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MOTIVATION, ANXIETY AND CREATIVITY:
The Relevance of Theoretical Perspectives
for Art at Leaving Certificate Level

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ABSTRACT

This study has been undertaken in response to my observations as a student teacher at Newpark Comprehensive School in Blackrock for the duration of the school year 1996/97. It has been my concern that the students, being placed under all manner of pressures at Leaving Certificate level, are in a position whereby they are unable to fulfil their creative potential in Art. In order to examine whether or not I am justified in suggesting such an argument, I have consulted the psychological literature, firstly to establish how best to motivate students in the school setting, and secondly to assume an understanding of consequences of examination pressure. In the context of these investigations, I have gone on to assess the place of creativity in the examination situation. Further to my research into the theories of psychologists and art educators, I have examined the Junior Certificate Art programme, so as to establish the merits of student evaluation which is primarily assessment based. Finally, in order to gather information at a local level, I have conducted a study involving a number of schools here in Dublin; Art teachers have been asked to respond to a questionnaire, the results of which have reinforced my argument.

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In Chapter One, I will examine a number of theoretical perspectives on motivation, so as to establish the case for the implementation of "proper motivation", (2) so that students might be in a position to express their creative potential through Art. Later in the chapter, I will discuss some of the purposes and effects of examinations, for Art at Leaving Certificate level is characterised by a series of

The concerns of this study have been summarised by Lowenfeld and Brittain in the above excerpt from **Creative and Mental Growth** (1970). Over the past months, I have had the privilege of working with a sixth year group of students at Newpark Comprehensive School in Blackrock, who have been studying Art at Leaving Certificate level. During this time, I have observed among these students a certain degree of anxiety. Whilst one may argue that this is an absolutely acceptable occurrence, I should like to draw attention to the fact that perhaps these feelings of apprehension are a potential block to creative behaviour.

If a child is found to be restricted in his creative expression yet highly developed intellectually, he must be provided with the opportunity to achieve a balance. Art can perform this function through proper motivation. Our present education system suffers from an over-emphasis on intellectual growth. The acquisition of knowledge remains the aim of education. It may be more important for the child to gain freedom in expression than to gather factual information. Knowledge unused is meaningless until the child develops the urge and freedom to use it. (1)

INTRODUCTION

set-time examinations. I should like to consider the significance of this factor in relation to my observations. Finally, I will attempt to define creativity, considering its place in the context of an examination-governed environment.

Chapter Two will focus on the programmes for Art at Junior and Senior cycle. Whilst some reference will be made to the literature reviewed in Chapter One, I will discuss some recent statistics in relation to student performance at Junior and Leaving Certificate level, in order to establish whether or not students are being affected by the potential pressures that present themselves at Leaving Certificate level.

In Chapter Three, I have made some suggestions as to the relationship between motivation, anxiety and creativity, through analysis of the information discussed in Chapters One and Two. Taking into consideration the evidence for a connection between these, I compiled a questionnaire, which was completed by teachers of Art in various schools. The results of the study either acknowledged or disparaged my argument for an alternative means of evaluation in Art at Leaving Certificate level. Regardless, my primary concern is for the welfare of the students; that they might be given the opportunity to express themselves in an environment which nurtures creativity.

FOOTNOTES INTRODUCTION

1. Viktor Lowenfeld and W. Lambert Brittain, Creative and Mental Growth (New York: MacMillan, 1970), p. 27.
2. Ibid.

CHAPTER 1

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Theories of Motivation

The literature reveals that motivational theory can be categorised in terms of three approaches, these being the behaviouristic, humanistic and cognitive perspectives. (1) Essentially, motivational theory attempts to explain why we do certain things; providing us with insights into the circumstances under which we will be most interested in carrying out any given task. Behaviourism is concerned with how the consequences of behaviour regulate and control actions; emphasis being on **external** motivation, such as praise and reward. External motivation, by definition, comes from outside the individual, appealing to motives which are directed toward the need for confidence and personal achievement. (2) Humanism, on the other hand, is concerned with the autonomy, dignity and worth of the Self; emphasising the central role of **internal** motives, and the need for competence and actualisation of one's potential. Internal motivation is that which drives the individual in the desire to know, the urge to explore, and the need to master one's environment. (3) Finally, cognitivism concerns itself with the significance of the mental processes which enable the individual to know, think and remember; in this instance, emphasis is on the need for knowledge and understanding in order for learning to be successful. (4)

All of the above mentioned schools of thought would surely agree that "without motivation, achievement is doubtful, and where achievement exists, one can be fairly certain that motivation preceded it." (5) Nevertheless, it is not enough to ask if one's students are interested in the subject called Art to establish levels of motivation for art activity; the issue of motivation is a far more complex one, as we will discover. Upon closer inspection of the various theories of motivation and the work of their respective theorists, it will become apparent that whilst it is possible for us to motivate our students "for the purpose of causing the pupil to perform in a desired way," (6) there is a need to address the wider issues, such as providing a learning environment where the student is encouraged to be a positive, responsible and active agent in society by "emphasising their personal and social creativity"; (7) teaching students to assume their individuality. (8)

Behaviourism

The behaviourist perspective plays a major role in our study of motivation; it acts as a highly efficient model through which student behaviour can be modified by external means. **B.F. Skinner** (1904-1990) is perhaps the most significant theorist to have emerged from this school of thought. (9)

The Skinner Box

Skinner began his research in a laboratory setting. His theory of **operant conditioning** (1938) was developed from experiments conducted with the use of rats and the "Skinner Box"; the rats were placed in a small enclosure, which contained nothing more than a bar and a small tray, which was connected to a supply of food pellets (fig. 1.1). Skinner was able to train the rats to respond to the sound of a specific tone, at which time they pressed the bar and were immediately rewarded with a pellet of food. It should be emphasised that Skinner's work with these animals evolved into the development of more complex behaviour. (10) Due to his success in getting animals to learn new types of behaviour, Skinner concluded that similar approaches could be used to shape human behaviour. (11) He saw traditional techniques of schooling as "terribly confused and inefficient", (12) and maintained that children were not receiving sufficient feedback with regard to their schoolwork. Perhaps it was Skinner's daughter, whom he observed, studying most diligently to avoid negative consequences, such as being punished or to avoid a low

grade, that compelled him to apply his theory to the context of education.

Basic Principles of Operant Conditioning

All behaviour is accompanied by certain consequences, and these consequences can influence whether or not a certain behaviour is repeated. Generally, these consequences are either positive or negative, and these will strengthen or weaken the likelihood of the behaviour being repeated under similar circumstances. When consequences strengthen the likelihood of a certain behaviour being repeated, the term reinforcement is used. Reinforcement can be either positive or negative. (13)

Positive Reinforcement

Positive reinforcement is concerned with increasing the likelihood of a certain behaviour being repeated. By introducing a positive stimulus, for example praise, money or some other reward, immediately after the desired behaviour has occurred, this positive stimulus acts as a positive reinforcer. The results of positive reinforcement can be seen in the practice of spending more time studying for a certain subject because of a compliment from the teacher or a high grade on an examination paper; the student is motivated to practice a desired behaviour so as to obtain the positive reinforcer. (14)

Negative Reinforcement

The goal of negative reinforcement is the same as positive reinforcement; that is, to increase the likelihood of a desired behaviour. However, in this instance, instead of providing a positive stimulus, an unwanted stimulus is removed whenever the desired behaviour is exhibited by the student. Therefore, the student is motivated to adopt a desired behaviour so as to avoid the unpleasant stimulus.

(15)

Task as a Means to an End

Following Skinner's model, many behavioural learning theorists have perfected techniques of behaviour modification. Students are motivated to complete a task by being promised a reward of some kind. However, when a student studies in order to receive praise or to earn a high grade, they are experiencing **extrinsic motivation**; the learner sees the task as a means to an end. Ideally, students should study a subject for its own sake, regardless of any reward; driven by **intrinsic motivation**. Unfortunately, it is not just in school that students are being driven by external motives. Often, the individual is motivated to engage in an activity so as to obtain certificates, prizes, public recognition or acceptance of some kind. Similarly, at school students are often motivated to learn or to study because the grades that they obtain can be used to get into college, and in turn, third-level achievement provides the individual with better job opportunities, and so on. (16)

Excessive Use of Rewards

Whilst it may be necessary to motivate the student to learn by offering them some kind of reward initially, it is important to mention that excessive use of rewards may lead to problems. The student may feel that they are being manipulated and resent the fact that they need to achieve in order to gain approval. Another danger exists in the situation whereby the student sees learning as a temporary means to an end; as soon as the examination is over and the extrinsic goal has been achieved, the student forgets the information, and may even go so far as to avoid a particular subject in the future. In this case, the student is unlikely to benefit from the learning. Finally, this over-emphasis on praise and reward, may lead the student to an ultimate dependancy on teachers. (17)

Undermining Intrinsic Motivation

Researcher, Mark Morgan (1984), has analysed the circumstances under which external rewards either undermine or enhance intrinsic motivation at school. The student's perception of the relationship between performance and reward is important. If a student is under the impression that once they complete a given task, regardless of quality, they will be rewarded, then they are likely to show a decrease in intrinsic motivation. The reason for this is that humans have a natural drive toward achievement, and if our level of competence or quality of performance with regard to a given task is not acknowledged, then we are not

inclined to pursue it to the best of our ability.

Enhancing Intrinsic Motivation

Morgan also provides us with a case for the enhancement of intrinsic motivation as a result of the use of external rewards; when rewards are given in relation to some predetermined standard of excellence, when the task is moderately challenging, and when the reward is relatively large, then intrinsic interest in the task is likely to increase. Intrinsic motivation can also be enhanced when a task is moderately challenging and the size of the reward is consistent with the individual's perceived level of skill. For instance, if a student wins first prize in an art competition, and they believe that their contribution is worthy of this honour, then the reward may encourage the student to maintain an interest in Art. (18)

Whilst motivation, in terms of the behaviourist perspective, finds its roots in a laboratory setting, Skinner's theory of operant conditioning or behavioural modification has considerable worth for application in the school environment. Skinner's theory should be seen as a potential aid to learning; increasing, eliminating, shaping and improving student behaviour. The merits of reinforcement are far reaching, in that teachers can potentially apply effective and humane methods in order to change student behaviour. However, there is also a danger in that students may become over-dependent on extrinsic forms of motivation,

thus subverting personal growth. The satisfaction experienced in expressing one's own feelings and emotions in Art, that which intrinsically motivates the individual, is not taken into consideration. Lowenfeld and Brittain (1970) argue that "art activity cannot be imposed but must come as a spirit from within", (19) but is this possible in the school setting? We will investigate humanist motivational theory in light of this statement.



Fig. 1.1 A Rat in a Skinner Box.

The rat's behaviour is reinforced with a food pellet when it presses the bar under the conditions preselected by the experimenter.

(Source: Biehler and Snowman, Psychology Applied to Teaching, p. 326)

Humanism

The work of **Abraham Maslow** (1908-1970) is in opposition to that of psychologists who endorse the behaviourist view. He argues that they have become so obsessed with observable behaviour and objectivity that they are ignoring some of the most important aspects of human existence. He proposes that the individual essentially seeks "fulfilling experiences." (20) In support of this statement, Maslow has developed a theory of **self-actualisation**. It is his understanding that each individual is born with an essential inner nature, which is shaped by experiences and unconscious thoughts and feelings, but is not dominated by these. (21)

Hierarchy of Needs

It is important to note that Maslow's primary concern is with motivation, and he believes that the most important principle underpinning all human motivation is "the tendency for a new and higher need to emerge as the lower need fulfills itself by being sufficiently gratified" (1968). (22) This leads us to a multi-level **hierarchy of needs** (1970), the descriptive model takes the form of a pyramid (fig. 1.2). This pyramid shape is used, not only to demonstrate the hierarchical arrangement, but also to emphasise the broad base of physiological and safety factors that need to be satisfied before other possible needs are likely to be considered. (23) Therefore, the order which Maslow defines, reflects differences in the strength of each need; the lower a need on the hierarchic scale, the greater

its strength. When a lower need is activated; hunger or fear, for instance, the individual will stop trying to satisfy a higher-level need, such as esteem or self-actualisation, rather the focus will be shifted to the satisfactory fulfilment of the basic need. (24)

Deficiency versus Growth Needs

The first four need-levels include physiological, safety, belongingness and love and self-esteem. These are classed as **deficiency needs** which motivate the individual to act only when they are unmet. Self-actualisation, on the other hand, is defined as a **growth need** because the individual constantly strives to fulfil it. Self-actualisation refers to the need for self-fulfilment, or the need to develop all of one's potential talents and capabilities. Whilst self-actualisation is dependent on the satisfaction of the lower need-levels, it is also necessary for cognitive needs, such as knowledge and understanding, as well as a belief in aesthetic values such as goodness, beauty, truth, autonomy, humour and justice, to be addressed. With regard to the importance of these, Maslow maintains that conditions such as freedom to investigate and learn, fairness, honesty and orderliness in interpersonal relationships are vital; for without these, the satisfaction of the basic needs would be impossible to achieve. (25) He goes on to emphasise that the teacher must ensure that the basic needs of the student are met, so that they may function at the higher levels of the hierarchic table. (26) However, there are any number of factors that can affect a student's inclination to learn in

the school setting. It is only under highly favourable circumstances that the need for self-actualisation occurs, and even then, the individual is at liberty to choose whether in fact they wish to activate this need:

...children should be allowed to make many choices about their own development. Parents and teachers play a significant role in preparing children to make wise choices by satisfying their physiological, safety, love, belonging and esteem needs, but they should do this by helping and letting children grow, not by attempting to shape or control the way they grow. (27)

This statement emphasises the conflict of interests which exists between the behaviourist and humanist perspectives. Whilst the behaviourists endeavour to "shape and control" student behaviour, Maslow sees the role of the adult as something quite different. The adult is a facilitator; providing guidance and, as much as possible, meeting the basic needs of the child, so that they might make "wise choices." (28)

Maslow suggests that there are good and bad choosers (1968); some students will make wise choices, whilst others have a tendency to make self-destructive ones:

Every human being has [two] sets of forces within him. One set clings to safety and defensiveness out of fear, tending to regress backward, hanging on to the past, afraid to grow...afraid to take chances, afraid to jeopardise what he already has, afraid of independence, freedom and separateness. The other set of forces

impels him forward toward wholeness of Self and uniqueness of Self, toward full functioning of all his capacities, toward confidence in the face of the external world at the same time that he can accept his deepest, real, unconscious Self. (29)

Maslow sees growth as the result of "a never-ending series of situations offering a free choice between the attractions and dangers of safety and those of growth" (1968). The individual should be encouraged to make growth choices, firstly through the fulfilment of deficiency needs, then by making the growth choice more attractive and less dangerous, and by making the safe choice seem less attractive and more costly. (30)

The instance whereby a student is placed in a learning situation which is characterised by the individual feeling threatened, or in danger, or feeling that the learning is of little value to them is illustrated in Fig. 1.3. In this case, it is highly likely that the student will want to play it safe, make little effort to respond, or even try to avoid learning. On the other hand, if the situation is made to seem appealing to the individual; involving minimal pressure, and a reduction in the possibility of failure or embarrassment, then the individual is likely to be more willing to take part in the proposed task. (31)

Whilst Maslow's model is highly informative, it is often difficult to pin-point the exact reason for a student's inability to focus in the school situation. (32)

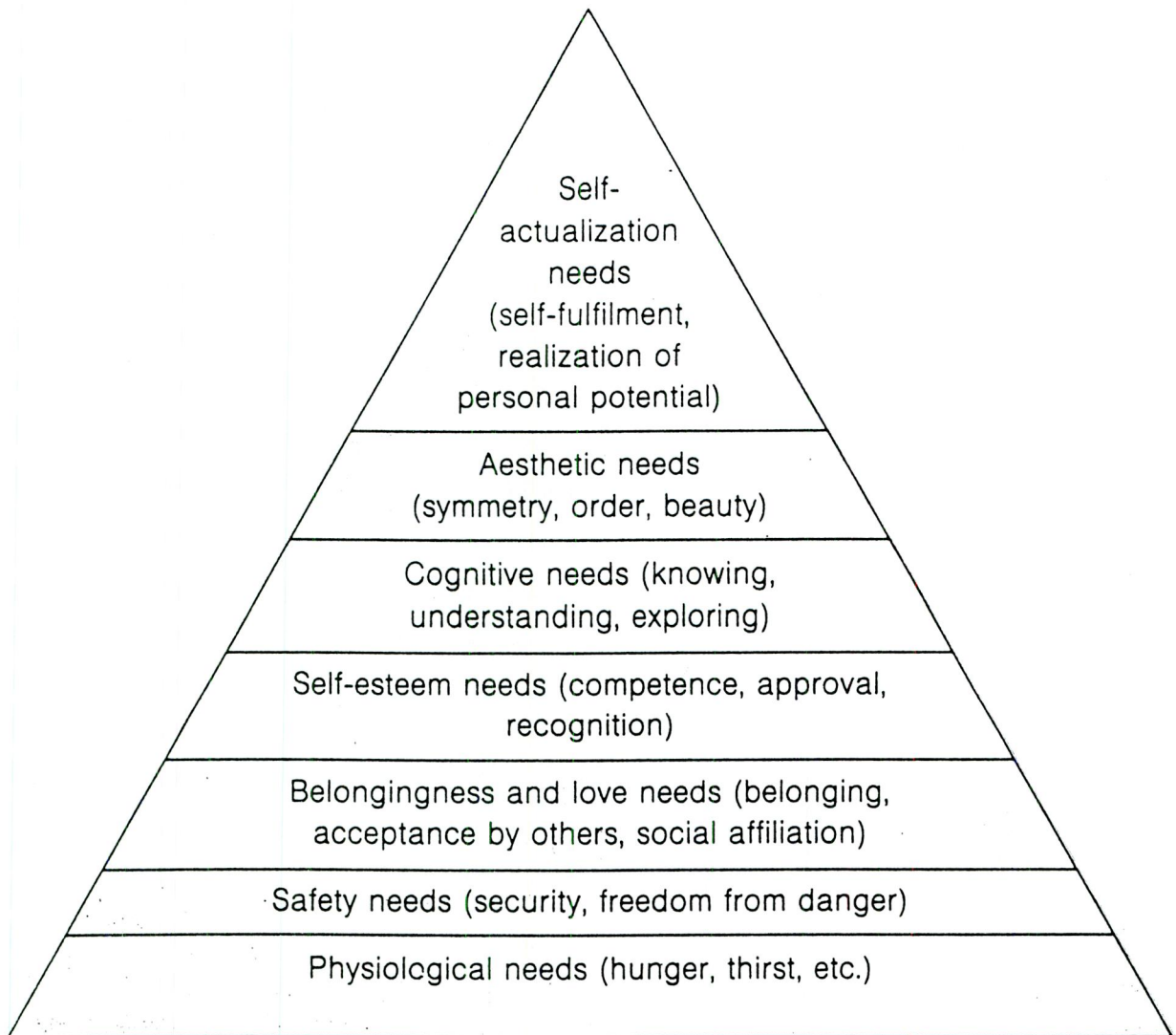


Fig 1.2 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

Maslow's model takes the form of a hierarchy going from personal needs at the bottom to intellectual ones at the top.

(Source: Fontana, Psychology for Teachers, p. 218)

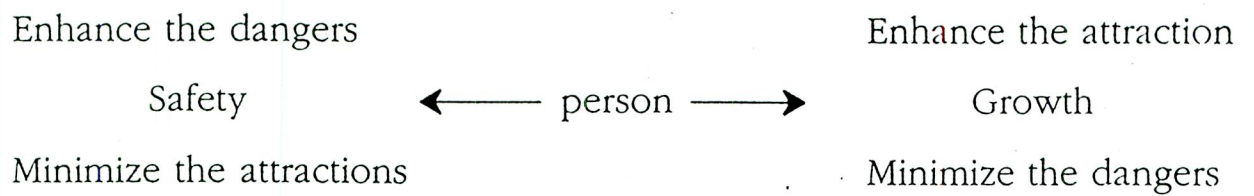


Fig. 1.3 Encouraging Growth Choices by Enhancing the Attractions and Minimising the Dangers.

(Source: Biehler and Snowman, Psychology Applied to Teaching, p. 518)

Cognitivism

The cognitive view of motivation stresses that human behaviour is influenced by the way that the individual perceives things. The individual, being faced with a certain problem or situation, feels the need to overcome it. Therefore, they evaluate the situation, and respond accordingly. (33)

Instrumental Conceptualism

American psychologist, **Jerome Bruner** is interested in the concept of meaningful learning and the discovery approach to education (1951). Bruner sees the individual as an active agent in the learning process. (34) Whilst Skinner, as we have already discussed, sees the learner's response to a given stimulus as the result of reinforcement, Bruner describes the learner as taking the information and processing it; coding and classifying it in accordance with their own understanding of the world. Thus, the individual responds to the stimulus in their own individual and subjective manner. The term used to describe the individual's response is instrumental conceptualism (1966). (35)

Spiral Curriculum

In **The Process of Education** (1960), Bruner discusses the need for the teacher to assist students in grasping the structure of a field of study. He believes that an understanding of the structure provides an understanding of

the basic ideas and the relationship between them. More importantly, once students are helped to grasp the structure of a field of study, they are more likely to remember what they learn. According to Bruner, once the basic principles are understood, they can then be applied to a variety of situations, thus preparing the student for mastering more complex knowledge. (36)

In **The Relevance of Education** (1971), Bruner addresses the issue of whether children are capable of grasping the meaning of fundamental ideas. Bruner suggests that children of different ages perceive the world in different ways, but he argues that even young children can grasp the essence of basic ideas, even though their interpretation is simplified and highly intuitive. The important factor here is that in order for understanding to occur, information needs to be geared to the level of the child. This concept of a spiral curriculum; where material is presented initially in its most basic form, and reintroduced in a more complex form at a later stage, is an attempt to cultivate understanding. (37)

Discovery Learning

Bruner argues that all too often learning takes the form of step-by-step formulae. He has observed that whilst students can readily recite information, they are unable to apply it outside the classroom situation. As previously mentioned (regarding the dangers inherent in the excessive use of

rewards), Bruner sees the over-structured learning environment as creating too high a dependency on rewards.

(38)

Instead, Bruner would like to see students being encouraged to think for themselves. He suggests that teachers should confront students with problems and help them to come up with solutions. He defines **true learning** (1983) as "involving figuring out how to use what you already know in order to go beyond what you already think." (39)

Bruner maintains that solutions reached by students on their own, are usually far more rewarding than those proposed by others. In this situation extrinsic forms of reward are not necessary. In addition to this, when students are given opportunities to reach their own solutions, not only do they develop problem-solving skills, but they also acquire confidence in their own learning abilities; "they learn how to learn as they learn." (40) The concept of discovery learning should not be misinterpreted; that is, students should not be left to discover every fact for themselves, rather that the outcomes of this approach to learning should include an understanding of the ways in which ideas connect with one another, the possibility of solving problems alone, and a comprehension of the relevance of what students already know to what they are learning afresh. (41)

There are limitations with regard to any theory, and

Bruner's is no exception; often it is difficult to motivate students to the point where they wish to find the answers to a problem themselves, this being particularly true if a solution can only be reached after an extensive period of time, during which a lot of material has to be covered and extensive skills learned. (42)

CHAPTER 1

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Purposes and Effects of Examinations

From our discussion of motivation we find that it involves a state of tension of some kind; in reference to the cognitive perspective: "the individual, being faced with a certain problem, feels the need to overcome it." (43)

In this section we will investigate the relationship between levels of motivation and student performance. Does an increase in motivation give rise to higher levels of performance? And is it necessarily the case that highly motivated (or highly anxious) students do better than others in a given task? Two of the primary factors which have been examined in connection with these issues are the **level of motivation** or arousal, and the **difficulty of the task**. (44) Researchers, Yerkes and Dodson (1908), conducting studies on rats, found that "an optimum is reached beyond which performance increasingly deteriorates." (45) Fig. 1.4 shows a theoretical representation of the relationship between arousal and performance. If we consider a simple undertaking, such as tying one's shoelaces; such a task is unlikely to cause any concern, even in the most trying of circumstances. However, in relation to a more demanding task, where levels of motivation or arousal are high, such as sitting an examination, the situation does not need to become too complex before we begin to make mistakes. Whilst

Yerkes and Dodson's findings are based on the performance of rats and not human beings, there is still reason to believe that in highly demanding situations, or with highly anxious individuals, interference with performance is evident from the outset of the task. Thus, as the stress mounts, performance can be seen to deteriorate immediately. If we refer back to Fig. 1.4, it can be seen that where arousal levels are high, the individual may be at point A from the outset of the task; point A is beyond the peak of performance. (46) Whilst moderate levels of tension or anxiety have been seen to promote learning, it is important to consider the level of tension that can be tolerated by the learner before the climate becomes so stressful as to interfere with performance. (47)

In the context of the present study, it should be of value to reflect upon some of the purposes and effects of examinations:

Examinations have been said to bring out qualities of perseverance and industriousness. They are thought to give practice in expressing ideas lucidly, fluently and quickly. They compel students to organise their ideas and develop systems of study and concentration which may be adapted for service in later life. (48)

Attempting to assess the quality and quantity of learning has been, and probably always will be, a regular feature of classroom practice.

Some Purposes of Examinations

One of the teacher's objectives is to stimulate the acquisition, understanding and application of knowledge. In order to assess the degree to which these objectives have been achieved evaluation must occur. Therefore, the **evaluation of attainment** is one of the central aims of examinations. (49)

It is realistic to assume that beyond school, potential employers, professions and colleges need some assurances as to the level of competence reached by any individual. For this purpose, national examination results provide an objective and credible criteria for the assessment of an individual's competence. By comparing the attainments of a group of people who have all taken the same examination, one can easily categorise the strengths and weaknesses of the individuals. (50)

Whilst this system may seem fair, there are many variables that can interfere with a student's performance in a set-time examination situation. Take for instance the student who fails at an examination; this result would imply that he or she has little or no understanding of the subject in question. However, if we take time to think about the fact that the student has spent two years at Leaving Certificate Level in preparation for the examination, the failure may not entirely be the fault of that individual.

Perhaps the examination paper is not all that it should be, in that it may not be objective enough. An objective paper should as much as possible, endeavour to cover the syllabus, so as to allow each student to show his or her knowledge of the subject matter covered. Another major factor that pre-supposes student performance in an examination situation is that of teacher competence. The ways in which a teacher treats students and course work in the classroom situation will be reflected in the examination results. However, student success in an examination situation can serve as a **means by which to achieve career aspirations**, therefore the long term prospect of obtaining a qualification and a good job can sufficiently motivate a student in Art. (51)

Some Limitations of Examinations

Whilst set-time examinations are the preferred means of evaluative assessment used at Leaving Certificate level Art, there are many problems associated with this method. It has been suggested by many teachers that both they and their pupils have to make many omissions in their course work, on account of the fact that they get caught up in the **frenzied scramble** toward the examination or assessment. The idea of the examination dictating the content of the curriculum and methods of teaching is known as the **backwash effect**. There is a tendency toward question prediction (guessing in advance the content of the exam questions), which is in direct conflict with the concept of a syllabus intended to give students a comprehensive grounding in a subject. (52)

Some Effects of Examinations

Spielberger (1966) has separated **anxiety** into two categories. The first of these is anxiety as a trait; this defines anxiety as a stable characteristic of an individual's personality, which allows them to feel threatened by a wide range of conditions. The second category recognises anxiety as a state; in this case, anxiety is a temporary characteristic, related to a specific situation. For instance, an individual may at a particular time, feel anxious about an examination. (53)

Research has been conducted in relation to anxiety as a state, with particular emphasis on **examination-induced anxiety** (Sarason, Davidson, Waite and Ruebush, 1960). These studies have shown that high anxiety students do not perform as well at certain kinds of tasks as do low anxiety students. These tasks are characterised by challenge, difficulty, evaluation of performance and time pressure. Fig. 1.5 illustrates the performance of high and low anxiety students on two similar tasks. The first task was carried out under pressured conditions (time restraints), whilst the second was not (no time restraints). It is interesting to note that the high anxiety students did not perform so well on the timed task, whilst the low anxiety students did not achieve on the untimed task. This research shows that highly anxious students are at a disadvantage in high pressure situations. However, the positive effects of

anxiety in relation to performance, can be seen in the case of the unpressured situation, whereby students were strongly motivated by this high level of anxiety. (54) The following observations have been made by Tobias (1979) concerning the affects of anxiety on students:

...anxiety can affect how well students
(1) receive information, (2) process information
and (3) retrieve processed information.

Firstly, there is the need to go back over information, so that students might properly receive it, during the period of anxiety. Material should be highly organised, and be given at a lower level of complexity to ensure that optimum learning takes place. Finally, as a means by which to prepare students for the ultimate confrontation with the examination, it is suggested that students be given take-home tests and assignments, as opposed to being given in-class tests. (55)

Examination-induced Anxiety and B.F.Skinner's theory of Operant Conditioning

Some students experience feelings of nausea as a direct result of examination anxiety. This condition can be attributed to some earlier experience. The individual who reacts to examinations in this way has made an association between examination result and feelings of failure, whether real or imagined; the disappointment of teachers and

parents, and ridicule from their peers. Therefore, the conditioned stimulus, that being the announcement of an examination, triggers the conditioned response, which is anxiety. (56)

As we have already mentioned, it has been found that moderate amounts of anxiety can improve student performance. Fig. 1.6 shows that when anxiety is either very high or very low, student performance decreases. (57) It is necessary to find a balance; that is, to reduce motivational levels in the case of highly anxious students, whilst increasing that of students who show too little concern with regard to their studies.

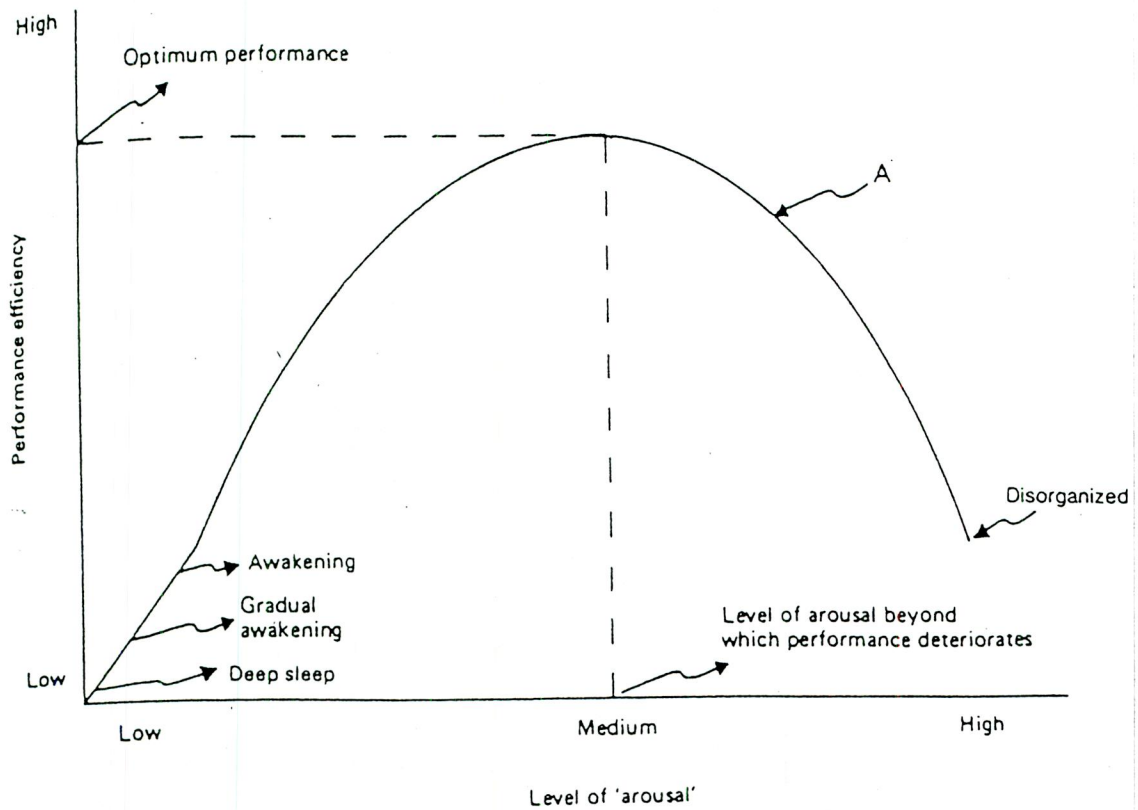


Fig. 1.4 Hypothetical Relationship Between Arousal and Performance Efficiency.

Yerkes and Dodson (1908), conducting studies on rats, found that an optimum is reached beyond which performance increasingly deteriorates.

(Source: Child, Psychology and the Teacher, p. 59)

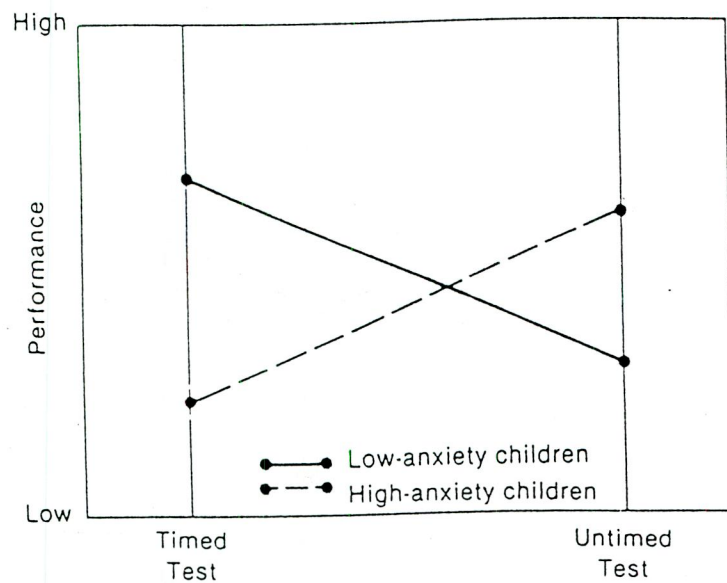


Fig. 1.5 Performance on Two Tasks of Children with High and Low General Anxiety.

Sarason, Davidson, Waite and Ruebush (1960), have conducted research which has shown that high anxiety students do not perform as well at certain kinds of tasks as do low anxiety students.

(Source: Gage and Berliner, Educational Psychology, p. 160)

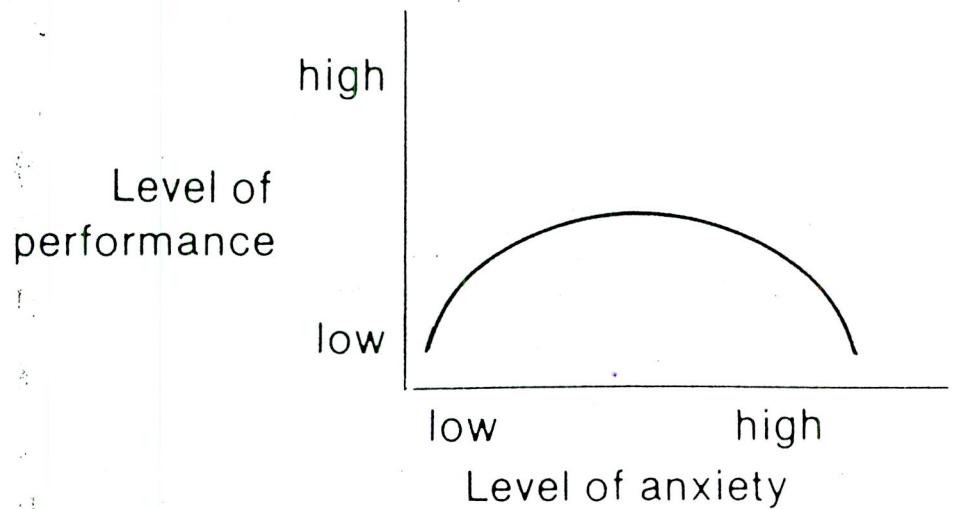


Fig. 1.6 Schematic Representation of the Relationship Between Anxiety and Performance.

When anxiety is very high or very low, performance decreases. The problem is finding a balance, to bring the motivational levels down in the case of highly anxious students and up in the case of students who show too little anxiety.

(Source: Gage and Berliner, Educational Psychology, p. 653)

CHAPTER 1

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Creativity and Examinations

In terms of an exact definition, creativity is not easily described. According to James E. Russell (1967) creativity is "the openness of response, the ease with which a person expresses curiosity, spontaneity, and the valuing of the non-conventional connection". (58) He maintains that these characteristics are ingrained in the very nature of young children; always spontaneous, open, free and unconventional in their responses. However, during the course of education, so intent are we to mould children into the shape of society, that the highly creative nature of the child is replaced by more conforming characteristics. Art has the potential to allow students to use these natural abilities that otherwise would go unrecognised. (59) Moreover, by learning to approach Art as a form of active, analytical investigation; "by observing, comparing, experimenting, evaluating, and reaching one's own conclusions", students will benefit, not only in other school activities but also in their lives outside school. (60)

Creativity, as defined by Howard Gardner, has much to do with "getting to know the subject in great detail, and then being willing to take that knowledge and use it in new kinds of ways." (61) He draws attention to the fact that the

inclination to use knowledge in new ways is a personality and value feature as much as a cognitive one. Gardner emphasises the need to look at creativity in terms of seven largely unrelated types of intelligence, which he refers to as the **multiple intelligences** (1983); linguistic, logical and mathematical, visual and spatial, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal and intrapersonal. He maintains that creativity can occur in any one of these domains; creativity representing the highest level of functioning in the specific domain. Gardner's definition brings us to the understanding that creativity should not be confined to a single event or quality, rather that creativity can be seen in the creative process, the creative product, or even in the creative person. (62)

Guilford (1959) suggests that creativity involves "fluency, flexibility and originality". (63) In the early 1950's, he introduced his **model of the intellect**, in which he suggested several cognitive operations, amongst which he included **convergent and divergent thinking**. Whilst the convergent thinker has the capacity to deal with problems which require one accepted solution, obtainable from the information available to them, the divergent thinker is able to respond to problems requiring the generation of several equally acceptable solutions; emphasis in this case, being on the quantity, variety and originality of response. (64) In a comparison study of the effects of convergent versus divergent approaches to teaching art, Madeja (1967) found

that divergent methods of instruction were most successful amongst high achievers, whilst convergent approaches were more favourable with students who demonstrated a lower aptitude in Art. This study brings us to the conclusion that motivations vary for different groups. Whilst students of high ability would be motivated by the challenge of an ambiguous situation; rich with opportunities for flexibility and originality, low ability students would be inclined to respond more readily to a situation which is easily definable in terms of its limitations and rewards. (65)

L.L.Lowe (1983) suggests that creative teaching and learning emerge out of recognition of the importance and validity of self-initiated learning, from flexible and non-authoritarian instructional methods, and from approaches that value reasoning, questioning, and the manipulation of ideas and materials. Creativity is fostered by the teacher who embraces individuality and creativity in students, by the culture that rewards rather than punishes those who produce work with originality, and by a classroom climate that promotes, rather than stifles expressions of creativity. (66)

In their study involving the relationship between **creativity and intelligence**, Wallach and Kogan (1965) identified four groups of students classified as high or low on intelligence and creativity, respectively. The purpose of the study was to establish characteristics that might differ among the

four groups. The results of the study show highly creative but less intelligent students (in the conventional sense) to be most frustrated within the school system, whilst highly intelligent but less creative students are addicted to school and well-liked by their teachers. Whilst it is important to keep in mind that this study is representative of extremes of measured intelligence and creativity, it provides some insight as to the problems faced by students who are not compatible with the school system. (67)

In his article "The State of Art Education Today, and Some Potential Remedies", American psychologist Elliot Eisner (1978) observes that "we live in a culture that regards objectivity and technology as prime virtues. For the arts, such virtues cause problems." (68) He regards objectivity as a means by which the evaluation of student ability has the mark of scientific method. Of course, it is necessary to evaluate work in accordance with some pre-determined criteria. Nevertheless, Eisner argues that many of the standardised methods, however highly efficient, are not easily adopted by the arts:

Efficient methods pre-suppose clearcut goals, something alien to the arts, where surprise, ambiguity, and flexible purposing are characteristic. (69)

He suggests that, whilst efficiency focuses upon goals, the arts pay much attention to "the quality of life elicited by the process" also. He goes on to emphasise that efficiency

"pre-supposes a linear conception of rationality," where there is only one route to the end product. Eisner suggests that by their nature, the arts adopt "a much more organic orientation to rationality where what is an end, and what is a means are far from clear and where the speed of arriving at a destination is not always regarded as a virtue." (70) The problem remains however, that Art must be evaluated somehow.

Viktor Lowenfeld supports Eisner's view. He sees that the primary goal of Art education is to "reinforce individualistic thinking" in the adolescent. (71) Like Eisner, he maintains that an Art programme that is primarily concerned with product may entirely miss one of the basic reasons for the existence of Art in the school programme, which is "the personal involvement of the individual and the opportunity for developing a depth of meaningful expression." (72)

Whilst the Art teacher can encourage the student to be expressive in their work, the nature of the examination has the capacity to interfere with this environment. In my experience students are consistently questioning the validity of their work in the context of the examination. Howard Gardner observes that it is not just the students who are fearful of the examination:

...neither teachers nor students are willing to undertake "risks for understanding"; instead, they content themselves with safer "correct answer

compromises". Under such compromises, both teachers and students are able to provide answers that have been sanctioned as correct. Of course, in the long run, such a compromise is not a happy one, for genuine understandings cannot come about as long as one accepts ritualised, rote, or conventionalised performances. (73)

According to Gardner, it is standardised testing that is the problem, and he proposes an alternative means by which to evaluate student performance in art; that is, through assessment. Were a portfolio system introduced, it would be possible for students, teachers and parents to get a more balanced picture of the individual's knowledge and accomplishment in art. Assessment recognises the organic and developmental nature of art, the teacher playing a supportive role. Most importantly, assessment acknowledges the individual. (74)

It is important that we acknowledge the alternative to the present system of evaluation at Leaving Certificate level. In the next chapter we will compare one evaluative system with another, for we have taken on board the suggestions of Gardner to a certain extent.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 1

Theories of Motivation

1. Guy R. Lefrancois, Psychology for Teachers (California: Wadsworth, 1991), p. 286.
2. George W. Hardiman and Theodore Zernich, Foundations for Development and Evaluation in Art Education (Illinois: Stipes, 1981), p. 432.
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7. Department of Education, Charting Our Educational Future: White Paper on Education (Dublin: The Stationery Office, 1995), p. 21.
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9. David Fontana, Psychology for Teachers (London: MacMillan Press, 1995), p. 143.
10. Robert F. Biehler and Jack Snowman, Psychology Applied to Teaching (London: Houghton Mifflin, 1993), p. 326-327.
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30. Ibid.
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32. Lefrancois, Psychology for Teachers, p. 152.
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40. Ibid.
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44. Child, Psychology and the Teacher, p. 58.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid., p. 60.
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48. Child, Psychology and the Teacher, p. 313.
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52. Ibid.
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58. Hardiman and Zernich, Foundations for Development and Evaluation in Art Education, p. 35.
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60. Ibid., p. 21.
61. Howard Gardner, "Multiple Intelligences: Implications for Art and Creativity", in Artistic Intelligences: Implications for Education, ed. William J. Moody (Teachers College Press, 1991), p. 21.
62. Lefrancois, Psychology for Teachers, p. 243.
63. Lefrancois, Psychology for Teachers, p. 244.

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73. Howard Gardner, The Unschooled Mind: How Children Think and How Schools Should Teach (London: Fontana Press, 1993), p. 150.
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CHAPTER 2

THE STUDENT OF ART AND SECOND-LEVEL EDUCATION

An Evaluation of Art: Junior and Leaving Certificate Level

(For the purpose of this section, refer to Appendix A). Art at Junior Certificate level is characterised by project work which is chosen and developed by students. Through their investigations with a wide variety of different materials, it is hoped that students will gain an "understanding of and competence in the principles and skills underlying visual [2D] and constructional design [3D]" problems. Besides the development of skills, the course aims to promote in the student a sense of personal identity and self-esteem through their work. (1) The course objectives are highly specific, and by the nature of the project work, students should be able to develop their skills and competencies at Leaving Certificate level.

Whilst the revised syllabus for Art at Junior cycle seems to allow for much greater "fluency, flexibility and originality" (Guilford, 1959), (2) it is unfortunate that change has not yet been implemented at Leaving Certificate level. Students of Art at Leaving Certificate level find themselves in a situation whereby, having been brought up under one working regime and evaluative system, they make the decision to continue their studies at Leaving Certificate level, only to find that the rules have changed. It is interesting to note that in actuality they have not

changed, but we perceive them to have changed. (3) From observation of the statistics, we can see that Art does not appeal to students in such great measure at Leaving Certificate level (fig 2.1).

Whilst, there is an obvious enthusiasm amongst students to take Art at Junior Certificate level; over 35% of the total student population taking Art in 1995 (fig. 2.1), the numbers of students taking Art as a subject for Leaving Certificate is no reflection on the numbers at Junior Certificate level. Even when the factor of student drop-out (permissible after Junior cycle) has been taken into account, the figures are noticeably lower; the estimated number of students taking Art for Leaving Certificate in 1995 was approximately 15% of the total number of candidates (fig. 2.1).

Through analysis of the statistics, along with classroom observation, it would seem that students of Art at Leaving Certificate level are unable to apply themselves to the extent that they should, taking into consideration the skills and competencies which will have been acquired through the study of art at Junior Certificate level. One could argue that students drop Art after Junior cycle in favour of subjects in which they are most competent. This may be the case, but statistics show that student performance in Art at Junior Certificate level is rather good (fig. 2.2). Unfortunately, the results at Leaving

Certificate level are rather less optimistic (fig. 2.3). It is not difficult to account for the drop in the level of student participation in the Leaving Certificate Art programme if we consider the statistics. In the context of the points race, Art does not sit well with students. The chances of obtaining an A-Grade in Honours Leaving Certificate level Art are slim, to say the least (fig. 2.3), and whilst there are students who continue to study art at Leaving Certificate level, the pressures placed upon them are extensive. The nature of the Art examination at Leaving Certificate level may be the root cause of the problem.

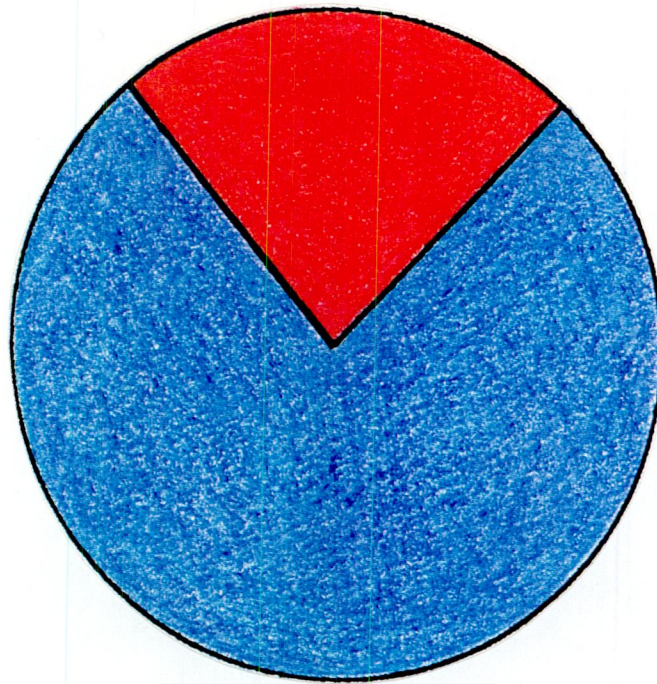
We earlier discussed a study conducted by Wallach and Kogan (1965), in which the relationship between creativity and intelligence was investigated. One may recall that the study showed highly creative but less academic students to be "most frustrated within the school system". (4) The art room is quite likely to be one of the places where a student of this description may be found, and yet they may feel more frustrated than ever in this environment. If we examine the make-up of the Leaving Certificate Art programme at present, it can be seen that history and appreciation of art make up almost 40% of the overall marks allocated to the examination. In turn, we see a high percentage of students performing in the C-Grade bracket at Leaving Certificate level Art (Fig. 2.3). Whilst students may be highly creative and talented in Art, there are all manner of factors that are influencing their performance in the

examination situation. Firstly, as we have already mentioned, students may find it difficult to function within the context of a written examination situation, nevertheless, this is a requirement at Leaving Certificate level Art. And secondly, having been used to an assessment based approach to art activity at Junior Certificate level, students may find it difficult to focus at Leaving Certificate level, given that none of the time spent in the classroom contributes toward marks awarded in the final examination.

Graham Wallas (date unknown) recognises four stages in the creative process; preparation, incubation, inspiration and verification. (5) Preparation involves the detailed investigation of all the possibilities surrounding a problem, by way of reading, discussion, questioning, making notes or trying out solutions. Incubation signifies the period during which ideas are worked on at a subconscious level; reforming and evolving new combinations of ideas. Inspiration is a sudden flash of insight; when a confusion of ideas takes shape. Finally, verification occurs when the idea is put to the test. During this time "active revision, expansion and correction" takes place (6).

From this evidence, we see that for a creative response to present itself, time and effort are essential, that is, there is usually an extended period of mental activity involved. Whilst the revised syllabus for Art at Junior

cycle allows time for the creative process to take effect, does the Leaving Certificate Art examination as it now exists, embrace this concept of the creative response?



Art: Red
Other: Blue

Fig. 2.1 Numbers of Junior and Leaving Certificate Examination Candidates for Art in 1995.

Part (i) The above pie chart illustrates a 35.3% student uptake of Art at Junior Certificate level in 1995. Out of a total of 68,085 Junior Certificate examination candidates in 1995, 24,021 took Art. Of this number, 10,449 took Art at Ordinary level, whilst 13,572 chose to take the Higher level option.

(Source: Department of Education, 1994/95 Statistical Report, p.55-100)

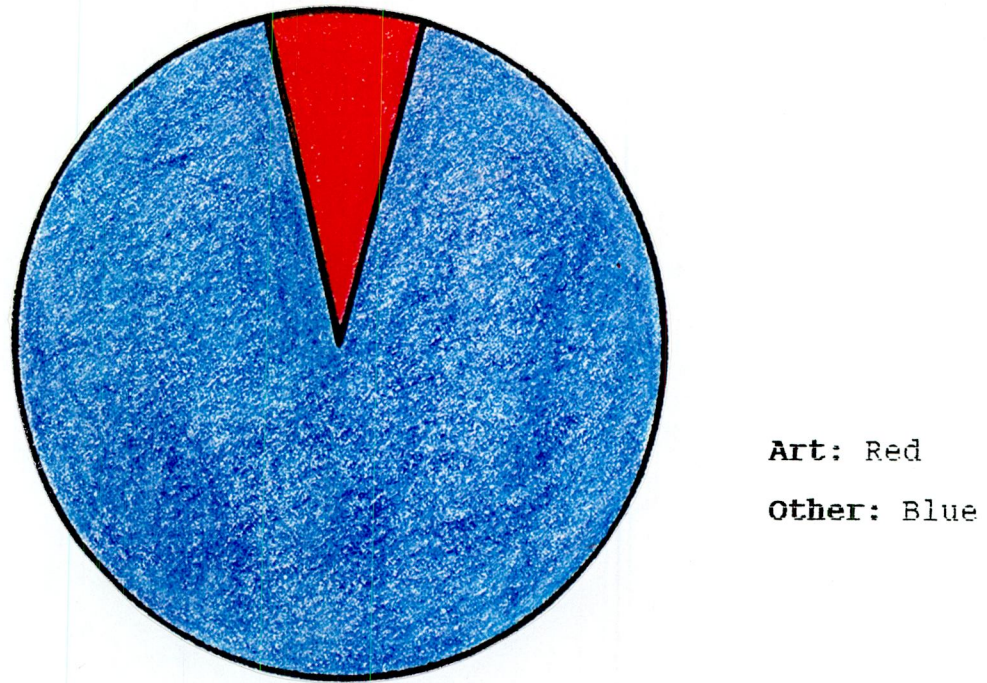


Fig. 2.1 Numbers of Junior and Leaving Certificate Examination Candidates for Art in 1995.

Part (ii) The above pie chart illustrates a 15.4% student uptake of Art at Leaving Certificate level in 1995. Out of a total of 66,305 Leaving Certificate examination candidates in 1995, 10,190 took Art. Of this number, 3,317 took Art at Ordinary level, whilst 6,873 chose to take the Higher level option.

(Source: Department of Education, 1994/95 Statistical Report, p.55-100)

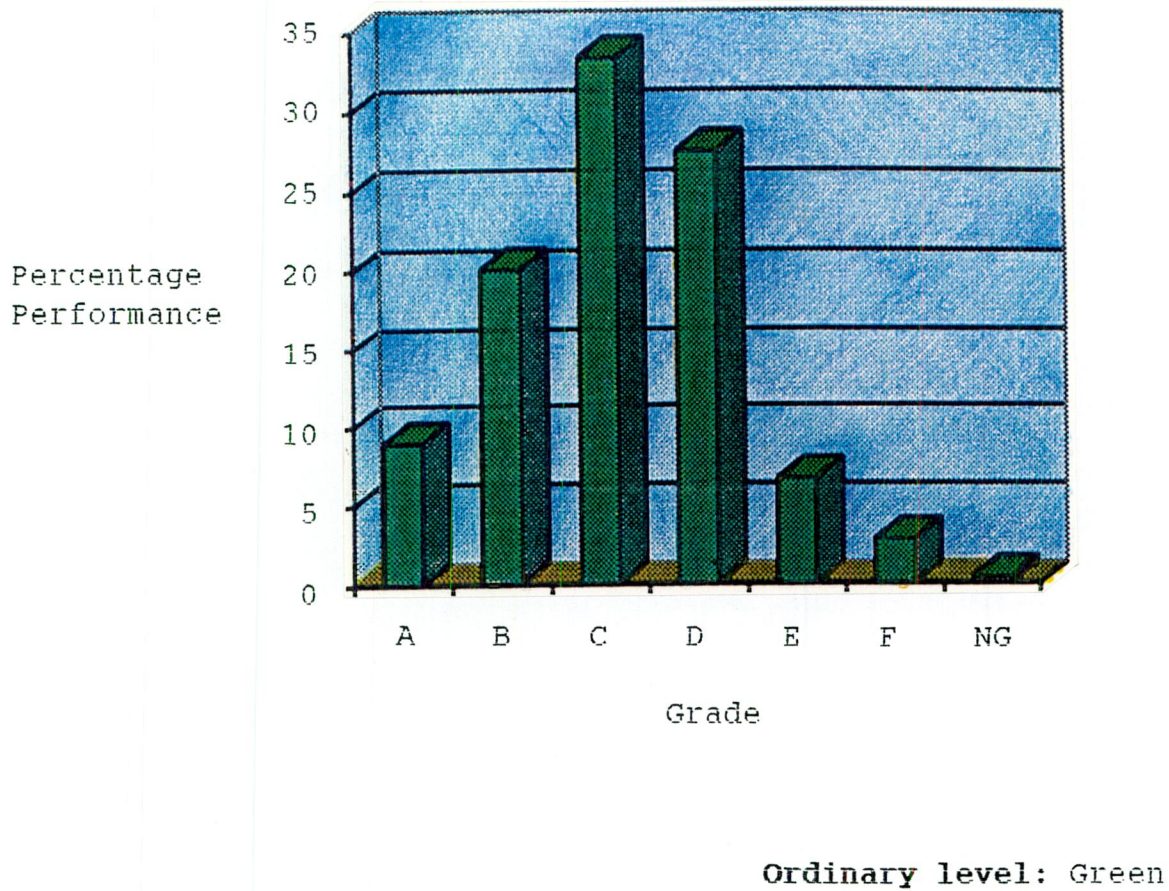


Fig. 2.2 Junior Certificate Results 1995 - Male and Female.

Part (i) The above graph illustrates the percentages of students achieving grades A-NG in Art at Ordinary level in the Junior Certificate.

(Source: Department of Education, 1994/95 Statistical Report, p.55-100)

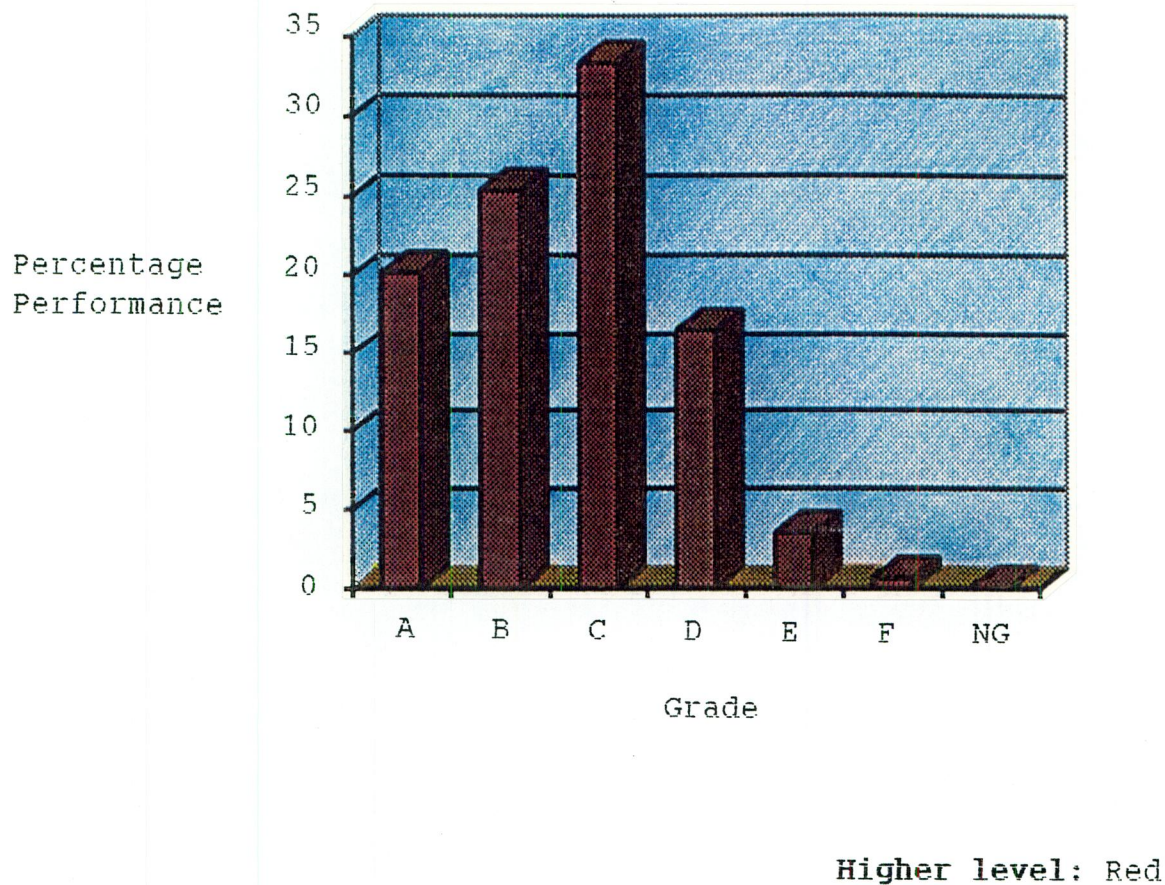


Fig. 2.2 Junior Certificate Results 1995 - Male and Female.
Part (ii) The above graph illustrates the percentages of students achieving grades A-NG in Art at Higher level in the Junior Certificate.

(Source: Department of Education, 1994/95 Statistical Report, p.55-100)

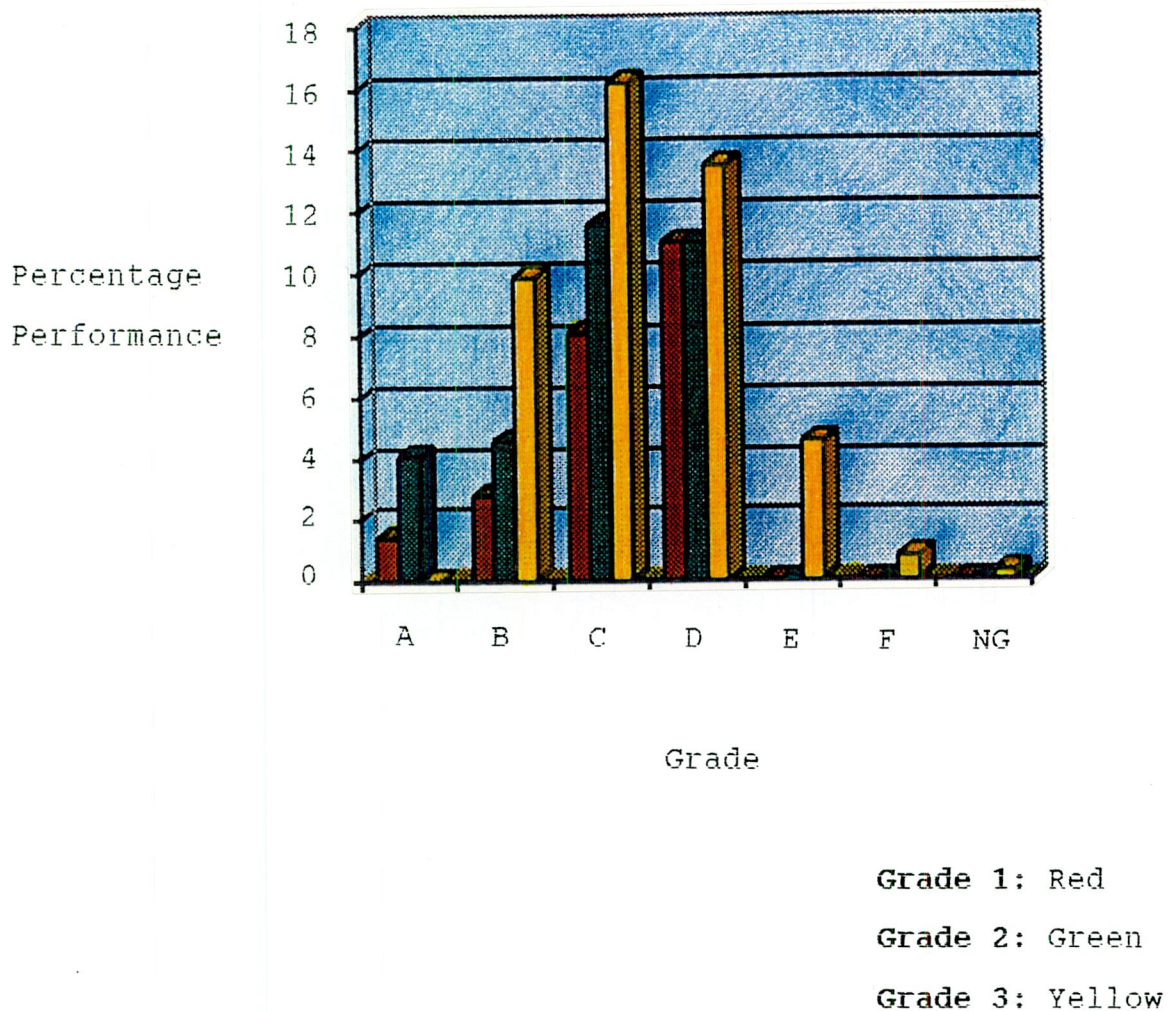


Fig. 2.3 Leaving Certificate Results 1995 - Male and Female.

Part (i) The above graph illustrates the percentages of students achieving grades A-NG in Art at Ordinary level in the Leaving Certificate. Each grade is broken down into 3 levels, ie. an A1 being the highest achievable grade.

(Source: Department of Education, 1994/95 Statistical Report, p.55-100)

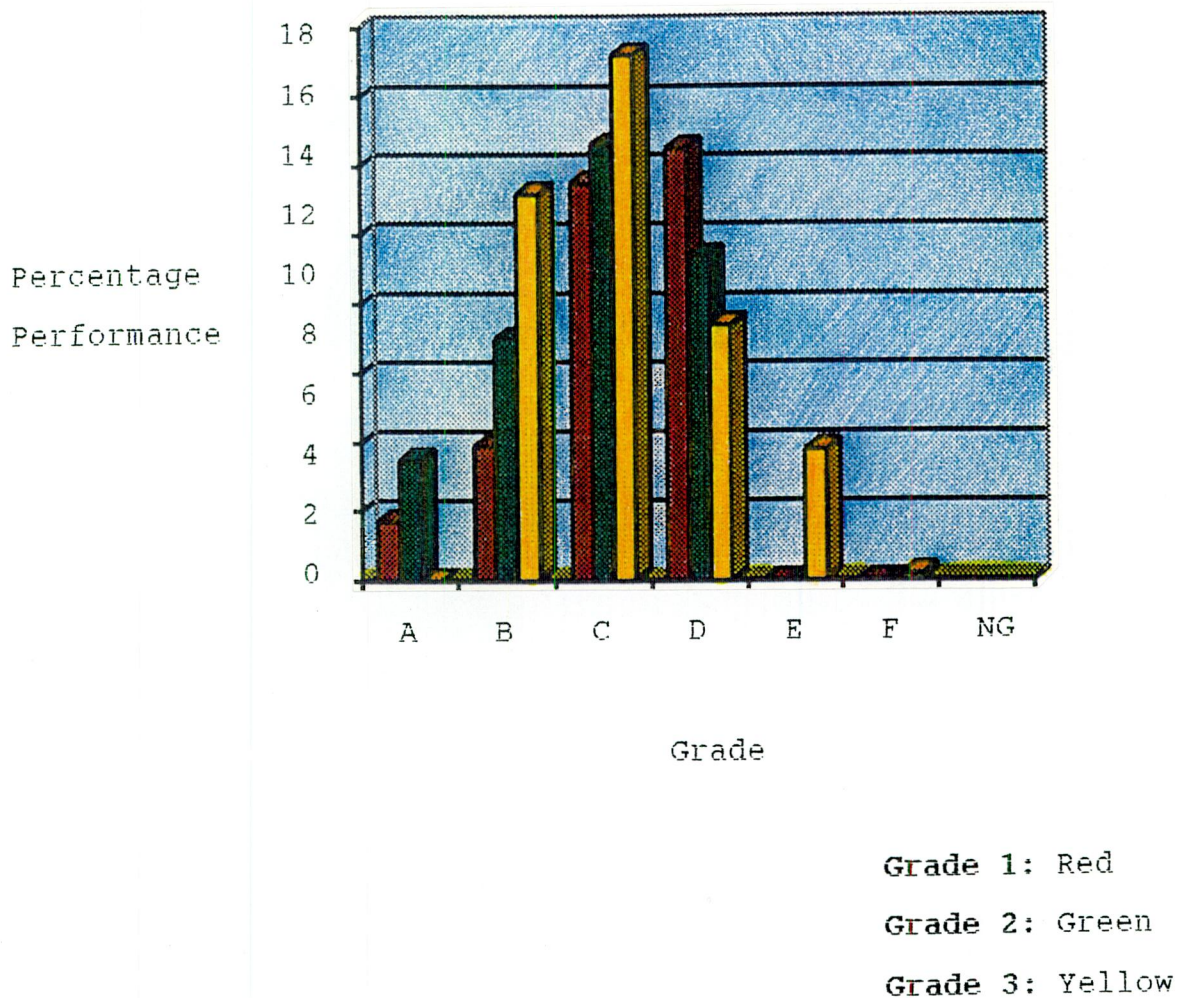
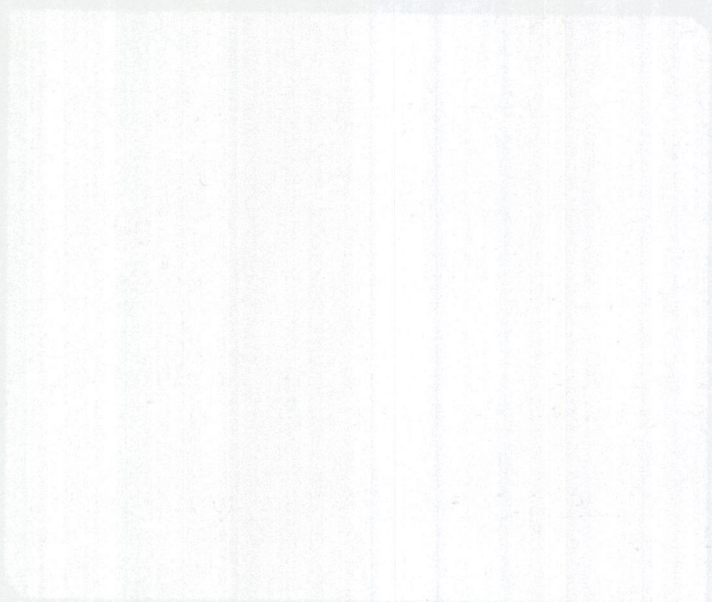


Fig. 2.3 Leaving Certificate Results 1995 - Male and Female.

Part (ii) The above graph illustrates the percentages of students achieving grades A-NG in Art at Higher level in the Leaving Certificate.

(Source: Department of Education, 1994/95 Statistical Report, p.55-100)



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CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction to the Present Study

From the theories of motivation outlined in chapter one, I have chosen to focus on the applicability of Abraham Maslow's theoretical model of a **hierarchy of needs** (1970) as the basis for this study. (1) We have already discussed the need for deficiency needs to be met in order for growth needs to be fulfilled, however I should like to refer to behaviour that, according to Maslow's research, can lead to self-actualisation. He describes the ability to experience life as a child; with absorption and concentration, along with a readiness to attempt the novel rather than what is safe and secure, as desirable. In addition, a facility for listening to one's own feelings rather than to a tradition, authority or a majority when evaluating experience, as well as a willingness to be unpopular if personal views do not accord with the majority, are regarded as positive characteristics. Finally, Maslow maintains that behaviour such as a readiness to assume responsibility, and the ability to work hard at any task are contributory to the attainment of a state of self-actualisation. (2)

It is interesting to compare Maslow's observations (outlined above) with James E. Russell's definition of creativity (1967) as "the openness of response, the ease with which a person expresses curiosity, spontaneity, and the valuing of

the unconventional connection", which he argues, are characteristics that are ingrained in the very nature of young children. (3) Therefore, we can establish a link between creativity and behaviour which can lead to self-actualisation.

Besides behaviour that leads to self-actualisation, it is important for us to discuss some of the characteristics which Maslow has found to be present among self-actualised individuals. He describes them as highly creative; problem-centred rather than self-centred, concerned for the welfare of humanity, possessing a deep appreciation of the basic experiences of life, spontaneous in thought and behaviour, resistant to enculturation (whilst not being deliberately unconventional) and, whilst being able to perceive reality efficiently, highly tolerant to ambiguity. (4)

According to Cattell's research involving the personal qualities of creative individuals (1971), they are characteristically:

...single-minded, non-conformist and persistent in tasks which engage their imagination. Tolerance to ambiguity is high (they are not perturbed when a problem has a number of plausible solutions); they may even enjoy dilemmas and searching out problems which have diverse possibilities. Risk-taking and venturesomeness with ideas appeal to the creative mind... (5)

We begin to see a great number of similarities between the creative and self-actualised individual. As Gardner describes it, creativity represents "the highest level of functioning in a specific domain", (6) and Maslow describes self-actualisation as the pinnacle of human fulfillment. (7) Thus, I should like to make a further comparison between the two by suggesting that factors which interfere with creativity are common to those which interrupt the attainment of self-actualisation.

In chapter one, we have discussed some of the effects of examination-induced anxiety. In terms of Maslow's model, these feelings of fear are linked with deficiency needs, which tend to hold the individual back from making growth decisions; the individual clings to safety and defensiveness out of fear, "afraid to grow...afraid to take chances, afraid to jeopardise what he already has..." (8) However, Maslow makes some recommendations as to how we might overcome these problems, so as to further personal growth and fulfillment. He suggests that an environment in which the individual feels secure; "involving a minimal amount of pressure, and a reduction in the possibility of failure or embarrassment," will encourage the individual to make growth decisions, which emphasise their personal and social creativity. (9)

Whilst the Junior Certificate Art programme consists of a combination of project work and examination, which surely

reduces pressure on students and the likelihood of failure, the Leaving Certificate remains totally exam-based. I wish to assess whether or not the Leaving Certificate level Art programme is functioning as well as it might, within the context of a revised syllabus for Junior cycle.

I am of the opinion that the problem of examination-induced anxiety has been accentuated by the introduction of an alternative programme for Junior cycle. Whilst the Junior Certificate emphasises the individual's own unique response to a suggested theme, and encourages the student to gather skills in a wide variety of media, this approach is not developed to its full potential at Leaving Certificate level. At this point, I should like to refer to Jerome Bruner's argument for the development of a **spiral curriculum**, whereby material is presented initially in its most basic form, so that at some later stage, the student will be able to build upon this basic understanding in order to master more complex material. (10) We should consider Senior cycle as a time for students to further their understanding of Art; whilst they may learn a great deal more about the history of art, there is a lack of continuity between Art at Junior and Senior cycle. In direct contrast to Maslow's recommendations, it would seem that students of Art at Leaving Certificate level are put under immense pressure, much of which, according to Michael O Nuallain, former senior art inspector in the Department of Education, is entirely unnecessary. (11)

In a recent article (see Appendix B), Michael O Nuallain made known the manner in which the syllabus for Leaving Certificate level Art, as it now exists, came about. The programme was developed in the 1960s so as to satisfy the criteria outlined by the the universities, in order for Art to be accepted for the purpose of matriculation or entry to college. As a result of inadequate consultation with the Art inspectorate for the Department of Education, the new syllabus for Art took on a tremendously high weighting of marks given for the history of Art. However, "all protestations were ignored." (12)

The Leaving Certificate examination puts pressure on students to achieve, and this, as we have seen in our observation of B.F.Skinner's theory of **operant conditioning**, can sufficiently motivate students. However, we have also discussed the danger of excessive use of rewards; (13) there is a great deal which rests upon results at Leaving Certificate level, such as the fulfillment of career aspirations. Student performance in Art at Leaving Certificate level is primarily assessed within the context of a series of set-time examinations (see Appendix A). Whilst the ultimate trial takes place during the examination period in June, it is important to investigate whether or not the pressures external to the art room at Leaving Certificate level are interfering with the creative potential of the students, and where pressures exist, are these in fact helpful in motivating students?

The following study has been conducted through the deployment of a questionnaire. The schools that have been selected to participate in the study were picked at random, while a cross-section of school types were, as much as possible, catered for. In total, twenty schools were invited to participate in the study, and of these, thirteen replied. Teachers were asked to respond to various statements which related to students of Art at both Junior and Leaving Certificate levels. Ultimately, what the questionnaire hoped to establish was whether or not students are able to do themselves justice in the Leaving Certificate Art examination, and where the sample were of the opinion that students are unable to achieve to their full potential, to suggest reasons for this, and in turn, what the most important motivational factors in the art room might be.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 3

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2. David Fontana, Psychology for Teachers (London: MacMillan Press, 1995), p. 220.
3. George W. Hardiman and Theodore Zernich, Foundations for Development and Evaluation in Art Education (Illinois: Stipes, 1981), p.35.
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8. Biehler and Snowman, Psychology Applied to Teaching, p. 518.
9. Ibid., p. 519.
10. Biehler and Snowman, Psychology Applied to Teaching, p. 426.
11. Michael O Nuallain, "Art Attack", in the Irish Times Education and Living Supplement (Tuesday, November 26, 1996), p. 8-9.
12. Ibid.
13. Biehler and Snowman, Psychology Applied to Teaching, p. 513.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

The Questionnaire

(For the purpose of this section refer to Appendix C). Part one of the questionnaire consisted of three related statements to which the sample were asked to respond. The teachers were required to comment on the relationship between the Junior Certificate and the Leaving Certificate Art programmes. (Fig. 4.1) Whilst the information gathered concerning the relationship between student achievement in the respective examinations was inconclusive, there was a modest majority of approximately 46% who disagreed with the statement. 38% of the sample agreed that there is a relationship, whilst others commented that it "depends on the student and the...circumstances", however "the inclusion of Art History can have quite an impact; both positively and negatively."

The issue of whether students are able to make use of their learning (established at Junior Certificate level) in the context of the present Leaving Certificate programme was no more clearcut in its response. (Fig. 4.2) Roughly 30% of the teachers involved agreed that students are able to use their skills; "anything which is learned will be used again in other areas", whilst 23% disagreed; "Skills yes, but the present Leaving Certificate Art course is quite unsuitable to Junior Certificate students". Other comments addressed

the need for a much higher level of continuity at Leaving Certificate level:

Only very highly motivated students will make the most of the Leaving Certificate art course as it stands.

The Leaving Certificate as it stands does not encourage follow through and developed work appropriate for progression into 3rd level...It is up to the individual teacher to make use of their skills in implementing stimulating classes.

Another issue which was addressed by one teacher was that "students choosing 5th Year art often have not covered Junior Certificate Art at all" can potentially add to pressure in the art room, but is there any alternative to the present situation?

The third statement to which the sample was asked to respond, inquired as to whether a programme of combined project work and examination would be favoured. (Fig. 4.3) The group embraced the suggestion of a revised system at Leaving Certificate level, with over 90% in agreement.

Question four consisted of two parts; reflecting upon the pressures which may or may not interfere with the creative potential of students of Leaving Certificate level Art. (Fig. 4.4) 77% of the sample agreed that the creative potential of students is hampered at Leaving Certificate level. (Table 4.1) More specifically, the sample considered insufficient sleep, career pressures, financial worries,

part-time jobs, along with a heavy schoolwork load, as interfering with student potential in class. Other comments included:

...having to prepare for the four particular Art exams can be restraining, and even inventive departures from the papers...still must lead back to the final requirements. It also depends on how much class contact time is needed, especially with 1-2 lessons a week being spent on history of Art.

Question five endeavoured to establish whether these pressures are helpful in motivating students; (Fig. 4.5) 77% of the teachers said that they are not. Part two required the sample to consider which factors do in fact, contribute to student motivation in the art room. (Table 4.2) Whilst career goals were a major contributor, over 90% of the sample regarded personal inclination to learn and self expression as the most significant contributing factors to student motivation.

Finally, question six (again consisting of two parts) required the sample to comment on whether it is possible for students to do themselves justice in the various sections of the Leaving Certificate Art examination. (Fig. 4.6) Over 90% of the teachers involved, maintained that their students are not able to do themselves justice. Part two attempted to establish some of the problems that students are faced with. (Table 4.3) Almost 85% of the sample agreed that the time restraints were problematic. This factor was closely

followed by student exhaustion, along with the relevance of the descriptive passages on the respective papers.

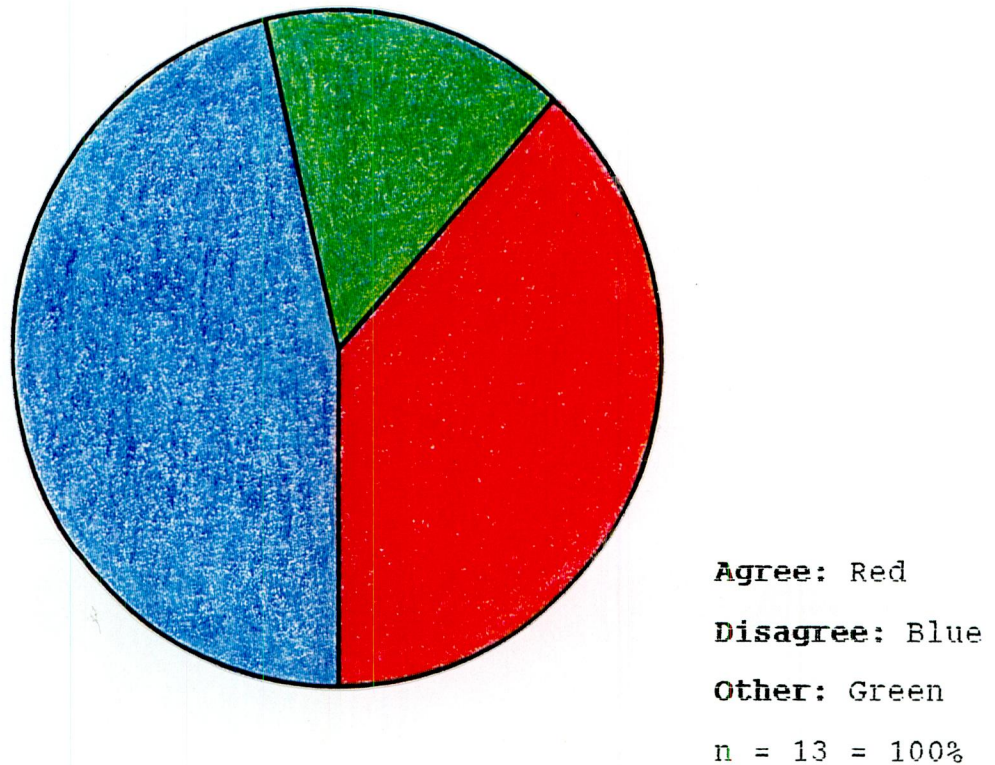
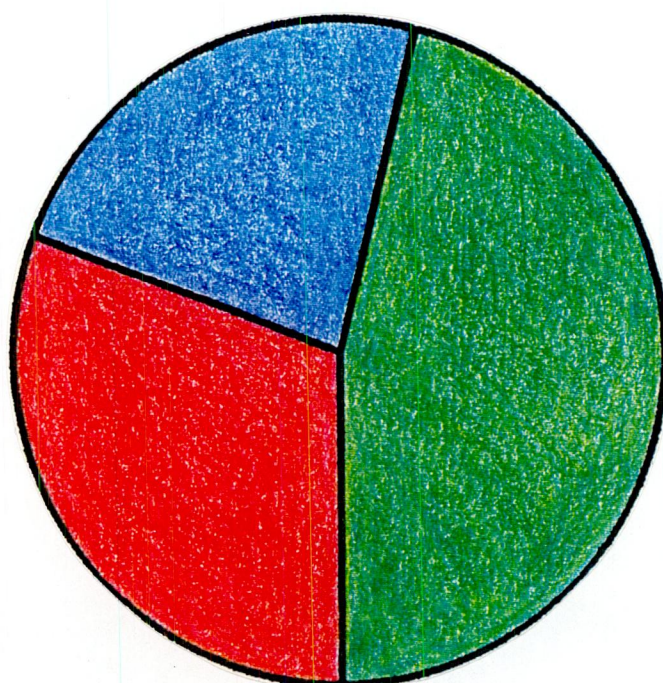


Fig. 4.1 Student achievement at Junior Certificate level Art pre-determines achievement at Leaving Certificate level Art.

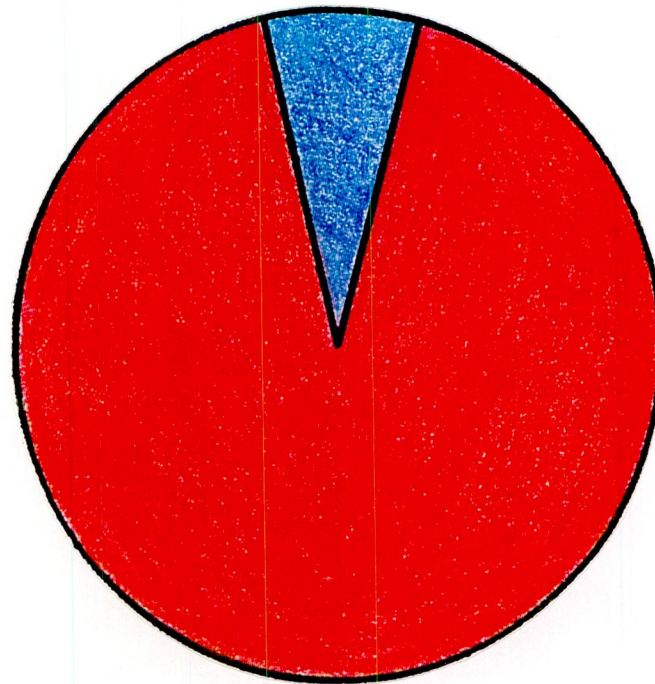
The response to this statement was unclear in its outcome. Approximately 38% of the respondents agreed, whilst just over 46% disagreed. The remainder, approximately 15%, gave a personal comment (See Appendix C).



Agree: Red
Disagree: Blue
Other: Green
n = 13 = 100%

Fig. 4.2 Students are able to make use of and build upon skills and interests learnt at Junior Certificate level Art within the Leaving Certificate level Art course, as it stands.

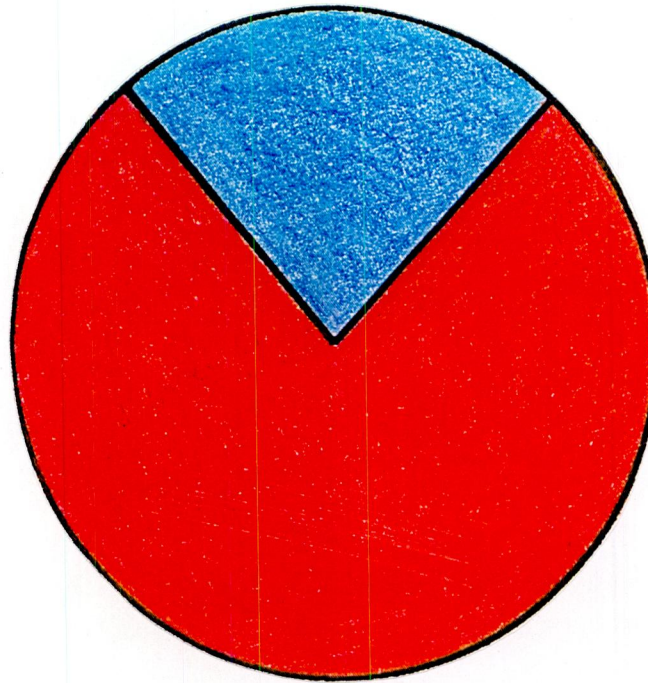
The response to this statement was unclear, with over 46% commenting that one can never generalise; that it depends on the individual students. Approximately 31% of the respondents agreed, whilst 23% disagreed (See Appendix C).



Agree: Red
Disagree: Blue
Other: Green
n = 13 = 100%

Fig. 4.3 A combination of project work and examination, as seen at Junior Certificate level Art, would benefit students at Leaving Certificate level.

The response to this statement was almost unanimously in favour of the statement with over 92% in agreement. (For further comments see Appendix C).



Agree: Red

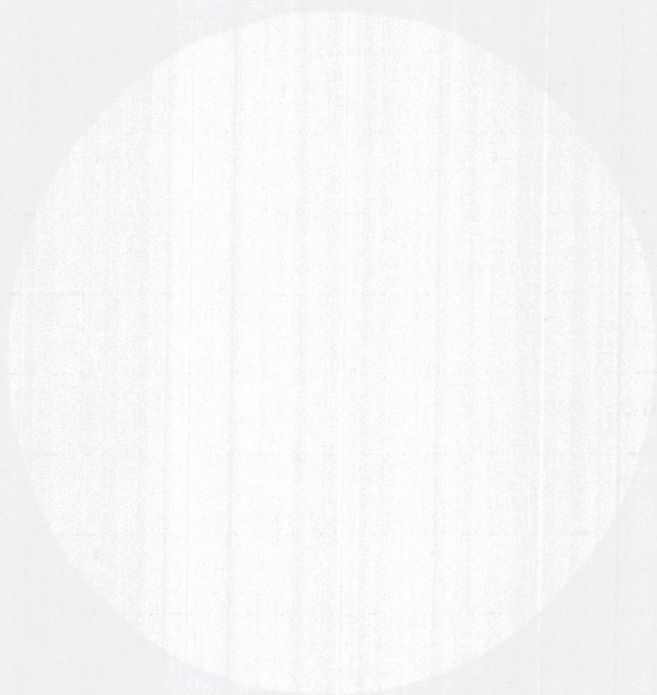
Disagree: Blue

Other: Green

n = 13 = 100%

Fig. 4.4 Do you think that the pressures outside the Art room interfere with the creative potential of students at Leaving Certificate level Art?

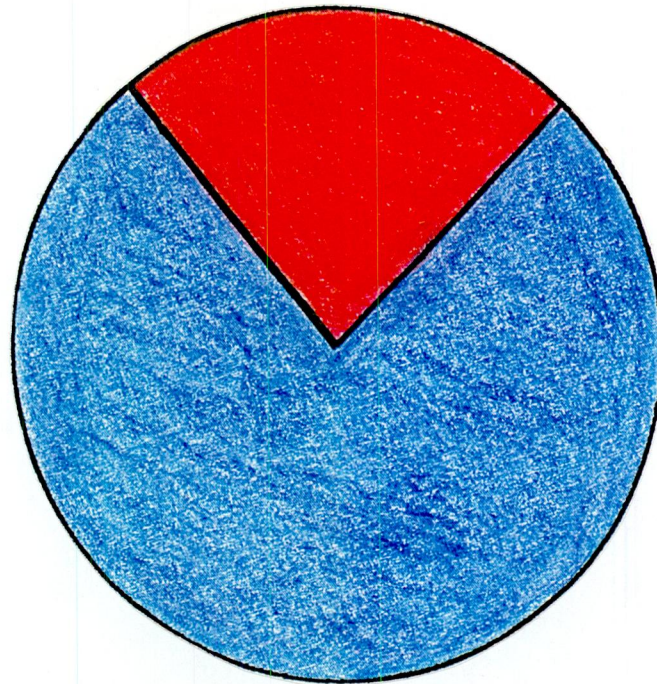
The majority of respondents, 77% answered "Yes", whilst 23% did not think that pressures outside the art room interfered with their student's creative potential (See Appendix C).



	No. of responses
Parental Expectations	3
School Expectations	3
Career pressures	5
Financial worries	5
Domestic difficulties	4
Peer pressure	3
Relationships	2
Sibling Rivalry	1
Poor diet	2
Insufficient sleep	7
Insufficient leisure activities	3
Heavy Schoolwork load	8
Other	6

Table 4.1 Which of the following do you consider interfere with the creative potential of students in the Art room?

The table illustrates the extent to which various outside pressures affect the student of Art.



Agree: Red

Disagree: Blue

Other: Green

n = 13 = 100%

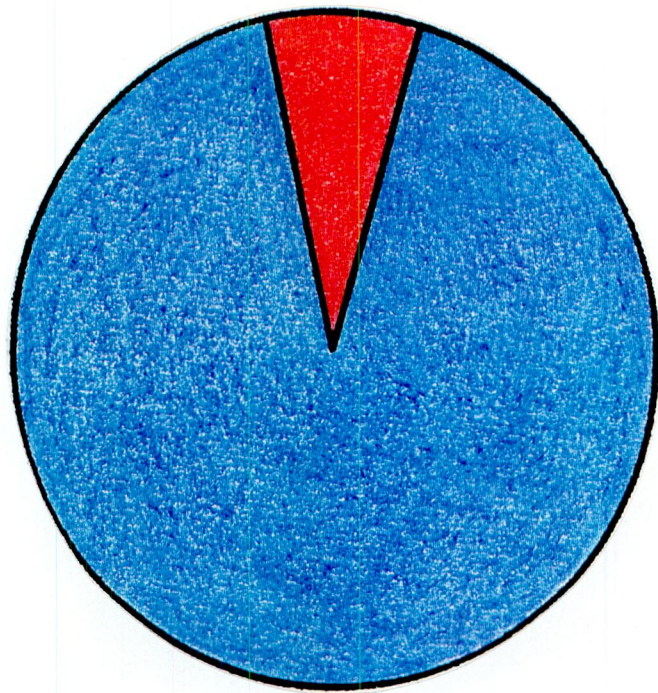
Fig. 4.5 Do you think that the pressures attached to the Leaving Certificate Examination are helpful in motivating students in the Art room?

77% of the sample responded negatively to the suggestion that the pressures might be helpful in motivating students. However, 23% answered "Yes" (See Appendix C).

	No. of responses
Parental expectations	2
School expectations	4
Career goals	9
The "points race"	3
Preparation for four Art Examination Papers	4
Time restraints on the days of the Examination	1
Personal inclination to learn	12
Self expression	12
Other	3

Table 4.2 Which of the following do you consider contribute to student motivation in the Art room?

The table provides us with the case for intrinsic motivation, with "personal inclination to learn" and "self expression", being supported almost unanimously. Note the significance of "career goals" also.



Agree: Red
Disagree: Blue
Other: Green
n = 13 = 100%

Fig. 4.6 Do you think that students are able to do themselves justice in the various sections of the Leaving Certificate Art Examination?

The sample are of the opinion that students are not able to do themselves justice in the examination, with over 92% in agreement on this issue (See Appendix C).

	No. of responses
Parental expectations	1
School expectations	1
Career goals	1
The "points race"	1
Inadequate Art materials in 5th and 6th Year	5
Student exhaustion	9
Lack of confidence	4
Creative, but not Academic	2
Time restraints during the Art Examination	11
Inadequate Art materials on the days of the Art Examination	5
Relevance of descriptive passages on the Art Examination papers to students	9
Other	4

Table 4.3 Which of the following do you consider interfere with student performance on the days of the Leaving Certificate Art Examination?

This final table illustrates the sample's view; the structure of the examination papers is in question, as are the time restraints during the examinations. The respondents also commented that student exhaustion could serve to interfere with student performance.

CONCLUSION

In the course of this study I have covered a considerable amount of new ground, in terms of my understanding of psychology. Having consulted the various theoretical perspectives, dealing with motivation, anxiety and creativity, it has become clear to me that we are the product of our environment. Of particular significance to my view point has been the work of Howard Gardner, Abraham Maslow and Jerome Bruner, who have made suggestions as to how we might improve the quality of the learning environment. Whilst my concerns for the welfare of students of Leaving Certificate Art have been acknowledged in the work of these men, it is unfortunate that the evidence has been ignored for so very long. As Michael O Nuallain has expressed, there is a distinct lack of commitment to the fulfillment of the potential of Art as a means of creative expression at Leaving Certificate level (see Appendix B). The results of the questionnaire have reinforced this view; that there is need for reform (see Appendix C).

Whilst it is promising to consider the fact that a revised syllabus for Junior Certificate Art has been produced, it seems to me to be quite unacceptable not to have made the change at Leaving Certificate level as yet. What I should like to see at Leaving Certificate level is far greater freedom. There should be less of a rigid structure which only serves to divide art history, life drawing, still life, design and imaginative composition. We should encourage the

interaction of all of these different aspects of Art, Craft and Design. Students have had a chance at Junior Certificate level to come to terms with the materials and the concept of the design process, however they move into an environment at Leaving Certificate level that "is against creativity." (see Appendix C) From consideration of the comments that have accompanied the results of the questionnaire, there is an obvious frustration amongst teachers at Leaving Certificate level. The strongest motivators in the art room have been seen as personal inclination to learn and self expression. Would it not be better to create an environment which encourages self directed learning?

Unfortunately, creativity is inclined to involve taking risks, the concept of which does not sit well with the present system of education. As we have discussed, it tends to reinforce convergent solutions; I have found my students really struggling to grasp the concept of thinking creatively and individualistically, so well versed are they in the ways of rote learning. Freedom of expression is central to Art, and to try and contain or restrict that freedom will only weaken the nature of learning.

In conclusion, I should like to refer to a creative individual, who epitomises the very nature of Art and the need for creative expression, regardless of the outcome. Picasso describes what it is like at such moments, when one

is taking enormous risks:

Painting is freedom. If you jump, you might fall on the wrong side of the rope. But if you are not willing to take the risk of breaking your neck, what good is it? You don't jump at all. You have to wake people up. To revolutionise their way of identifying things. You've got to create images they won't accept. (1)

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 4

1. Howard Gardner, Creating Minds (New York: Basic Books, 1993), p. 159.

APPENDIX A

Source: (Junior Certificate) An Roinn Oideachais, The Junior Certificate: Art, Craft and Design, p. 2-3.

Source: (Leaving Certificate) An Roinn Oideachais, Rules and Programme for Secondary Schools 1987/88 - 1996/97, p. 336-339.

Aims of Art, Craft and Design at Junior Cycle

- (i) To promote in the student an informed, inquiring and discriminating attitude to his or her environment and to help the student relate to the world in visual, tactile and spatial terms.
- (ii) To develop a sense of personal identity and self-esteem through practical achievement in the expressive, communicative and functional modes of Art, Craft and Design.
- (iii) To develop in the student an understanding of Art, Craft and Design in a variety of contexts - historical, cultural, economic, social and personal
- (iv) To develop in the student the ability to apply evaluative criteria to his/her own work and to the work of others and in his/her daily encounters with the natural, social and man-made environments and with the mass media.
- (v) To promote in the student a practical understanding of and competence in the principles and skills underlying visual and constructional design and problem-solving.
- (vi) To develop through structured practical work the student's aesthetic sensibilities and powers of critical appraisal, appreciation and evaluation and to enhance the student's qualities of imagination, creativity, originality and ingenuity.

Course Objectives of Art, Craft and Design at Junior Cycle

The Art, Craft and Design course develops the student's ability to:

- (i) give a personal response to an idea, experience or other stimulus.
- (ii) work from imagination, memory and direct observation.
- (iii) use drawing for observation, recording and analysis, as a means of thinking and for communication and expression.
- (iv) use the core two-dimensional processes in making, manipulating and developing images, using lettering and combining lettering with image, in expressive and communicative modes.
- (v) use the three-dimensional processes of additive, subtractive and constructional form-making in expressive and functional modes.
- (vi) use and understand the art and design elements.
- (vii) use a variety of materials, media, tools and equipment.
- (viii) use an appropriate working vocabulary.

Course Objectives of Art, Craft and Design at Junior Cycle

- (ix) understand relevant scientific, mathematical and technological aspects of art, craft and design.
- (x) sustain projects from conception to realisation.
- (xi) appraise and evaluate his/her own work in progress and on completion.
- (xii) develop an awareness of the historical, social and economic role and value of art, craft and design and aspects of contemporary culture and mass-media.

APPENDIX A

LEAVING CERTIFICATE PROGRAMME

30. - ART (including Crafts) Ordinary and Higher Level Courses

The course should be as broadly based as that for the Intermediate Certificate. It is important that a sense of unity should be maintained throughout the different sections of the syllabus in order to avoid a system of isolated lessons.

The following outline is suggested:

Observational studies

Sketches and studies in black and white and colour of natural forms and man-made objects: buildings and landscapes under varying conditions: human figures.

These studies should serve to build up a store of visual images necessary for creative activity in Imaginative Composition, Design and Craftwork.

Imaginative Composition and Still Life

Experimentation with a variety of media in an attempt to find the vehicle of expression that best suits the temperament of the individual and the nature of the composition.

Design and Craftwork

Activity leading to a development of a sense of pattern and rhythm, study of colour, mainly direct from nature; experiments to determine the potentialities and limitations of specific crafts.

As the visual experience of the pupils is conditioned by a heritage from earlier generations, both recent and

remote, it is desirable that continual references be made to existing cultural resources. Therefore, the History and Appreciation of Art are included in the course to afford pupils the opportunity of showing awareness of the place of the visual arts in our culture and community. This does not call for specialised study of the History of Art but the teacher may find it fruitful to lay special emphasis on a selected field of interest, e.g. "Art in Early Christian Ireland", "European" or "Modern Art".

It is assumed that the Art teacher in the normal course of his work will have familiarised pupils with a wide variety of reproductions, slides and original works of Art and will have actively encouraged individual and group visits to local museums, galleries, national monuments and modern buildings etc. Opportunity should also be given for discussion of topics based on the every-day visual experience in their own environment.

It is suggested that the Art teacher select the field of special study for which most material is available in his own area.

LEAVING CERTIFICATE - ORDINARY AND HIGHER LEVEL

Candidates will be required to answer four papers in all as follows:

Subject	Time	Marks
(a) Imaginative Composition or Still Life	2.5 hours	100
(b) Design or Craftwork	2.5 hours 5 hours	100
(c) Life Sketching	1 hour	50
(d) History and Appreciation of Art	2.5 hours	150

1. **Imaginative Composition or Still-Life**

The paper will consist of a descriptive passage which will be open to interpretation as either an imaginative composition or a still-life study. The paper will be made available to the candidates three days before the examination so that those who wish may collect any necessary objects mentioned in the said passage and which would be appropriate for the still-life groups. Alternatively, candidates who wish to make an imaginative composition will be given an opportunity to select a subject which appeals to them from any part of the descriptive passage, to consider in advance how they will treat it, and make preliminary studies and sketches.

No preparatory work, however, may be taken into the examination hall. Candidates will be allowed to use any medium which may not be damaged in transit.

2. **Design**

The paper will consist of a passage of prose which may be used as the basis for a design (on paper) for a specific craft such as fabric-printing, calligraphy, lino-printing, embroidery, weaving, pottery, modelling and carving, and publicity design. The work may be in any suitable medium which may not be damaged in transit.

3. **Craftwork**

Candidates will be required to carry out a design in the actual material for a craft such as lino-printing, bookcrafts, hand-printed textiles, embroidery, pottery, weaving, puppetry, calligraphy, carving, modelling and art metalwork. All necessary materials must be provided by the school. The examination arrangements will be similar to those for the Intermediate Certificate Craftwork Examination.

4. **Life Sketching**

Candidates will be required to make two sketches of the model. The first will be a pose of 15 minutes. The second will be a more fully worked drawing taking approximately 30 minutes. Colour may be used.

5. **History and Appreciation of Art**

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

The fields of special study covered by the examination are as follows:

Section I - **Art in Ireland** (from Prehistoric times to the present)

Section II - **European Art** (from 1000 A.D. to the present)

Section III - Under the heading **General Appreciation** it is intended to afford students an opportunity to discuss topics based on every-day visual experience in their own environment

The examination paper will offer a wide choice of topics on each section or special field of study. Candidates should answer one question from each of the three sections of the paper (2.5 hours).

. LIST OF ART BOOKS

(There are so many excellent books available that teachers may prefer to select their own books to cover the course. For convenience's sake the following list of books is suggested as a basis for selection. The list is in no sense a Prescribed list).

Section I - Art in Ireland (from Prehistoric times to the present)

New Grange (O'Riordain and Daniel)

Irish Churches and Monastic Buildings, Vols. I, II and III (Harold J. Leask)/Tempest, Dundalk

Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland Publications of the National Museum

Irish Stained Glass (Wynne and White)/Brown and Nolan

Irish Art (Bruce Arnold)/Thames and Hudson

The National Gallery of Ireland (James White)/Thames and Hudson

Modern Irish Landscape Painting Slide Pack (Frances Ruane), published by the Arts Council

Recent Irish Stained Glass Slide Pack (Nicola Gordon Bowe), published by the Arts Council

Guides and Publications of the National Monuments, published by the Office of Public Works

Excellent photographs may be purchased from the Photographic Department, National Monuments Branch/Office of Public Works

Antiquities of the Irish Countryside (O'Riordain)/Methuen

Irish Art (3 vols.; Early Christian Period, Viking Invasions and Romanesque Period) (Francoise Henry)/Methuen

Irish Churches and Monastic Buildings (First Phases and Romanesque, Gothic to 1400, the Last Phase)/Tempest

Section II - European Art (from 1000 A.D. to the present)

The World of Art Library/Thames and Hudson

European Painting and Sculpture (E. Newton)/Pelican

Outline of European Architecture (Pevsner)/Pelican

Art through the Ages (Helen Gardner)/Bell and Sons

Early Renaissance (M. Levey)/Pelican

A Social History of Art (Hauser)/Routledge

A Concise History of Painting: From Giotto to Cezanne/Thames and Hudson

History of Architecture (Bannister and Fletcher)

Dictionary of Art and Artists (L. and P. Murray)/Penguin

Classic Art: An Introduction to the Italian Renaissance (Wolfflin)/Phaidon

The Age of Baroque (M. Kitson)/Hamlyn

The Dolphin History of Painting (6 vols.)/Thames and Hudson

The Meaning of Art (Herbert Read)/Faber and Faber

Oxford Junior Encyclopaedia (Vol. 12)

History of Modern Painting (2 vols.) (M. Raynal)/Skira

The Story of Art (E.H. Gombrich)/Phaidon Press

Section III - General Appreciation

Looking and Seeing (Rowland)/Ginn

The Meaning of Art (Herbert Read)/Faber and Faber

Art and Industry (Herbert Read)/Faber and Faber

Design (A. Bertram)/Pelican

Periodicals

Design: Council of Industrial Design,
The Design Centre,
28 Haymarket,
London, S.W.1.

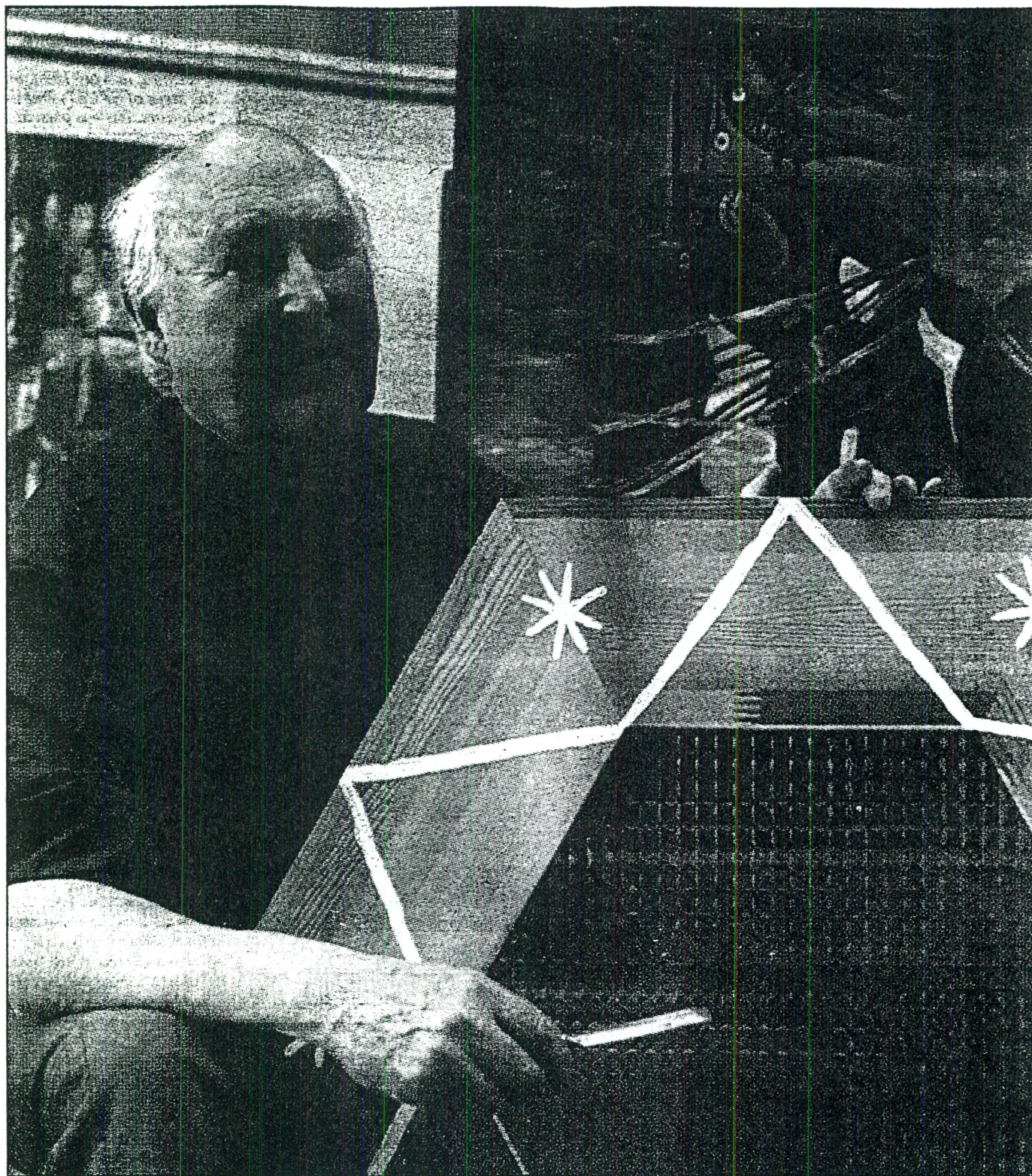
Studio International:

Journal of Modern Art, 37 Museum Street, London, W.C.1.

Art Education: The Journal of the National Art
Education Association, 1201 16th Street N.W.,
Washington, U.S.A.

APPENDIX B

Source: Michael O Nuallain, "Art Attack", in the Irish Times Education and Living Supplement (Tuesday, November 26, 1996), p. 8-9.



Micheál Ó Nualláin wants art marked differently in the Leaving Certificate. Photograph : Paddy Whelan.

Tuesday, November 26, 1996

FOCUS ON EDUCATION

ART ATTACK

The Department of Education needs to get serious about balancing the practical and the academic in art education. That's the view of artist **Micheál Ó Nualláin**, former senior art inspector in the Department.

IT IS possible to pass the Leaving Certificate art examination while failing all its practical art components. This is clearly absurd. Senior management in the Department of Education has allowed the universities to impose a written examination in the appreciation and history of art on this examination with an outrageous mark loading of 37.5 per cent. No provision for a qualifying mark in the practical art components exists.

Thirty-eight per cent overall is deemed a pass in this examination entitled art (including crafts). How did such a state of affairs come about?

In the late 1960s, the universities asked by the Department of Education to have art accepted for the purpose of matriculation or entry to the universities. It was "regretted" that the then art paper and syllabus

lacked what they termed "intellectual content" and to satisfy that criterion of the universities it would be necessary to introduce a written paper on the history of art to make art acceptable.

All this was agreed without any consultation with the art inspectorate of its own department, which at that time consisted of Gerry Bruen and myself. We were simply presented with this *fait accompli* and told to get on with it. All protestations were ignored.

The universities are entitled to lay down whatever conditions they deem necessary to satisfy their own entry requirements. However, they are not entitled to dictate those requirements to all candidates who sit for the Leaving Certificate, irrespective of whether they intend to seek entry to university or not.

The history of art is as legitimate

as any other history. It could complement and extend a pupil's understanding and knowledge of the practical work being undertaken. Furthermore it could act as a stimulus to new areas of study. But that is not how it is approached.

The marking position is as follows:

History and Appreciation of Art — 150 marks, 37.5 per cent

Imaginative Composition or Still Life — 100 marks, 25 per cent

Design or Craftwork — 100 marks, 25 per cent

Life Sketching — 50 marks, 12.5 per cent

Theoretically, if a candidate was awarded full marks in the history and appreciation of art, only a few marks in the practical components would be required to secure a pass. It is clear that there should have been a qualifying mark operating in the practical areas to ensure that a balance was maintained. However, none exists, none whatever!

Over 17 years ago the use and inclusion of reproductions of paintings etc, on the history and appreciation of art papers of the Leaving Certificate was introduced, but blocked at the last minute by an assistant secretary in the Department.

The implications of this are most

Did you know that you can pass Leaving Certificate Art without being able to draw?



serious. For over 17 years candidates sitting the Leaving Certificate art were deprived of the aid of reproductions and illustrations on their history and appreciation of art papers while other Leaving Certificate papers had illustrations, diagrams and maps to aid candidates.

This year for the first time reproductions were introduced for art papers.

Over 22 years ago the Department set up a five-member internal committee to formulate policy on art education. I was a member of that committee and recommended that the only way forward was for the Department to set up a section to deal with art. It would, among other things, give locus and focus of responsibility to art education. This was a relatively modest proposal.

My recommendation was rejected out of hand and the system which had dismally failed was pursued — as it is to the present day. This committee accomplished nothing.

Several years ago Colm Ó Briain, as director of the Arts Council, proposed that a development unit for the promotion of the arts in education be set up by the Department. He too was ignored by the Department of Education.

The real problem is that the visual arts are for the most part a closed book for the vast majority of the Irish people. Rather than imple-

menting a programme of enlightenment, the Department compounds the issue by allowing unqualified and visually untutored personnel to make decisions concerning art education and pays scant regard to recommendations or informed opinion.

If any other subject were treated in this manner there would be an ongoing and persistent outcry. The opportunity to rectify this whole situation now rests with the Leaving Certificate art course committee of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, which is currently examining the position. Whatever proposals the committee arrives at, it would seem to be logically in the nature of a development of art, craft and design of the Junior Certificate syllabus.

I believe that two things should happen:

1. The proposals of the NCCA committee for the new Leaving Certificate course and art examination should be made public before being ratified by the Department of Education.
2. Urgent consideration should be given to the establishment within the Department of Education of a development unit for the promotion of art education — as proposed by the former Arts Council director.

APPENDIX C

Questionnaire: Participant Schools

1. **Pobailscoil Iosolde,**
Palmerstown,
Dublin 20
Tel. 6265991
2. **Holy Child Community College,**
Sallynoggin,
Co. Dublin
Tel. 2855334
3. **Greendale Community School,**
Kilbarrack,
Dublin 13
Tel. 8322735/36
4. **Pobailscoil Rosmini,**
Grace Park Road,
Drumcondra, Dublin 9
Tel. 8369880
5. **Colaiste Chairain Community School,**
Celbridge Road,
Leixlip, Co. Kildare
Tel. 6243226
6. **Chanel College,**
Coolock,
Dublin 5
Tel. 8480655

7. **Rathdown School,**
Upper Glenageary Road,
Glenageary, Co. Dublin
Tel. 2853133
8. **Malahide Community School,**
Malahide,
Co. Dublin
Tel. 8463244
9. **Old Bawn Community School,**
Tallaght,
Dublin 24
Tel. 4520566
10. **Colaiste Choilm,**
Swords,
Co. Dublin
Tel. 8401420
11. **Loreto College,**
Swords,
Co. Dublin
Tel. 8407025
12. **Loreto High School,**
Beaufort,
Rathfarnham, Dublin 14
Tel. 4933192
13. **Newpark Comprehensive School,**
Newtownpark Avenue,
Blackrock, Co. Dublin
Tel. 2883724

14. **Cabinteely Community School,**
Cabinteely,
Co. Dublin
Tel. 2852137
15. **Assumption Secondary School,**
Kilmanagh Road,
Walkinstown, Dublin 12
Tel. 4507107
16. **St. Mark's Community School,**
Fortunestown Lane,
Tallaght, Dublin 24
Tel. 4519399
17. **C.B.S. Monkstown,**
Monkstown Park,
Co. Dublin
Tel. 2805854
18. **St. Andrew's College,**
Booterstown Avenue,
Blackrock, Co. Dublin
Tel. 2882785
19. **St. Joseph's College,**
Lucan,
Co. Dublin
Tel. 6281160
20. **Killinardin Community School,**
West Tallaght,
Dublin 24
Tel. 4527447

APPENDIX C

Cover letter

30 Clonkeen Road,
Deansgrange,
Blackrock,
Co. Dublin

17th February 1997

Dear

I am a student of Education at the National College of Art and Design, and am carrying out research on the motivational factors behind the work of students at Leaving Certificate level Art.

Whilst you will notice that this questionnaire is concerned with student issues, I believe that your experience as a teacher will be more objective in answering the questions presented.

I would be very grateful if you could return the completed questionnaire to me by Friday, 28th, February.

Thanking you in anticipation

I remain,
Yours sincerely,

Heather McKay

APPENDIX C

Questionnaire Page 1

Please respond to the following:

1. Student achievement at Junior Certificate level Art pre-determines achievement at Leaving Certificate level Art.

I agree —

I disagree —

Other (explain)
.....
.....

2. Students are able to make use of and build upon skills and interests learnt at Junior Certificate level Art within the Leaving Certificate level Art course, as it stands.

I agree —

I disagree —

Other (explain)
.....
.....

3. A combination of project work and examination, as seen at Junior Certificate level Art, would benefit students at Leaving Certificate level.

I agree —

I disagree —

Other (explain)
.....
.....

4a. Do you think that the pressures outside the Art room interfere with the creative potential of students at Leaving Certificate level Art?

Yes

—

No

—

Don't know

—

If you answered **YES** to 4a, complete 4b.

4b. Which of the following do you consider interfere with the creative potential of students in the Art room?
(Tick as many as you wish)

Parental expectations

—

School expectations

—

Career pressures

—

Financial worries

—

Domestic difficulties

—

Peer pressure

—

Relationships

—

Sibling rivalry

—

Poor diet

—

Insufficient sleep

—

Insufficient leisure activities

—

Heavy schoolwork load

—

Other

—

5a. Do you think that the pressures attached to the Leaving Certificate Examination are helpful in motivating students in the Art room?

Yes	—
No	—
Don't know	—

5b. Which of the following do you consider contribute to student motivation in the Art room?

(Tick as many as you wish)

Parental expectations	—
School expectations	—
Career goals	—
The "points race"	—
Preparation for four Art Examination papers	—
Time restraints on the days of the Examination	—
Personal inclination to learn	—
Self expression	—
Other	—

6a. Do you think that students are able to do themselves justice in the various sections of the Leaving Certificate Art Examination?

Yes

—

No

—

Don't know

—

If you answered **NO** to 6a, complete 6b.

6b. Which of the following do you consider interfere with student performance on the days of the Leaving Certificate Art Examination? (Tick as many as you wish)

Parental expectations

—

School expectations

—

Career goals

—

The "points race"

—

Inadequate Art materials
in 5th and 6th Year

—

Student exhaustion

—

Lack of confidence

—

Creative, but not Academic

—

Time restraints during the
Art Examination

—

Inadequate Art materials on
the days of the Art Examination

—

Relevance of descriptive passages
on the Art Examination papers
to students

—

Other

—

APPENDIX C

Results of the Questionnaire

Question One:

Student achievement at Junior Certificate level Art pre-determines achievement at Leaving Certificate level Art.

Agree = 5 (38.4%) Disagree = 6 (46.2%) Other = 2 (15.4%)

Other comments:

"Depends on the student and the student's circumstances"

"Marking system is very varied, therefore results cannot be used to determine achievement or suitability for Leaving Certificate"

"The inclusion of Art History can have quite an impact; both positively and negatively"

"Some students achieve poor grades in the Junior Certificate due to hard marking etc., and could go on to an "A" in the present Leaving Certificate as it is structured. Others may achieve on the basis of maturity better Leaving Certificate grades. Some did not take it [Art] at Junior Certificate, yet go on to do portfolios in Senior cycle and achieve Art college places"

"A keen student does much better at Leaving Certificate level"

"Not necessarily - they may have reached the limit of interest and motivation for developing skills due to their own expectations, those of others, other interests, lack of confidence; encouraging "safe" decisions..."

Agree	Disagree	Other
5	6	2

Question Two:

Students are able to make use of and build upon skills and interests learnt at Junior Certificate level Art within the Leaving Certificate level Art course, as it stands.

Agree = 4 (30.8%) Disagree = 3 (23%) Other = 6 (46.2%)

Other comments:

"Some are...others forget; it depends on the level of interest and commitment"

"Students choosing 5th Year Art often have not covered Junior Certificate Art at all"

"The Leaving Certificate as it stands does not encourage follow through and developed work appropriate for progression into 3rd level, but this is being dealt with by the Art Teachers' Association and the Department of Education. It is up to the individual teacher to make use of their skills in implementing stimulating classes"

"Skills yes, but the present Leaving Certificate Art course is quite unsuitable to Junior Certificate students"

"Only very highly motivated students will make the most of the Leaving Certificate Art course as it stands"

"I agree that anything which is learned will be used again in other areas"

Agree	Disagree	Other
4	3	6

Question Three:

A combination of project work and examination, as seen at Junior Certificate level Art, would benefit students at Leaving Certificate level.

Agree = 12 (92.3%) Disagree = 1 (7.7%) Other = 0 (0%)

Other comments:

"No, parents don't want it, and there is the enormous question of time which they do not have in 6th Year"

"Changes are in progress at the moment; interim changes already in place for 1997 exam"

"A more comprehensive project perhaps"

"Also visits from the Art inspector/s throughout the years 2 and 3; for support/additional information - an exam "feel" without undue pressure"

Question Four (a):

Do you think that the pressures outside the Art room interfere with the creative potential of students at Leaving Certificate level Art?

Yes = 10 (77%) No = 3 (23%) Don't know = 0 (0%)

Other comments:

"...if a student is interested in Art. Being creative helps alleviate external pressures"

"Possibly...the interested ones get on with it"

Agree	Disagree	Other
12	1	0

Yes	No	Don't know
10	3	0

Question Four (b):

Which of the following do you consider interfere with the creative potential of students in the Art room?

Other comments:

Other - "Often, having to prepare for the four particular Art exams can be restraining, and even inventive departures from the papers...still must lead back to the final requirements. It also depends on how much class contact time is needed, especially with 1-2 lessons a week being spent on history of Art"

Question Five (a):

Do you think that the pressures attached to the Leaving Certificate Examination are helpful in motivating students in the Art room?

Yes = 3 (23%) No = 10 (77%) Don't know = 0 (0%)

Other comments:

"If a student is motivated, they can work with pressure. If they are not, they simply won't work"

"The pressure involved in the written History element can have an adverse effect on weak students"

Question Six (a):

Do you think that students are able to do themselves justice in the various sections of the Leaving Certificate Art Examination?

Yes = 1 (7.7%) No = 12 (92.3%) Don't know = 0 (0%)

Yes	No	Don't know
3	10	0

Yes	No	Don't know
1	12	0

Question Six (b):

Which of the following do you consider interfere with student performance on the days of the Leaving Certificate Art Examination?

Other comments:

Student Performance - "The whole format of the Leaving Certificate is against creativity"

Other comments:

To alleviate the pressure - "they must bring their own prepared materials and use what the school has to offer. Students can interpret the exam paper in so many ways - only one word in the passage is needed to make it relevant. Good preparation is essential"

Note - "In general, I feel that there is now very little relationship between the present Leaving Certificate course in Art, Craft and Design and the current Junior Certificate course. Students who have covered the Junior Certificate course are at a loss to understand the requirements which are so different for the Leaving Certificate (these are even unsuited to preparation for 3rd level Art courses). Motivation of students can be difficult for the teacher faced with four exams in June, and a high weighting of marks for history of Art. Many students who choose Art at 5th Year level are not very academically motivated and their expectations of what the Leaving Certificate course will be like can be at times disappointing when they realise that the majority of their course work will not be contributing in effect to the end results"

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