

An Introductory Course in Art at Eirias High School

The Introductory Course is an important concept applicable to a range of curriculum areas and various stages in the educational process. In this case I am concerned with 'Art' at the commencement of the secondary school and am assuming that Art is accorded a separate subject status.

Children come together as the new intake year in a secondary school. The policy of the school is administered and the pupils are grouped, timetabled and organised into their new complex of classes, rooms, subjects and teachers. Mixed-ability grouping is a widespread practice here and results in a number of parallel first-year classes all nominally similar in composition and potential.

An Introductory Course at this stage is desirable because one is dealing for the first time with children from the assortment of primary schools in the catchment area. These children's experiences and abilities in Art and Craft work are inevitably various in type and quality. One of the purposes of the foundation course is to summarise and consolidate the subject experiences gained in the primary school. A second aim must be to prepare pupils for entry into the examination courses that dominate the fourth and fifth years, and to diagnose their potential in order to give guidance.

One has a situation of x parallel classes all with the same educational needs — all requiring a common syllabus. To administer this syllabus one has y teachers, diverse in their specialisms, experience and approaches. The need is for a strategy which will reconcile these two factors.

Team Teaching has become for us an effective strategy for tackling this problem. Our programme at Eirias High School, Colwyn Bay, is now in its third year of operation. We started in September 1975 with a new first year intake of six classes: we were then a team of five teachers each working in a separate and geographically scattered studio. We had two Art studios, a Pottery, a Three-Dimensional studio and a Fabrics studio. Since then we have experienced staff illness and resignations, temporary and non-specialist staff, the loss of the 3D and Fabrics studios, and the reduction of the team to three.

Our system has had a severe testing and in the process has evolved and been modified. But it has proved itself practical and resilient and has been made into a manageable organisation that copes, no matter what happens.

2. Course Organisation

In outline, the system has been organised in the following way:

1st Year 1975/6

Six classes, labelled 1C, O, L, W, Y, N are blocked in threes and timetabled in those blocks for one double period and one single period per week.

Five teachers — Mr. A, Miss B., Mrs. C., Mr. D., Mr. E. are allocated to classes.

Classes	1C	1O	1L	1W	1Y	1N
Teachers	A	B	C	B	D	E

Week 1

In the 1C, O, L double period the block of three classes and teachers assemble together in a suitable lecture room.

A Lead Lesson on Topic 1, is presented by Mr. A. the Head of Department to the whole group. This sets the work to be undertaken for the duration of the Topic, by each class with its own teacher.

In the 1W, Y, N double period the procedure is repeated and Mr. A. delivers the Topic 1 Lead Lesson for the second time.

Note that Mr. A. does not directly take a 1W, Y, N class. He will probably have to obtain cover to release him from duty elsewhere and in this case Miss B. (who has already attended the Lead Lesson) might cover for Mr. A.

Weeks 2, 3, 4

All classes meet with their own teachers and follow the programme set by the Lead Lesson. This should include Written and Practical work at school and home. When the work on the Topic is concluded an Assessment Mark is recorded.

Week 5

Repetition of Week 1 procedure save that the Lead Lesson on Topic 2 is given by Miss B. As Miss B. teaches classes in both Blocks she is available to give both Lead Lessons.

Weeks 6, 7, 8

Work in separate teacher/class groups on the material of Topic 2.

The Presentation and Implementation of each successive Topic continues throughout the year in this manner. When it becomes the turn of a teacher with a timetable clash, the Lead Lesson takes precedence and arrangements have to be made to cover the other class.

2nd Year 1976/7

In the second year we moved into a new situation in which we were repeating the first year programme and concurrently were developing the second year course. We had also lost two of our original team and replaced one so that we were now a team of four. It was necessary to re-allocate and re-order some of the Topics. Two of the second year classes were working with a new teacher although where possible continuity was maintained. Another planning factor here was to avoid a teacher being programmed to give first and second year Lead Lessons at the same time. However, it was still possible to run the scheme with two blocks of three classes in both years.

Teachers:	Mr. A.	Miss B.	Mr. D.	Miss F.
Classes	1C 1O 1L	1W 1Y 1N		
Teachers	A B F	B D A		
Classes	2C 2O 2L	2W 2Y 2N		
Teachers	A B D	B D F		

3rd Year 1977/8

In the third and current year of operation, the changing establishment of the School has still further reduced the team to three – now a usual sized department for a school of 950. In timetabling it became evident that the team teaching system could not be sustained into the third year and an alternative method was adopted for this year which is outside my brief in this article. It was also found impossible to deploy the three staff all on together, in a block timetable six times in a week. Consequently, the blocking has now become three sets of two and it is necessary to give Lead Lessons three times over in the weeks when they become due.

Teachers:	Mr. A.	Miss B.	Mr. D.
Classes	1C 1O	1L 1W	1Y 1N
Teachers	A B	B D	B D
Classes	2C 2O	2L 2W	2Y 2N
Teachers	A D	B D	B D

With experience we have found that a frequency of three Topics per term, preferably of four weeks duration, is the best. However, account has to be taken of the school calendar and it is sometimes expedient to shorten or lengthen the duration of particular Topics in order to fit the term. Thus we arrive at a sequence of nine Topic slots each school year; a total of eighteen for the two-year course.

3. Course Content

The Foundation Course can achieve validity only through the material contents of its programme. It is futile to set up this organisation and then transmit variegated trivia in place of a meaningful course. What is taught must be valid, basic, significant, interesting, useful and relevant.

In planning the course content I first identified eight sub-subjects that I considered valid ingredients:

LETTERING : BASIC DESIGN : SUBJECT STUDIES : COLOUR : PATTERN : DECORATIVE DESIGN : GRAPHIC DESIGN : 3D FORM

In making this selection I was conscious of the basic educational elements inherent in the study of each area.

LETTERING – Is important and useful in school life generally. It involves practical training in pencil, pen and brush control and tracing techniques; aesthetic training in proportion, shape and spacing.

BASIC DESIGN – The study of the basic elements of visual experience – POINT, LINE, SHAPE. Has both Abstract and Realistic aspects; involves various materials and techniques, e.g. Collage, Printing.

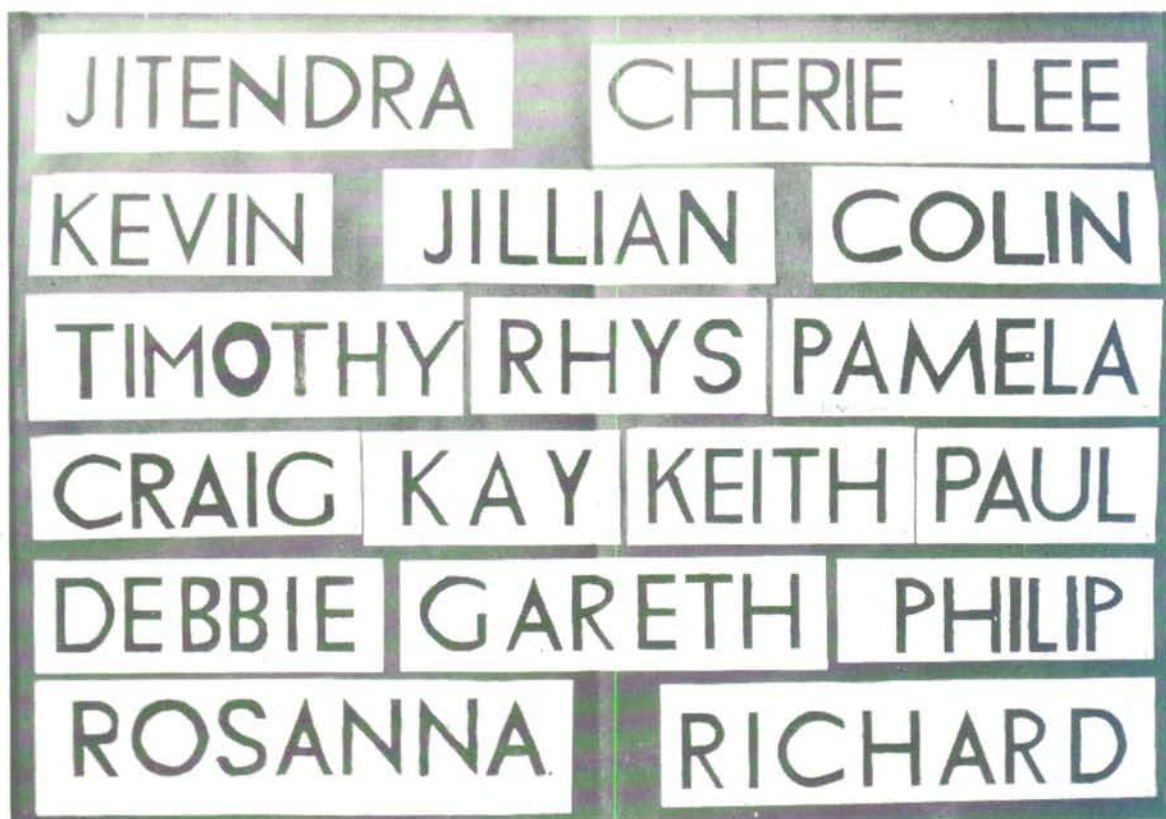
SUBJECT STUDIES – Involves General Knowledge of Things in order to draw them. Possible subjects include – ANIMALS, FLOWERS, FACES, BUILDINGS. Approaches comprise Observation, Study, Copy Drawing and Creative Drawing. Media – Pencil and Fibrepen.

COLOUR – Elementary Colour Theory – Theoretical and Practical studies. Colour Palette and Identification, Tints and Shades, Colour Circle, Triads, Complementaries, Painting materials – care and use of brushes – painting of diagrams.

PATTERN – The main geometrical bases of pattern – Structures and Motifs. Stylistic elements. Colour and Linear Decoration.

DECORATIVE DESIGN – A Composite Subject comprising Subject Studies, Pattern and Basic Design. Concentration on Imaginative and Decorative approach, Stylisation, Symmetry. **GRAPHIC DESIGN** – A composite Subject comprising Lettering, Geometrical Design, Black and White and Symbolism.

THREE DIMENSIONAL FORM – CUBE, CONE, CYLINDER. Materials – Paper, Clay, Plaster, Wood. Simple construction methods. Formal and Imaginative approaches.



The total course provided for a series of eighteen topics. I aimed to programme a selection of topics that would introduce pupils to the basic concepts and activity of the subject: encouraging them to achieve understanding and facility through both instruction and practice.

Out of all this material it was obvious that only a fraction could be covered. And yet a considerable degree of overlapping and inter-relation existed. It was apparent that information or skills taught as part of one Topic would be relevant to others.

For instance, Lettering begins with a Skeleton (single line) Alphabet of Capital Letters and in the process teaches freehand straight line drawing, construction of circles, optical estimation of

proportion and some principles of design. Later a Sans Serif Block Alphabet is taught. This is more difficult but is based upon the previous alphabet. Basic Design also approaches the study of Line through H.V.A. — which means horizontals, verticals and right angles. This ties in with and supports the initial work in Lettering and Subject Studies. Subsequently other aspects of Line — Pattern Line, Calligraphic Line are isolated and studied.

By definition, I had realised that Decorative and Graphic Design were composite subjects — a fusion of selected elements. The ability to draw geometrical diagrams would be useful to Colour, Pattern, Graphic Design. Freehand drawing skills and the ability to Copy were foundational. So was the use of brushes and paint. Right at the heart of art education was the development of colour sensitivity.

Thus by a process of further analysis a projected sequence of Topics was hammered out. At first nothing could be assumed. All material that we required the children to know had to be specifically taught. Even simple things like the correct use of a ruler, or optical judgement of a half-way point, or the names of pigments, could not be taken for granted, they had to be taught. So there had to be a considered sequence beginning at the beginning, getting things into the right order of steadily increasing skill and difficulty. Then there had to be a recognition that the learning process was Cumulative. Each Topic in turn drew upon what had gone before and provided groundwork for what was to follow. Finally, each Topic had to be allocated to one of the teachers in the team to prepare and present, matching their particular interests and strengths as far as possible.

Diagram 1 shows the total two-year syllabus as it was planned at the outset. Only Year 1 was actually being followed. The second year was projected.

In the event, this original syllabus has proved itself quite sound. Throughout our three years of operation most of the original contents have been put into practice successfully. However, the original

Second Year;
Faces — Clowns.
Assorted media

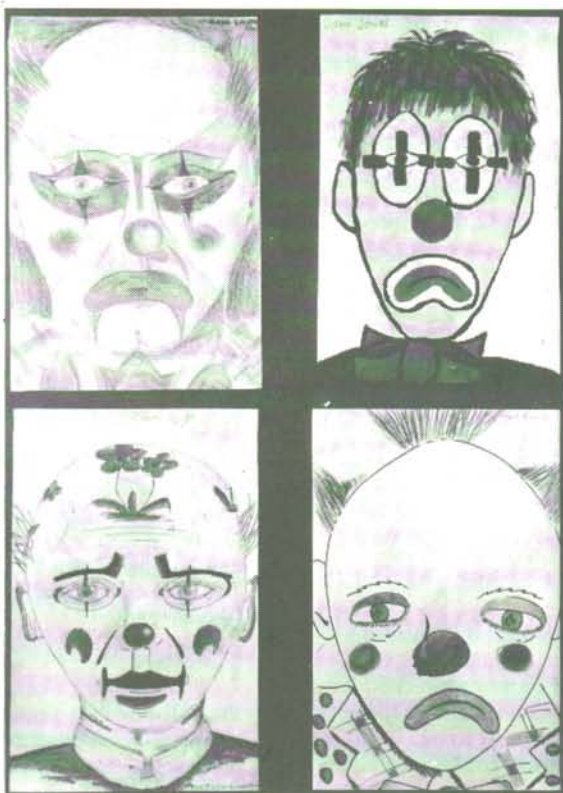


DIAGRAM 1

ART & DESIGN DEPARTMENT: FOUNDATION COURSE (Mixed Ability – Teach Teaching)

METHOD – Lead Lesson presented twice to 1C.O.L./1W.Y.N. by the nominated PRESENTER.
Follow-up by Teachers with allocated Registration Group.

Team	Presenter			
YEAR 1				
1	(Topic 1	A	Skeleton Lettering – Upper case	STUDY AREAS Courses seek to develop lines of study in the following areas: Lettering Basic Design Vocabulary of Imagery Pattern Colour Graphic Design 3D Form Decoration
	(2	B	Point	
	(3	D	Animal Imagery	
	(4	C	Christmas Card – Imagery & Techniques	
2	(1	A	Skeleton Lettering – Lower Case & Word Building	
	(2	E	H.V.A. Line & Shape	
	(3	A	Introd. to Painting & Colour – Standard Palette	
	(4	B	Botanical Imagery	
3	(1	A	Expressive Word Design	
	(2	C	Pattern Lines	
	(3	D	3D Studies – Geometrical Form & Planes	
	(4	E	Pictorial Illustration	
YEAR 2				
1	(Topic 1		Standard Alphabet – Caps. Word Layout	– There are no hard and fast demarcations between these Study Areas – the Programme is Cumulative and will constantly refer back. Also – Media and Techniques will in some instances be biased to the MATERIALS, EQUIPMENT & SKILL available in the various specialist rooms.
	(2		Line – Calligraphic & Imagery	
	(3		2D and 3D Texture and Surface	
	(4		Imagery – Faces and Figures	
2	(1		Standard Alphabet – Lower case, numerals punctuation	
	(2		Colour – Circle & Relationships	
	(3		Shape and Shapoids	
	(4		Imagery – Buildings	
3	(1		Standard Alphabet – Word Building	
	(2		Pattern Bases – Tesselations, Techniques, Colour	
	(3		Symbolism	
	(4		Graphics – Black & White Design	

plan of presenting four Topics per term proved impracticable and has been reduced to three. This has meant further whittling down of the list of Topics. The current Syllabus is shown in Diagram 2.

4. Course Control

The remaining problem was that of exercising control over the progress of the Course. All members of the Team had to be put in the picture and given the chance to contribute their expertise. In some cases there was the need to help colleagues prepare and present their own Topics, perhaps by the provision of slides or demonstration material.

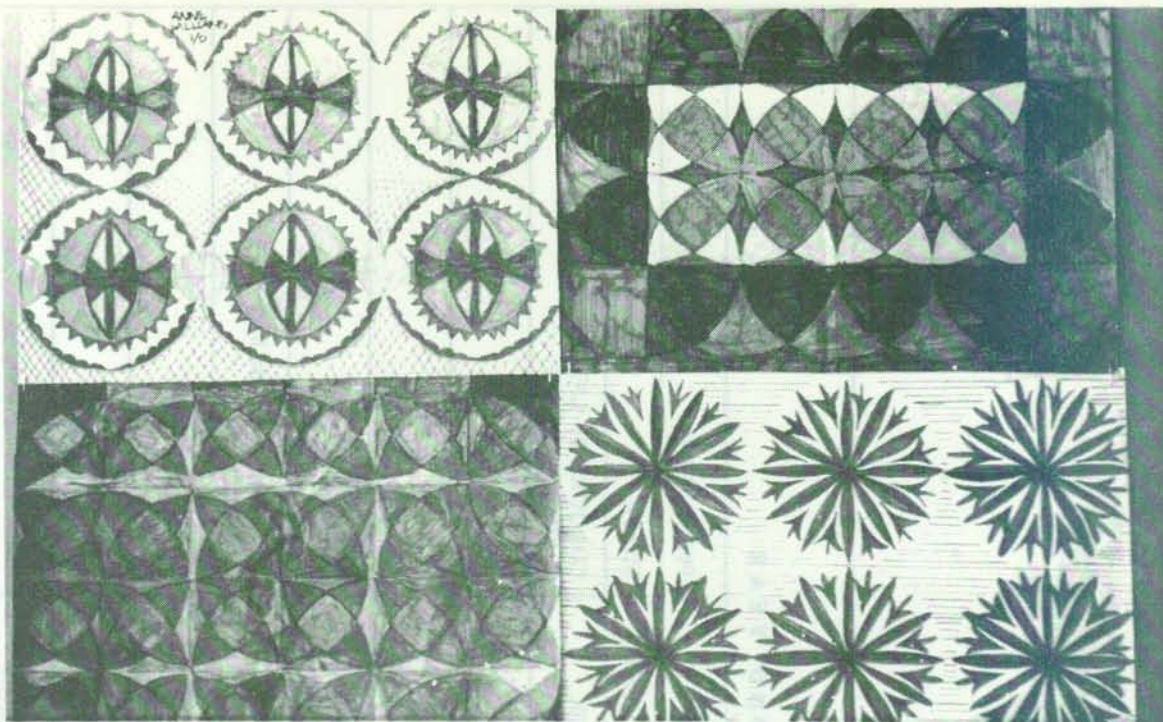
There was also the problem of relating work and assessment standards between the different classes.

As a partial answer to the problem of liaison and communication the following notes were prepared and published. I reproduce them in full.

Topic Presentation

Each nominated Topic is deemed to make an important contribution to the Art & Design programme that is SEQUENTIAL AND CUMULATIVE.

SECOND YEAR									
FIRST YEAR					SECOND TERM				
FIRST TERM					FIRST TERM				
1977					10	D	BASIC DESIGN	SHAPE	
SEPT. 6	1	A	LETTERING	SKELETON CAPS.	11	A	COLOUR	COLOURS OF LIGHT SPECTRUM SIX	
OCT. 3	2	B	BASIC DESIGN	POINT	12	B	BASIC DESIGN	H.V.A. DESIGN	
NOV. 7	3	D	DECORATIVE DESIGN	CHRISTMAS CARD DESIGN					
1978									
SECOND TERM					SECOND TERM				
JAN. 9	4	A	COLOUR & PAINTING	COLOURS OF PAINT	13	D	SUBJECT STUDIES	FACES	
JAN. 30	5	B	BASIC DESIGN	CIRCLE DESIGN & GEOMETRY	14	A	LETTERING	STANDARD ALPHABET CAPS.	
FEB. 27	6	D	SUBJECT STUDIES	ANIMALS	15	B	BASIC DESIGN	PATTERN LINES	
THIRD TERM					THIRD TERM				
APR. 11	7	A	LETTERING	SKELETON LOWER CASE	16	D	SUBJECT STUDIES	BUILDINGS	
MAY 15	8	B	SUBJ. STDS & DEC. DESIGN	FLOWERS & PLANTS	17	A	LETTERING	STANDARD LOWER CASE ALPHABET	
JUNE 19	9	D	3D	THE CUBE	18	B	GRAPHIC DESIGN	BLACK & WHITE DESIGN	



Each Topic follows from what has gone before, adding to the range of Knowledge, Skills, Concepts and Creative Experience.

At each stage, also, previous elements are recapitulated, developed and integrated into the current Topic.

It is part of the task of the Presenter to understand and reinforce the full implications of his/her Topic in relation to the whole course.

When studied each Topic will be seen to consist of several elements:—

Knowledge — Factual information to be imparted to pupils and to be learned.

Skills — Instruction and practice in the nature and use of various materials and techniques.

Imaginative Stimulus — Providing a starting point for individual creativity.

Criteria and Standards — Investigation into the 'Rules' of Art and Design: defining quality; making value judgements.

The task of the Presenter is to produce a package in which all these elements are included. How this is done will vary with each Topic and each Presenter. There are two main avenues of communication:

- 1) The Lead Lesson
- 2) Reprographic Teaching Material

The Presenter is also, while addressing himself/herself to the pupils, aiming to provide colleagues with an effective practical teaching programme incorporating over a four week period:

- Theory and Practical Work
- Homework and Classwork
- Discipline and Initiative
- Learning and Creativity

Lead Lesson

The Lead Lesson is presented to an audience composed of three classes together with their teachers. Its functions are:

- 1) to focus attention on the nominated Topic,
- 2) to illustrate its sources of inspiration, its artistic possibilities and the nature of the current projects,
- 3) to demonstrate the new technical skills required,
- 4) to give any necessary instructions to colleagues and pupils regarding the topic work assignment.

The task is essentially one of *Communication, Entertainment and Stimulation*. Within this context the Lecture alone is inadequate and must be reinforced by Visual Aids, Audience Participation tactics (Quizzes, etc.) and even Audio Aids.

There is scope for originality to discover the most effective techniques for particular topics and to make Lead Lessons a composite of various techniques and elements.

The Equipment and Teaching Techniques available include:

- | | | | |
|----------------------|--|--|-----------------|
| Film Strip | Slides | Cine Film | Video Recording |
| Overhead Projector | — Direct Drawing and Writing or Shadow Projection. | — Prepared Transparencies and Overlays. | |
| Panel Displays | — Photographs — Illustrations | — Artwork — Demonstration Material. | |
| Direct Demonstration | — Chalkboard — Easel — Table | — Panel — Magnetic Models on Panel — Drawing — Painting — Printing — Crafts. | |
| Audio | — Tape — Cassette — Discs | — Music — Sound Effects. | |

It is important for the Lead Lesson to be well prepared. The outline planning should commence about six weeks in advance to allow time to make collections of material, prepare slides and transparencies, etc. Even where a topic is being presented for a second time there is scope for revision and improvement and sufficient attention to preparation is necessary.

A Script should be prepared giving the text of the lecture with lists of the slides, pictures, diagrams, etc. to be presented. (This Script should be stored for future use — also noting the whereabouts of loaned material). Good Stage Management is essential. Check in advance on where the meeting is to be held and see that everyone is informed.

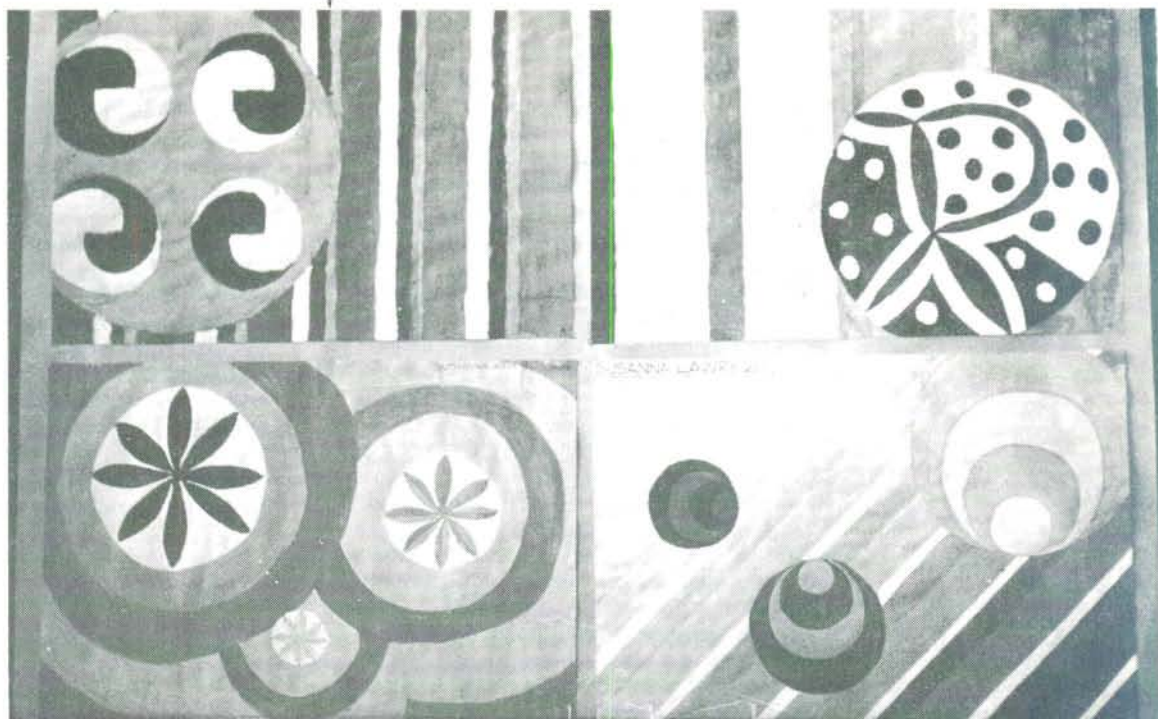
Make sure the right equipment is assembled and *all* materials required are to hand. Don't be stuck for a piece of chalk or a pointer or whatever.

In advance, make sure you are familiar with the equipment you are using and that you get Sound and Vision of adequate quality. See that slides are in order and right way up, tapes are edited, etc. If necessary obtain the assistance of a colleague as projectionist.

Plan the lesson to run to time.

When all this is done there is nothing further to worry about.

The Presenter can relax and enjoy the lesson — and so will everyone else.



Reprographic Teaching Material

Topic material prepared for issue to each pupil. This comprises the following elements:

- 1) INSTRUCTION SHEET
- 2) DEMONSTRATION SHEET
- 3) PROJECT ASSIGNMENTS

1. Instruction Sheet

The text of the Lead Lesson in a form suitable for copying into the pupils' Study Book. Key Words are underlined for definition in a Glossary at the back of the Study Book. It will be necessary for the class teacher to go over the text with the class to reinforce the Lead Lesson and establish definitions. Copying out the Instruction Sheet will be a homework task.

2. Demonstration Sheet

Reprographic illustrations supplementing the topic for the pupils to copy and take as samples. The same illustrations will probably have featured in the Lead Lesson. Where teaching is desirable the use of the sheet may be in class time, or it may be appropriate to set for the pupils as homework.

3. Project Assignments

Precise instructions about the work programme to be followed by all classes. The projects will include such instructions as:

- a) Copy the Instruction Sheet into your Study Book.
- b) Write up the Glossary definitions.
- c) Collect or prepare materials or specimens.
- d) Copy the illustrations on the Demonstration Sheet into the Sketchbook or the Study Book.
- e) Fill a Sketchbook page with drawings or designs on a set theme: either Observation work, or Research, or Creative.
- f) Produce set practical work — drawing, painting, collage, etc. as exercises teaching the essential content of the topic.
- g) suggest starting points for creative and experimental projects developing the theme ... for those pupils who work fast enough and well enough to attempt them.

The Presenter may wish to suggest which projects are for classwork and which for homework and what order of work should be followed. But the administering of the programme in the way that seems best is within the discretion of the class teacher.

Class Teacher Duties

The success of Team Teaching does not lie only with the Presenter. The class teacher must assimilate

the Topic presented and administer and direct his/her own class to meaningful work on the theme. In teaching a mixed ability class the difficulty is ensuring that each child is working to the limits of their own ability. Able pupils will achieve higher standards and do additional work. The poorer ones must be helped to master the basics.

The Reprographic Sheets are to be collected in at the end of the topic and stored for possible future use.

Aim to see that the Sheets are maintained in a clean condition and that an efficient storage system is devised.

Assessment

Assessment Marking is based on an Attainment Scale 1 — 9.

1	Excellent	
2	Very Good	High Ability
3	Good	
4	Satisfactory	
5	Average	Average Ability
6	Fair	
7	Moderate	
8	Weak	Low Ability
9	Poor	

Provide a single Assessment Grade for each child at the conclusion of each Topic.

Component exercises within the Topic (Homeworks, Notes, Exercises, Projects) are separately marked and are averaged to arrive at the Topic Grade.

Each teacher keeps their own record and a Departmental Record Sheet for each form is also filled in.

Thus a cumulative Continuous Assessment record is maintained.

This Record Sheet gives a diagnostic indication of overall ability, improvement or decline of standard, and strengths and weaknesses in particular topics.

It is important for each teacher to attempt to maintain consistent marking standards.

Overall Correlation and Moderation of marking standards is the concern of the Head of Department.

Conclusion

This experiment in Team Teaching has now reached a stage at which an interim assessment of its merits can be attempted. Here we have a system which gives the Head of Department considerable overall

control over the content of the art course followed by every child for the first two years of secondary schooling. The Syllabus acquires a valuable uniformity, validity and stability that is nevertheless amenable to constant revision and improvement.

The Head of Department is given occasion to directly teach and be known to all children in each year group, and also to communicate and demonstrate his wishes to his colleagues by example.

Similarly each member of the team becomes known to all the pupils. Responsibility for a Lead Lesson carries with it the obligation to make a good professional job of it, preparing the topic thoroughly and presenting it effectively, watched by one's colleagues.

As well as the responsibility to lead a topic in one's turn, each teacher is also a learner and follower. With each topic, colleague teachers are provided with control directions and ideas to cover the activities of their own class. The children also know what is involved and can actively contribute to the pursuance of a theme. Strong teachers can relax. Those with less experience are helped to tackle new areas of work in a more successful manner. To some extent the strong can carry the weak. As I noted earlier, the team teaching system can even survive the inclusion of temporary and non-specialist staff who are able to fit into the structure already established and follow the pattern provided.

But it is the quality of education received by the children that is the ultimate criterion. There has been a gratifying involvement in the course by a majority of the pupils. The best pupils have filled interesting and purposeful sketchbooks, have produced beautiful study books, quality classwork and meritorious hobby pictures and designs. Not all the work is of this standard, of course. In a mixed-ability grouping we must naturally expect a wide

range in quality and results. Nevertheless a high proportion of children are extended by the team teaching approach and are producing work that represents personal progress. Even with the poorer children the problem is less than it might be. It seems that disinterest and misbehaviour can be better controlled in a group where the majority are keen and hard-working. One is reassured that the high-ability children are extended by team teaching and are not too much handicapped by the mixed-ability form grouping.

The first 'graduates' of our foundation course are now third formers. These children are showing a good level of retention of the foundation material and techniques they have been taught. It has become possible to rely on a common background of knowledge and skills and to witness the continuing attainment of high standards and solid progress upon the foundations laid.

Design Education for the Middle Years A Teachers' Guide

David M. Shaw and J.M. Reeve

The educational experience provided by design-based activities for pupils between the ages of eight and fourteen years lays a firm foundation for design courses pursued during the later years of secondary education. This book provides detailed guidance for primary, middle and secondary school trained teachers on how, despite the very real difficulties involved, they might translate the aims and objectives of design studies in education into meaningful activities and viable courses for their pupils. The authors advance thought-provoking views on many areas of professional concern associated with the introduction and development of design studies for pupils in their middle years of schooling and beyond.

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