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Art Education in Scotland

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"Though the position has slowly improved over a generation, the biggest problem in regard to the teaching of the Arts is still to have them taken seriously at all. Education authorities, headmasters, teachers and parents in their different ways continue to perpetuate the notion that such things as singing and painting hardly belong to serious business of schooling but are at best recreational attachments to it."

This quotation is from the report on Secondary Education compiled by the Advisory Council on Education in Scotland, published in 1947. A brief account of the history of Art Education in Scotland will clearly point the reasons for the above statement.

Art, or as it was then called, Drawing, has been a part of Education since the creation of the Scottish Education Department in 1872. At first it was taught to boys only; after many years it was made compulsory for both boys and girls. Before 1885 the following subjects were taught:- Freehand Drawing of ornament in Outline, Model Drawing in Outline, and Plane Geometry. In 1885, the Scottish Education Department proposed a definite course of instruction arranged to suit children and in graded standards; it included Ruler and Scale Drawing, Solid Geometry, Light and Shade from the Cast as well as Freehand, Model Drawing and Plane Geometry. In 1895, Drawing on a large scale on blackboards, known as Freearm Drawing, was introduced.

The course of instruction for the 23 years, 1872 - 1895 was dictated first by the Science and Art Department, then the Scottish Education Department, and its intention was to train factory and trade operatives. The subjects of instruction - -Freehand, Model Drawing, Geometry and Scale Drawing - were introduced to this end, and the objects aimed at were accuracy and neatness.

In the next nineteen years (1895 - 1914) there was some remodelling of the course of art instruction. A gradual change to greater freedom was made. Each school was required to submit individual schemes of instruction based upon local requirements, and suited to the capacity of both teacher and pupil. Object and Plant Drawing were substituted for Model and Freehand Drawing while Design and Craft Work were developed in schools. Outline drawing was replaced by light and shade and colour, while copying a copy was finally banned. It is recorded that the work of Scottish schools in the first ten years of the 20th Century showed a thorough intellectual grasp of appearance, expressed

however without personality or art appreciation, and, where imagination was involved, Scotland was decidedly behind the continental nations.

From 1914 - 1922, owing to the Great War, little advance was made. In 1920 the emphasis was still on very definite control and systematized work. A suggested scheme of that date states the following, under the heading "Infant Department":-

"The main aims of the work in this Department are to awaken and develop the powers of observation; to provide the means by which children express their thoughts and observations graphically; and to bring the free, undisciplined movements which they display in Scribbling, under control. Objects for exercises can be taken from the following:- balls, large marbles, coins, biscuits, apples, tomato, plum, peaped, carrot, twigs, catkins, drumstick tops, flags, etc." This syllabus is graduated in difficulty throughout the various primary stages.

Until recent years, children, after three years in a secondary school, sat the Intermediate Examination, in which Drawing was compulsory. Objective representation was given a prominent place. Although pupils' portfolios were examined by the Department Officials, Object drawing formed the basis of the personal examination on the Inspector's visit. This undue emphasis on one subject led to the comparative neglect of the more imaginative side of art instruction.

Although art teachers no doubt had heard of Cizek, Pestalozzi, Herbart and Froebel, and the now important developments for which the psychologists were largely responsible, and in more recent times had also come to know something of the work of Catterson Smith and Marion Richardson, the rigid schemes, with their clear and limited aims, tended to prevent any adventurous branching out. As those brought up on "Froehand" from the flat were diffident over introducing Light and Shade in representation, so also were those brought up on Light and Shade in representation diffident about the development of free, creative, imaginative work. Thirty years from 1920, when the above-noted scheme was produced, is very near to us in time. Teachers who are now in the prime of their teaching careers, were brought up on these rigid schemes, where meticulous finish and the ideal of the camera were regarded as the goal, and any personal feeling was ruthlessly crushed. Naturally, they tend to pass on their early training in these subjects with which they have had only a brief and passing acquaintance since their own primary school days.

It is easy to give lessons on skills and techniques but difficult to evolve personal expression, and there is still to be found in many schools this insistence on technical attainment and uniformity of performance which has atrophied the creative power of the community for a long period. Copying a copy is not yet banned.

Many factors contributed to make the disciplined, rigid schemes, which produced definite east-iron results, appeal to the Northerners; Scots thoroughness and attention to detail, a liking for precision and discipline of mind and body, historic, religious and economic background and national traditions which have made deep and lasting impressions,

the stern climatic and geographical conditions, a way of life which allowed little time or energy for extras, and no deep well of culture to draw upon as far as the visual arts are concerned. The work of developing the innate creative powers of the child and of encouraging the growth of honest personal vision and imagination has not gone unnoticed by many headmasters, teachers and administrators who believe in the wider implications, aims and possibilities of education today. The drag-chain and restraining influence on widespread development is the type of art education which preceded it. New methods have not only to be taught, old ones have to be unlearned.

School attendance is arranged as follows:-

- (1) For under 5 year old children there are Nursery Schools, mainly in industrial areas
- (2) 5 - 12 years - Primary Schools
- (3) 12 - 15 years - Junior Secondary Schools
- (4) 12 - 17 or 18 years - Senior Secondary Schools
- (5) Special Schools are provided for handicapped children
- (6) Further Education facilities

- (i) Day Institutes
- (ii) Evening Classes

There is no external examination at the end of the Junior Secondary School course. In the Senior Secondary Schools, pupils take the examination known as the Leaving Certificate Examination and may take, as part of that, Higher or Lower Art¹. Education Authority areas are those of the Counties and of the four largest Burghs, Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow. There are joint Education Authorities for the counties of Moray and Nairn, and of Perth and Kinross. The total school population is 795,299 as at 31st July, 1950. In Edinburgh, the school population is 59,950 pupils.

there are 72 Primary Schools
21 Secondary Schools.

In Glasgow the school population is:-

176,384 200 Primary Schools
 48 Junior Secondary Schools
 29 Senior Secondary Schools.

The roll of the largest Senior Secondary School is approximately 2,000. Eight full time Specialist Teachers of Art are employed.

In a County Authority such as Berwickshire in South East Scotland, there are four Junior Secondary Schools and one Senior Secondary

¹ See Appendix 'A' for details.

School, and in Orkney in the North there are nine Junior Secondary Schools and two Senior Secondary Schools.

The small scattered counties experience serious staffing difficulties. This has greatly handicapped the development of art in the outlying places. Conditions vary from well equipped, up-to-date art rooms to dingy, barrack-like rooms which would seem unsuitable for practical work. The room, however, does not appear to influence the work greatly: good or bad work may be produced in any type of room.

Specialist Art Teachers are employed in all the Senior Secondary Schools in the cities¹ and in most Senior Secondary Schools in country districts. The same is true of all Junior Secondary Schools in the cities and in some outside areas, although many country Junior Secondary Schools have perhaps a visiting Art Teacher or no art qualified teacher at all.

Some specialist Art Teachers take charge of primary classes or advise the form teachers. In Edinburgh, a team of art specialists tours the Primary Schools. Each class receives instruction once a month from the Specialist in the presence of the class teacher who thereafter carries out the lesson demonstrated. Glasgow now has a few peripatetic specialist Art Teachers in Primary Schools. The aim is eventually to have specialist help available to all Primary Schools.

The time allocated to art varies from school to school. A minimum of two periods per week has been laid down in a recent Scottish Education Department Circular - some schools allow more time - three and sometimes four periods per week².

A recent Scottish Education Department Circular directed schools to make provision for instruction in art appreciation for all 4th and 5th year pupils. This has only been operating for a year and results are difficult to assess. On the question of appreciation generally, many schools have their own collection of picture reproductions. Use is made of the Council of Industrial Design Educational Material and the Needlework Development Scheme operating from Glasgow is now providing valuable school exhibits. Also, in the cities, the Schools Museum Services provide ~~instruction and opportunity~~ for study in many fields. Glasgow's Museum and Art Gallery caters for a wide range of interests. In 1949/50 some 76,131 people (children and adults) made use of various museum services, such as loan collection, exhibitions, lectures, etc.

There are few experiments in the integration of art education with other subjects in the curriculum. The emphasis still lies on the division of subjects. Art teachers have helped to stage school dramatic works, have arranged for murals to be painted on the walls of rooms and corridors and have assisted generally in school activities, but work in co-operation with other specialist teachers has been slow to develop.

In most Scottish schools the emphasis has been, and still is, on

¹See Appendix 'B': qualifications of specialist Art Teachers

²Time laid down for examination candidates: see Appendix 'A'

the academic subjects and the esteem in which they are held is reflected in the curricula and even in the rates of pay of teachers of academic subjects as compared with teachers of art etc. This in turn has meant that most of the able pupils are directed into the study of subjects other than art, after the Third Secondary School Year. (It must be admitted that many who, up till that time have to suffer a dull and sterile form of art teaching, gladly turn their backs on it.)

While Scotsmen and Scotswomen do appear to appreciate the rich and varied beauty of their country and the products of creative genius, the imposed narrow criteria and restrictions of early training have raised great barriers to their full enjoyment of and satisfaction in the arts.

The history and the growth of art education in Scotland have been such that work of a freer, more imaginative nature is somewhat slow to develop. Even today the course leading to the Leaving Certificate Examination tends to follow somewhat restricted lines. This is made so by the interpretation put on the syllabus by the art staffs. The syllabus allows a great measure of personal interpretation but only in isolated instances is initiative shown.

It is noteworthy that now many young art teachers are seeking appointments in Junior Secondary Schools, where they perhaps have charge of art work and do not suffer the possible restrictive influence of an external examination. And, although their pupils are not possessed of the same academic powers as those in Senior Secondary Schools, the vigour and relish displayed in the art activities is stimulating and promising and is an indication of the powers and possibilities in art that lie as yet undeveloped in so many places.

The way lies clear ahead, beginnings are being made and an increasing amount of first-rate work is being done in progressive schools. The latest memorandum on the Curriculum of the Primary School dated 1950 has a section on Art which shows there is a change of thought and attitude at departmental level. It begins: "In teaching art, the aims are to encourage the child's natural desire for self-expression through picture and pattern making; to develop his sensitivity to beauty in nature and art; to quicken his observation of his everyday surroundings; and to sharpen his critical perception of what is honest and fine in craftsmanship.

The aims today go beyond merely training potential factory and trade operatives. Instead the full harmonious growth and development of the child is planned, and the belief that this can only be completely realised through opportunities for self-expression and experience through creative activities is receiving ever increasing recognition among educators and parents.

Scottish Leaving Certificate Examination

ART

(A) Higher

Pupils in 4th and 5th years have eight periods of 40 minutes for Art each week.

The examination is divided in time as follows:-

- (i) 4½ hours practical test
- (ii) 1 hour written paper on History of Art or Architecture. (candidates are required to answer one question out of nine; five were on Painting and four on Architecture in the 1951 paper.)
- (iii) 2 hours composition and design

In (i) above the tests are as follows:- Pupils who have been marked by their teachers above 5% have the following options:-

- (a) Still-life in water colour
(Body colour also, though most seem to use water colour)
- (b) Life drawing
- (c) Figure Composition
- (d) Poster Design
- (e) Fabric Printing Design or Embroidery
- (f) Architectural Studies
- (g) Drawing from Antique

Pupils who have been given a mark of under 56% have the choice of (a), (b), (f), and (g) only. Under new regulations in 1951 the practical test for all candidates includes one hour life drawing followed by three and a half hours of one of above subjects. All tests, still-life groups etc., are set by H.M. Inspectors. The Inspectors also see the candidates portfolio of work done over the final two years.

(B) Lower

The time allowed for pupils taking Lower Art is four periods of 40 minutes per week. Pupils of poorer quality who have had eight periods per week and are potential "failed Higher" may also take the Lower examination.

The time is divided as follows:- A total of $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours

- (i) 1 hour of life drawing (1951)
- (ii) $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours - normally still-life (exceptions do figure composition)

In West Scotland there are about 150 to 200 Higher Examination candidates presented per year, and in all Scotland the total may be between 600 and 700. Only a small proportion of these go forward to the Schools of Art in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Dundee, and a proportion only of those receiving School of Art Diplomas continue to the Training College to become teachers. In 1950, out of 105 leaving School of Art, 55 took the teaching course.

Note: Within the above regulations, teachers have a great deal of freedom, but much of the work produced is extremely dull and stodgy. There no real restrictions exist, they seem to arise in the minds of some teachers.

Training and Qualifications of Specialist Art Teachers

Scotland

Students desiring to qualify as teachers of Art must satisfy certain requirements as to general education laid down by the Scottish Education Department. They must follow the courses of study for Diplomas of Art as drawn up by the Governors of the School of Art and approved by the Scottish Education Department and must take a Diploma in a particular course.

The courses are arranged as follows - Four years comprised of:-

- (a) General course of two years
- (b) Specialised course of two years

The Diploma course may be taken in any one of the following subjects -

- (1) Drawing and Painting
- (2) Sculpture and Modelling
- (3) Commercial and Graphic Art
- (4) Design (Within this section there is a wide range - from Embroidery to Industrial Design)

A subsidiary study of one or more crafts is also done.

Teacher training authorities may admit to training persons who hold one of the following qualifications:-

- (i) A Leaving or Senior Leaving Certificate of the Scottish Education Department or a Certificate of Attestation of Fitness of the Scottish Universities Entrance Board, or
- (ii) Having been presented for one or more of the following certificates, namely the Leaving Certificate of the Scottish Education Department, the Senior Leaving Certificate, or the Scottish Leaving Certificate, have obtained at the relative examination or examinations, passes in five subjects. (These subjects must include, English and History or Geography and Arithmetic).

Other minor regulations exist for deciding the adequacy of the students academic attainment and qualifications.

On completion of the Diploma course in a School of Art, Students attend teachers Training Colleges in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee or Aberdeen. The course of Professional Training extends from October until Easter.

The courses of instruction cover the following -

Hygiene	Speech Training
Physical Training	Education
Psychology	Methods and Practice
Art	

School practice is on three days per week and the types of schools used vary in the different centres. In Glasgow two days are spent in Senior or Junior Secondary Schools and one day in Primary Schools.

Throughout the Session each student is visited several times and final lessons are given before H.M. Inspectors.

Note The Teacher's General Certificate - a qualification to teach Primary Schools Subjects.

This is a three year course for women students holding a Leaving (or Senior Leaving) Certificate or a Certificate of Attestation of Fitness of the Scottish Universities Entrance Board.

During this three year course, students have Art instruction on two periods per week for two years.