

T 1426

NC 0020679 2



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

**A STUDY IN THE APPLICATION OF LEARNING APPROACHES  
IN THE ART HISTORY CLASSROOM**

A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Education

in

Candidacy for the

**DIPLOMA FOR ART AND DESIGN TEACHERS**

by

**EOGHAN O'REILLY**

1995

# **A STUDY IN THE APPLICATION OF LEARNING APPROACHES IN THE ART HISTORY CLASSROOM**

**Eoghan O'Reilly  
DIPADT 1994**

## **SUMMARY**

The Leaving Certificate Examination sets aside 37½% of its marks for the testing of the History and Appreciation of Art. The first section of this paper examines this situation by asking what can be learned from the study of the History of Art. It proposes that by studying Art History, students gain insight into their culture and that of others and can develop their ability to think critically and articulate their ideas. Once it is established that there is value in studying Art History the paper then seeks to draw up a set of goals, in terms of what the students should know and be able to do at the end of the course. These goals range from recalling factual information to an ability to analyse and evaluate works of Art, and are based on the Learning Theory of Benjamin S. Bloom. These goals lead to the formulation of a structure in which Art History can be taught, based on the ways in which Art Historians have looked at Art. Once it is established what should be taught it is then asked how it should be taught. At this stage the work of learning theorists B.F. Skinner, Jerome Brunner and others is considered in drawing up a test of methodologies which might be used in the Art History classroom. The final chapter seeks to combine the proposed structure for presenting the History of Art with the methodologies considered appropriate and describes what it is proposed will actively take place in the Art History class and finally reports on the experience of applying parts of the programme in the classroom.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE NO.
LIST OF FIGURES	iii
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER I.	
I (i) WHY STUDY THE HISTORY AND APPRECIATION OF ART	2
(a) Understanding The Past	
(b) Understanding Present Culture	
(c) Understanding Other Cultures	
(d) Developing Investigative and Critical Thinking	
(e) Expression of Personal Ideas	
(f) Support Studies for Practical Work.	
I (ii) BLOOM'S LEARNING OBJECTIVES	5
I (iii) THE DIACHRONIC AND SYNCHRONIC APPROACHES TO THE HISTORY OF ART	7
FOOTNOTES CHAPTER I	10
CHAPTER II	
II (i) LEARNING THEORY	12
B.F. Skinner and Behaviourism	
Jerome Brunner and Cognitive/Gestaltism	
(a) Motivation	
(b) Structure	
(c) Sequence	
(d) Reinforcement	
II (ii) A PROPOSED LEARNING STRUCTURE	15



	<b>PAGE NO.</b>
<b>II (iii) METHODOLOGY</b>	16
Modelling	
Questioning	
Feeding Back	
Contingency Management	
Interpersonal	
Student Centred Learning	
Practical Activity	
<b>FOOTNOTES CHAPTER II</b>	24
<b>CHAPTER III</b>	
<b>III (i) CLASSROOM APPLICATION</b>	28
Subject Matter	
Formal Elements	
Techniques	
Context	
Ideas	
Evaluation	
Assessment	
<b>III (ii) CLASSROOM FINDINGS</b>	34
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	36
<b>FOOTNOTES CHAPTER III</b>	37
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	38

## LIST OF FIGURES

1. Edgar Degas, The Bellelli Family, 1859. The Louvre, Paris.
2. Pablo Picasso, A Hen with Chickens, 1942. Illustration for Boffons Natural History.
3. Pablo Picasso, A Cockerel, 1938. The collection of the artist.

## INTRODUCTION

As it stands at present, the Leaving Certificate examination in Art sets aside 37½ of its marks for the testing of the History and Appreciation of Art. Looking at this figure it would seem that those who formulated that examination considered the study of the History and Appreciation of Art to be of considerable importance within the study of art in general. This paper will firstly examine this situation by asking what can be learned from the study of the History of Art.

After outlining the learning that might take place in the study of the History and Appreciation of Art the paper will then consider what we want to teach about the subject; what do we want the student to have considered and learned by the time he or she finishes his or her Art exam, and perhaps his or her formal art education. As a guide to answering this question, ways in which Art historians have chosen to look at the vast quantity of artifacts that make up the History of Art will be examined to see if there is anything in their approaches which may be of value to secondary school students and teachers.

In seeking to establish a structure in which to present the vast quantity of information which the Leaving Certificate Art History syllabus covers the work of Learning Theorists such as Benjamin S. Bloom, B.F. Skinner and Jerome Brunner will be considered and the work of these theorists will also provide a basis for the selection of methods considered useful in achieving the goals as they will be described.



## CHAPTER 1

### (i) WHY STUDY THE HISTORY AND APPRECIATION OF ART?

Before we can begin to consider this question we need some idea of what we consider art to be. We need to decide whether art is of value to humanity, and why? It might be true to say that one of the commonest notions about art is that the 'goal of art is to provide aesthetic experience and that aesthetic experience is an experience of, or related to, the beautiful'.<sup>1</sup> But art also communicates meaning, and the meaning it consistently communicates is that of the values of the culture in which it was produced.<sup>2</sup> If a large part of culture is concerned with problem solving, (engineering, technology, science, survival), then the Arts teach us about that culture and 'ultimately they give purpose and direction to practical problem solving'.<sup>3</sup>

If one accepts these notions then one must accept that the study of art is the study of a central facet of our being and certainly deserves some consideration. We only have to consider for a moment the vast amounts of artifacts that exist in the world that have been created by people since Palaeolithic times, throughout the history of humanity, right across all continents and cultures to see that the making of 'Art' is central to our humanity, indeed some would even say that it defines it.

Given that the realm of art is worth consideration let us now look at why, specifically we should encourage young people to study History of Art. It is possible to identify these broad areas of learning possibilities:

- (a) Understanding the Past<sup>4</sup>
- (b) Understanding Present Culture<sup>5</sup>
- (c) Understanding Other Cultures<sup>6</sup>
- (d) Developing Investigative and Critical Thinking<sup>7</sup>
- (e) Expression of Personal Ideas<sup>8</sup>
- (f) Support Studies for Practical Work<sup>9</sup>

#### (a) Understanding the Past

... the historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence.

**T.S. Elliot**



We are reminded here that the study of the past can only make sense if we consider how it remains with us in the present. In artwork we have concrete remnants of the past and in them we can gain first hand insight into what has gone before. From information on a myriad of details like clothing and customs to broader insights into cultural value systems, the art of the past gives us an historical sense which can illuminate our sense of what is now.

Important works of art are capable of sustaining a contemporary dialogue, not because of the resourcefulness or imagination of critics, but because the language of the humanities are not time bound as ordinary language is... Art cannot be understood except in terms of the recurrent forms and ideas it embodies.<sup>10</sup>

### **(b) Understanding Present Culture**

The student of History of Art learns to deal in the language of the formal elements of design such as line, shape, colour, structure etc. The student becomes visually literate. Everything that is made speaks to us about ourselves and it speaks to us largely through the visual elements. The visually literate can learn lessons about their society and can make decisions on how to react to such knowledge. Our society and its products, are producers of messages.

Messages that not only reflect, but promote social values are being imposed on audiences unable to comprehend their hidden meanings because of a lack of knowledge of visual forms.<sup>11</sup>

Art criticism, by its very nature increasingly opens to scrutiny for the student the objectives and values of the society in which the student will play a role as an adult.<sup>12</sup>

The place of equality, violence, identity in our society, can all be ascertained by looking at the art, and other signals it produces.

### **(c) Understanding Other Cultures**

R.A. Smyth (1991) speaks of 'the power of art to establish an affinity among minds across time'<sup>13</sup>, and also across space. So much of our education is focused on the achievements and aspirations of Western Civilisations it is easy for students to believe that somehow, Western society is the best, the most 'developed', and is what all other

societies aspire to. This is a mistaken notion and if the study of non Western Art can illuminate for us the merits of other societies, then it has 'expanded our sense of human possibilities'.<sup>14</sup>

#### **(d) Developing Investigative and Critical Thinking**

If the history of art is taught as a list of events and artists achievements, a certain amount of the learning outlined above might take place. On the other hand, if room is made for analysis, criticism and interpretation, then it is possible the student will develop skills which he or she will use outside the world of art appreciation as much as within it. 'A comprehensive art education nurtures student's abilities to access vital thinking processes and it allows them to do so with increasing desire, confidence and success'.<sup>15</sup>

Skills such as analysing, critiqueing and interpreting each provides us with an orientation that can broaden our fields of vision, open windows to new possibilities and perspectives and foster an understanding and appreciation for diversity.<sup>16</sup>

The processes of looking at art has much to do with questioning, problem solving, hypothesising, cross referencing and discovery, skills which can be of assistance in a world of different endeavours.

#### **(e) Expression of Personal Ideas**

Smith (1991) notes that some Art Historians engage in a certain amount of personal exchange with artworks in their writings. He says that in the work of E.H. Gombrich 'we are invited to a more intimate and personal relation to an artwork'.<sup>17</sup> David Hunt (1990) outlines behaviours that are desirable in a teacher in the classroom such as allowing students to hypothesise and viewing the student as a participant in learning.<sup>18</sup> The study of History and Appreciation of Art allows for this.

The study of History and Appreciation of Art offers the student that rare opportunity to make personal judgments about that which he or she is supposed to be learning and indeed is encouraged to express these judgments without the fear of being 'wrong'. The subject gives the students opportunity to discuss beliefs, emotions, issues, opinions and creates an environment where such utterances are essential and appreciated.



## (f) Support Studies for Practical Work

In the accumulated record of art we may discover a rich treasure of images and symbols from which to draw fresh inference and meaning as we struggle to understand and express our own experiences.<sup>19</sup>

Reference to artworks of the past, and recent past, is invaluable to the teacher of art in a number of ways. It can be used as a visual aid, i.e. to clarify a lesson about a certain element, e.g. line. It can be used as a motivational aid. It can be used to show how artists of the past have tackled problems which may be facing a student in their own work. It serves to make the production of artwork more real to the student; the making of art is a real process which real people engage in and not just a classroom occupation.

By examining artwork in an Art Historical manner students of the Arts learn to perceive, describe, analyse and even evaluate works of art, old and new, including their own.<sup>20</sup>

The preceding pages examined various reasons for considering the teaching of History of Art as worthwhile. If we then decide that it is indeed worthwhile, we must next ask what is it we want to teach about it? Alternatively, we might ask what do we want the student to know about Art History and Appreciation? What tasks do we want them to be able to perform? In short, what is our goal?

### (ii) BLOOM'S LEARNING OBJECTIVES<sup>21</sup>

Benjamin S. Bloom developed a scheme that classifies educational objectives and relates each objective to specific classroom procedures.<sup>22</sup> Each outlines a level at which we might expect a student to perform.

#### **Level One - Factual Knowledge**

Questions require factual recall of material.

#### **Level Two - Comprehension**

Questions require the student to think more broadly, to show more indepth

understanding, to use his or her own words.

**Level Three - Application**

Questions ask the student to apply learning to new situations.

**Level Four - Analysis**

Questions are designed to ask the students to take the material apart and examine the pieces.

**Level Five - Synthesis**

Questions attempt to get the student to go beyond our present knowledge.

**Level Six - Evaluation**

Questions are designed to request the student to evaluate ideas according to a detailed and explicit set of criteria.

Our goal is to get students to function well at all of these levels of knowledge and abilities, and especially at levels Two, Three, Four and Five. This is not a structure in which the subject should be taught. i.e. starting with factual information, and then moving onto the next level and so on. It is a range of levels of varying sophistication at which a student can perform at a given time.

At Level One (factual), students should know basic factual information relevant to an artwork such as name of artist, title, medium, etc. The student should also know things such as accepted influences on an artist and what they said themselves about the work.

At Level Two (Comprehension), students should show a broader understanding of such aspects as influences on an artist, the style of an artist and the ideas of the artist. At this level the student is also able to state how the formal elements have been used in specific works.

At levels Three and Four (application and analysis), which in the study of Art History would seem to be interconnected, the student can use knowledge about the use of



formal elements, the effects of social context, etc. to interpret works for themselves, make comparisons and show a good understanding of the processes of art creation and aesthetic examination.

At level Five these abilities are advanced to a stage where students feel confident to talk about works they have never seen before, and to put forward their own ideas on works and be able to back up their suggestions.

At Level Six we are into the realm of Art Criticism. The key here is for students to go beyond likes and dislikes and to be objective in their evaluations of artworks.

To say that a painting by a master such as Picasso is great because it makes you feel more deeply is not an adequate basis for your conclusion. In a critique you must consciously describe the standards you use for such a judgment call.<sup>23</sup>

If these are the abilities we want students of History of Art to display, then what is the best way to present the subject so that these goals are attained?

### (iii) THE DIACHRONIC AND SYNCHRONIC APPROACHES TO THE HISTORY OF ART

As a guide to how best to present the subject to students let us look at the way Art Historians have examined art.

A major distinction we come across is that between the diachronic and synchronic approaches to looking at Art History.<sup>24</sup> The diachronic looks at art by tracing the order of events in the story of art in strict chronological sequence, concentrating on continuity and causality. The synchronic approach looks at simultaneous events which happen in different places and can be expanded to encompass an approach which looks at art across time and culture also.

Traditionally there has been a strong emphasis on the diachronic approach but it is becoming clear that this approach has some drawbacks. The history of art can be lightly traced along a path of successive developments and even along a line of causes

and effects, but this line is a very weak one and indeed may be an illusion, created by our desire to order events in this way.

'In art history small islands of causally conditioned data are surrounded by vast expanses of undefinable developments'.<sup>25</sup> The history of art can sometimes be seen as a succession of anomalies and at these times the diachronic approach becomes weak.

The chronological organisation of Art Studies is often unfeasible because it is too lengthy, frequently misleading in its assumptions about the recurrence of aesthetic phenomena and occasionally irrelevant because it focuses on art sequences rather than art objects.<sup>26</sup>

The diachronic approach has advantages and disadvantages. Its advantages are that the student is clear about the sequence of events in Art History and is very conscious of the historical bearing of contextual influences. It also suits the way the present Leaving Certificate Examination is set. Its disadvantages are that it might give a jaundiced, exclusively Western European appearance to the history of art. It also suggests that there was progress of some kind and that later art is better than earlier 'primitive' art. Such an approach misses out on exciting ways of comparing and contrasting as aids to clarification.

The synchronic approach might then be more useful, especially when expanded to include cross temporal and cross cultural references. If we are to look at artworks from across these divides we need to look at them from angles other than their place in time. Returning again to how art historians look at art we find certain recurring headings under which art can be examined.

External information - date, size, medium.  
Internal information - subject matter, content.  
Formal elements - shape, colour etc.  
Context - biographical and historical.  
Ideas.  
Evaluation.<sup>27</sup>

This structure also has parallels with Bloom's learning levels as outlined earlier. The way to use this structure might be to focus on one of the headings at a time and move from era to era and from culture to culture in exploring that aspect of art. This

approach focuses on a search for analogies within the world of the visual arts. The advantage of such an approach might be in the possibilities of comparing and contrasting seemingly different works to make a common point between them crystal clear. It might make it easier to relate the information to the present and to the student's own life experience. It might encourage a greater ability to talk about work which the student has not seen before as they have a clear understanding of what to consider when looking at a work for the first time. It might encourage a more critical approach to looking at art and might even make the tackling of 'difficult' contemporary art more accessible. The possible disadvantages lie in the risk that students might lose sight of the overall historical context and become confused about time and place and the connections between various developments in Art History.

In trying to evaluate the educational potential of these approaches I will look at what educational psychologists say about the nature of learning and use this information in formulating an approach to the teaching of History and Appreciation of Art which will facilitate the goals as outlined earlier.



## FOOTNOTES CHAPTER I

1. Howard Risatti, "*Art Criticism in Discipline Based Art Education*" in Discipline Based Art Education, ed. Ralph A. Smith, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987) p. 218.
2. Ibid., pp. 218-219.
3. Ibid.
4. W.A. Levi and Ralph A. Smith, Art Education, A Critical Necessity. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991) pp.54-55.
5. Risatti, "*Art Criticism in Discipline Based Art Education*" 1987, pp.214-220.
6. Levi and Smith, Art Education 1991, p.62.
7. Laura H. Chapman, Adventures in Art. (Mass: David Publications Inc., 1994), p.1.9.
8. Norman A. Sprinthall and Richard C. Sprinthall, Educational Psychology: a development approach, Fifth Edition, (New York: Hill Publishing Company, 1990), pp. 332-336.
9. W. Eugene Klienbauer, "*Art History in Discipline Based Art Education*" in Discipline Based Art Education, ed. Ralph A. Smith, 1987, p.205.
10. George Pappas, Concepts in Art and Education. (London: The MacMillan Company, 1970), p.358.
11. Risatti, "*Art Criticism in Discipline Based Art Education*" 1987, p.219.
12. Ibid., p.220.
13. Levi and Smith, Art Education. 1991, p.62.
14. Ibid.



15. Dr. Lila G. Crispin in Adventures in Art, Laura H. Chapman, 1994, p.1.9.
16. Dr. Joanne Canales in Adventures in Art, Laura H. Chapman, 1994, p.1.9.
17. Levi and Smith, Art Education, 1991, p.60.
18. Sprinthall and Sprinthall, Educational Psychology, 1990, p.377.
19. Klienbauer, *"Art Criticism in Discipline Based Art Education"* 1987, p.205.
20. Ibid., p.211.
21. Sprinthall and Sprinthall, Educational Psychology, 1990, p.355.
22. Ibid., p.350.
23. Ibid., p.354.
24. Levi and Smith, Art Education, 1991, pp.55,56.
25. Sonia Rauve, *"Teaching Art History"* in The Study of Education and Art, ed. Dick Field and John Newick, p.193.
26. Pappas, Concepts in Art and Education, 1970, p.358.
27. Levi and Smith, Art Education, 1991, p.57.

This is similar to the structure of John Canaday's What is Art. (London: Hutchinson, 1980).

Chapman, Adventures in Art, 1994, pp.47-53.

## CHAPTER II

### (i) LEARNING THEORY

For us to know how best to teach a subject we should have some knowledge as to how we learn.

There are scientific principles of learning that can be translated into classroom use in order to make learning more efficient and productive.<sup>1</sup>

Two psychologists whose work still holds much influence in terms of the psychology of education today are B.F. Skinner and Jerome Brunner, whose theories are described respectively as Behaviourism and Cognitive/Gestaltism.<sup>2</sup>

#### B.F. Skinner and Behaviourism

Skinner views learning as an association between stimuli and responses and suggests that conditioning, or learning, takes place when a response is followed by a reinforcing stimulus.<sup>3</sup> According to the Behaviourist,

good teaching is... the ability to arrange the proper sequence of reinforcements and to make sure that these reinforcements are contingent upon students emitting the appropriate responses.<sup>4</sup>

This information is vital to every teacher. It states clearly the main motivating factor in a student's learning and reminds the teacher to be aware at all times that in order to learn the student must feel there is some reward involved.

All manners of rewards have been used in contingency management - the social reinforcements of praise and encouragement, material reinforcements of consumables or privileges, tokens and symbolic rewards.<sup>5</sup>

Prizes and praise are not the only way that behaviour is reinforced in the classroom. Praise must be dealt out with caution as students know when they are being patronised. 'Specific standards for performance need to be established for students and teachers and indeed for educational institutions'.<sup>6</sup> When feedback is given as to how a student is doing within a certain goal orientated structure a reinforcing effect occurs,<sup>7</sup> especially when the student has achieved some level of success.



Many studies have shown that learning follows a particular pattern. At first we learn a new subject slowly and then as our understanding reaches a certain level the learning speeds up dramatically. This is known as the learning curve. The period of accelerated learning can be very satisfying for student and also has a reinforcing effect. Teachers should also consider other reinforcing agents such as the students' peer group and parents, and so should avoid treatment that might cause conflict in the peer group and be aware of the effect of any contact with the student's home.

These behaviourist ideas have a bearing on the formulation of an approach to the teaching of Art History in two ways. Firstly in terms of classroom methodology and secondary in terms of structuring. When in the classroom, we reward the abilities and operations as described previously, such as statements about style and formal elements and also hypothesising and interpreting. Students should be encouraged to talk and to talk about art.

When it comes to structuring the lesson sequences it should be kept in mind that the students should feel that they have achieved some level of success quite early on and continue to achieve success. Any testing, worksheets, projects should be set within a range in which the teacher knows the student will perform.

### Jerome Brunner and Cognitive/Gestaltism

The need for an appropriate structure in presenting learning is one of the main affirmations of Learning Theorist Jerome Brunner. Brunner is described as a Cognitive Gestaltist and as such insists that 'the final goal of teaching is to promote the 'general' understanding of the structure of a subject matter'.<sup>8</sup> Brunner argues that real learning takes place when we come to understand the broad concepts and relationships at work in a body of knowledge rather than being familiar with the details of the subject. 'Grasping the structure of a subject is understanding it in a way that permits other things to be related to it meaningfully'.<sup>9</sup> Brunner's theory is divided into four principles; motivation, structure, sequence and reinforcement.<sup>10</sup>

#### (a) Motivation

Brunner believes that children are naturally curious, strive to be competent and are

interested in what they are good at. 'In order to activate exploration children must experience a certain level of uncertainty'.<sup>11</sup> So in order to motivate, a subject should not be presented in a way that is too easy for the child, nor in a way that is too difficult.

### **(b) Structure**

Bruner himself states that if appropriately structured 'any idea or problem or body of knowledge can be presented in a form simple enough so that any particular learner can understand it in a recognisable form'.<sup>12</sup> He suggest three concepts which we can consider when structuring learning. These are; modes of presentation, economy and power. He describes three modes of presentation; enactive where things are understood in terms of the actions of the body; iconic, where concepts are understood in terms of image and, symbolic, where concepts are understood in terms of language.

When Bruner talks of economy he suggests that the best learning takes place when concepts are presented in a clear, concise and uncluttered manner. When he talks of 'Power of Presentation' he suggests that information should be presented in a striking, forceful way to grab the students interest and make concepts graphically clear in the students mind.

### **(c) Sequence**

Bruner believes that the sequence in which a subject is taught is vital to learning. He suggests that sequences should be based on the three modes of presentation moving from the enactive, through the iconic, to the symbolic.

### **(d) Reinforcement**

'In order to achieve mastery of a problem we must receive feedback as to how we are doing'.<sup>13</sup> Much of what was said earlier in terms of reinforcement in behaviourist theory applies here also.

Based on these principles there is Bruner's theory on Discovery Learning. 'The facts and relationships children discover through their own explorations are more



useable and tend to be better retained'.<sup>14</sup> When students learn by their own discovery they tend to learn in terms of the broader concepts and structures that Brunner refers to and students have shown that conceptual learning is longer lasting and creates greater feelings of self esteem.<sup>15</sup> Promoting Discovery Learning in the classroom involves the generous use of questioning, instructing and discussion. These methods will be dealt with in more detail when I come to examine what modes of teaching are best suited to teaching the devised approach to Art History.

## (ii) A PROPOSED LEARNING STRUCTURE

This section will examine what can be learned from these learning theories and used in sequencing the aspects of History and Appreciation of Art into a structure for exploration. The proposed structure is to explore the aspects of Art History and Appreciation in the following sequence.

- Subject matter.
- Formal elements.
- Techniques.
- Context.
- Ideas.
- Evaluation.

The following is an outline on why the above sequence is considered appropriate. In looking at art under categories of subject matter students will explore the different way artists have treated similar subjects across time and culture. Such an approach provides an accessible introduction to looking at art in which students can make their own observations and queries and also provides a setting for presenting work in interesting combinations. This idea stems from Brunner's idea of the Power Mode of presentation as outlined earlier. It has also been suggested that the study of art should start from the pupils own base of knowledge and interests and work from there.

The proposed model for teaching Art History starts from present taste manifestations and verbal utterances of Art Appreciation and proceeds backwards to past Artistic events and theories illuminating those events.<sup>16</sup>

It is much easier for pupils to learn rationales that they already feel instinctively.<sup>17</sup>

Looking at Art under broad subject matter headings provides an ideal setting for this to happen. Next on the list are the formal elements and techniques. Brunner's structure of modes of presentation are the enactive, iconic and symbolic. Looking at the elements and techniques is a process which is still very much based in the iconic. One is still dealing with concrete visible concepts which can be explored in a visual way but one is also beginning to use a more developed language in looking at art. This serves as a bridge between the iconic and symbolic modes of understanding. Taking Bloom's 'Levels of Learning' as a model, the study of these aspects also serve as a bridge of analysis and application from the factual information level to the synthesis and evaluation levels.

When we progress to exploring context and ideas we are working within the levels of application and synthesis as described by Bloom, and are well into the symbolic mode of understanding as described by Brunner. One might also expect this exploration to take place after an acceleration in learning, as portrayed by a learning curve, as the student begins to piece together the information presented so far into a manageable structure.

Finally Bloom describes a level of evaluation and thus might correlate with art criticism. As outlined earlier to ability to make reasoned judgments depends largely on an ability to relate and apply the concepts that have made up the five stages.

### (iii) METHODOLOGY

Having decided on a sequence in which to present the Art History aspects as described we must now decide on a method of presenting the information in such a way so as to maximise the achievement of the goals outlined. Based primarily on the work of Ned Flanders and Nate Gage, three broad models of teaching have been identified.<sup>18</sup> These are; the transmitter of knowledge or lecturing; inductive inquiry and interpersonal learning.<sup>19</sup>

In the lecturing mode it is vital that the teacher be adequately prepared and follow a path which makes the learning as complete as possible. This is usually done through outlines of what will be covered, examples of increasing detail leading to the



restatement of the generalised principle.<sup>20</sup>

Using the inductive inquiry model the idea is to teach concepts or the process of enquiry rather than facts. Questioning is used to show students how concepts can be arrived at and the method is based on the principles of Brunner's Discovery Learning theory.

The final model describes interpersonal learning which places the emphasis on the relationship between the teacher and the students. 'If a teacher can convey a genuine affection and empathy, a warm facilitative classroom atmosphere will be created and the pupils will take it from there'.<sup>21</sup>

The effective teacher is one who can combine all these models in varying degrees, depending on the situation. For the teaching of Art History and Appreciation emphasis will be placed on the inductive enquiry model in combination with the other two models, since it best reflects the abilities we want to encourage as described in the section on our teaching goals. The actual methods which can be used within these models are as follows:-

- Modelling.<sup>22</sup>
- Questioning.<sup>23</sup>
- Feeding Back.<sup>24</sup>
- Contingency Management.<sup>25</sup>
- Interpersonal.<sup>26</sup>
- Student Centred Learning.<sup>27</sup>
- Practical Activity.<sup>28</sup>

The implementation of these methods also calls on certain qualities in the person of the teacher in order to make them work as will be outlined later.<sup>29</sup>

## **Modelling**

In Educational Theory the term Modelling refers to the way learning can be aided by providing example. If the Art History teacher goes through the process of analysing a particular artwork so as the student can observe the method, language and attitude of the teacher, then it is possible that the student will learn a certain amount by example.



In the Art History classroom the teacher is talking about art, and is using a specialised language. The teacher can make a conscious effort to use appropriate language and method of exploration and so familiarise the student with the skills they will need to make their own Art History statements.

Modelling has been shown to be a highly effective means of establishing abstract or rule governed behaviour. On the basis of observationally received rules, people learn, among other things, judgmental orientations, linguistic styles, conceptual schemes, information processing strategies, cognitive operations and standards of conduct.<sup>30</sup>

Modelling can work in more subtle ways also. If a teacher can display an enthusiasm for the material and create a sense that it is very real to him/her then exchanges about art history and appreciation may become more immediate and conversational.

The art teacher can help this process first by openly expressing feelings verbally ... and secondly by encouraging this openness in students.<sup>31</sup>

## Questioning

Since those first Socratic seminars, questioning has been the most characteristic means of assistance in formal learning, school and academic learning.<sup>32</sup>

The practice of questioning in class can clearly be seen as a fundamental factor in discovery learning as described earlier. If we simply inform students about the accepted interpretation of a certain artwork then it is possible that this information will lack real meaning for the student. Instead of uniting a range of concepts and becoming a reality in the mind of the student, it will remain an isolated detail and will be difficult for the student to express again or could be forgotten. On the other hand, if the student is led through a series of carefully chosen and ordered questions about what he/she sees and why he/she thinks it has been made this way, to arrive at what might be the same interpretation, the student has now gained real insight and understanding. The student is more likely to remember the information and indeed, with time, will be able to go through the process unaided.

In education questioning is a central device, because questions call up the use of language and in this way assists thinking.<sup>33</sup>



Effective questioning is a skill that the teacher must develop. Questions that can be answered with 'yes' or 'no' are not as useful because the answer is more than likely contained in the question. The teacher should have a clear idea of where he/she is trying to lead the student and ask questions that build on top of one another to take them there. Questioning can lead a student from an intuitive first response to an artwork, through analysis of its form and an understanding of how that form creates a meaning for the artwork. The following is an example of how this might be done. The work chosen is 'The Bellili Family', by Edgar Degas, painted in 1859 (fig. 1). A series of questions such as those that follow might be used as part of an exploration of group portraiture.



fig. 1

We might begin by asking the students who they think these people are and what is their relationship? We might ask what kind of person do the students think each individual in the painting is? At this stage we are looking for initial impressions and plenty of speculation is allowed and encouraged. Questions will then focus on the relationship between the members of the family. Questions will then change to a more formal nature of where things are placed, what shapes are used etc. The dialogue might then proceed as follows. This might probably be a shortened version as the anticipated student responses might require more drawing out.







- Q. Where in the painting is the father placed?  
 A. Over on the right hand side.
- Q. Where is he in relation to the other family members?  
 A. He is sitting apart from them.
- Q. Is there anything else that adds to this sense of separation?  
 What is between him and the rest of the family?  
 Where does his space end and the other space begin?
- A. At the edge of the table and the mirror.
- Q. What effect does this create?

The questioning would continue along this line to establish that the father is placed within a separate box of his own with a definite barrier of vertical lines between him and the rest of the family.

- Q. How has his face been painted?  
 A. It's hard to see.
- Q. Why?  
 A. It's dark and it's not clear.
- Q. What effect does this have?  
 A. It's like we don't really get to see who he is.
- Q. What do you notice first about the mother?  
 A. The way she's standing, the way she's staring blankly.
- Q. What shape does her outline make?  
 A. A triangle.
- Q. What effect do you think this has? What does it remind you of?  
 A. Something stable, steady, like a mountain or a tower.
- Q. What else makes her seem steady, motionless?  
 A. Her black dress.  
 The way she's leaning on the table.
- Q. What about the shape of the daughter next to her?  
 A. She looks the same.
- Q. Where is her shape in relation to the mother's shape?  
 A. It is inside it.
- Q. What do you think this says about the relationship between these two?
- Q. What about the other daughter?

- Where is she in relation to the complete shape of the other two?
- A. She is outside it.
- Q. What kind of shape is she compared to the other two?
- A. Less regular, less triangular, less stable.
- Q. Is she as steady and motionless as the other two?
- A. No.
- Q. What creates this effect?
- A. The way she's leaning over, the way she has one leg tucked under her, her hands on her hips.
- Q. What does she look like she's about to do?
- A. Get up and go.
- Q. In what direction? What does this suggest?

At the end of the session the students should have a clear understanding of how composition and formal elements such as line and shape can create meaning in an artwork. The aim of the process is to create cognitive structures in the mind of the student. 'Cognitive structuring refers to the provision of a structure for thinking and acting'.<sup>34</sup> These structures provide frameworks on which further information can be hung, and so make learning easier and more effective. 'Cognitive structures organise content and functions and as a corollary, refer to like instances'.<sup>35</sup>

### Feeding Back

Feeding back is an integral part of questioning. As the students provide answers it is vital that the teacher continues to respond, to repeat what has been said or to say it again in a different way and to relate the information to that which has already been established. Feedback is also achieved through assessment. Assessment is a chance for students to find out how they are progressing, and if the feedback they receive is that of having achieved some level of success this can have a powerful motivational effect.<sup>36</sup>

### Contingency Management<sup>37</sup>

Contingency management refers to what if any systems of rewards are used to increase motivation. As mentioned earlier one of the most powerful motivational factors available to the teacher is for the student to experience success, so feedback



through assessment also applies here. In order to create any sense of interest in the material in the student there should be something in the learning that he/she can relate to. More will be said about this when Student Centred learning is discussed.

### Interpersonal Learning

'One main element of effective teaching is the need to create a relatively relaxed learning environment within a task orientated focus'.<sup>38</sup> The teacher who believes in Interpersonal learning sees the pupil/teacher relationship as the single most important factor in education. If the 'pupils are supported and encouraged to learn with high positive expectations'<sup>39</sup> and the 'teacher/pupil relationships are largely based on mutual respect and rapport'<sup>40</sup> this positive relationship will result in eased learning in the classroom. The relationship will cause questioning and inductive enquiry to be more productive and teacher feedback will be more valued. A good classroom climate will allow for a greater variety of teaching methodologies and will allow for greater input from the students, leading to greater participation and pride in their own learning.

### Student Centred Learning

'In planning instruction in the Humanities we should start with life as it is felt and as we see it lived'.<sup>41</sup> In our eagerness to impart knowledge of the history of art on students, it is all too easy to lose sight of the base of knowledge that we are building on. We do not have to start from scratch, building onto blank slates, but onto minds that can already see and respond to artworks in some way. Indeed students may have a complex understanding of visual language through their own interests and culture.

Direct intuitive experience of the work of art related to the pupils psycho-social situation ought to be the springboard towards a subsequent imparting of a body of historical cognitions.<sup>42</sup>

The Art History teacher should be willing to use a variety of resources to explore the form and content of artwork, including cinema, music video, graphic design, fashion design etc. This is what Jerome Brunner calls Power of Presentation; something which grabs students attention and makes the point in a very clear and concise manner.<sup>43</sup>



## Practical Activity

In the Junior Certificate programme for Art, Craft and Design, Art History and Appreciation are treated as support studies, i.e. something the student has seen and considered as an aid to his/her practical project work. For the Leaving Certificate, with its large proportion of marks for Art History, it is possible to see this relationship being reversed, where practical work can aid insight into artworks.

'It was once part of the traditional training of art students that they should make a copy from the masters'.<sup>44</sup> The practice of having students make copies of artworks may fix the image in the mind but beyond this has limited value in terms of facilitating insight or understanding.<sup>45</sup>

'It is personal involvement in the activity that stimulates the appreciation and the desire to see how others have dealt with problems similar to those faced by oneself'.<sup>46</sup>

This practical activity will of course involve making sketches of works in completion and in detail, and labelling them, but will also entail more general work based on the formal elements of art and design such as shape, tone etc. In the Leaving Certificate programme these exercises could be fashioned so as to be relevant to the practical papers of the examination as well as clarifying aesthetic statements.

The examination of Learning Theory has been the basis for the development of two important factors in the formulation of a programme for the study of History and Appreciation of Art at Leaving Certificate level. Firstly in terms of a structure in which to present the material and secondly in terms of the methodology chosen to use in the classroom. In the next chapter it will be described how these two factors, the structure and the methodology, will combine to create an actual programme of study over a two year course.

**FOOTNOTES - Chapter II**

1. Norman A. Sprinthall and Richard C. Sprinthall, Educational Psychology: a development approach, Fifth Edition, (New York: Hill Publishing Company, 1990), p.227.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p.229.
4. Ibid., p.238.
5. Roland G. Tharp and Roland Gallimore, Rousing Minds to Life. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p.51.
6. Ibid., p.55.
7. Sprinthall and Sprinthall, Educational Psychology, 1990, p.247.
8. Ibid., p.257.
9. Ibid., p.241, 243.
10. Ibid., p.243.
11. Ibid., p.244.
12. Ibid., p.245.
13. Ibid., p.247.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid., p.248.

16. *Sonia Rauve, "Teaching Art History" in The Study of Education and Art, ed. Dick Field and John Newick, p.199.*
17. *Ibid., p.197.*
18. *Sprinthall and Sprinthall, Educational Psychology, 1990, p.326-329.*
19. *Ibid., pp.329-336.*
20. *Ibid., p.330.*
21. *Ibid., p.332.*
22. *Thorp and Gallimore, Rousing Minds to Life, 1988, p.59.*  
*Victor Lowenfeld and W. Lambert Brittain, Creative and Mental Growth. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987), pp.459, 460.*
23. *Thorp and Gallimore, Rousing Minds to Life, 1988, p.59.*  
*Robert Clement and Shirley Page, Knowledge and Understanding in Art. (Oliver and Boyd, 1992), p.23.*
24. *Thorp and Gallimore, Rousing Minds to Life, 1988, p.55.*  
*Sprinthall and Sprinthall, Educational Psychology, 1990, p.247.*
25. *Thorp and Gallimore, Rousing Minds to Life, 1988, p.51.*  
*Sprinthall and Sprinthall, Educational Psychology, 1990, p.238.*
26. *Thorp and Gallimore, Rousing Minds to Life, 1988, p.63-65.*
27. *Lowenfeld and Brittain, Creative and Mental Growth, 1987, p.460.*  
*George Pappas, Concepts in Art and Education, (London: The MacMillan Company, 1970), p.359.*



28. Lowenfeld and Brittain, Creative and Mental Growth, 1987, p.461.  
Sprinthall and Sprinthall, Educational Psychology, 1990, p.364-366.
29. Ibid., p.377.
30. Tharp and Gallimore, Rousing Minds to Life, 1985, p.49.
31. Lowenfeld and Brittain, Creative and Mental Growth, 1987, p.459-460.
32. Tharp and Gallimore, Rousing Minds to Life, 1985, p.88.
33. Ibid., p.60.
34. Ibid., p.63.
35. Ibid., p.65.
36. Sprinthall and Sprinthall, Educational Psychology, 1990, p.247.
37. Tharp and Gallimore, Rousing Minds to Life, 1985, p.51.
38. Sprinthall and Sprinthall, Educational Psychology, 1990, p.323.
39. Dr. Chris Kyriacou, Essential Teaching Skills, (York: Simon & Shuster, 1991), p.10.
40. Ibid.
41. Pappas, Concepts in Art and Education, 1970, p.359.
42. Rauve, 'Teaching Art History', p.195.
43. Sprinthall and Sprinthall, Educational Psychology, 1990, p.246.

44. Roger Clement and Shirley Page, Knowledge and Understanding in Art, (Oliver and Boyd, 1992), p.44.
45. Ibid.
46. Lowenfeld and Brittain, Creative and Mental Growth, 1987, p.461.



## CHAPTER III

### (i) CLASSROOM APPLICATION

A structure in which Art Historical knowledge could be arranged and presented was devised in Chapter II, followed by a description of various teaching methodologies which could be employed in presenting it in the classroom. This Chapter will seek to bring together these two elements into an outline of an Art History and Appreciation Course for senior cycle students in preparation for the Leaving Certificate Examination. The section on History of Art in the Leaving Certificate syllabus for Art, Craft and Design states that

Questions will be framed so as to test the general knowledge of historical development and visual appreciation rather than detailed or specialised knowledge of the History of Art. Opportunities will be offered for the expression of the candidates' own opinions of works and visual problems. Answers to questions may be illustrated by sketches where these would be appropriate.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, in formulating a programme for the teaching of History of Art we must keep these points in mind, especially the words 'general knowledge of historical development and visual appreciation' and 'own opinions of works and visual problems'.

The proposed programme is based on the assumption that at the start of fifth year, students have had limited exposure to Art History beyond occasional references, in relation to practical work. The first half of the programme seeks to improve students abilities to talk about art, to increase the vocabulary needed to do so and to introduce students to the concepts involved. The second half seeks to furnish the student with more detailed contextual and ideological information which can be combined with a mastery of visual language. As outlined in Chapter II the proposed structure and sequence for presenting the material is as follows:

Subject Matter  
Formal Elements  
Techniques



Context  
Ideas  
Evaluation

What follows is a description of what it is proposed will actually take place in the classroom as the course is covered.

### Subject Matter

Direct intuitive experience of the artwork... ought to be the springboard towards a subsequent imparting of a body of Historical Cognitions.<sup>2</sup>

One of the most effective ways of rousing students into discussion is through comparison and it can be particularly interesting to compare different Artistic treatments of similar subject matter. Possible headings under which work could be present might include portraiture, the human figure, still life, architecture, animals, landscape or work could be presented under thematic headings such as war, old age, mother and child, etc.<sup>3</sup> The aim of this stage is to initiate observations on different styles of Art and to give students opportunity to explore their own immediate reactions. Students might, for example, be shown two different treatments of a cockerel by Picasso, (Fig. 2) and (Fig. 3), and be divided into two groups, one for each image.



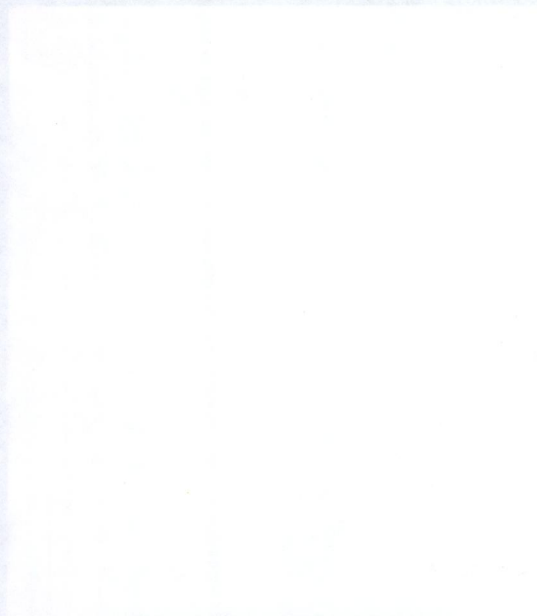
Fig. 2



Fig. 3

Each group will have a worksheet to fill in, stating what they like about their image, and what they dislike about the other. More images may be needed for larger





100-100

100-100



groups. Then each group makes a defence of their image and an attack on the other groups'. As the discussion proceeds the teacher takes any opportunities which arise to introduce new words which the students write down. By being forced to defend a work like this students can become quite vocal about the work and may be forced to look a bit harder if they are asked to defend a work which they don't really like.

Another activity which can facilitate the use of language in Art History class is for a student to describe verbally or in writing a work to a partner who has not seen the work. Then the partner has to make a drawing of what he/she imagines the work to look like. This is an excellent technique for improving students' powers of description and can really highlight particularities and differences of style.

As the programme progresses students will become familiar with the terms 'realistic', 'expressive', 'abstract', etc. Students will be provided with copies of all works covered which they will keep in notebooks along with any worksheets, practical work or glossaries that are used in class.

### Formal Elements

Throughout this introductory phase as described above the students will have been making references to formal elements such as colour, shape, texture, etc in their efforts to describe works and express their feelings about them. The aim of this next phase is to look at these elements in more detail so as to provide students with the building blocks for talking about the visual qualities of art and design objects. The study of art and design elements will be 'an integral part of whatever course is undertaken'.<sup>4</sup>

It will be useful at this stage to return to works which have been examined earlier in the course to show how different works can be looked at from different points of view and to increase familiarity with a core selection of important works. A variety of practical exercises could be used to clarify points about the elements in artworks. For example, students might be asked to make a selection of lines in response to words like 'flow', 'terror', 'swirl', 'quiver' etc. Any such work they do in class would be kept in their Art History notebooks as mentioned earlier. Following line,

shape, might be explored and then tone and form. Art from different periods of history should be used including twentieth century art, and abstract art. Other elements such as colour, pattern, texture and composition would also be explored.

### Techniques

A few classes could be given over to looking at various techniques artists have used. The knowledge of how a work was produced, and why, can provide valuable insight into why it appears the way it does. The ideal way to present this material would be for students to visit studios or workshops where they can experience first hand the processes involved. This is, of course, not always possible, so the art teacher might try to build up a collection of slides or videos of artists and crafts people at work, to illustrate any classes on materials or techniques.

### Context

Looking at the social, historical or personal context in which work was produced, provides an opportunity to begin a more diachronic approach to the teaching of Art History as students approach their Leaving Certificate examination. Apart from this, students' understanding of art will be increasing and some knowledge of the chronological development of Art History will become necessary to further their understanding. Indeed a knowledge of the context in which a work was produced can prove vital to the understanding and appreciation of the work.

The use of charts or time-lines can be very useful here with key relevant historical developments and key works, perhaps with small illustrations shown. The chart should remain visible in the artroom at all times and be referred to from this point onwards whenever appropriate. Students should be encouraged as much as possible to figure out for themselves how certain contexts have affected the creation of works. Students will be asked to name the forces which act upon an artist and affect the way his/her art will be made. The key questions sought will be - What was happening in the world which might affect the production of the artwork? Who is initiating the work? The artist or a patron? If a patron, who are they? What do they want to achieve? If by the artist him/herself what was his/her own situation? What were his/her own ideals, beliefs? What, if any, site was the work made for? Who was its



intended viewers? What are their requirements or expectations? What else was being created at that time or immediately before?

If such information is given to students they might then be asked to speculate on what, of what we see in the artwork is attributable to these influences. The role of these forces can also be illustrated through products other than artworks. Product design, packaging design, advertising design can all be examined by asking these questions and the different results of different contexts can be compared. All of the development in language and understanding which the first half of the proposed course of study aims to promote really comes to be of value and artworks can begin to have meaning when context is considered, or as Andrew Dyson puts it in Art Education, Heritage and Prospect,

The neglect of fostering a sense of history (by which I mean, of course, much more than merely a grasp of chronological sequence) is perhaps one of the most damaging omissions in Art Education. Unless pupils are equipped with such a sense, the whole notion of direction and of continuity - not only in art in general, but also in personal endeavour - will be stillborn.<sup>5</sup>

## Ideas

Through exploring the context in which artworks were and are produced students will come across meaning in art. Using all they have learned, students can now discuss ideas about religion, sex, beauty, society and wealth, as they are expressed in artworks. Discussions can be organised through team debates, questions and answers scenarios where panel members are representing artists and patrons. Many parallels in contemporary media can be found to illuminate relationships between ideas and art. For example, students might consider who buys art today and why, or they might consider the depictions of women in advertising compared to their depiction in eighteenth century painting. In terms of the goals that were outlined in Chapter I as to what we hoped the student will learn from studying History of Art, the discussion of ideas will contribute greatly to the students understanding of their culture and that of others, the development of their critical thought and the expression of their ideas.

Art History... extends and deepens the emotive responses of young persons to the world around them and vitalises their lives through the exposure to



previously unknown artistic values.<sup>6</sup>

## Evaluation

At the beginning of the proposed programme the students were encouraged to express their initial responses to artworks - whether they liked them or not, what they thought they were about and if they thought they were any good. By the time they reach the end of the programme they should be able to evaluate work. In order to evaluate the students should be able to

state the criteria that should be applied to the work,  
give reasons why the work does or does not reach the  
criteria and cite evidence, qualities of the work to  
support the judgment.<sup>7</sup>

Fostering this ability in students might be achieved through having students state the merits of a work which they have said they disliked or by having students write reviews of exhibitions having researched the work and the artist beforehand.

## Assessment

As was stated a number of times, assessment is vital to the student in terms of feedback and motivation and to the teacher in terms of pacing progress and formulating strategies. At the end of sixth year the students will sit the Leaving Certificate examination which is a form of assessment. This examination consists of selecting and answering three essay type questions. This in itself is a particular skill which should be developed in the students. Students should learn how to read and understand questions, by understanding key words and phrases such as 'discuss', 'describe', 'give an account of'. Practice is needed in terms of structuring answers and timing of responses so the teacher should provide opportunities for this type of assessment towards the end of the programme. Having said that, there are other means of assessment which can and should be used over the course of the two years which will contribute more in terms of feedback, motivation and evaluation. By way of written assessment, a test which has structured questions rather than open-ended essay type questions can create a greater sense of attainability in the student and can act models when it comes to answering the essay type questions. Students might be asked to do projects on certain artists or topics which provides wide opportunities for assessment in terms of how well student have grasped the basic principles of looking

at Art History as well as the particularities involved. In the case of projects assessment criteria should be very specific and made known to the students. They should be assessed, for example from the point of view of the methods they used, the quality of the content, the amount of personal initiative and quality of presentation.

In the Leaving Certificate examination students are asked to write about works without reproductions of them in front of them. This type of assessment would only be used towards the end of the programme as students can learn through the assessment process if they are asked questions about work which is in front of them.

## (ii) CLASSROOM FINDINGS

The nature of the proposed programme for the study of History and Appreciation of Art requires that the students and teacher work together over a two year course. Because of this, the full programme could not be implemented in the limited teaching time afforded by a one year Diploma for Art and Design Teachers course. Nonetheless there are aspects of it which I had opportunity to apply and following is a description of what I found particularly useful in the classroom. The most useful of all the strategies described in the methodologies section, proved to be that of questioning. By using questioning as the driving force behind classes I found that I could be much more sure that the information was being understood and was making sense than if I had simply talked at the students from the top of the class. It also proved to be a useful form of assessment for me as I could tell by students responses to particular questions if material we had covered before had been taken on board. I also found that students could analyse works quicker as they got used to the questions I would ask and even pre-empted some as they became familiar with ways of approaching works of art.

The move away from a strict chronological study of Art History also worked very well in the classroom. By choosing works from across time and space and comparing them it proved much easier for students to talk and write about each work, than when works were shown in isolation. It also provided opportunity for working in groups as described in the section on using subject matter as a starting point for the teaching of Art History. It was found that the groups actually became quite competitive and



fought hard to defend their work, almost to the point where they found it difficult to accept the merits of the other groups' artworks.

It was found to be hugely beneficial to deal with actual works instead of reproductions. When actual works from living artists were brought into the classroom, the interest, attention and level of inquiry increased dramatically. Students were fascinated as to how the works were made, and why, and what the artist said about them. A similar increase in interest was seen on trips to exhibitions and museums.

Using a starting point which the students could readily identify with proved to be effective and the use of film particularly so. Film was used to illustrate points about use of colour, use of light and shade as well as for the study of film as part of the General Appreciation section of the examination paper. Music was also used in conjunction with a lesson on pop art and helped establish a context for the work. The use of a variety of methods in the classroom prevented the students from 'switching off' as soon as they realised it was going to be an 'Art History Class'.

Modelling as described earlier was also seen to take place and it was interesting to see words and phrases I had used in class turn up in essays a few days later. I also found that students responded to a certain amount of enthusiasm from me in terms of works which I particularly liked or even stories that I could tell about where and when I saw a particular work. Generally it was found that students responded well to anything which made the material more immediate, more real.



## CONCLUSION

The present Leaving Certificate examination in History and Appreciation of Art is a broad course which covers the art of Ireland and Europe from prehistoric times to the present day as well as the whole area of visual awareness of our designed world. It is an extremely difficult task to cover it all at the level of detail as is suggested by the framing of the questions on the exam paper each year. It has been found that a certain amount of paring down has to be done but that it is possible to provide students with enough of an understanding of the principals involved in the looking at art to enable them to take in a lot of information about a lot of seemingly diverse topics. It was found that three factors were vital in the achievement of this goal. Firstly teachers 'need to know enough about their discipline to feel secure in their teaching'.<sup>8</sup> Secondly, teachers need to be able to structure the knowledge and present it to the students in such a sequence as to provide cognitive structures to ensure the easy and sound learning of the material. Thirdly, teachers need to be aware of the methodologies, which, based on learning theories have been found to be most effective, and to use a variety of such methodologies in the classroom. If these three factors are present in the Art History classroom then the study of the subject can, as well as preparing them for examination, extend the insights of students into their own worlds and the world around them.

### FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER III

1. Rules and Programme for Secondary School 1987/88 to 1993/94, (Dublin: Published by The Statutory Office), p.250.
2. Sonia Tauve, "*Teaching Art History*" in The Study of Education and Art, ed., Dick Field and John Newick, p.195.
3. Chris Dunn, Art and Design, A Resource Book for Students, (London: Longman, 1989), p.3.
4. Frederick Palmer, Visual Elements of Art and Design, (London: Longman, 1989), p.4.
5. Andrew Dyson, "*History of Art in Schools, Grasping the Nettle*", in Art Education, Heritage and Prospect, (University of London, Institute of Education, 1983).
6. W. Eugene Klienbauer, "*Art History in Discipline Based Art Education*", in Discipline Based Art Education, ed., Ralph A. Smith, 1987, p. 209.
7. Roger Clement and Shirley Page, Knowledge and Understanding in Art, (Oliver and Boyd, 1992), p.5.1.
8. W.A. Levi and Ralph A. Smith, Art Education, a Critical Necessity, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991), p.56.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Canaday, John. What is Art. London: Hutchinson, 1980.

Chapman, Laura H. Adventures in Art. Mass.: Davis Publications Inc., 1994.

Clement, Robert and Page, Shirley. Knowledge and Understanding in Art. Oliver and Boyd, 1992.

Dunn, Chris, Art and Design, A Resource Book for Students, London: Longman, 1989.

Kyriacou Dr. Chris, Essential Teaching Skills, York: Simon & Shuster, 1991.

Levi, Albert, William and Smith, Ralph, A. Art Education: A Critical Necessity, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991.

Lowenfeld, Victor and Brittain, W. Lambert. Creative and Mental Growth, New York: Macmillan, 1987.

Palmer, Frederick, Visual Elements of Art and Design, London: Longman, 1989.

Pappas, George. Concepts in Art and Education. London: Macmillan, 1970.

Sprinthall, Norman, A. and Sprinthall, Richard, C. Educational Psychology: a developmental approach, Fifth Ed. New York: Hill Publishing Company, 1990.

Thorp, Roland, G. and Gallimore, Roland. Rousing Minds to Life. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

## Component Parts of Works

Dyson, A. "History of Art in Schools, Grasping the Nettle" in Art Education, Heritage and Prospect, University of London, Institute of Education.

Klienbauer, W. Eugene. "Art History in Discipline Based Art in Education" in



Discipline Based Art Education, pp.205-215. Edited by Ralph A. Smith. Urban and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987.

Risatti, Howard. "*Art Criticism*" in Discipline Based Art Education. In Ralph A. Smith, 1987.

Rauve, Sonya. "*Teaching Art History: a methological reappraisal*" in The Study of Education and Art. Edited by Dick Field and John Newick.