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

**DESIGNING A MODULE FOR TRANSITION YEAR ART  
IN THE CONTEXT OF A  
SOUTH DUBLIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

**A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Education**

**in**

**Candidacy for the**

**DIPLOMA FOR ART AND DESIGN TEACHERS**

**by**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
LIST OF TABLES.....	iv
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.....	v
INTRODUCTION.....	vi
Chapter	
I. SOME BACKGROUND ON TRANSITION EDUCATION .....	1
Demographic Change	
Technological Change	
Socio-Psychological Change	
Economic Change	
A Place for Art in Transition Year	
II. STUDY OF ART IN THE TRANSITION YEAR IN A SOUTH DUBLIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE .....	12
The School Profile	
The Study of Art, Craft and Design in the Transition Year	
A Look at Art in Transition Year in Local Schools	
III. CREATING A MODULE OF WORK FOR TRANSITION YEAR.....	25
My Strengths and Resources	
Content	
Aim	
Objectives	
Method	
Support Studies	
Cross-Curricular	
What is Assessment?	
The Role and Value of Assessment	
Problems with Assessment	
Assessment Criteria	
Reflecting on the Module	
Recommendations	
APPENDIX.....	71
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	89
OTHER SOURCES.....	91



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## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1	Numbers of students participating in Transition Year Programmes.	7
Table 1.2	Aims of Transition Year.	9
Table 1.3	Creating a module of work.	26



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## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PLATE	1.	Example of 6th Year work displayed on corridor (scale - A1).	14
PLATE	2.	Displayed pupils' work (scale A1 x 8).	15
PLATE	3.	Significant Learning Day.	30
PLATE	4.	Significant Learning Day.	31
PLATE	5.	Significant Learning Day.	32
PLATE	6.	Pupil's observational drawing.	37
PLATE	7.	Visual Aid.	38
PLATE	8.	Pupil's observational drawing.	39
PLATE	9.	Initial design idea.	40
PLATE	10.	Support studies - Adolf Dietrich - still life.	42
PLATE	11.	Support studies - William de Morgan - tiles.	43
PLATE	12.	Support studies - Auguste Rodin - relief bronze doorway.	44
PLATE	13.	Passageways around the school.	45
PLATE	14.	Rooms around the school.	46
PLATE	15.	Pupil working on tile.	49
PLATE	16.	Bisque fired tiles.	54
PLATE	17.	Pupils glazing tiles.	55
PLATE	18.	Tiles ready for glaze firing.	56
PLATE	19.	Ceramic tile - storyboard.	59
PLATE	20.	Ceramic tile - storyboard.	60
PLATE	21.	Pupil's tile project in situ (Science department).	65
PLATE	22.	Close-up of tile project.	66







## INTRODUCTION

The Transition Year Programme is set to become a permanent fixture in the educational system. This study arose from my interest in the programme. I believe that Transition Year provides an opportunity for teachers to create modules based on their own disciplines and background, using the resources available within schools.

The Transition Year is, in essence, a Liberal Studies Programme. The focus is on the needs and development of the individual pupil, in an environment that is free from exam pressure. Transition Year seeks to equip students to meet the demands of society in the world beyond the school. In carrying out the work described in this study, I sought to bear in mind the overall aim and objectives of the Transition Year Programme.

In Chapter One I give an account of the changes in society which have led to a renewal of the Irish Educational System. I look at key factors in society which have influenced the decision to introduce a Transition Year on a national basis. This chapter charts the phases that the Transition Year Programme has gone through and outlines its current position. More specifically, I discuss the place of Art in the Transition Year Programme.

Chapter Two presents a profile of the co-educational school and the setting in which I worked. In this chapter, I outline the school's approach to Transition Year and the approach of the Art Department. In the course of devising a teaching module, I contacted Art Departments in local schools and was surprised to discover that there is little interaction or collaboration between Art teachers in the various schools.



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Chapter Three, the core chapter in my dissertation, gives an account of the module I devised for Transition Year Art. It gives the context in which my work took place. In describing the context I refer to and discuss: My strengths as a craftsperson; The resources available to me within the school; The methods and approaches I adopted.

An important issue that arose in the course of my work is that of assessment. In Chapter Three, I discuss the importance of establishing assessment criteria and the benefits of so doing for both teaching and learning.

Finally, I reflect on the module and my teaching of it. I also make a number of recommendations for devising Transition Year Art Programmes.



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## CHAPTER 1

### SOME BACKGROUND ON TRANSITION EDUCATION

Transition Education Programmes have now entered their twenty-second academic year. The first large-scale programme appeared in 1977 and since then several others have been developed. In this short period of time Transition education has assumed an important role in the education system serving many thousands of pupils.

There have been many major changes in industrial societies which have important implications for young people and, as a consequence, for education practice in recent years. Education systems have generally been slow to adapt to changing conditions. The changing conditions can be categorised as demographic, technological, socio-psychological and economic in character (1).

#### Demographic Change

A study of population statistics has shown an increase in the number of young people. In the 1981 Census of Population of Ireland people under the age of 25 accounted for almost half of the total population. In the same census people in the 15 to 24 year old age group accounted for 18% of the population by comparison with twenty years earlier, when it accounted for only 14% (2). This increase created pressure on accommodation in schools and caused financial problems for the Government.

#### Technological Change

Within the technological area, it is suggested that the change led to a decline in traditional labour-intensive industries and agriculture. There was a shift from manual to non-manual skills and a breakdown in the barriers between traditional job titles, activities and skills.



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### Socio-Psychological Change

The changes taking place in society in recent years mean that the environment in which children are growing up has become more complex and less supportive. People's values were changing, there was changes in the structure and role of the family. It has been suggested that the mass media - T.V., radio, video, newspapers, and magazines are to blame as they absorb a major proportion of an individual's time.

### Economic Change

The particular form that education takes, the number of pupils who receive it, the number and nature of the schools they attend and the length of time they stay there are all things that are influenced by economic circumstances. The average standard of living has risen in the last two decades, so has the rate of inflation, the progressive increase in taxation and social security schemes in the welfare system. The rate of unemployment over the last ten years has encouraged pupils to stay even longer in the school system, giving them every opportunity to develop and raising the importance of being properly qualified. Thus the economic compulsion to leave school on the earliest date that the law permits has diminished.

For some time, schools have been experiencing the effects of many of these changes which have been occurring outside them. They have to deal with problems of discipline, disaffection and drug abuse. When encountering these problems in the past, schools would have turned to a variety of persons and agencies outside to help. However, now these very persons and agencies are themselves experiencing major problems.



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### History of Transition Year Education

A response to the many changes taking place in society was the idea of Transition Education. The concept of Transition has developed with the period between adolescence and adulthood in mind. During this time,

"many young people are approaching psychological maturity in terms of the physical, intellectual and emotional development but are confined to a state of sociological childhood in institutions in which they are dependent and lack authority and responsibility" (3).

Transition Education is designed to ease the move from school to work and adult life. Government policy objectives of the programme for action in education 1984-1987 "..... seek to achieve a closer relationship between education and modern society and between education and the world of work"(4).

The development of the Transition Year Programme occurred in three main phases. The first phase of development began with the introduction of the Transition Year Programme by the then Minister of Education, Richard Burke T.D., in 1973. It was designed "..... to stop the academic treadmill and release the pupil from competitive education pressures for one year" (5).

In the Rules and Programme for Secondary Schools in 1976/77, it was described as being in the pilot stage and was launched in three schools with a total of sixty-six pupils participating.

In 1977/78 a total of sixteen schools opted to participate in this scheme. These schools had to apply to the Department of Education in order to seek approval and acceptance. An Evaluation Report was commissioned by the Department of Education to assess the effectiveness of the Transition Year courses. This report,



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which is not yet available, is the only external formal evaluation of the Transition Year Programme to date.

A collective enthusiasm for the Transition Year waned as a consequence of the lack of communication with schools and the Department. This led to the diminution in the schools' willingness to take on the Transition Year Programme. For the next two years participation rates dropped significantly - 281 and 174 respectively. In 1981 the number increased again to 540, slightly higher than the 1977 figure. Approval was not granted to any new schools to introduce the programme and in 1983 the small financial aid given to schools was withdrawn, leading to a further decrease in participation (See table 1.1). This may be explained by the tight budgetary constraints and scarce resources available during the early part of the 1980's, as outlined in the National Economic Plan "The Way Forward" 1983/87.

Phase two of the Programme happened in 1984. The majority of schools were offering a five year senior cycle. These schools were experiencing falling numbers of pupils, due to a falling birth rate and to the fact that parents were opting to place children into a six year cycle post-primary school where possible. Ms. Gemma Hussey T.D., the Minister for Education listed Transition Year, Vocational Preparation and Training Programme and Repeat Leaving Certificate courses as options for schools wishing to offer a six year post-primary cycle.

The 1984 development was innovative and different to the previous manifestations in numerous ways:

1. Government monitoring of programme.
2. Departmental Mentor system - provision of guidelines.
3. Standardisation and attempts at nationwide uniformity of programmes.



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It was envisaged that a six year cycle would help to ease the problems with entering Third Level at too young an age and would bring the Irish Education System more in line with the rest of Europe. Schools, particularly those in a five year cycle, were keen to be accepted for Transition Year by the Department of Education in order to retain pupils. Although proposed in 1984, schools could not provide Transition Year until 1986/87. The Programme was extended to 73 schools with 2,918 pupils participating in 1986.

The Curriculum and Examinations Board (C.E.B.) produced: "Planning, Introducing and Developing Transition Year Programmes - Guidelines for Schools in 1986". This document gave details of the Department's aims and aspirations for Transition Year as well as information on a practical approach for teachers. As in Phase 1, support for the Programme did not continue. A short time after these guidelines were issued, the Government reversed the decision that all pupils would have access to six years of Second Level Education. A further five years were to elapse before Ms. Mary O'Rourke T.D., would relaunch it again (6). Although the number of participants decreased over the next two years, this did not herald the demise of the Transition Year Programme. Access was still granted and schools already offering it continued doing so. Detailed application forms had to be completed and returned to the Department of Education. Controlled access allowed for a small expansion, but the next major expansion did not occur until the third Phase of the evolution of the Programme in 1994. In September 1989, 111 schools were offering Transition Year Programmes and 5,594 pupils were participating. The number gradually increased to 162 schools, 8,193 pupils in 1992.

Phase 3 of the development stemmed from a return to the commitment to provide for six years of post-primary schooling, as stated in the Government's Programme for Economic and Social Progress 1991. Once again pupils were to have the option of a three year senior cycle and the Leaving Certificate was to be of two



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years duration. The Department of Education stated that no more than 40% of the week was to be given to mainstream Leaving Certificate studies and that the year was to be free from mainstream examination pressures.

In 1994/95, guidelines were sufficiently flexible to allow schools to plan the Programme most suitable for the participating pupils.

In September 1994, 460 schools offered the Transition Year Programme and 21,173 pupils were participating. The Department of Education has shown its support for the Programme by organising a nationwide programme of In-Career Development for teachers during 1994 and also by providing a special grant to schools of £50 per annum for each pupil on an approved Transition Year Programme in 1994/95, and 1995/96. Initially this grant was to be used for allocation for part-time teaching hours to free teachers for co-ordination work. However, the Department later agreed to a greater degree of flexibility in the use of the grant which may be used for any expenses relating exclusively to the Transition Year Programme. Table 1.1 shows the number of pupils participating in Transition Year Programmes from 1974-1994.

The Department of Education, Transition Year Programmes - Guidelines 1994/95, states that the overall mission of the Transition Year is:

"..... to promote the personal, social, educational and vocational development of pupils, and to prepare them for their role as autonomous, participative and responsible members of society" (7).

The overall aims of the Transition Year Programmes are:

- "\* Education for maturity with the emphasis on personal development including social awareness and increased social competence.



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	Secondary	Vocational	Community	Comprehensive	Total Girls	Total Boys	Total
1974							66
1975							249
1976	269	17	62	170	306	212	518
1977	240	30	0	198	245	223	468
1978	73	67	105	36	119	162	281
1979	109	38	0	27	76	98	174
1980	290	76	0	174	309	231	540
1981	249	210	41	129	379	250	629
1982	291	66	45	143	372	173	545
1983	244	55	49	155	319	184	503
1984	197	75	6	147	258	167	425
1985	244	75	6	159	266	218	484
1986	2183	409	88	238	2047	871	2918
1987	2125	391	270		1894	892	2768
1988	2176	230	267		2013	660	2673
1989	4956	327	281		3192	2372	5564
1990	5451	344	310		3456	2649	6105
1991	7070	647	333		4351	3699	8050
1992	7131	743	319		4364	3829	8193
1993	7377	755	367		4454	4045	8499
1994	15163	3871	2139		11536	9637	21173

Table 1.1 Numbers of Students participating in Transition Year Programmes

Source: Department of Education Statistical Reports 1974 - 1992 and Department of Education



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- \* The promotion of general, technical and academic skills with the emphasis on inter-disciplinary and self-directed learning.
- \* Education through experience of adult and working life as a basis for personal development and maturity." (8).

Table 1.2 Aims of Transition Year.

### A Place for Art in Transition Year

"Curriculum content is a matter for selection and adaptation by the individual school having regard to these guidelines the requirements of pupils and the views of parents. In establishing its Curriculum, the school should also take into consideration the possibilities offered by employers and other work providing agencies and the wider interests of the local community." (9).

It must be remembered that each school plans its own Transition Year Curriculum based on its staff and resources. There is no specific instruction issued from the Department of Education regarding the role of Art within schools. Art is suggested under the headings "Aesthetics Education and Practical Studies".

"The aim is to develop an awareness and appreciation of visual art....." (10).

"A wide variety of activities could be considered as the following suggestions

- \* furniture making and restoration; interior design and furnishings.
- \* various crafts such as model making, jewellery making, pottery.
- \* photography and video production.
- \* textile crafts such as soft toys, weaving, fabric printing, etc." (11).



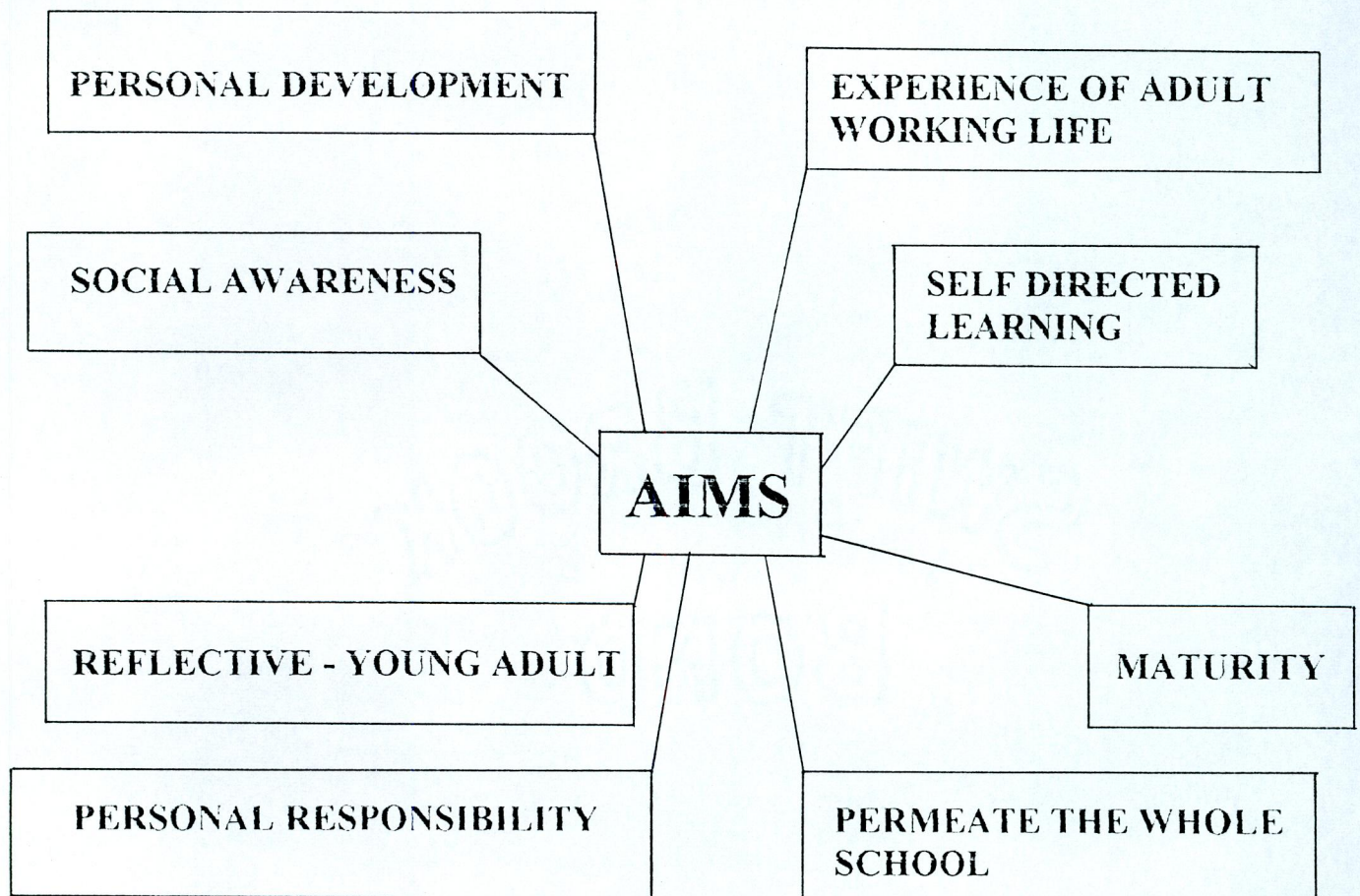


Table 1.2 Aims of Transition Year







## FOOTNOTES

## CHAPTER 1

1. J. S. Coleman and T. Husen, Becoming Adult in a Changing Society, (Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development, London, 1985), p.1.
2. "Aspects of the Education and Employment of Young People in Ireland" in National Youth Policy Committee. Final Report. (Stationery Office Dublin, 1984) p.84.
3. Thomas Kellaghan and Mary Lewis, Transition Education in Irish Schools (The Educational Company of Ireland, Dublin 1991), p.3.
4. Programme for Action in Education 1984-1987. (Stationery Office, Dublin, 1984), p.91.
5. Crooks and McKernan. The Challenge of Change. Curriculum Development in Irish Post-Primary 1970-1984. (Institute of Public Administration, Dublin), p.26.
6. Willie Ruane, Transition Year Option, A Teacher's Handbook. (Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland, Dublin), p.3.
7. The Department of Education, Transition Year Guidelines 1994-1995. (The Stationery Office Dublin, 1993), p.4.
8. Ibid., p.4.



9. Ibid., p.5.
10. Ibid., p.21.
11. Ibid., p.30.



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## CHAPTER 2

### STUDY OF ART IN THE TRANSITION YEAR IN A SOUTH DUBLIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

#### The School Profile

The main task of my sample school, a community school located in South West Dublin, is to meet the second level educational needs of the local community. The school values its distinctive features as a second level school which is co-educational, non-selective and multi-denominational, catering for pupils from different backgrounds and varying abilities, the College seeks respect for such differences as a central value. The College also values the developmental process of human growth through which young people are progressing.

The school has 962 pupils of age 11-18 years, 68 teachers and 21 ancillary staff. The Senior Management Team consists of the Principal, Vice-Principal, and six Year Heads. They are supported by the Board of Management and County Dublin Vocational Education Committee.

Classes are organised in the College on a mixed ability basis. From 1st Year, the base classes are mixed to take account of:

- (a) the spread of ability as ascertained by the assessment test;
- (b) a balance of boys and girls;
- (c) the primary school of origin;
- (d) the addresses of pupils;
- (e) additional information, educational and family background.



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The College recognises that teaching a mixed ability class places more demands on the teaching skills of teachers, it requires more resourcefulness and better preparation.

While mixed ability teaching makes its own demands, the general benefit is a better teaching environment, the absence of ghettoised classes and pupils, a greater level of co-operation and positiveness between pupils and school. The end result is more satisfying and worthwhile.

In my sample school the Transition Year Programme is entering its tenth year. The year is subject based with English, Mathematics and Irish plus four option subjects, and enhanced P.E. programme and R.E. programme on world religions. Health Education, Work Experience, and Career Guidance are key areas. The pupils rotate between Social and Media Studies, Mini-Company, Consumer Education, Gender Studies, European Studies and Computer Studies. Some key features of Transition Year are - Contract of Learning, Work Experience and subject based classes (with assignments and significant learning days). Figure 2 shows a breakdown of the Calendar for the current year's Transition Year pupils. There are 89 boys and 61 girls participating.

#### The Study of Art, Craft and Design in the Transition Year

The Art Department is located at a prime position at the main entrance in the school. There are two full-time Art teachers and one part-time Art teacher. For the Principal, Art plays a valuable role in promoting a particular ambiance within the school. Murals decorating the walls, corridors lined with examples of pupils' work, are seen to engender an atmosphere of learning and purpose and <sup>are</sup> is an inspiration to staff and pupils alike. Plate 1 and 2. The Principal has appointed a teacher to a post of special responsibility for Art.



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PLATE 1. Example of 6th Year work displayed on corridor (scale - A1).





PLATE 2. Displayed pupils' work (scale A1 x 8).



Art has always been an option in Transition Year. Usually two classes form with around 24 pupils in each class. The groupings are of mixed ability with extremities of pupils who obtained high honours in their Junior Certificate Art examination, and pupils who never had an opportunity to take Art as a subject in the past.

The whole system of Transition Year in my sample school is under review at the moment. It has its own special committee which is trying to formulate a Programme which would be different to other school years in so far as possible. It aims to explore new educational opportunities which the pupils would not have experienced in their previous or future years within the school, while still keeping within the Government guidelines.

It has proposed a modular system in Art. From my observations, the Art teachers are not too happy about this. They feel that they have worked hard at establishing Art as a serious subject and they feel that the Art room may become a dumping ground. The Art teachers have certain standards and aim at all times to achieve them. They feel that if every pupil does Art next year in Transition Year, there will be a huge strain on resources and no solid work can be done in such a short module by all pupils.

One of the most influential models for teaching Art and Design is laid out below provided by Maurice Barrett. He divides the model into three essential parts of any visual enquiry:

- "1. The personal or conceptual element creates curiosity and interest in children, places the work within a meaningful context for them and generates feelings, responses to the idea, and problems presented by the theme.
2. The technical element is concerned with the organisation and use of materials and processes with the development of skills appropriate to the problem.







3. The visual element embraces perception and understanding of those visual elements that reveal the appearance of the world: colour; tone; surface; line; space; movement; etc. It also includes understanding of the different forms of visual response appropriate to the theme or problem" (1).

The overall aim is to provide pupils with looking, thinking, and making skills. If this new system is implemented next year, the structuring and use of time will be a very important element for the teacher of Art, even allowing for the fact that pupils do work at very different speeds. Other teachers from different subject areas feel that anyone can do Art, so why not give the pupils a chance. The result of what is going to happen next year is unclear at this stage.

Included are two course outlines for 1992 and 1994, written by the Art teachers within my sample school. Appendix A and B. They are clearly within the guidelines from the Department offering pupils exciting and experimental ways of working within the Art, Craft and Design field.

#### A Look at Art in Transition Year in Local Schools

Over the last two decades, West Dublin has become one of the largest populace centres in Ireland. An expansive infrastructure is a direct consequence of this occurrence. Geographically the region is quite disjointed, population size denying regular interaction between peer groupings and education centres. Looking at the Art programme within my sample school, an interest arose to find out how other schools in the local area were approaching the Transition Year, thus determining further the status of Art in the local community.

A questionnaire was the most direct format of compiling information and guaranteeing almost immediate responses with time spent being an important



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consideration. Prior to posting out a questionnaire on Art in Transition Year, contact was made with the Art teachers concerned requesting that they would kindly respond. Isolation seemed to be the pre-dominant mood among the subject group. Further interaction and information was requested after compilation of facts.

Inservices were organised approximately five times in the 1993/94 academic school year for the South and West County Dublin schools. They concentrated solely on the Junior Certificate exam and the difficulties presented to the Art teachers in the introduction of new skills required by the exam. Because Transition Year is only presently being introduced into most schools now, the Art teachers have only the Government guidelines to adhere to. There is a definite need for more communication between Art teachers <sup>in</sup> and local schools.

Below is a general summation of information gathered from questionnaires sent and returned. Appendix C.

#### GENERAL QUESTIONS

- Q1. How many years has Transition Year been in your School?  
A. Longevity of course existence ranges from one to three years.
- Q2. How many Transition Year students are taken on each year, on average?  
A. Initial year in existence one class group of 24 pupils, doubling and tripling to a maximum of 75 pupils in year three.



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- Q3. Have they been selected/interviewed for the Transition Year Programme?
- A. Interviews occur in different formats, some more officious than others. 7
- Q4. Is Art in Transition Year compulsory? Yes/No.  
If Yes, do students take part in Art for the whole year or just a block?  
If No, what options is Art set against on the timetable?
- A. (a) The majority of pupils in Transition Year take Art as a subject.  
(b) Pre-dominantly modular.  
(c) Art is set against Science in some cases.
- Q5. Is Art a popular option in your School?
- A. Collectively yes.
- Q6. Is it necessary for the Transition Year student to have done Art before?
- A. Collectively no.
- Q7. Have you the power to restrict the number of students in each class?
- A. Union restrictions are adhered to.
- Q8. Have you got good facilities/resources?
- A. All schools have excellent resources.
- Q9. Do students have to buy their own equipment?
- A. Limited purchases appear to be the norm.



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Q10. In your experience what methods of motivation do you find to be the most successful?

A. The method of motivation appears to be based on a topic of universal appeal to all pupils disregarding their past experiences or lack of. A craft tends to be the option regularly chosen. *it*

#### ART PROGRAMME QUESTIONS

Q1. Could you outline briefly the breakdown of the year?

A. Modular and skilled based activities determine the segmentation of the academic year.

Q2. Do you specialise in any area, for example a craft, photography or portfolio preparation?

A. Specialisation within the Art room is determined by the teacher's original discipline field, ie, fashion design, batik, photography.

Q3. Is the Artwork based on single or multiple themes, please give examples.

A. Multiple themes, ie, wildlife, sport.

Q4. Do you ask them to keep a personal notebook/diary on a particular theme?

A. No personal notebook/diary kept by students.



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Q5. Is there an Art/Craft based Mini-Company regularly organised in your school?

A. (a) The tendency is to disinvolve the Art department as the base for such activities.

(b) Past experiences has brought forward the response given in (a).

Q6. Have you had to adapt your scheme over the years? Yes/No.

A. General consensus is yes, they have to adapt their schemes of work.

Q7. Do you find the amount of time students are out a disruption to your module or has it worked out well within your timetable?

A. Good timetable management appears to be the solution to disruptions within the academic year.

Q8. Do you have certain deadlines for work assignments to be completed?

A. Deadlines are stressed.

Q9. Is their work displayed/exhibited or for sale?

A. All work is exhibited.

Q10. What procedures do you use to assess Transition Year work?

A. Differing criterias applied by all teachers concerned ranging from summative, continual and individual assessment throughout the year.

Q11. What are the **positive** aspects of Transition Year for Art Education?

A. No exam syllabi to adhere to, releasing students to acquire new skills, experiment and indulge in areas within the field of Art.



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Q12. Are there any **negative** aspects of Transition Year for Art Education?

A. Problems and reservations arise as Transition Year course matures in years within schools. Classes in the initial year experience no difficulties. Mixed abilities due to Art being a general option has lowered standards and pressurised staff to accommodate students. Modular system deemed too short in some instances to cover successfully project tasks. The Transition Year guidelines concerning "Aesthetics Education and Practical Studies" (2) are diluted within this allocated timeframe.

The sample school is unique and peculiar to the Transition Year programme for numerous reasons - reasons proven to be beneficial and equally not in an educational sense. The programme is <sup>CURRENTLY</sup> presently in its tenth year, a pioneer in relation to its neighbours both locally and nationally. The lapse of time has provided the vital indicators. The South West Dublin area comprises of schools proposing to introduce the programme this academic year to centres entering their second and third year. The sample school in this study subscribes to a method of blanket application with all students completing 3rd Year being automatic candidates. The lack of a selective process, presently employed by other centres locally, creates problems logistically and educationally. The programme is perceived by some staff members as a selfish consumer of teacher energy and school resources, providing poor tangible dividends. For those who participate willingly and enthusiastically, the programme provides excellent opportunities to introduce a teacher's own degree of specialisation to a chosen subject.

unclear

teachers  
or  
pupils?

The long awaited evaluation report of the governmental inspectorate only recently published, was derived from a one-day visit to a selected number of schools. The pre-empted occasions giving opportunity for 'specimen' displays of general

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*Clarify**disappointment  
on  
whose  
part?*

activities concealed the underlying difficulties. The shallow surface evaluation resulted in distorted reports containing disappointed revelations.

"The most widespread criticism was the failure of many schools in the planning and carrying through of projects, to establish strong cross-curricular and interdisciplinary linkages." (3)

Each centre is responsible for its own assessment criteria and application. Certification is particular to each school. However, the area of evaluation is contestable and indicates it requires "specific attention." (4)

The questionnaire, while limited to the schools in an immediate vicinity, proved a worthwhile exercise to gain valuable insight into grassroot reactions. Regular interaction between Transition Year Art teachers would prove to be mutually beneficial to all involved.



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## FOOTNOTES

## CHAPTER 2

1. Maurice Barrett, The Art Teacher's Handbook, ed. R. Clement (Stanley Thornes Ltd. Cheltenham, 1994), p.4.
2. Transition Year Programme, Guidelines for Schools. (Curriculum and Examinations Board, Dublin, 1986), p.21.
3. "Activity Based Learning Projects" in Transition Year Programme 1994-1995. An Evaluation by the Inspectorate of the Department of Education. (Department of Education, Dublin, 1996), p.17.
4. Ibid. "Assessment", p.10.



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SECRET ROOM



## CHAPTER 3

### CREATING A MODULE OF WORK FOR TRANSITION YEAR

#### "My Strengths" and Resources

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number of Art and Design students entering teaching as well as qualified designers, particularly within the fields of graphic design, fashion, textiles, and ceramics.

The degree of specialisation existing in an Art department will depend on its facilities and the background training of the teachers. It may range over such disciplines as painting, graphic design, textiles, sculpture or metalwork. It seems quite obvious from the questionnaires sent out to local schools that the Transition Year pupils are benefitting from specialised Art teachers. The increasing technological skills and materials available to pupils in secondary schools have created a demand for teachers whose role may be an adviser in a particular field but, as an educator, value lies in the promotion of the pupil's deeper understanding of the concepts related to the area.

Having come from a design-based faculty, a design orientated module was the developing aim with this year's Transition Year pupils. Before implementing the module, research was required to source the availability of space and resources, the time allocated to Art classes, the class size and the background in Art of pupils in my Transition Year class, all these factors had to be considered in the initial planning stages. Table 3.1 Creating a Module of Work.

In South County Dublin, the Local Education Authorities have grants available in the setting up of Art departments within new schools. My sample school availed of this thirteen years ago. Among other things, they installed kilns, wheels and pottery equipment. The opportunities were limited at first by the shortage of teachers trained in this craft. The value of clay in an Art department is enormous. It



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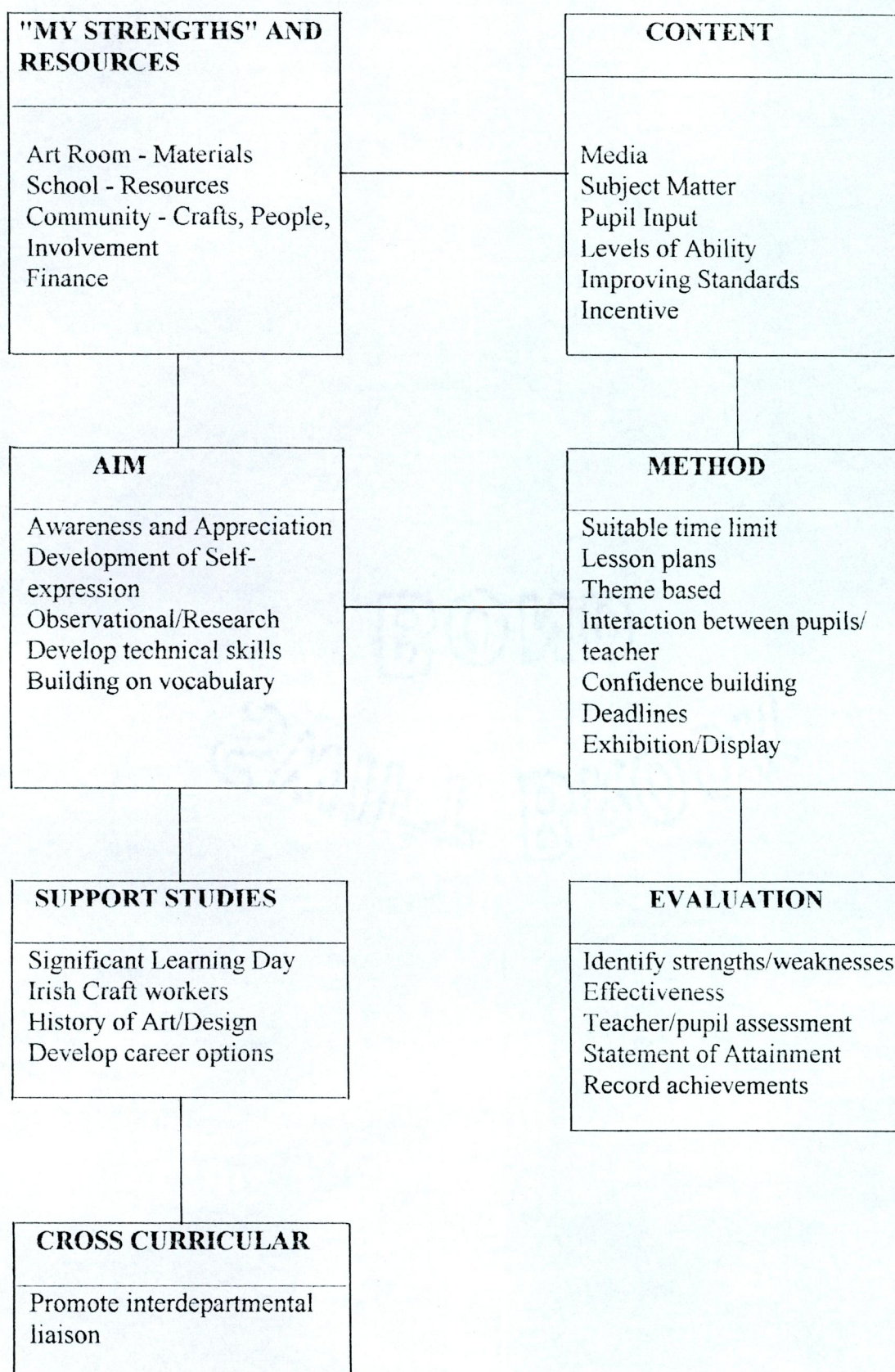


Table 3.1 Creating a Module of Work



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is a sympathetic and malleable material which gives pupils the chance to produce immediate results.

All equipment and tools were available, clay and glazes being the only requisite sought. The Art departments' budget accommodated this expenditure. Limitations of scale and mass were considered because of time being a factor.

### Content

The framework for the module had to be clearly planned and kept within the government guidelines. Development of pupils' visual literacy through Art, using tools and materials through craft, planning and problem solving through design. This education will encourage in pupils

"an informed, inquiring and curious attitude about the world, how we perceive it and how it can be assimilated visually" (1).

The aim is to give the pupils the chance to enjoy the tactile aspects of clay and to explore its various qualities. Imparting the knowledge that the process is often more exciting than a finished product.

Regardless of my field of specialisation, the sole concern is with the pupils and their education. Considerations must be made when formulating a module concerning pupils' development, physically and emotionally and their conceptual growth and the way in which they learn. To this understanding I will bring my insight and understanding of processes, materials, listen to the pupils, their ideas or concepts they generate, in order that they may build their own education through Art.

A thematic approach has the advantage of providing a wide range of starting points for pupils of varying degrees of confidence and ability particularly where they



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are able to contribute to the project through class evaluations in the initial stages. As part of the process of working out the content personal concern with the pupils' range of general abilities as already mentioned in Chapter 2. All should understand the language of shape, texture, colour and line and then build on these. Without the pressure of an examination, they can on one hand enjoy the discipline of a traditional skill and on the other the opportunity to invent form which is only limited by the properties of the material itself.

The need for skills in creating is crucial. The development of skills to express oneself artistically, be that the development of observational skills through drawing, painting and model making skills or the higher level skills of perception and design, leading to the ability to receive and appreciate Art, an aesthetic experience.

*As Elliot Emerson puts it:*

"Without the necessary skills expression is doomed to be stifled because of the lack of discipline necessary for its realisation." (2)

*All quotations should be introduced and credited*

A curriculum in Art needs sufficient continuity so that skills can be developed, refined and remembered becoming part of the pupil's expressive qualities.

A problem specifically with Transition Year is the time intervals between classes.

Long periods between project work increases the difficulty of developing and refining the insights and skills gained.

*Clarify - how long?*

When dealing with the range of abilities, the term 'standards' may only refer to levels of attainment in skill. As for the establishment of standards as a necessary condition to the pupil's commitment, Constant encouragement will lend itself to a personal sense of achievement. That is a success in the pupil's own terms. It may initially be the ability to handle a particular material or to create an image which is positive and satisfying. It may be the accomplishment of a simple technical procedure - the skills involved in such procedures as joining clay or the application of glaze. The confidence gained will enable them to enjoy the activity. An added



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incentive was to let them know in the school that there will be a prize for the best overall design. With an atmosphere of encouragement, the pupil will

"use his deeply rooted creative impulse without inhibition, confident in his own kind of expression." (3)

For the Significant Learning Day allocated for Art pupils in December, a planned intended visit to a successful ceramic artist workshop occurred. The pupils witnessed the mechanics of the process of a small craft business in operation, the craftsman explaining and displaying each stage, revealing to the pupils a practical business application of the material. Plates 3, 4, and 5. A prepared worksheet was to be completed by students at home. Appendix D.

Spacing



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PLATE 3. Significant Learning Day.





PLATE 4. Significant Learning Day.





PLATE 5. Significant Learning Day.



### Aim

Aims are about the broad and 'visionary' ideals of the content. To produce a collaborative wall mural derived from source drawings of natural objects, adhering to the intention of the module.

#### **For the Teacher**

- \* To foster mixed ability group work.
- \* To offer significant scope for personal development
- \* To allow for the development of a broader perspective on learning.
- \* To encourage the development of skills and include hands on practical to the maximum extent possible.
- \* To allow the pupils to be exposed to new learning strategies.
- \* To encourage the development of personal responsibility for behaviour and learning.
- \* To develop a sense of personal awareness, awareness of others and of community.
- \* To be interesting and to stretch the pupils' minds.

#### **For the Pupils**

- \* To enable pupils to become visually literate, to use and understand Art as a form of visual and facile communication.
- \* To enable pupils to take responsibility for devising and managing their own learning.
- \* To develop particular creative and technical skills involved in the use and manipulation of clay.
- \* To enable pupils to have informed judgements about Art.
- \* To develop pupils' design capability.



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- \* To develop pupils' ability to articulate and communicate ideas, opinions and feelings about their work and that of others.
- \* To develop pupils' ability to value the contribution made by artists, craftworkers, and designers and to respond thoughtfully, critically and imaginatively to ideas, images and object of many kinds and from many cultures.

### Objectives

These form the basis for assessment. Objectives are more specific and should include a balance of knowledge, skills, concepts and attitudes.

Pupils should

- \* select and record images and ideas from first hand observation.
- \* experiment with different qualities of line and tone in making images.
- \* develop a personal approach to the identification of sources and how ideas are recorded and developed.
- \* experiment with ideas suggested by source materials and explain how they have used them to develop their work.
- \* apply their knowledge and experience of different materials, tools and techniques using them experimentally and expressively.
- \* experiment with pattern and texture in designing and extend their insight to the technical and aesthetic aspects of their clay work.
- \* use a specialist vocabulary to describe their work and where it developed from.



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in preparation for the craft activity. Plates 6 and 8. By doing so, they become familiar with the appearance, content and structure of the form they wish to recreate. With this sufficient knowledge about its appearance, pupils are able to focus upon the new and technical problems involved in the process of making. The designs are visual elements such as the surface, pattern and colour qualities in natural forms, utilising the qualities of line, shape and form. Plate 9.

The most important system any teacher can use is that of generating enquiry through talk, whether through describing, questioning or discussion. At this point, the teacher's own visual aids are most beneficial. Plate 7. The use of questioning in association with looking is one of the most important and basic methods of teaching available. For example, demonstrations which are given at the beginning of class show through teacher instruction and student observation what steps are involved in the particular task. Pupils see through talk as they do through direct observation and especially in a society where they spend a great deal of time scanning or viewing television/computers.

*Ambiguous*

When doing observation, drawing notes can be taken, collecting information, ie, writing down words which describe the object to be drawn, comparing orally two or three similar objects or experimenting with materials to discover a range of tone, surface or pattern. These types of observations and experiments enhance pupils' ability to perceive something helping them in their drawing and making.

The role of the teacher in such a situation is often marked differently from that where traditional forms of learning are followed. Often being a member of a team, acting alternately as leader, adviser, assistant and confidant. Perhaps to be treated as a partner in their enterprise but at the same time they demonstrate a respect for my judgement and skill. This role is in contrast to the traditional one of teacher as authority and director. The approach is one in which the pupil is the central element and encountering new information, ideas and materials they may gain the insight and confidence which will motivate him/her to further enquiry.

*incomplete sentence*



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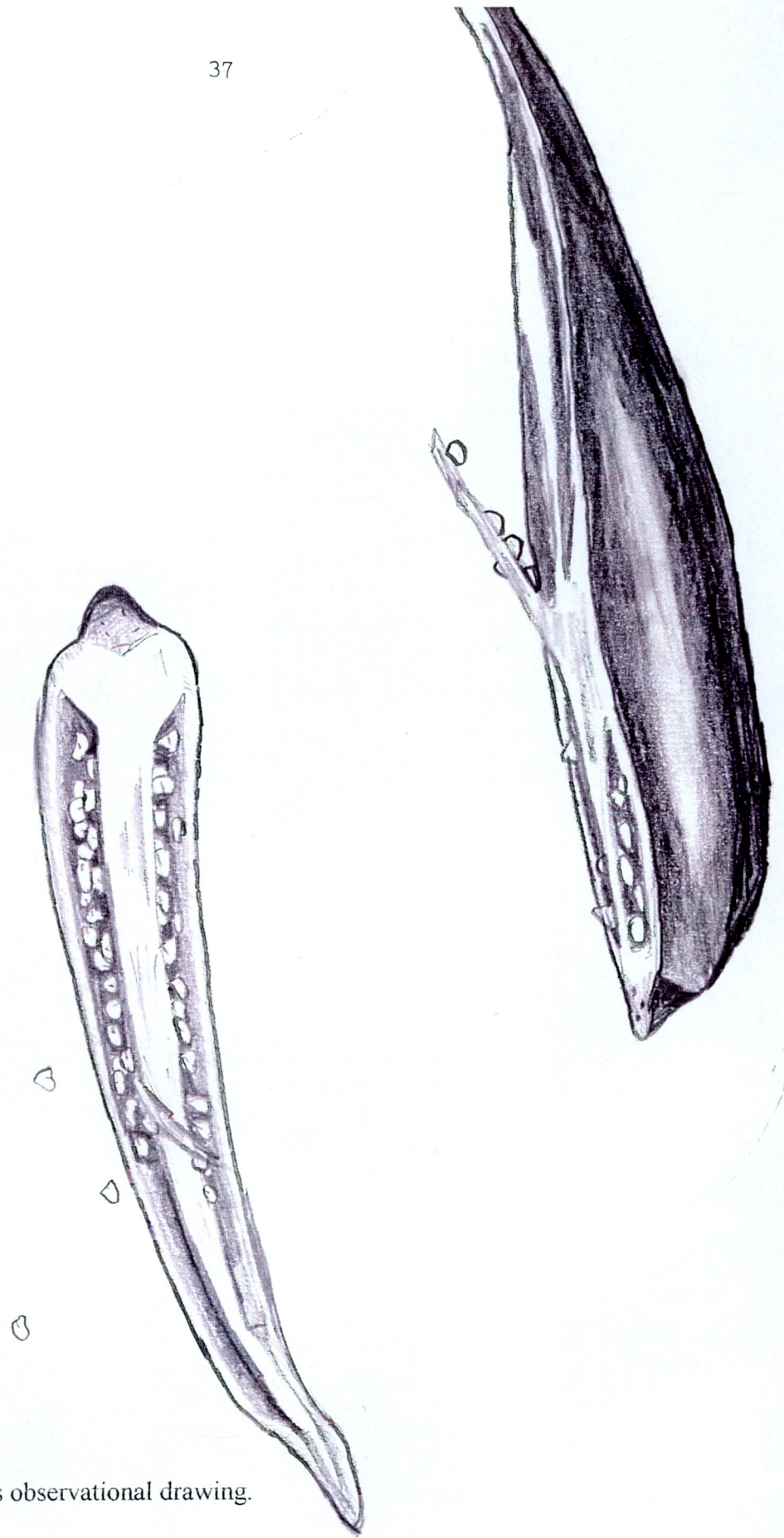


PLATE 6. Pupil's observational drawing.



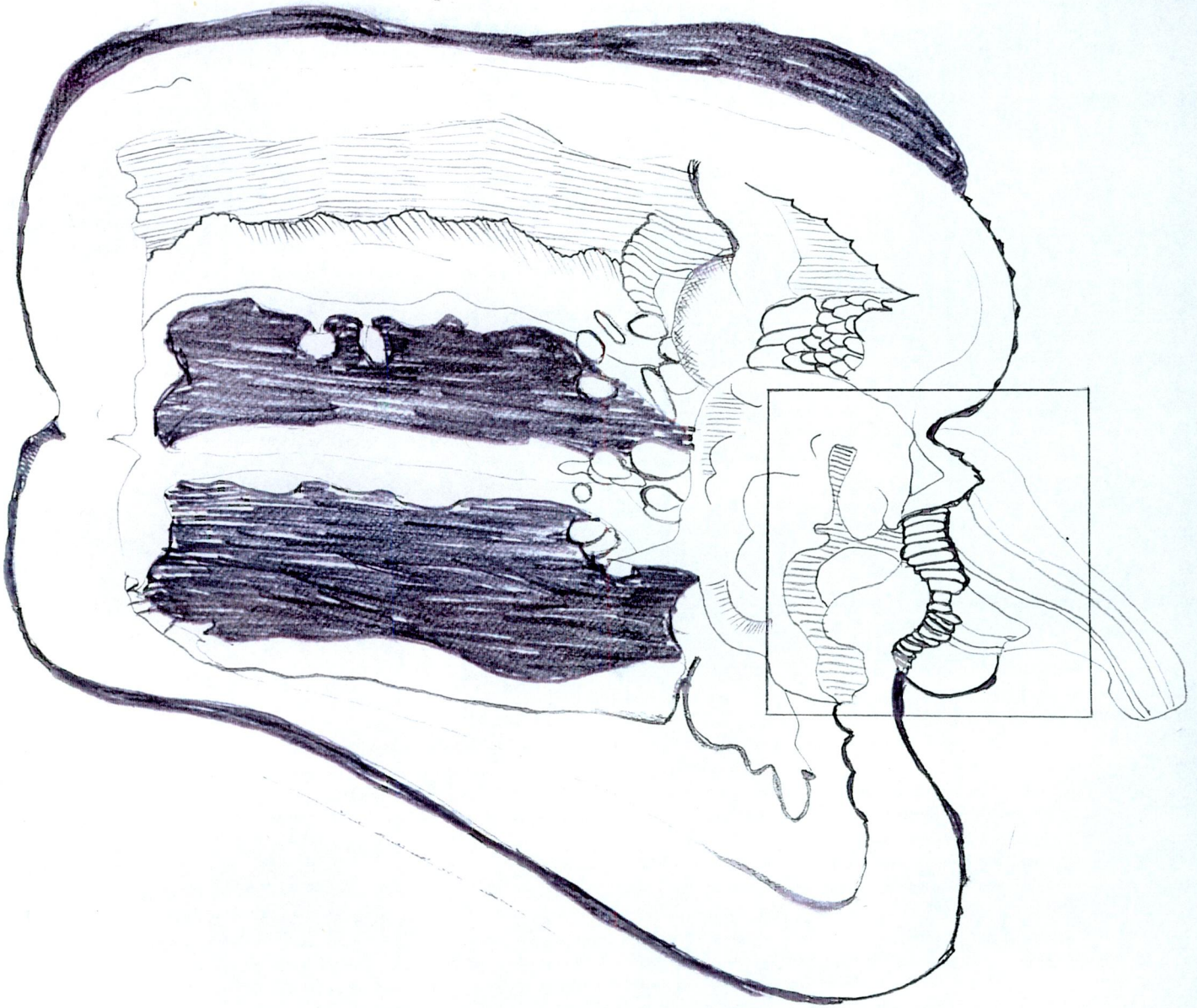


PLATE 7. Visual Aid.

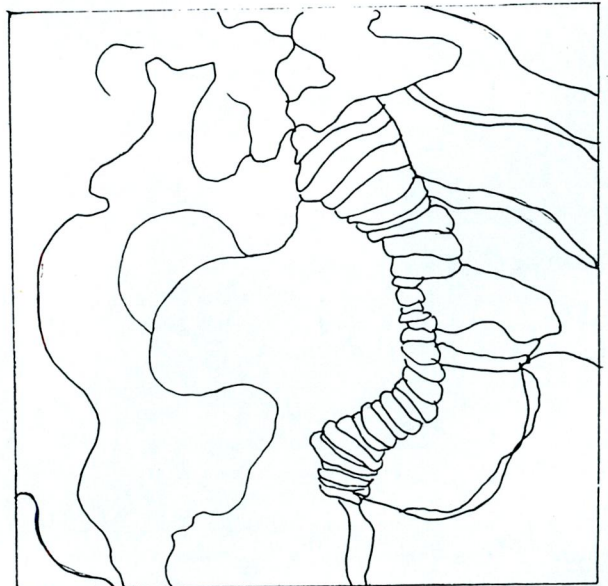






PLATE 8. Pupil's observational drawing.



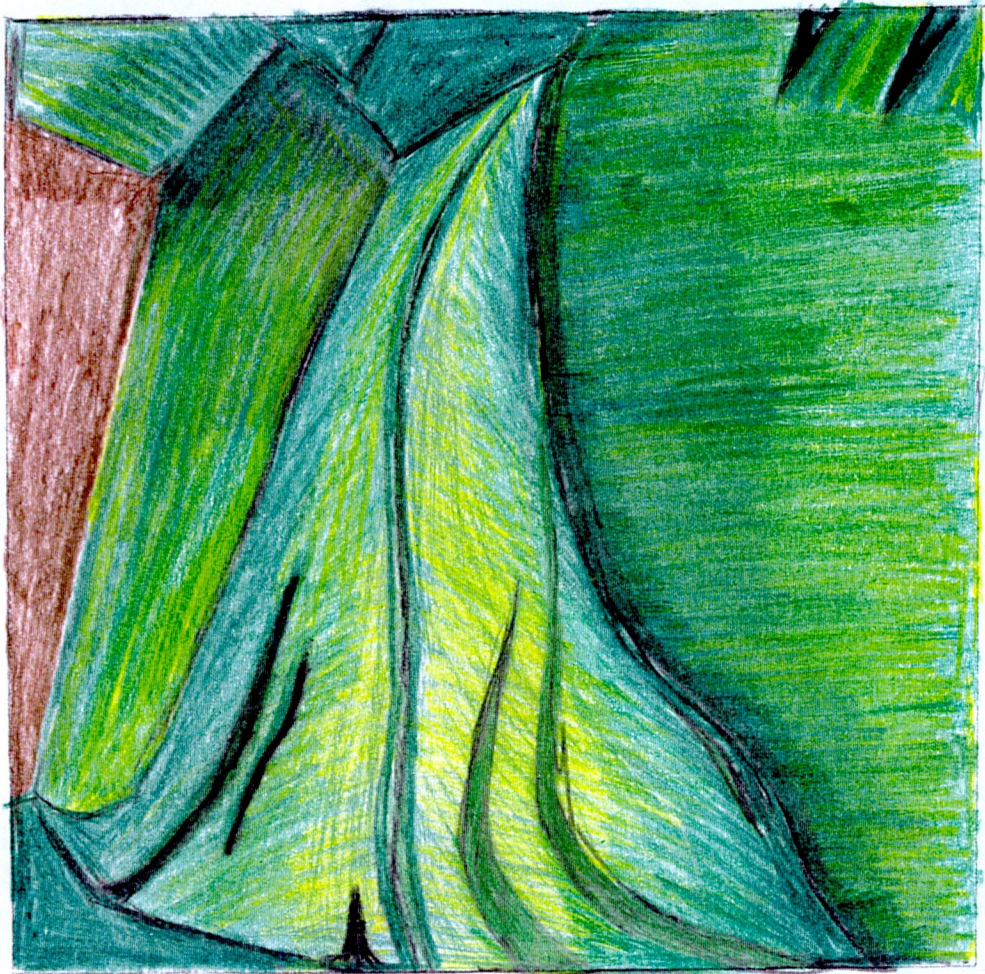
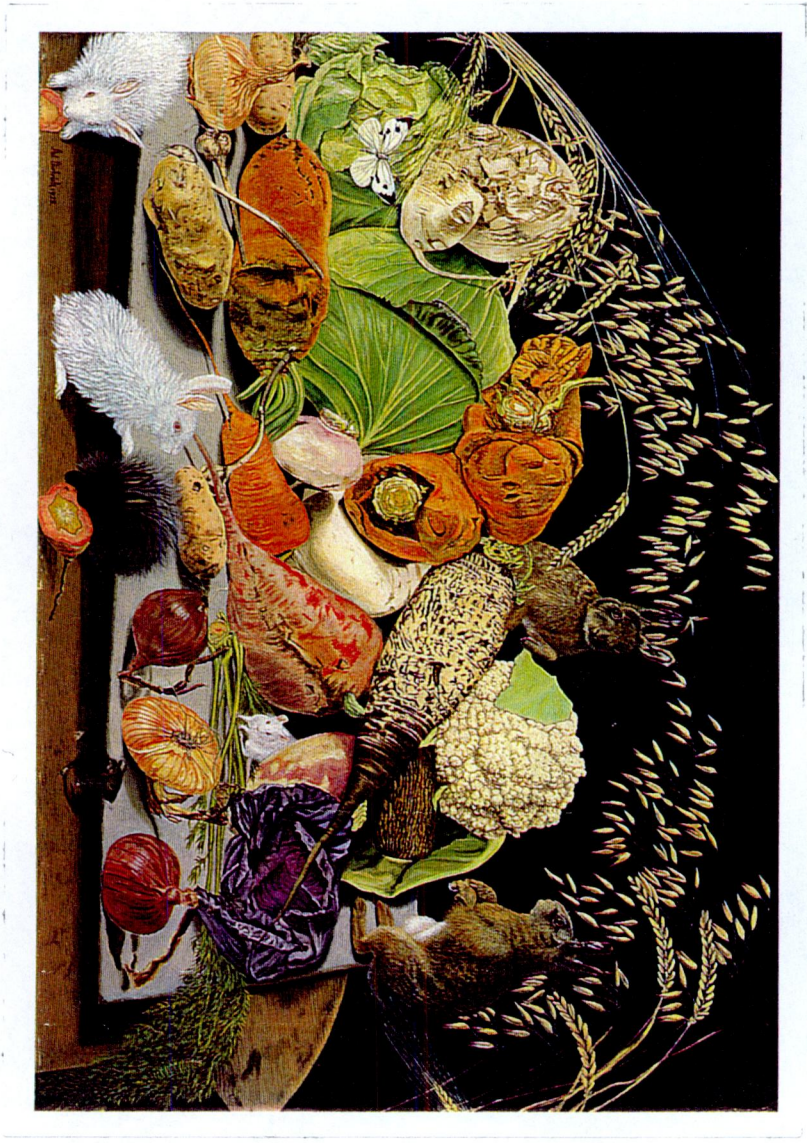


PLATE 9. Initial design idea.







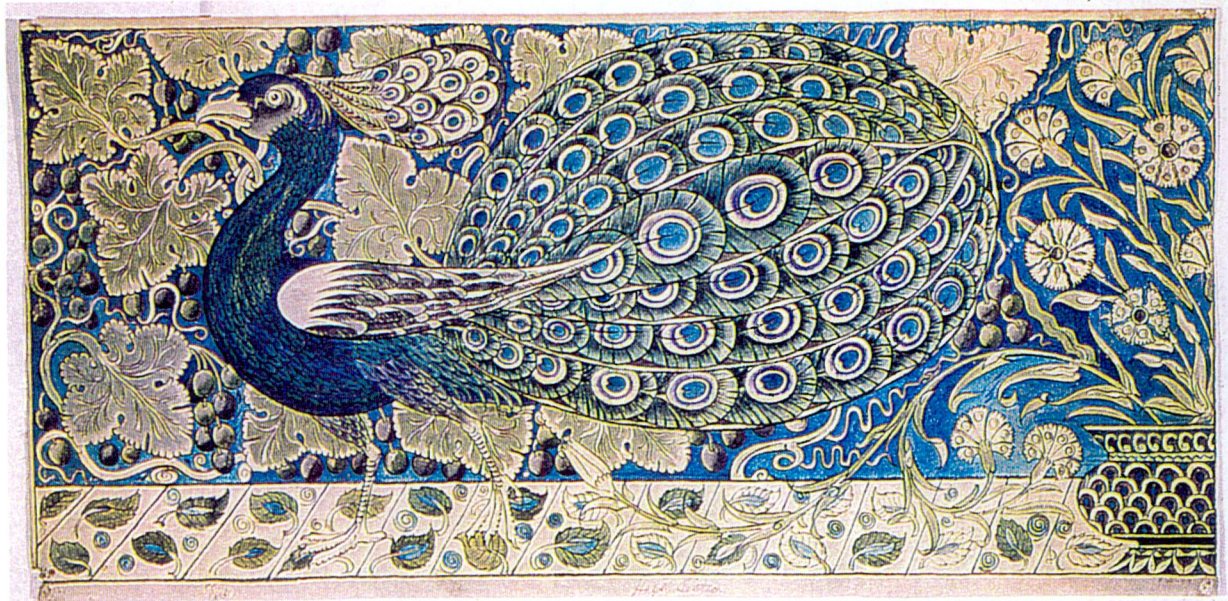


PLATE 11. Support studies - William de Morgan - tiles.





PLATE 12. Support studies - Auguste Rodin - relief bronze doorway.





PLATE 13. Passageways around the school.





PLATE 14. Rooms around the school.



### What is Assessment?

by whom?  
clarify

The whole area of assessment in Art seems to have been avoided, Art educators have not used tests to any great degree. There is a lack of definite research findings to help in a criteria for evaluation. Evaluation

"is especially difficult in Art because the nature of the field does not lend itself to the neat categories that are more easily applied to other fields." (4)

With information formulated and results gathered from the questionnaire, it is my belief that marks tendered through assessment lack standardisation, structure and practical application. An emotive and intuitive response by teachers to work done can have a detrimental effect or an undervalued reaction. An ambiguous marking system has duly formed to justify art as a subject to acquire parental consensus.

What does this mean?

The word 'assessment' is from the Latin "assidere", to sit beside. Sitting beside pupils suggests a close relationship and a sharing of experience. It is ironic, therefore, to find that educational assessment is associated with an obsession with the measurement of performances leading to schools and teachers sorting out pupils for occupations of different status and remuneration in a hierarchically ordered society.

Assessment should directly relate to pupils' learning and progression. In education it can be justified by the need to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching, to provide incentive and feedback information to pupils to certificate performance, to obtain the data for accountability and to ensure the maintenance of educational standards.



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"Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process. It should be diagnostic, so as to provide accurate information with regard to pupil strengths and weaknesses, and formative, so as to facilitate improved pupil performance through effective programme planning and implementation." (5)

Teacher assessment can:

*Assessment of pupils by teachers can*

- \* help identify the strengths, weaknesses and progress of each pupil.
- \* enable teachers to evaluate the general effectiveness of their methods of <sup>teaching</sup> delivery and plan and modify future programmes of work.
- \* formally record a pupil's achievements.
- \* facilitate communication between pupils, teachers, and parents.

Formative or ongoing assessments are made once the educational programme is under way. They may be formal, as in half-term tests or informal as when a teacher walks around her class checking that a new process is understood and correctly applied. Such tests are formative and will shape the next step in the programme whether for individuals or a group. This represents the teachers' interpretations made in the context of everyday classroom activity. Observation has the advantage of allowing behaviour to occur naturally, rather than a highly structured situation such as a formal test. It can be applied to academic skills, pupils' interest and attitude. Plate 15. It forms the basis of comments on record cards, reports and the school's general impression of its pupils.

Summative testing is literally a summing up of performance at the end of a significant period of school life.

Other terms frequently encountered in assessment are "evaluation", "testing", and "grading" but they have quite distinctive meanings:





PLATE 15. Pupil working on tile.



? - *Intro*

**"Evaluation** can be conceived of as a process through which value judgements are made about educationally relevant phenomena.

**Testing** is one procedure used to obtain data for purposes of forming descriptions or judgements about one or more human behaviours.

**Grading** is a process of assigning a symbol standing for some judgement of quality relative to some criterion." (6)

Evaluation refers to the processes by which the worth of something is judged. In assessment terms it is usually applied to the attempts to find out how effectively a teaching programme has achieved its objectives. Evaluation and testing are not the same. The typical testing situation puts pupils in an artificial situation, providing information on how pupils perform, giving no indication on how they behave outside test situations. Much of the criticism of assessment is aimed at 'the grading system'. A single grade A, B, C, or D is used to encompass or reduce the total range of a pupils' efforts. What grades do not do is tell all that is known about the pupil's performance or abilities and valuable information is lost.

There is no shared understanding of grading systems and no history of moderating the effect to achieve a sensitive, comprehensive, positive and valid assessment is in itself a tall order.

### **The Role and Value of Assessment**

What is the point of assessment? The main purposes of assessment is to provide information to help people make decisions. Pupils need to know what progress they are making and what their strengths, weaknesses or special abilities are. This information helps them to decide on where to concentrate their efforts, perhaps revising for examinations or considering possible careers. This information identifying matters for concern is called diagnostic.



Teachers must make diagnostic decisions, to identify pupils' learning problems and attainments and then plan their lessons appropriately. Additionally, there is a need to pass information about pupils on to their next teacher so that the pupil's progress can be maintained.

Methods of assessment in the arts need to be appropriate to the styles and methods of teaching and learning in the Art class. In art lessons, pupils and teachers work in collaboration, often in an open ended and unpredictable way. The pupil's autonomy is encouraged and developed. Analytical thinking and self-evaluation are promoted through discussion of their own and others' work. This collaborative relationship must be extended into assessment. It is important that the criteria for their success is clear. Pupils and teachers should negotiate agreement on these, particularly where there is room for a variety of responses. This negotiation can affect the planning and development of the course content and the teacher's strategies. In this way, teaching and learning can be enhanced by assessment and not hindered.

Assessment procedures need to respond to individual requirements not be imposed from outside. Assessment at its best is straightforward, simple, positive, on-going and most importantly a partnership between teachers and pupils.

### **Problems With Assessment**

Many teachers are concerned that assessment can be very time consuming, get in the way of learning, make pupils feel that they are failing and involve a lot of writing. They conjure up visions of endless cross-referenced checklists, forms, profiles and records of achievements all stored away in filing cabinets. It is



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important that it is kept in perspective and perceived as an integral part of the whole process of teaching and learning.

A strong opposer of any form of testing was John Holt (1970), who says:

"I do not think that testing is necessary, or useful, or even excusable. At best, testing does more harm than good: at worst, it hinders, distorts and corrupts the learning process..... our chief concern should not be to improve testing, but to eliminate it. How can we expect to measure the content of someone else's mind when it is so difficult, so nearly impossible, to know more than a very small part of the contents of our own?" (7)

With the widespread use of computerised records, human beings fear they are reduced to numbers by testing and records, resulting in the reduction of human freedom. Much attention is paid by the education system to only a small portion of the abilities of children/pupils, usually their quantitative and verbal skill. Important qualities and features differentiating one pupil from another are obliterated by grades. Several pupils who have all got the same grade may have tackled quite different problems in quite different ways.

The idea of pupils working for a grade has been developed quite early in a pupil's school career. The grade tends to motivate the pupil, neither the joys of inquiry or the finished peice gain this satisfaction. Living in a competitive society, rewards are given to those who 'come in first'. Society considers the assignment of grades to be appropriate, it is simply one of the reward systems that pupils will be dealing with throughout their lives.

Some subjects are less amenable to testing than others, indeed some may be destroyed by it.

*interest.*

"The problem of testing creative thinking and self-expression is considerably more difficult than testing for achievement in Mathematics or Spelling." (8)



The unfortunate consequence of this could be that we assess only what is easy to assess and thus increase its importance.

Objectives in teaching Art are difficult to pin down. What the pupil produces and what he/she learns are not always foreseen. Pupils could happen upon something accidentally that should be explored further. These unplanned shifts are when teaching becomes most artistic, recognising that something valuable can be taught. Eisner's expressive objective describes an encounter the pupil is to have and hopefully positive consequences will follow.

"In the creation of Art forms, there is no single correct answer. To allow for this type of behaviour, indeed to encourage it, I have invented the concept, expressive objective to complement, not to replace the concept, instructional objective." (9)

Objectives alone will not provide evidence that the pupil has progressed. An important method for judging achievement is to compare a pupil's products with those of his/her classmates. It is illogical on the other hand to conclude that a particular pupil ought to perform in a certain way simply because most people of his age do. Sadly, assigning grades and evaluating progress on the basis of group comparisons is another flaw in society. Pupils, parents and teachers desire to be 'above average'. Within a mixed ability class in Transition Year, how is it possible to compare a new Art pupil's work to that of experienced pupils? Plates 16, 17, and 18.

Using an individual comparative base is the logical answer, it also serves to improve instruction. It provides opportunities for diagnosing strengths and weaknesses in Art performance. Having samples of pupils' work helps in the planning of Art modules and helps the pupil to recognise his own progress. It could



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PLATE 16. Bisque fired tiles.





PLATE 17. Pupils glazing tiles.





PLATE 18. Tiles ready for glaze firing.



present dramatic evidence of change for pupils who underestimate their own progress.

*intro*  
 "The pupil needs to recognise his own progress in Art as well as to recognise the achievement of others. This recognition is more likely to take place when he is encouraged to measure his own achievement in terms of his own growth rather than by limiting his comparison to the work of others."  
 (10)

Developing pupil autonomy is an important function of Arts teaching. It is important that the pupil's judgements about their own work are taken into account. There is no purpose in marking work without discussion or explanation, for to have real value, assessment should act as a guide to further progress. Work merely marked with a simple grade represents a valuable opportunity missed, and can give rise to resentment.

The topic of assessing ability presents something of a dilemma. Pupils have different capacities, Sr William Alexander spelt out the practical consequences.

"Each child has his own standard, determined by his capacity. The task of the school is to educate each of its pupils in such a way that attainment is matched to capacity." (11)

Pupil self-assessment <sup>5</sup>prove that they know better than their teachers about certain aspects of learning, how hard they have tried, what they were attempting to do and how successful their efforts were in achieving their personal goals. Self assessment supplies information from the perspective of the learner. Assessment



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"should not determine what is to be taught and learned. It should be the servant, not the master, of the curriculum. Yet it should not simply be a bolt-on addition at the end. Rather, it should be an integral part of the educational process, continually providing both 'feedback' and 'feed-forward'. It therefore needs to be incorporated systematically into teaching strategies and practices at all levels." (12)

### **Assessment Criteria**

#### **How Pupil Learning is to be Assessed**

Setting out to assess Transition Year Art into a manageable framework aims the intention behind appraising pupils' growth in Art, Craft and Design. Determining whether pupils are learning and progressing as expected. To identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses, so that positive achievement can be recognised and learning difficulties supported.

As implied earlier, assessment procedures are the servant of the teacher, not the master. Assessment will contain formative and summative information. Ongoing records of research work, progress made and developing skills, attitude and behaviour will guide the planning of further work and, gathered together, will form a basis for a final summative evaluation at the completed stage, recorded and presented in a standardised format. Evidence generated through observational drawing, design work, discussion, Significant Learning Day, worksheets, storyboards, and the use of technical skills and tools in their final piece. Plates 19 and 20.

A third kind of assessment is taken into consideration on the summative report, that is the pupils' judgements about their work and performance. Encouraging students to reflect on the achievements of the project and use this as a basis for further skills development. This 'Statement of Attainment' filled out by the teacher but guided by the pupil uses both active and reflective terms to describe their



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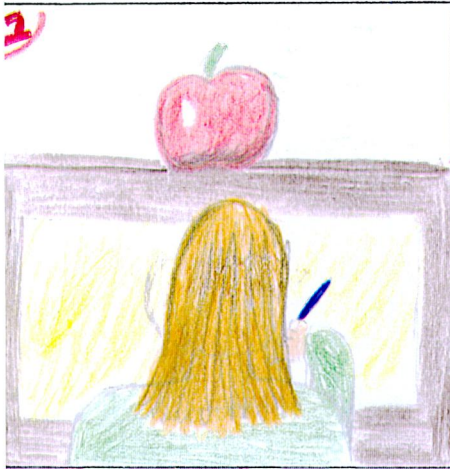
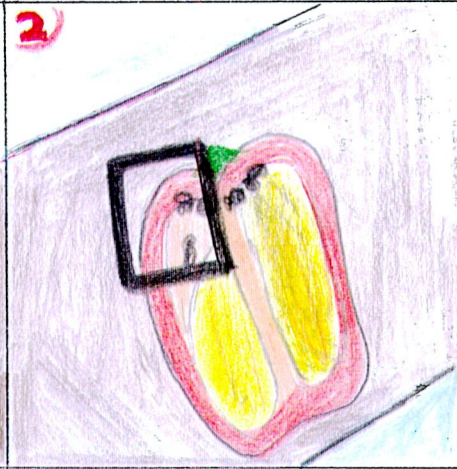
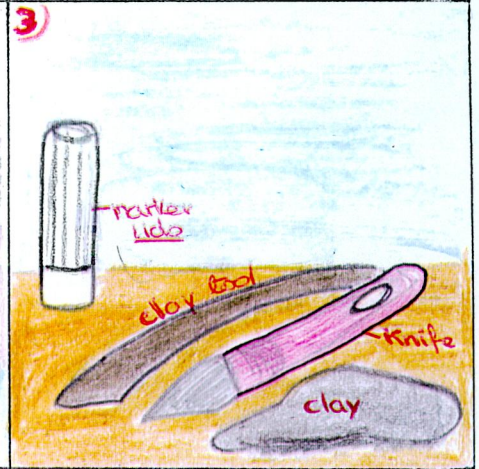
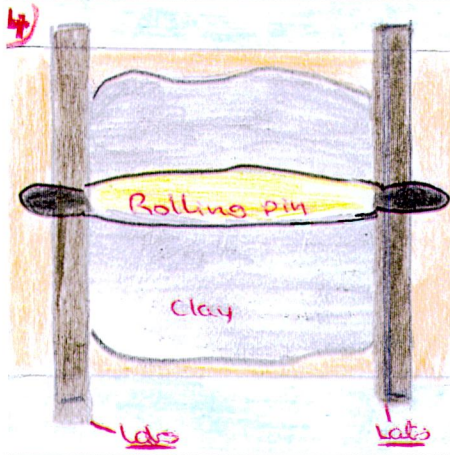
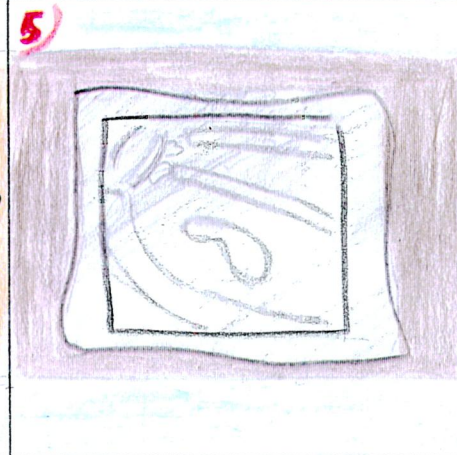
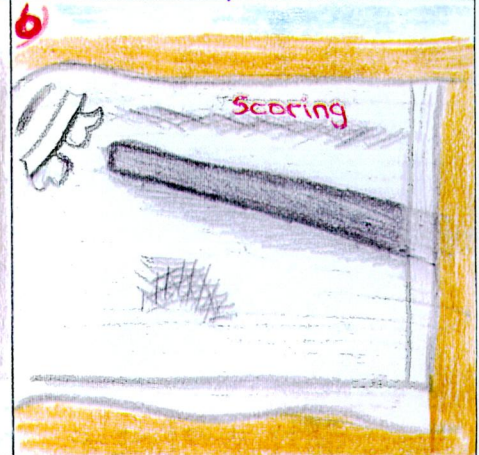
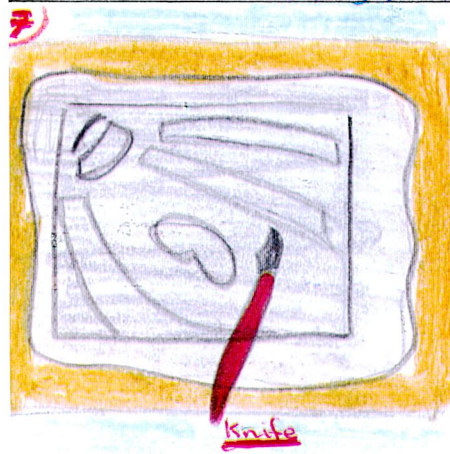
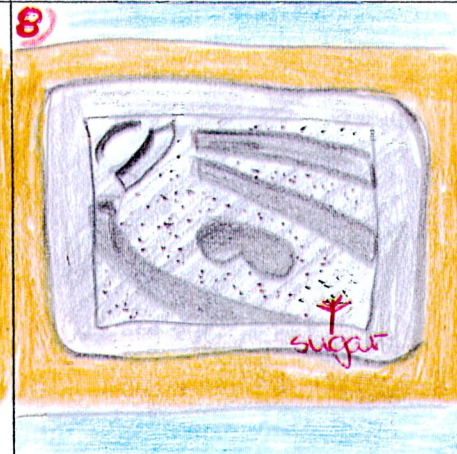
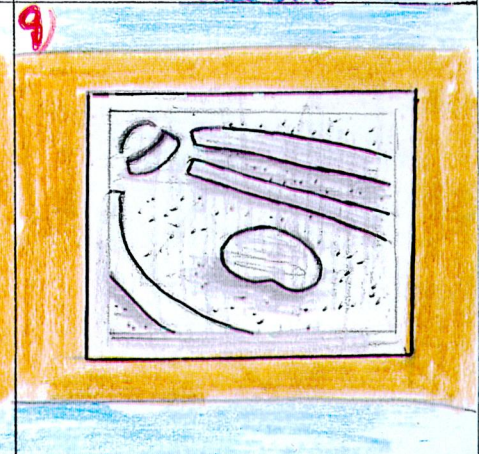
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# CERAMIC TILE - STORYBOARD

Over the last few weeks we have been exploring clays characteristics and discovering some limitations. Illustrate below the development of your clay tile, from observation work, to design drawings, to how you made your tile. Mention clay tools and modeling equipment, materials for imprinting and texturing.

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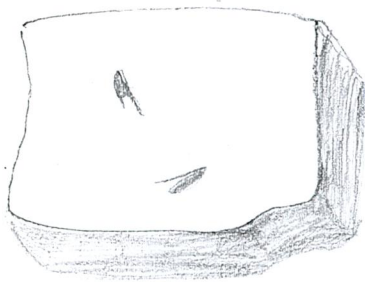
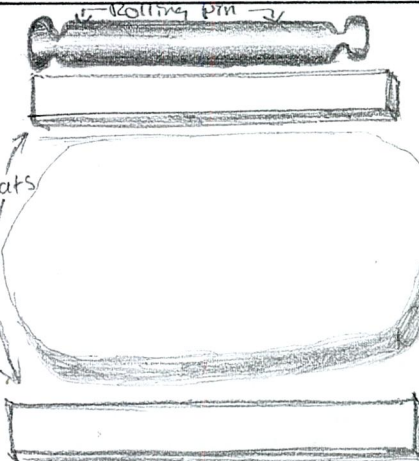
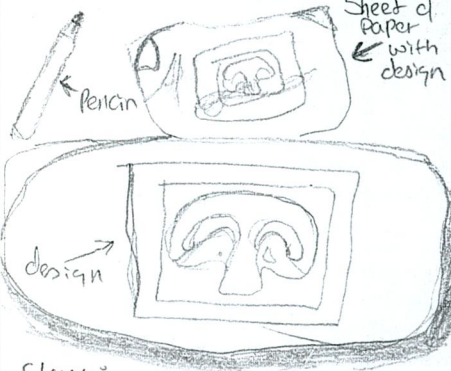
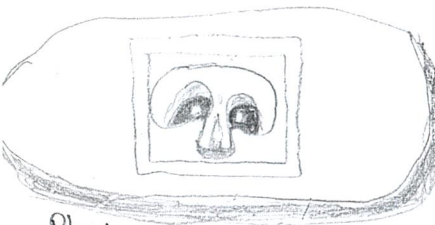
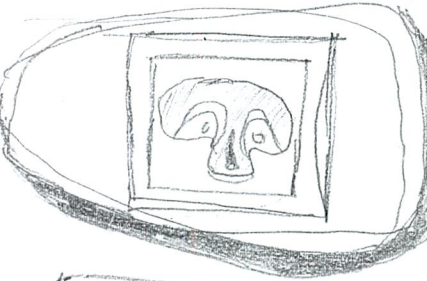
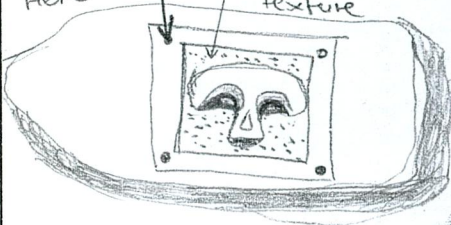
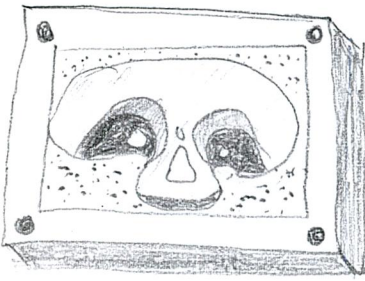
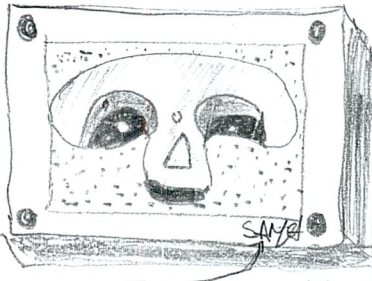
<p>2)</p> 	<p>2)</p> 	<p>3)</p> 
<p>First I started by drawing certain vegetables.</p>	<p>Picked certain parts to use in the tile.</p>	<p>Practised making textures on a tile with clay tools, lido, adding pieces of clay.</p>
<p>4)</p> 	<p>5)</p> 	<p>6)</p> 
<p>Rollled out the clay using lido and rolling pin.</p>	<p>Marked off the margin and drew in the design.</p>	<p>Started adding pieces of clay using a scoring technique and slip.</p>
<p>7)</p> 	<p>8)</p> 	<p>9)</p> 
<p>Carved out certain areas to give extra depth using tools.</p>	<p>Added sugar to give texture to the centre.</p>	<p>Finished off edges to complete tile.</p>



# CERAMIC TILE - STORYBOARD

Over the last few weeks we have been exploring clays characteristics and discovering some limitations. Illustrate below the development of your clay tile, from observation work, to design drawings, to how you made your tile. Mention clay tools and modeling equipment, materials for imprinting and texturing.

NAME: ... Steven ... P.T.S. ...

		 <p>Sheet of paper with design</p> <p>Pencil</p> <p>design</p> <p>clay is on wood cell of the tree so it doesn't stick to the table</p>
<p>Lump of Clay</p> <p>the darker the shading the deeper the cut</p>  <p>Plastic (Steel (stainless)) Scalpel</p>	<p>Clay Rolled out</p> <p>the darker the shading the more that's added</p>  <p>(Plastic) A Modelling tool</p>	<p>Design drawn onto Clay</p> <p>Pencil or Sharp end of Modelling tool used here</p> <p>toothbrush used to create this texture</p>  <p>toothbrush (plastic)</p>
<p>Design Cut out of Clay</p> <p>Tile cut out using Scalpel</p> 	<p>Adding Pieces on to get 3D</p>  <p>Initials added using Sharp Pencil</p>	<p>Textures added</p> <p>When the Tile has been left a few days it is fired in the kiln for 12 hours &amp; then it is Glazed, Painted with colours that turn to glass when heated, And it is Fired again</p>
<p>Tile Cut out of Clay</p>	<p>Initials Added</p>	<p>THE END</p>



progression. Appendix H. The pupil needs to develop a vocabulary to express the what, how and why of their work. This will develop awareness, giving simple reasons or making links between why they created like that. They should be using and encouraged to use their knowledge, skills and understanding to explain and justify the way they worked. This form of questioning gives a very direct and immediate form of feedback. The questions themselves have short sentence answers, sampling the pupils' learning for themselves. Speech allows for instant feedback but the written words are more appropriate for recording purposes later. It is important that communication is clear and unambiguous, so that reports are fair to all pupils. This ensures a wider coverage of pupil performance considering baseline data, taken from the viewpoint of the pupil.

The summative report of assessment sheet sums up the pupils' overall performance at the end of the module. Advantages are that it enables the teacher to see how far the objectives have been achieved and to use the pupils' comments diagnostically as a basis to help learners improve their future performances.

Appendix I.

To generate evidence capability is assessed through:

### **STAGE ONE**

Documentation - observational drawing skills, design process, proposed solution, presentation of drawings and worksheets.

### **STAGE TWO**

Technical - use of tools, knowledge of vocabulary, material and process skills and the finished piece.

### **STAGE THREE**

Evaluation - of their work, communicative, and expressive skills.



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## REFLECTING ON THE MODULE

In the continuous search for high standards, the teacher should make a realistic assessment of their own performance and areas that need improvement in a positive way. A programme/module designed for Transition Year should provide interest, a variation of pace containing stimulating teaching and learning methods.

Teachers willing to listen to pupils' comments and incorporate their ideas can guarantee more success in generating interest and receiving a response. Where possible, pupils given a choice of activity/task will engender feelings of control. A choice of themes will increase feelings of participation and responsibility. This level of autonomy creating a more mature adult response reflects the Transition Year ethos.

The importance of establishing a positive atmosphere is a premium. Discussing levels of performance and tasks completion deadlines with individual pupils will lead to them feeling constantly challenged. A collective lethargy and apathy requires constant monitoring.

For the project to be actual and purposeful it must contain relevance to their world and they must see the challenges as learning opportunities that motivate pursuit.

A craft based module had the advantage of having a new material to work with but it could be used in a much more expressive way with emphasis on the freedom to experiment.

Good preparation gave confidence, not only in a particular session, but throughout the module. Presentation of the lesson must be considered. The use of







probing questions leading pupils on to solutions which are all relevant, interpersonal necessary skills. The classroom should be arranged in a way that enables pupils to behave as independently as possible. Equipment should be clearly available and easily accessible. Respect for the learning environment needs to be generated. The teacher must show that he/she values the pupils' work by perhaps displaying it around the room or school.

A feature of Transition Year is that pupils can involve themselves in subjects which are not examination related, however a public certificate seems to be highly valued in Irish society. Assessment is underestimated and the importance of its continuity in programmes. It must be incorporated systematically into teaching strategies and practices at all levels and not just implemented at the end of a task. The very nature of the subject requires a consistent and progressive interplay between teacher and pupil. I explained in Chapter 3 that there is no right or wrong answer in Art unlike perhaps Science or Maths. The nature and range of tasks require the teacher to adopt a more flexible system of assessment. It must be stated that teachers cannot assess, by the same criteria, tasks as various as imaginative composition, a lino print, or a papier mache sculpture.

The Student Attainment sheets were a professional procedure and a good practice of negotiated assessment offering a time for reflection and appraisal. It showed I valued their response to the project and that together we could plan the next project considering what they wanted to learn next.

I was pleasantly surprised by the critical skills pupils brought to bear in assessing their work and in the confidence they showed in discussing their work with me. Attitudes to Transition Year ranged from one individual who saw the Programme as a waste of time despite achieving high standards to others who loved







the social aspects of the year and embraced the new experiences in the subject.

Plates 21 and 22.

At the end of Transition Year, I now feel that it is important for teachers to reflect on and review: (a) their class management, (b) their forms of questioning, (c) their explaining of subject knowledge, (d) lesson preparation and planning and (d) assessment procedures. In other words I am now aware of the need to review every stage in delivering a module in Transition Year and hope to bring this reflective approach to all my future work as a teacher.

I would like to finish by saying that the Transition Year Support Team, which was set up this academic year by the Department of Education, is a positive step. They contain the insight and enthusiasm to fight for the best education for Transition Year pupils.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Looking to the Future

Having devised a module for Art in Transition Year, and having devised the module with my pupils, I believe the following guidelines should be borne in mind in planning future Transition Year programmes:

- \* Open communication between teachers, pupils and parents so that all parties concerned can have an active role in the structuring of the school's Transition Year curriculum. In doing so, everyone can be reassured as to the value of the year.









PLATE 21. Pupil's tile project in situ (Science department).





PLATE 22. Close-up of tile project.



- \* Schools should examine their internal organisation, their role, their relationships and their contribution to the successful preparation of students for post school life.
  - A structured timetable, eliminating time lost after out days etc. Taking into consideration Art's special needs for time with the use of specific materials.
  - Early planning to determine interdepartmental co-operation and participation.
  - A solid review of the programme completed in every subject area, submitted to the Principal, assessing the teacher's own contribution and performance.
- \* Closer links with teachers in other schools to share experiences.
- \* Continual inservices to be provided to keep teachers up to date with technology providing confidence in the handling of resources.
- \* Pupils' ideas for projects must be considered. The Art teacher has the responsibility of cultivating the pupils' sensibilities and creativity through projects which are of genuine interest to them.
- \* Experience and experiment with different media within the Art class and outside. Increasing the range of 2D and 3D modelling techniques.
- \* Assessment procedures need to respond to individual requirements. There should be a partnership between teacher and pupil with a straightforward and positive approach. It is important to keep this in perspective and perceive it as an integral part of the whole process of teaching and learning, continually focussing on what has been achieved and what can be achieved. Effective assessment is a useful way to improve pupils' performance in Art.



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- \* Encouragement of pupils to evaluate their ideas as they progress through a project not just at the end. Developing a critical vocabulary. Reflection and consolidation are needed.
- \* A serious evaluation of schools' programmes in need with specific recommendations by the Government Inspectorate.
  - Criteria referenced and subject specific assessment procedures.
- \* Ideally, each Art department needs to work together to discuss, develop and implement a system which works effectively. This will not be achieved overnight, but will take several years of evolution and modification to get right.



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## FOOTNOTES

## CHAPTER 3

1. Kieran Meagher, "The Art, Craft and Design Syllabus" in The Changing Curriculum. Perspectives on the Junior Certificate, ed. T. Crooks. (O'Brien Educational Ltd. Dublin 1990), p.22.
2. Elliot W. Eisner, Educating Artistic Vision. (MacMillan Publishing Co. Inc. New York, 1972), p.212.
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4. Elliot W. Eisner, "Evaluating Children's Art" in Concepts in Art and Education, p.390.
5. Transition Year Programme Guidelines for Schools. (Curriculum and Examinations Board, 1986), p.9.
6. Eisner, Educating Artistic Vision, p.201.
7. John Holt, Testing for Teaching, ed. FA Spooner. (Hodder and Stoughton, London 1983), p.6.
8. Eisner, Educating Artistic Vision, p.206.
9. Ibid., p.155.



10. Idem, "Evaluating Children's Art" in Concepts in Art and Education, p.390.
11. Sir William Alexander, Testing for Teaching, p.127.
12. David H. Hargreaves, "The National Curriculum and Improving Secondary Schools", in School Work and Equality, eds. B. Cosin, M. Flude and M. Hales. (Hodder and Stoughton Educational, London 1989), p.45.







## APPENDIX

APPENDIX	A	Transition Year Programme 1992.	72
APPENDIX	B	Transition Year Programme 1994.	74
APPENDIX	C	Letter and Questionnaire for Art Teachers in the Locality.	77
APPENDIX	D	Significant Learning Day - Worksheet.	80
APPENDIX	E	Scheduled Absences During Module Within the Transition Year Calendar.	81
APPENDIX	F	Scheme of Work.	82
APPENDIX	G	A Sample Lesson Plan.	84
APPENDIX	H	A Sample Statement of Attainment.	86
APPENDIX	I	A Sample Assessment Sheet.	87



To explore new aspects of Art which will enthuse and motivate students, investigating practical applications of Art beyond the confines of an examination syllabus.

This Art programme provides an excellent opportunity for students to become involved in making and displaying their work, some of which will become permanent Art works for the College, while enabling them to learn new skills, developing a critical analytical approach and giving them a better appreciation of Art in the world around them.

### **SIX PROJECTS OF VARYING DURATION**

#### **1. POSTER WORK**

September/October

Introductory project to aid students with no background in Art to cover a range of skills in addition giving Junior Certificate Art students an opportunity to brush up on old skills.

- self portrait - developed into screen print - research lettering - market impact.

- skills - experimentation in textures - marbling - colour - lettering - drawing - technique of stencilling - screen printing - collage.

#### **2. BATIK HANGING**

October/November Open Day

Four Batik Panels based on four stone heads designed by Patrick Scott of the four rivers, Shannon, Liffey, Corrib and Foyle (6ft x 4ft).

To be displayed in relevant Group Area.

Skills - enlarging - colour experiment - use of dyes - lettering - batik - display of design - frame-making.



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### 3. CAREER PROJECT

November/January (Display for Arts Week)

Students chose their own project linked directly to their chosen career (work experience), e.g.,

Architecture - model-making, scaled drawings, interior design, etc.

Fashion - T-shirt design - fabric print - batik - weaving - fashion drawing

Advertising - product design - marketing - display.

Illustrator - calligraphy - illustrate existing or original poem - story or song.

Theatre - set design - puppetry

Animation - cartoon, character design.

Potter - ceramic project - various techniques - sculpture - relief panel - domestic product.

### 4. ADVERTISING PROJECT

February/April - incorporating Significant Learning Day

Visit to CIE Sign Writing Depot

Product design - existing or original product chosen by student

Finished piece - product prototype - logo - image - scrapbook - market research - illustration for double page spread for magazine - design for sign-writing on CIE bus.

### 5. ARTS COUNCIL SPONSORSHIP

Artists in Residence Programme.

Selected students will take part in Residency Programme to produce ceramic wall panel for permanent display in school.

### 6. HISTORY OF ART PROJECT

Illustrated essay A3 size.

Research an artist, sculptor or period in Art history.



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**Statement:**

The experience is very much one of teaching Art to mixed ability students. In Transition Year, Art classes often include a percentage of students who have not previously taken Art as a subject at Junior Certificate level. It is interesting to note that even those students who achieved low to average grades in the Junior Certificate exam, have a great advantage over those taking Art for the first time, as they have developed a greater understanding of Art elements, materials and processes, in the course of the three years preparing for the Junior Certificate.

This situation highlights one of the main aims of our T.Y. programme. The necessity for us to build into our programme the flexibility to cater for a wide range of ability levels, which at the same time makes provision for the development of the individual student, regardless of previous experience and natural ability.

**Aims:**

Developing skills and fostering awareness in areas such as:

Planning	Creativity
Problem solving	Critical Awareness
Expression	Colour relationships
Visual awareness	Composition
Understanding of form	Sensitivity - Media & Art elements
Art & Design appreciation	Heritage & Cultural Identity

Though the course content does not aim at the Leaving Certificate directly, it stands to reason that the experiences gained as a result of the exposure to the modules undertaken as part of the T.Y. programme, will have longer term beneficial effects for all the students as they approach the Leaving Certificate exam.



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**MODULES:****Drawing:**

- : from observation, Natural and Man-made forms.
- : from imagination.
- : expressive/gestural
- : experiments with a variety of media.

**Painting:**

- : experiments with, and exposure to, a variety of techniques and styles of working.

**Graphics & Communications:**

- : Design concepts.
- : Composition of graphic elements - image & text.
- : Manipulation of graphic media.
- : Understanding of graphic processes, - printing.
- : Original use of visual images.
- : Experiments with pattern and shape.
- : Computer generated graphics.

**Crafts:****Ceramics:**

- : Modelling forms in clay.
- : Hand-building techniques, - Pinch, Coil, Slab.
- : Decoration of form, - Additive / Subtractive.
- : Decoration of surface, Glazes.



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**Printing.**

- : Screen printing, - Cut paper stencil technique.
- : Lino printing.
- : Mono printing

**Tye-Dye:**

- : Techniques for creating designs on fabric.

**Significant Learning Days:**

- : May involve visits to, Galleries, Museums, Workshops and Studios. All help to reinforce the notion that what the students are learning in school does have applications in the 'real world'.

**Special Art Related Projects:**

In recent years the students have been afforded opportunities to take part in specialised projects.

One such project involved the provision for students to work with a professional ceramic artist during the period of Transition Year, towards the production of Art-work to be permanently displayed within the College. This project involved application to and sponsorship by the Arts Council.

During the current year, students from T.Y. are taking part in a collaborative project involving four schools from the North of Ireland, and four schools from the South. The project was initiated by the Northern Ireland Film Council, and involves the creation of an animated film composed from work carried out by students from each of the eight schools. It is proposed that the finished animation will be screened at film festivals and by TV networks, north and south.

All Transition Year students taking Art are encouraged to take part in such projects as the opportunities arise.



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12B, Portobello Harbour,  
Dublin 8.

8<sup>th</sup> February 1996

Dear .....

I am a graduate of NCAD and presently taking the Diploma for Art and Design Teachers. I have been teaching in the Tallaght area for the last four years. As a requirement of the course I must complete a dissertation based on the Transition Year Programme. As part of my research I have produced a questionnaire (enclosed) which will help me compile information for my dissertation on Transition Year Art education within the Tallaght area.

I would be extremely grateful if you could take the time to answer the questionnaire over the next week. Please feel free to add any information which you consider relevant.

If I have not already spoken to you, I will be contacting you over the next few days.

Yours sincerely, .....  
Anne Moylan

**All information will be treated in strictest confidence.**







## **Questionnaire on Art in Transition Year in your School.**

### **General Questions:**

1. How many years has Transition Year been in your School? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many Transition Year students are taken on each year, on average? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Have they been selected/interviewed for the Transition Year Programme? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Is Art in Transition Year compulsory? Yes/No  
 If Yes, do students take part in Art for the whole year or just a block? \_\_\_\_\_  
 If No, what options is Art set against on the timetable?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
5. Is Art a popular option in your School? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Is it necessary for the Transition Year student to have done Art before? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Have you the power to restrict the number of students in each class? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Have you got good facilities/resources? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Do students have to buy their own equipment? \_\_\_\_\_
10. In your experience what methods of motivation do you find to be the most successful?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



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### **Art Programme within Your School:**

1. Could you outline briefly the breakdown of the year? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
2. Do you specialise in any area, for example a craft, photography or portfolio preparation? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Is the Artwork based on single or multiple themes, please give examples.  
 \_\_\_\_\_
4. Do you ask them to keep a personal notebook/diary on a particular theme?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
5. Is there an Art / Craft based Mini-Company regularly organised in your school?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Is the business end of the company also done in the Art class?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
6. Have you had to adapt your scheme over the years? Yes/No
7. Do you find the amount of time students are out a disruption to your module or has it worked out well within your timetable?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
8. Do you have certain deadlines for work assignments to be completed? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Is their work displayed /exhibited or for sale? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What procedures do you use to assess Transition Year work?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
11. What are the **positive** aspects of Transition Year for Art Education ?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
12. Are there any **negative** aspects of Transition Year for Art Education?  
 \_\_\_\_\_

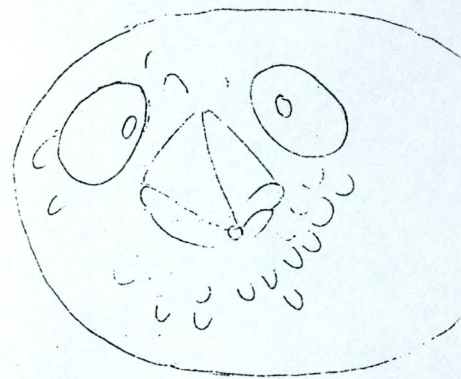


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## Visit to an Artist's Studio



1. Name of artist: Raymond Kingham and Ian Brady

Date and time of visit: 13<sup>th</sup> December 1995. 2.20 approx

2. What kind(s) of art does this person create?

They create items of pottery for sale. And Raymond Kingham paints and writes poetry.

3. Describe some of the artist's most important sources of ideas for art.

Old Celtic brooches and designs, taking a piece of clay and thinking what can be done with that.

4. What design concepts or processes does the artist usually like to use?

Finding an existing design and developing it into something malleable.

5. What media and forming processes does the artist like to use?

Ian Brady liked to make a idea firstly and then shape it into something he thought would be more marketable.

6. What special tools and equipment for creating art does the artist use? What are they used for?

They use special knives for shaping and designing. Canes and staddleboards for designing a special kiln and sandblast bed to give the pieces of pottery a more unusual colour.

7. Describe the most unusual features of the artist's studio work space.

The unusual way they kilned the pieces and then coated them in a sandblast bed mixed with broken glass and other things.

8. What were some important events that lead the artist into an art career?

Ian Brady took a course and opened a business in pottery.

9. Other interesting facts/discoveries:



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SCHEDULED ABSENCES DURING MODULE WITHIN THE  
TRANSITION YEAR CALENDAR

<b>November</b>	1st-7th	Mid-term Break
	20th-24th	Work Experience
	27th	Significant Learning Day
<b>December</b>	18th-22nd	Christmas Exams
	23rd-31st	Christmas Holidays
<b>January</b>	1st-8th	Christmas Holidays
	22nd-29th	Work Experience
<b>February</b>	12th	Significant Learning Day
	16th-20th	Mid-term Break
	26th-29th	Work Experience
<b>March</b>	1st-8th	Work Experience
	18th	Bank Holiday
<b>April</b>	1st	Easter Holidays



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STUDENT NAME: ANNE MOYLAN

THEME: FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

AIM OF SEQUENCE: Collect information through making drawings and studies of natural objects in preparation for a craft activity

Week & Date	Class Group & Time	Introduction Motivation	Demo/ Visual Aids	Source	Art Element	Task	Skill	Materials	Support Studies	Home/ Activity	Cross - Disp. Connection
1. 13.11.1995	Transition Yr	Fruit + vegetables	Pencil work form details	Primary Source	Line shape form	Observation drawings line only	Pencil work Information gathering	cartridge paper pencils	17 Dutch still lifes Leonardo	Pencil drawing Nat. Ob.	Science Home Ec. Environmental club
2. 27.11.1995	Transition Yr	Natural objects	mark making texture	Primary Source Nat. Ob.	Line pattern tone	Observation focusing on texture	formal drawings	Paper pencils HB 4B 6B	M. Foley Photograph Roussseau	Tile design using drawing	Home Ec
3. 4.12.1995	Transition Yr	Information choose judicious designs	Handout source to designs	Previous drawings	Design relief panel	design drawings abstract	design work develop intent	Paper Pencils	Craft magazine Art in community	Measurements 5 x 5	Business Studies
4. 11.12.1995	Transition Yr	Presentation for comp. standards	Designers drawings styled	Architects drawings - scale	design	mount all drawings	cutting display presentation	Sugar paper knives	Le Corbusier Lloyd Wright Arcimboldi		Construction Studies

Out-day - Japanese / Botanical Gardens, Tile Works Craft Council, R. Kingham

POTENTIAL LESSON DEVELOPMENT:

Kidbed vessel-plaster cast fruit + vegetables (peppers, pineapples etc.)

Plaster casts of found objects, assemblage, cut + construction, mini-company.

Ceramic garden-sculpture, fountains, paving, birdbox/baths (theme: plant/flower/birds/insect etc.)

Poster / calendar - botanical gardens, seasons



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STUDENT NAME: ANNE MOYLAN

THEME: ABSTRACT CERAMIC TILE exploring surface decoration.

AIM OF SEQUENCE: To explore a surface decoration on a clay tile with observational drawing as a starting point.

Week & Date	Class Group & Time	Introduction / Motivation	Demo / Visual Aids	Source	Art Element	Task	Skill	Materials	Support Studies	Home/ Activity	Cross - Disp. Connection
5. 15.1.1996	Transition 9.05-10.20	Achieving textures in clay	clay tiles sheets/slabs	Observation drawings & designs	Relief surface texture	Textured tile imprinting	techniques modelling	clay modelling tools.	W. De Morgan	design in colour	Science
6. 29.1.1996	Transition 9.05-10.20	tile design in colour	Test tiles in format frame	design test tiles	composition. incise	Tile w/ border + design	slab precision additive/slit	Rice, rope, sawdust - equipment	B. Adams E. Cates	collect textures	H. Economics
7. 5.2.1996	Transition 9.05-10.20	texture test kiln	Joining safety	Clay tiles	Slip/glaze modelling of relief.	levels of relief	modelling firing, slip dec	newspaper boards tools	Jaffray & Hayes	worksheets + ceramic tech. art	Metall work.
8. 11.3.1996	Transition 9.05-10.20	Fired tiles	glazing safety	drawing tiles glaze	glazing decoration	glaze tile	application of glaze	glaze brushes masks	Corneal Boydel	Assignment	Science
9. 25.3.1996	Transition 9.05-10.20	Completing project.	Attaching tiles to wood.	glazed tiles frame	mounting grout cementing	mount tiles display	securing tiles to board	wood + adhesive	Cauchi Miro murals		

POTENTIAL LESSON DEVELOPMENT:

- Carving, casting (wood, plaster, sand) mould-making.
- Architecture - building construction techniques + methods.
- Throwing project - in clay wheel work - cylinder / bowl - functional ware.
- Self - portraits - modelling skills / Identity - Jill Crowley. Mosaics - Raulenga.



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# LESSON PLAN

Date 5.2.1996 Lesson No. 7

Year group Transition Yr. No. of students 19

Class ability Mixed Ability Class duration 1 hr. 20 mins.

Theme Abstract ceramic tile-exploring surface decoration

**Aim** To explore surface decoration on a clay tile with observational drawing as a starting point.

**Objective** In creating a tile arrangement, consider balance, a variation in surface quality and the shadows cast within the tile.

**Introduction** We have explored clay's characteristics and discovered some of its limitations.

- : Format of tile and dimensions.
- : Refer to test tiles, materials for imprinting and texturing-Natural and Man-made.
- : Pupil's must be aware of time restriction and the standard of work require



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## Task

To model relief tile of different levels of relief - using suitable textures

**Demonstration** • Additive and subtractive methods.  
• Building form/shape (modelling). • Joining clay  
• Applying texture - rough + smooth (burnishing)  
• Application of coloured slip.

**Visual Aids** ① Texture using tools ② Texture with found objects • Coloured slip test tiles/textures  
• Mounted pupils designs chart-format.

**Support Studies** E. Coates - textured surfaces.  
Jaffray - ceramic tiles - wire joinings.  
G. Hayes: Dept. of Industry and Commerce  
stone carvings.

**Materials** Clay  
modelling tools  
textures  
Newspaper.

**SAFETY** - Cleanliness.  
dust hazardous.

**Clean-up** Tiles signed.  
All work to dry on  
rack. Clean surface/tools.

**Home Activity**  
Story-board/Worksheet.



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STATEMENT OF ATTAINMENT

Student Name M. G. T.Y. 6. Date 11.3.1996  
 High grade achieved in Junior Cert. Art Exam.

The student's interest in the area of study is reasonably involved and motivated but without a great deal of enthusiasm.

Enthusiasm Loves drawing and working with clay. Work Experience with Fashion Designer - career option.

Research of subject Observes with accuracy and skill. Is alert to pattern structure. Lacks surface levels on tile.

Interaction in class In group discussions / evaluations no real contribution

Oral communication skills Is well able to make decisions, judgements and give opinions.

Written communication skills No. Significant Learning Day sheet More effort and time required on Storyboard.

Completion of work on time

Final piece finished on time.

Attendance

Good - not present at S.L.D.

Presentation

Excellent, w/complementary colours used on tile.

What the student needs to improve

Needs to be more expressive verbally and with her work.

How this improvement might be achieved

M. needs to be challenged by the work and use her imagination more.  
 \* interested in fashion and photography.



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ASSESSMENT SHEETStudent Name M. G.Tutor Class T. Y. 6. Date 26. 3. 1996

5: Excellent, 4: Very good, 3: Good, 2: Fair, 1: Poor.

**Documentation**

Drawing skill - observational	5
Attention to detail	3
Design proposed. Exploration of source material	4
Worksheet - Significant Learning Day	—
Ceramic - Storyboard	3

**Technical**

Variety of tools used/skills and techniques	2
Vocabulary used	2
Attention to safety	4
Final product (10) Construction/modelling, application of glaze	7



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## Evaluation

Managing materials	3
Interpreting information	3
Managing time	3
Dealing with difficulties/critical appraisal	2
Creativity - expressive skills	2

Overall Performance 57%

Further details and comments: Can record accurately and well. Can immediately see how an idea can be transposed successfully from one dimension to another; however, she needs to be more expressive in her work and in a co-operative situation where work, ideas and materials have to be pooled. Well done.

Art Teacher Anne Maylan.

Course Co-Ordinator \_\_\_\_\_

Principal \_\_\_\_\_



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