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THE VALUE OF VISUAL AIDS IN THE ART ROOM

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by

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is a study of the importance of visual aids in the teaching of Art Craft and Design syllabus. The following investigation aims to examine the purpose of visual aids in the art room and prove their importance in developing visual awareness within the young person. This investigation will be backed up by primary research work carried out in a South County Dublin Community School. As a result of these studies many conclusions will be given proving the necessity for the use of visual aids in the Art Craft and Design curriculum.

Chapter One deals with the influence visual aids has on teaching methodology. It discusses the success of using visual aids as an approach to educating the young in art. Examples of this success will be given. This chapter will also deal with visual awareness. Visual awareness can be developed in many ways which includes the use of visual aids.

Chapter two will differentiate visual aids from support studies. Support studies and visual aids are used in conjunction with each other in the art room. However it is important not to confuse one with the other. This chapter sets out to clarify the use of both, giving examples if visual aids and support studies.

Chapter three deals with the use of visual aids in the art room. This chapter will deal with the consideration of size, colour, purpose and interest when deciding upon a relevant visual aid.

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Chapter four deals with the role visual aids play in the Junior Certificate and how they play an integral part in the Art Craft and Design Junior Certificate syllabus and its aims. In order to achieve the Art Craft and Design aim sat Junior Cycle, this chapter states that the use of visual aids is of utmost importance. This chapter deals with the education of the young person in the art room and the best possible methods of achieving the education.

Chapter five discusses one scheme related to the value of visual aids. It outlines the aims, objectives and the students activities from week to week. A self evaluation and student evaluation on the success of the scheme will be given in brief. The chapter will also deal with the findings and the results of this scheme.

Chapter six will give conclusion as to the value of the use of visual aids. These conclusions are a result of the research done for this dissertation. Recommendations will be given dealing with the importance of visual aids in teaching the Art Craft and Design syllabus.

VI



CHAPTER 1

THE INFLUENCE OF VISUAL AIDS IN TEACHING METHODOLOGY

Art students earliest recognition of the benefits of visual aids in various forms will have come from a realisation of the part played by such visual aids in the classroom. This could involve helping the students to understand and comprehend the artistic elements and forms.

The use of visual aids may be one of the most successful approaches to educating the young in art.

A receptive teacher sat on the carpet in the home corner of her classroom and told her pupils about Picasso. She shared many images with them, talked about them, invited their comments and left a small group on their own to look reflectively through the books, posters and cards that she had energetically put together whilst planning this activity. She monitored their engagement with these resources from a distance and was struck by the way one five-year-old seemed particularly absorbed. The teacher recalled how the child used his fingers to trace and follow many of the lines and shapes within the drawings and paintings. Repeatedly he turned the pages and slowley trailed his fingers along and around the images. After a long time, he placed the books he had been using back in the book box and went directly and without instruction to the drawing table. There he worked with complete conviction and focus until he had made a vibrant large scale pastel drawing of a head. 1.

When introduced to visual aids the child of five-years-old, as discussed by Kate Stephans, imitated Picasso's work. If the same was introduced to an older student one might expect the same student to explore further the elements and art forms used by Picasso. This mature student might be expected to understand the purpose of the visual aid. This might be to demonstrate Picasso's use of colour, line and

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shape. "These can all be the starting point for many lines of enquiry."2.

The visual aid therefore would be the starting point to further project work. The author Kate Stephans met the same five-year-old two months later and asked him if he could remember looking at any artists work at the time. The child's response was;

Yes Picasso, Hockney and another man ... I like my green eyes and square face ... I was the only one who did a square face ... I like staggery faces . . . (I'm going swimming tonight) ... I like the colour [he began working into the picture again] because I've left some spaces. 3.

The approach to teaching this young student has been successful. However if one had not given the group the chance to peruse the books, results may have been less successful. The same five-year-old child may not have remembered the project some time later. The approach to developing visual awareness within the classroom is most successful when the young person is introduced to visual resources regularly. "These ideas and be initiated by the contents and layout of the room before the start of the lesson and by this means some of the assumptions with which a child comes in may be challenged."4.

When a student is introduced to a visual environment within the classroom, this experience helps the young person to become more visually aware outside the classroom. Theme corners have been used by many primary school teachers. See fig 1. Although it is a common aspect of a primary school classroom one could





Fig. 1. Theme corner - a display of secondary source materials used to stimulate project work.



also integrate this into the secondary school art room. Theme corners could focus on one art movement or one artist either way should contain sufficient visuals and resources available for the group. Fig 1. Shows a theme corner. One can see visuals with the same theme as the artists work. The class teacher has set up a very appealing corner which is very applicable to a classroom situation. The corner provides visual stimulation support studies, theme connections and readily available resources.

An approach to achieving visual awareness in students will demand the use of visual aids. A visual aid should visually explain the task of the lesson at hard and what may be achieved as a result, and should also show how an art element for form may be used in the wider environment.

Stephans refers to a teacher who successfully used books and images as visual aids. The success of this approach in second level schools will depend on the range of visual aids and how the teacher uses these resources. Visual aids, if used appropriately will help in the development of the young person's education.

The general aim of education is to contribute towards the development of all aspects of the individual, including aesthetic, creative, critical, cultural, emotional, intellectual, moral, physical, political, social and spiritual development, for personal and family life, for working life, for living in the community and for leisure.5.

For the achievement of the Junior Certificate syllabus objectives "the student should be taught how to develop and use a number of methodical ways of

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Fig. 2. Students Work - a result of researching secondary source materials





Fig. 3. A & B Displays which enrich the learning environment.



observing visual stimuli and identifying the basic art and design elements necessary to form a visual language."6. The achievement of this objective demands a visually stimulating learning environment. A visual aid can take many forms, The obvious being: Photographs, mounted images, slides and videos. See fig 4(a). However it is when they are used that is important. The development of a young persons visual awareness will be enhanced when introduced regularly to visual resources supported by appropriate learning experiences. "Life is interesting when we feed off a mixed and varied diet, both literally and metaphorically and this is equally true when it comes to using resources in the classroom."7.

Kate Stephans agrees that the learning environment is important combined with a continuous range of visual resources. Again these visual resources could include books, posters, large reproductions, postcards, slides, videos along with artefacts and aesthetically decorative and functional designed forms. See fig 4(b). During a recent trip to Australia, the author, Rod Taylor visited an artist and his wife. The couple had just returned home having spent a number of months on an island north of Arnhem land. This was a restricted access area in a depressed state.

Once inside their home one was surrounded by a rich abundance of Aborigional art. It covered every wall and even all available floor surfaces. The paintings were both on bark and in acrylic on canvas - all executed in the four basic colours of black, red and yellow ochre and white. Woven mats piled on top of each other and there were baskets bags, beads and carvings in abundance. 8.

Taylor's artist and his wife succeeded in achieving a learning environment amongst

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Fig. 4a. Slides used as visual aids in a lesson





Fig. 4b. Hagazines used as visual aids in a lesson



the Aborigional people. The Artist used his own experiences and work as visual aids in order to achieve learning. On visiting the artist's home, Rod Taylor found evidence of rapid progress in skill development in the Aborigionals. As Taylor states; "One could not have had a more powerful example of the power of the visual arts, or one that points up some of their significance within education."9.

From a teacher's perspective visual aids form an essential and integral part of the lesson preparation, presentation and achievement of lesson objectives. Visual aids influence the way a teacher will present the lesson and the achievement of a learning environment. Only two examples of the success of visual aids in teaching methodology have been discussed in this chapter. However one only has to walk into an art room and interview the young people to see the benefits of the continuous use of visual aids.



FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER 1

- 1. Kate Stephens, <u>Learning through art and Artefacts</u> (London : odder and Stoughton Educational, 1994). P.24.
- 2. <u>Children's Growth Through Creative Experience Art and Craft Education</u> (U.S.A.: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company Inc., 1974) p.96.
- 3. Stephans, op. Cit, p.24.
- 4. Children's Growth Trough Creative Experience Art and Craft Education, p.95.
- 5. An Roinn Oideachais, <u>The Junior Certificate art, craft, design Guidelines for</u> <u>teachers</u>, (Dublin : NCCA Publication, 1997) p.1.
- 6. <u>Ibid.</u>, p.3.
- 7. Stephans, op. Cit, p.25.
- 8. Rod Taylor, Visual Arts in Education, (London : The Falmer Press, 1992) p.15.

9. <u>Ibid.</u>, p.15.


CHAPTER 2

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SUPPORT STUDIES AND VISUAL AIDS

Support studies are used in conjunction with visual aids to show how artistic problems may have been previously solved. Support studies show the context in which art has been explored and progressed throughout history to present day. It is possible for one to confuse the two. But it is necessary to note that there are differences between the use of visual aids and the use of support studies within the classroom.

When teaching art, in preparation for the Junior Certificate Examination, one would use visual aids as a back-up for support studies or vice versa (see fig 5 a&b). For example in the case of lino printing, one might use Escher as a support study and prints achieved by past students as visual aids. These visual aids might demonstrate how past students may have delt with a particular theme. Whereas Escher as the support study would demonstrate the artists view on a particular theme.

Support studies involving art history, appreciation, critical and evaluative aspects should be carefully organised as an integral part of each learning situation using visual aids, reference books, films, or other appropriate means. 1.

Support studies would be used to help students understand the historical and cultural aspects of their work. One could consider the use of African Masks as a support study during a project on mask making. Visual aids hold no historical purpose. A visual aid demonstrates the task at hand. For example a visual aid in a





Fig. 5a. Escher used as a support study - used to back up a visual aid demonstrating a design process.





Fig. 5b. A Visual Aid used to demonstrate the design process step by step.



project on mask making might show various methods of papier mache or the construction of a mask. One would agree in saying that one supports the other in the art room.

In an exercise involving printing one could include support studies under the

following headings:

* The History of Print - Guttenberg's print press	
* Forms of Print	- Lithograph, lino and screen print
* Uses of Print	- Graphic design,, advertising, books and
magazines	
*Study of Visual Grammer	- Composition, meaning, etc. Communication
	of ideas through print.

It is hard to argue which has more benefits for students; support studies or visual

aids?

If one believes that the primary function of art education is to help the young learn to appreciate the great works of contemporary and historical art, then perhaps a person trained in art history is most suited to teach. If one thinks that the major goal of art education is to prepare practising artists, then perhaps practising artists are best equipped to teach art. 2.

As Elliot Eisner believes about the suitability of teachers the same could be argued about the suitability of visual aids and support studies. If it is to teach the appreciation of contemporary and historical art one would use support studies. However if it is to demonstrate the elements of art, such as colour or form, one would use visual aids (see fig. 6a&b). In this case the support study would show an historical use of form in artists work. The visual aid in this circumstance would demonstrate how one would achieve form in their work. Not all educationalists, however, would agree with the importance of support studies and visual aids.





Fig. 6a. One visual aid used in a colour theory lesson.





Fig. 6b. An alternative visual aid for use in the teaching of colour theory.

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Viktor Lowenfeld considers these outside influences to be an inhibitance on self expression.

If children developed without any interference from the outside world no special special stimulation for their creative work would be necessary. Every child would use his deeply rooted creative impulse without inhibition, confident in his own kind of expression. We find this creative confidence clearly demonstrated by those people who live in the remote sections of our country and who have not been inhibited by the influences of advertisements, funny books and education!. 3.

One could agree with Lowenfeld's argument that television and computers may

inhibit the child's creativeness. However one may also argue that by researching

forms of advertising or the uses of paint one would discover the artistic field which

best suits oneself. Lowenfeld continues to say that

Among the folk are found the most beautiful, natural and dearest examples of children's art, what civilisation has buried we must try to regain by recreating he natural base necessary for such free creation. Whenever we hear children say, "I can't draw that", we can be sure that some kind of interference has occurred in their lives. 4.

One would tend to agree with Lowenfeld's argument that those from remote areas are more creative than those from educated civilisations. The African tribal people are creative and this creativeness has been used as support studies in many art classrooms. However it could also be argued that through the use of support studies and visual aids one would explore and develop creativeness. Lowenfeld states that these remote civilisations have no outside interferences. Much of the art from these remote civilisations has been influenced by the natural environment and animal kingdom. There it would be said, stands their visual aids. These could be referred to as visual aids. The support studies involved could be said to be artistic



surroundings including, architecture, decoration and icons.

One would agree that there is a support study and visual aid possibly used in every artistic circumstance, whether it be obviously displayed or hidden in the surrounding environment.

When we come to consider the great civilisations on the past or to consider the contemporary civilisations different to our own, we often look to artefacts, images and architecture of those societies to tell us about the particular qualities of mind and of feelings which characterised the people involved. 5.

The author Martin Drury, in this statement, could be describing the purpose of support studies. To research and explore other civilisations art one uses artefacts and images as a source in achieving the required knowledge. "I do not know of any way to learn the skill of judgement except by judging things." As a result of his own experience, of over thirty years work in the teaching and management of higher education. Patrick Nuttgen argues some problems set out in education. One of Nuttgen's arguments is that the child can only learn to analyse by doing so in the classroom. One would agree with this by continuing to say that visual aids and support studies could help us develop analytical skills.

Support studies could be used to teach the skill of analysing and the development of critical skills. One might approach this in the art room by asking students to discuss artists use of subject matter. The students in this case must analyse the work, discuss and agree or disagree. Visual aids, used to teach observational skills, thus developing the skills of recording information. In this case a visual aid

would demonstrate how one might go about recording from, for example through direction of line or use of tone.

Therefore, one must agree that both support studies and visual aids are of importance in the preparation for the Junior Certificate. A visual aid will demonstrate the lesson at hand in the context of present day. Whereas a support study will set the lesson into an historical context, demonstrating historical achievements in art. Both visual aids and support studies, one would also agree, are important in the development of the child's aesthetic skills, however both hold different educational function within the art room.



FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 2

- National Council for Curriculum Assessment. <u>The Junior Certificate Art, Craft,</u> <u>Design, Guidelines for Teachers (Dublin: An Rionn Oideachas,</u> 1997) p.8.
- 2. Elliot Eisner, <u>Educating Artistic Vision</u> (London: Collier Mac Millan Publishers, 1972) p.7.
- 3. Viktor Lowenfeld, <u>Creative and Mental Growth</u> (New York: The Mac Millan Company, 1947) p.1.
- 4. <u>Ibid.</u> p.1.
- 5. Martin Drury, The Arts and Education (Compass 20) p.10.
- 6. Patrick Nuttgens, <u>What should we teach and how should we teach it</u> (England: Wildwood House Ltd, 1988) p.133.



CHAPTER 3

THE USE OF VISUAL AIDS

A visual aid is used to stimulate the student interest to allow for personal reflection, verbal exploration and to develop critical analyses. Art education would aim to develop visual awareness. This may be developed through the use of visual aids. However in order to achieve visual awareness one may consider the choice and preparation of the visual aids. Before tackling a project one would analyse the educational programme in question and what it requires. In the case of the Junior Certificate, the criteria of the syllabus in relation to the project are to be considered. One might then decide on what visual aids to use at each stage and where one would find these visuals. One should also consider this taking into account size, colour, purpose and interest.

Before deciding on a visual aid some thought should be given as to what the student is to learn from it. In the ease of colour theory many visual aids have been used for teaching aids in the classroom.(see fig 7a & b) A small number include the following:

- <u>a ball painted yellow with a bottle painted purple</u> this will demonstrate effect of complementary colours when placed side by side.
- <u>a colour wheel</u> this will demonstrate that the colour wheel is made up of both primary and secondary colours. This will also demonstrate what two primary colours make up what secondary colour.
- <u>photographs</u> these will demonstrate monochromatic colours and the use of tonal ranges.
- <u>coloured card</u> will also demonstrate the effect of complementary colours when placed side by side.
- <u>paintings finished in harmonal colours</u> these may demonstrate the use of cold or warm colours to achieve varied effects.

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Fig. 7a. Visual aid used to demonstrate the mixing of colour to create secondary colours.





Fig. 7b. An alternative visual aid used to demonstrate the making of secondary colours.



Another consideration to be given should be the size involved. One might consider if the student will look and analyse or would the obvious be a more successful visual aid. One would agree with both the obvious and the less obvious being as successful as the next. However the age and the ability if the student would play a role in this argument. If one was to use a visual aid for a first year group with weak ability the obvious would be more suitable. In this situation, to demonstrate form, one might use a drawing of a bottle with obvious tonal ranges, in just black and white, as the visual aid. However one must also consider that abilities improve in the right learning situation. At this point one could consider the use of more advanced, less obvious visual aids. In this case a large coloured tonal study of a plant or a still life could be used as a visual aid. As a result, this could achieve analytical development in the young person. When questioning size, one might also consider what the classroom situation is. Could the students go to the back of the room, record the necessary information required from the visual aid, and is bigger more interesting.

When one is using a visual aid to demonstrate or explain a task, where the group have gathered close to the teacher and the visual aid used, size may not be important. However, when the group is seated, it should be argued that the larger the visual aid the more attention and interest is retained throughout the lesson. A visual aid could also be considered as resource material. Resource material is available under a wide range of



categories. Visual aids should "help to illustrate the range of craft and design work in the real world and can be used simultaneously to cover many curriculum areas".1 A visual aid could also be used in a variety of forms, such as slides, reproductions, books, video film, artefacts and ephemera. Each form has its own advantages for the development of learning. With reference to the Junior Certificate syllabus, one would consider using slides as visual aids for preparatory work in the research stage of the project.

The advantages of slides would be that the whole class can respond analytically to a single image, the teacher can question, comment on, and direct the attention of the group simultaneously. Slides, when shown, in a darkened room will help the development of the students responsiveness. If a darkened room is unavailable one would introduce slides using hand held viewers or table top light boxes. Slides are also an excellent way of preparing students for a museum or gallery trip, or follow up work.

There are a number of advantages in the use of reproductions. One could obtain these visuals without difficulty. "They enable pupils to chose their own imagery from which to work or make reference and are ideal for small group paired work".² One could use a reproduction to visualise a design process which has been previously accomplished (see fig. 5b). Reproductions, one would consider, are required in the context of comparison and contrasting. However a reproduction such as a postcard should be enlarged to suit



the viewing of a large group, to achieve group discussion. The Junior Certificate syllabus in Art Craft and Design requires the learner to collect such reproductions as postcards or magazine cuttings, keeping in mind the syllabus themes. There are advantages of the use of books as visual aids. One would agree that books play an integral part of the school library. The use of books would visually demonstrate illustration, drawing, pen and ink work, painting and collage.

The range, quality and content available is immense and can therefor expose pupils to many art, craft and design practitioners from all over the world, both past and present, and can help pupils to understand that the making of art is considerable, widespread and ongoing in the adult world. 3.

The use of videos and film provide the learner with a medium in researching artists, craft workers and designers practical work. Art videos and films depict the various fields of art and are readily available.

From a teacher's perspective one would consider another advantage. As art develops popularity television increases its artistic programming. This abundance of programmes is geared towards the young learner and in order to create visual aids one would record such programmes. It is important that in order to teach a lesson one should be aware of the uses of visual aids. One should prepare the context in which to use these visuals. "A teacher should plan his resources to focus interest, and to stimulate questions and ideas on the topic he wants to introduce".4 One would agree that it is important to plan



visuals and to expose the student to a broad variety of visual aids throughout school life.

When should one use visual aids? In conjunction with questioning, a visual aid should be used to encourage the learner to analyse and evaluate. In a classroom situation one would use a visual aid which is understood by a group with varied abilities. One should consider using visual aids in order to capture and retain the attention of the group.

...if art is to be more than an elitist frill on the school curriculum in addition to providing high quality instruction based on the studio approach, art teachers must provide instruction which appeals to a broad cross section of students. 5.

In order to provide instruction which appeals to the broad cross section of students one,

as the educator, should sustain the varied and visual environment.

Teachers have an important part to play in encouraging children to look and respond with confidence. There by enabling deeper understanding, by encouraging questioning, suggesting sensitivities, teachers will help pupils to develop their personal responses through knowledge and insight. 6.

In order to achieve responsiveness in the classroom one must endeavour to discover the

true purpose and use of visual aids within the classroom.



FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 3

1. Stephans, Learning through art and artefacts, p.49.

2. Ibid., p.47.

3. <u>Ibid.</u>

- Schools Council, <u>Children's Growth Through Creative Experience Art and Craft</u> <u>Education</u> (USA: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company Inc., 1974) p.95.
- Barzun, <u>Art and Education inflation is curricular considerations for visual Arts</u> <u>Education: Rationale, Development and Evaluation</u> ed. G.W. Hardiman and T. Zernich (Champaign, IL: Stripes Publishing Company, 1974).
- 6. Stephans, Learning through art and artefacts. p. 16.


CHAPTER 4

THE IMPORTANCE OF VISUAL AIDS IN THE TEACHING OF THE JUNIOR CERTIFICATE SYLLABUS

The use of visual aids in the teaching of the Junior Certificate is a prerequisite to the achievement of the syllabus aims and objectives. The framework of the syllabus is designed for the full ability range in Junior Cycle. The syllabus consists of Art, Craft and Design. These are three inter-independent disciplines. "They are fundamental to human existence, predating written language."1. Each discipline emphasises a different way of thinking;

*Art emphasised feelings, analytical skills and ideas.

*Craft emphasises the manipulation of tools and materials.

*Design emphasises problem solving, processes and thinking

The use of visual aids within the syllabus is to focus on the student's experiences of the

natural, social or man-made environment.

The starting point for each learning experience is crucial in developing the students capability for focused personal response. The motivation should be visually orientated and derive from the students direct experience of the natural, social or man-made environment. 2.

The aims of the Art Craft Designing syllabus at Junior cycle are;

*To promote in the student an informed, inquiring and discriminating attitude to his/her environment and to help the student relate to the world in visual, tactile and spatial terms.

*To develop a sense of personal identity and self-esteem through practical achievement on the expressive, communicative and functional modes of Art, Craft and Design.

*To develop in the student an understanding of art, craft and design in a variety of contexts - historical, cultural, economic, social and personal.



*To develop in the student the ability to apply evaluative criteria to his/her daily encounters with the natural, social and man-made environments and with the mass media.

*To promote in the student a practical understanding of and competence in the principles and skills underlying visual and constructional design and problem solving.

*To develop through structured practical work the students aesthetic sensibilities and powers of critical appraisal, appreciation and evaluation and to entrance to enhance the students qualities of imagination, creativity, originality and ingenuity. 3.

In teaching any option of the Art, Craft and Design syllabus in Junior cycle the appropriate and relevant visual aids must be part of the learning situation. When teaching a graphics project, such as book cover design, suitable visual aids would demonstrate both work in progress and the finished art. This work - in - progress show how the artist developed ideas from one stage to the next until a finished piece has resulted.

The Junior Certificate is designed to develop one's skills and abilities through a range of Experiences. Emphasis is given to the social and environmental education. The young person is encouraged to achieve the highest possible standards of excellence in accordance with one's abilities. "Artistic learning deals with the development of abilities to create art forms; it deals with the development of powers of aesthetic perception; and it deals with the ability to understand art as a cultural phenomenon."4. One would agree with Elliot Eisner's argument that education is not the sole teaching of the basics; reading, writing, and rythmatics, but to prepare the young person for life. The Art, Craft



and Design syllabus is structured to ensure a balance of experience, understanding and making within the classroom. In order to experience craft work one should understand the possibilities of the materials involved. With this understanding one will then develop ideas. Visual aids in this situation could involve the manipulation of fabrics, such as various methods of stitching. A visual aid of a finished product should be used to demonstrate how one of many have used materials or methods in the making of the final art work. "....art education is about the opening of new realms of feeling at the level of the individual pupil who through art, can achieve a sympathetic understanding of, and communion with his own subjective world; and then at the level of the community as a whole in terms of the affective aspect of the times we live in."5.

In order to achieve this the young person must be introduced to new realms of experience. One could argue that it is the role of the art teacher to do so. By visually introducing the student to the possibilities of art this could be achieved. One would use visual aids to do so. Visual examples of such possibilities should be analysed and judged by the young person. In her writing Stephans would agree with the above statement of Malcolm Ross. Stephans also argues the vital development of the individual through; "communicating ideas and feelings, developing ideas, experimenting, applying knowledge, planning and making, choosing appropriate materials adapting and modifying, comparing and looking for purposes."6.

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Throughout Junior Cycle the young person should be introduced to a broad range of media, art elements and artefacts which will develop the individual. Visual aids, one would agree, play an important role in achieving the development of the individual. Visual aids when used appropriately could also develop ones evaluate skills. "Evaluation is necessary and vital and should be regarded as an important and essential diagnostic procedure to improve what to taught and learned."7.

With reference to relevant visual aids the young person could develop their evaluative skills through comparison. The comparison of ones own work with visual aids within the classroom. In order to create and develop visual awareness, another aim of the syllabus, it could be argued, a visually stimulated learning situation. From a teachers perspective one would agree that it is the teacher's role as an educator to create an ongoing visually stimulating environment. However, it is important that one would create this environment around the structure of the Junior cycle syllabus. For example the use of visual aids showing preparation, process and product, in such a sequence. "Art is a form of experience that vivifies life; it helps the growing organism recognise that it is alive; it moves one to a height of feeling that makes it possible to identify that experience as a unique event in ones life."8.

Eisner's argument, could be achieved when the syllabus is taught in a visually stimulating environment. Thus proving the success of visual aids as a means to the achievement of

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learning. "The prime value of the arts in education lies, from my point of view, in the unique contributions it makes to the individuals experience with an understanding of the world."9.

In order to prepare the student for life outside the classroom, the educator should use as broad a range of visuals within the classroom. To prepare the young person for a variety of experiences life has to offer, one would agree that they be introduced to varied experiences within the classroom. In order to achieve the aims of the syllabus, one would agree with the necessity for a varied and constant visual environment.



FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 4

- 1. National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, <u>The Junior Certificate Art, Craft,</u> <u>Craft, Design Syllabus (Dublin : An Rionn Oiseachais, 1997)</u>. P.1.
- 2. <u>Ibid.</u>, p.2.
- 3. Ibid.
- 4. Elliot Eisner, <u>Educating Artisitic</u> Vision (London : Collier Mac Millan Publishers, 1972)p.65.
- 5. Malcolm Ross, <u>The Arts and Personal Growth curriculum issues in art education</u> (London : Pergamon Press, 1980) p.100.
- 6. Kate Stephans, <u>Learning through Art and Artefacts</u> (London : Hodder and Stoughton Educational, 1994) p.25.
- 7. An Roinn Oideachais, <u>Art Craft Design Guidelines for teachers</u> (Dublin : NCCA Publication, 1997) p.6.
- 8. Eisner, op. Cit p.5.
- 9. Ibid. p.9.



CHAPTER 5

VISUAL AIDS IN THE CLASSROOM

Background to Methodology

The social which I carried my research for my dissertation was situated in South County Dublin. I have completed my 4th year teaching practice in a community school. This caters for both boys and girls and accommodates approximately six hundred students. There is a very strong spirit and this is clear from both student and staff. However, this is not always so clear from students. One search deep at times to find this spirit.

There is strong support for the art department as it is regarded highly in the school curriculum. Along the corridors there is evidence of this. There is a vast amount of students work on display. This high regard for the art department is also evident in the sports hall which permanently displays murals done by students.

There are two art rooms both of which are spacious and do not lack storage room. However, the art rooms although bright, spacious and tidy, both lack simulation in the form of a constant flow of visuals and student work displayed on the walls. There is evidence of this wall decoration however within a seven month period the same visuals and students work have remained on the wall. Both art rooms are well equipped with materials and objects for observational work. One art room is furnished with a kiln, four pottery wheels and a large amount of clay. However, this was not available to me



at any time as been used for night classes. From the evidence of students work in the art rooms the only students given the opportunity to work in clay are junior certificate groups. However on saying this the teachers maintain an extremely high standard of work. This is evident in the work displayed around the school and in results of exams.

The group with whom I have worked for the purpose of this dissertation is a second year group. This group is a weak ability class of seventeen students. The majority in the class have little knowledge of art and have little experience in various techniques. The scheme of work was completed over twelve seventy - five minute periods.

Proposed Scheme of work

As stated I completed my 4th year teaching practice in south county Dublin school. I completed a suitable scheme of work relating to the value of visual aids in the art room. I devised a scheme of work directed at a 2nd year group. The final product was a lino print, based on the theme "Under the Sea". I decided to work on print for this second year group because their previous artistic experience was limited to poster paint and colouring pencils. I wanted to broaden this experience as well as developing their artistic knowledge and vocabulary.



Use of Visual Aids within a Scheme of Work

Aim of Sequence

To design and print and image using lino as the print process. To design the image using under the sea as a theme.

Week 1 : Texture through line

Objective : To introduce and explore texture through the manipulation of line.
Visual Aids : Line creating texture in the natural and manmade environments.
The students on observing my visual aids analysed the art room to discover any unusual textures. The group then Completed the task by creating these textures on paper using various lines.

Week 2 : Observational drawing

Objective: To further develop an understanding of line through observational drawing. *Visual Aids:* No visual aids were introduced for this lesson.

Students made a number of observational drawings of the shape and the line of shells. A demonstration took place but no visual aids were shown. This was for experimental purposes, the results of which will be revealed later. The materials used were marely pencils and paper.

Week 3 : Observational Drawing

Objective : To further promote an awareness of visual texture through observational





Fig. 8. Visual aid used to show line creating texture in the environment.





Fig. 9. Students Work - line creating texture.



drawing.

Visual Aids : Observational drawings of shells showing shape form and texture. Students continued to work on observational drawing however this week began to analyse the textures of the source objects. Visual aids were shown to back up demonstration and to provide insight as to what was expected of the group. Students used their textured sheets from week one as a source for visual textures.

Week 4 : Design Process

Objective : To introduce and develop an understanding of positive and negative shape through the modification process.

Visual Aids : Artists original observational drawing against the finished print. Students worked from their textured drawings to come up with a design for their finished lino print. The visual aid shown did not demonstrate the full step by step modification process. Again this was part of an experiment, the results of which will be revealed later.

Week 5 : Design Process

Objectives : To further promote an awareness of line and shape through the modification process.

Visual Aids : Modification process shown in steps. Eschers design process in achieving a successful print.





Fig. 10. Visual Aid - Showing a finished print beside source observational drawing.



Students continued to modify their original drawings into lines and shapes in an attempt to come up with a successful design for a lino print. Visual aids were detailed showing the step by step process one should take in order to create a successful design.

Week 6 : Slide Show

Objective: To visually reinforce the students awareness of the use of line, shape and colour in the print process.

Visual Aids : Slides and colour photocopies of Durer and Andy Warhol.

The students observed and analysed these visuals. The group took part in a discussion

based around the visuals showed. The students then recorded details from these,

comparing the artists work with their own work Week 7 : Design Process

Objective : To further develop the students skill of modification.

Visual Aids : Step by step modification process.

The students continued to modify their designs.

Week 8 : Design Process. Lino Cutting

Objective : To further develop the students understanding of composition.

Visual Aids : Modification processes used in print.

Using felt markers the students completed satisfactory compositions for lino prints.





Fig. 11. Students Work - design work for final lino print.



Students transferred their designs to the lino block and began the cutting process.

Week 9 : Lino Cutting

Objective : To introduce an awareness of the techniques involved in the cutting process.

Visual Aids : The cutting process; this giving directions for cutting lino including the safety elements involved. The students continued the cutting process.

Week 10 : Lino Printing

Objectives: To further promote the students understanding of shape with a view to introducing the next step in the print process.

Visual Aids : Materials Required, step by step directions of the print process. A large visual aid was also shown demonstrating how one has come from an original idea to a finished successful print.

The students completed the cutting process and began the print process. Students made a number of prints before working on their final prints. The visual aid of materials required was used as a reminder of what one should have on the desk before one begins printing. The visual aid showing the step by step print process was used to back up demonstration, to keep students clear as to what to do to achieve a successful print.





Fig. 12. Students cutting lino.





Fig. 13. Visual aid used in describing the step by step print process.




Fig. 14. Visual aid used to describe the design process taken from initial to the final print.



Week 11 : Lino Printing

Objective : To introduce colour with a view to developing an awareness and understanding of complementary colours.

Visual aids : The colour Wheel. Bottles painted with the colours of the colour wheel. The students took part in a short colour theory game using bottles. After an introduction on complementary colours the students took part in the short game. The students were asked to place the yellow bottle and so on. The students then made a number of prints on coloured paper. The colour wheel was used to back up the colour theory as a reminder of the complementary couples.

Week 12 : Lino Printing, Display

Objective : To further promote an understanding of colour with a view to developing an awareness of the importance of a good finish.

Visual aids : The colour wheel. Step by step directions in constructing a paper frame. The students chose the complementary colour to the paper on which they printed. The students then made a frame, following a demonstration, for the print. These prints were then mounted and displayed. The visual aid giving directions in constructing a paper frame was used as a reminder of measurements and cutting directions. The colour of the complementary couples of the colour wheel.





Fig. 15. Students making a successful print - following the step by step print process.





Fig. 16. Students finished prints.



PERSONAL EVALUATION

This scheme was successful. Although at times problems may have occurred to slow up the process, all of the learning objectives were achieved. The students learned to work from source drawings to come up with a design which was then translated into a final print.

As the students had little experience in art their enthusiasm and eagerness resulted in creating a hard working atmosphere. Although the group did need direction in the execution of techniques including lino cutting and printing no major problems were encountered.

STUDENT EVALUATION

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This group was of weak ability with many discipline problems. As a result it was important to keep each student active and not leaving anyone idol at any time. The students enjoyed the scheme but became anxious at times due to lack of understanding. This lack of understanding was due to the lack of visual aids at times. Discipline problems were limited to paint and water incidents. Only one accident occurred when cutting lino and this was minor.

Students were extremely happy with their final products. For a group with the limited experience of paint and paper in art it must be said that a lot of learning took place.



Students work was displayed on art room walls giving the group confidence and inspiration to work as well on the next project.

Throughout this scheme I endeavoured to prove the value of visual aids within the art room. In order to do I completed a small experiment. In week two when the group began their observational drawing I provided no visual aids to back up my demonstration. As a result work was very poor and continuous individual attention was required. In week three I did introduce visual aids showing observational drawing and what was required of the group. The results were that the students work was of a higher quality with obvious analytical skills showing. Students needed no extra attention after the demonstration as they referred to the visual aids to answer any queries. Then in week four the only visual aid shown was a finished print beside a source drawing. This resulted in a lot of confusion as to how one would transform an original drawing into a final product. Although one's demonstration can be clear and concise visual aids are needed to back this up and used as a reference throughout the task. In week five to follow this up I used a visual aid showing a step by step modification process. Students found the process much easier to understand when seeing it on paper. Again the group worked well needing no extra demonstrations or attention. Another finding from this small experiment is the effect on discipline. During the lessons when no visual aids were used students became frustrated due to



lack of understanding. This frustration led to lack of interest and then to idolness. When students are idol they will find a means to entertain themselves. Such occasions in this scheme resulted in students throwing paper, splashing water, roaming about the art room and shouting to each other. During the weeks when visual aids were used and on display, discipline was not a problem. Students understood the task and were active and busy at every movement. Students worked well during these lessons finding no time to be idol.



CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Visual aids should be an intregal part of an art lesson. As can be seen from the findings of my scheme referred to in this dissertation, visual aids are invaluable in creating a stimulating learning environment. The use of visual aids is a necessity when teaching art to students. The use of visual aids in the teaching of the Junior Certificate is a prerequisite to the achievement of the syllabus aims and objectives. In keeping with Elliot Eisner's argument that education is not marely the teaching of the basics but also the preparation of the young person for life. A Systematic and constructive preparation of visual aids will stimulate awareness and student interest in the lesson topic.

It was obvious from the students observational work and their finished work. The success of the scheme is due mainly to the students understanding of the task and constant exposure to the wide variety of visual aids. My research also included a small experiment based on the value of visual aids within the art room. In one lesson I introduced no visual aids to back up my demonstration.

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As a result students lacked understanding. Although a clear demonstration was given, the group had no reminder of this demonstration to refer to during the task. This caused an obstacle in learning taking place. Students became frustrated and needed individual attention. The following lesson did involve the use of visual aids and the results were not surprisingly different. Students understood what was expected of them. The group became focused and worked well with little need for extra individual attention.

CHAPTERS

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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During my teaching practice I came across another situation which, from an art teachers perspective, was not appropriate. This was the class room environment in which I taught and the fact that the same visuals have been on display in the art room since the beginning of the year. Rather than educating the student in visual awareness the student is uneducated when not seeing a regular change.

Although I have delt only with the Junior Certificate in this dissertation I recommend that visual aids be used as and intregal part of every art lesson in the school curriculum at both the Junior level and Senior level.

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In relation to a successful learning environment I also recommend that students be exposed to a constant flow of visuals. This should involve students work being displayed on walls and renewed regularly. Visual aids relating to projects should not only be introduced and used for particular lessons but should also be displayed throughout to develop students awareness and understanding. This visually stimulated environment will develop interest and enthusiasm amongst students with an eagerness to take part in each lesson.

In conclusion it is crucial that the students be educated to their highest potential. One can only be educated in art when visual awareness along with analytical skills is developed in an interesting and stimulating environment. "Life is interesting when we feed off a mixed and varied diet, both literally and metaphorically, and this is equally true when it comes to using resources in the class room."1 Pho Cenving Contribute course in Art Crudt indeDostar everyond is in accordance with the old line modente certains are thing for a ways Cartificane course in Art acteur to be chinged more original way the funitor Certains ac

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FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 6

1. Kate Stephans, <u>Learning through art and artefacts</u> (London : Hodder and Staughton Educational, 1994) p.24.

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