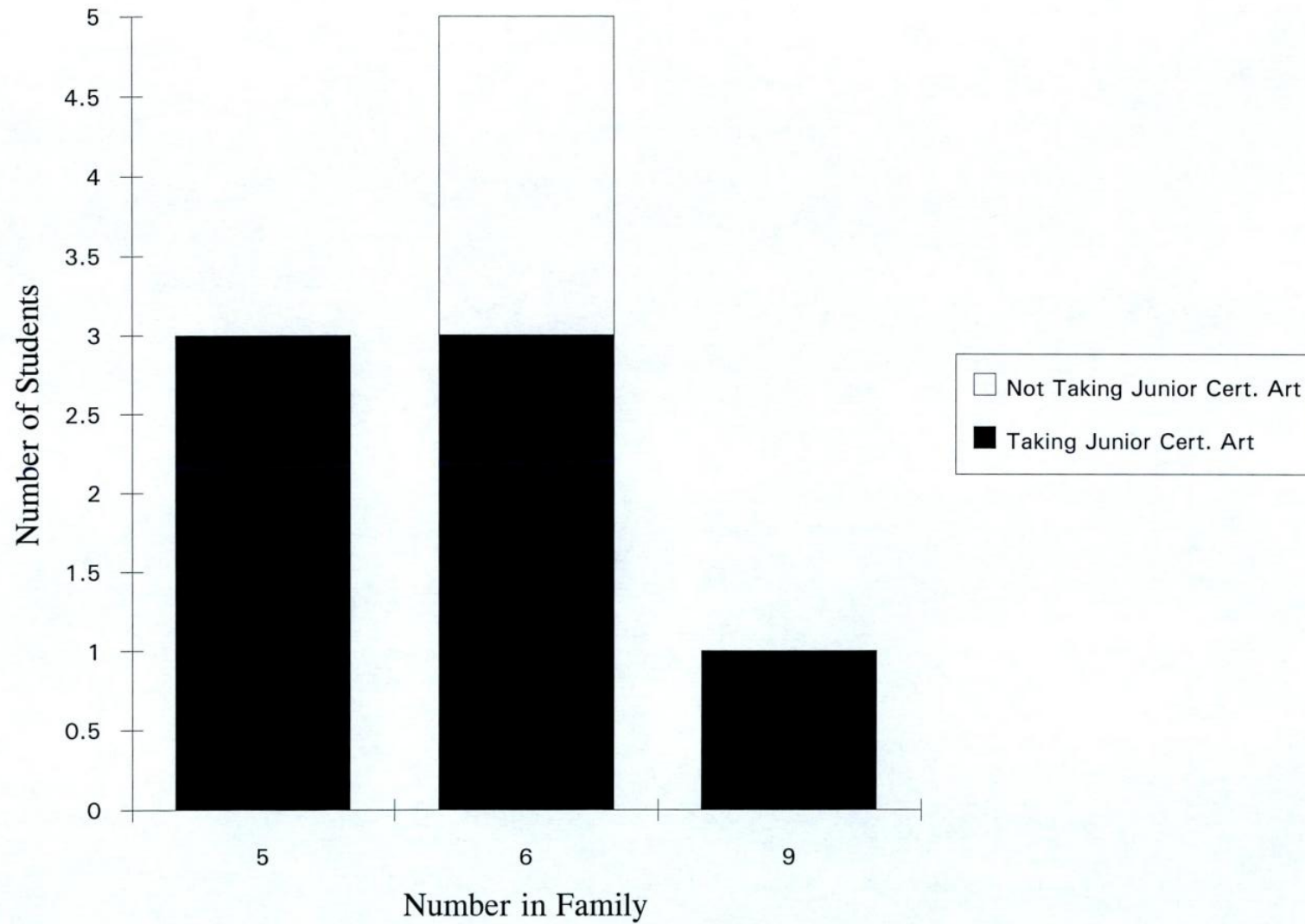


Figure 38a: shows students taking Art Junior Certificate Examinations, according to family size.

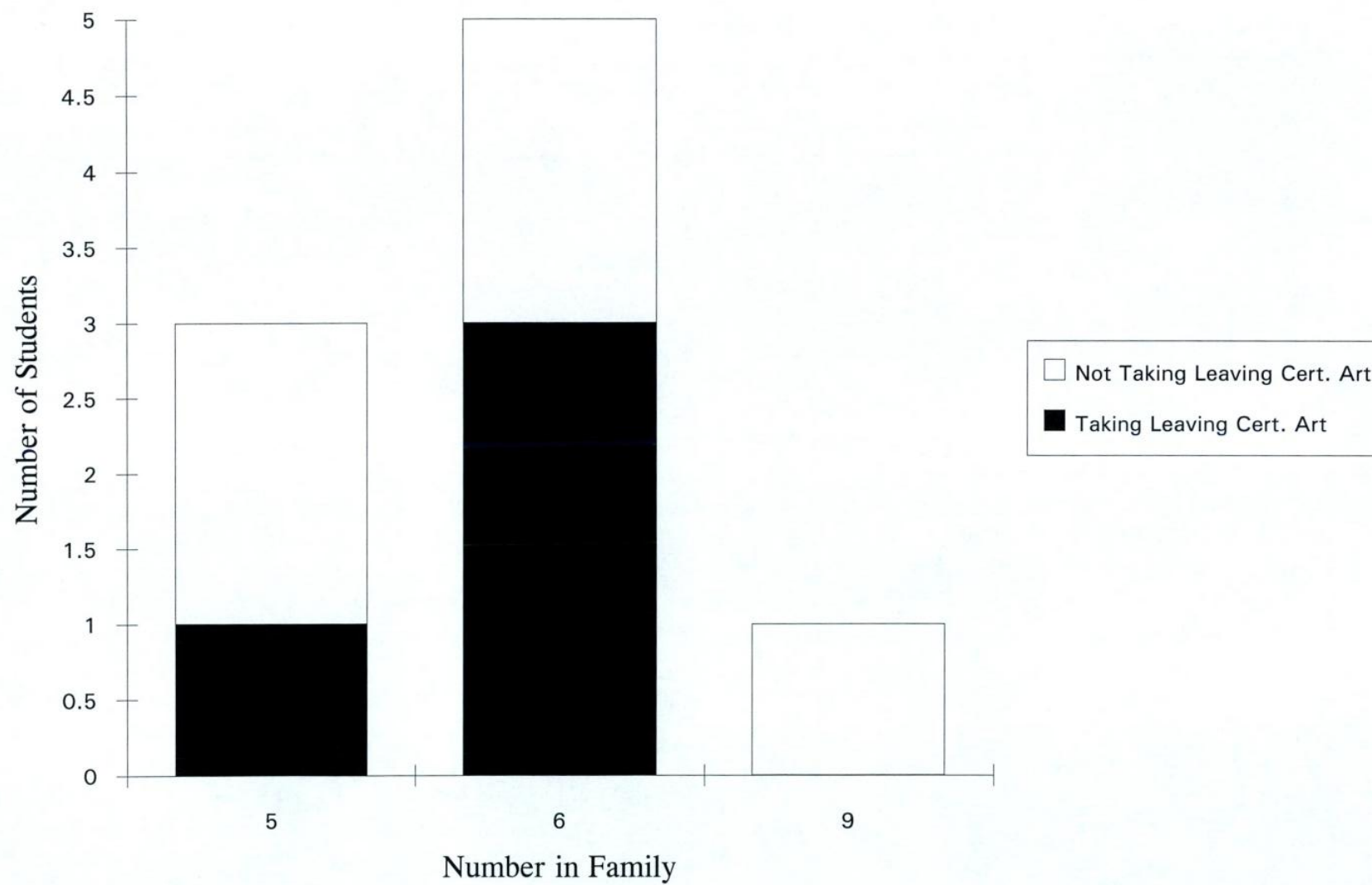


Figure 38b: shows students taking Art Leaving Certificate Examinations, according to family size.

Sixth Year Students

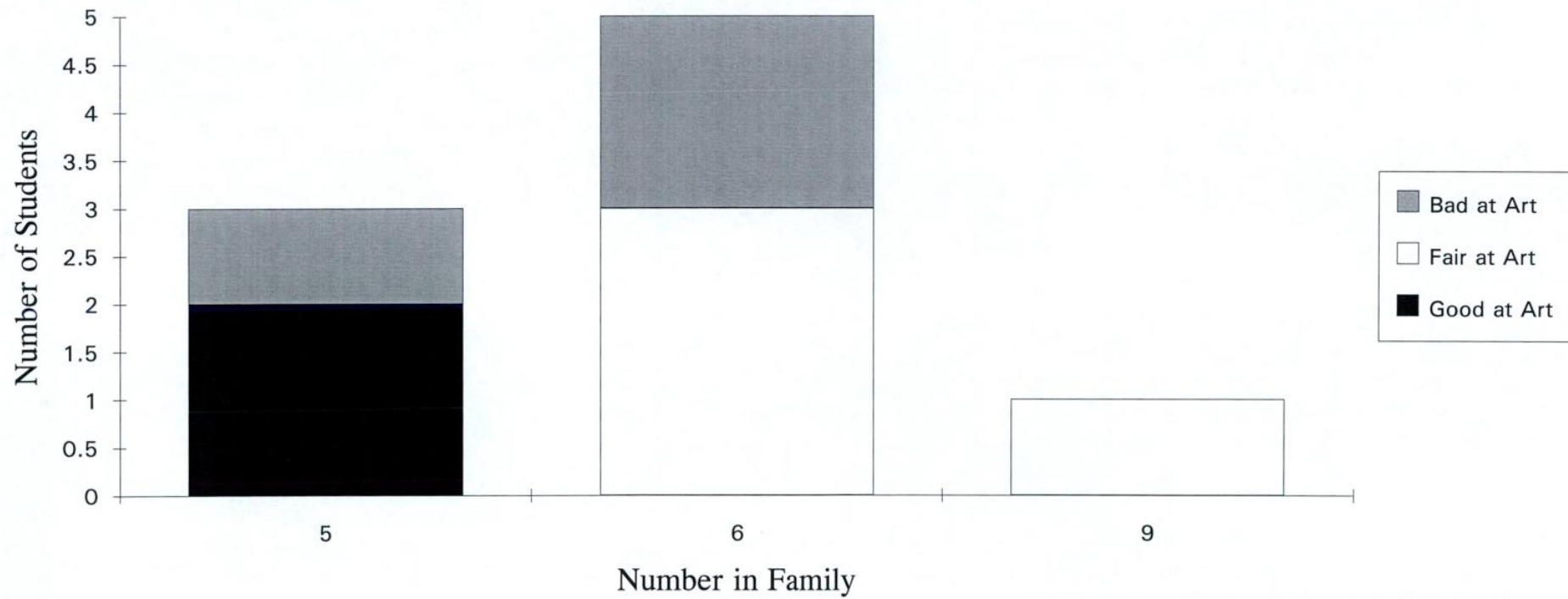


Figure 39: students personal evaluation on Art ability levels according to family size.

RESULT D

Of the 5, fifth year students that returned questionnaires from a class group of 12, the average family size is 5.6 individuals per family unit. 3 of these families have no parents employed. Almost all students claimed that they liked Art but in general did not like school, all 5 students intend to take their Leaving Certificate Art Examinations, even though only 2 students previously took the Art Junior Certificate Examination. The students personal evaluation on their art ability levels consisted fo 2 'goods', 2 'fair,' and 1 'bad.'

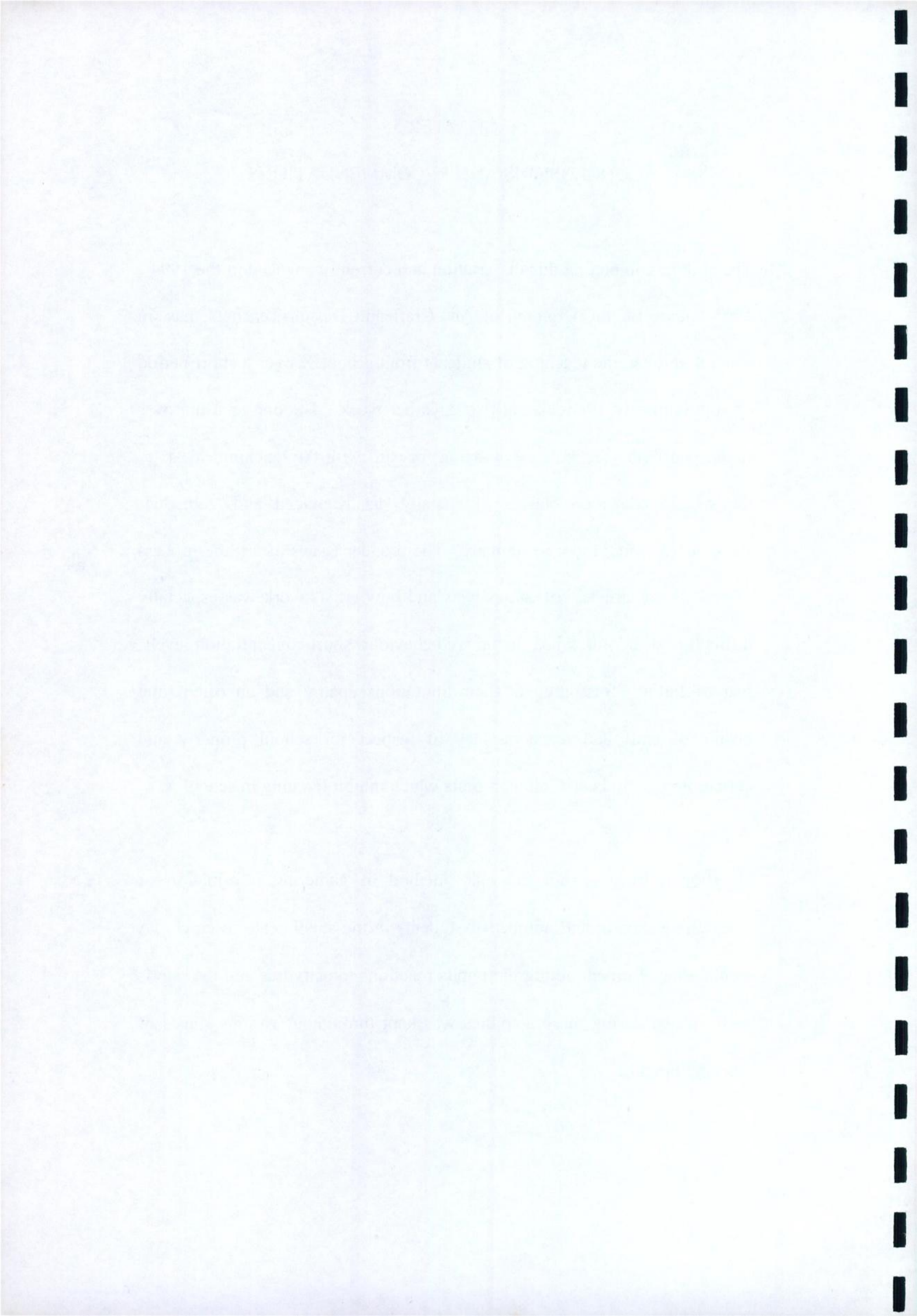
The sixth year students on the other hand, in general had a 'bad' opinion, of their Art ability levels. From a total of nine students questioned only 4 students intended sitting their Art Leaving Certificate Examinations this summer (1995). Once again these negative answers, are derived from the students that come from the larger family sizes. These eighteen and nineteen year old students in general did not like school have displayed apathy and an anti-school culture.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The author, completing this dissertation and currently engaged in the 1994 - 1995 course for the Diploma of Art, Craft and Design Teachers, has, in general enjoyed the teaching of students from school X over a short period of approximately 19 weeks, at two days per week. The one area that was found constantly difficult was moving forward with the teaching of Art to the special education classes of socially disadvantaged and 'remedial' students, of which there were many. The broader issues of art; the process of making art, artists, critical analysis and how artists work was especially difficult to deal with, when disruptive behaviour, short concentration levels, fear of failure, frustration at their limitations apathy and an often total dislike of staff and teachers, lack of respect for school property and classroom materials are common traits which inhibit learning in school X.

Questionnaires were not the only method of gathering information or researching this limited number of students in the small scale research. A mental diary formed, noting the pupils reactions to activities and the pupils performance during these activities was kept throughout various stages of teaching practice.



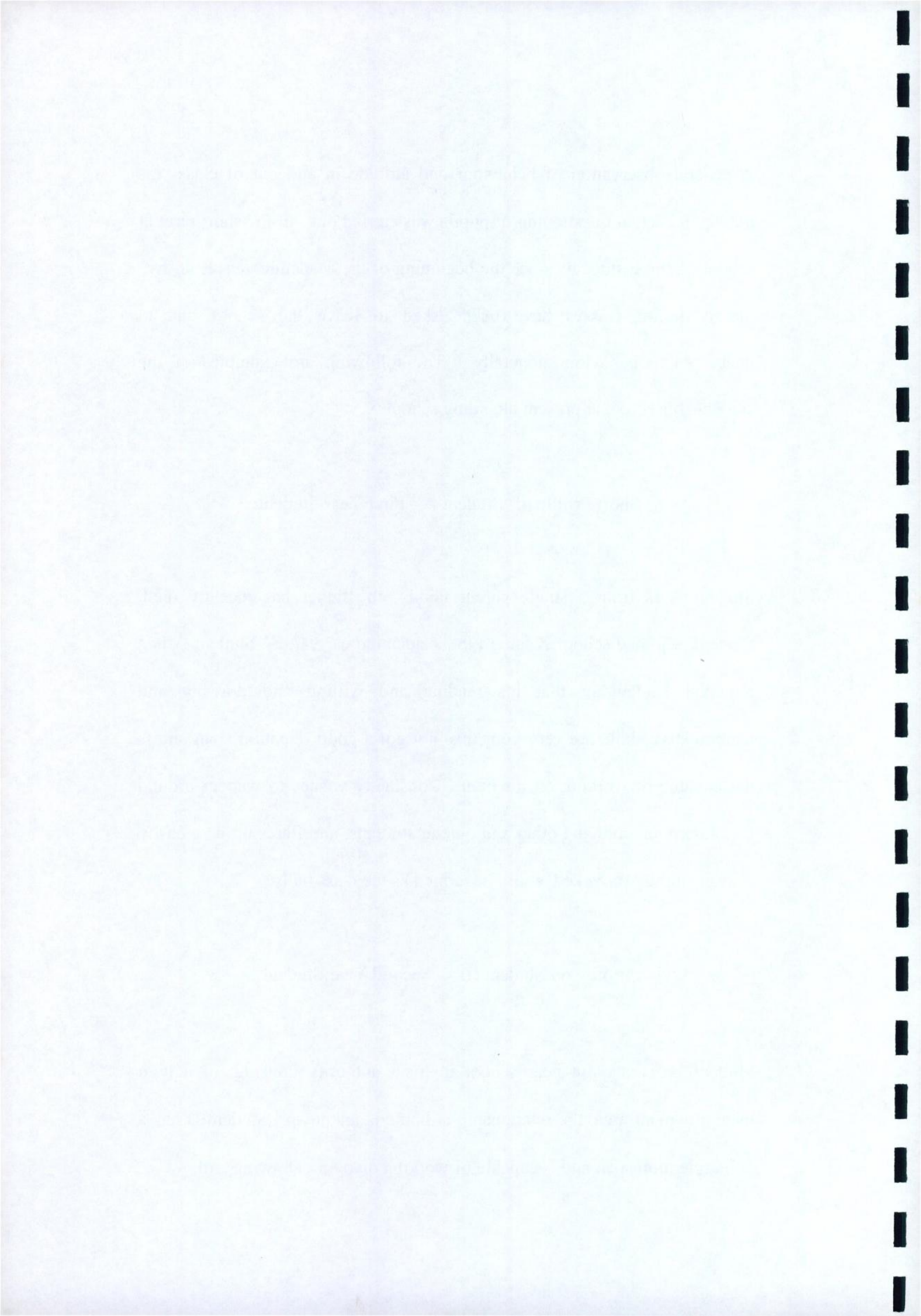
A general observation of behaviour and attitude in and out of class was noted, and actual questioning of pupils was carried out. In the short term at school X, three students since the beginning of the academic year from two of my junior classes have been asked to leave the school due to unacceptable behaviour generally. The following are examples of the students observed, at present attending school X;

Short Profile of 'Student A'; First Year Student.

Student A is from a single parent family, the father has recently died. Student A joined school X late in the academic year 94/95. Student A is a remedial student in that his reading and writing and drawing and manipulative skills are very poor, has not got a good retention span and is not capable of working on his own. Constantly wishes to wander around the classroom annoying other and quieter students, and flares up very easily if even slightly provoked, could be termed as the class bully.

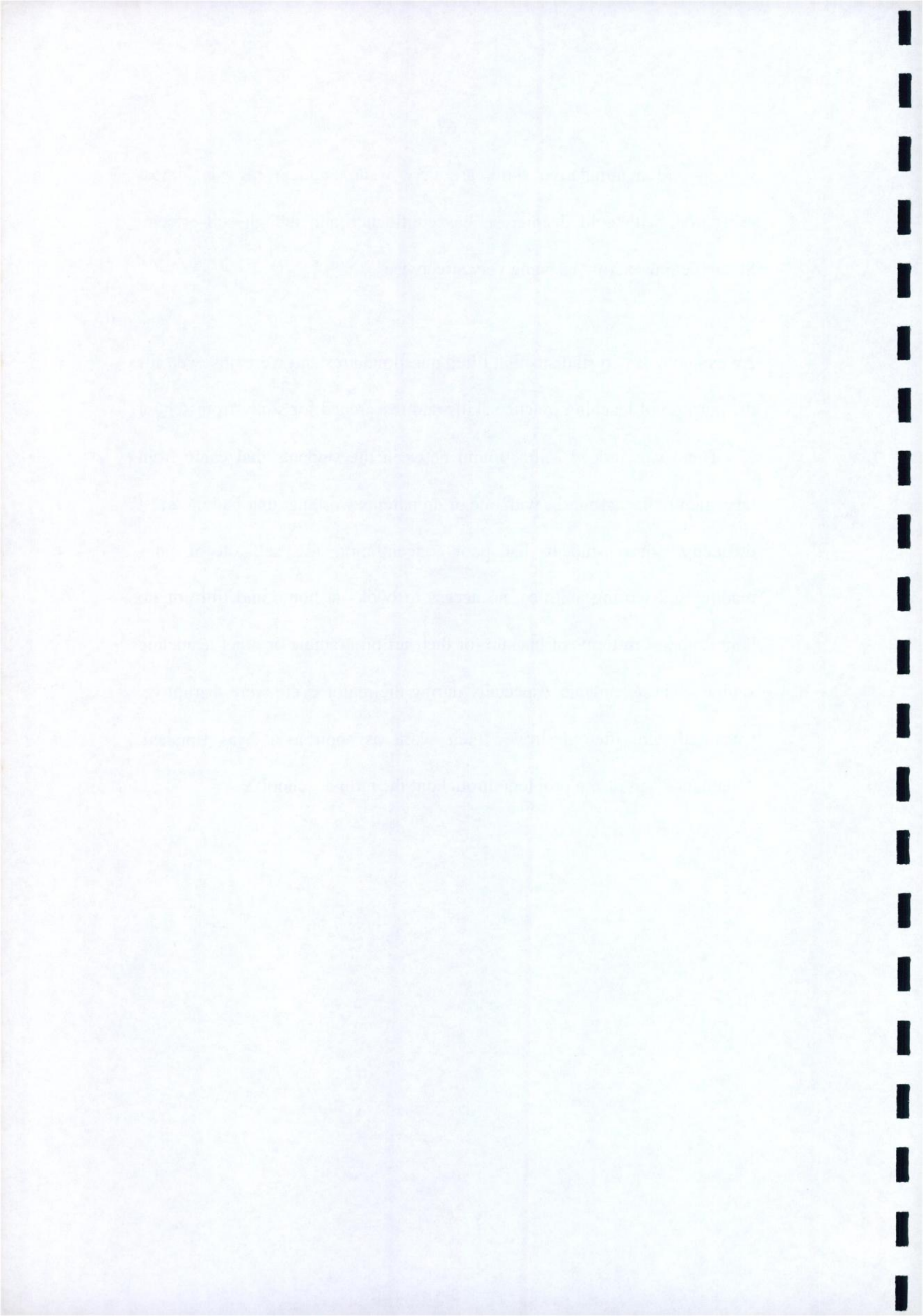
Profile on Student 'B' : Second Year Student

Student B lives quite near school in local authority housing, in a high unemployment area, the relationship at home is unknown. Student B has a good retention span and is capable of working on own. Drawing and



writing and manipulative skills are very weak, student regards almost everything with cold disinterest, has confidence and a high self-esteem. Student comes across as being very streetwise.

An example of two students that filled questionnaires and were observed for the purpose of teaching practice skills and researched for study from school X. There was indeed a link found between the students that came from large family backgrounds, with one or no parents working, that had the most difficulty - those students had poor concentration, low self-esteem, poor reading and writing abilities, no access to books at home and little or no home support in terms of backup for their art programme or other academic studies. These students, especially during the junior cycle were disruptive, frustrated and often destroyed their work as soon as it was finished. Attendance was also a problem throughout the term at school X.



EVALUATION

Reason for need of proposal in Art Education for the
Remedial/Disadvantaged Student

1. To serve the needs of the disadvantaged student.

Too often art is divided into art appreciation and critical awareness for the brighter, better educated student and the less able students are given additional time in the practical element of the art class, because of its relaxing or therapeutic benefits.

...the new support studies element in the junior certificate creates a new way of looking at art appreciation - it does not involve note taking and lectures with slides - as the old system did, which is very difficult for both the weaker, restless student, not academically minded, and for the teacher in control of the situation. Studies have shown that there, could be an important role for the development of critical studies within a contemporary art gallery - for the disadvantaged/remedial student. A critical response through the relationship with a museum could be exciting and practical and may breath new life into a difficult area for weak/disadvantaged students." (1)

2. To Serve the Needs of the Art Teacher and the Junior Certificate Syllabus

Little research has been carried out in remedial art education and little information published on the criteria used in teaching weaker students.

There is a grave need for this, especially now that art teachers are faced with a sophisticated approach to the new junior certificate. The junior certificate project is based, and very reliant on self motivation and individual research. There are no guidelines given as to how the project can be adapted to suit weaker students, who would have considerable learning difficulties and little or no support at home.

3. To Serve the Needs of School X:

School X is open since and serves the areas of Donneycarney, Edenmore and Harmonstown. The area consists almost entirely of local authority housing and unemployment is running at 70%. In general the area's can be described as deprived in a material, educational and social sense. The results of which are felt in this school.

4. To develop School Cross Disciplinary Relationships with other Institutions, that would both reinforce and stimulate the students learning experience (These relationships may work on several levels).

A regular structured approach to using other institutions or cross disciplinary connections would be a powerful invaluable aid to learning.

A combined programme of critical studies and practical work each reinforcing the other, would forge a link between "the process of making art" and the artist the poet, the history, the geography, the wood work and the metalwork, etc. Thus demystifying the notion of art for the student.

A cross fertilization or exchange of ideas between other institutions e.g., museums, art galleries etc., and schools, would lead to a relevant, stimulating programme for students and teacher alike. Simultaneously the gallery or museum would have its finger on the pulse of art for history etc., education in schools of the area. This pilot programme would allow time to reflect on the needs of the weaker student, the needs of the museum and gallery and what the future holds for both in terms of art, education for all.

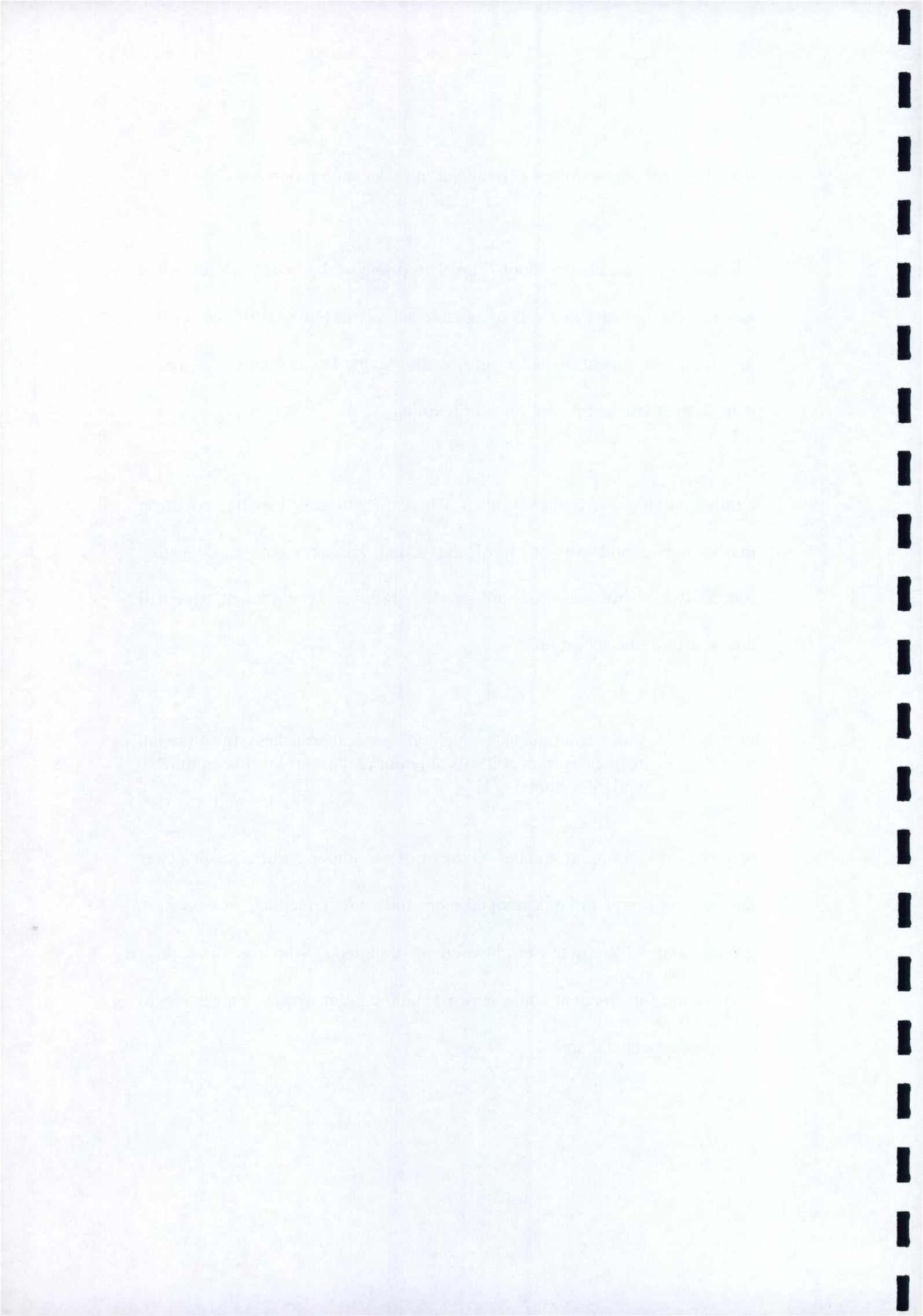
Why the implementation of a 'remedial' art education programme?

All first year students in school X take art as one of their core subjects. It is generally recognised that it is a valuable subject in terms of its therapeutic benefits in the practical field. But it is often regarded as a more decorative side, to the more serious business of learning.

Critical Studies - All those means where by students can be led to an understanding and enjoyment of the visual arts are generally lacking, especially with the remedial and socially disadvantaged student who will not take art at the senior level.

...in consequence, methods or approaches to drawing responses from students at junior and senior level are similarly underdeveloped. (2)

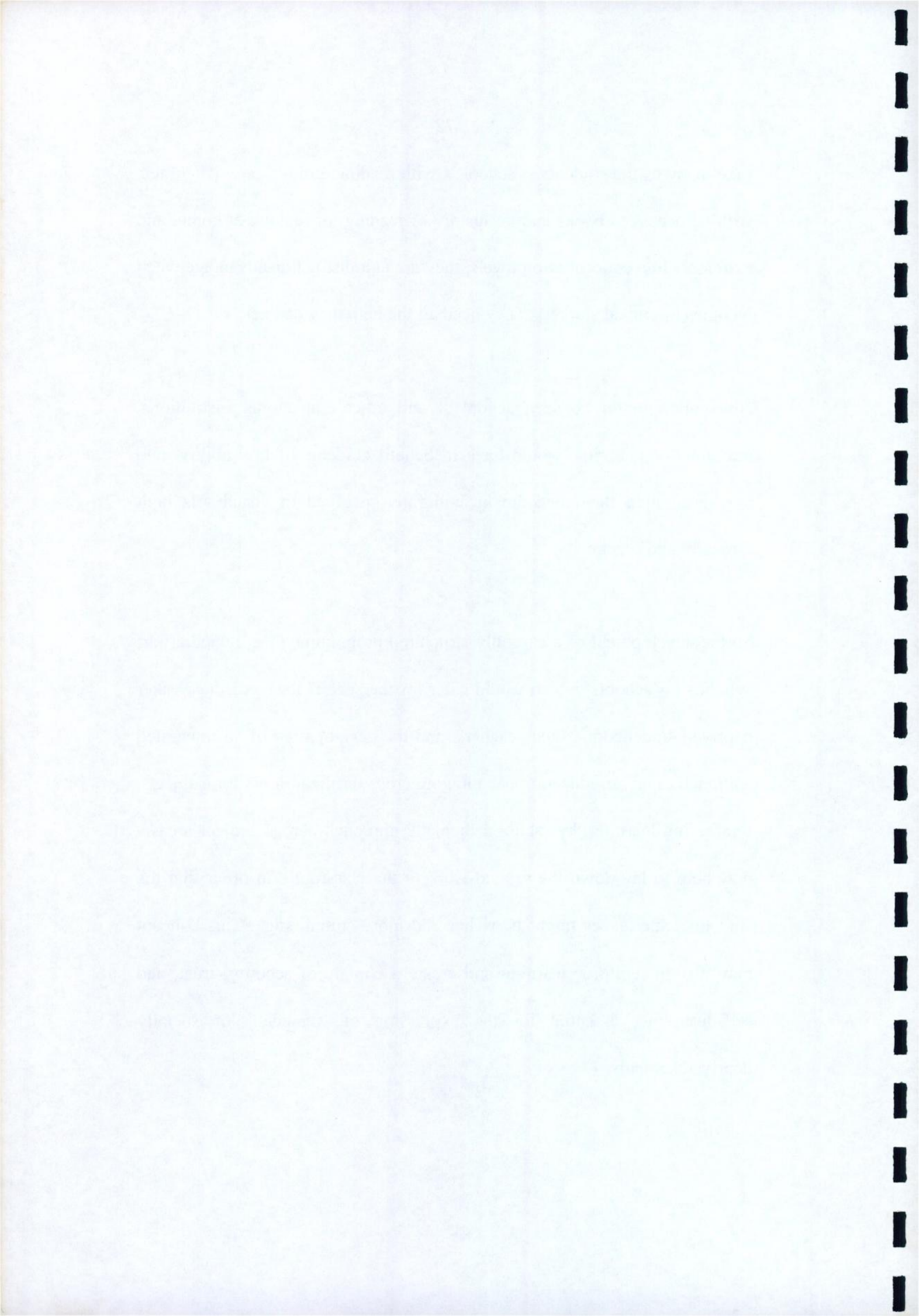
Now with the "support studies" element of the junior certificate, in place, this area will have to be developed more fully. A 'remedial' art education project would benefit the bright motivated students, who can draw on a positive reinforcement at home, support studies and/or critical studies would be a welcome challenge.



Like many of the students at school X with reading and writing difficulties, with no access to books and no history of reading, or looking at home, and extremely low concentration levels, they are at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to critical studies. They need all the help they can get.

Any collaboration between school X and other educational institutions, museums or galleries, would have to benefit students of low ability, and may even help them become meaningfully involved in visual arts both critically and practically.

So the development of a carefully structured programme to a 'remedial' art syllabus for schools, which would cater for the special needs of the weaker deprived students and their teachers, and the development of an integrated approach to an art education encouraging cross fertilization within subjects, reinforcing learning, by taking a thematic approach across subject areas - may help to lay down the ground-work in the classroom, in order that the students experiences might be richer and more stimulating. This concept may in turn reinforce learning and create a climate of security, trust, and self-discipline, essential for the expression of 'remedial' or socially deprived students.



FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 5

1. D. Jordan, "Phase one of CPCC/IMMA Joint Education Project 1993". p. 2.
2. Ibid., p. 4.

APPENDIX A

Questionnaire devised to determine the link between social disadvantage, and underachievement in Art at Post Primary level.

QUESTIONNAIRE -

Answer All Questions

- (Tick) Male ☐ Female ☐ Class_____
- Age_____ Number in Family_____
- Number of Parents who work (tick box)

	None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mother	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Father	<input type="checkbox"/>	Both	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Do you like School? Yes ☐ No ☐
- Do you like Art? Yes ☐ No ☐

Tick Appropriate Box.

- I will take Art for my Junior Certificate ☐
- I will not take Art for my Junior Certificate ☐
- I will take Art for my Leaving Certificate ☐
- I will not take Art for my Leaving Certificate ☐
- Which of the following describes you?
 - Good at Art ☐
 - Fair at Art ☐
 - Bad at Art ☐
- Would you like to do art in College? Yes ☐ No ☐
- Would you like to work in an Art - Related Job? Yes ☐ No ☐

Thank You

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