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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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TITLE: TEXTILES AS A GENDERED DISCIPLINE IN ART, CRAFT AND
DESIGN

This dissertation examines the origin of gender inequalities and why they occur. A discussion on these perceptions is continued, examining primary, post primary and, to a lesser extent, third level education, which in turn, suggests the reason for the association of school subjects such as Art, Craft and Design with female students.

The emergence of Textiles as a female discipline is examined in more detail in the second chapter, where the historic background of the most gendered area of Textile design, that is, Embroidery is looked at with noteworthy results.

Chapter three relates the findings of the classroom application for this study. The results of questionnaires, the observations during the scheme of work and the conclusions drawn from this project are documented throughout.

The final conclusion recaps on some of the important points raised during the study, and on suggestions for the future.

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**TEXTILES AS A GENDERED DISCIPLINE
IN ART, CRAFT AND DESIGN**

**A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Education
in Candidacy for the
DIPLOMA FOR ART AND DESIGN TEACHERS**

by

Jenni Curran

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PREFACE

Having attended a single sex post-primary school I experienced first hand how subject choice was limited because of gender. Subjects such as Technical Drawing, Woodwork and Metalwork were mysterious realms which were only explored by the male students. I often wondered why this was the case and why subjects such as Home Economics were not taught in single-sex boys schools, or if they were why they were not very highly regarded. I wondered at what point it was decided that Technical Drawing, Woodwork and so on were "male" subjects and subjects such as Home Economics, Art were "female" subjects.

However, this division of subject take up due to gender has not been confined to second level education. My third level educational experiences have only served to reinforce my observations. Having decided to study Textile Design I became aware of the lack of male participation in this department, especially in the area of Embroidery. Many male students opt for areas such as Graphic Design and Industrial Design. Yet again I wondered why this was the case, and at what point it was decided that the area of Textile Design was a female concern.

It is as a result of these private queries that I have decided to study the area of subject take up due to gender and the resulting effect on career choice.

CHAPTER I

ISSUES IN GENDER INEQUALITY

Introduction

When the issue of gender inequality is raised in any area of society, be it in the workplace, or in the school environment, the assumption is made that gender inequality means female inequality. The performance of female students in examinations, the treatment of female students and the lack of attention given to girls in the co-educational situation by teachers, is acknowledged and debated in depth. However, gender inequality is not just a female issue, the area of schooling for male students needs to be dealt with, since, as Arnot (1984) explains, "their education can be perceived as a problem not just for girls, but for the boys themselves."¹

Therefore the subject take up and attitudes of both sexes must be considered if an analysis is to be made of the preconceived ideas of what a traditionally female area is.

Primary School

By the time children reach school age, they are quite aware of sex differences and are becoming aware of gender differences. These differences are part of the way that children understand the world and their own place within it.

Rudduck (1994) observes that

... we have become so accustomed to patterns of gender differentiation and inequality that it is tempting to regard them as natural.²

However, these "patterns of gender differentiation" are not natural or inherent. They are learnt behaviour. As Minns (1991) points out

... social and cultural attitudes about gender are learnt from birth and are modelled and reinforced often unconsciously by parents.³

Many parents and family members will buy gender specific toys for children - dolls for girls, train sets for boys. David Fontana (1993) writes

... the greater part of the differences in behaviour between the sexes (sex roles) appears to be learnt and learnt in particular from within the family.⁴

However parents are not solely to blame. Even when parents try not to stereotype their children, outside influences prevail. The media, in particular television, children's storybooks, magazines and even comics play their part in reinforcing gender roles. Commercials on television depict women in the kitchen, washing the dishes or in the supermarket buying washing powder. Children's storybooks still show women in the traditional roles. Minns argues that even

... comics are very clearly targeted at boys or girls and reflect their gender roles that young children take on for themselves. Their use of language, their storylines, their heroes (male and female) and the games and puzzles that form part of the magazines are all part of the gender package.⁵

So, it is not at all surprising that children enter school with predetermined ideas of their role and that of the opposite sex. However, the ideal place to alter these attitudes is in the learning environment of the school.

Yet it is within this environment that inequalities are promoted, and the ideas or attitudes of the children are reinforced. In early schooling, dedication to what Minns calls "free choice" and "free activity" can

... constrain both girls and boys because even at this early age children tend to choose classroom activities that support gender roles ... consequently they are not free to choose because they often restrict themselves to the kinds of activities which they feel secure.⁶

This permeates right through the school system.

In primary schools in Ireland, both boys and girls study the same subjects. The core subjects are English, Irish and Mathematics, and subjects such as Social Studies, Arts and Crafts, Music, Physical Education and Religion are also taught to both sexes. Yet this does not mean that both

sexes experience a similar type of education. Drudy and Lynch (1993) argue that

... the evidence including that from other countries would suggest that gender differences are likely to be common at the classroom level.⁷

In Britain, a survey conducted by the Department of Education and Science (DES) in 1975, discovered that during 1973 boys in primary schools were more likely to be offered mechanical toys than anything to do with home, dressing up or shopping. Boys were likely to be separated from girls for some aspects of physical education.⁸ This was also the practice in Ireland. Official guidelines in the Teachers' Handbook produced by the Department of Education suggest that

... separate training in movement be made for boys and girls. Boys can now acquire a wide variety of skills ... and girls often become more aware of style and grace. Control and resiliency become more important.⁹

There is also evidence of sex-stereotyping in the handbook in the area dealing with music. The handbook proposes that

... with regard to the teaching of music ... while a large number of songs are suited to both boys and girls, some songs are particularly suited to boys, e.g. martial, gay, humorous, rhythmic airs. Others are more suited to girls, e.g. lullabies, spinning songs, tender in content and expression.¹⁰

Another factor which contributes to gender differentiation is peer-pressure. Children do not want to stand out or to act differently to other children. They are as Fontana describes, "essentially conformist."¹¹ Children like to feel accepted by their peers and they "strenuously avoid acquiring labels such as 'sissy' or 'tomboy' and boys especially come in for a good deal of censure if they are seen to show too much kinship with the opposite sex."¹²

Post Primary Education

This continues right through school life up to and including post primary education and is highlighted in the area of subject choice. Girls and boys will, again, choose subjects which will not earn them labels such as 'sissy' or 'tomboy', or more common these days, labels such as 'homo' or 'gay'. In 1983 Damian Hannan in his study of "Schooling and Sex Roles" noted that girls

... (had) more negative attitudes to science and maths ... are far more involved in actual household and home-making roles than boys.¹³ (See Fig No 1)

However, in more recent times gender differences in the take up of Mathematics and Science has reduced considerably. (See Fig No 2)

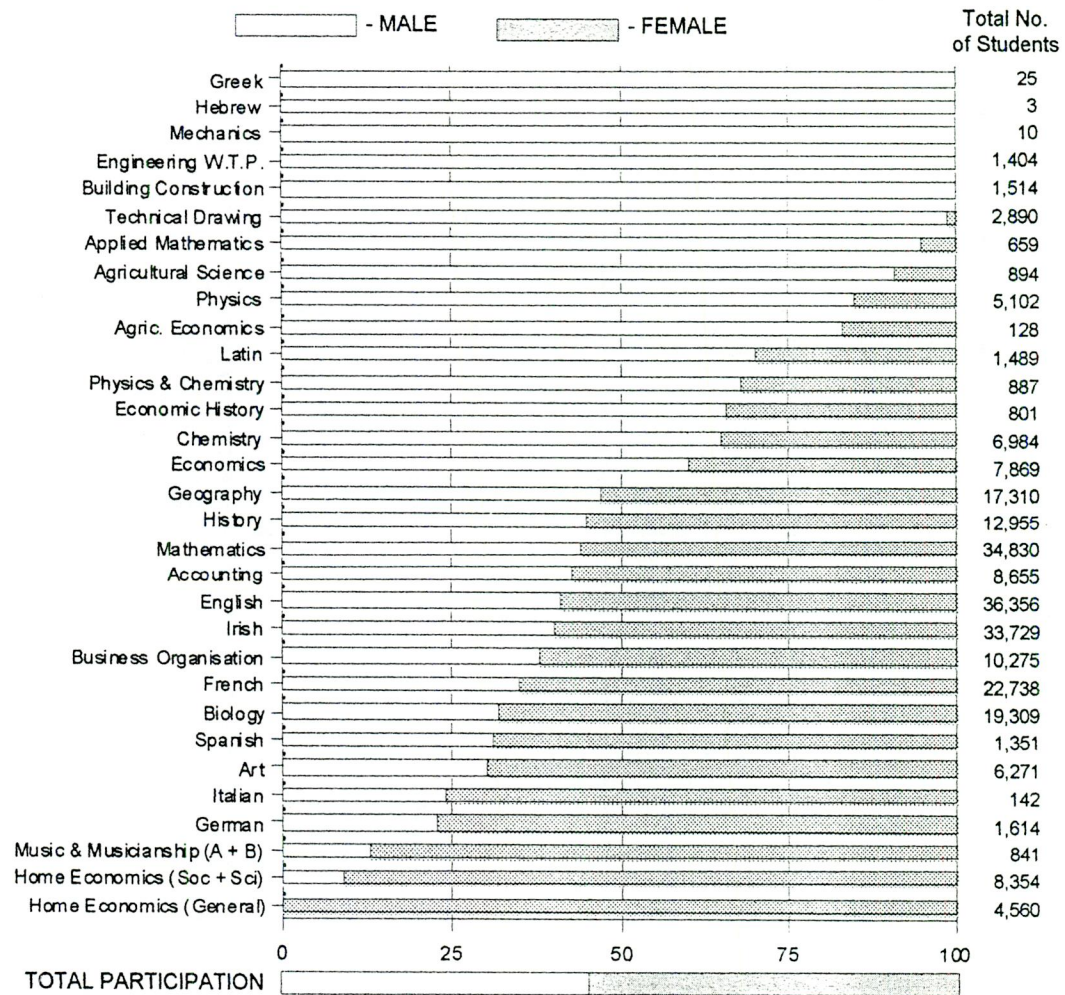
In 1983, Hannan had stated that

... the freedom given to schools in curriculum and time tabling especially at Senior Level has resulted in very noticeable gender differences both in the availability and the take-up of particular subjects.¹⁴

While the take-up by girls of Mathematics and Science has improved, subjects such as Technical Drawing, Engineering and Construction Studies are rarely available as options for girls in the single sex schools, while time tabling in co-educational schools often means that girls are excluded. Boys on the other hand are rarely given the option of doing Home Economics and the pattern is similar at Junior Level. (See Fig No 2)

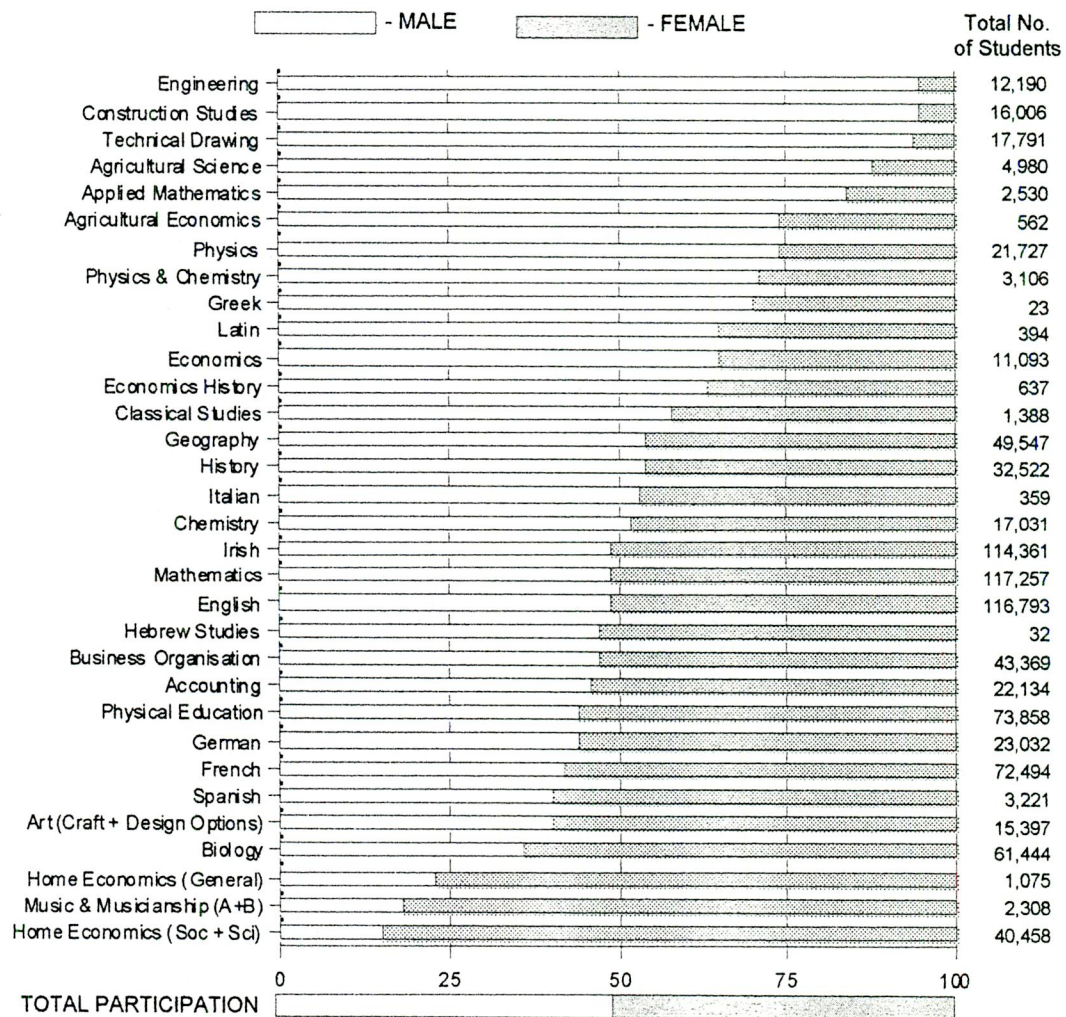
In more recent studies, such as Drudy and Lynch (1991), it was concluded that

... the reduction of gender differences in the provision, allocation and choice of Leaving Certificate subjects has not resulted in the domination of gender differences in the take-up of particular sex-typed subjects. Boys still predominate in the Sciences (with the exception of Biology) while girls predominate in Art, Music and Continental Languages.¹⁵



Source: Department of Education Statistical Report, 1979-80

Figure 1: Percentage Participation in Leaving Certificate Examination Subjects by sex, 1980



Source: Department of Education Statistical Report, 1994-95

Figure 2: Percentage Participation in Leaving Certificate Examination Subjects by sex, 1995

It could be argued, therefore, that having subjects such as Metalwork, Technical Drawing and Woodwork in female single sex schools (or available to female students in co-educational schools) and Home-Economics, Art in male schools (or available to male students in co-educational schools), would be a waste of time because of the take up rate would be so low.

Drudy and Lynch found that

... the sex difference in pupils' own choices was greater than in either the provision or allocation of subjects to them.¹⁶

Therefore students are again opting for subjects which they feel secure or which society expect from them. Simply increasing the provision or allocation of a subject to students will not reduce the sex differences in subject take up.

David Fontana explains that "most early schooling teaching is done by women and boys therefore, associate school with feminine values. Where such teaching is done by men ... school rejection shown by boys apparently declines."¹⁷

This argument can also be applied to the post-primary level of education. Teachers are associated with the subject they teach, as a result students will also decide on the "masculinity" or "femininity" of a subject in relation to the sex of the member of staff who teaches the subject. Arnot describes how "the sex-segregation of teaching staff by subject is also likely to reinforce a boy's view that certain subjects are not masculine."¹⁸

Therefore if subjects were presented in a different way, which would appeal to the student (Home Economics, if presented as a more technical subject introducing 'Catering' and

'Tailoring' instead of 'Cooking' and 'Sewing') and if early education did not reinforce gender roles, attitudes would certainly be different. Fontana wonders, whether

... with the appropriate education (could) our roles as men and women be modified by the kind of education we receive.¹⁹

In advertising, the way in which a product is packaged strongly contributes to the success of that product in the marketplace. In today's technological, consumer society which influences children greatly, perhaps the way in which subjects are "packaged" should be examined more closely. Music and Art are still viewed as luxury or "easy" subjects which will not lead to a job. Since boys link their subject choices to their future occupations these subjects would not be taken seriously by them. Boys, throughout their schooling years, are trained to think only of the job prospects which await them once school finishes and there is a strong vocational element in their education.²⁰ If the future possibilities of these subjects were promoted and more computerised equipment was introduced to heighten the profile of these subjects they would appeal to more students. The same could be said for Home Economics - even the title given to this subject is outdated, immediately evoking images of the kitchen occupied by the dutiful housewife.

However gender equality for both sexes needs to be tackled within the whole educational system. Much can be done in the classroom to help children form better attitudes. Research in Britain indicates that many textbooks and other reading material for students are still highly stereotyped.

Arnot discovered that

... school Science textbooks are filled with masculine imagery, through their choice of photographs of males, examples drawn from the male world, styles of learning and assessment which favour male students, and an impersonal approach which tends to suit boys more than girls.²¹

Drudy and Lynch also found that

... many (such) books present girls as passive and immobile, usually in indoor activities and seldom in a leadership role ... Girls and women are frequently portrayed in children's reading schemes as helpmates to boys and men, bystanders to the narrative drama of stories.²²

However the teacher cannot change these sexual stereotypes single handedly. Gender equality needs to be "built into everyday relations of schooling."²⁴

If a school is to develop an ethos of gender equality, it is within areas such as school textbooks that basic changes have to be made. There is no point adopting a policy of equality if sex stereotyping is not tackled at every level. All school activities should be open equally to both sexes, and subjects should not be divided by gender.

Some schools in Britain are trying to present equality as a professional obligation, that is, whatever personal beliefs teachers hold, they must uphold the equality ethos of the school. This limits the problem of inequality to school boundaries. It does not challenge the divisions and inequalities that are deeply rooted in the structures of the wider society. As Rudduck argues

... confronting equality involves the individual in self evaluation. It is not restricted to professional or academic areas.²⁵

What better place to start this self-examination than in the school environment, even if it is an 'academic area'.

It disturbs individuals by requiring them to examine their own practices and to acknowledge that they have taken part in the continuous creations and recreations of gender differences over time.²⁶

Gender inequality and stereotyping can thus be seen to be formulated, from the earliest years of a child's life and it is during these years that parents and family pose the greatest influence. These gender perceptions are reinforced during primary school education and perpetrated further in secondary school. This has been the focus of this chapter. However to fully understand the gendering of the area of textiles specifically, it is necessary to look to its historical evolution. In the next chapter this shall be discussed.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER 1

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2. Jean Rudduck, Developing a Gender Policy in Secondary School, (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1994) p.2.
3. Hilary Minns, Language, Literacy and Gender, (London: Hodder and Staunton, 1991) p.12.
4. David Fontana, Psychology for Teachers, (London: The MacMillan Press Ltd, 1993) p.11
5. Minns, Language, Literacy and Gender, p.35.
6. Ibid, p.35.
7. Sheelagh Drudy and Kathleen Lynch, Schools and Society in Ireland, (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1993) p.172.
8. Arnot, Co Education Reconsidered, p.40.
9. Drudy and Lynch, Schools and Society in Ireland, p.173.
10. Ibid, p.173.
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12. Ibid, p.23.
13. Damian Hannan, Schooling and Sex Roles, (Dublin: The Economic and Social Research Institute, 1983) p.xxiii.
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15. Drudy and Lynch, Schools and Society in Ireland, p.177.
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17. Fontana, Psychology for Teachers, p.135.
18. Arnot, Co-Education Reconsidered, p.43.
19. Fontana, Psychology for Teachers, p.135.
20. Arnot, Co-Education Reconsidered, p.42.
21. Ibid, p.42.
22. Drudy and Lynch, Schools and Society in Ireland, p.200.
23. Ibid, p.200.
24. Rudduck, Developing a Gender Policy in Secondary Schools, p.3.
25. Ibid, p.4.
26. P. Woods, The Happiest Days? How Pupils Cope with School, (London: Falmer Press, 1990) p.57.

CHAPTER II

THE EMERGENCE OF TEXTILES AS A FEMALE DISCIPLINE

Introduction

During the last ten years, from 1987 to 1996, the Textile Department within the National College of Art and Design has witnessed the graduation of over two hundred students. From this number only 3.5% of the graduates have been male, compared with 20% within Fashion. It is understood that when male students choose the option of Textile Design they achieve high grades and pursue promising careers in the Textile Industry¹. It can be debated that in many cases fellow female students can be more “talented” and yet do not possess the same confidence or competitiveness that seem dominant traits of the male sex, whether in school or work (see previous chapter).

Regardless of whether male students achieve highly or not, the fact remains that few male students choose Textile Design, whether it is weave, print or, especially, embroidery, as a career option. Within the 3.5% of graduates who have been male, this percentage can be broken down again with 70% studying Print Textiles and 30% studying Woven Textiles. During the last ten years Embroidery has not been chosen by any male student. Therefore while Textile Design, in general, is considered a female area, Embroidery in particular is regarded as “Women’s Work”. However, this has not always been the case.

Embroidery

Embroidery has been described as “a painstaking feminine craft of low status and strong domestic association.”¹ Weave and Print textiles have fared slightly better and have a more respected image and this is probably the reason for the slight male interest within college over the last ten years. Yet Embroidery was, at one stage, regarded as a profession not just ‘for women’ but for men as well.

One of the earliest datable examples of British work is the misleadingly named Bayeux Tapestry. This embroidery piece is considered amateur in its style, since by the 14th century craftsmen and women had formed themselves into groups and guilds and were producing much more sophisticated work in these professional workshops.

In a French document from 1303, statutes of guild workers were listed. Members were heavily fined if found not to be following regulations controlling working conditions. Sunday work was banned, the working day was limited to daylight, quality of materials was safeguarded and a craftsperson was not allowed to take on an apprentice without having their own workshop. However the most interesting aspect of this document is the fact that it refers to both men and women. As Linda Parry (1994) concludes

... it is clear from the Paris statutes that men and women worked on equal terms and embroiderers of both sexes are now identifiable from historic documents.²

Joanna Banham (1988) also testifies to the existence of male embroiderers, describing how

... during the middle ages needlework was practised by monks as well as nuns, while up until 16th century the majority of embroiderers to the Kings were men.³

Other 15th century French records refer to men only in the industry, although women were still employed as embroiderers, but were being paid less than men.

So, it can be seen that men, at one stage, were respected with the embroidery profession and were, indeed, earning more than women. Yet today nothing could be further from this situation and a number of reasons can be suggested for this turn of events.

The period of the Reformation brought change to the industry. Patronage for the professional embroiderer moved from the Church to the Court and landed gentry, while trade practices were also beginning to change.

Although 89 master craftsmen were listed with the Broderens' Company in 1580 within 50 years, the industry saw a decay in the trade. A petition sent to the King of England described how many members had to take on more lowly jobs.⁴ This was the first evidence of the diminishing status of the professional embroidery trade.

It is possible through documents and embroideries of one person, which still exist to devise a picture of life at this time and the role of embroidery during this period.

The person in question is Elizabeth, Countess of Shrewsbury, better known as 'Bess of Hardwick'. The 16th century embroideries which adorned her home, range from sets of ceremonial cushion covers worked by professionals, to a large quantity of other items worked by Bess and the amateur embroiderers of her household. According to Bess's own evidence these embroideries were made by both women and boys from her household with the help of a professional embroiderer. At this time many of the professional embroiderers were still men.

Accounts from 1598 list the wages of a man called Webb who was employed as an embroiderer.

Mary Gostelow (1979) describes how

... Bess and her ladies helped to decorate her home, working with the professional embroiderers who included Thomas Lane.⁵

However, by this time these professionals were paid considerably less than staff members responsible for helping complete embroiderers and as Parry explains

... it is due most certainly to this change in the status and fortunes of the professional within the household that the rise in the quality and importance of amateur work came about.⁶

Pattern books which began to circulate and which were widely available by the end of the 16th century, allowed amateur embroiderers to copy patterns without the help of a professional embroiderer. Versions of these pattern books can still be seen today.

An embroidered sampler created by Jane Bostocke in 1598 is likely to be one of the earliest surviving embroideries worked by an amateur not known to be part of the workforce of a grand household.

It was also at this stage that embroidery became included as an important part of the education of girls both in school, or more usually, in the home. It is this habit of training girls only in the skills of embroidery, which has proved the most obvious reason for the craft being associated firstly with women and secondly as a technique worked exclusively in the home.

Up to this point men were prominent in the embroidery industry and boys practised the skill of embroidery (as in the household of Bess of Hardwick), and yet, from the end of the 16th century, girls were solely taught the skills. This practice lasted right through the 17th and 18th centuries, into the 19th century, developing an increasing reputation for being first and foremost a hobby for the female sex.

Even towards the late 19th century when a strong reaction against amateur work emerged and a new type of semi-professional worker appeared with the founding of several professional workshops the perception of embroidery as a home based pastime could not be altered. The profession at this stage was almost totally female which did not help and it is this attitude towards embroidery which has lasted to this day.

While in contemporary society, the area of textiles and specifically embroidery have been rendered "female", they have not always been perceived as such. It has only been with the passage of time that it has been given its 'low status' categorisation. This argument suggesting that the male population, in particular, have a low opinion of the area of textiles is reinforced in the next chapter, through the examination of a textile based project which was worked on by a group of male secondary school students.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER II

1. Informal Interview with Frances McDonagh, Head of Fashion and Textile Department, NCAD, March 27, 1997
2. Joanna Banham, "Subversive Stitch", Craft Magazine 93 (May / June 1988) p.40.
3. Linda Parry, "Women's Work", Craft Magazine (May / June 1994) p.42.
4. Banham, "Subversive Stitch", p.40.
5. Parry, "Women's Work", p.45.
6. Mary Gostelow, Art of Embroidery (New York: Dutton Press, 1979) p.75.
7. Parry, "Women's Work", p.45.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Thus far, the attitudes of male and female students towards school subjects have been discussed. The continuation of these attitudes and the effect upon subject choice in third level institutions specifically in the area of textile design, has also been looked at. However, in order to observe whether male and / or female students within a post primary school have, in fact, preconceived notions of what is a “male subject” and what is a “female subject”, a scheme of work was devised for a second year remedial group of students.

The group, consisting of male students was, as their art teacher described, full of students who had a very ‘macho’ image of themselves and this attitude permeated through into other areas of their lives.¹ Therefore, it was felt that any preconceived ideas on gender division would be more pronounced in this group.

Questionnaire #1

In order to establish the extent of the students’ notions of what is ‘male related’ and is ‘female related’, a questionnaire was formulated and each student was asked to complete it. Due to the ability of the class and the fact that this study was taking place within the confines of the art room, the questionnaire was a visual one, consisting of a collection of images, rather than a list of written questions. These images, which were of objects ranging from household appliances to items of clothing, were arranged into ten separate groups. Each group consisted of four objects and three of these objects had a common theme or purpose while the remaining one was classed as “the odd one out”. Reasons for this were gender related, but could also have been for other reasons. For example, group one consisted of three home appliances, such as a washing

machine, an iron and a vacuum cleaner, while the fourth object was a hammer. The gender division was obvious, but students could also have picked the hammer because the other items were electrical, and 85% of answers actually stated this reason rather than the fact that the hammer could have been regarded as a male tool, while the other items could be looked upon as female tools (15% of answers stated this reason).

However when asked to pick “the odd one out” from a group of watches, which consisted of three mens’ watches and one ladies watch, one of the mens’ watches could have been selected due to the fact that it was a ‘sports’ watch while the rest were ‘dress’ watches. However 61.5% of reasons were gender specific claiming that the ladies watch was “the odd one out”. It is worth noting that 23% of answers given, reasoned that the ladies watch was different from the rest of the group, not because it was a watch for a woman, but because it was ‘smaller’ than the other watches.

Another group of items which generated noteworthy results was a group which included obvious women’s items of clothing accessories, such as a handbag, a high heeled shoe, and a hat, alongside a pair of trousers. It was thought that students would select the trousers, which could be perceived as a piece of male clothing, yet 85% of answers gave the handbag as the item which did not belong with the rest of the group, because it could not be worn, unlike the other items. Only 15% chose the trousers because the rest were items of women’s’ apparel.

The results of the questionnaire were surprisingly, not gender related. From the total answers, only 21% of reasons given by the students gave any mention of gender, while the remaining 79% certainly did not. (See Appendix A for full questionnaire and results).

However, the questionnaire was general and not specifically linked to textiles and it was only when the scheme of work was underway that the attitudes of the students really became apparent.

Scheme of Work

The scheme of work executed, with the students, over eleven weeks, was primarily a weave project. While the technique was textile based, materials such as electric cable, plastic strips, wooden dowling rods, branches were collected for students use, in the belief that these materials would appeal to male students and banish any thoughts of this project being a “girly” or “sissy” project. The theme of the project, ‘Native Indian Habitats’ was also introduced, again for the purpose of appealing to the male students, and again, in the hope of changing any preconceived ideas they might have on weave and textiles.

The project began by looking at textured surfaces and trying to render these surfaces using different types of papers. This lasted the first three weeks of the scheme (See Fig 3).

During week four students were introduced to the technique of weaving. Samples using materials which included fabric, wood, paper and so on were woven by students and most students grasped the basic idea of weaving very well (See Fig 4).

After a break for Christmas holidays, students were asked again to weave samples, two in total, one using man made materials, the second using natural materials. While most students worked hard, some students became disgruntled, more from frustration due to the difficulty of weaving some of the materials (See Fig 5).



DESIGNS FOR WILWAM
DESIGN

3 ↓

2

1

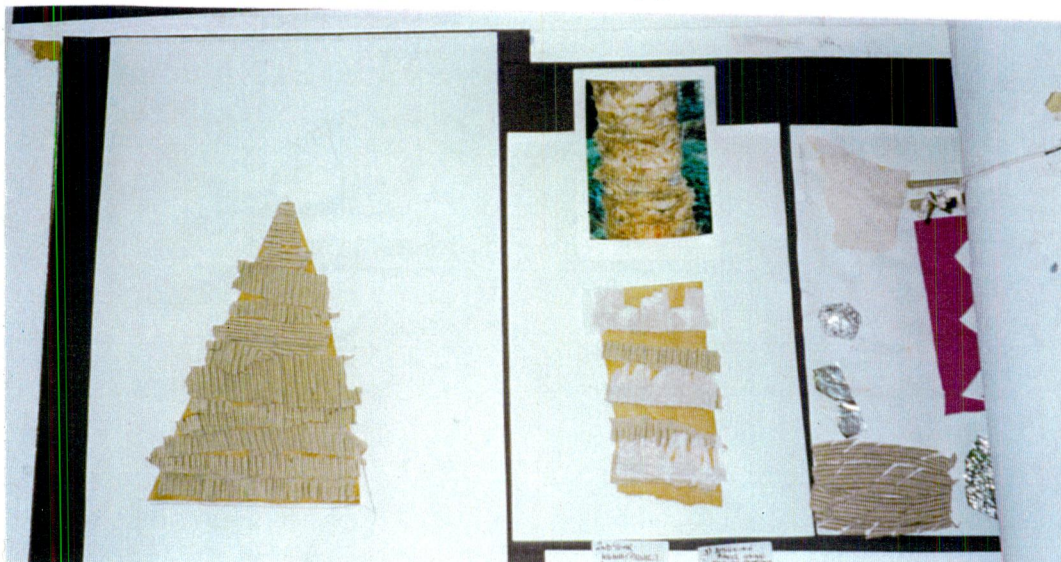


Fig 3: Students design work from stage 1 to stage 3

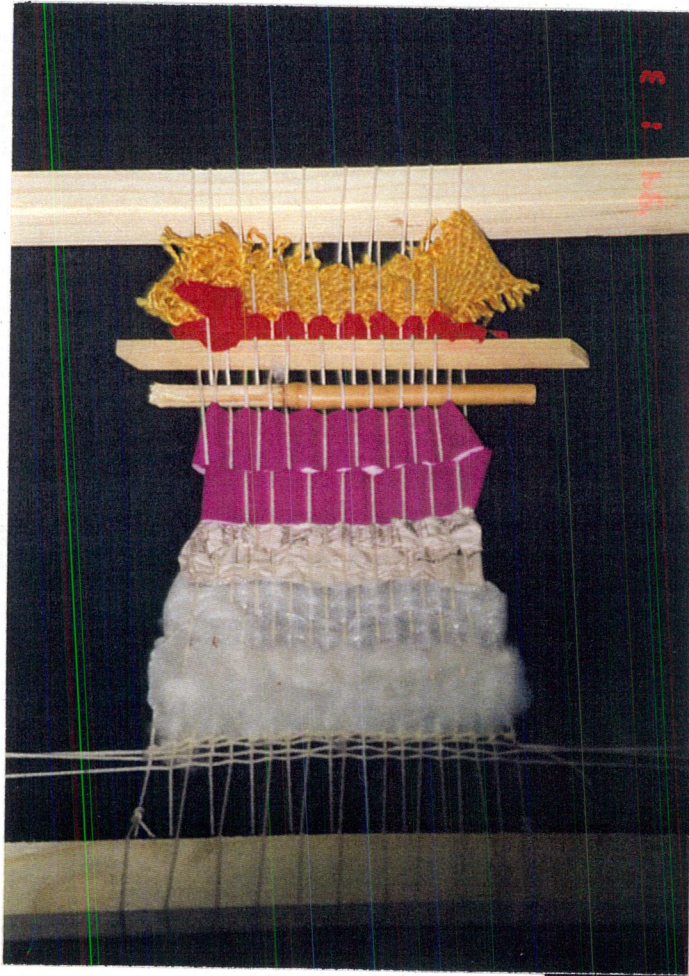


Fig 4: A student's first weave sample

From week seven students began designing their own panels for the wigwam based structure. These designs were based on previous exercises which explored texture through paper. One of the main reasons for the concentration on texture, was the presence of visually impaired students in the class.

Once designs were finalised work began on individual panels for the group wigwams. It was at this stage that the views of some students emerged. One student wondered about the point of learning to weave, since unlike a subject such as mathematics, it would not lead to a job. At this point a discussion started on weave and the practical applications of this discipline. Examples of woven baskets were shown to students, along with woven chairs and woven fabrics. The question in itself was very important since it reinforced theories about how male students are educated, both at home and in school, to think primarily about working life after school years. Male students are continually geared towards the workforce, and their whole attitude is formulated by this.² Rosemary Deem (1984) suggests that “boys are oriented towards a life of paid work”³ while Drudy and Lynch (1993) explain that

“For boys the future expected is generally that of employment in the paid labour market.”⁴

Further into the project, while students were completing their panels, a few students complained that they were being turned into “queers” and “gays” due to the work they were being asked to do. When asked why they thought this they replied that the work was “girls work” and they should not have to do it. These students were then questioned on why they thought this type of project should be geared towards girls and the only reasons they could give was that girls always do this type of work.

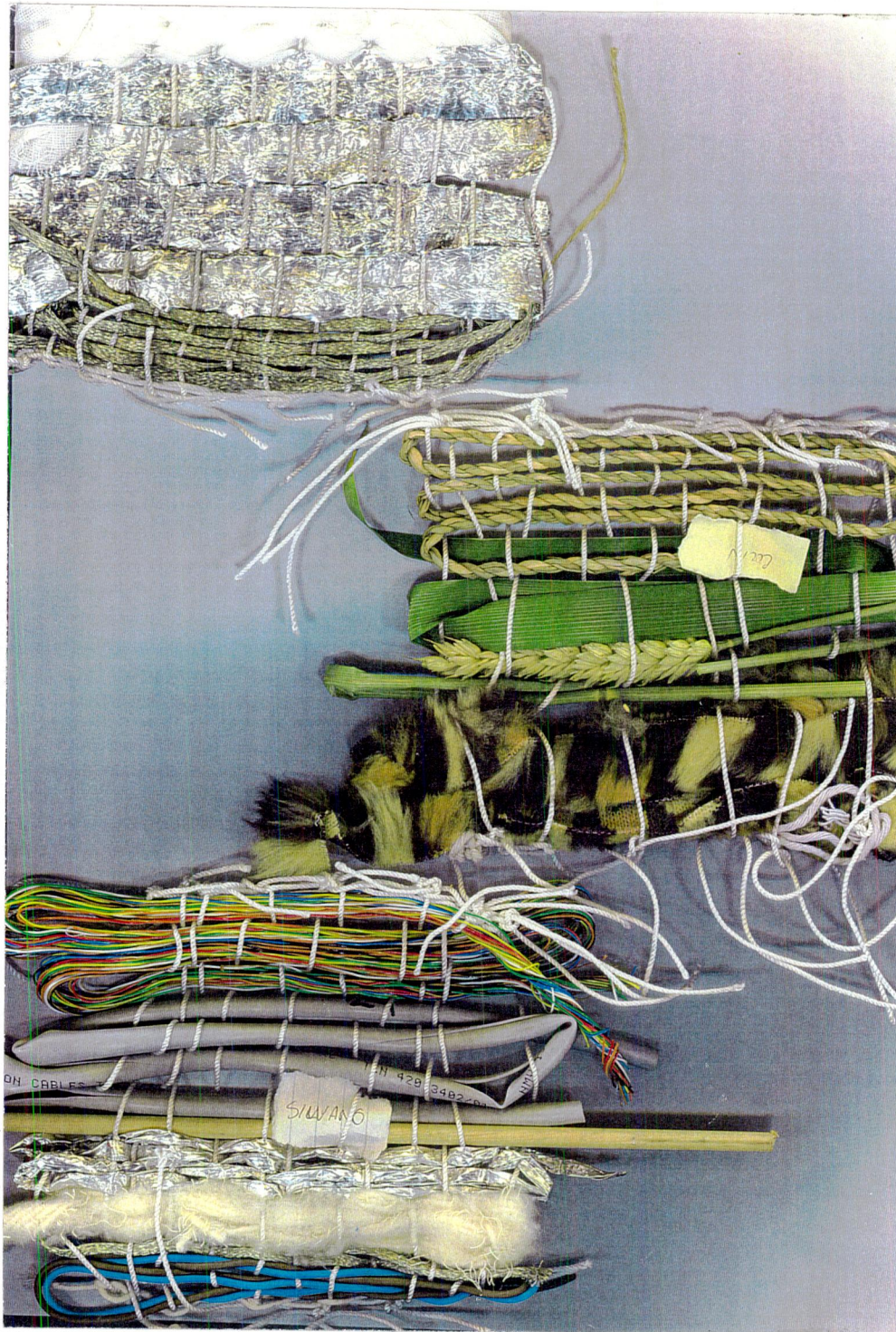


Fig 5: Student samples using man-made and natural materials



Figs 6 & 7: Woven bamboo baskets and woven chair by Ann Sutton



Figs 8 & 9: Finished work by the students

This was an important stage within the project because it clearly illustrated the typical male attitude towards textiles, that is, textile work is a female concern, and in this age of so called 'equality' and political correctness, little has been achieved in many areas to banish preconceived notions of what is a man's job and what is a woman's work. (See Appendix B for full breakdown of scheme of work).

Questionnaire #2

Once the scheme was completed and students attitudes were noted, a second questionnaire was given to students in order to confirm these attitudes. The questionnaire consisted of eight simple questions concerning textile design. (See Appendix C for full questionnaire).

The answers to the questionnaire were quite similar throughout. All students believed textile design to be the weaving of fabric, while textiles are used in everyday life in the form of clothing, a couple of students realised that the term 'textiles' included items such as curtains and furniture covering, and there was an awareness among the students of the fact that there are different types of fabrics, such as silk, linen, cotton and so on.

However, the type of person who works within textiles was described as 'an old person who could not get any other job', and the majority of students believed that men would work within the textile industry in order to earn money to pay the bills and support their families. A few students did believe that men would not work properly within the industry because it is an area that women are better suited to. Surprisingly some students were aware of men like Calvin Klein, Ralph Lauren and Giorgio Armani who work with textiles in the fashion industry.

As a result, it seems from the questionnaire that while men do work in the industry for the practical reasons mentioned above, which again reinforces the argument that boys are conditioned to look at everything in relation to whether it will result in a wage packed to support the household, textile industry is still regarded as a female discipline. The function of the textile industry and the type of products produced are well known and thought of as necessities and yet, not an area that many men would choose to work in.

While the results of Questionnaire #1 proved inconclusive, due, perhaps to the subtlety of the gendered divisions within it, the scheme of work and the subsequent questionnaire, both of which highlighted the attitudes of the students, have shown that male students, in general, are taught to see their education leading specifically to post school employment. Therefore, subjects which they do not automatically associate with future employment, such as the discipline of textiles specifically, and art, craft and design in general, are deemed as irrelevant and, therefore, a waste of time.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER III

1. Informal discussion with the students' Art Teacher on 1st November 1996.
2. Madeleine Arnot, "How shall we educate our sons?" Co Education Reconsidered, ed. Rosemary Deem (London: Open University Press, 1984) p.40-41.
3. Rosemary Deem, "Reviving The Debate", Co Education Reconsidered, ed. Rosemary Deem (London: Open University Press, 1984), p.xvii.
4. Sheelagh Drudy and Kathleen Lynch, Schools and Society in Ireland, (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1993) p.185).

CONCLUSION

Even in this age of supposed equality and political correctness, there are many attitudes which have not changed. The female is still the 'fairer' sex, tied to the kitchen sink, and the male is still the 'breadwinner' earning a living to support his dependant wife and children, as far as many people are concerned. Efforts have been made to introduce and reinforce ideas of egalitarianism. Issues for female works and fair education for female students are constantly discussed. Yet very little is mentioned about trying to change male attitudes towards areas of gender inequality. However, in order for change to occur, both parties need to be involved in the transformation.

As with any other area of inequality, education is the key to change and yet it can be argued that from a child's earliest experience with school, sex roles which are initially learnt at home are fortified in this environment. As early as nursery school children are treated differently, depending on their gender and this continues through a child's education into primary and post primary school. This educational experience effects subject choice in third level training, sustaining these gender divisions, which, in turn, effect choices in relation to participation in the workforce. The absence of women in the world of science and technology and in high status professions, can be seen to be a result of their academic choice of non-scientific disciplines earlier in their education.

Likewise the absence of men in area of Textile Design is a result of their primarily vocational training. The differential treatment which both sexes receive is so widespread and commonplace and yet, in many instances, so subtle, that most people do not even realise that these separate experiences are even occurring.

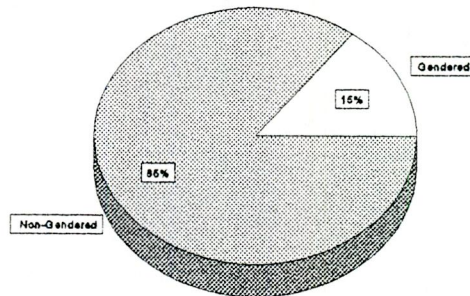
It can be seen from the study of the historical background of a subject such as Textiles, that it is taken for granted that this discipline is a female domain and yet, in the extremely sexist periods of the past both men and women participated in this area. The difficulty in obtaining information regarding the historical background of this subject, serves to highlight how little thought is given to the emergence of this, or any subject, as a gendered discipline. The Crafts Council, the Linen Museum, the Textile Federation, even the Census Board and the Irish Trade Board were contacted in the hope of obtaining relevant information concerning this emergence of Textiles as a female craft and yet, little information was available.

It is only in relatively recent years that many areas in life have been segregated by gender. By studying the historical background of many of these areas and passing this information on to the general public, attitudes may begin to change. The best way of passing this information on is through the educational establishment known as school. This should start at an early age, so that children can grow up learning that regardless of sex, every avenue is open to them, and that it is this attitude and not the already existing attitude of sexism and gender inequality, that becomes second nature and the innate way to view the world.

APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE #1 "PICK THE ODD ONE OUT"

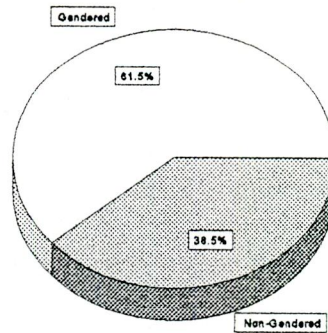
GROUP 1

A: Washing Machine, B: Vacuum Cleaner, C: Hammer, D: Iron



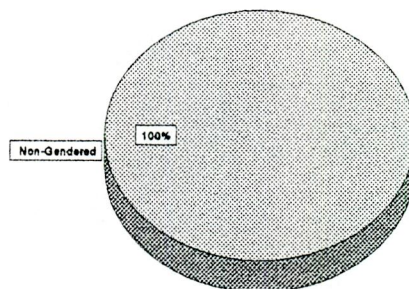
GROUP 2

A: Man's Dress Watch, B: Lady's Dress Watch, C: Man's Dress Watch
D: Man's Sports Watch



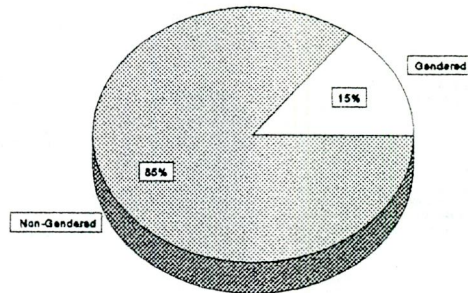
GROUP 3

A: Mobile Phone, B: Computer, C: Manual Typewriter, D: Facsimile Machine

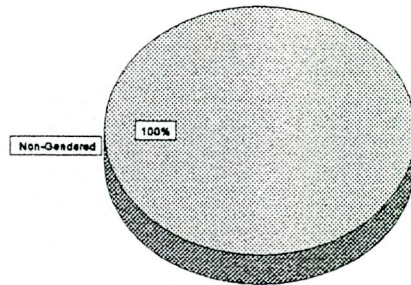


GROUP 4

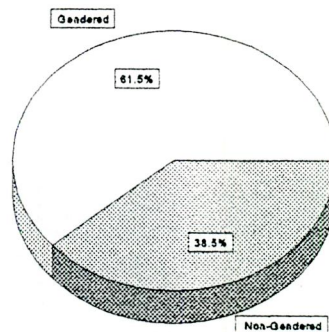
A: High heeled Shoe, B: Handbag, C: Pair of Trousers, D: Lady's Hat

**GROUP 5**

A: Champagne Glass, B: Wine Glass, C: Pint Glass, D: Wine Glass

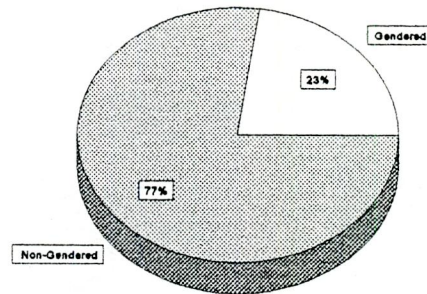
**GROUP 6**

A: Aftershave Bottle, B: Long Perfume Bottle, C: Bulb Shaped Perfume Bottle
D: Perfume Bottle

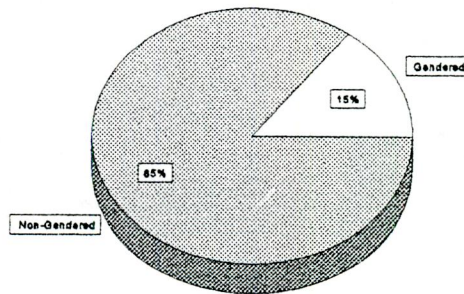


GROUP 7

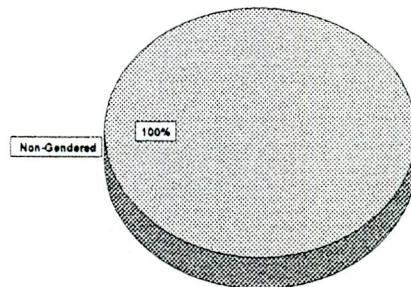
A: Jigsaw Puzzle, B: Building Blocks, C: Lego Blocks, D: Doll

**GROUP 8**

A: Lady's Sunglasses, B: Man's Sunglasses, C: Lady's Sunglasses, D: Ladies Sunglasses

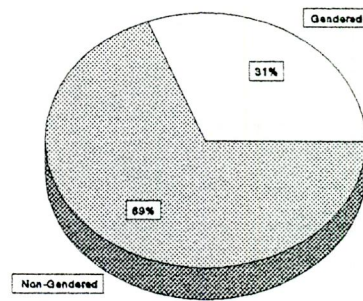
**GROUP 9**

A: Boxing Gloves, B: Golf Clubs, C: Swimming Goggles, D: Football



GROUP 10

A: Motorbike, B: Speedboat, C: Foodblender, D: Helicopter

**OVERALL RESULTS**

21% of answers = gendered responses

79% of answers = non-gendered responses

STUDENT NAME: Jenni Curran

THEME: Native American Textiles

AIM OF SEQUENCE: THE EXPLORATION OF TEXTURE RESULTING IN PRODUCTION OF MIXED MEDIA TAPESTRY BASED ON THEME

Week & Date	Class Group & Time	Introduction Motivation	Demo / Visual Aids	Source	Art Element	Task	Skill	Materials	Support Studies	Home/ Activity	Cross - Disp Connection
Wk 1	2nd Year (6) 2.00-3.10PM	DISCUSS MARKS, OBJECTS WHICH COULD BE USED TO MAKE MARKS	POSSIBLE DIFF. MARKS FOUND OBJECT - DRA. IT, ETC.		MARK MAKING	TO CREATE MARKS USING DIFFERENT OBJECTS	MARK MAKING	WHITE PAPER BACK PAINT FOUND OBJECTS	Van Gogh	TO FIND ONE OBJECT & MAKE 6 DIFFERENT MARKS	
Wk 2	2nd Year (6) 2.00-3.10PM	DISCUSS TEXTURES + HOW PAPER CAN MAKE DIFF. TEXTURES	PAPER CREATING TEXTURE - PAPER - FOLDING, ETC.	NATURAL OBJECTS	TEXTURE	TRY OUT DIFF. TEXTURES PAPER CAN CREATE ROUNDER, SQUARE	RENDERING TEXTURE	DIFF. PAPERS P.V.A WHITE PAPER		FIND OBJECT AND RENDER TEXTURE USING PAPER	
Wk 3	2nd Year (5) 2.00-3.10PM	RECAP EVALUATE + WORK DISCUSS PAINT PAPER	MIXED MEDIA WORK WITH BASIC WEAVE TECHNIQUES	PICTURES OF NATURAL OBJECTS	TEXTURE	TO PRACTISE BASIC WEAVE TECHNIQUE	"	DIFF. PAPERS P.V.A WHITE PAPER PAINT RUBBERS	PROPER MAN FOUNT - 1000 FROM BOOIL		
Wk 4	2nd Year (6) 2.00-3.10PM	DISCUSS TEXTURE MIXED MEDIA WEAVE	DEMO. BASIC WEAVE TECH.	NATURAL HAND MADE MATERIALS	WEAVE	TO WEAVE 2 SAMPLES - 1 = NATURAL 1 = HAND MADE	WEAVE	STRAN, RUBBERS, PLASTIC ELECTRICAL TAPE FOR	BAMBOO WOVEN BOARDS		
Wk 5	2nd Year (8) 2.00-3.10PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	EXAMPLES OF INDIAN WOVENS		
Wk 6	2nd Year (6) 2.00-3.10PM	DISCUSS DESIGNING PROCESS REFLECT TO PREVIOUS WORK	COLLAGE PAINTING DESIGN FOR WOVEN PAPER	STUDENT WORK	DESIGN PROCESS	TO DESIGN PAPER BASED ON PREVIOUS WORK	DESIGNING	PAPER PAINT WHITE PAPER GLUE	"		
Wk 7	2nd Year (6) 2.00-3.10PM	DISCUSS DIFF. WEAVE TECHNIQUES	WEAVE SAMPLES SHOWING DIFF. WEAVE TECHNIQUES	"	WEAVE	TO BEGIN WEAVING WOVEN PAPER	WEAVE TECHNIQUES	FABRIC BRANCHES FULL CABLE PLASTIC STRAN, RUBBERS	CONTEMPORARY WOVENS "BRITISH CRAFT TAFT" TEXTILES		
Wk 8	2nd Year (6) 2.00-3.10PM	RECAP WEAVE TECHNIQUES	"	"	"	TO CONTINUE WEAVING WOVEN PAPER	"	"	SUSPENDED WEAVE TECHNIQUES		
Wk 9, 10	2nd Year (6) 2.00-3.10PM	"	"	"	"	TO FINISH PAPER CONSTRUCT WOVEN	CONSTRUCTION	STANDS FABRIC TAPE	-		
Wk 11	2nd Year (6) 2.00-3.10PM	DISCUSS ASSESSMENT OF WOVENS	DIFF. WAYS TO JOIN PAPER	"	CONSTRUCTION	TO FINISH PAPER CONSTRUCT WOVEN	CONSTRUCTION	STANDS FABRIC TAPE	-		

POTENTIAL LESSON DEVELOPMENT:

APPENDIX B SCHEME OF WORK



APPENDIX C
QUESTIONNAIRE #2

1. What do you think textile (fabric) design is all about?

2. Are textiles used in everyday life?

3. Can you name different types of textiles?

4. Describe the type of person you think works with textiles?

5. Can you name any men who work with textiles?

6. Do you think many men would work with textiles? _____
Why / why not? _____

7. What do you think of the textile project you did in art class?

8. Would you like to work on a textile project again? _____
Why / why not? _____

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