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

THE VALUE OF TEACHING THE ART ELEMENTS THROUGH
TEXTILES

A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Education

In

Candidacy for the

B.A. DEGREE IN ART AND DESIGN EDUCATION

By

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13

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To my family, to whom I am eternally grateful, especially my Mother and Grandmother. My final acknowledgement must go to my Aunt, Elaine, who typed this dissertation – without any complaints – thank you.

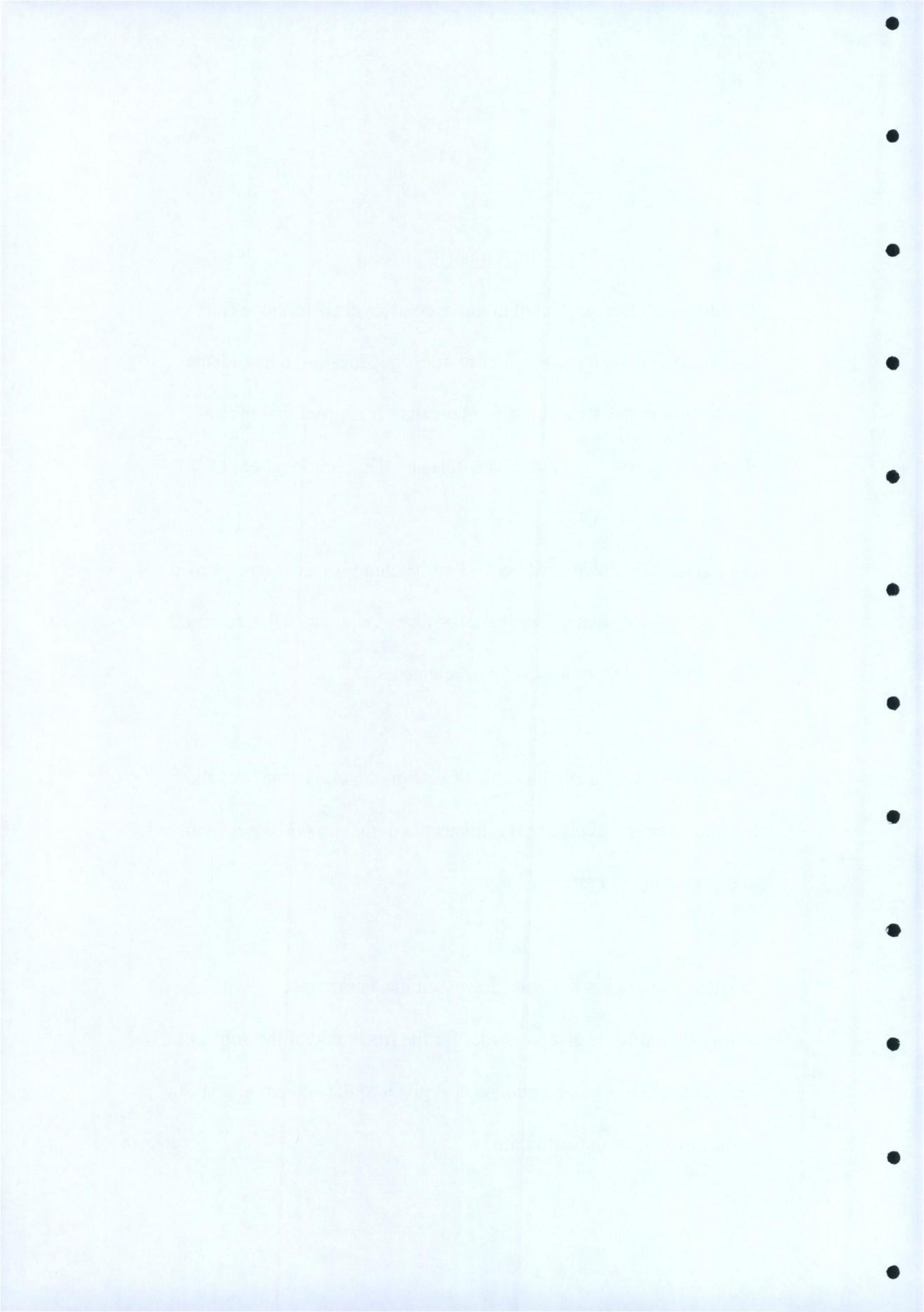
INTRODUCTION

Textile art is often neglected in our second level art rooms. This dissertation is about the value of textiles, in educating our students, particularly in the area of the art elements. It is proof that the elements can be taught effectively through this traditional craft.

In Chapter one, the area of general art teaching is discussed. Why do we teach it, and what are the benefits for the student? Chapter one also defines the more important art elements.

Chapter two deals with the value of craft in the classroom, and the learning process involved. It outlines the dominant processes involved in the teaching of craft.

Textiles as a craft is the issue discussed in Chapter three. A brief history of textiles is given in order for the true value of the subject to be appreciated. Consideration is also given to the subject in relation to our own Leaving Certificate.



(v)

Chapter four contains the methodology involved in using textiles in the classroom. This chapter also contains an evaluation and assessment of an overall scheme and the level of success that was achieved.

The dissertation is concluded with a brief summary and recommendations for using textiles in the art room.

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Chapter One

ART EDUCATION:

VISION AND LANGUAGE

WHY TEACH ART?

Art education seeks to develop sensitive, imaginative, creative and artistically literate individuals who may grow aesthetically, emotionally, and intellectually through active expression or reflective appreciation in the arts. ¹

This quotation from The Aims in Art and Education by Irving Kaufman, should reiterate, for us, why we teach art. He goes on to discuss the value of art in society, how it offers us engagement with life and how, very often, art offers us meaning. So, why teach it? How do we teach it? According to Kaufmann, “Art in education can develop a sense of personal and unique worthwhileness”. ²

Kaufman also feels that it provides a satisfaction for the individual, it gives a personal identity and helps us to achieve a greater appreciation

THE HISTORY OF THE CITY OF BOSTON

FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENT
TO THE PRESENT TIME

BY
JOSEPH NEALE, ESQ.
OF THE BARR

IN TWO VOLUMES.
THE FIRST VOLUME.
CONTAINING THE HISTORY FROM
THE FIRST SETTLEMENT TO THE
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PRINTED BY J. NEALE, AT THE
SIGN OF THE BELL, IN ST. MARTIN'S LANE.

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for other cultures. Overall, art can help us to understand and communicate. Hans Hoffman makes the point that a piece of work which has been completed, has certain messages. These messages may lose their initial meaning, but the, '... communicative powers of its emotive and vital substance, however, still stay alive as long as the work is in existence.' 3

Art, offers us a wide range of experiences. It allows us to grow, to identify, to appreciate and to communicate. We teach it, so that students may develop and learn of their natural talents. We teach it because it is enjoyable, emotional and stimulating.

Other subjects have text books, lessons may be learned by rote.

Surface learning is possible with other subjects, but not with art. Art, craft and design requires a deep understanding. Deep learning is the only kind of learning which should take place in the art room.

Kaufman describes the student involved in art, as a person enlarging

On the 1st of January 1900, the
British Government, by the
Royal Warrant, has ordered
that the 1st of January 1900
shall be the day on which
the British Government shall
begin to exercise its
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his territory of knowledge, and his experience, but in a very practical way.

Art, craft and design, as a subject, follows rules. Each process has various techniques, each technique has various steps. Elliot Eisner discussed the problems which occur in his essay 'Structure and Magic in Discipline-Based Art Education' – "Providing experience that helps children learn how to think about art is what the disciplines in disciplined-based art education are intended to accomplish." ⁴ and "I value integration, coherence and unity ... as long as the values of art are not diminished in the process." ⁵ Kaufman speaks of one view, development of the student, expression and creativity, Eisner points out a different view, the one of the subject matter which must be learned, the values and the rules which exist in the many disciplines of Art.

HOW TO TEACH ART

These ideas make the question of how to teach art, craft and design, a difficult and complex question to answer. We have established why we teach it, but how we go about it is a different matter. Eisner mentions the child-centred view, which would agree with both Kaufman and Hofmann. This view is personal and centred on development. Eisner's 'subject-centred' view is concerned with the intellectual integrity of Art.

There is a way of teaching the language and values of art, whilst allowing an environment of development to flourish. Eisner suggests a challenging programme, which promotes effective learning. This programme should teach students; how to make art, how to look at it, how to understand it and how to criticise it. In short it is the production of art, the criticism of art, the history and the aesthetic of the subject. These four should go hand in hand, they all have their role in art education. In order to study art, and to achieve a deep level of learning, one must speak the language of art. This visual language

has a group of concepts as its foundation and these are known, collectively as the art elements. If the art elements are taught and used, through exciting and innovative projects or schemes, then, both views which Eisner has suggested, are taken care of, the personal is addressed and the integrity and subject are intact.

WHAT ARE THE ART ELEMENTS AND HOW ARE THEY TAUGHT?

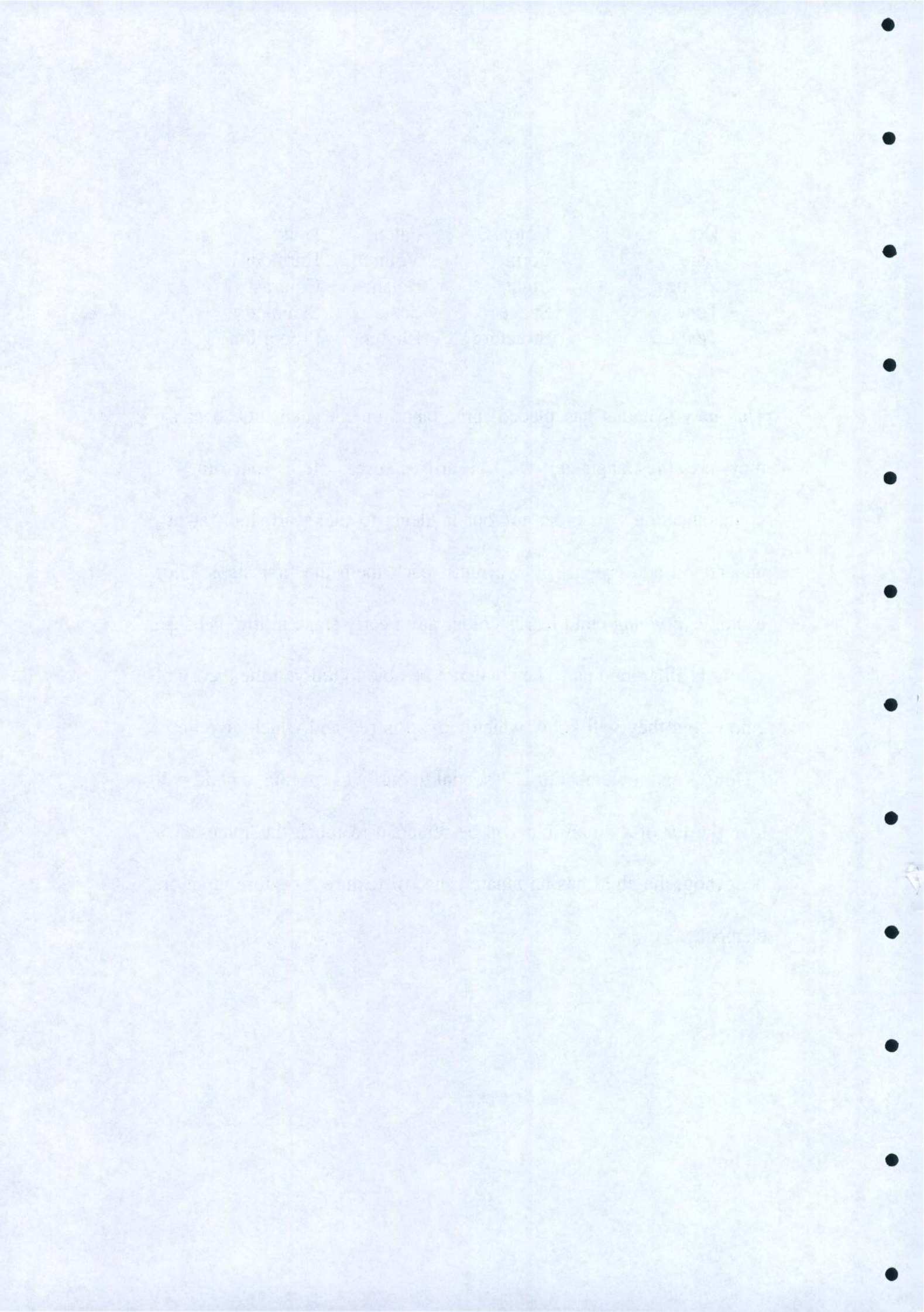
The Junior Certificate art syllabus refers to the art elements in its course objectives. The syllabus promotes the use and understanding of the art and design elements, and in its course structure they receive a separate point.

“Art and Design Elements”

The elements of art and design listed below should be introduced, not in isolation, but as an integral part of Art, Craft and Design learning experiences. However, it may be necessary on occasion to highlight elements through specific lessons.

Dot	Colour	Pattern	Unity
Line	Form	Volume	Harmony
Shape	Light	Balance	Contrast
Tone	Space	Scale	Symmetry
Texture	Structure	Rhythm	Proportion

This new syllabus has placed importance on the elements, because they are the language, we, as artists, use. It is our line of communication. In order for our students to make art, look at art, understand and criticise it, we must teach them the first steps. For example, a young child learns colour at an early stage in life; because colour is all around us. They may not be able to tell you the theory of colour, but they will know which crayon is red and which is yellow. Colour is an art element, it is essential to our lives. Again, a child will love the fur of a kitten, but will be reluctant to touch the spines of a hedgehog, the child has an innate sense of texture. Texture is an art element.

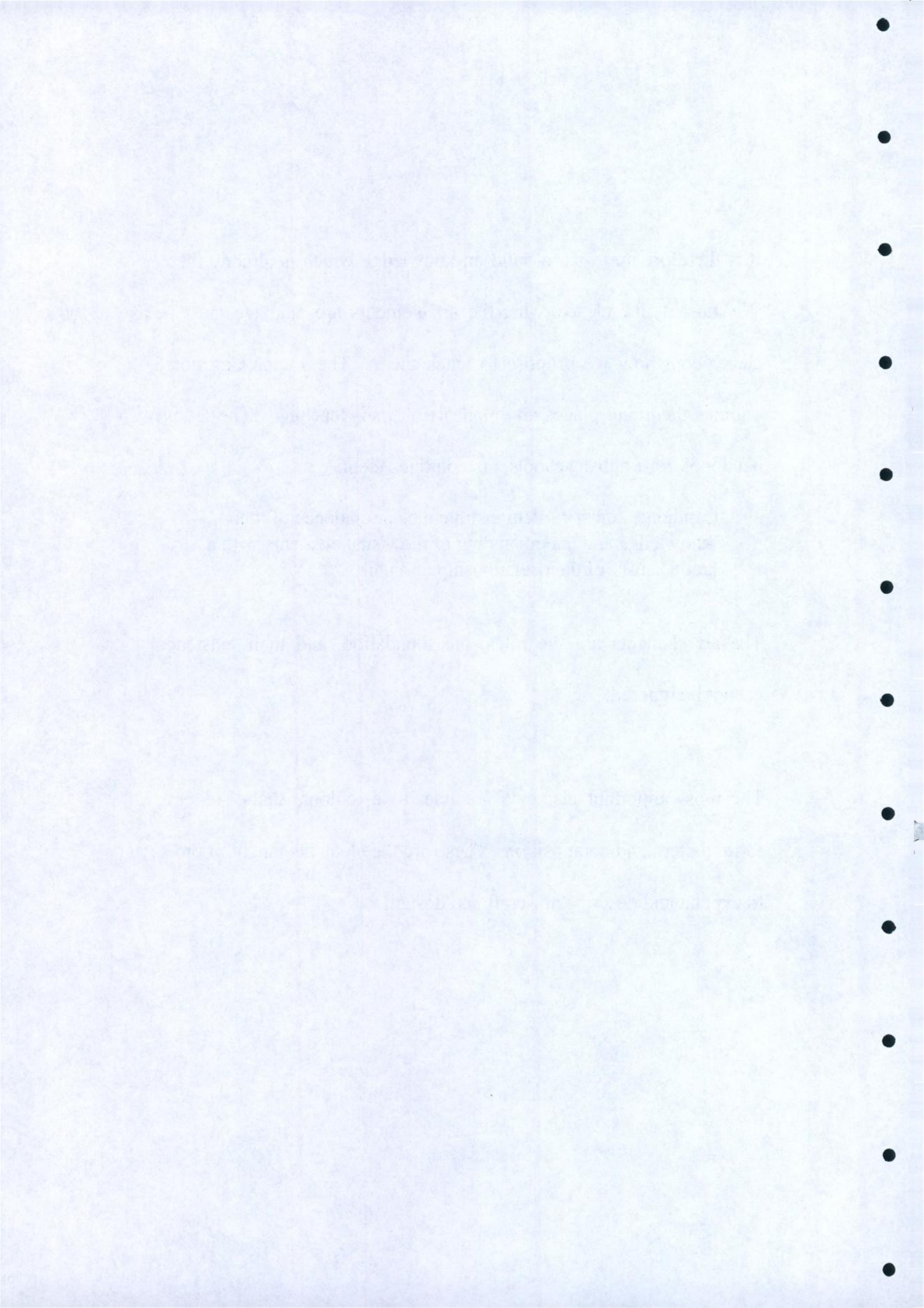


It is therefore up to us to build on knowledge which is already there. We must define clearly what the art elements are, and we must be clear about how we propose to teach them. The Junior Certificate outlines them and places an emphasis on their teaching. The GCSE handbook for English schools, also outlines them.

Candidates must ... demonstrate a clear evidence of their knowledge and understanding of the visual elements with a good sense of their relationship and unit 6

The art elements are the rules, the foundation, and their existence cannot be ignored.

The most important elements are line, tone, colour, shape, texture, form, pattern and composition. These are the elements taught in order to explain and describe art, craft and design.



LINE

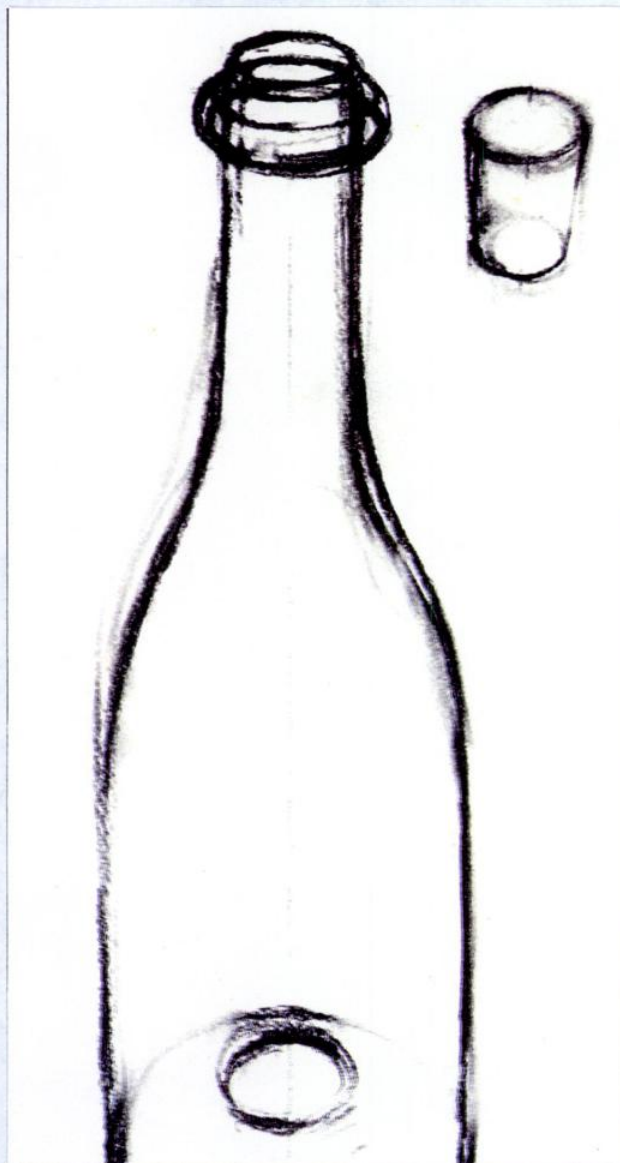
A line is the path of a visual moving points, as it draws across a surface. A line, is simply, a series of points.





SHAPE

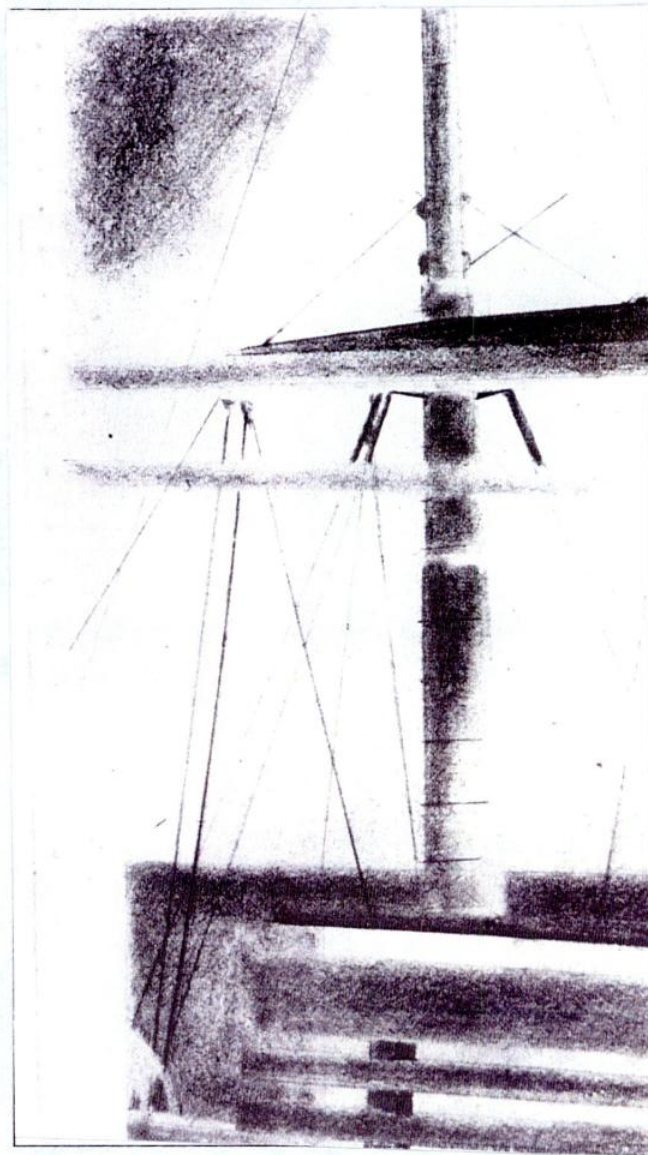
A shape occurs when a line joins up with itself. Shape refers to the appearance of an object, rather than the structure.





TONE

Tone occurs when light, natural or artificial, falls on an object.





FORM

Form is the shape, design and size of an object.





Colour

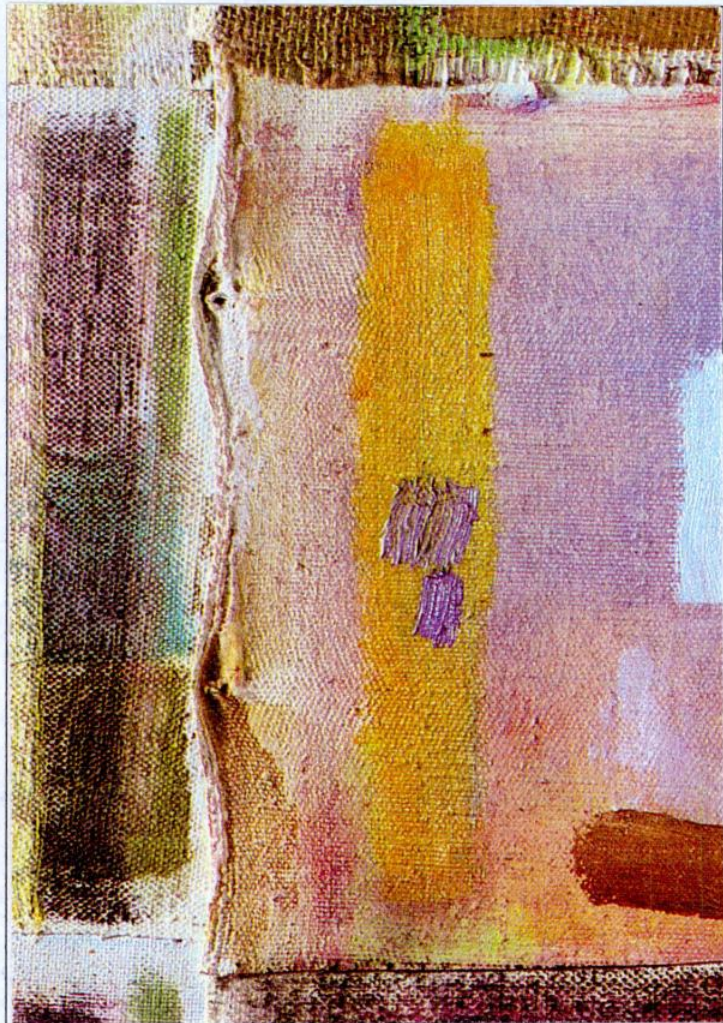
Light allows colour to exist . Objects achieve their colour by absorbing or subtracting certain parts of the spectrum. There are three primary colours red, blue and yellow.





TEXTURE

Texture is surface quality. Texture can be visual or tactile.

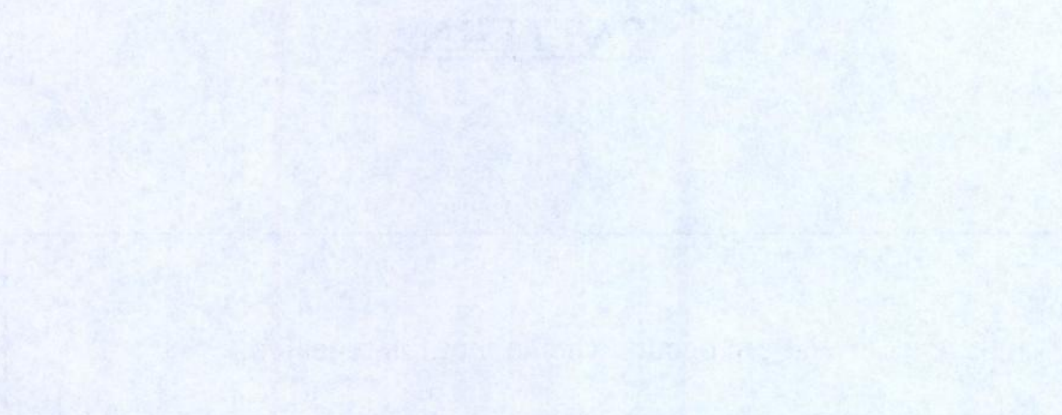




PATTERN

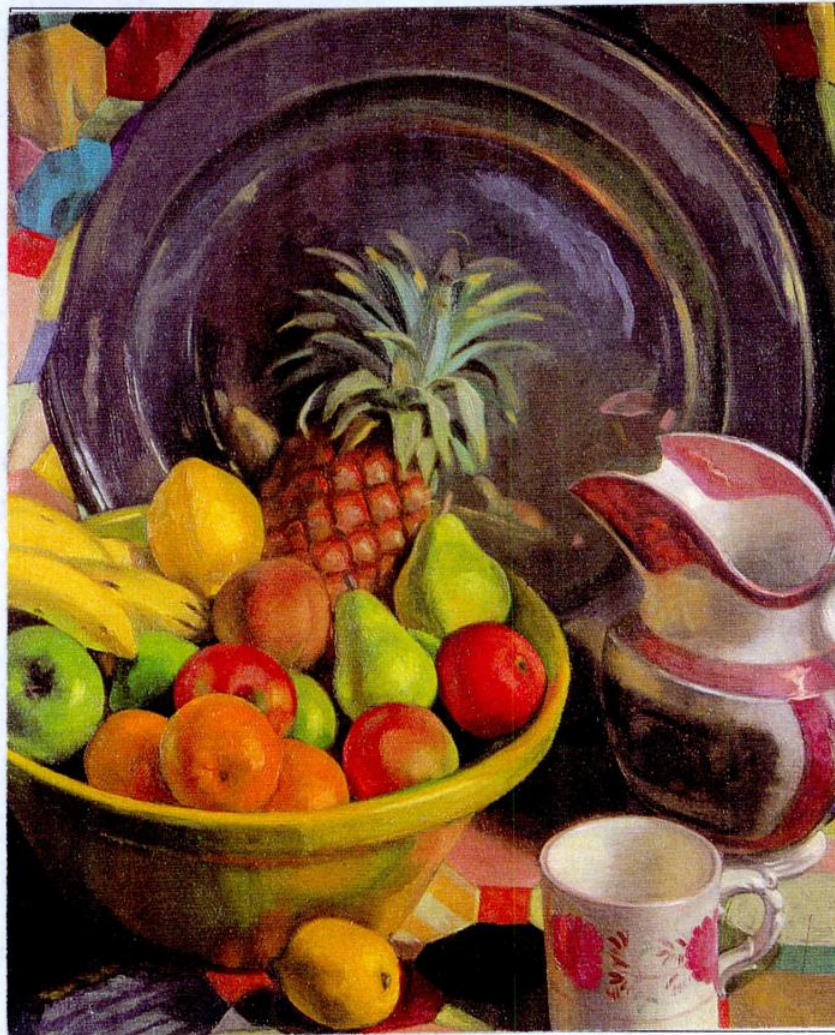
Pattern occurs when a motif is repeated.





COMPOSITION

Composition is the arrangement of elements on a page.





Once these elements are understood and used, a person, who is involved in art may “express themselves meaningfully, creatively and with aesthetic quality”. ⁷ Often in the classroom, the elements are taught in succession, starting with line and working onwards. In Art and Adolescence, the value of the visual arts, including, the elements, are broken down into headings.

Art experiences involving line, shape, texture, and colour, develop an aesthetic awareness which is the basis for making choices not only in matters of painting ... and the crafts, ... but choices ... in our daily lives. ⁸

The elements provide the language, of art and design. Once the students understand them, they can communicate about their own work, they can make critical judgements on the work of another artist. From both a practical and historical point of view, a clear understanding of the elements is essential.

There are so many ways in which to teach this language. You may start with observational drawing, recording the environment, firstly in line, then tone, then colour. You may begin with shape and line, and build it into a patterned block print. You may wish to paint, using colour and texture. Composition will also play a part in all of these. However, I propose that one of the most valuable and stimulating ways to teach and learn the elements, is through the area of craft and specifically through textiles.

1. The first step in the process is to identify the problem.

2. The second step is to define the problem in terms of specific objectives.

3. The third step is to develop a plan of action to achieve the objectives.

4. The fourth step is to implement the plan and monitor progress.

5. The fifth step is to evaluate the results and make adjustments as needed.

6. The sixth step is to report the results to the appropriate authorities.

7. The seventh step is to document the process and results for future reference.

8. The eighth step is to review the process and make improvements as needed.

FOOTNOTES – CHAPTER ONE

1. Irving Kaufman, Art Education in Contemporary Culture
(New York: Macmillan, 1966) p 33
2. Ibid., p.34
3. Hans Hofmann, Search for the Real (Andover: Addison Gallery of
American Art, 1948) p.54
4. Elliot Eisner, “Structure and Magic in Discipline-Based Art
Education” in Critical Studies in Art and Design Education, ed.
David Thistlewood (England: Longman Group, 1989) p.17
5. Ibid., p. 19
6. Bill Read, GCSE Art and Design (U.K.: Longman, 1988) p.16
7. John A. Michael, Art and Adolescence (New York: Teachers
College Press, 1983) p.92
8. Ibid., p.92

Chapter Two

CRAFT AND ITS VALUE IN THE CLASSROOM

The place of craft in the classroom is often hard to establish. This is due to the variety of craft available, and the variety of subjects that offer an experience in craft. Crafts can generally be seen as the applied arts, and often they would have been looked on as industry. In his essay Meaning in Crafts, Edward Mattel describes an Indian potter, who claimed that although he was creating a piece of work, he did not consider himself an artist. We may argue that pottery is, surely, art, but he looks on it as his livelihood, his industry! Craft can be seen in the Home Economics room, in the Woodwork room, and in the Art room. It is a wonderful cross-curricular subject, and each area of craft can be approached in many different ways. Weaving, quilting, pottery, or ceramics, embroidery, batik, wood turning, silk

THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

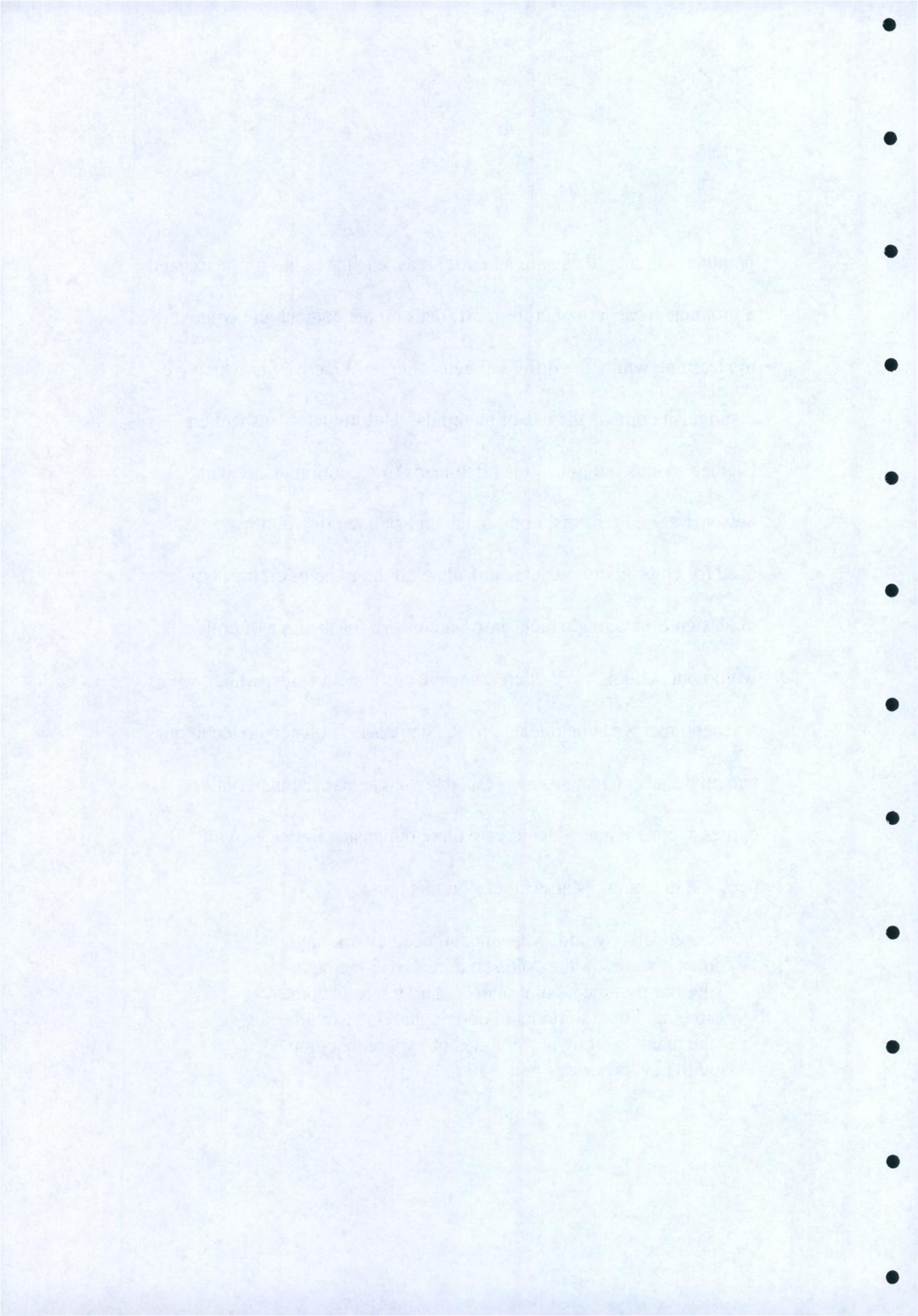
The history of the United States is a story of growth and change. It begins with the first people who lived on this land, and continues through the years of exploration, settlement, and the struggle for independence. The story is one of a people who have built a nation of freedom and opportunity, and who have fought to protect those values through the years.

The early years of the United States were marked by a period of rapid growth and expansion. The country was founded on the principles of liberty and justice for all, and these principles have guided the nation through the challenges of the past. The story of the United States is a story of a people who have built a nation of freedom and opportunity, and who have fought to protect those values through the years.

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painting, printing; these are all craft areas, each area has a process and a product. Teachers of craft, must focus on the content and context of the learning within the different areas of craft. One way in which we distinguish crafts is the use of materials. Unfortunately, as Robert Clement points out to us, this often leads to repetition. Clay will always be used for pots, both pinch and slab, cloth will always be used for embroidery. Clement deals with the issue of craft in Issues in Design Education, which shows a concern for the area of craft within our schools. We often associate crafts with skills, which, we as teachers, feel we should teach, so the emphasis is placed on technique and materials. Clements suggests that we can use the material as expressive mediums which create three dimensional images with personal meaning. Mattel agrees on this point;

Surely clay, wood, weaving and needlework, and many others of the "old standards" will maintain their importance, but it is necessary not to become so bound by traditional materials that one excludes the many exciting possibilities of experimentation with new processes and materials. 1



By the introduction of found objects, we can make craft very experimental and engaging for our students. Once we understand how exciting the area of craft is, how its appeal has lasted through centuries, we need to question the value of its subject matter. Why is craft valuable and what sets it apart from the rest of the curriculum in terms of effective learning? Mattel sums it up well;

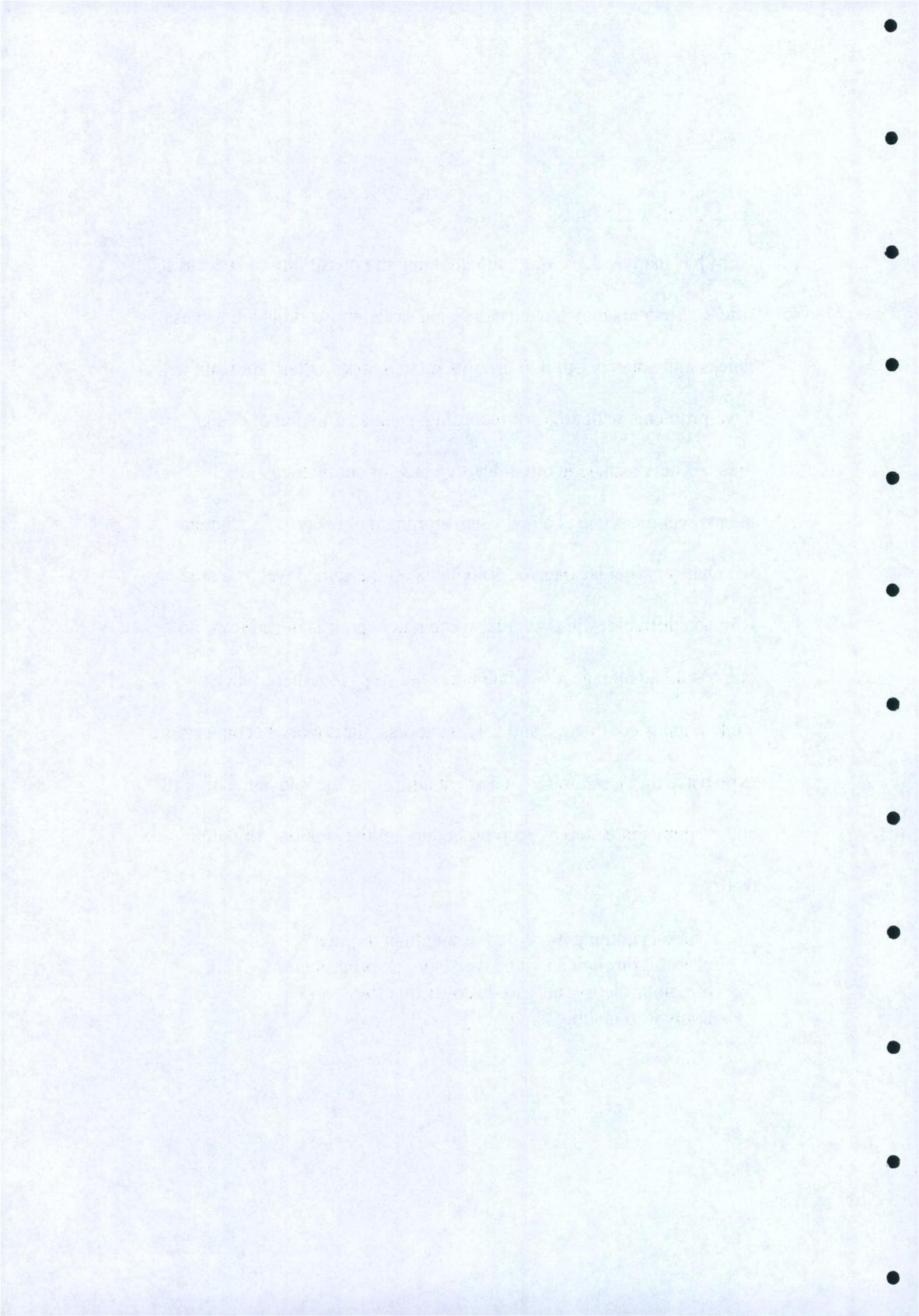
In crafts, the child is able to organise his thoughts, ideas, feelings, actions, and technique into a product. If the experience or motivation is shallow, the ideas vague, the feelings diffuse or absent, the product will reflect it. 2

Mattil describes, in a few lines, the overall value of craft. The essence of the subject lies in the process; the product is a reflection of that process which has taken place, be it in ceramics or embroidery. The product may be a ceramic lamp or a wall hanging made in fabric or wool, the process is the step by step approach which the product requires.

VALUES OF CRAFT

Craft has many values, one of them being the possibility of success it offers. Students may have basic visual skills, these skills are useless, unless immediately put into use in a related task. Often, students will have problems with areas of recording, such as drawing or design areas. This obstacle is often due to a lack of confidence in their talents, yet everyone is equal when starting a new craft. A student who has a particular flair for drawing is on the same level as a student who has difficulties in that area, when a new craft is introduced, no one has an advantage, everyone takes the steps together. Once a student gains confidence and sees a success, their work becomes more expressive and less limited. Clement addresses the relevance of craft and its immediate step by step procedure, in the situation of colour theory.

There is nothing more depressing than to put a class ... through an intensive six week programme of colour theory, only to discover that they can't apply it to making a painting! 3



In craft, the colour theory is one of the steps, which coincides with the procedure, it is an integral part of the process. The idea of quick success, should not be taken the wrong way. Craft is not an area where low-level visual skills are accepted, but it is a way of building up the students morale, where the fear of getting it 'wrong' is finally laid to rest. In the classroom, craft can also prove economical. Cloth can be found at home, objects like gift wrap, bubble wrap, found objects such as tins, wood, stones, leaves; these are all items which can be used in a craft class.

TEACHING CRAFT

Clement lays out for us the three dominant processes used within craft teaching:-

- ⇒ Visual Enquiry
- ⇒ Acquisition of Skills
- ⇒ Problem Solving.

Visual Enquiry

In the area of Visual Enquiry, he stresses a need for observational drawing. The work, he writes, should grow from the environment around us. By students carefully recording their perception of the world through colour, movement, pattern, structure, etc., they should fuel ideas for work in the craft area. This Visual Enquiry is the starting point.

Acquisition of Skills

In Acquisition of Skills he writes about the student having basic skills in order to make his product. These skills are part of the process.

Problem Solving

Problem solving covers the experimental areas of materials and general principles. I also feel that design and constructional problems could be mentioned here. As craft is very often three dimensional, then students, who previously have probably only worked in two dimensions, will need to work out how an object will stand, or how it will look when viewed from all angles.

With these three areas being covered, it is becoming clearer how all the art elements can be introduced and a deep level of understanding being promoted through the area of craft. With craft, the process and the step by step approach become more important than the product, the journey more enjoyable than the destination.

Rather should the emphasis be placed upon continued good experiences with materials and a continued involvement in the process. 4

FOOTNOTES – CHAPTER TWO

1. Edward Mattel, Meaning in Crafts (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1971) p. 31
2. Ibid., p.42
3. Robert Clement, “Developing Craft Activities in Schools” in Issues in Design Education, ed. David Thistlewood (England: Longman Group, 1989) p.92.
4. Mattel, Meaning in Crafts p. 43.

Chapter Three

TEXTILES AS A CRAFT

The journey through the textile process is rich in learning. Textiles provides teachers with an opportunity to cover the design process and a wide range of the art elements. Textiles is a hands on experience, one which students will not forget. It encompasses Clement's Visual Enquiry, Acquisition of Skills and areas of Problem Solving. Textiles has many options, and many end products. It is inexpensive and incorporates an experience with many materials, not just fabric or wool.

In order to fully appreciate this craft, we must look back at the history of textiles, where it came from and why it has become such a popular form of art.

History and Survival

Textiles is a fundamental craft, one that plays an important part in our history. You may go through life without looking at paintings and other fine art pieces, but it would be difficult not to encounter a piece of fabric. Fabric design, embroidery, tapestry weaving are all major areas of textiles, but it also encompasses batik, lacework, knitting, felting and without textiles we would have no fashion industry.

The roots of the craft are buried deeply in countries such as Egypt, where spinning and weaving were developed over long periods, with weaving coming first. The earliest looms came from Egypt, and the best and most successful dyes, came from the Roman Empire.

Discoveries which followed, such as the spinning wheel and the later mechanisation of textile processes all helped to speed up the manufacturing of textile products, however, it also succeeded in the

demise of hand-crafted textiles. Weaving survived as a cottage industry up until the eighteenth century but it also fell prey to the industrial revolution. Textiles, as a craft, was mostly associated with costume, but over the years, it was also used to decorate homes and depict historical scenes, such as the famous Bayeux Tapestry which is actually an embroidered piece.

One artist and genius believed in the strength of hand crafted textiles, that man was William Morris. Together with the “Arts and Crafts Revival Movement” they set about to save a tradition which dates back to 10,000 BC. Morris looked back to primitive and tribal designs and also to private textile collections in order to design new and innovative textile designs. He set up Merton Abbey in 1881, promising luxurious and exquisite textile pieces to his market. He succeeded. In the 1880’s Morris and Co. made and sold a limited number of large embroideries, and also smaller items such as cushions and firescreens. Embroidery, at this time, was seen as an extremely

respectable pastime for middle-class women, and Morris sold embroidery kits, which were based on the firm's designs. The hand craft was saved and now finds itself in our art rooms. Textiles has to be described as an historical and traditional craft, strong in character and valuable in providing learning for our students.

Application in the Art Room

Textiles comes under many areas in the options for Leaving Certificate Art. Among the most popular choices, both in higher and ordinary level craft choices in 1996 were:

Higher Level

Calligraphy
Poster
Lino Cutting
*Screen Printing
*Fabric Printing
Bookcraft
*Embroidery
*Puppetry
Modelling
Pottery
*Weaving
*Batik
Carving
Art Metalwork

Ordinary Level

Calligraphy
Poster
Lino Cutting
Bookcraft
*Fabric Printing
*Screen Printing
*Batik
*Puppetry
Embroidery
*Modelling
Pottery
Carving
*Weaving
Art Metalwork

Embroidery, weaving and fabric printing would be the main areas involved in textiles, then screen printing, puppetry and batik would be

textile related. According to the chief examiners report from the 1996 craft papers, both:

Embroidery and Weaving were well prepared and Varied in interpretation. Some candidates were so Creative that their finished items were 3D in Realisation. There were wonderful examples of Colour combinations and clever use of modern Textures. /

In one small paragraph the areas of composition, colour and texture are all mentioned in relation to textiles, proving further the valuable learning which it offers in regard to the art elements.

The Leaving Certificate offers many textile based options on the craft paper, and it is becoming more and more popular in both the second level art room and the third level studio. Why was it neglected for so many years? Perhaps teachers thought it too expensive. However, textiles proves to be very inexpensive.

Laura H. Chapman sums up how versatile textiles really is, in her craft

section of Approaches to Art in Education.

Virtually any flexible, fiberlike material can be woven – yarn or cotton, linen, wool, synthetic material, reeds, wood slats, grasses, soft wire, strips of plastic and metal foil. 2

Many of these materials are found objects which can easily be collected. By expanding the use of materials, we open up the avenues of expression and experimentation. We abolish Mattel's fear that we will be bound by traditional materials.

Teachers may have felt in the past that textiles involved a knowledge of stitchery or weaving. These processes may have been associated with the Home Economics department in a school. However, the skills involved are easy at a basic level, and can be built upon as the years pass. The skills are only a minor role in any craft area, as we have seen before, surely the journey is more important.

In order to see how effective textiles is, and to see its value in teaching the art elements, it must be seen in the form of a scheme.

This scheme is a step by step, lesson by lesson approach to one of our strongest and most valuable, inherited crafts today.

FOOTNOTES – CHAPTER THREE

- (1) Since 1992, the Chief Examiners Report has been published in order to let teachers know what went right or wrong in their students Leaving Certificate. this quotation is taken from the 1996 Chief Examiners Report for Art, Craft and Design.
(Dublin : Dept. of Education, 1996). p. 19
- (2) Laura Chapman, Approaches to Art in Education
(New York : Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Inc, 1978).
p.311

Chapter Four

THE SCHEME

Introduction

Textiles, as a craft, offers our students endless opportunities. It follows a step by step process, which encompasses many art elements. Textiles provides a process in which all the elements are taught in an integral way. It includes Clement's Visual Enquiry, Acquisition of Skills and Problem Solving. In order to show its value in the classroom, and particularly in relation to the art elements, I devised a scheme. The scheme was an introduction to textiles and covered many of the art elements. The overall scheme lasted eleven weeks and covered embroidery and weaving.

Aims and Objectives

The overall aim of the scheme was to introduce textiles through the design and construction of a soft sculpture hat, based on the theme, 'the Lucan Environment'. Objectives would have been element based

each week. Each element was taught in an integral, task related way. Students would have been expected to explore the elements through observational drawing and to explore the textile process. Throughout the scheme, an awareness of composition was promoted. Other objectives related to other art elements: (for example)

- To introduce colour into the recording process.
- To introduce the concept of three dimensional design.
- To explore the manipulation of fabric, creating shape, form and texture.

The school in which the scheme was taught is a West County Dublin Convent school. The group were sixth years. There were eighteen students in the group of mixed ability. The art room in the school is spacious and well lit. There are very few facilities available, but this is changing. In the last year, the school bought a kiln, a slide projector, and full lino cutting equipment. A silk screen printing area is in the process of being set up. For the scheme, most students brought in bags of fabric, needles and thread were provided. Wire, plaster and PVA were available in the art room .

Methodology

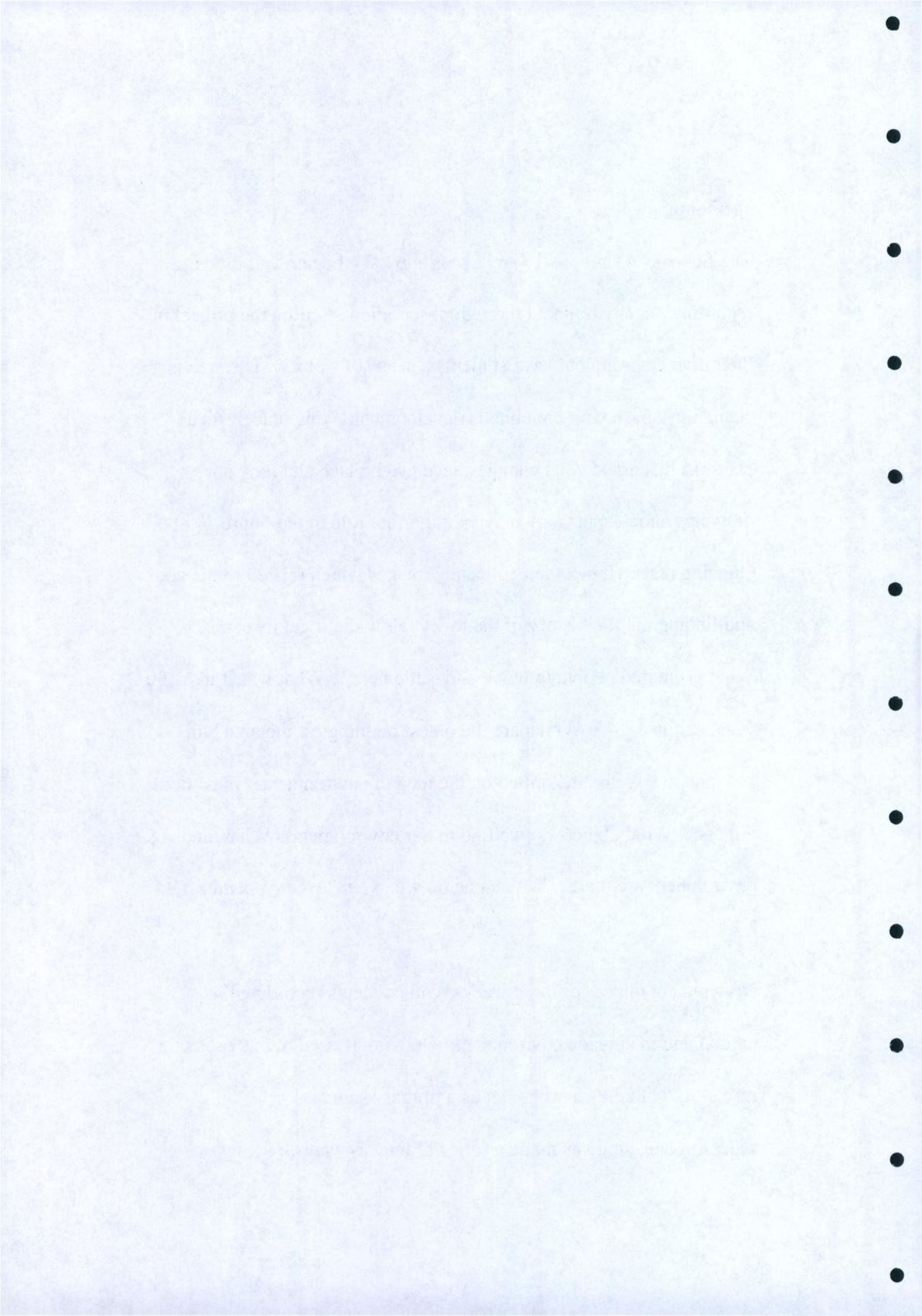
The Scheme is suitable for any age group. We began with drawing, recording the environment through observation. Setting the project in their own environment gave students a sense of history. The area is a changing suburb with continuous development taking place. As a class we discussed what changes have taken place and how our drawings and designs may play an important role in the future.

Ongoing research included collecting images which related to the area and finding out the history of the town. How did it get its name?

What prompted people to move and settle here? What was it like 100 years ago in 1898? Which are the oldest buildings in the area? In Lesson One, we brainstormed on the idea of environment. What does it mean? What objects do we find in our environment? What kinds of environment are there? Which one do we live in? (see Appendix 1)

Drawing continued for three weeks, with students recording the natural and man made environment. Drawing is used in this project as research; with the environment as a primary source.

In lesson one, students made a series of line drawings, paying



attention to shape. This allowed them to experience the environment and to build up familiarity with drawing it. We looked at sensitivity of line, and how line can suggest tone and texture. Students also made rubbings as valuable research. In lesson two, tone became the focus. Tone suggests form. Some students chose to work on their drawings from the previous week, some started afresh. By now, the students were confident in their drawing skills. Colour studies followed in week three. Students made close up studies of the environment, using colour. Through drawing for this textile project, we had already covered line, tone, form, colour and texture. Students, at this point had covered these elements, and the learning which had taken place was effective. Rather than learning the elements in a rote fashion, the students had a hands on experience, where the elements were an integral part of their work. Clement's Visual Enquiry was the starting point of our scheme, with students recording their perception of their world. In lessons four and five, we covered the design process for hats. This scheme has a three-dimensional product, yet the design process is two-dimensional. When designing something three-dimensional, it must be noted that you will be able to view it from all

1. The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country and the progress of the work during the year. It is divided into two main sections: the first section deals with the general situation of the country and the progress of the work during the year, and the second section deals with the specific work done during the year.

2. The second part of the report deals with the specific work done during the year. It is divided into three main sections: the first section deals with the work done in the field, the second section deals with the work done in the laboratory, and the third section deals with the work done in the office.

3. The third part of the report deals with the results of the work done during the year. It is divided into three main sections: the first section deals with the results of the work done in the field, the second section deals with the results of the work done in the laboratory, and the third section deals with the results of the work done in the office.

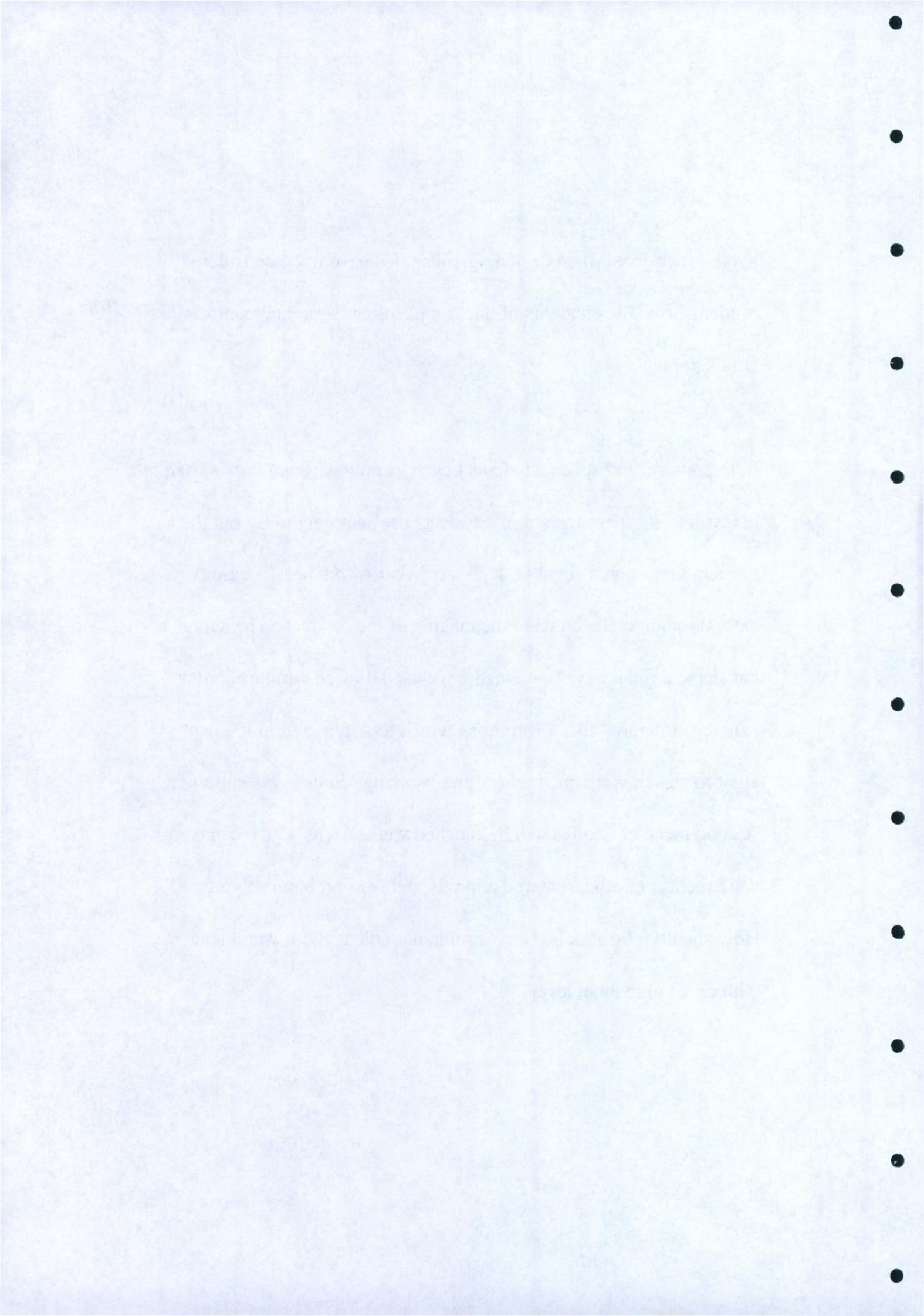
4. The fourth part of the report deals with the conclusions drawn from the work done during the year. It is divided into three main sections: the first section deals with the conclusions drawn from the work done in the field, the second section deals with the conclusions drawn from the work done in the laboratory, and the third section deals with the conclusions drawn from the work done in the office.

5. The fifth part of the report deals with the recommendations made during the year. It is divided into three main sections: the first section deals with the recommendations made in the field, the second section deals with the recommendations made in the laboratory, and the third section deals with the recommendations made in the office.

angles, therefore, when designing, all angles have to be considered.

Students used the elements of line, tone, colour, form and composition at this point.

In lessons six and seven, students began sampling. Sampling is used in textiles as experimentation. Students use sampling to try out their ideas in fabric, on a small scale, to see what works best. Lessons eight through to eleven were the making of the product. The actual hat shape did not have to be made, we used it as an armature, or an existing structure. Demonstrations which took place from lessons eight to eleven were on stitchery and weaving. Finish was important. A good piece of textiles will be finished well. Areas which came up, were the use of other material and this involved problem solving. How should it be attached etc. Problems such as these were dealt with on an individual level.



Evaluation of the Scheme

The scheme was successfully completed in eleven weeks. Each student had a set of drawings, design work, samples, support study sheets and their finished piece.

The soft sculptures were very successful and explored many textile processes. Effective learning did take place, with student benefitting from a hands on approach. The scheme had a step by step approach, which covered the art elements, design process and textile skills.

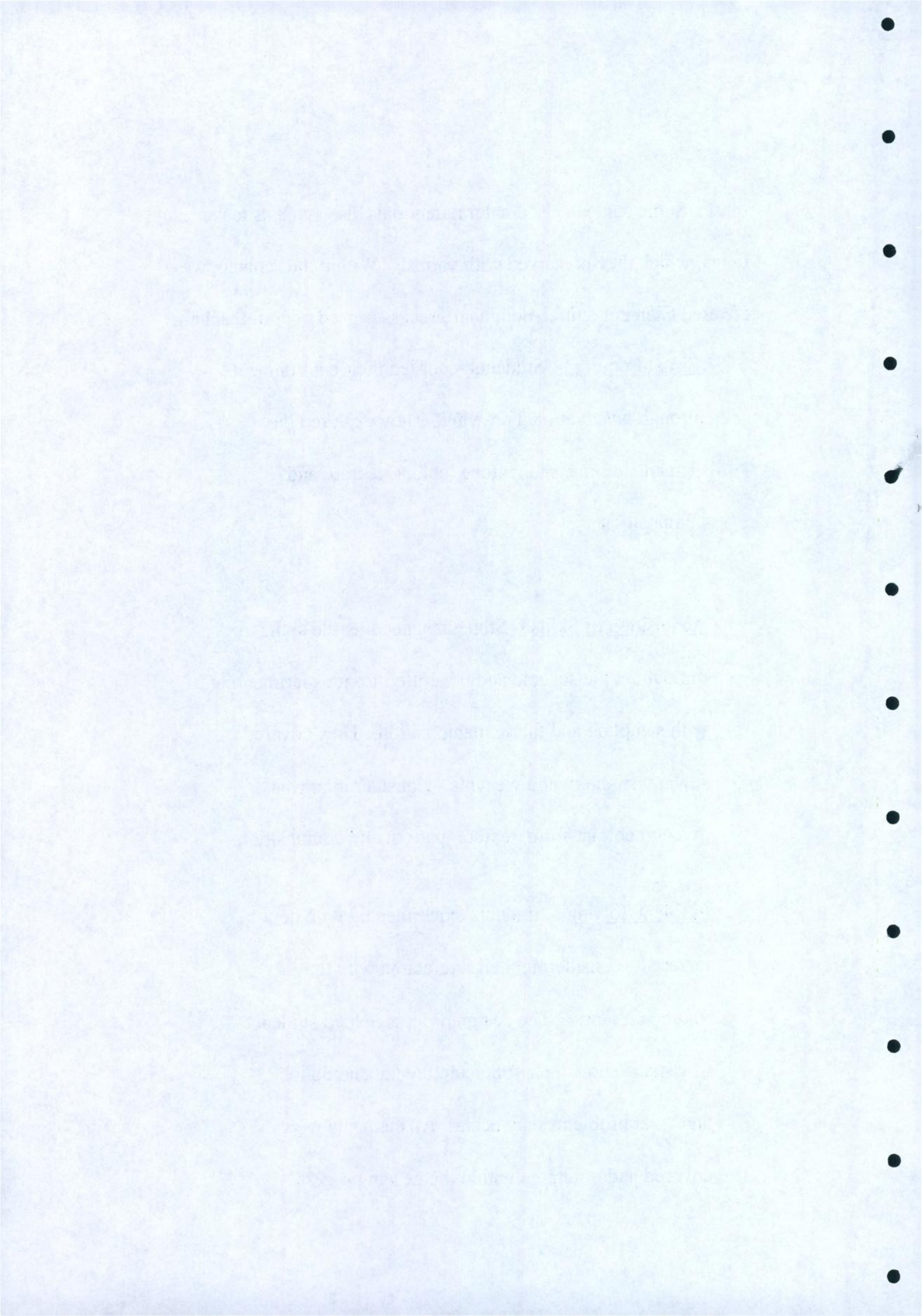
Visual aids and support studies were motivating and carefully selected. Students were engaged in discussions concerning the support studies, and answered using terminology and mature opinion. Evaluations were valuable in providing advice, and in getting students to speak about their own work. One area, which did occur, was the use of new materials. When I introduced the scheme, I wanted to promote creativity and I was also conscious of both Clement's and Mattel's opinions on traditional materials. Textiles has always been associated with cloth and wool, I wanted my students to experiment with other materials. Some students used paper, wire, plaster, plastic, papier mache, in fact, most students experimented with a variety of

these. Some students used natural materials also, such as leaves and twigs, which they preserved with varnish. Within the scheme, we covered Clement's three dominant processes used in craft teaching.

Visual Enquiry - Students recorded their environment through observational drawing. They explored the elements of line, shape, tone, colour, texture and composition.

Acquisition of Skills - Students gained textile skills throughout the scheme and benefitted from experimenting with sampling and fabric manipulation. They covered sewing, stitchery and weaving. Consideration was given to colour, form, texture, pattern and composition.

Problem Solving – Students experimented with new materials, considering their interaction with the traditional fabric. The design process helped students to visualise how their soft sculpture hat should look, and what problems may occur. All elements were covered and reiterated within the design process.

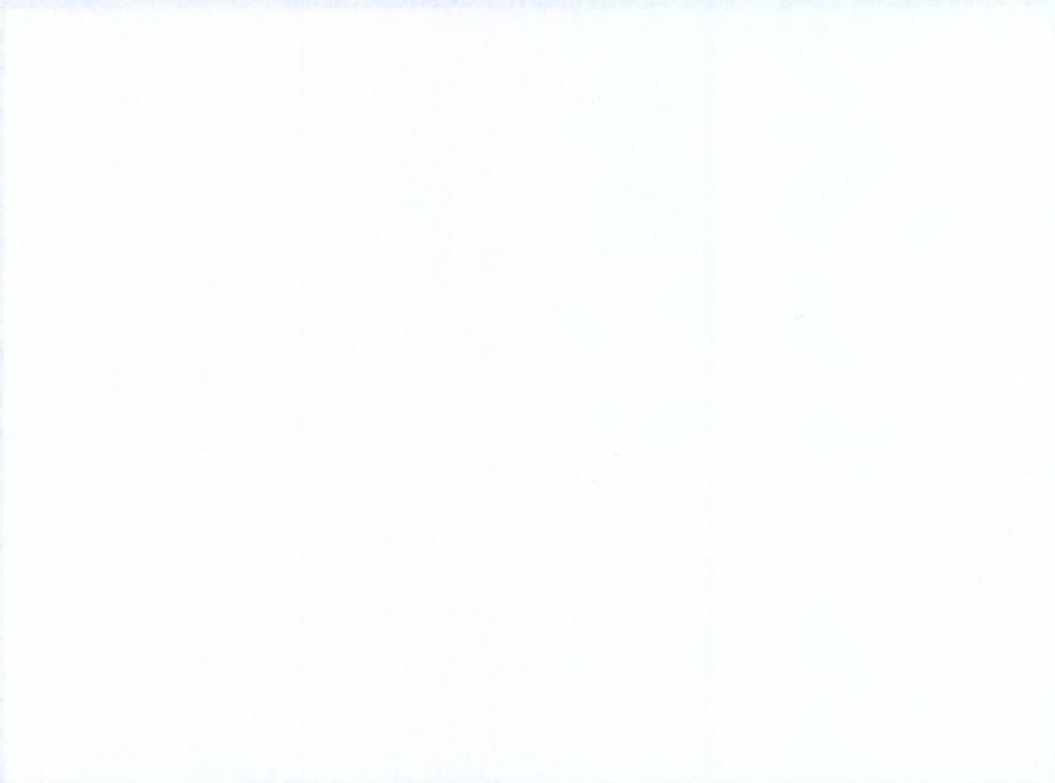


A deep level of understanding was achieved through this craft.

Students enjoyed a scheme which had a 'hands on' approach. The art elements played an integral role in this. As they learned about them, they were using them in a related task. When we spoke about line, we used line in our drawings. Each element was approached in this way.



Students Work



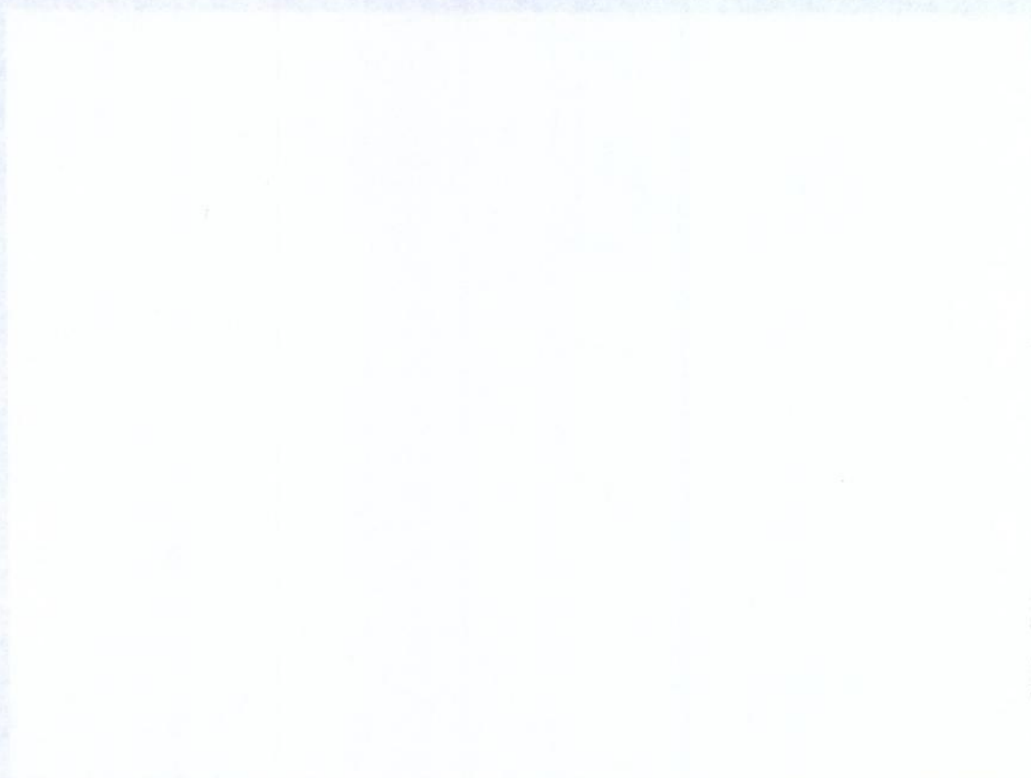


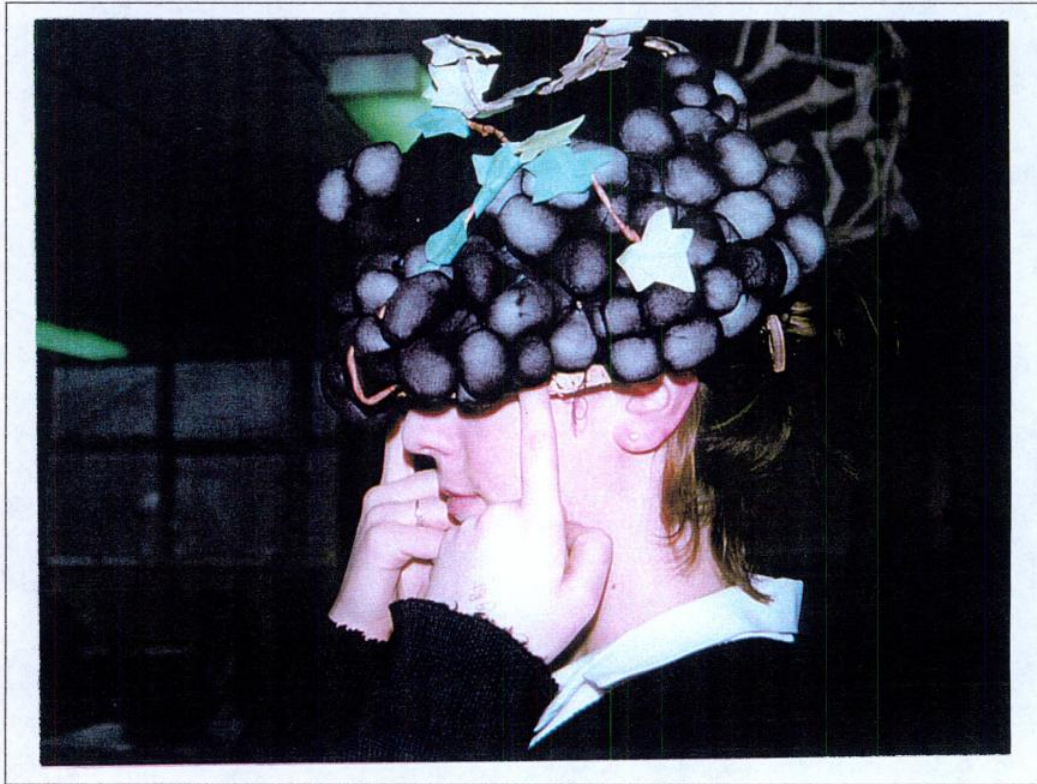
Students Work



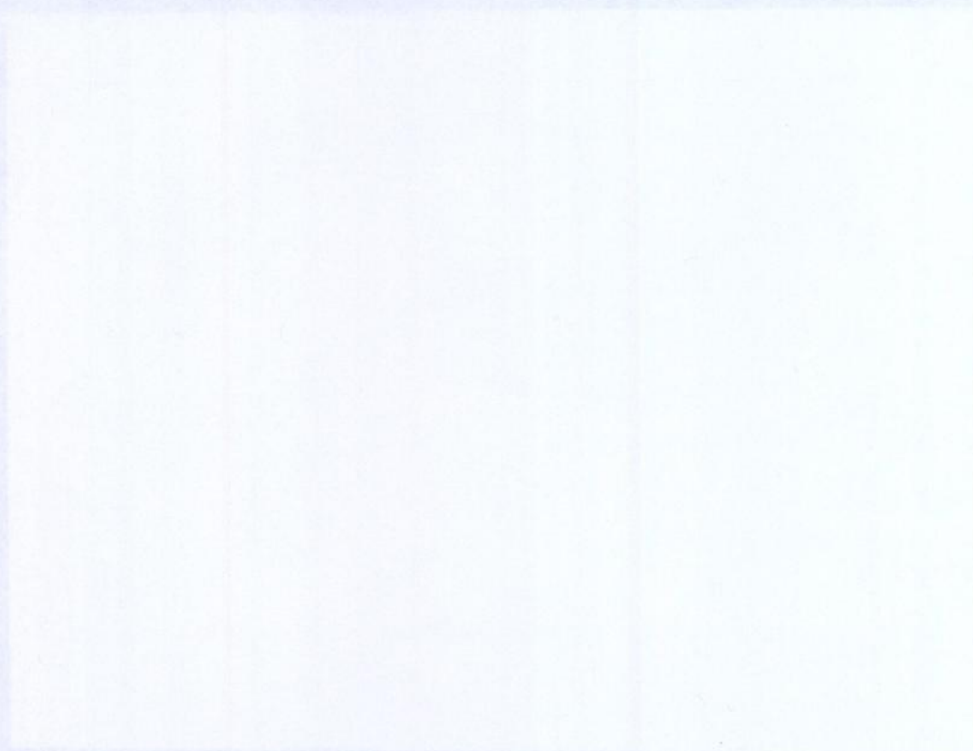


Students Work



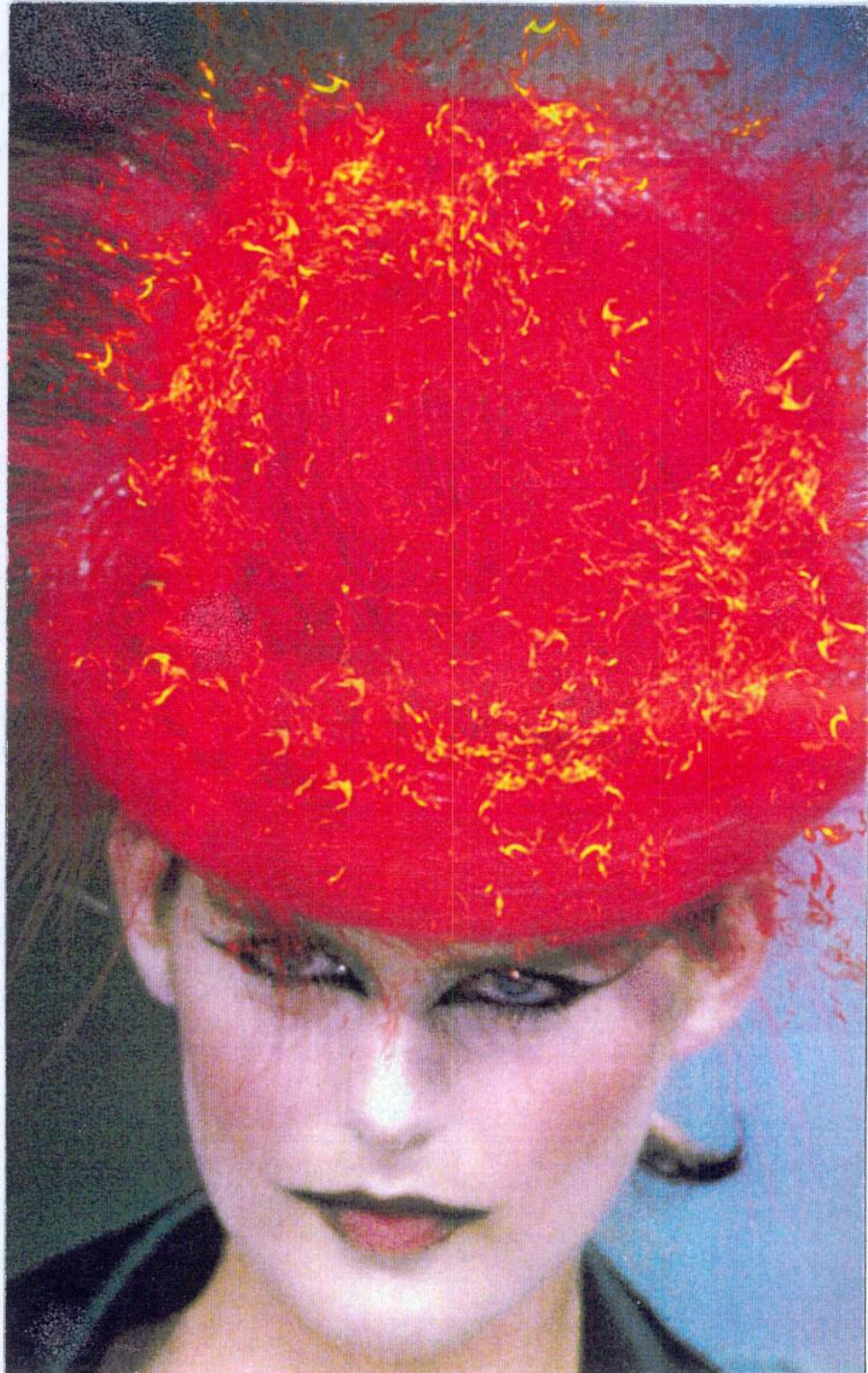


Students Work



Support Study – Lesson 4

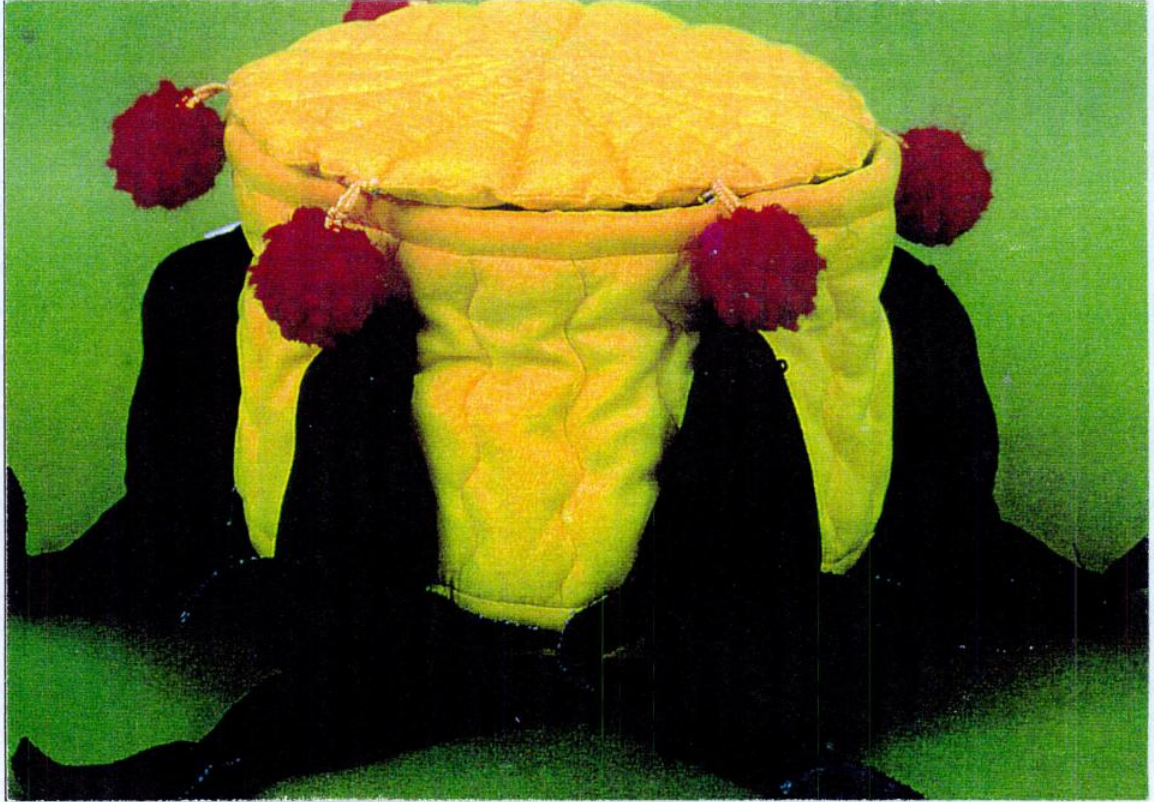
Philip Treacey





Support Study – Lesson 6

Claire Johnson





Assessment

The scheme was assessed after eleven weeks. A questionnaire was given to each student in the class. (See Appendix 11)

This questionnaire asked students to define the elements, where they used each element and their feelings towards textiles having completed the scheme.

Fifteen students took part, three were absent.

Line - 12 out of 15 students could define line.

Shape - 14 out of 15 students could define shape.

Tone - 10 out of 15 students could define tone.

Form - 11 out 15 students could define form.

Colour - 11 out of 15 students could define colour

Texture - 12 out of 15 students could define texture.

Pattern - 7 out of 15 students could define pattern.

Composition - 14 out of 15 students could define composition.

- 10 out of 15 students could state where they had used line in their work.

- 10 out of 15 students could state where they had used shape in their work.
- 11 out 15 students could state where they had used tone in their work.
- 11 out of 15 students could state where they had used form in their work.
- 15 out of 15 students could state where they had used colour in their work.
- 14 out of 15 students could state where they had used texture in their work.
- 7 out of 15 students could state where they had used pattern in their work.
- 14 out of 15 students could state where they had used composition in their work.
- 12 out of 15 students said that their view of textile art had changed.
- 2 out of 15 students said that their view of textile art had not changed.
- One out of 15 students said that they did not know if their view of textile art had changed.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This dissertation set out to prove the value of textiles in teaching the art elements. The art elements are our language, and as artists we use them every day; to explain, criticise and produce our work.

Chapter one dealt with the question, "Why teach art?". We teach it because it is of great value to our students. It allows them to grow, both emotionally and mentally. It allows the student to express themselves in a creative manner. Chapter one also outlined the basic art elements; line, shape, tone, form, colour, texture, pattern and composition. It is important to have a clear definition of the elements in order to teach them effectively.

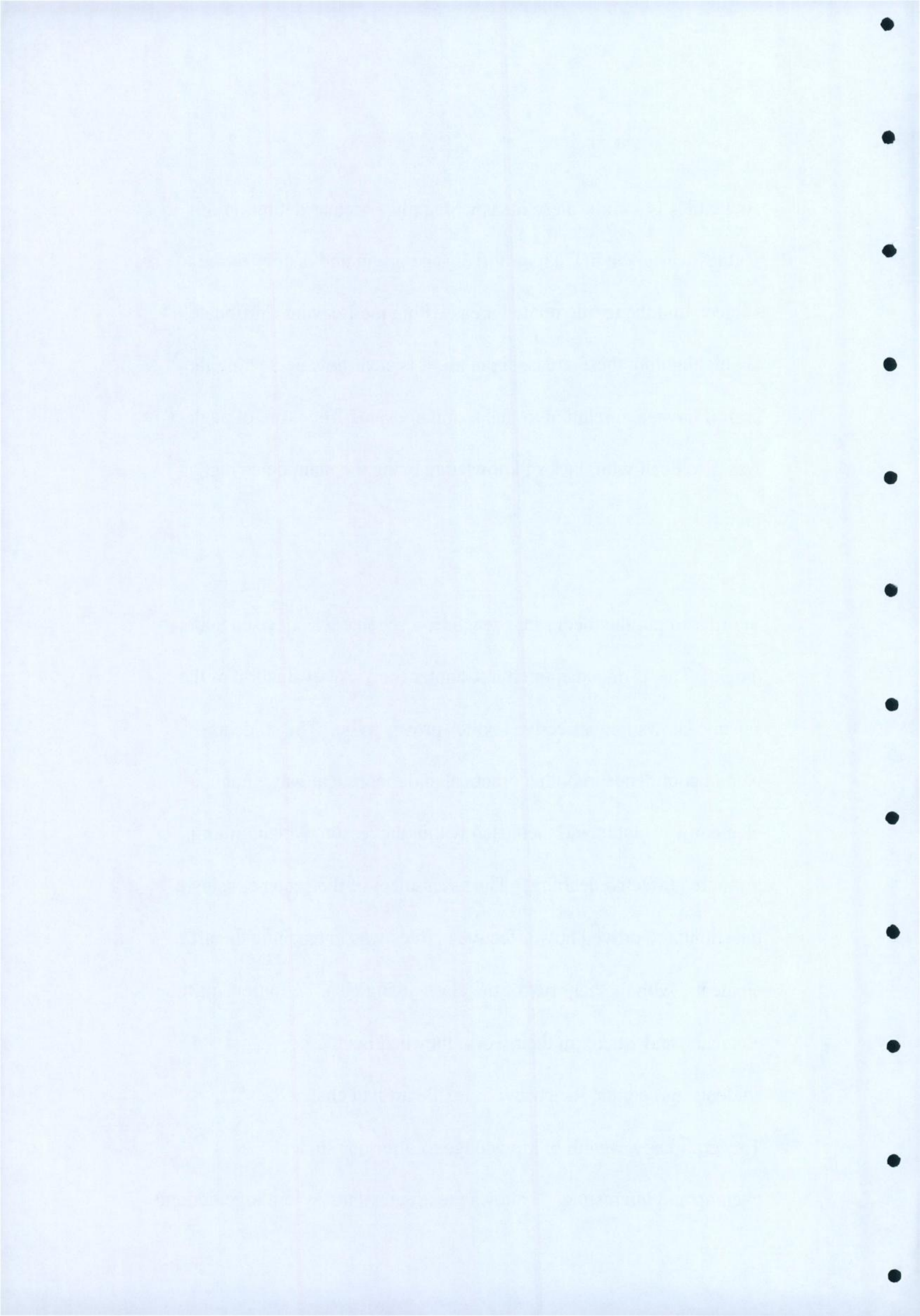
Craft and its value in the classroom was discussed in Chapter two. Areas such as success and content became obvious benefits for the student. Craft is a way of motivating and giving confidence to the student who may lack in certain areas. The step by step process of craft subjects allows the art elements to be taught in an integral and task related way.



As textiles is a craft, these ideas will apply. A clear definition of textiles was given in Chapter three. The origin and history of the subject, and the textile related areas within the Leaving Certificate. By highlighting these areas, six in all, it is clear how neglecting the craft is unwise in relation to this terminal exam. The issue of neglect was also dealt with, lack of knowledge being the main deterring factor.

In order to put the theory into practice, a scheme was devised and taught. This is documented in Chapter four. An evaluation of the scheme shows how effective textiles proves to be. The students gained confidence in both a practical and theoretical way. Each art element was taught and then used within the lesson, which, in turn, promoted effective learning. The assessment of the scheme, using a questionnaire proved how effective textiles was in teaching the art elements, with the majority of the class giving clear definitions of the elements, and where, in their work, they had been used. Most students agreed that their view of textile art had changed.

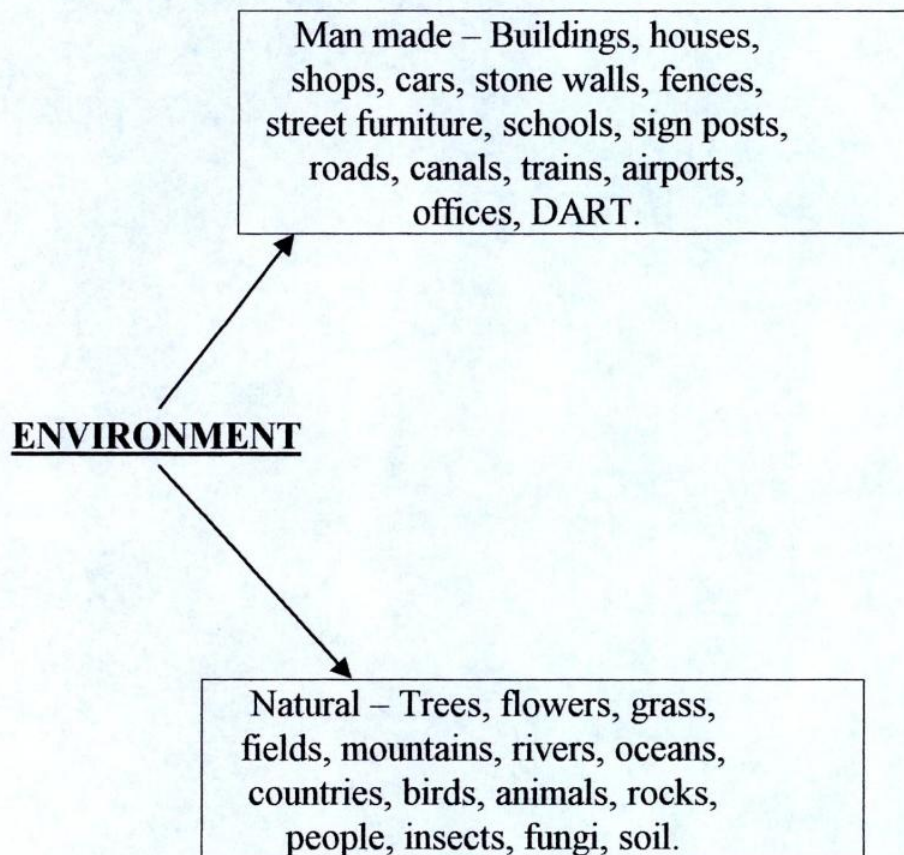
This craft has a wealth of knowledge to offer our students. It is exciting and interesting. It allows the art elements to join together and



be learned in a deep and practical way. It is a craft which has survived since 10,000 BC, and still evolves today. Textiles is easily applied to the classroom, it is economical and encompasses the elements, the design process, and a variety of skills. Through textiles, the student learns a valuable skill, they are fluent in the language of art and design, they can criticise, appreciate and produce art, they have learned the foundation of our subject; the essential art elements.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I



APPENDIX II

HANDOUT

Answer the following questions, think back carefully on the scheme,
and each step we took.

(1) GIVE A DEFINITION FOR THE FOLLOWING:-

(a) LINE

(b) SHAPE

(c) TONE

(d) FORM

(e) COLOUR

(f) TEXTURE

(g) PATTERN

(h) COMPOSITION

(2) WHERE DID YOU USE EACH ELEMENT IN YOUR WORK? (e.g. LINE – PREPARATORY DRAWINGS)

- (a)
- (b)
- (c)
- (d)
- (e)
- (f)
- (g)
- (h)

(3) HAS YOUR VIEW OF TEXTILES CHANGED?

(4) ANY OTHER COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS?

Ms Carter

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