

## My teaching philosophy

### Ciara Normoyle

I am a life-long learner inspired by what I have learned and excited about what I have yet to learn. Life offers itself as the ultimate educator, with daily objectives and learning outcomes. John Dewey viewed educators as the most important inquirers into the success and failures of the school – viewing the role of a teacher as investigator of pedagogical problems through inquiry. I view my job as an educator and facilitator of student’s engagement with educational practices in the aim of creatively establishing themselves as inquisitors and critical thinkers.

A/R/Tography holistically describes my professional identity. I am an Artist, Researcher and Teacher with a complementary passion for each intertwining title. I am an Artist by life, a Researcher by curiosity and a Teacher by vocation.

The art craft and design classroom should be a heaven that offers students the opportunity to explore a variety of problem solving activities and engage with active and kinaesthetic learning.

*“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]

Where I believe art for art sake is good enough, the Art, Craft and Design curriculum actually offers a deeper and more comprehensive learning opportunity for students. As a researcher I consider action research as the employer of the circumstances to produce, implement and evaluate through inquiry-laden processes, and as an A/R/Tographer I am concerned with creating these circumstances. Where a paradigm of interests establishes such inquiries, 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. I believe that literacy and numeracy skills can be strengthened throughout art projects and creative schemes, which enhance the entire curriculum. As a keen advocate of developing literacy and numeracy skills in this very practical led subject, I imbed strategies to aid in this throughout my schemes. Evidence of this corresponds with my research project where I issued 2<sup>nd</sup> year students with digital blogs and reflective journals to document ideas, alternative approaches and drawings in order to critically reflect and problem solve throughout the project.

As an educator I believe in enriching the students’ holistic learning experience as a desirable learning outcome to every lesson. My philosophy relates to teaching students to question and critically reflect for the purpose of deep and sustainable learning.

When designing a scheme I consider the learning opportunities embedded throughout the 'process' of creating an end 'product'. Where students will gain a sense of achievement in completing a piece of art, I believe that they should also become aware of the learning opportunities in each step of its creation as well as a solid comprehension of the difference between quality over quantity, enriched designs over mass production.

The proposed title *Visual Arts* will encapsulate the Art, Craft and Design curriculum. Visual Arts represents a more collaborative approach to the mediums explored in schools.

*“No man is an Island”*

John Donne – 1626

According to Dunne, no man is an Island, and no subject should be either. Collaboration and cross curriculum engagement is vital to embodying a rich and comprehensive learning experience for students.

As educators we implement curricula based on the required assessment guidelines issued by the State. While teaching students with the knowledge required to successfully undertake these examinations, I view it as imperative to equip students with the skills to think, critically reflect and learn for themselves. Reflective practice offers students the opportunity to critically consider the information taught, absent of the Null curriculum, subsequently enhancing their engagement with their higher cognitive domain.

With regard to my own artwork, which I believe is essential to keep alive at the core of my teaching practice, it availed itself as a key influencing factor in developing my research project. This ten week research project saw my group of 2<sup>nd</sup> year participants creating ceramic busts – each student capturing a precious moment in time [ciaranormoyleartographer.weebly.com/research.html](http://ciaranormoyleartographer.weebly.com/research.html). As an artist I equally enjoy capturing participants of life and their stories through digital platforms. These interests inspired a 5<sup>th</sup> year digital media project through which students conducted interviews from a range of characters that represented their rural school [ciaranormoyleartographer.weebly.com/5th-year-digital-media.html](http://ciaranormoyleartographer.weebly.com/5th-year-digital-media.html).

While I am excited about digital developments within our contemporary fast paced society, I value traditional Art, Craft & Design practices as the core of the classroom. 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 Framework extends far beyond the adeptness of the subject in and of itself. My teaching philosophy from this perspective is entirely sympathetic to the cause for craft education. The core focus of my research project 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. I set out to promote an appreciation of Craft for the Junior Certificate Cycle. My research 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.

My teaching profile is ever evolving. I take every opportunity to enlighten and develop my professional identity. I consider extending my professional identity a task for both within and beyond the art classroom. I will be parking in Print workshops in the Limerick Print makers during the summer in order to develop my printmaking skills. I have partaken in an artist in residency program in Milford Primary School in Limerick and I teach evening courses in Limerick College of Further Education in order to enrich and broaden my own teaching experiences. I want my students to want to learn and I aid in this by investing considerable time in planning schemes and selecting strategies that best fit and motivate my students.