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COLÁISTE NÁISIÚNTA EALAÍNE IS DEARTHA  
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**EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT CAN BRING ABOUT A  
WORTH WHILE EXPERIENCE WHICH CAN MINIMISE DISRUPTIVE  
BEHAVIOUR AND MAXIMISE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN  
EFFECTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT.**

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## INTRODUCTION

Plato, 427 BC was a rationalist philosopher and a mystical visionary in the western tradition. It was clear to him that the manner in which a state is organised greatly affects the lives of its citizens. He saw a direct link between society and chaos, order and education. Plato's purpose was to help people live their lives in such a way as to avoid defilement of their souls. If philosophy was to serve human kind then its central focus and best efforts should be directed to the education of youth. Similarly if teachers want our youth to be able to produce high quality work we must develop ways to empower them and to help them establish, implement and reflect upon a well defined plan of action.

In the nineteenth century, training institutions were known as 'normal schools' on the grounds that there was some single norm endorsed by society. The function of training establishments was to perpetuate this stereotype and the master of the method was employed in the model schools to ensure that each generation of teachers was poured into the same approved mould.

After World War II the first real effort was made in America to pursue universal education through to high school graduation. The National Commission on excellence in education recommended longer hours, more homework and more emphasis on science, maths and writing.

Today there are several factors which combine to require levels of skill, understanding, imagination and resilience from teachers which go infinitely beyond the rudimentary common sense and mechanical competence fostered by the normal schools of the last century.



Teachers need to develop strategies which not only transmit information but also encourage students to learn both independently and as members of a group. Students who leave school under-educated or unable to use their leisure time effectively are at risk of long term unemployment and other negative factors of a consumeristic society.

Many teachers find that traditional methods of learning are ineffective especially when faced with the fact that the number of unmotivated students is growing. These students feel that they are forced to attend school and then they drop out well before the Leaving Certificate. Teachers need to rely on their own ingenuity to develop motivational teaching skills which enable students to learn.

In this dissertation I explore aspects of classroom management. My contention is that effective classroom management can bring about a worth while experience which can minimise disruptive behaviour and maximise the establishment of an effective learning environment.





## CHAPTER ONE

### CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

*Many disruptive behaviours in the classroom can be alleviated before they become serious discipline problems. Disruptive behaviours will also be greatly reduced by the teacher's ability to employ effective organisational, planning and instructional practices. Such practices are at the heart of the teaching process and are essential to establishing and maintaining classroom control.(1)*

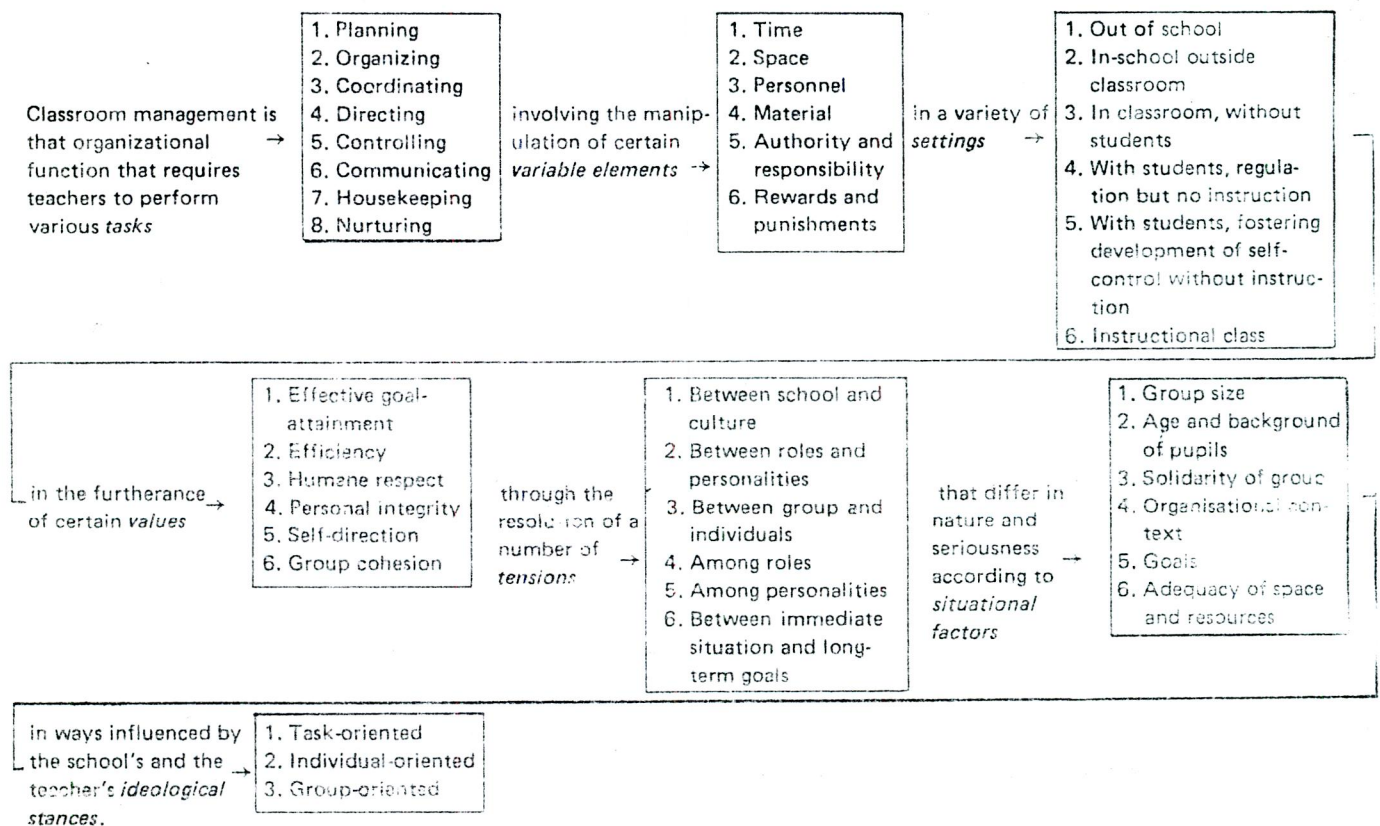
Classroom management is a topic which now attracts more research than was the case twenty years ago. It is a contentious field with disagreement about what constitutes an effective classroom climate.

Johnson and Brooks, 1979, produced a useful model (figure 1.1) which depicts the intricate nexus of relationships between the tasks which society obliges teachers to perform, such as planning and organising lessons and the many kinds of setting in which teaching and learning may take place. The values that teachers hold and the tensions between people and the roles they have to play. Is it true that *"classroom management is what teachers do to ensure that children engage in the task at hand."* (2) Most assuredly the management of time people and resources is a vital skill in teaching. Classroom management may be a contentious field but there is general agreement as to what constitutes a good teacher. What are the qualities of a good teacher? According to Wragg *"good teachers, it is commonly held, are keen, and enthusiastic, well organised firm but fair, stimulating, know their stuff, and interested in the welfare of their pupils."* (3)









Source: Johnson and Brooks, 1979.

Figure (1.1) A conceptual model of classroom management, Johnson and Brooks, 1979.





It is in the interest of the welfare of their pupils that teachers try to facilitate pupils in learning something worthwhile such as skills, values and how to live with others. But if pupils are disruptive teachers have to rely on their motivational skills to encourage them to behave. If they do not have the necessary skills *"many teachers either quit or lose their jobs because of a lack of control of their classes. Little learning can take place in a class fraught with behaviour problems. Therefore serious attention must be given to this aspect of classroom management."* (4)

What constitutes disruptive behaviour? The committee of enquire into Discipline in Schools (Des 1989) showed that the majority of disruptive behaviour is in fact petty nuisance according to David Fontana, educational psychologist, *"talking out of turn, work avoidance, unnecessary noise and out of seat behaviour far out-numbered more serious offences such as verbal abuse of the teacher, destructiveness, and physical violence"* (5) How can a teacher deal with this behaviour?

Effective discipline should be the natural result of the behaviour. For instance if a student throws a jar at the wall in anger, the natural punishment is to make him/her clean up the mess and paint the wall. Punishments should be certain, fair and impersonal. The teacher, who gets annoyed at a student's inattention and assigns a penalty that springs primarily from the teacher's exasperation will never succeed with adolescents. They know that the penalty is only an outlet for the teacher's emotions, and they blame the teacher rather than themselves.





Punishment should be constructive and conducive to greater self-control. Allowing students to suggest and carry out their own punishment is more likely to develop self-control than the assignments of penalties from a figure of authority. Punishment must avoid the arousal of fear, partly because fear is disorganising and partly because it is useless. A frightened student will agree to anything, but after he has recovered, the behaviour may be worse instead of better. The end result will be that *"the child may develop strategies such as untruthfulness to avoid punishment. This is not only, potentially bad for the child's long term personality development, but it also threatens the existence of trust between teacher and child."* (6)

Research findings and the experiences of successful teachers have identified certain initial practices that seem to minimise disruptive student behaviour and maximise the establishment of an effective learning environment. What I plan to do is give an overview of some of these practices and theories and in the following chapter put these theories to task in the art room.

There are four major parts to every class, the beginning, get the pupils into the class; the middle, get them to do the work; create a positive relationship with them and at the end, get them to leave the class in an orderly fashion.

Practices for minimising discipline problems should begin on the first day. The ASTI recommends that *"prior to meeting a class for the first time the teacher should become familiar with school policies concerning appropriate student behaviour and discipline problems."* (7)





At the beginning of every class the teacher should ensure that the pupils enter the class in an orderly fashion. And the best way to welcome them into class is *"greeting the class with a smile as they enter the classroom, instead of paying attention to the dirty blackboard, will build confidence and motivation among students"* (8)

Each class should be planned with the aid of a lesson plan. A lesson plan is a device to help a teacher become familiar with all that is involved in the good delivery of a class. It is a short, carefully written outline which, contains information on the teacher's objectives and skills that are to be learned and the activities for each class. A series of lessons following a strong learning objective is called a scheme of work. This has the advantage of providing the pupil with a systematic and structured learning environment and for the teacher a scheme of work is needed to visualise and prepare for the lesson.

In the 1950s, awareness of the vagueness of educational objectives in schools stimulated a group of psychologists, who specialised in testing, to seek a better way to describe these objectives. Group tests could be made more accurate and effective, based on the school curriculum and derived from a systematic list of aims and objectives, which can be defined as *"a general expression of intent and the degree of generality contained in the statement may vary from the very general in the case of long-term aims to the much less general in the case of short-term aims. An objective, by contrast, is characterised by greater precision and specificity"* (9)





Some difficulties may arise and this can often result in increased learning if handled in the correct manner. As Colin J. Smith and Robert Laslett believe that *"a more positive orientation is for teachers to see questioning as a means of checking if material is understood and to treat an incorrect answer as a teacher's fault for inadequate explanation instead of reprimand"* (10)

David Fontana is a consultant in educational psychology at the University of Wales, College of Cardiff. He believes that mutual trust and respect in the classroom can be created for the benefit of the student and teacher, and Fontan confirms that.

*teachers who relate satisfactorily to children have the gift of conveying to them sympathy, understanding, and a personal delight in the job of teaching. They indicate to the class that they want children to succeed not because this demonstrates their own competence but because success is important to children. Once the class is convinced that, they have the teacher's support, they will respond, as in any relationship with co-operation and esteem.* (11)

Jacob Kounin, 1950s - 1970s, one of the early writers on classroom management, identified several effective classroom management techniques. He emphasised being aware of the ripple effect, cultivating withitness, coping with over lapping activities, maintaining the momentum of a lesson, using a variety of instructional techniques enthusiastically focusing on the misbehaviour of the student rather than on their personalities, and suggesting alternative constructive behaviour.





Moving around the classroom quietly work can be marked in progress, advice, guidance and immediate feedback can be offered where help maybe freely administered without disturbing the whole class. It is important that teachers, know, or appear to know what is happening in the class at all times and thus prevent misbehaviour before it occurs. This is what Kounin called *"Withitness: having eyes in the back of your head and thus picking up misbehaviour early"* (12)

Even with an open and understanding attitude from teachers, student misbehaviour can still exist. But it must be remembered that

*many especially beginning teachers, view acts of misbehaviour as directed to them personally. A teacher who realises that such behaviour might be a reaction to other factors or to the teacher's role rather than to the teacher personally, will be in a better position to handle the situation. (13)*

In the case of misbehaviour in the class the teacher should try to understand the cause of the behaviour, maintain a calm atmosphere and focus on the student's behaviour rather than on the individual in question. It is necessary to understand that problem behaviour does not exist in a vacuum and, as a result, some schools provide the counselling and guidance which students require in helping them to understand their problems and how to avoid damaging confrontations in the classroom. Other schools, encourage and support teachers in the modification of students' behaviour. This learning theory is based on the theories developed by B.F. Skinner and is applied to shaping and changing behaviour in ways that are practical and realistic within the routine of the classroom.





*Behaviour modification techniques are based essentially upon the operant conditioning model of learning. That is, they work on the assumption that behaviour which is reinforced or rewarded is likely to be repeated, while behaviour which is not reinforced will tend to disappear. (14)*

Kounin employs a strategy called 'overdwelling': he advises teachers to avoid staying on an issue for longer than necessary. By respecting the students' feelings and not carrying out a public confrontation there is more likelihood that the situation will be resolved successfully. If a punishment is to be exacted, ensure that the student knows why and agrees that it is fair and that it is their responsibility as much as it is the teacher's. Punishment can be counter productive as Fontana says

*the use of punishment of any kind may damage the relationship the child has with the teacher, perhaps permanently. This is particularly true if the punishment is seen as unfair or designed to humiliate. (15)*

Careful planning at the end of each lesson is as important as at the beginning of the teaching session. Let us not forget to structure the end of class "*Structure at the end of a class is all too easily lost in a sigh of relief that it is nearly over.*" (16) A pleasant learning atmosphere can be spoilt if a productive session dissolves into a noisy chaotic and stressful finale. There are two parts to concluding a class. *The first is an opportunity to "refresh, restate and reinforce the theme of the lesson."* (17)





An orderly procedure for stopping work should include consolidation and reinforcement of learning. This is achieved by giving an early warning that they have two to five minutes of work time left. Then select some examples of class and gather the pupils around for the evaluation. The evaluation will take the form of a brief question and answer session which will enable the teacher to check on how successfully objectives have been attained or identify points which require further learning. This reminds the class of what has been covered and prepares the way for the next lesson.

It must be stressed that this evaluation be conducted in a non-threatening manner and used as feedback to ensure that the lesson has been understood. The students can learn from themselves and others how to evaluate their progress and set goals for their future self assessment. It is a time to praise good work as *"Effective praise calls attention to students' develop learning progress or skill mastery."* (18) and reassure those who have difficulties. In time the students may come to look forward to having their work commented on and seeing this evaluation as a spring board for further learning.

Homework may be set that can reflect the learning objective of the class and extended learning beyond the classroom. We then have *"to get them out"*

*Some sequence which facilitates the movement of bodies from inside the classroom with the minimum contact with furniture, equipment or each other needs to be established. (19)*





The second part to concluding a class is the clean up. Students need to know where materials are kept and how to use resources and equipment safely and without wastage. They need to be able to clean up after themselves and follow guidelines that will lead to responsibility for their actions.

A rota ensures that a general clean up is done by students who are delegated to return materials to storage, sweep the floor and check that the desks are tidy and the stools are up on the desks. Once this is completed they collect their bags and coats and file out of the room in an orderly fashion prepared for their next class.

Students prefer teachers who, without being overly severe, display good classroom management skills. These skills manifest themselves in the ability to be fair in their use of rewards and punishments but also to be able to treat their students as individuals and provide them with a variety of stimulating work. Good classroom management facilitates the learning context and prevents misbehaviour before it can happen. When inappropriate behaviour occurs it is met with suitable sanctions. The aim of such sanction is to promote understanding by the student and to resolve the issue in the hope of preventing its happening again. In summary *"good teachers view teaching as a human process and are aware of the complexities of personality, structure, group dynamics and counselling process."* (20)





FOOTNOTES CHAPTER I  
CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

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## CHAPTER TWO

### METHODOLOGY

*The traditional view of a well managed classroom includes the notion of students working silently at their desks, speaking only when spoken to and providing verbatim recitations of what the teacher and textbook said, is incompatible with the contemporary view of learning and motivation. (1)*

In order to explore the components of classroom management with particular reference to the art room. I would first like to give an outline of relevant curriculum traditions and styles of teaching.

The Technocratic approach is one where success is measured in terms of a clear learning objective and the use of these objectives, as criteria for evaluating learners' progress. The liberal-humanist approach treats curriculum as knowledge-centred through not necessarily a curriculum based upon any particular division of knowledge into subjects. Having said that It does however recognise that 'fields of knowledge' exist such as the theoretical and practical areas of activity including agriculture, medicine and education. Where structure renders information more meaningful and provides for more accessible learning.

Progressivism takes subject matter into consideration as its is student - centred and illuminates the child's world where growth is the central metaphor. Self-development is gained by direct experience and communication with others is encouraged. An example of this in theory would be the new curriculum for the primary schools published in 1971 under the title, *Curaclam na Bunscoile*.





The cultural-analysis sees school as having a socialising function. What is transmitted by this form of education will include the ideas, ideals, beliefs, skills, tools, aesthetic discernment and methods of thinking. Thus 'School' claims to centre the child's educational experience, around that which is valued nationally and universally. When schools are seen as a means of social constructivism the teachers role is that of a facilitator rather than that of an instructor.

Just as parents adopt either an authoritarian, laissez-faire (permissive) or authoritative approach to raising children, teachers adopt one of these approaches to managing the behaviour of students. Authoritarian teachers establish rules for their students' behaviour and expect them to be blindly obeyed. Explanations of why a particular rule is necessary are almost never given. Instead rewards and punishments are ladled out. Laissez-faire (liberal humanist) teachers represent the other extreme. They impose few controls. They allow their students to make basic decisions and provide advice or assistance only when asked. Authoritative teachers provide rules but discuss the reasons for them and adjust these rules as students demonstrate the ability for self-governance, this produces the highest levels of desirable student behaviour.

To obtain success in the art room the art teacher needs to be a combination of the technocrat, progressivist and the cultural - analysis. Thus encouraging a more open minded and realistic approach. This approach includes having a sense of humour and dedication. And one though aware of all the traditions, reflects at different times worthy elements of each but does not incorporate all of any all the time.





I put the theories of Classroom Management to task in Pobalscoil Iosolde, Palmerstown Community College which was founded in 1982 under the terms of a deed of trust between His Grace, the Archbishop of Dublin, the Sisters of Mercy and the Minister for Education. It is a co-educational community school established to meet the needs of the young people of Palmerstown and Chapelizod. It now serves six hundred boys and girls and has a staff of forty teachers.

The school is bright and cheerful, a red bricked one storey building surrounded by grassy slopes, it has hard courts for tennis and basket-ball and a football pitch. Inside, the school corridors are decorated by art completed by the fourth year students; mosaics and metal work adorn the hall ways. The science laboratory, art room, woodwork room, library and computer room are all very well equipped. The school has upgraded its facilities with the acquisition of six new Pentium Multimedia PCs, ensuring that the students have access to the very latest in computer technology. The school provides its students with the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP), this can be described as a Leaving Certificate which has strong vocational dimension. The emphasis for the transition year students is on the development of a wider range of skills rather than on academic work and special attention is paid to developing personal learning strategies. The school recognises that state examinations are important but also sees the value in the personal, social and religious development of every student as essential.





The teachers are aware of the various students' backgrounds and try to encourage them by positive affirmations and challenging them to take responsibility for their own behaviour. The school code of discipline is reviewed annually in consultation with the parents.

The Parent Teacher Association was formed to act as a channel for greater parental involvement in the operation of the school. The principal and representatives from the teaching staff attend its meetings. The school has a healthy adult education department which is attended mostly by the parents of the students in the community, thus strengthening ties, and encouraging the people in the locality to avail of the school resources.

Thirty percent of the staff are A.S.T.I. members and seventy percent are T.U.I. members. Among the staff there is a chaplain, a counsellor and a psychologist. They assist in dealing with discipline, behavioural problems and bullying. One of the realities of the school is the concerns of the staff and parents with regard to bullying.

The existence of bullying has implications for classroom management. Effective action against bullying needs a 'whole school' policy to raise the self esteem of the victim and remove the need for self assertion from the bully. The attitude of the school seems to be to seek the best for the student and the teacher whenever possible. The teachers openly discuss students and work out strategies to help those at risk. The school has a healthy emphasis on the jobs market but also considers the rounded education of the young person in a non-threatening environment.





With this in mind I designed my schemes with the aim of improving the skills, knowledge and attitudes of the students at Palmerstown Community College. I taught two first year classes, two second year classes and one fifth year class. All were double classes except for one second year class. I needed practical assistance in implementing these schemes and ideals. I explored issues in contemporary education and found a scaffold that classroom management linked with a successful project could provide my classes with a positive and effective learning environment. I came to believe that *"Professional competence is really made up of intelligent thought translated into intelligent action"* (2)

I looked into the Junior Certificate Syllabus guidelines for teachers which are intended to help teachers implement a *"constructive and active learning programme based on the aims and objectives of the Junior Certificate Syllabus"*. (3)

Part of the syllabus is for students to develop the ability to analyse design problems, to develop working drawings, to learn how to design from two dimensional to three dimensional, and to use problem solving techniques appropriate to the task at hand. As Iseult McCarthy and Gary Granville state in Design in Education, a discussion paper.

*Yet design education clearly fosters the development of these qualities essential to your people growing up in the 21st century. These qualities include analytical problem - solving skills, creativity and enterprise. Intrinsically valuable in themselves, such qualities are transferable to all areas of thought and action.* (4)





Another aspect of the design syllabus is the importance of a visually stimulating learning environment where the teacher sets the tone that encourages creative action. This includes the ability to allow students to work and the freedom to express ideas and where sincere effort irrespective of the ability, is always praised and encouraged.

At the beginning of the teaching year I introduce myself to the class and establish rules and regulations for classroom behaviour.

*It is best to "establish a set of classroom rules to guide the behaviour of students at once. With younger students the rules should be general and pertain to behaviours such as paying attention, respect for others, excessive noise and securing materials"*  
(5)

Rather than have a set of negative rules I try to introduce a 'what to do' list. This fosters students on self-control and exercise of responsibility. For example instead of saying no talking when instruction is given I prefer to say 'wait quietly for instruction' or 'students should respect others and their property and move about the class in an orderly fashion'. By keeping this list to a minimum I have a greater hope that students will respond positively and take responsibility.

It is also important that students know what sanctions are there when they fail to meet the agreed responsibility.





*And what are the best kind of rules? Good classroom management involves establishing clear rules where rules are needed, avoiding unnecessary ones, eliminating punitive ones reviewing them periodically and changing or dropping them when appropriate. (6)*

Being in the classroom before students arrive establishes an atmosphere of being in control of the situation.

*J. Smith and R. Lasslett strongly believe that simply by being there before the class arrives the teacher establishes the role of host receiving the class and is quietly able to underline authority (7)*

I ensure that I am in the class at least five minutes before students arrive.

Once the bell is rung announcing the beginning of class I stand behind my desk which gives me a vantage view of both the door and the rest of the classroom. Thus I am able to set the tone. There is another advantage: I am able to check that the room is tidy, that there are enough tables and chairs and that materials are at hand (e.g. paint, paper, brushes, cardboard, foam) and not just somewhere in the room.

I use the time to organise visual aids, support studies and prepare the materials for the demonstrations. A visual aid is an image of the idea to be communicated to the class. When teaching a class on how to make a mosaic the work of Gaudi could be used as an example of a support study. Gaudi was renowned for his mosaic work in Barcelona. He designed and decorated Park Guell, and the Sacra Familia Church.







A demonstration follows the introduction where the students are shown how to manipulate materials and learn a skill, individual questions are answered and having understood the instruction get to work. Children respond to clear instructions and according to Lovitt

*If children know what we want them to do, they will usually do it. (8)*

A double class is eighty minutes long. Roll call, introduction and demonstration take from twenty to twenty five minutes. Class evaluation and clean up at the end are approximately another fifteen minutes. So actual task time is forty to forty-five minutes. I find that this is a good structure any longer than this and the students become tired and disinterested. They must be made to feel that they are on top of the subject and as C.J. Smith and R. Laslett show *"pupils feelings of self esteem and a sense of competence in a practical subject area will depend, to a considerate extent on the teacher's ability to get on with 'it'". (9)*

'It' refers to the main part of the lesson, the nature of its content and the manner of its presentation. Time is different for all of us but *"young people perceive each minute to be approximately three times longer than older people."* (10) It is for this reason that once the roll is called I move swiftly into the introduction, focus their attention by a quick recapitulation, establish what the students already know and how to build on that information thus leading naturally into the demonstration.

From the very start of the year I approached the fifth year class differently from younger classes were very weak and defensive about their abilities. I realised that rules and regulations would not succeed so from the onset they were informed of the scheme of work







Figure 2.1 Self portrait in the style of the artist Gauguin. Visual Aid for the classroom.







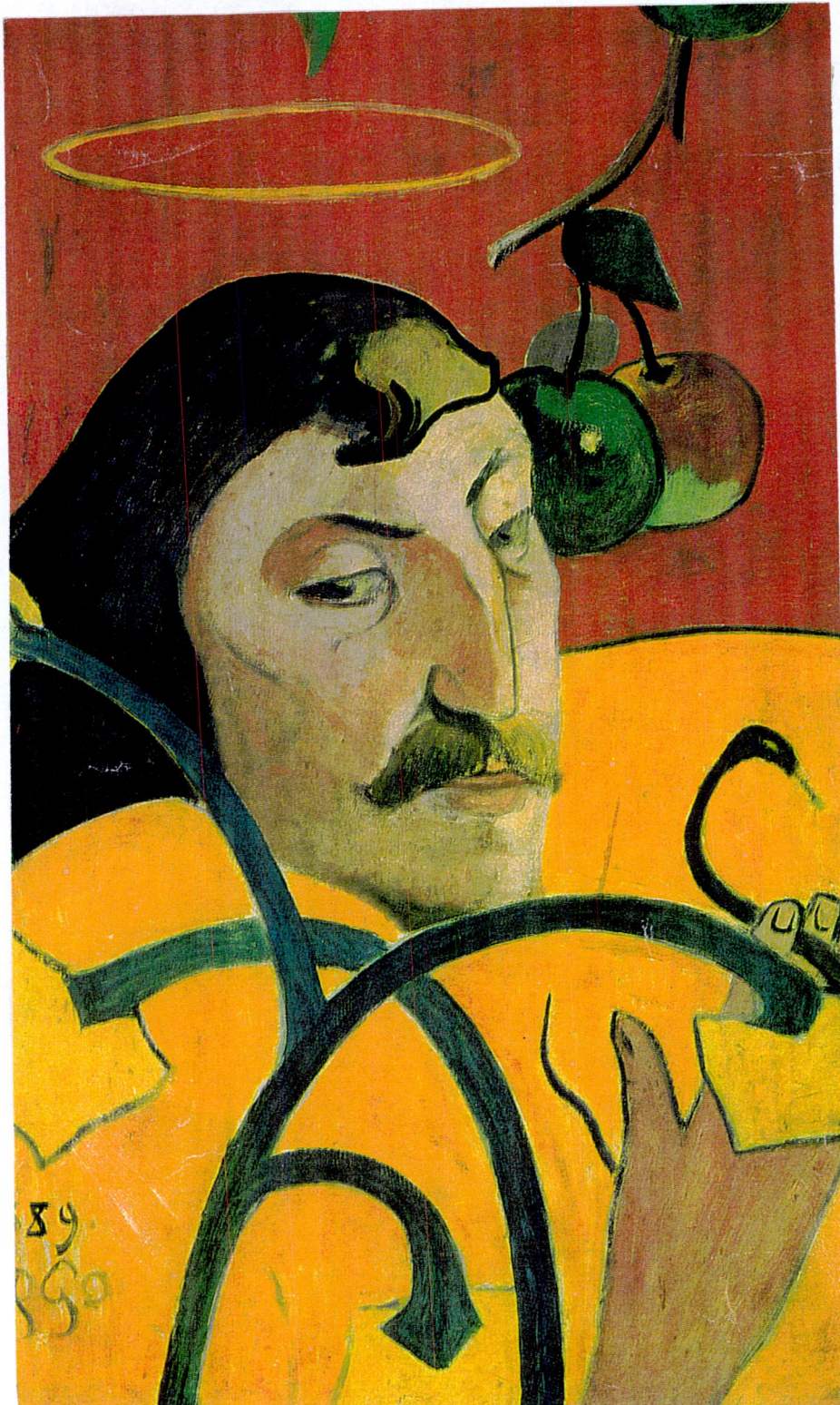


Figure 2.2 Gauguin, self-portrait. Visual Aid for the Classroom.







which was to do a self-portrait based on the style of an artist of their choice. I showed them images of artists' work and how to use the resources of the school library. Basic concepts and art vocabulary were explained for example, composition, perspective and proportion. I was aware that their negativity was not directed towards me personally but towards the role of a teacher, the figure of authority. I emphasised that sincere effort was to be encouraged and set about developing a relationship based on trust and acceptance. Not engaging in their negative attitude towards me, and by avoiding classroom confrontations, they desisted from their behaviour.

As a result there was a marked improvement in their self-confidence, there was a healthy working and learning environment in the classroom and their belief in their abilities was self-evident in the final project. which was the exploration of the medium of clay using the theme of transport (car, bus, boat), which led to the understanding of the possibilities and common handling techniques of clay.

During the demonstration the students gathered around my desk. I demonstrated coil and slab technique. I made a coil pot by rolling out a coil and showing how to attach it to the previous coil using 'slip', which is clay and water mixed to form a glue. I then rolled a slab of clay out with a rolling pin. This ensures an even surface. By asking one student to roll a coil it was possible to see that he understood how to perform the task. The other students asked questions relating to their class work and the application of the technique. One student then made a train using coil technique. Slab technique led to a clay model of an aeroplane,





another student combined both slab and coil technique to make a boat. The students clearly saw and understood what had to be done and were able for the task. Their new found belief in their abilities was self-evident in this project.

Good and Brophy have noted that the student needs only to see a particular behaviour demonstrated by another person before imitating it himself. The person who demonstrates the behaviour is called the model and the form of learning, modelling. Modelling can be a useful device for teachers. Many skills, for example, can be learned more easily through observation and imitation than by trying to understand and respond to only verbal explanation and instruction. Therefore *"letting students know what you require them to do in class. What you hope to achieve and how the class will operate helps reduce student tension and confusion."* (11)

Rules were established with the first year classes at the beginning of the year. I mentioned the use of modelling as a teaching tool for demonstrations especially in a practical class, in fact a teacher, in and out of class is always modelling. Sincerity and sympathetic relationship are of the essence as these create mutual respect this is why it is important to remember that if pupils detect discrepancies between what the teacher says and what he actually does, they will ignore what is said and do what is done. 'Do as I do not as I say'. This aspect of modelling is important for discipline so having established a particular standard of behaviour with the first year and second years it has to be insisted that it be maintained.







Figure 2.3 Support Studies. Gaudí, mosaic Park Guell, Barcelona.







Figure 2.4 Fifth year students. Palmerstown Community College.









Figure 2.5 Fifth year student work. Self portrait in the style of the artist, Munch.





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Figure 2.6 Fifth year student work. Self-portrait in the style of Monet.





A short scheme of work was implemented that included observational and expressive work which indicated their strengths and weaknesses. The second scheme of work was to design and construct a three dimensional figure based on Roald Dahl's, *Revolting Rhymes* leading to an understanding of puppet making and basic set design. By introducing this class to puppet making they were allowed to explore new media, new techniques and new way of expressing themselves and by using cloth, glue and sewing and construction work in cardboard, they were able to visualise the puppets coming to life and on the way their strengths were allowed to develop.

In order to allow creativity and not chaos to flourish, in this class certain classroom management skills were put in place that encouraged work to continue and prevented misbehaviour. Just to repeat a good and apposite quote, *'Withitness - having eyes in the back of your head and thus picking up misbehaviour early'*. (12) In this first year class my presence was felt by my moving around the classroom quietly giving feedback and advice. The class knew that their work would be seen in turn, they worked at their own pace and knew that I could be called on for extra assistance.

During one of these classes I had a group around me making foam puppets and the students making paper maché puppets working at another table. I was able to employ 'withitness' by making eye contact, calling students by name, reminding them of their task and asking one or two of them to bring their work to me. Thus preventing misbehaviour and encouraging students to return to their work.







Figure 2.7 Puppets, Visual Aid for the classroom



Figure 2.8 First year students puppet, 'Giant' from 'Jack and the Bean Stalk'









Figure 2.9 First year students work  
 'Pig' from 'The Three Little Pigs'  
 'Giant' from 'Jack and the Bean Stalk'  
 'Wolf' from 'Little Red Riding Hood'







The scheme of work I taught to one of the second years in the first term was to introduce the to cardboard printing. This was a difficult assignment because of the cutting involved and the rewards were not worth the effort. This was already a volatile class with an aggressive presence and now students were dissatisfied with their work and becoming disruptive.

The second scheme of work I pursued with this class was to design and construct a book and its cover leading to an understanding of the relationship between text and image. The scheme focused on drawing and lettering and enabled me to control the tempo and pacing of the class. By doing so I was able to see the students' work and their abilities. I employed desist methods, behaviour modification and established my presence in the classroom to the extent that this class, though still very disruptive finally produced work that they were proud of.

The 'ripple or domino effect' works in a situation where I comment to one pupil that the work is good or ask another why this task has not started. This usually has the knock on effect that other pupils realise that they should have begun work and that I am interested in seeing a result. I find the overlapping method works very well in this kind of situation that is *"being able to do more than one thing at once for example deal with someone misbehaving whilst at the sometime keeping the students you are with occupied"*. (13)





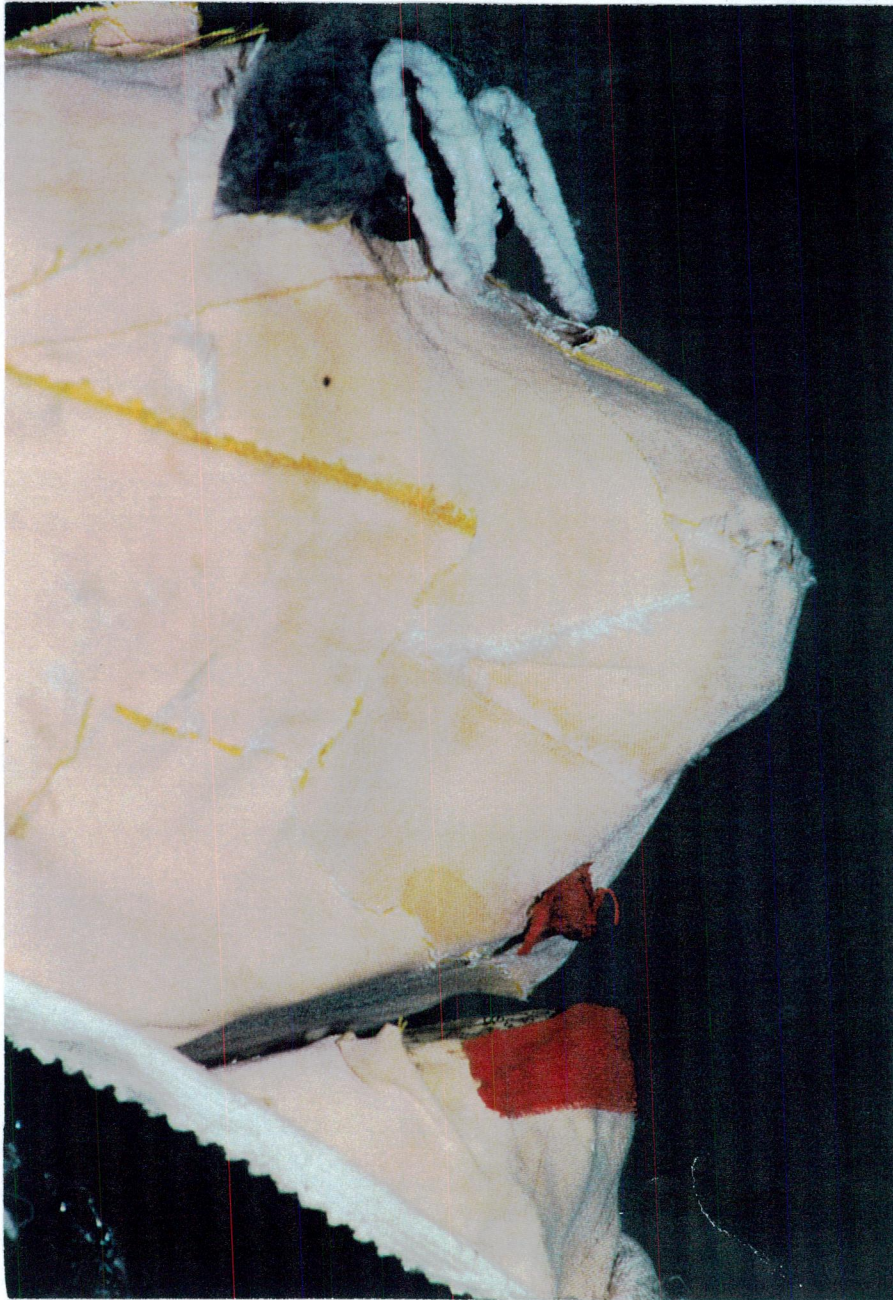


Figure 2.10 First year students work.  
The 'Judge' from 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'

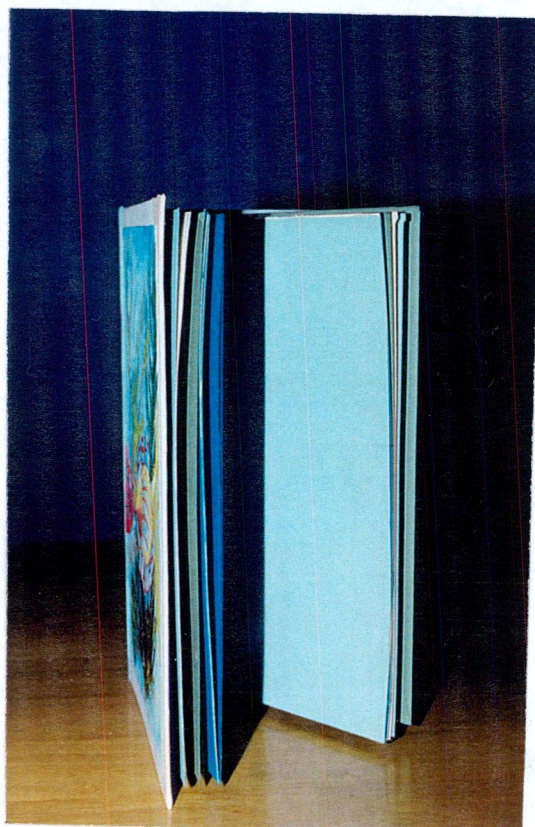








Figure 2.11 Bookcover and inside pages.  
Visual Aid for the Classroom









While making the bookcover with the second years some students had technical difficulties. On these occasions rather than interrupt the whole class I quietly gathered a small group around my table and clarified their problems. While doing so I looked up at regular intervals and observed the class; misbehaviour was prevented by calling a students' name with a reminder to return to the task. Whilst staying at my desk I have employed 'overlapping' and by not interrupting other students I have employed the 'smoothness' technique which is *"keeping students at work by not intruding suddenly when they are busy, starting one activity and then leaving or ending an activity and then coming back to it unexpectedly"*. (14)

Because of the sequential format of the scheme of work students are aware of beginning and the end of the activity - work is drawn, designed and brought to its conclusion either in a two or three dimensional project. It is then presented for an end of project evaluation and appraisal.

So how do I see my role as art teacher? I have come to agree that *'the art teacher in reality, serves as a catalyst - guide - director - stimulator in bringing about learning, development and a positive attitude concerning art on the part of the student via experience in the art room'* (15)

In this class there was one boy who persisted in disruptive behaviour. Talk of rules, or detention had little or no effect on him. I dealt with the issue in the following manner. The classroom in Palmerstown is 'L' shaped which means that I can put a pupil aside in the 'L' to





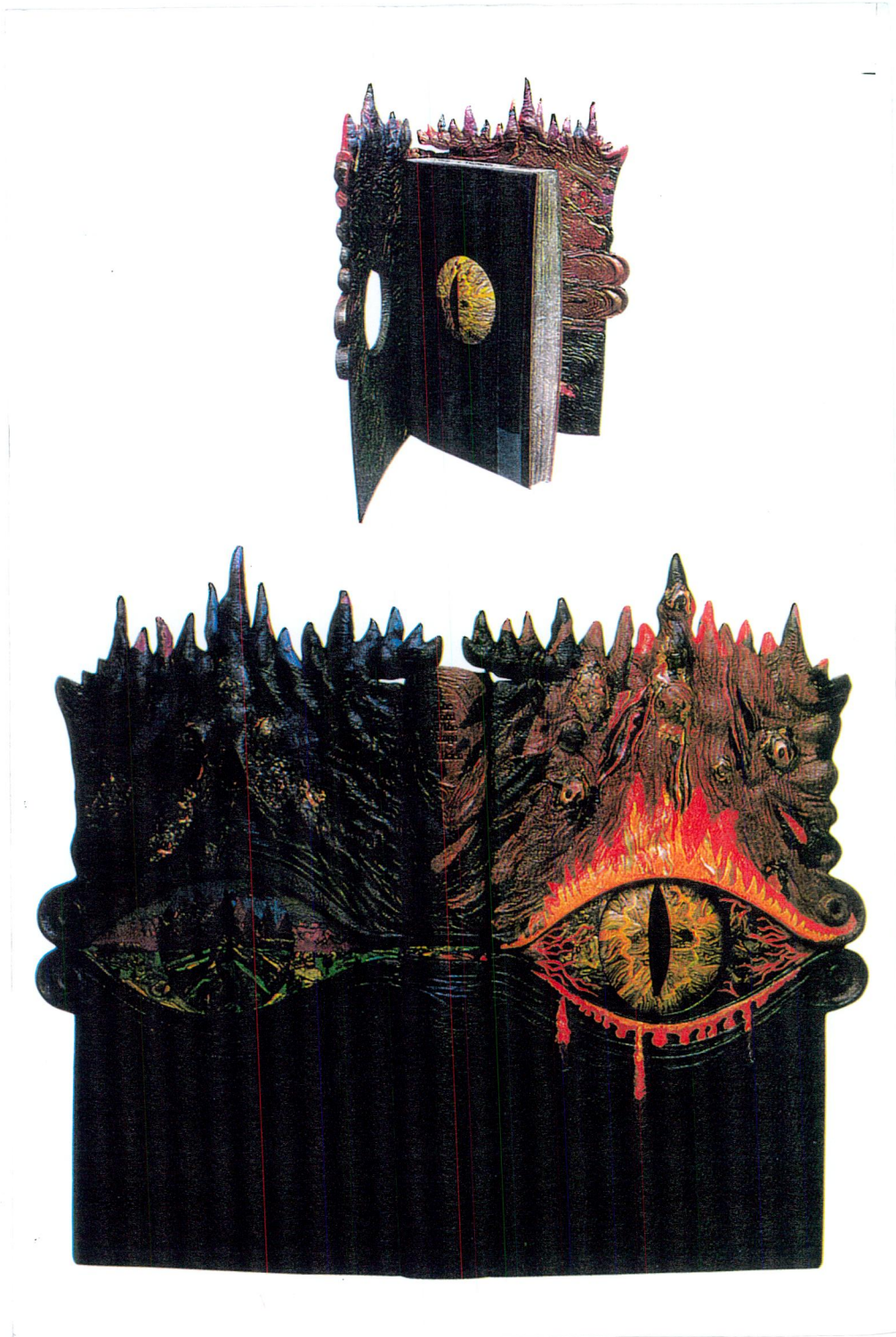


Figure 2.12 Support Studies.  
Bookcover and inside pages by Philip Smith for Tolkein, 1983.







work alone at a table or have a discussion to see if an issue can be resolved and the student returned to classroom work.

Within minutes of walking into the classroom this particular student would misbehave. Rather than have the problem escalate I asked him to move to the 'L' on his own. Once there for a few minutes, I would make sure he understood why his behaviour was intolerable in a class and encouraged him to work. He realised that I did not dwell on the issue, did not take his behaviour personally and that I was more interested in the development of his art work.

One day he left class without permission, I notice his absence on his return to class rather than punish this act I entered into a contract of good behaviour with him; if he behaved for three weeks I would write a good report in his journal. He needed gentle reminders on a weekly basis but by the end of the second term I was able to reward his improved behaviour with a good report. His work and classroom behaviour continued to improve thereafter.

All of my classes this year were 'mixed ability'. There is an important difference between mixed ability groups and mixed ability teaching, because as Elliot remarks

*"Mixed ability teaching implies a certain kind of teaching whereas any kind of teaching can, and does go on in mixed ability groups. Elliot, who makes this important distinction, identified mixed ability teaching as occurring when a teacher attempts to regulate his treatment of individual differences by the principle of equality. For example when a teacher adopts a teaching - to-the-whole-class approach in a mixed ability situation he fails to regulate his teaching by the idea of equality because his teaching style assumes that individual differences do not exist."*  
(16)







Figure 2.13 Second year students work. Design for Book Cover.





I use "wholeclass" approach when I am giving an instruction and a demonstration but I am very aware of the various individual abilities within the class.

A student in my first year class found it difficult to concentrate and stay at task. Therefore I devised a scheme and planned lessons with his ability and attention span in mind.

Supplementary activities were planned and once occupied he stayed out of trouble and gained a positive classroom experience while other students benefited from my extra attention as a result. This proves the validity of the excerpt from "A Guide to Teaching Practice" that

*"much of the time spent teaching mixed ability classes will be devoted to individual and small group work. The advantage of individualised learning in this context is that each child is able to work at a pace best suited to his needs and ability." (17)*

Because of the individualised nature of the practical work in the art room it is a perfect opportunity to give time to individual and group work. Information is broken into 'bite-sized chunks' to challenge and motivate the weak and the bright student alike.

Towards the end of the task time students in the art room are reminded that they have five minutes left. Smith and Laslett advise giving '*an early warning that work will stop in two minutes precisely*' (18). Work is then selected that shows what has been achieved in that class and the evaluation reinforces the learning objective of the lesson. This is an important aspect of learning as students are helped to develop a critical awareness about the work they have done.







Figure 2.14 Second year student work. Design for Book Cover.







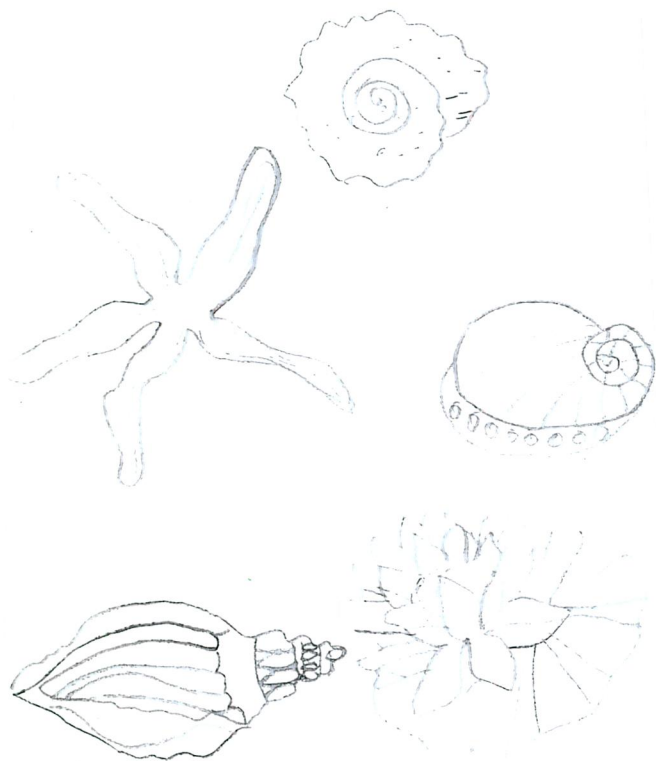


Figure 2.15 Student work. Design for Bookcover.





Questions on the evaluating can cover many areas of the creative, intellectual, emotional and social growth of the student depending on the aims and objectives started at the beginning of the year of scheme of work. This type of questioning can reinforce learning and it is also a valuable time for praising work and for students to gain positive feedback. Praising work does not need to be left to the last part of the class but can be used effectively as an integral part of the class, *"Catch them being good."*

I prefer to use praise in a natural voice and in a straight forward way without embarrassing the student concerned. I also like to call attention to a skill learned or use of imagination or ingenuity with materials. A class who have made progress and improved in behaviour can be given a general pat on the back. Using praise can also improve behaviour and encourage progress by focusing on the students own efforts abilities and decisions made rather than on dependency on external manipulation. Thus reinforcing what Good and Brophy say of praise

*"Effective praise calls attention to students' developing learning progress, skill mastery. It expresses appreciation for students efforts or admiration for their accomplishments in ways that call attention to the efforts or accomplishments themselves rather than to their role in pleasing the teacher" (19)*

Home work can be set to reinforce learning outside of the classroom setting. Areas needing further clarification can be noted from the homework and reinforced in the next lesson. In a class dealing with composition discussing background, middle ground and foreground. The homework would be to draw an image with a strong middle ground and return it to class for further discussion. This encourages students to look beyond the art room for extra learning experience.





Good classroom management includes an orderly procedure for cleaning up. In the art room when paint has been used, brushes, palettes and containers need to be cleaned, washed and returned to their places. Considerable confusion can arise where there are too many students all clamouring for the sink at once. By allowing only two students to the sink at one time the job gets done quicker and faster. When they know classroom guidelines they can take responsibility for their own actions. Even with the best of intentions students will avoid clean up if left unmonitored. Fontana maintains that *"good classroom management also means that students know where things are kept and that they each have clear duties and responsibilities."* (20) Each student is responsible for their area but a rota is also established which ensures that general work is done by students delegated to collect scissors, return materials to their storage area and sweep the floor. Scraps of paper and rubbish are put into the bin. The students collect their bags and coats and they depart from the classroom in an orderly fashion and in preparation for the next class.

Careful planning in devising schemes of work, good organisation and communication skills maximise student attention and involve them in the acquisition of knowledge and skills. By being utterly fair and having a sense of humour I can involve them in developing a relationship of trust and self confidence with the teacher and with each other. This can be developed to allow them to express their thoughts and options on art and design and make critical appraisal of the world around them.







Figure 2.16 Palmerstown Community College. The Art Room.







Putting to task the various aspects of classroom management enabled me to minimise disruptive behaviour to create and maintain an effective learning environment in all my classes.





## FOOTNOTES CHAPTER II

### METHODOLOGY

1. Robert F. Biehler and Jack Snowman, Psychology Applied to Teaching, (Houghton Mifflin Company. 1997) p.480.
2. E.C. Wragg, Classroom Management (Routledge 1994) p.
3. The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, ed. Maurice Meade The Junior Certificate Art, Craft, Design Guidelines for Teachers, (An Roinn Oideachais 1997) p.
4. Iseult McCarthy and Gary Granville, Design in Education, a discussion paper (National College of Art and Design/National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. 1997) p.
5. School Discipline: Advice for Teachers and School Authorities (ASTI 1995) p.
6. Louis Cohen and Lawrence Manion, A Guide to Teaching Practice (Methuen 1983) p.191.
7. Colin J. Smith, Robert Laslett, Effective Classroom Management (Routledge 1993) p.4.
8. Ibid p.8
9. Ibid p.7.
10. School Discipline: Advice (ASTI 1995) p.6.
11. Ibid p.3.
12. E.C. Wragg, Classroom Teaching Skills (Croom Helm, 1984) p.25.





13. Ibid p.25
14. Ibid p.25
15. John A. Michael, Art and Adolescence Teaching Art at the Secondary Level, (Teachers College Press, N.Y. 1983) p.100.
16. J. Elliott, 1976. Cambridge Journal of Education 6(2), 13-14. Cohen, Manion, Teaching Practice, p.90
17. Ibid p.95
18. Smith, Laslett, Effective Classroom Management p.6.
19. Thomas L.Good and J.E. Brophy, Looking in Classrooms (Longman 1997) p.145
20. David Fontana, Psychology for Teachers (Macmillan Press 1995) p.371





## CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion it should be remembered that art and design education is not only about acquiring skills, learning about perception, teaching about context and encouraging expression and critical awareness. It is about all of these but it is also about providing the opportunity for the understanding of concepts and the formulation of opinions and ideas, enabling thinking and fostering a sense of wonder and curiosity which will enable students to make links and understand relationships in all they see.

*For, don't you mark, we're made so that we love,  
First when we see them painted, things we have passed  
Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see;  
..... Art was given for that -  
God uses us to help each other so,  
Lending our minds out, (1)*

In order to provide these opportunities in the art room the art teacher needs to be a combination of the technocrat, progressivist and the cultural analysis. The teaching of skills is the domain of the technocrat, where schemes of work are devised which are within the experience of the students and also allows for the development of their ideas. The progressivist encourages the students self-confidence to express their thoughts and considered opinion in art and design and to make critical appraisal of the world around them. The cultural analysis helps them to realise that art is not an undisciplined act and that knowledge of life and art is gained through direct experience which can change their world as a result.





Being a classroom manager who combines these three styles of teaching encourages an open-minded and realistic approach to teaching and learning. This includes having a sense of dedication coupled with a sense of humour, and one though aware of all the traditions, reflects at different times worthy elements of each. But does not use all of any all the time.

Implementing aspects of classroom management skills enabled me to bring about a worthwhile experience for the students of Palmerstown Community College.

By being fair, having a sense of humour, using desist methods and building up a relationship based on trust and respect. I was able to minimise disruptive behaviour. With careful planning, clear learning objectives, stimulating schemes, awareness of the mixed abilities and individuals' needs within the class, I was able to motivate students and keep them focused on their art work.

Applying the various aspects of Classroom Management in the art room, I was able to maximise the establishment of an effective learning environment which led them to experience pride and joy in their work, confidence and self esteem in themselves which must surely be the aim of any teacher.





## FOOTNOTES

## CONCLUSION

1. Robert Browning, Fra Lipo The English Parnassus, Anthology of longer poems, (Oxford University, Amen House, London 1952) p.640





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