To what extent can adopting contemporary art practices enrich student's appreciation, knowledge and skill in engaging in traditional ceramic practices?

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Art and Design with Digital Media

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2016

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Signed Statement

I hereby certify that the material in this Research Report, which I now submit for assessment on the program of study leading to the award of Professional Masters of Education in Art and Design with Digital Media is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others except where duly acknowledged.

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Abstract

To what extent can adopting contemporary art practices enrich student's appreciation, knowledge and skill in engaging in traditional ceramic practices?

The purpose of this qualitative action research project is to examine how introducing a traditional method of making, specifically in relation to creating a ceramic bust form, could promote an appreciation of Craft for the Junior Certificate Cycle. The project aimed to engender the basic hand building techniques and methodical attention required to research, design, critically reflect and create a ceramic 3D form and aimed to support pupil engagement with craft education and artistic practices. It was conducted with the objective of inaugurating concurrent findings by which to frame the study.

Three core findings were established;

- Craft Education in Ireland

- A/R/Tography

- Reflective practice – critical thinking

The rationale for these findings mirrors the relationship between traditional craft and the contemporary attitude to craft practices. Why? Why pay homage to traditional methods when growing technologies offer a contemporary art and design classroom advances in making? Craft practices are intrinsically linked to Irish culture. In order to maintain our culture and respect our roots, while embracing contemporary influences, the A/R/Tographer must engage in artistic and pedagogical approaches to fostering appreciation. Student's engagement was promoted and encouraged through reflective practice and critical thinking.

Acknowledgement

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who have supported me throughout developing, undertaking and writing this research project.

I offer sincere gratitude to my tutors in LSAD. Through their considered appraisals and advice, I was kept focused and encouraged to take educational risks and to be ambitious in terms of content and methods necessary.

I am and will for ever be grateful to my co-operating teachers, and relevant schools, for the support they offered throughout my placements over the two years.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends for their unwaveringly support. Their love and strength inspires me invariably.

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INTRODUCTION

This Action Research project aimed to develop innovative and attractive art and design curriculum. Methodologies aligned with qualitative research led in the methods utilised to gather data. The conceptual framework for this research project was to examine the extent to which adopting contemporary art practices might enrich student's appreciation, knowledge and skill in engaging with traditional ceramic practices, therein examining the degree to which students could achieve an understanding and appreciation for the skills of craft and ceramics through the making of a traditional ceramic bust.

Traditional Ceramic Craft skills and the Digital Sketch Book

[Short Course

Appendix 10.]

The catalyst to this research project was a Short Course designed using the prescribed NCCA guidelines [JCT]. This project set out to enable the students to slow down and make considered decisions and problem solve solutions to the various technical possibilities and limitations involved in order to build a large sculpture based on their preliminary work. Students were encouraged to engage in hand rendered and digitally documented (blogger) reflective practice and thus critical reflection, commenting on their ideas and opinions through the combination of these platforms.

Selected Statements of Learning (SOL) guided the learning objectives, as set out by the Framework for The Junior Cycle [DES 2015].

One such SOL that framed the desired outcomes reads as follows;

4. *Create and present artistic works and appreciate the processes –both digital and hand rendered skills involved.*

I undertook this research project unsure of how and when to separate my identities within the A/R/Tography context. A question I set for consideration parallel to the research topic was, wherein focused data must be gathered in the parallel roles of teacher and researcher, should they be considered separate identities?

Dewey viewed educators as the most important inquirers into the success and failures of the school – viewing the imperative role of a teacher as investigator of pedagogical problems through inquiry [Kincheloe 1991].

My focus as researcher was to examine the degree to which, I as teacher, could foster an appreciation for traditional methods of making – focusing on creating a ceramic bust.

Methods of inquiry explored will be further discussed under the *Content of the Research* Report. Data was gathered through numerous means including surveys, reflective journals, personal blogs, audio recordings and video recordings.

Data analyse was undertaken to examine the why and how with regards to students' approaches to decision making; not just what, where, when, or who as influencing factors, and to deduce trends in the making and recurring opinions of the students in order to develop more effective and encouraging teaching strategies.

This Research project was conducted with a group of 20 second year students over a ten week period in an all girls CEIST school community which fosters the spiritual and personal development of each student. The school strives for academic excellence and seeks to nurture a sense of self-worth, while having particular concern for the needs of the academically and socially disadvantaged.

Fig. 1.1

Fig. 1.2

The school is based in an urban environment with a student cohort of approximately 850 students and a staff of 1 Principal, 1 Deputy Principal, 56 teachers, 5 Special Educational Needs Assistance, 3 Secretarial staff and 1 lad technician.

Apple i-pads were introduced as an instrument of learning for each individual student in 2012. The current transition year students are the oldest group who utilise the i-pad's as part of their learning experience. Wifi is limited but available throughout the three story school, which is a physical blend of a new and old structural facility. Restrictions to social media and other sites are implemented for the safety of the students.

The subsequent report will include a literature review discussing the three core findings established:

- Craft Education in Ireland
- A/R/Tography
- Reflective practice – critical thinking

This report will break down the research methodologies explored and research methods selected. The research findings and subsequent evaluation of project outcomes, conclusions and recommendations will be synthesised.

LITERATURE REVIEW

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INTRODUCTION

Between 1965 to 2000 the changing demographic trends in Ireland led to increasing levels of students completing their secondary level education, and subsequently, a growth in the transfer rates into third level education [DES 2004]. The introduction of the 1967 free post-primary scheme is inextricably linked with the paradigm shift in the progression of education in Ireland [O'Dubhlaing 1997]. The growing bond between the economy and education saw education taking on the task of trainer in order to improve productivity in fulfilling employment [Halsey et al 1997]. From a Marxist perspective, a school should mirror the workplace through its hierarchical structures [Cook 2008]. The hidden curriculum is fundamental in this process [Lynch 1989]. In contrast, Dewey believed vocational education should be included as part of a more rounded curriculum in order to foster a greater range of abilities to expand student's future occupational options [Frankena 1965].

Considering the paradigm shift of the Irish education system and the desirable implementation of a more rounded approach to complement the training, education and engagement of students from a vocational and occupational standpoint, three core approaches to teaching methodologies will be further discussed and examined throughout this literature review;

Craft Education, A/R/Tography and Critical Reflection.

This literature review will examine craft education in Ireland. It will establish the extent by which A/R/Tography and engaging in critical and reflective practice can facilitate and support student learning and engagement within craft education. It will review the degree to which establishing reflective practice skills in the classroom and alternative approaches to teaching art, craft and design, removed from a solely academic achievement driven rationale, can foster an appreciation of contemporary craft skills in a modern and contemporary classroom.

Considering *A/R/Tography* as defined by Mel Alexenberg;

> *''Artists-researchers-teachers inhabit and explore the borderlands between art, science, and education, integrating knowing, doing, making through aesthetic experiences that elegantly flow between intellect, feeling, and practice to create and convey meaning. A/R/Tographers search for new ways to understand realms of learning at the interface between their artmaking, research, and teaching through attention to memory, identity, reflection, meditation, storytelling, interpretation, and representation''*
>
> [Alexenberg 2008 p. 20]

This literature review will evaluate if traditional craft is in decline throughout second level education. It will examine to what extent engaging with traditional craft skills enables a more holistic learning experience for students. Finally, this review will distinguish the degree to which new age digital technologies can support student learning in becoming reflective practitioners and critical thinkers.

CRAFT EDUCATION

This section examines craft within the Irish educational context. It considers and reviews craft practices from its traditional and functional object-centred beginning, to its ever evolving relationship with contemporary fine art. Within the Irish context, traditional craft practices are intrinsically linked to the richness of Irish culture and are imbedded in the roots of our identity. The worth of art, craft and design within the Irish educational frame work extends far beyond the adeptness of the subject in and of itself. The education gained and the skills developed are operable and transferrable throughout life. The question posed and evaluated throughout this section is;

How might traditional craft education be promoted in a contemporary art, craft and deign classroom?

Judith W. Simpson [1998] wrote about the traditional assumption that art needed to be identifiable based on a set criteria of aesthetic principals. John Dewey [1934] speaks about experience as the foundation of art. Evidence of these values' are embedded in the curricula developed for Art, craft and Design [NCCA].

Craft components can be identified in the syllabi of five Junior Certificate subjects; Art, Craft and Design, Home Economics, Technology (Wood), Technology and Metalwork [Crafts Council of Ireland 2009]. Under 40% of the student cohort in 2007 took each of these exams [Crafts Council of Ireland 2009]. Why? In what way are these craft components been embraced and promoted in contemporary school structures, considering Dalin's Typology of schools [1993] and the teachers own reluctance change [Fullan et al. 1992]. The technicalities, techniques and craft of making traditional forms unapologetically requires homage to be paid when developing projects and schemes of work, however, must the concepts remain true to a traditional assumption as discussed by Simpson [1998]. In other words, need things be things? Why not invite a more personal and creative decision making process of choice for the students in order to encourage engagement and annihilate an assumption of an elitist preserve for the artistically talented.

> *''There Lingers a noble notion that art should be taught for its own sake, that the creative impulse of the true Artist should arise from no nobler source than a desire simply to make Art... it is just this stance that, at least in part, has led art education to the periphery of the school curriculum... ''*
>
> [Walling 2000 p. xi]

The relationship between *Craft, Craftsmanship,* and *Art* are discussed throughout Grayson Perry's work. Considering 'The Tomb of the Unknown Craftsman' [Perry 2011], Perry exhibited traditionally rendered, yet contemporary in design, ceramic pots alongside accessioned objects that he extracted from the collection in the British Museum in order to create a dialog between then and now. Traditional methods of making, deep rooted in craftsmanship, can be successfully married with contemporary design and fine art. Perry states that he is an artist who uses clay as his medium. There is an assumption or discrimination that alludes to the notion that making in craft makes you a craft person and making in fine art an artist. Where one can indeed identify with one or the other, similar to the A/R/Tographer, these identities can be considered mergeable and interchangeable entities.

Art education requires a dramatic paradigmatic shift in pedagogical theory and practice [Bumgarner 1992]. The only way to ensure an enriched and holistic art, craft and design learning experience for students is to develop a curriculum that responds to the times in which we live while paying homage to the core traditional methods of making [Session 1999]. Where traditional craft practices are imbedded in the roots of our identity, there requires a shift in the pedagogical approach to fostering and developing an appreciation for these traditional practices in today's contemporary social setting. The beliefs and values embedded in a school establish a unique personality [Schoen and Teddlie 2008] that sets it apart from other education centres. These individual and unique personalities, merged with the art teachers own artistic philosophies and beliefs influence the degree to which students are invited to explore and embrace craft education [Deal and Kennedy 1982].

ARTIST/ RESEARCHER/ TEACHER

This section examines how engaging and investing in making art can be used as a means to intensify and strengthen our understanding of who we are as an artist, researcher and teacher [Anderson 1997]. It will review the influences these three identities have on moulding and modelling our personal and professional desirable outcomes, and there in, how they intrinsically inspire our teaching methodologies and strategies that influence the development of our educational philosophies and pedagogies [Irwin 2004].

Jane Waller [2001] and Rae Anderson [1997] discuss how the artist and their art work are viewed as inseparable entities; Waller [2001] describes how the identity of the artist is ultimately a physical representation of the *unseen spirit* of the artist – essentially working from the inside out. In contrast, the relationship between the artist, teacher and researcher are individual identities that merge, intertwine and facilitate an interdisciplinary approach [Anderson 1997].

In reviewing the *identity of the Artist* Thornton [2013] wrote that the artist is the origin of the work and the work is the origin of the artist;

> *''...Neither is without the other''*
>
> [Thornton 2013 p. 44]

Thornton [2013] discusses how intrinsic beliefs and convictions are rudimentary to the identity of the artist-teacher regarding both art and education. These identities are often considered as an intellectual struggle for art educators;

> *''In the process of shifting from artist to art educator, my professional identity became unclear and a personal and intellectual struggle ensued.''*
>
> [Eun-Hee 2006]

Action research employs the circumstances to produce, implement and evaluate through inquiry-laden processes, an A/R/Tographer is concerned with creating these circumstances [Springgay 2008]. Where a paradigm of interests establishes the A/R/Tographer's inquiry, it too enables an environment in which students engage on a deeper level with artistic practices from the implementation of good studio practice to the availability and usage of artistic language and terminology [Eun-Hee 2006].

Investment in a sustainable interdisciplinary approach between these identities is imperative in order to facilitate deep change in fostering an appreciation for craft education. As previously discussed, neither is without the other [Thornton 2013]. Therefore, if the *artist* holds a discourse of noninvestment and belief for craft education and traditional methods of making, then, the *teacher* will ensue in this manner leading to a failure in successfully implementing an exciting and challenging body of work. This in turn will establish a barrier between the student and a prospective knowledge base and appreciation for traditional methods of making. Neither is without the other. In order to support student learning and engagement within craft education, the A/R/Tographer must invest time in developing, making and critically reflecting on their processes and practices. This will invite a step by step knowledge and therefore enthusiasm and investment of time, which can be modelled in the classroom and mirrored by the students.

REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONERS – CRITICAL THINKING

In this section reflective practice will be reviewed from the point of view of developing critical and reflective thinking practices in the class room. It will consider the effects of explicitly implementing reflective practice strategies as a means of critically assessing and engaging in self-evaluation [Archer 2011]. This section will review how critical thinking enriches the learning experience of the student and teacher, and examines the degree to which it embeds a deeper and more rounded understanding of the activities undertaken. It will discuss the advantage of reflective practice and critical thinking in developing the student's cognitive domain. Finally, this section will assess how new age digital technologies can support student learning in becoming reflective practitioners and critical thinkers.

Through reflective practice one attempts to become aware of their assumptions [Brookfield 1995]. These assumptions are the taken for granted beliefs and values consciously or sub consciously imbedded in selected teaching strategies and research methodologies. Brookfield writes;

''In many ways we are our assumptions''

[Brookfield 1995 p. 2]

Critical reflection ensures we audit these assumptions to avoid running the risk of making poor decisions and bad judgements based on routine and accepted concepts, void of new ideas. In order to engage in critical reflection there needs to be a base line knowledge or grounding in a subject from which to critically reflect. Our A/R/Tography identity equips us in this this grounding. In order to facilitate student's engagement in critical reflection, they must first embrace an introductory period of learning from which they can later critically reflect. To achieve this they can engage in questioning and reflective practice throughout the introductory period- which will deepen their personal understanding of the activities undertaken.

Technology has always offered artists new and exciting means to express and create. As technology grows, so too does the ability to utilise it. Traditional means of expression are transformed [Olejarz 1998]. Digital media in and of its self can enable a creative learning experience.

The evolving capabilities of technology also aids in offering students instant results, and thus an instant support for documentation, reflection and discussion. While educational researchers are attempting to design new pedagogy to respond to the potential of digital technologies within existing curriculum and assessment policies, digital literacy pedagogies are gradually occurring in classrooms [Walsh 1999]. In today's modern and contemporary classroom, students are becoming reliant on technology and must be guided to an understanding that technology is a useful resource but not a replacement for human interaction in terms of thinking critically and creatively, engaging in group work and developing a comprehension of project-based learning in order to stimulate and develop their problem solving ability [Devlin et al. 2013].

Through the implementation of class room based reflective practice and critical thinking, students are encouraged in the development of their problem solving skills, spatial and aesthetic awareness which in turn can be translated into many areas of their intellectual development [Hannan 2014]. Andrew Pollard [2005] referred to reflective practice as in intricate part of the vocation of a teacher. In order to enhance and maintain ones professional development and expertise, Pollard discussed how reflective practice embodies a fundamental process in the development of a teacher. The development of the student should be considered in the same vein.

Conclusion

The curriculum sets out what is to be taught and how learning in the particular subject area is to be assessed. Most curricula are organized around at least two levels of objectives—very general or broad goals and then much more specific learning activities and objectives. In Ireland, while there is a centralised curriculum, moulding the curriculum in the classroom is subject to the personal identity and character of the school [NCCA]. Hidden curriculum is acknowledged as the socialisation process of schooling [Kentli 2009]. The teachers values, beliefs, use of language, text books, assessment and evaluation strategies and curriculum priorities, influence and establishes the hidden curriculum [Martin 1976]. The only way to ensure an enriched and holistic art and design learning experience for students is to develop course work, curriculum and thus pedagogical approaches that respond to the times in which we live while paying homage to the core traditional methods of making [Session 1999].

In a contemporary modern classroom ceramics is viewed as either "low" craft or "high" art [Sessions 1999]. When undertaking a traditional ceramic scheme in education there is an assumption of a functional and or a product orientated method of making art, mirroring the occupational Marxists mind set [Spendlove 2007]. Engaging in critical reflection will enable students and the teacher to question these assumptions. Integrating contemporary art themes into teaching requires a shift from predominantly technique-driven instruction to idea-driven instruction;

> *''The central hypothesis of the work is that greater recognition of an emotional dimension within a triadic schema ... will help conceptualise the powerful interrelationship between emotion, creativity and learning.''*
>
> [Spendlove 2007 abstract]

Teaching traditional ceramic craft skills can support pupil engagement with craft education and appreciation of contemporary ceramic craft practices [Hannan 2014]. In merging traditional methods of making with reflective practice, artistic beliefs and developing digital technologies, an Artist/Researcher/Teacher can encourage and support pupil engagement with craft education and appreciation of contemporary ceramic craft practices.

THE CONTENT OF THE RESERCH REPORT

Research Methodologies

School-based educational research sets the task of systematically and objectively implementing procedures to evaluate whether a given research question in line with a scheme of work is effective or fit for its purpose, in this case;

"To what extent can adopting contemporary art practices enrich student's appreciation, knowledge and skill in engaging in traditional ceramic practices?"

Research Methodologies were selected on the premise that they would be best positioned to gather the required data in order to deduct and evaluate findings most fittingly to the nature of this study. These methodologies aided in the inquiry and in deducing the weaker links of the scheme of work in order to make it stronger and not simply gather facts and figures. Applying mixed methods in action research utilised the strengths of the research methodologies [Ivankova 2015] and therefore offered a more comprehensive and broader perspective of the findings.

Action Research refers to the reflective process of progressive problem solving. It is considered a systematic study that combines action and reflection with the intention of improving practice [Cohen et al.]. Reflective practice was established as a core method of gathering data and was embedded throughout this research project. Both researcher and students engaged in a self-reflective enquiry in order to develop and improve on their practices [Surgenor 2011].

The traditional assumption related to empirical research procedures hypothesises that, regardless of experiences encountered in the field, the structure or procedural guidelines must not be altered [Kincheloe 1991]. The results are therefore confirmed or falsified on the basis of the theory presented. Action research invites change and minute by minute reflection and considered responses to experiences encountered.

Qualitative Research relies on the natural setting of a classroom environment as the main source of data and views the researcher as the key instrument [Biklem 1992]. The processes and actions are more in focus than the outcomes. Data gathered is analysed inductively [Biklem 1992].

This **Qualitative Action Research** project was conducted with the aim of understanding opinions and preconceived ideas of the given subject matter in order to uncover trends in opinions upon which to reflect and evaluate, enabling a deeper understanding of the issues raised. *Quantitative data* was explored as an aid to the qualitative methods through gathering data results from survey's issued. Questions posed were primarily opinion based and therefore would prove difficult in quantifiably measuring. From this perspective, quantitative methods of gathering data were utilised to compare and contrast changing ideas and opinions of the students, which I will discuss in the findings, but not with the aim of statistically or factually stating a quantitative finite result.

While acknowledging as a researcher in the social science setting of a classroom based environment, the inability to behave as an object automaton while conducting this educational research, alternative systematic and comprehensive methods were established in order to extract and gather data. I conducted much of the research availing of an empirical approach. I encouraged the students to become critical in their thinking and establish themselves as reflective practitioners.

The next section will discuss the methods of research utilised and further elaborate on the rationale for implementing qualitative approaches as a key method of gathering data during the process of this action research project.

Methods of Research

Action Research is considered a spiral of activity [Berg 2004]. Throughout this research project my identity as an A/R/Tographer facilitated and guided the students through the research process. In conducting action research it is suggested that there is a four step process which becomes an endless cycle for the inquiring A/R/Tographer [Sagor 2000];

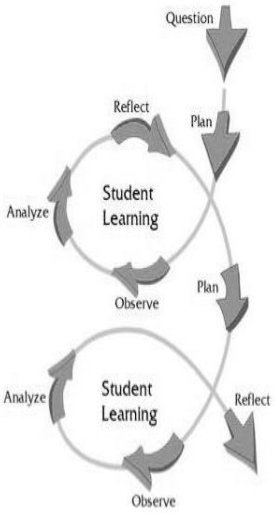


Fig. 3.1

1. Clarifying Vision
2. Articulating Theories
3. Implementing Action and Collecting Data
4. Reflecting and Planning Informed Action

Selecting a focus, clarifying theories, identifying research questions, collecting data, analysing data, reporting results and taking considered and informed actions are stages involved in partaking in action research, which are layered throughout the spiral.

To what extent can adopting contemporary art practices enrich student's appreciation, knowledge and skill in engaging in traditional ceramic practices?

In setting this *spiral* in motion I established a directed question to lead the research project. The question was conceived from my own artistic background and my interest and curiosity in deliberating how I might foster an appreciation of craft education while engaging with contemporary artistic practices.

With the overarching research question framing the design of the project, I moved on to identifying core questions to establish a starting point, middle and an end. I also wanted desirable intersections established in order to gather data for analysis and evaluation.

Ultimately action research will create its own voyage of discovery learning; however, in order to attempt to answer the question set out by the research topic, focused sub questions were established. These included;

- *To what extent can students achieve an understanding and appreciation for the skills of craft and ceramics through the making of a traditional ceramic bust?*

- *To what extent can I foster an appreciation of contemporary ceramic practice through teaching traditional ceramic craft skills in the classroom?*

- *To what extent can making and designing a tradition bust form encourage students to marry traditional methods of making with contemporary cultural influences?*

Three core strands of investigation became clear;
- Craft Education in Ireland
- A/R/Tographer – Identity in a classroom
- Reflective Practice – Critical thinking

These strands, or findings, influenced and focused the qualitative methodologies implemented to gather data. These methodologies complemented my desire to promote critical thinking and establish the students as reflective practitioners.

Methods implemented to gather data;

- Surveys
- Audio recordings / interviews
- Video recording
- Reflective Journals
- Blog [blogger.com]

Surveys were issued on four separate occasions. The same survey was issued twice in order to compare and contrast student's engagement with the project over a particular period of time and two further surveys were issued after the completion of the ceramic bust forms in order to deduct their opinions after the fact, once removed from any further making. Anonymity was a key safe guard to protect the 2nd year group in undertaking this scheme. The anonymity of the surveys also enabled students to answer more honestly and critically.

Where I identified the purpose of the surveys, as stated above, I issued open ended questions and therefore a broad range of responses and thus data was gathered. The advantage to this enabled a more comprehensive insight into the students thinking. However, with an over-arching research question in mind, some of the responses were lost in translation between the desired outcome of the survey and the students comprehension of what was been asked [Johnson 2005].

Students were accommodated with **Reflective Journals** and with workshops on setting up **Blogs**. The blogs and journals were established as ongoing methods of real time critical and reflective sources of data collection – without the boundaries of a set series of questions [Walker 2006].

Reporting and reflecting on activities under taken was an essential aid for not only gathering data but also for reshaping and developing the lesson plans throughout the research project.

One of the key methods of data gathering implemented to capture real time reactions to the activities in class was **Video** and **Audio Recordings**. Group discussions were established and students were asked targeted questions. Students' knowledge gained and comprehension of the skills taught at sporadic intervals were available instantly through these visual and oral means of formative assessment [McCarthy 2015].

Action research is a complementary blend of practical and theoretical concerns, in that it is both action and research.

In participating in action research, methodologically eclectic approaches were realised and a variety of methods were implemented in order to gather data. The benefit of Action research is that it remains open-minded about what counts as data [Cohen 2011].

Ethical Considerations

Ethical Approval Form

[Appendix 8]

Parent Consent Forms

Student Consent Forms

[Appendix 7]

Limerick School of Art and Design, as a school body under the Limerick Institute of Technology, outlined the granting of ethical approval an essential prerequisite to conducting a research project of this nature. Ethical Approval from the LIT Standing Committee on Research Ethics for the purposes of collecting data from human research participants was required. Following their approval, further permission was granted from the school Principal and Placement Schools' Art and Design teacher.

Students were issued consent forms to sign if they wished to be involved in the undertaking of this research project. Students were made aware that contributions were for the purposes of the research alone and that refusal to consent would have no adverse consequences [appendix 7]. All students opted in as participants to the research study under the safe guard of anonymity as outlined in the consent forms.

Where I viewed it as imperative not to influence the student's decisions based on my personal and professional values [Martin 1976] to the detriment of their development as an artist, it is equally imperative to keep true to the values and beliefs which set out the context of the project in order to ethically and honestly participate as the facilitator for this research project. An ethical outcome could only be achieved by aiming to identify the beliefs, values and set of assumptions I sub consciously and or consciously embedded in the research environment and monitoring and assessing their involvement.

Fig. 3.2

KEY FINDINGS

Research Design

Research Findings

This section discusses the three core findings from the research study. As previously discussed, the sub research questions that framed the study included the following;

- *To what extent can students achieve an understanding and appreciation for the skills of craft and ceramics through the making of a traditional ceramic bust?*
- *To what extent can I foster an appreciation of contemporary ceramic practice through teaching traditional ceramic craft skills in the classroom?*

- *To what extent can making and designing a tradition bust form encourage students to marry traditional methods of making with contemporary cultural influences?*

''...ceramics is one of the few areas where students have the opportunity to explore three-dimensional space and form, in a kinesthetic manner.''

[Hannan 2014 p. 108]

Ultimately three key areas of analysis emerged. The first was *Craft Education*, secondly *A/R/Tography* - focusing on modelling an artist's process and practices in the art room and reviewing its effect and thirdly *Reflective Practice* – viewing the degree to which implementing methods of documentation and reflection could enable and encourage students to critically evaluate and assess ongoing work.

CRAFT EDUCATION IN IRELAND

Craft components can be identified in the syllabi of five Junior Certificate subjects [Crafts Council of Ireland].

Fig. 6.1

Craft practices are intrinsically linked to the richness of Irish culture and are imbedded in the roots of our identity. As previously discussed the worth of art, craft and design within the Irish educational frame work extends far beyond the adeptness of the subject in and of itself.

Fig. 6.2

The findings from this perspective were entirely sympathetic to the cause for craft education. This was revealed through various reflective sessions, interviews and surveys undertaken.

Fig. 6.3

In my first lesson with this group I issued a survey to gage student's comprehension of traditional craft components. The following survey was conducted with 16 students who were present on that given day.

When asked;

'' 3. Can you name a traditional craft? ''

[Appendix 1.1]

Eleven students noted St Bridget's crosses as a traditional craft and both sewing and basket weaving were mentioned nine times. Pottery was stated three times. Knitting and whittling were noted twice and felt, embroidery, woodwork were all mentioned once.

Question

Had you ever seen other students working with clay?

Answer

[group] ''Yes''

[one student points and elaborates] ''...like those things are always around the class room''

[Appendix 4.1]

Question

''Did those things interest you, did you think about how they were made?''

Answer

[One student] ''I was always interested in how they made them''

[Appendix 4.2]

The art teacher was conducting a paper basket weaving scheme with a first year group and notes and visual evidence of this work were displayed around the room. Students from this research group had not completed that scheme previously but were offered the opportunity to visually reflect on the work undertaken by their peers.

I documented in my own reflective diary how susceptible students were to developing an interest of a craft activity though visual and physical references.

Upon reflection I considered how engaging with craft practices in a classroom will not only influence students undertaking the project but also those who avail of the opportunity to observe the work on display. This informed planning on issues such as how I was going to store the students clay busts as they developed in order to empower them as visual curiosities for other year groups, while keeping them safe.

Fig. 6.4

Fig. 6.5

In the same survey students were asked;

> *'' 2. Are all ceramic items functional? If yes/no please give an example;''*

[Appendix 1.1]

''No because some ceramic items are sculptures and may not be functional but only there to be nice on the eye''

[1.1 - Student A]

Out of 16 students surveyed, 11 students said 'no' all ceramic objects were not functional, 3 declared that 'yes' all ceramic objects are functional and 2 students were unsure and made an argument for both. Art is referred to as having a cognitive value through its conceptual domain. One could argue that the aesthetical characteristic of a piece of art is its function and offers a similar cognitive value [Schellekens 2005].

''You can use all ceramic items to look at to please the eye but not all can be actually used. Tea cup is used to drink from but a bust has no use.''

[1.1 - Student B]

A number of the students, for example 'Student A' and 'Student B', referred to the aesthetical value as a use. I had discussed with students prior to issuing the survey, the nature of the word function in this instance, citing a cup or jug or vase as examples. This was a perfect example of the lost in translation concept I alluded earlier when discussing the disadvantages of surveys in the previous section.

When asked the same question half way through the course and upon giving the same definition of the word function in this instance, 7 students said 'no' because;

> *''Some are ornamental like vases or busts''*

However the majority of the students had developed opinions and thinking skills through their reflective documentation and issued considered responses such as 'Student C'.

''Yes. Busts are used by historians to get information from the past.''

[1.1 - Student C]

''Even though scoring and slipping takes up more time I think it is better for it to be a strong base rather than cracked and loose''

[3.1 - Student D]

The stages involved and the time and methodical attention required to develop a traditional hand built ceramic bust required a sustained and motivated level of enthusiasm. The research group over all were very motivated and self-driven. At times interest levels wavered.

27th November

''I have started wondering about reverted back to my earlier suggestion that students make one [bust] in groups – thereby completing four class busts for example... I would have loved the students to create bust each – as I stated I am just concerned about the time.''

[Appendix 5.1]

Timing became a source of concern. In order for the students to develop an appreciation for craft education, I was determined to offer the time required to teach the skills I deemed necessary to gain a rounded and holistic comprehension of hand building in clay.

The illusion of a ten week project was eroded by the nature of single periods and absenteeism. As documented in my reflective journal on the 27th November, I began to consider diluting the ambition of the project in order to be comfortably complete a small number of busts. Upon evaluating the timing of the lessons and other options available to extend the making contact time with the students, I decided to take the risk and re-ignite the bust project as it was conceived.

Question:

How long did ye spend making coils?

Answer:

''A week? It felt very long... It's kinda hard though when there is only half an hour classes... so it's better when we do it at lunch and then that leads into our half an hour class then.''

[Appendix 4.3]

Students noted at numerous stages, how much *time* things were taking to develop and progress. 'Student D' documented in her reflective journal that she could see the value of the techniques been undertaken but was frustrated by how time consuming it was.

''Our crafts are apart of our culture and it would be a sad day when technology takes over. Everyone should be taught craft to continue our traditions''

[1.3 - Student A]

Student's engagement with craft education was supported throughout the development of this body of work. The evidence of this is visible in the quality of work achieved by the students and in their hand rendered reflective journals, and digitally documented blogs. Their sustained level of interest was evident from them utilising their lunch time to work on their busts.

Fig. 6.6

Fig. 6.7

Fig. 6.8

Fig. 6.9, 6.10

STUDENT AS REFLECTIVE PRACTICITONER

15th January;

''Students will be reminded...

Reflective Journal;

- Use your reflective journal to discuss and discriminate between aspects of the course you enjoy or perhaps elements you would like to try different.

- Question jobs and activities undertaken! Think of alternatives! Share your opinions!

- Compare and contrast

- Don't forget to illustrate ideas and workshops undertaken''

[Appendix 9]

Given the very nature of an art and design classroom environment, in its social setting, I conducted much of the research availing of an Empirical approach. I encouraged the students to become critical and reflective in their thinking and through their methods of empirical research they kept a reflective diary. These diaries have become a key source of data for my analysis – gaging the changing levels of appreciation for their work. The reflective journals established themselves as a time line and problem solving mechanism.

To enable the students to buy into the premise that they too were researchers, I set the task that they must keep a hand rendered reflective journal and a digital blog. Students were directed that two running courses of thinking [and thus learning] were to be documented, their processes and reflections. They were guided to document the process and practice and to critically reflect on both. The journals captured the changing levels of appreciation and sustained interest for their individual pieces throughout the course of the project.

Considering reflective practice as a way of studying and evaluating one's self [Cohen et al. 2011], students were guided to not simply reflect on an experience as a lesson learnt, but directed to deliberate and reflect on that experience for further analysis and learning.

4th December;

''Previously I held back to consider 'how might I best offer advice to this student? This created a time lapse between the student's action and my re-action or advice.

I have subjectively observed pupils actions to date. I have written empirical observations but going forward I need to observe, act, evaluate and assess the students work in real time in order to avoid this time lapse between creation and evaluation. I will need to enforce a more critical approach in my teaching.''

[Appendix 5.2]

While I encouraged students to embrace and engage with their journals in a deep and meaningful way, at the beginning I was slow to embrace critical reflection and found myself prescriptively documenting activities undertaken. In Week 5 while struggling to break down my prescriptive wall, I began questioning my approach to evaluation and deliberated about changing my position in favour of evaluating in real time thereby altering my process of assessment and constructive criticism. It was around this time that I began to engage in my reflective journal by exploring my identity as a reflect practitioner.

The students reflective journals were established as a place to reflect discuss and consider alternative approaches. They too began in a prescribed approach- documenting step by step the activities undertaken. Upon reviewing my own reflections and lesson plans, I questioned and noted my pre-conceived assumption [Brookfield 1995] of prior knowledge in relation to how students would interact with this form of documentation. In utilising a post-it note method of feed-back, and engaging in my previously discussed new approach to evaluation, students became more self-aware of problems occurring and thus utilised their journal in becoming reflective practitioners and engaging in research methodologies from a data analysis viewpoint. They were encouraged to be honest and critical and reminded to constantly compare and contrast their opinions.

''If you could have chosen to do only the digital blog [with the availability of blogger in the room] or only the hand rendered reflective journal, which would you have preferred and why??''

[1.3 - Question 2]

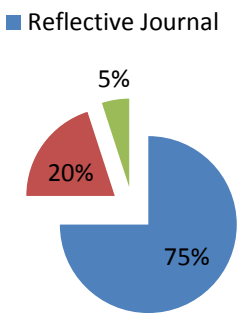


Fig. 7.1

Blog 20 %

I Don't Mind 5 %

Reflective Journal 75 %

Blog

''Blogger, because you can research easily and add photos for inspiration.''

[2.1 - N.B 2016]

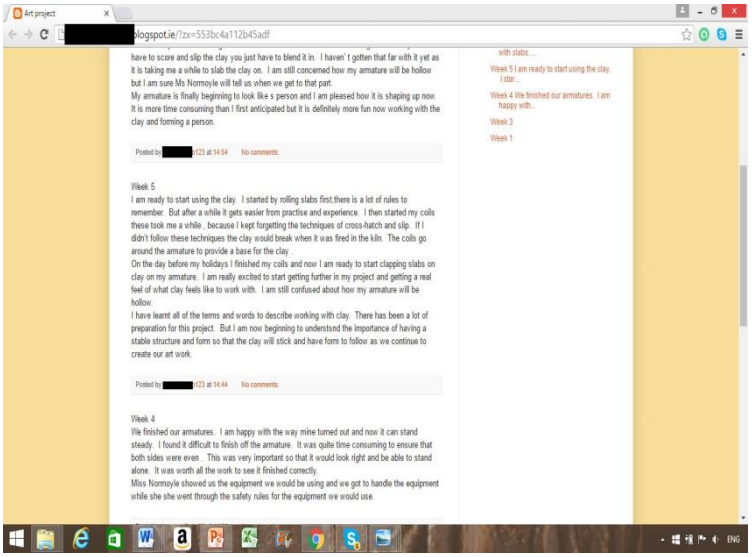


Fig. 7.2

Technical issues arose when trying to set up blogs which will be further discussed in the evaluation of project outcomes. These issues or barriers made it more difficult for students to engage with the blogs to the same degree by which they interacted with their hand rendered journals. Therefore a preference was established for the majority of the cohort towards the hand rendered reflective journals.

''[The Journal] I feel it makes me think more about what I want to say''

[1.3 - Student E]

Fig. 7.3

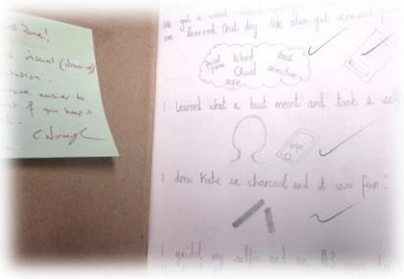


Fig. 7.4

''Looking back on this diary today I've realised that I've learned so much. I've loved doing the word clouds and timeline and diary!''

[3.2 – Student F]

There is clear evidence across the cohort of students of how their engagement with reflective practice evolved and aided in their development as an artist and researcher throughout the project. In a number of cases the students have documented their opinions of reflective practice, and suggested a keen interest in a reflective approach to project work going forward.

ARTIST/ RESEARCHER/ TEACHER

Fig. 8.1

''Artists-researchers-teachers inhabit and explore the borderlands between art, science, and education, integrating knowing, doing, making through aesthetic experiences...''

[Alexenberg 2008 p. 20]

The role of a teacher/ researcher is to investigate pedagogical problems through inquiry [Kincheloe 1991]. In this case the research question set the focus for the investigation.

My identity as an A/R/Tographer became a curious point of study due to its intrinsic composition in an art and design classroom. As a ceramic artist I aimed to promote a holistic experience of hand building techniques. As a teacher I was aware of the constraints and barriers to implementing this aim in the designated art and design classroom – class schedules and equipment void of a kiln for example, and as a researcher I aimed to establish solutions to these problems in order to foster an appreciation for craft education.

Modelling ways of thinking, working, making and researching in the classroom was really more of a personal journey for me. As discussed in the introduction, a question I set for consideration parallel to the research topic was, wherein focused data must be gathered in the parallel roles of teacher and researcher, should they be considered separate identities?

''We had to do consent forms and have our parents sign them too (they are so Ms. Normoyle can document what we do)''

[3.3 – Student G]

Students were introduced to the project by receiving consent forms to sign if they wished to be contributors to the data. This was done with the focus of ethical consideration to researching human participants as required by Limerick Institute of Technology, but it carried a second function. It enabled students to gain a second identity. I pitched the project as a collaborative exercise in developing a new and exciting curriculum. Students adopted a researcher identity and that enabled a more invested attitude when undertaking this project.

While acknowledging my personal and professional belief that I will be a life-long learner in continuing to develop and evolve my teaching philosophies, one teaching philosophy that I embed in every body of work is a focused discrimination towards a conveyor belt concept [Gold et al. 2013]. By prompting and supporting students inquisitive/researcher identity, I encouraged students to question, discuss and consider alternative approaches to activities conducted in class.

''... we are encouraged to personally reflect about the day's events, in art terms, naturally. The paper is really nice and I often draw doodles to show what I mean''.

[2.1- N.B 2016]

Student's journals and blogs were assessed on a weekly basis. As referred to in the previous section I had assumed a prior knowledge to their interaction with this form of documentation. Students want to get the right answer and so they originally engaged in a prescriptive form of documentation instead of engaging in documenting personally considered opinions. Upon assessing their reflections [utilising both a hand written post-it note method and one to one tutorials] I promoted and encouraged students to personally reflect [appendix 2.1].

''Finally started clay. I'm on clay duty, going to be fun''

[3.4 - Student H]

16th December;

''If I had the time back I would make the bust in a time sensitive condition. Start the work, time myself, clean up and place away the pieces – in the time constraints of a 30/ 40 minute class time frame. Really flesh out how much making time is actually available.''

[Appendix 5.3]

In engaging with my artist identity, I established a studio space for the students to prepare the coils and slabs. Students were assigned tasks to set up the demonstration table and it became an efficient practice.

In hindsight coil building the base established a labour intensive beginning to the students handling of clay. In my reflective journal on the 16th of December I began noticing the length of time prepping and cleaning was taking away from actual making time. I had also commented on stock piling going forward. I realised once they had gained the knowledge of how to complete the task, valuable time could be saved by my stock piling slabs prior to the class. This enabled more productive use of time for the students.

20th November;

''I have introduced lessons so far through verbal direction. This was successful for the portraits. I never changed that process which was a mistake... I should have had visual examples or clearer images as a teaching aid for instructing the creation of the busts.''

[Appendix 5.4]

4th December;

''Previously I held back to consider 'how might I best offer advice to this student?' This created a time lapse between the student's action and my re-action or advise. I have subjectively observed pupil's actions to date. I have written empirical observations but going forward I need to observe, act, evaluate and assess the students work in real time... I need to inforce a more critical approach in my teaching.''

[Appendix 5.5]

7th December;

''I personally will no longer accept my insecurities and lacking in confidence to 'make art'... I will begin really delving into my own practice to try and find what excited me before. In terms of the T [A/R/T] I must begin educating myself more on techniques complementary to these schemes in order to deliver a more fruitful and effective set of lesson plans.''

[Appendix 5.6]

This was one of the pivotal points of my realisation of the importance of an A/R/Tograher, contrary to viewing the artist, researcher and teacher as separate identities.

As discussed previously;

''...Neither is without the other''

[Thornton 2013 p. 44]

I began this voyage a little sceptic of this statement. I felt who I am as artist couldn't be modelled or merged with my developing identity as a teacher. I found that where one could exist without the other, they are enriched, empowered and improved by merging and co-operating. This was a key moment of realisation for my personal and professionalism development.

Participating in an honest and critical approach to reflective practice has further justified this finding. By merging my approach to making as an artist, with my planning as a teacher, considering a key pillar of active research [open to experiences encountered and acting in real time] I documented ill-fated planning and problem solved for commencing lessons [Appendix 5.4].

I became acutely aware of the students mirroring my actions. My insecurities as an artist lead to me holding back on critically assessing students work [Appendix 5.2]. Through engagement with my research and reflective practice I noticed by circumventing critical evaluations, I was essentially postponing what I trying to avoid [Appendix 5.5].

Fig. 8.2

EVALUATION OF PROJECT OUTCOMES

Since early 1960 The Human Capital Theory remains the most influential economic theory of Western education [Kwon 2009]. This theory essentially considers that an investment in education will ultimately lead to people being less costly to the state. However by viewing education as a conveyor belt concept; enter, learn, achieve academic results, leave, and become contributors to the economy, are we are over-looking the culture and values that are imbedded and intrinsically linked to our identity? Curriculum reflects what 'we' value as a nation and what 'we' desire for our young people. Viewing curriculum as *content, pedagogy and assessment,* it is designed to convey knowledge which is considered to be important [Gillies]. But who represents the 'we'? Whose values are selected for curriculum in Ireland, and in the same context, what options are left out?

> *''Much of what a government does is shaped by the individuals who happen to occupy critical positions''*
>
> [Connelly et al. p. 12]

Short courses offer the subject options denied or not covered by the combination of curricular subjects available in the school [DES 2015]. This research project was conducted through the implementation of a pilot short course in line with the 2015 Framework for Junior Cycle [DES 2015]. According to this Framework [DES 2015] the main purpose of a short course is to allow schools greater flexibility in the delivery of their Junior Cycle programme and thus to broaden the learning experiences for students [DES 2015].

The Framework for Junior Cycle 2015 [DES 2015] outlines the newly devised assessment and curriculum arrangements that will provide students with learning opportunities, fundamentally aiming to achieve a balance between learning subject knowledge and developing a wide range of skills and thinking abilities.

> *''Students will be enabled to use and analyse information in new and creative ways, to investigate issues, to explore, to think for themselves, to be creative in solving problems and to apply their learning to new challenges and situations''*
>
> [DES 2015 p. 7]

As educators we implement curricula based on the required assessment guidelines issued by the state. While enabling students with the knowledge required to successfully undertake these examinations, we need to ensure that we are enabling students with the skills to think, critically reflect and learn for themselves.

Stemming from the initial consultation on a Background Paper in 2015 [NCCA 2015], a draft specification for Junior Cycle Visual Art has been developed [NCCA 2016].

In view of the research question;

> *''To what extent can adopting contemporary art practices enrich student's appreciation, knowledge and skill in engaging in traditional ceramic practices?''*

The following three sub headings will look at the evaluation of outcomes in respect to the three findings as discussed in the previous section. In conjunction with a brief overview of the limitations, difficulties and lessons learned, the ability to foster an appreciation and promote craft education under the Draft Specification for Junior Cycle Visual Art (Proposed new title for Art, Craft, Design) will also be reviewed [NCCA 2016].

CRAFT EDUCATION

Viewing craft as a potential for growth in the economic sector, and not solely for the appreciation for craft in and of its self, Mary Coughlan, Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade & Employment, sees the value in its inclusion in the curriculum.

> *" Given the potential for growth in the crafts sector as identified by the Crafts Council of Ireland and its links to other creative sectors in the economy, ongoing innovation and improvement in craft education and training will be important for our future. "*
>
> [Crafts Council of Ireland 2009]

Under the proposed specifications 'Craft' or 'Strand 2' is defined as the application of a range of skills and knowledge to create pieces of 'aesthetic worth and/or usefulness' [NCCA 2016]. The framework advises that pieces may represent traditional crafts or a more individual approach by the craftsperson. Embracing the new contemporary title for Art, Craft and Design, *Visual Arts*, the issue again arises to the context of the student's identity as an artist. The suggested division between an artist, craftsperson and designer is highlighted by the inclusion of the term *craftsperson* in lieu of *visual artist*. Traditional methods of making, deep rooted in craftsmanship, can be successfully married with contemporary design and fine art. Where a student may choose to identify with one or the other, these identities can be merged. By stating, craftsperson in this instance, they are retracting the improved 'Visual Art' theme of inclusivity.

Through discussion and engagement with reflective practice students embraced a broader interpretation of the term *usefulness* in relation to ceramic art. Students began to view their busts as art pieces and not functional or necessarily aesthetically pleasing pieces of craft. Students alluded to the notion that the desired aesthetics could solely represent the function.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE – CRITICAL THINKING
ESTABLISHING THE STUDENT AS A REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER

The Irish education system has been likened to a conveyor belt, embodying a regurgitation approach to listening, learning and for the purposes of assessment, recalling information [Stewart A. 2011]. Reflective practice enables the students the opportunity to delve into the selected stockpile of information taught, absent of the Null curriculum [Flinders D. J et al. 1986], and encourage them to become more interactive with their higher cognitive domain by shedding what they have learned in favour of a critically considered level of education.

The current education system and curriculum is under pressure to perform. Parents want more information on the academic performance of schools as "information is power, and parents want this power" [Bourke C. 2007] and therefore, from a performance view point, the curriculum implemented by the school body does not offer the students the time and opportunity to form critical view points and opinions of what to *shed*. The current Junior Certificate favours capturing and assessing the student's memory and mindless repetition of information taught, and ill-fatedly over-looks challenging the students higher order of thinking;

> *''It only measures a small segment of an individual's intellectual ability and completely ignores many human competencies that are crucial for personal success.''*
>
> [Rowe P. 2013]

Thereby failing to encourage students to hypnotise and form opinions, assessing all students with the same brush so to speak – ignoring the qualitative assessment of a range of skills which would accurately paint a picture of their capabilities and knowledge.

A core belief in my teaching and research methodologies, and a theme underpinning the Junior Certificate reform [DES 2015], encapsulates my wish to enable the student to think beyond the information given and pass personal opinions and alternative solutions to techniques and methods taught in class.

I set out to differentiate and cater for the students of this study to do just so, in order to broaden and enrich their learning experience. Ultimately to instil a desire to learn, beyond the conveyor belt mechanism of completing a selected scheme. The main purpose to establish the students as reflective practitioners was to foster an appreciation for reflective practice and to encourage and promote an inquisitive nature and a curious mind.

In engaging with this form of self-evaluation, students gained a deeper understanding and engaged with problem solving alternative solutions. For this research project I established a reflective practice working habit in the classroom, for both students and I, which was supported through enabling documentation outlets for the students. Two core activities were initiated in order to facilitate the students with engaging in reflective practice.

With the availability of i-pads ***Blogs*** presented themselves as an obvious method of reflective documentation. All students successfully set up blogs. Wifi was available throughout the school. Understandably it was severely filtered to sites deemed unsafe, which unfortunately included the *Blogger* domain. This essentially meant that I could demonstrate how to setup a blog, using the interactive white board, but during class I could not access any of the content of the blogs. Students added me as an author which enabled me to view their blogs from an alternative location. I was able to screen grab the pages and present them as stills. This embodied a solution to the problem.

A hand rendered ***Reflective Journal*** was the second core activity undertaken by the students. These journals enabled the students to marry creative processes of description. As stated by one particular student

> *'' It's basically a notebook in which we are encouraged to personally reflect about the day's events, in art terms, naturally. The paper is really nice and I often draw doodles to show what I mean.''*
>
> [Appendix 2. N.B Blog]

Through evaluating and assessing their interactions with their reflective journals, evidence to the growth of their confidence in partaking as a reflective practitioner became clear. I left the approach, in regards to how they should consider engaging with their journals, too vague at the beginning. As I grew confidence in critical reflection, so too did my ability to promote and encourage this form of reflection.

Blogs became an area of considered and prescriptive documentation. Although blogs were blocked to outside views, students interacted with them considering a more formalised approach. In contrary students engaged with their hand rendered journals with a freer and more open and honest approach [1.3 – Student H]. Perhaps with the availability of blogger in the classroom, students may have developed a more trusting approach to documenting digitally; however, when surveyed with this concern in mind, 75% of the students stated that they preferred the reflective journal.

A/ R /T / OGRPHY

''If we teach what and love, it is almost impossible for us to understand students who find our subject boring or intimidating.''

[Brookfield 1995 p. 50]

A voyage of discovery as to my identity as an A/R/Tographer, became a key source of investigation throughout this research project. I was sceptic of their honest collaboration. As an artist my scepticism stemmed from my interest in process over product. I could not envision the manner by which I make (experimenting and generally never having a full proof plan of an end product) successful been implemented through my teaching strategies. I didn't consider that as a Teacher I could embed my process curious nature as a strategy of learning into the development of a scheme, albeit with a clear end product/ concept in mind. Students need structure, but, in only considering the structure as a painting by numbers concept, they will never gain the ability to engage in student led learning or discovery. Establishing the students with duel identities, researcher and learner, they too embraced the project with a more invested attitude.

The Artist feeds the creativity of the Teacher, who ignites the curiosity of the Researcher. Embracing a/r/tography inspired my teaching methodologies and strategies that in turn influenced my curiosity of educational philosophies and pedagogies [Irwin 2004].

Throughout the development of this research project I noticed that modelling the class room environment as a studio and engaging students as an artist embedded a deeper connection to the physical work.

CONCLUSION

The conceptual framework for this research project was to examine to what extent I could enrich a student's appreciation, knowledge and skill for traditional ceramic art practices. The focus was to establish the students as confident practitioners of reflection, critical analysis and ceramic art. Reflecting on Jean-Jacques Rousseau ideals of considering the 'man with knowledge' as a tutor of guidance and less of a teacher of instruction, I was drawn towards the following statement;

> *''The move to a more student-centred view of learning has required a fundamental shift in the role of the teacher. No longer is the teacher seen predominantly as a dispenser of information or walking tape recorder, but rather as a facilitator or manager of the students' learning. The more responsibility and freedom given to the student, the greater the shift required in the teachers' role''*
>
> [Harden and Crosby 2000 p. 10]

One of the five immutable principles described by Minister O'Sullivan which must underpin any reform of the Junior Cycle [DES 2015] states;

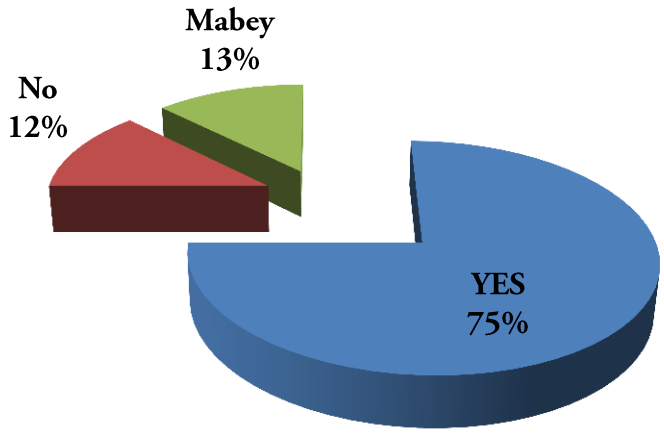
> *''A requirement to considerably reduce the focus on one terminal examination as a means of assessing our students''*
>
> [DES 2015]

With the aim of fostering an appreciation for craft education for the Junior Cycle, I re-ignited my own interest levels for this form of making. Engaging in A/R/Tography aided in facilitating the students as participators. Identity became a recurring theme of curiosity and consideration - my identity in the art room and the identities of the students.

With guidance and evaluation, students eventually embraced their identity as researcher and investigator. This was facilitated through reflective practice. Through analysis of their documentation in their reflective journals and blogs, it became evident that students engaged in critical analysis of the work been conducted and explored and questioned the process of design. Students embraced questioning and discussed alternative approaches. This established a higher order of thinking and promoted literacy, critical thinking and problem solving strategies.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Craft education, specifically in relation to traditional methods of hand building a 3D ceramic form was successfully experienced by all students in this 2nd year research group.



[1.2 – Question 6]

Fig. 10.1

75% of the cohort surveyed stated that they would feel confident in using clay for their Junior Certificate project. Limitations of this ten week action research project included the prevention of comparative quantitative findings. Further studies could be established over an entire Junior Cycle, focusing on the engagement of a particular year group from 1st year until they complete their Junior Certificate. It would be also recommended to conduct this study in a range of different school types with varying differentiating characteristics in order compare and contrast possible influencing factors – considering the values and beliefs of the schools in promoting this form of learning.

LIMITATIONS AND RESTRICTIONS

''Considering today's fast pace culture and society, the methodical time and concentration required to document and develop, through creative digital means, a precious captured moment of a human form, will aid in enriching students understanding and appreciation for time – and time worthy exercises. To distinguish and discriminate between quality and quantity, mass production and one of designs.''

[Appendix 10 - Short Course Rational]

This time worthy exercise was both revealing and limiting in the reality of a contemporary art and design classroom. Students utilised their lunch time period once a week, and twice for the remaining two weeks, in order to complete their bust. The additional time optionally utilised by the students revealed their determination and appreciation for their ceramic form.

The limitation to accessing the blogs and interacting with them in real time created a barrier to a holistic learning engagement with blogging as a form of reflective documentation. Difficulties developed throughout the creation of the ceramic 3 Dimensional forms, namely the contact time available and the ceramic resources which had to be sourced. Time remained the biggest complexity in regards to engaging to this degree with this form of craft education. Acknowledging that the short course was written with the pretext of 100 hours, with approximately a quarter of that available, lunch times were utilised with the co-operation of this research group. Other technical issues arose – resulting from the students lacking in prior knowledge in regards to the degree to which inappropriate handling and storing of their clay pieces would result in pieces drying out.

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APPENDIX
1. SURVEYS

1.1

Survey Project — 2nd Year Bust

Date: 3rd Nov

1. Can you name three ceramic items?

-

-

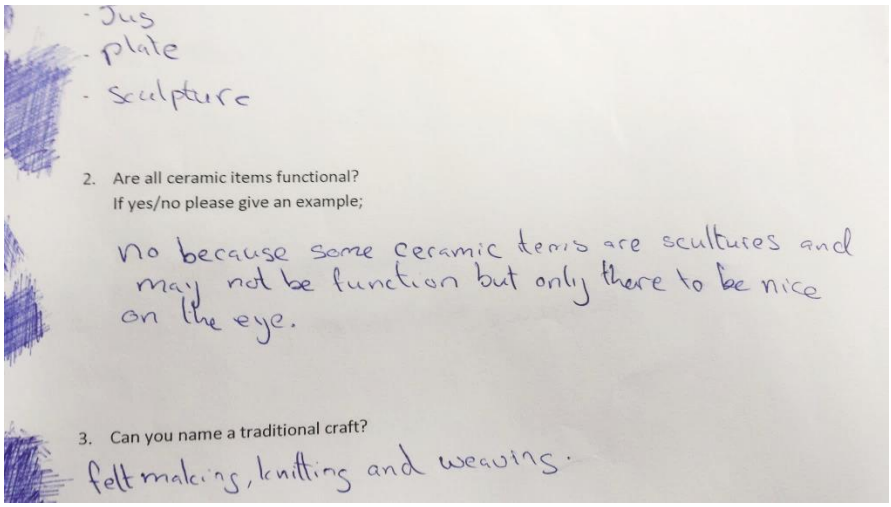
-

2. Are all ceramic items functional?
   If yes/no please give an example;

3. Can you name a traditional craft?

4. List any ceramic artists you are familiar with;

Student A.


- Jug
- plate
- sculpture

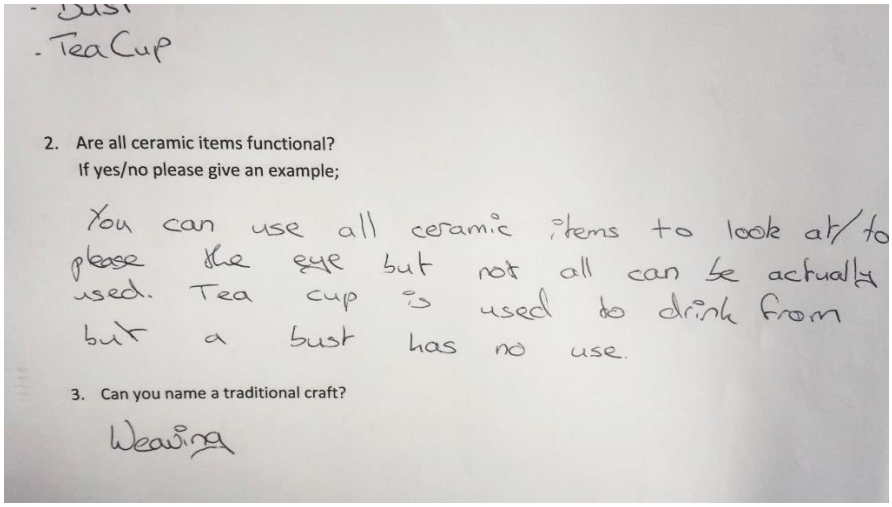
2. Are all ceramic items functional?
If yes/no please give an example;

no because some ceramic items are scultures and may not be function but only there to be nice on the eye.

3. Can you name a traditional craft?

felt making, knitting and weaving.

Student B.


- Bust
- Tea Cup

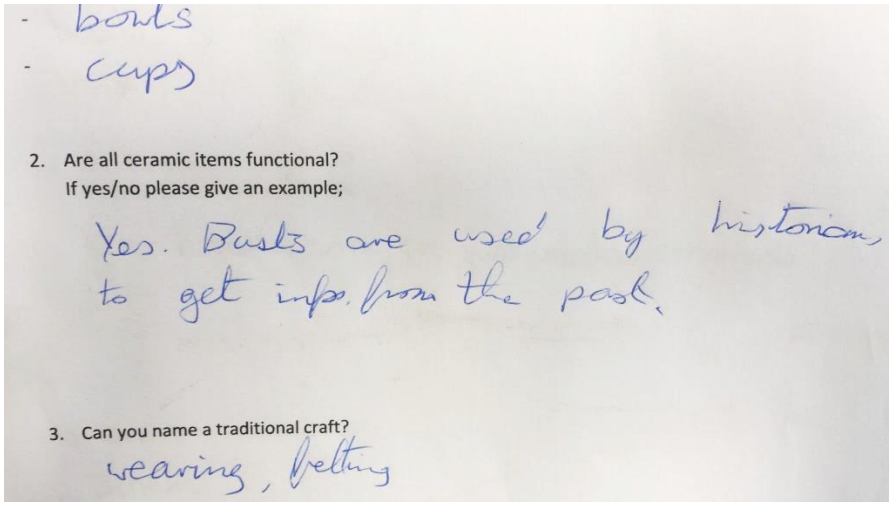
2. Are all ceramic items functional?
If yes/no please give an example;

You can use all ceramic items to look at/to please the eye but not all can be actually used. Tea cup is used to drink from but a bust has no use.

3. Can you name a traditional craft?

Weaving

Student C.


- bowls
- cups

2. Are all ceramic items functional?
If yes/no please give an example;

Yes. Busts are used by historians to get info. from the past.

3. Can you name a traditional craft?

weaving, felting

1.2

Title of the research project

''An inquiry that examines the degree to which learning traditional ceramic craft skills can support pupil engagement with craft education and appreciation of contemporary ceramic craft practices.''

Question one

What were your initial thoughts of what the project was going to be like?

Question two

Have you discussed this project with your friends/ family? How would you describe the work you have undertaken?

Question three

What were your;

- Favourite parts? Why?

- Least favourite? Why?

Question four

If you had the ten weeks back what would you like to do differently?

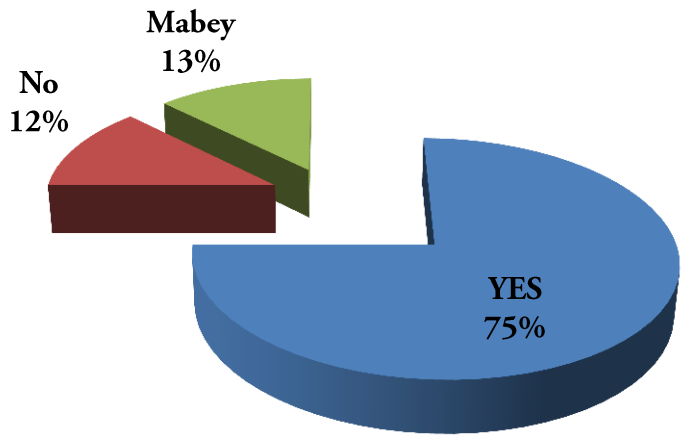
Question five

If you were teaching this project what would you do differently? What advice would you give me going forward in relation to running this course?

Question six

Would you feel confident in using clay the future in creating a piece of art – considering your Junior Certificate next year?

[1.2 Question 6]



I.3

Survey 2nd Year Research Project [10th February]

– Creating a ceramic Bust through traditional hand building techniques

1. Having completed your traditional hand built ceramic 3D form in clay, in your opinion should digital media retire the need for traditional craft techniques for the Junior Certificate? Does it have to be one or the other?

2. If you could have chosen to do only the digital blog [with the availability of blogger in the room] or only the hand rendered reflective journal, which would you have preferred and WHY??

3. Do you know the kind of artist you would like to be? For example, what methods of making art have you had the opportunity to explore? Do you get an opportunity to try a range?
   Consider what would you like to try?

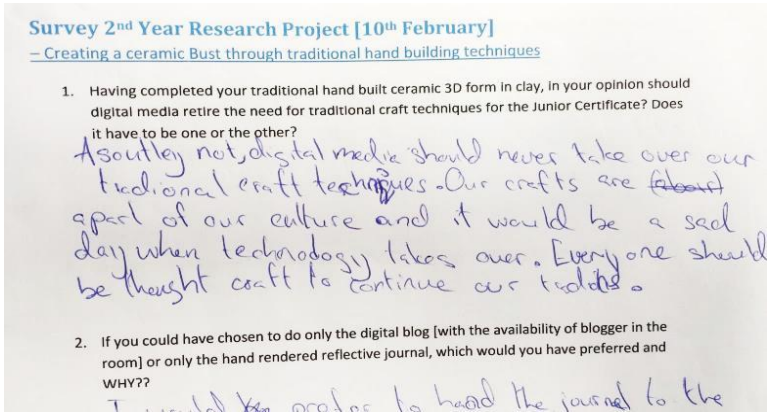
4. Are you going to continue taking art as a subject for the Leaving Certificate? If so/no.. why?

5. Do you think you should be introduced to history of art in the Junior certificate?

6. Do you think you are given the opportunity to evaluate and discuss art or are you told what it means? If so, through what means?

7. What type of art do you think you other art teacher did as her degree?

Student A.



Survey 2nd Year Research Project [10th February]
– Creating a ceramic Bust through traditional hand building techniques

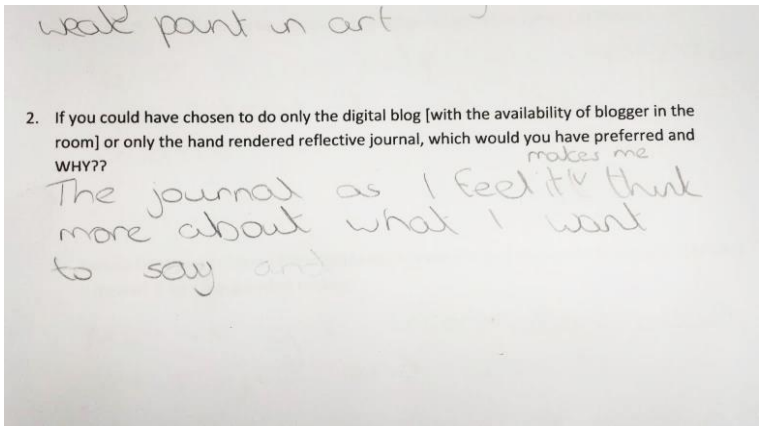
1. Having completed your traditional hand built ceramic 3D form in clay, in your opinion should digital media retire the need for traditional craft techniques for the Junior Certificate? Does it have to be one or the other?

Absolutley not, digital media should never take over our traditional craft techniques. Our crafts are ~~about~~ apart of our culture and it would be a sad day when technology takes over. Everyone should be thought craft to continue our traditions.

2. If you could have chosen to do only the digital blog [with the availability of blogger in the room] or only the hand rendered reflective journal, which would you have preferred and WHY??

I would like prefer to hand the journal to the

Student E.

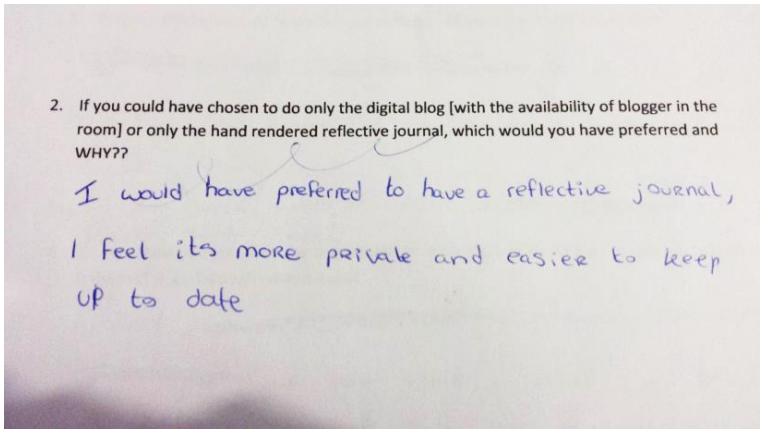


weak point in art

2. If you could have chosen to do only the digital blog [with the availability of blogger in the room] or only the hand rendered reflective journal, which would you have preferred and WHY??

The journal as I feel it makes me think more about what I want to say and

Student H.



2. If you could have chosen to do only the digital blog [with the availability of blogger in the room] or only the hand rendered reflective journal, which would you have preferred and WHY??

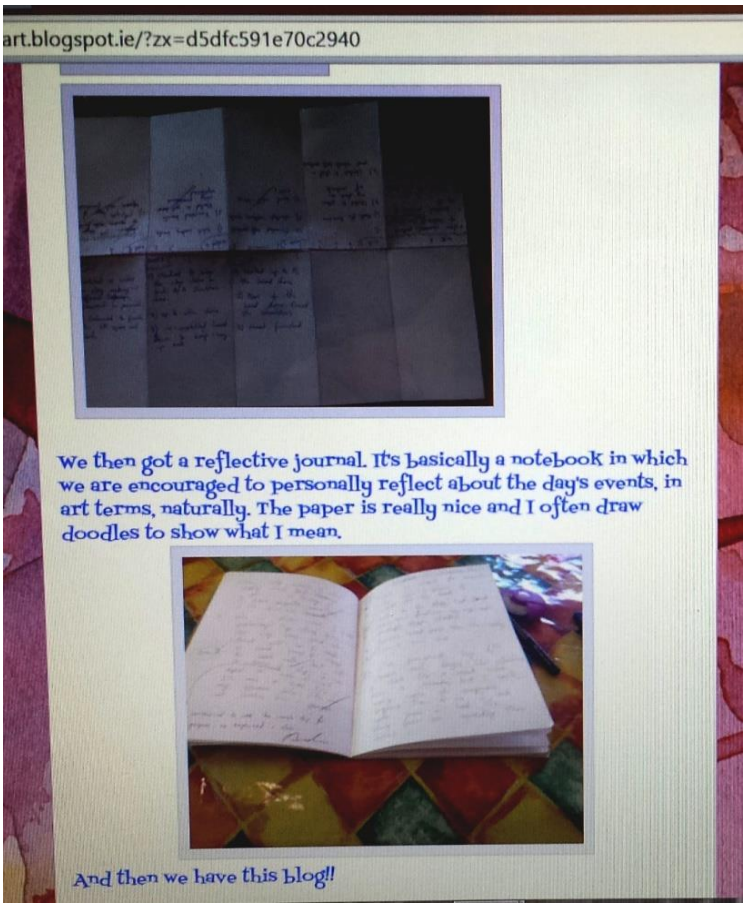
I would have preferred to have a reflective journal, I feel its more private and easier to keep up to date

APPENDIX

2. BLOGS

2.1

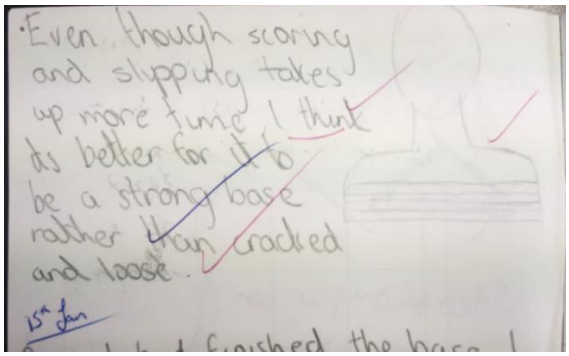
N. B 2016



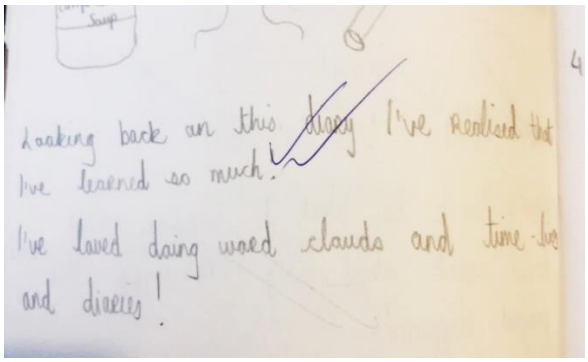
APPENDIX

3. STUDENT REFLECTIVE JOURNALS

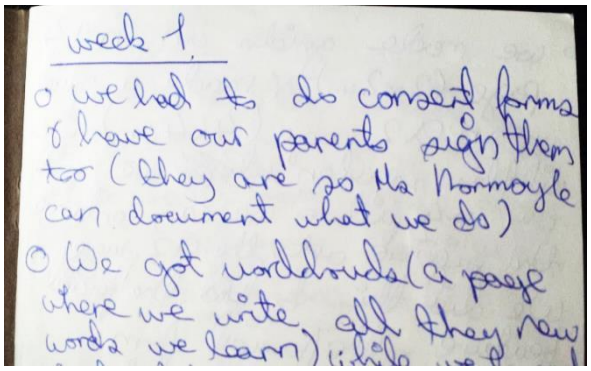
3.1 Student D - A.M



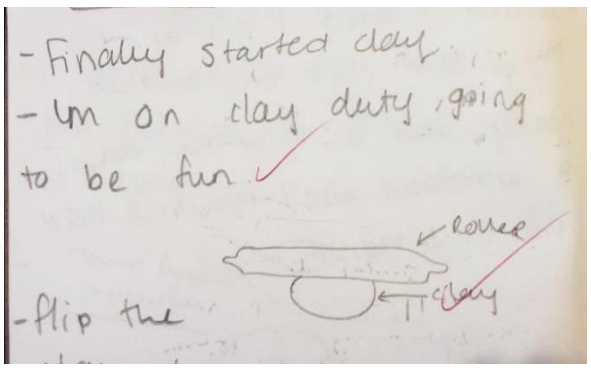
3.2 Student F – A.D



3.3 Student G – M.M



3.4 Student H –S.M



Appendix
4. Audio Recordings

Audio recording s of an informal *questions* and *answers* during a 30 minute class

4.1

Question: Had you ever seen other students working with clay?

Answer: [group] ''Yes''

[one student points and elaborates] ''...like those things are always around the class room''

4.2

Question: Did those things interest you? did you think about how they were made?

Answer: [One student] ''I was always interested in how they made them''

4.3

Question: How long did ye spend making coils?

Answer: A week? It felt very long... It's kinda hard though when there is only half an hour classes... so it's better when we do it at lunch and then that leads into our half an hour class then.

APPENDIX

5. TEACHER REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

5.4

2nd Year Research Group 20th November

SP visit

In today's class some of the busts began taking a funny direction – in relation to their form. I made my way around the room to each student - as discussed in my post class tutorial, I should have utilised time more efficiently thereby spotting similar issues arising so to take those pieces and enable the students to relate their busts to the given examples and evaluate the best actions going forward. Essentially to avoid repeating the same advice and direction to every student individually, this would also enable them to learn from one another.

Going forward, I have decided to create a presentation to discuss the level to which their pieces currently stand and how to improve on their standard. I have decided to display a stair diagram. I will explain that standing at the top of the stairs is the final model bust and discuss how students might climb closer to the top.

I have introduced lessons so far through verbal direction. This worked for the portraits. I never changed that process which was a mistake. In other words I should have had visual examples or [as discussed] clearer images as a teaching strategy/ aid instructing the creation of their busts.

I will assess the busts over the weekend and try and break them into standards – I will then make one from each standard in order to prompt students to see a comparison with theirs and discuss how to climb up a step close to completion.

5.1

2nd Year Research Group - 27th November

I have had this week off from school as the students have had their Christmas tests. I did however instruct 2nd years to drop their reflective journals into the art room by Wednesday and some students never did. So I will have to talk to them about this on Tuesday. ''It was not a suggested instruction, it was a requirement''.

I have also been mulling over my S.P appraisal this week. I am very disappointed with a C3. To be very clear – I very much appreciated the time given and information and advice delivered by Edel in my post class tutorial. Equally my S.P appraisal feedback is very comprehensive. Where my disappointments lie is I feel I have not demonstrated in my lesson file, the extent to which I do give feedback and advice ''going forward'' to students via post notes and conversations during double periods each week. I didn't want to 'put on a show' on Friday – I wanted to try and give the students the most fruitful class and best learning experience not hindered by my desire to ''show off''. However, I do agree that as I began my way around the room I noticed myself repeating similar instructions and so I most definitely should have stopped the lesson to evaluate in real time.

I have considered the question posed by Edel in my appraisal, but it has never been a surprise or secret that I lack confidence in making art. I do realise I need to get over this. And I most certainly am pushing myself in class to be more 'hands on' in actually drawing and demonstrating for the students. I have concerns about moving into clay – I feel comfortable in the making, it's the time that concerns me. I have started wondering about reverting back to my earlier suggestion that students make one in groups – thereby completing four class busts for example. And individual masks – capturing a 3d representation of their self-portrait. But I haven't totally figured this out yet. I would love and prefer the students to create a bust each – as I stated I am just a little concerned about the time. In reading the appraisal – strengths were observed. I can't see how I can improve in the required areas in the first class back – as the next S.P visit will be the first time I see the research since the 1st S.P visit. I actually had a conversation with the art teacher in telling her I was disappointed in myself with the result – that if she had known me as a student in Colaiste she would see the change in me as back then I would have skipped out the door with a c3 – having not given it much study so I was always happy to just pass. Over the years I have changed, I am determined and want to do well. I feel a little unmotivated this week as I know I have been putting a lot in, all of which equates to C3.

5.2, 5.5

4th December 2nd Year Research Group

After briefing the students on today's lesson all students were given 15 minutes to complete their busts. I used these 15 minutes to give the students back their reflective journals. I called them up one by one and gave them back suggesting a few notes but also directing them to the post-it notes which contained my advice on how they could utilise their journals going forward. I think although I am determined not to 'waste' any more time I needed to still give feedback one to one. It gives the students the respect they deserve for completing their individual tasks to the best of their abilities.

Although the heads were still not completed on some of the pieces, I began the ceramic workshop. I know what is required to complete some of the students busts can be done so in conjunction with developing their bust in clay.

I kneaded the clay and rolled out a slab. Students were directed to get into two lines and complete these activities. I also brought in my hand blender and students observed and some took part in blending the clay to make slip. I then cut a slab in half and scored it back together. These are going to be vital ingredients going forward with their busts. We discussed the difference between cutting and scoring the clay. Wetting and slipping.

I took my time with this workshop because again I believe these are the key steps required in creating their piece. Therefore I wanted this session not to be rushed. Students also agreed today about utilising lunch time- midweek- before their 30 minute class to work on their piece.

There is a wonderful attitude to work in this class. I most definitely am excited about getting stuck into clay.

In my previous appraisal notes were given on studying the anatomy of the human form. I will be bringing that into next week's sessions. I was content in students capturing the basic shape of the human bust. These forms can be manipulated and will be with the weight of the clay.

5.3

16TH DECEMBER 2ND YEAR RESEARCH PROJECT

ALMOST ALL STUDENTS ATTENDED LUNCH TIME CLASS. THOSE WHO COULDN'T MAKE IT HAD CHOIR AND TRAINING FOR BASKETBALL. PUSHING THOSE AHEAD SEEMS TO BE WORKING IN TERMS OF MOTIVATING THEIR PEERS TO FOLLOW. ALL STUDENTS HAVE MOVED ON FROM MAKING IN COILS. IN HINDSIGHT PERHAPS IT WAS NOT THE BEST DECISION TO BEGIN THE BASE OF THEIR BUST IN THAT PROCESS. I KNOW WHY I THOUGHT IT WAS THE RIGHT DECISION, BUT THE PROCESS IN AND OF ITS SELF WAS TOO TIME CONSUMING TO DATE. THEN AGAIN IF I HAD STOCK PILLED THE COILS AS DISCUSSED WITH EDEL, IT WOULD HAVE SAVED MORE TIME. I HAVE DEFINITELY LEARNED FROM STRUCTURING AND PLANNING THIS SCHEME. I MAKE FAST AND ALTER MY PROCESSES AS I GO. I THINK IF I HAD THE TIME BACK I WOULD RE-MAKE THE BUST IN A TIME SENSITIVE CONDITION. START THE WORK, TIME MYSELF, CLEAN UP AND PLACE AWAY THE PIECES AGAIN – IN THE TIME CONSTRAINTS OF A 30/ 40 MINUTE CLASS TIME FRAME. REALLY FLESH OUT OF MUCH MAKING TIME IS ACTUALLY AVAILABLE.

5.6

7th December TY4 Batik Project

I was made aware today [by the students] that I wouldn't have them Friday due to a Christmas Market. I am not sure if it is because I am their student teacher that I wasn't made aware of this but again moments like these mirror my earlier reflection of sometimes feeling like a teacher and other times a student. There is a link currently missing between me feeling like a teacher in the school versus a visitor. I suppose in some respects I am only there a short term and I have stretched out days that therefore don't require my presence in the school for long periods of time. In any case I am going to try and step out of my 'shy' comfort zone in this respect and begin developing that professional self / presence in the school.

At the beginning of last week, upon reflecting on Edel's feedback and more recently Maria's, I began working on 'real time' evaluations - changing my view of constructive criticism – considering and viewing it now more as a motivational strategy. I have related this to my own appraisals. Reading common issues been observed and reflecting on the points raised in general has, instead of making me defensive, actually made me question and admit that these are my short comings and to get over the excuses I tell myself to enable these shortcomings. I personally will no longer accept my insecurities and lacking in confidence to 'make art'. I may not necessarily improve in my making for a while – but I will begin really delving into my own practice to try and find what excited me before. In terms of the *T* [A/R/T] I must begin educating myself more on techniques complementary to these schemes in order to deliver a more fruitful and effective set of lesson plans.

The room in which the Ty class is held offers its self as a group learning environment. There was a really fabulous moment today in which one student – who constantly tells me ''I know nothing about art'' when asked ''What did she think about the design created by the student sitting next to her'' – suggested it looked like a tree with all the lines looking like the rings in the bark – her imagination was ignited and became really infectious for that table [group]. Subject specific conversation continued to flow about their designs as I moved away – which was really exciting as that group in particular have now really began buying into their own projects. Has my self-evaluation and newly acquired desire to over throw my lacking in confidence as an 'A' complimented my 'T' and rubbed off on the students? I will evaluate the TY work on Friday and really assess where they stand on the timeline associated with this scheme. As well as assessing based on the guidelines set out by the rubric – I am curious to observe any development in their abilities and confidence relating to their work from the beginning.

Appendix
8. Ethical Approval Form

LIT APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL TO COLLECT DATA FROM HUMAN RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Research Activity Prohibited at LIT (Art. 6 EC Commission 1982/2006/EC)

(i) Research activity aiming at human cloning for reproductive purposes

(ii) Research activity intended to modify the genetic heritage of human beings which could make such changes heritable.

(iii) Research activities intended to create human embryos solely for the purpose of research or for the purpose of stem cell procurement, including by means of somatic cell nuclear transfer.

Section 1: Please complete all parts of Section 1 - Enter N/A if not applicable.

1.	**Applicant's Name:** Ciara Normoyle					
1.1	**Preliminary Ethical Approval Reference Number:**					
1.2	**School/Faculty:** Limerick School of Art and Design		**Department:** Art and Design Teacher Education Dept.			
1.3	**Research Centre or Group:** Professional Master of Education – Art and Design with Digital Media					
1.4	**Principal Supervisor:** Maria Finucane / Edel Hogan					
1.5	**Award Sought:**	*M.A.*	*M.Bus.*	*M.Eng.*	*M.Sc.*	*Ph.D.*
		☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.6	**Title of Proposed Research** <u>Enter title</u>; An inquiry that examines the degree to which learning traditional ceramic craft skills can support pupil engagement with craft education and appreciation of contemporary ceramic craft practices.					
1.7	**Research Question** <u>Enter research questions;</u> • To what extent can students achieve an understanding and appreciation for the skills of craft and ceramics through the making of a traditional ceramic bust? • To what extent can I foster an appreciation of contemporary ceramic practice					

	through teaching traditional ceramic craft skills in the classroom? • To what extent can making and designing a tradition bust form encourage students to marry traditional methods of making with contemporary cultural influences?	
1.8	**Proposed Programme of Research (in the form of an abstract 500 words)** The purpose of this research project is to examine how introducing a traditional method of making in relation to a ceramic bust form, could promote an appreciation of the techniques and methodical attention required to create a ceramic 3D form. Student lead learning is encouraged through the process of design in order to examine the effects contemporary culture and society has on a student's process of design. The aim of the project is to promote traditional craft while marrying that with students own personal interests in order to create a 3D form. Roman portraiture was one of the most significant periods in the development of portrait art. These works of art were sculpted representations of the upper part of the human figure. These bust forms recreated the likeness of an individual. This project will examine the student's comprehension of craft – ceramics, both prior and post making, in order to consider how to promote an appreciation for ceramics as a method of expressing and creating works of art.	
1.9	**Applicant's Signature:**	**Date:**
1.10	**Principal Supervisor's Signature:**	**Date:**

Section 2: Detail the Ethical Issues Identified

(Complete this section if you answered "yes" to any question above)

2.1 Recruitment and Selection of Participants
How will potential research participants be identified and recruited? An appropriate second level year group will be identified as the potential research participants in consultation with the art teacher where the depth and scope of the research will determine an appropriate year group / age group suitability.
What Inclusion criteria will be applied to participant selection? All students of an identified second level year group are identified as potential participants.
What exclusion criteria will be applied to participant selection? Failure to secure written consent will merit exclusion
How many participants will be recruited?

Enter class size: 20

Will Recruitment Letters/Advertisements/e-mails, etc. be used to recruit participants?
If YES, please attach the details to this application.

No

Does your research activity require the permission/co-operation of a gatekeeper?
Please explain:

Yes.
Permissions will be required from the school Principal / Vice Principal and Placement Schools' Art and Design teacher(s).

If participants belong to any of the following vulnerable groups please give details.

☒ Children under 18 years of age.

☐ People who have language difficulty

☐ People who have a recognised or diagnosed intellectual or mental impairment

☐ Elderly people

☐ People confined to institutions *(prisoners, residents in 24 hour nursing facilities)*

☒ Persons in unequal relationships with the researcher *(teacher/student; therapist/client; employer/employee)*

☐ Others *(please specify)*

Details:

Discuss the power dynamics between the researcher/s and the research participants and say how the researcher/s has/have accounted for this in their data collection (100 words).

This study involves the teacher-researcher undertaking classroom based research with a group of second level students.

- I the researcher will be the classroom art teacher and therein will be in a position of authority in so far as I will be responsible for the effective management of all classroom and teaching activities. I the researcher will be responsible for all teaching activities, student participant learning and for the assessment of all art work carried out over the duration of the study. I in this role will have a duty of care and responsibility to all participants as outlined in;
- LSAD, LIT Professional Master of Education – Art and Design with Digital Media - School Placement Handbook
- Placement Schools' policy and guidelines on school placement
- Teaching Council's guidelines for school placement

The power dynamics between the researcher and the research participants will be accounted for in data collection through the following provisions:

- Discussion based briefing session at the introduction of participant information sheets and distribution of consent forms wherein participants are made aware

that should they consent to participant in the study any information they contribute will not inform assessment of their class work and participation. Participants will be made aware that contributions are for the purposes of the research alone and refusal to consent and / or to withdraw from participating in the study will have no adverse consequences.

- Data collection methods will largely consist of semi-structured interviews / focus groups that encourage authentic discussion and idea sharing
- Anonymity of information and data gathered from participants will be maintained for the duration of the study
- Pseudonyms will be used where deemed necessary

Where participants belong to any of the vulnerable groups listed above, please confirm you have undergone Garda Vetting (or equivalent process)?

I confirm that I have undergone Garda Vetting as part of the application process for the Professional Master of Education in Art and Design Education in LSAD.

Will payment of any kind, including expenses, be made to participants? No

If YES, please attach the details to this application. N/A

Will incentives / inducements be provided to participants for taking part in this research project? No

If YES, please attach the details to this application. N/A

2.2 Additional Documentation

Where applicable the following supplementary information **must** be attached to your application.

	Attached	**Not Applicable**
Participant Information Sheet (including possible ways in which the data may be used)	☒	☐
Parent/Responsible Other Information Sheet	☒	☐
Participant Informed Consent Form (including a statement detailing the right of the participant to withdraw)	☒	☐
Parent/Responsible Other Informed Consent Form (including a statement detailing the right of the participant to withdraw)	☐	☒

Interview schedule	☐	☒
Stimulus materials e.g. visual or auditory materials	☐	☒
Questionnaire (or sample)	☐ Draft ☐ Final	☒
Ethical Approval form other Committees	☐	☒
Garda Vetting	☒	☐
Letters, ads, e-mails, etc. used to recruit participants	☐ Draft ☐ Final	☒

2.3 Safety and Security of Participants/Researcher

Please discuss your assessment of any potential risks to participants:

There are no perceivable or identifiable risks to participants.

What measures will be put in place to ensure the safety of participants? Please explain:

All research activities will operate in accordance with the placement school's

- Health and Safety policies and measures

Child Protection Policy and procedures and therein the school's Designated Liaison Person's (DLP) contact details will be known to the researcher.

What processes will be put in place for de-briefing participants?

A sufficient portion of class time will be allocated to a de-briefing session with participants at the close of the study. This will be conducted with the placement school's art teacher(s)'s presence. A simple, clear and informative explanation of the rationale for the design for the study and the methods used in the study will be offered to all participants. I, the researcher, will ask for and answer participants' questions during this debriefing session and will inform participants that a summary of the findings of the study will be made available to the school in June 2015.

What support measures are available for participants and how will these be communicated?

The following support measures and personnel will be available for all participants for the duration of the study and all participants will be informed of these provisions and how to avail of these supports as per school policy and procedures in advance of the study;

The school's art teacher(s)

The school principal and vice-principal

The school's provision of pastoral care which includes;

- Special Education / Resource Team including Special Needs Assistants
- School chaplain and counseling services
- The appointed class teacher / year head

Please discuss your assessment of any potential risks to the researcher, and what measures will be put in place to ensure the safety of the researcher:

There are no perceivable risks to the researcher

All research activities will operate in accordance with;

- Placement school's health and safety policies and measures
- Teaching Council's guidelines for school placement
- LSAD, LIT Professional Master of Education – Art and Design with Digital Media - School Placement Handbook

The researcher is aware of the following supports and services and is aware of how to avail of these measures;

- Pastoral supports and services available to me in my role as the researcher during my placement in the school.
- Student welfare, counselling services and supports are available to me through the Limerick School of Art and Design, LIT.

2.4 Privacy

What measures will be taken to ensure confidentiality of collected data?

Confidentiality

All information and data gathered during the study will be maintained for the duration of the study. This information / data will not be shared with persons other than my supervisor.

Anonymity

No identifying information of participants will be collected.
Anonymity of information and data gathered from participants will be maintained for the duration of the study. Individual participant responses and or participant art works will not be linked with participant identities and pseudonyms will be used where necessary.

Secure storage

Research data will be stored securely and responsibly with assigned security codes / passwords to computerised records.
Research data will be destroyed / deleted responsibly on expiry of a specified timeframe yet to be identified.

Where and how will the data be stored / retrieved?

Data protection safeguards;

- Research data will be stored responsibly in secure files on my personal computer.

Data retrieval;

- All computerised / digital records and data will be protected by security codes / passwords and retrieved by security code / password entry only

Who will have custody of, and access to, the data?

I the researcher will have sole custody of the data
My researcher supervisor will also have access to the data

For how long will the data from the research project be stored? *(Please justify)*

The duration of studies, including the appeals process timeframe, associated with the Professional Master of Education – Art and Design with Digital Media year of study 2015-2016.
Yet to be identified

Describe the procedures by which consent will be obtained

- Initial consultation with gatekeepers – structured meeting with school placement art teacher and school principal / vice principal
- Briefing potential participants on proposed research
- Information sheet outlining the aims of the research will be drafted and distributed
- Signed consent forms – participants and parent/guardian

2.5 Signed Declarations

Supervisor
(To be completed in cases where the applicant is a research postgraduate student.)

I hereby declare that I have read, understood, and agree to abide by the most recent LIT Ethics Policy for Researchers. I also hereby authorise the named Principal Investigator to conduct this research project in accordance with the requirements of LIT Ethics Policy for Researchers. I have informed the Principal Investigator of their responsibility to adhere to the recommendations and guidelines in set out in the LIT Ethics Policy for Researchers.

Supervisor Signature : _____ Date: _____

Print Name :

Investigator

The information contained in this application form is accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief. I have:

- Read the most recent LIT Ethics Policy for Researchers.
- Agreed to abide by the LIT Ethics Policy for Researchers in conducting this research.
- Accepted without reservation that it is my responsibility to ensure the implementation of the policies outlined in the LIT Ethics Policy for Researchers.
- Undertaken to inform the LIT Ethics Committee of any changes in the protocol.
- Understood that it is my sole responsibility and obligation to comply with all domestic Irish and European legislation and to obtain such statutory consents as may be necessary.
- Agreed not to commence any research until any such consents have been obtained.
- Understood that neither the University, the Committee, nor individual members of the Committee accept any legal obligation (to me or to any third party) in relation to the processing of this application or to any advice offered in respect of it nor for the subsequent supervision of the research.

Candidate Signature : _____ Date : _____

Print Name:

FOR OFFICIAL USE:

Section 3 – Coverage of Ethical Issues

(to be completed by the Standing Committee on Research Ethics)

(It is necessary to complete this section ***only*** if there are '**Yes**' replies in **Section 2**)

Coverage of Ethical Issues	**YES**	**NO**
If the research involves use of human embryos or human Embryonic Stem Cells (hESCs), do you consider that this research methodology is necessary in order to achieve the proposal's scientific objective?	☐	☐
Are the ethical issues raised in **Section 2** above adequately addressed in the proposal?	☐	☐
Do the applicants demonstrate familiarity with the guidelines and established ethical standards?	☐	☐
Have the applicants indicated in which country(s) any research raising ethical issues will be carried out?	☐	☐
Have they indicated which national, EU and/or international regulations will apply?		

Section 4 – Conclusion by the Standing Committee on Research Ethics

Conclusion	YES	NO
PROPOSAL NOT APPROVED	☐	☐
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REQUIRED	☐	☐
PROPOSAL APPROVED WITHOUT MODIFICATIONS	☐	☐
PROPOSAL APPROVED WITH THE FOLLOWING MODIFICATIONS	☐	☐
Comments:		

Chair LIT Standing Committee on Research Ethics: _____ Date : _____

Appendix
7. Consent Forms

Information Sheet

Invitation to take part in an Art and Design Education Study.

Dear Student,

The following outlines the details of an art and design education project that I will be conducting with a 2nd year group in [redacted] The project will focus on fostering an appreciation for a traditional method of hand building a ceramic sculpture. I will be conducting an educational study in conjunction with this project that aims to examine to what extent can making a traditional ceramic bust inform an appreciation for craft and encourage the use of ceramics in an art class room. I am inviting you to participate in the educational study. The details of what will be involved in this project and study are outlined below.

Title of the project:

Teaching traditional ceramic craft skills in a contemporary art and design classroom

Title of the educational study:

An inquiry that examines the degree to which learning traditional ceramic craft skills can support pupil engagement with craft education and appreciation of contemporary ceramic craft practices.

Background to the project:

I am a student teacher currently undertaking my School Placement at [redacted] Secondary school. I will be introducing a project to you that will focus on examining the degree to which learning the technical and traditional ceramic craft skill of creating a ceramic bust form, can support pupil engagement with craft education and appreciation of contemporary ceramic craft practices.

The study - What am I trying to discover?

I am undertaking this study in order to;

- Examine to what extent students can achieve an understanding and appreciation for the skills of craft and ceramics through the making of a traditional ceramic bust.
- Promote and equip students with the necessary tools to confidently design and create their 3D form using clay as their medium for their Junior Certificate.
- Discover methods and strategies to foster an appreciation of contemporary ceramic practice through teaching traditional ceramic craft skills in the classroom
- Develop the students' self-esteem through personal achievement in developing, designing and making in this mode of art, craft and design.
- Examine to what extent can making and designing a tradition bust form encourage students to marry traditional methods of making with contemporary cultural influences.

What will happen during the study?

Your participation in this study will involve field trips, survey, focus group, project work and discussions forums. Field trips will be conducted in compliance with the policies and procedures as set out by [redacted] and students will be accompanied by both myself and their art teacher Ms. Hickey. I will also document project work as it develops for the purposes of data collection.

The material collected during this study will be kept confidential. The results of this study may be published or presented at professional meetings, but the identities of all participants will remain anonymous. All information relating to this study will be protected in accordance with data protection and privacy policies and procedures for researchers in Limerick Institute of Technology.

Are there any risks to doing this study?

There are no perceived risks associated with your participation in this study. The study will be conducted during the project as outlined above, we will be working together as a group to create art and design work during our scheduled class periods.

What if I change my mind about being in the study?

If you decide that you do not want to participate in the study there will be no consequences to you. You will continue to participate in the all of the classroom activities associated with this project but will not be asked to respond to surveys, participate in focus group responses or have your art work documented as part of the study.

Are there any benefits to doing this study?

The project at the centre of this study is designed to enhance your appreciation of a technical and traditional method of making a ceramic form of art. I hope that what is learned as a result of this study will help us to better understand this traditional method of making and aid in considering and analysing how contemporary culture and individual identity influences our process of design.

How do I find out what was learned in this study?

I expect to have the study report completed by June 2016 and I will send a brief summary of the key findings of the study to the school.

Student Teacher/Researcher:

Title of award: Professional Master of Education Art and Design with Digital Media

Department and Institution: Art and Design Teacher Education, Limerick School of Art and Design, Limerick Institute of Technology

This research study has received ethical approval from the Post Graduate Research Ethics Committee at Limerick School of Art and Design, Limerick Institute of Technology.

Yours sincerely,

_____

Student Teacher

Informed Consent

LIT
LIMERICK SCHOOL
OF ART AND DESIGN

Dear Student,

Before reading this consent form you should have read the attached information sheet. Please ensure that you retain the information sheet for your records. If you wish to participate in this project please sign this consent form and return it to the school on or before 3/11/2015.

If you have any concerns relating to your participation in the project, please contact either the school or myself and we will be happy to address your concerns. Thank you for your cooperation on this matter.

Kind Regards,
Ms. Normoyle

I wish to acknowledge that:
• I have read and understood the attached Information Sheet.
• I understand what the project is about.
• I know that participation is voluntary and that participants can withdraw from the project at any stage without giving any reason.

• I wish to participate in the project that will be undertaken in [redacted] in conjunction with Limerick School of Art and Design.

By signing this consent form I am acknowledging that I have read the above bullet points and am fully aware of what each one means.

Student
Signed: Date:

Information Sheet for Parents/Guardians

Invitation to take part in an Art and Design Education Study.

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The following outlines the details of an art and design education project that I will be conducting with the second year group in [redacted] Secondary School. The project will focus on fostering an appreciation for a traditional method of hand building a ceramic sculpture. I will be conducting an educational study in conjunction with this project that aims to examine to what extent can making a traditional ceramic bust inform an appreciation for craft and encourage the use of ceramics in an art class room. I am seeking consent for your daughter to participate in the study. The details of what will be involved in this project and study are outlined below.

Title of the project:

Teaching traditional ceramic craft skills in a contemporary art and design classroom

Title of the educational study:

An inquiry that examines the degree to which learning traditional ceramic craft skills can support pupil engagement with craft education and appreciation of contemporary ceramic craft practices.

Background to the project:

I am a student teacher currently undertaking my School Placement at [redacted] Secondary School. I will be introducing a project to your daughter that will focus on examining the degree to which learning the technical and traditional ceramic craft skill of creating a ceramic bust form, can support pupil engagement with craft education and appreciation of contemporary ceramic craft practices.

The study - What am I trying to discover?

I am undertaking this study in order to;

- Examine to what extent students can achieve an understanding and appreciation for the skills of craft and ceramics through the making of a traditional ceramic bust.
- Promote and equip students with the necessary tools to confidently design and create their 3D form using clay as their medium for their Junior Certificate.
- Discover methods and strategies to foster an appreciation of contemporary ceramic practice through teaching traditional ceramic craft skills in the classroom
- Develop the students' self-esteem through personal achievement in developing, designing and making in this mode of art, craft and design.
- Examine to what extent can making and designing a tradition bust form encourage students to marry traditional methods of making with contemporary cultural influences

What will happen during the study?

Your daughter's participation in this study will involve field trips, surveys, focus group – discussion forums and project work. I will also document project work as it develops for the purposes of data collection.

The material collected during this study will be kept confidential. The results of this study may be published or presented at professional meetings, but the identities of all participants will remain anonymous. All information relating to this study will be protected in accordance with data protection and privacy policies and procedures for researchers in Limerick Institute of Technology.

Are there any risks to doing this study?

There are no perceived risks associated with your daughter's participation in this study. The study will be conducted during the project as outlined above, we will be working together as a group to create art and design work during our scheduled class periods.

What if I change my mind about my daughter being in the study?

If you decide that you do not want your daughter to participate in the study there will be no consequences to them. They will continue to participate in the all of the classroom activities associated with this project but will not be asked to respond to surveys, participate in focus group responses or have their art work documented as part of the study.

Are there any benefits to doing this study?

The project at the centre of the study is designed to enhance your daughter's appreciation of a technical and traditional method of making a ceramic form of art. I hope that what is learned as a result of this study will help us to better understand this traditional method of making and aid in considering and analysing how contemporary culture and individual identity influences our process of design.

How do I find out what was learned in this study?

I expect to have the study report completed by June 2016 and I will send a brief summary of the key findings of the study to the school.

Student Teacher/Researcher:

Title of award: Professional Master of Education Art and Design with Digital Media

Department and Institution: Art and Design Teacher Education, Limerick School of Art and Design, Limerick Institute of Technology

This research study has received ethical approval from the Post Graduate Research Ethics Committee at Limerick School of Art and Design, Limerick Institute of Technology.

Yours sincerely,

_____

Student Teacher

Informed Consent

LIT
LIMERICK SCHOOL
OF ART AND DESIGN

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Before reading this consent form you should have read the attached information sheet. Please ensure that you retain the information sheet for your records. If you give permission for your daughter to participate in this project please sign this consent form and return it to the school on or before 3/11/2015.

If you have any concerns relating to your daughter's participation in the project, please contact either the school or myself and we will be happy to address your concerns.
Thank you for your cooperation on this matter.

Kind Regards,
Ciara Normoyle

I wish to acknowledge that:
• I have read and understood the attached Parent / Guardian / Information Sheet.
• I understand what the project is about.
• I know that participation is voluntary and that participants can withdraw from the project at any stage without giving any reason.

• I give permission for my daughter, to participate in the project that will be undertaken in [redacted] in conjunction with Limerick School of Art and Design.

By signing this consent form I am acknowledging that I have read the above bullet points and am fully aware of what each one means.

Parent / Guardian / Responsible Other
Signed: Date:

Appendix
9. Lesson Plan 15th January

Research Project 15th January

Lesson: 23

Three differentiated desired outcomes for this lesson – Building their bust for in clay

- ***Complete the initial bust form – merging and blending slabs to establish the head form – utilising the neck support previously constructed.***
- ***Measuring the proportions of the face – construct their collar.***
- ***Find the facial form – build the facial features and begin constructing their hair***

Revision
Set up the working 'studio'

-Complete the initial bust form – merging and blending slabs to establish the head form – utilising the neck support previously constructed.
- Find the facial form

Students are instructed too;

Observe the prepared clip and partake in finding the facial form in the clay - taking observation notes [visually and in their reflective journal] from these prepared clips.

- Complete their bust form – focusing on constructing the head from their already constructed neck. Measure their facial proportions – essentially map out their face.
- Complete collar and begin finding their facial form.

Students will;

- Show discipline and a degree of responsibility and respect for their working material by partaking in the rotation of assigned tasks in setting up and establishing a ceramic workshop environment.
- Display evidence of a level of comprehension and capability in relation to their newly acquired set of skills in hand building a clay form. This will be observed in their initial bust form – in which they will merge and blend slabs, building from the neck and developing their head, and in progressing forward to developing their facial features.
- Observe and analyse resource material captured on their i-pads – utilising these images as an aid for mapping out the features.

Students will be reminded…

Reflective Journal;

- Use your reflective journal to discuss and discriminate between aspects of the course you enjoy or perhaps elements you would like to try different.
- Question jobs and activities undertaken! Think of alternatives! Share your opinions!
- Compare and contrast
- Don't forget to illustrate ideas and workshops undertaken

Students will be required to hand up their journal at the end of today's lesson.

Time line;

- What I did - What I learned - What I liked -What I didn't like

Ceramics;

Continue partaking in a rotation of tasks assigned to a number of students per class. Develop a broader comprehension of hand building techniques. Complete their human form – begin finding the facial form.

Differentiation:

I have decided going forward I will implement a new project for the SEN student in this class. She is very comfortable rolling out clay and cutting out printed shapes and sizes. The plan will be to compile a series of shapes in order to create a hanging ornament.

Students are now seated in their new seating arrangement. This has established a cohort of complementary standards of work. Again students who do not have wifi available at home will be offered the opportunity to work on their blogs in the classroom.

I will be requesting that all students build their collar [if their head is complete] while the clay is still capable of taking to new slabs. Then they will be directed to measuring out their proportions and finding the facial form

Conclusion:

I expect after this lesson that all students will have their collar attached and facial features mapped out in terms of their proportions. There are a number of students who are currently applying their facial features and for those students I expected that they should have their basic facial features completed by the end of today's lesson.

I will request for students to clean up and take a seat for a debriefing. Students will be asked to hand up their reflective journals for grading over the weekend. They will be required to work on their blog over the weekend. I will set a time for 6pm on Monday for viewing.

APPENDIX
10. SHORT COURSE