

**Art Revised: Reflections of Designers on Art in
Second Level Education**

Research Paper

Abstract:

The arts represent a means of expression and imagination that influence the cultures in society (Sunil Iyengar & Ayanna Hudson, 2014). Art education refers to learning about diverse creative disciplines that are an integral component of innate talent's (Nunan, 2009). In Ireland's second level art education there is a lack of clarity in the components of art; which has produced concern towards the current repetitious curriculum cycle (ATAI 2016). From this, the study aims to analyse the core principles of art in second level education by seeking the views of design professionals. This has examined the fundamentals of the art curriculum by explicating the perceptions of contemporary designers; with the goal conducting an exploration into the positive or negative effects of art education. The outcome has revealed whether art as a subject in school is a beneficial choice or proves to negatively impact a career in design; disclosing if art and design techniques can be employed in conjunction. Finally, the designer's experiences have suggested issues and solutions within the framework of second level art.

Keywords: Art, design, education, curriculum, conjunction, reform, revision, creative industries.

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Title:

Art Revised: Reflections of Designers in Second Level Education

“A broad education in the arts helps give children a better understanding of their world...We need students who are culturally literate as well as math and science literate.” - (Ostergard, 2015, p88)

Art helps to cultivate creativity, empathy and imaginative exploration. The term ‘art’ embraces a broad diversity of art forms, which include music, TV, film, traditional and landscape art (Julie Van Camp, 2017); many of them involve group collaboration and all prioritise ineffective communication; for instance, traditional artists would produce artwork for self expression so appreciation is attained from others (Newspaper Association of American Foundation, 2017). On the other hand, design is primarily motivated with enhancing the aesthetic usability and desirability of an object or space to entice a targeted audience. Design has elements of taste and skill that are taught and learned, as encouraging people to buy a product is the designer’s primary service (Potter, 1980). Various design disciplines include modern illustration, animation, graphic, web, and industrial design. Although art and design do overlap with artwork originality and creative innovation, there is a division; if you gain an understanding of both subjects it gives you a strong foundation to excel in both or within either subject individually. Despite their differences, both disciplines tell a story, promote empathy and diversity; with this, a visual appreciation is established (Newspaper Association of American Foundation, 2017) (Potter, 1980).

Through personal experience as an inspiring designer, the awareness of art knowledge and talent will benefit the design professional pursuit immensely. In contrast, during second level education the desire was to be a future traditional artist, but the awareness of design was not obtained in this time period. Hence, at dissimilar life stages the natural preference could be different, and it is important to notice the relationship with previous and current life goals; maintaining an understanding of both (art and design) is highly beneficial. However, the

problem is that at disparate educational levels the discipline direction was distinct due to a lack of variation being employed in education.

Art in Ireland's second level education is considered as the main creative output for students; with the curriculum having approaches to art crafts, drawing and history. However, this study will question whether art education needs a more diverse and receptive landscape for students in contemporary education? Second level art has attracted considerable scrutiny in previous years, especially in regards to the lack of art alteration and students failing to partake in the discipline (ATAI 2016). The Leaving Certificate (LC) art curriculum has remained unchanged since 1972, in spite of multiple requests for revision and the natural evolution of art itself. This failure contributes to the decline in numbers of students taking art as subject (from 10,783 in 2011 to 9,747 in 2016) (CS0, 2011; ATAI 2016). According to ATAI (Art Teachers' Association of Ireland) (2016), an overhauled curriculum is the required implementation and reform of the entire Leaving Certificate art spectrum, not just the assessment refinement. There continues to be a noticeable lack of interest, increased decline and research in this key area, as a revamped curriculum continues to be overlooked (Benson, 1978; Stapleton, 2010; Maguire, 2015; ATAI, 2016). Online media has recently promoted a campaign for the urgent reform of Leaving Certificate art: a petition was created to raise awareness and acquire involvement from the masses (Uplift. 2016). However, this study seeks to research further into this key area by considering the views of designers.

The perceptions of design professionals on the existing problems in this area are the reason for creating this study, where the researcher will explore if art and design have worked in conjunction toward achieving success in their respective fields. This will determine whether a collaboration of art and design is required in Ireland's education by ascertaining if art plays a pivotal role in current design professionals' job disciplines. Perhaps it is questionable that the art curriculum itself is being undermined in education; as it could and/or is helping nurture current and future design practitioners in the creative industries. If art education is considered to be relatively less important than other subjects this will have a damaging effect on potential future artists and designers of the industry.

Currently in Ireland, there is a failure of conducting research towards the reflection's of designer's on the subject art, the art syllabus or the relationship between the disciplines; this study will identify the problems that exist and provide solutions. Therefore, this study will uniquely explore experience, perspective and techniques where design and art overlap or are very much closely tied.

1.0.Literature Review:

The following section is a review of literature in regards to education, art and design. A wide variety of theoretical journals have been reviewed with themes that emerge continuously throughout. The central focus of this review is the purpose of education, the art curriculum and the modern conjunction or disjunction of art with design and vice versa. The primary component of this review is to ascertain if the involvement (if any) of the contemporary school art syllabus has been beneficial to educational knowledge and the design discipline.

1.1. Purpose of Education:

The primary purpose of education is to facilitate young adults to fulfil their life potential, prepare entry into the workforce and citizenship (Peifer, 2014). Martin Luther King (1948) once said the very function of education should aim to teach one to ‘think intensively and critically’. Noam Chomsky specifies that the educational purpose:

“Is for the student to acquire the capacity to inquire, to create, to innovate, to challenge; that’s education” (Chomsky, 2014).

To embrace critical and creative abilities is an important educational attainment according to Chomsky and King. Furthermore, Henning Meyer emphasises today’s education as relying heavily on ‘committing facts to memory rather than on building analytical and Creative capabilities’ (Meyer, 2012, p36). Meyer maintains that analytics and creativity is a future workforce necessity with the digital age demanding that workers are ‘flexible and adaptable’. He argues that it’s essential for the education paradigm to reflect this model with an immediate rethinking of the current educational policies (Meyer, 2012). Sonia Bahri (2014) explains that the majority of education systems are built on models designed in the 19th century; which is outdated and out of touch with society.

1.2. Role of Art in Education:

Richard Siegesmund (2015) supplies an overarching definition of how art in education is about mind habits that illustrate a re-imagining of new possibilities of democratic societies by providing an audience with an understanding of empathy. The professor explains three core areas that should be framed as studying visual art. The first is artistic education; students would partake in in-depth technical training about the production of form. The second is art

education; the inner sense of perception of the multiple outcomes of art, which is providing your innate talent with empathic thinking and learning that assists in creating artistry artefacts. The final segment is aesthetic education; defined as ‘the appreciation of inscriptions of meaning in a wide variety of cultural forms’ (Siegesmund, 2015, p301).

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (2005) (UNESCO) pin points that a new version of secondary education is required that will correspond with art in Irelands education system. Bahri features that art education is a vital segment of modern education; it has positive influence on children’s growth, development, personal well-being and thus academic achievements rise in art involved disciplines (Bahri, 2005)

1.3. Meaning of a Curriculum: Special Consideration to Art:

UNESCO defines a curriculum as a societal forecast of the important teaching and learning material, which is therefore intended and finally implemented as a syllabus. This should represent the vision of society by documenting a framework that issues learning materials, textbooks, teacher and assessment guides. From this, a curriculum is constructed around dissimilar subjects and then knowledge is divided throughout into a set of textbooks; Ireland’s system is assembled like this (curriculumonline.ie, 2017)

A modern day alternative for the western idea of curriculum is a *dynamic curriculum model* (Robinson, 2009). Robinson conveyed that the whole framework of subject based learning requires assessment, explaining that the very notion of separate subjects that lack commonalty offends the ‘principle of dynamism’ (Robinson, 2009). Rather the schooling foundation should be directed towards a ‘Fertile idea of disciplines’, thus a flowing interdisciplinary format is achieved (Robinson, 2009).

Art education in Ireland’s secondary schools offers students two strands of art; practice and engagement with arts in the public domain (TD, 2012). Chief Examiner’s report (2013) reviewed the LC in Arts including Crafts breakdown; which provided in-depth information on the syllabus and assessment structure. The syllabus itself is sectioned into 5 areas: Observational Studies, Imaginative Composition, and Still Life (21%) (2 ½ hours); Design (2 ½ hours) and Craftwork (25%) (5 hours); Life Sketching (13%) (2 ½ hours); and the History and Appreciation of Art (37%) (2 ½ hours) (Chief Examiners report 2013).

The curriculum fails to correspond with ideals discussed earlier as it is very exam focused and lacks creative diversity; students are instructed to study 44 hours of European and Irish Arts and Crafts (c.3200BCE – Present day) in this short time period. With the art syllabus in Ireland remaining unchanged in over four decades, the ATAI presented that this is playing a vital role in students failing to partake in the study. The ATAI (2016) believe if the number of students participating in Art continue to decline, then the LC Art cycle will become marginalised in the future. This may negatively influence Ireland's national, cultural and creative productivity.

It is notable that, in 2005 the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) created a new art curriculum; it currently fails to be implemented. Hazel Stapleton proposes that the 2005 revised syllabus is out of touch with concurrent society. Stapleton emphasises two options for an amended curriculum. The first is Art History being taught as a separate subject; the merit of this suggestion is increasingly evident due the high intensity of material that students are expected to process. The second is integrating Art History to support and contextualise in helping the growth of students' works; teachers are required to teach 5 sections of art in the short space of 2 academic years (Stapleton, 2010; Maguire, 2015).

1.4. Place of Art in Schools:

Ciaran Benson (1978) explains what art education should really demonstrate. Benson acknowledges that art in society should represent values, beliefs and aspirations. Siegesmund and Benson argue that a successful artist can supply perceptions of society to the public through artistic activity, with this, by learning from differing artistic elites. Benson upholds an argument for change as art continues to be coined as more interesting than useful; the problem is to overturn this so art has a more central position in Irish schools. However, variations of art should be introduced for this to happen. As the development of technology is expanding, art usually evolves with it. For instance, when technology increases current generations acquire it for artistic developments; the arts and technology have expanded both fields with ease of access to the masses (Benson, 1978).

Interestingly, Benson explains that teachers today are challenged with having opportunities like never before to introduce kids to art, but, the issue is how to prepare young people to 'cope critically' with the multitude variations of art presently accessible. Could this be merely

a proposition to have an education system completely designed around art? although, a revamped syllabus in Ireland is distant (Benson, 1978). The forms of art are endless, art with design, and film with TV, the commonality they have should generate a new audience. However, Benson explains that Ireland's education system has to change to a more 'favourable environment' so the arts might flourish (Benson, 1978; Stapleton, 2010; Maguire, 2015; ATAI, 2016).

1.5. The Relationship between Art and Design:

Christopher Frayling (1993) outlines that the profession's artists, craftspeople, and designer's main source of activity is research, using the term 'the r word' (Frayling, 1993). Frayling illustrates how the patterns and evolution of design are conjoint and how young designers have transcended from being at work toward being at play (Frayling, 1993). The importance of these fundamentals links in with the concept that the designer is an artist, and if art played a part in them becoming a designer the relationship of art to design (or work to play). Artistic exploration is the only movement. With the art syllabus in Ireland basing its learning on Art History examination and Art Practicality (ATAI, 2016), it fails to explore other key variations of art such as design, innovative techniques, the cultivation of creativity and experimental initiative (Frayling, 1993; Coolahan, 2015). This compares to Ireland's art curriculum and its core agenda to produce an artist, whereas if art has achieved or failed because schooling produces a designer rather than an artist, what are the results of this?

1.6. The Modern Conjunction of Art and Design with the Digital Age:

The current period of human history is primarily concerned with '*computer miniaturisation*' advancement (Ivang, 2017, p1). Introducing design based subjects to work alongside art education is how students will become more engaged with this period. Elizabeth Delacruz (2009) regards that there is a social agenda within the concept of art and design in the 21st century. A new movement is arising as the digital age plans to merge art education with digital media and new modern technologies. She indicates that art today is defined by citizenship, caring and public engagement. However, the main vision of this century is about new agile technologies, where old and new media collide. The conjunction between the two is what's fascinating; 'art education in the digitally connected classroom' (Delacruz, 2009). Could this change the current art classroom?

Haeryun Choi & Joseph M. Piro (2010) propose similar strategies to Delacruz about maintaining art education throughout a technological explosion and pervasive globalisation. The authors explain that arts education policy requires an on par engagement with global and technology advancements in contemporary society, and education ought to devise ways to incorporate the development of new media learning with education and art (Haeryun Choi & Joseph M. Piro, 2010). Ireland's Creative Industries could counteract the repetitious cycle of failure, by being welcomed into Ireland's education system; creativity can be paramount in any industry, any field and any way of life. Would the modernisation of the educational paradigm not benefit Ireland's escalating economy substantially? To have a broad and diverse curriculum, that embraces change and self sufficiency that supplies a more creative education in Ireland. The natural evolution of art should be incorporating with computerised technology, this will benefit the schooling system that surrounds digital natives and beyond, presently it's perceived as an obvious failing to produce creative minds and independent thinkers in the current educational agenda (Natascha Radclyffe-Thomas, 2008).

The general consensus between the academics is that a brighter future is dependent on human creativity. It will only flourish by giving it a chance to grow within others; this is fulfilled by judging life from inner perspectives. With educational modernisation in art, Ireland's society will advance towards a better future for artists and designers. However, questions do arise on the core principles of each craft and if they have a future in Ireland's education paradigm.

2.0. Research Methodology:

The following is a review of research methods in regard to creating data analysis. This research's methodology has taken an approach of mixed methods, which in turn has tested the primary data that is acquired. Methods such as *qualitative and quantitative data* analysis were performed throughout the duration of this study. *Qualitative* research involves the use of interviews, surveys, focus groups and experiments (Research-Methodology, 2017). Whereas *Quantitative* research involves critical analysis and explicating facts and figures, with special consideration given to finding out the underlying rationale concerning the disclosure of the primary findings (Research-Methodology, 2017). In order to achieve the aims and objectives of this study, finding common patterns within the participant responses is essential. Therefore, comparing the findings of the literature review and the main research findings are of vital importance for both types of study (*quantitative and qualitative*) that have been implemented in this research methodology.

The first method was creating a Screener Survey to identify suitable candidates for the purpose of this study. This survey has inspected the individual's knowledge in regards to the topics significance and meaning. It was necessary to locate design participants that are regarded as suitable or unsuitable for further participation in this study. The survey itself had questions ranging from high or low of the art and design discipline knowledge. This screener contained a mixture of multiple choice questions (e.g. 'What type of design professional are you') and exclusion questions (e.g. 'Are you a design professional' and 'did you study art in second level education'). Based on the results of the screener, multiple design practitioners have engaged with the remainder of this research. The screener survey itself had 19 questions, covering three main areas; the designer's background, his/her opinion of the art curriculum and information about their art and design skills and techniques; the online survey is closed.

A number of approaches have been used to locate design professionals. The first was social media sharing throughout popular platforms (*twitter & behance*). Posting information across social networking sites works excellently for basic surveys which require insights from a large group of people. However, for this study expert viewpoints from Irish designers that studied art in second level education were required. The system most suited for accumulating a larger sample size was Snowball Sampling and Hashtag Hijacking. Hashtag Hijacking

involves the use common trends in a post and/or tweet with the survey attached. Snowball Sampling¹ assisted in finding potential applicants in this study. As this study required a very small subgroup of the population, Snowball Sampling is ideal. There are two patterns of Snowball Sampling: Exponential Non-Discriminative and Exponential Discriminative (Research-Methodology, 2017). Some major advantages of Snowball Sampling are that it's cheap, efficient and requires limited planning and preparations. Many of the existing participators have been fulfilled through this method (*Snowball Sampling*).

Cold emailing and conducting face to face interviews have also been used for survey dissemination. The sent emails have incorporated Exponential Non-Discriminative Snowball Sampling techniques. Lastly, in order to be in the same environment as creative experts and design professionals, the Offset conference was attended with hard copies of the survey. Even though the conference in question is considered as an informal networking hub, only 7 surveys were completed by the attendees.

The final stage of collecting data prior to the organisation of the interviews is quantitative data coding. The three key steps are developing and applying codes, identifying themes, patterns with relationships and lastly summarising and linking the data. For instance, elements to be coded in relation to this study include 'can you identify any current skills that should be taught on the art curriculum' with possible codes being Graphic Design, Design Principles and Digital Art.

Conducting Semi-Structured Interviews with this study's target audience of current design professionals was the next step. This has included designers in disciplines such as illustration, graphic design, animation, and web design. Discussions covered the art curriculum, design techniques with the potential assistance of art, and an account of their design success after schooling. Furthermore, designers provided their expert viewpoint on their initial experience with art and expressed whether the art subject assisted the design profession. They were asked 'do you have any comments for young designers and/or artists still in education'. Narrative Interviews were also conducted to provide the interviewee with

¹Snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling technique that is used by researchers to identify potential subjects in studies where subjects are hard to locate (Explorable, 2017).

opportunity to talk about their experience with art and design, participants were asked ‘What is your general opinion of art education then and looking back what is your opinion of it now’.

A reserved methodology was conducted to locate designer professionals. This alternative was contacting an academic design professional in regard to the possibility of an interview. In this, a discussion has transpired and produced qualitative data on specific topics in relation to the research. The academic design participant has presented their individual preferences and beliefs on the art and design curriculum’s in second level education and the core principles of each craft, with particular reflection on a modern conjunction of design with art and vice versa.

Each interview has initiated a debate concerned with what separates art and design, possible problems that can be remedied and long-term solutions regarding the art syllabus.

3.0. Survey Results and Findings:

This studies aims to find Irish designers that studied art second level education. Ireland's design demographic is a fusion of exceptional talent across multiple disciplines; the professionals included within this study ranges from Graphic Designers, Illustrators, Web Designers, Animators and User Interface/Experience Designers. However, locating design professionals in Ireland's Creative Industries that studied art in second level education has demonstrated as a difficult procedure. This section will illustrate how the methodology of this research has gathered information from Ireland's design demographic; as the data collection has gathered insights of art education and current design skills from the professionals. The data has also provided valuable information in relation to the organisation and structure of the second level art curriculum. Furthermore, required information on the designer's educational level and job role background has also been supplied.

3.1. Survey Aims:

From the preliminary results of the 2011 Census it is estimated that there are 6,234 design professionals currently employed in Ireland (CS0, 2011). The number of students participating in art in the Leaving Certificate in 2011 was 10,783, this figure dropped substantially to 9,787 in 2016 (ATAI, 2016). The evidence provided by both reports reveals that the targeted demographic is relatively small. Nevertheless, with the limitations stated previously, a vital segment of survey dissemination occurred at OFFSET. OFFSET is an Irish based company and with 2,500 attendees each year the conference has grown to be one of the world's most inspirational, educational and vocational conferences for contemporary design and creative industries (OFFSET, 2017). Offset has a multi discipline approach inviting the world's biggest practitioners in fields such as Graphic Design, Photography, Animation, Illustration, Fashion, Film, Industrial Design and Art. Alongside this, the survey was shared on popular social media sites (*twitter & behance*) on numerous occasions. Additionally, snowball sampling, hashtag hijacking, direct and cold emailing were three other ways of surveying this researches demographic.

At the event (OFFSET) the survey was designed to fit four pages, whereas, the online survey was displayed on a one page scroll. The majority of questions were focused on Irish Designers who studied in Ireland, with special consideration given to the subject art. A blend

of methods between qualitative and quantitative questions was used. As a result, answers that are relatable to key aspects of this research have been attained.

3.2. Survey Results:

From all the above methods, thirty surveys were completed. Design professionals from both genders engaged and their ages ranged from 22-54. Twenty-nine of the thirty considered themselves as design professionals, with their educational levels varying from undergraduate to postgraduate qualifications. However, not all respondents studied art for leaving and junior certificate in second level education. Along with qualitative information, below are six charts explaining more about the quantitative comments gathered.

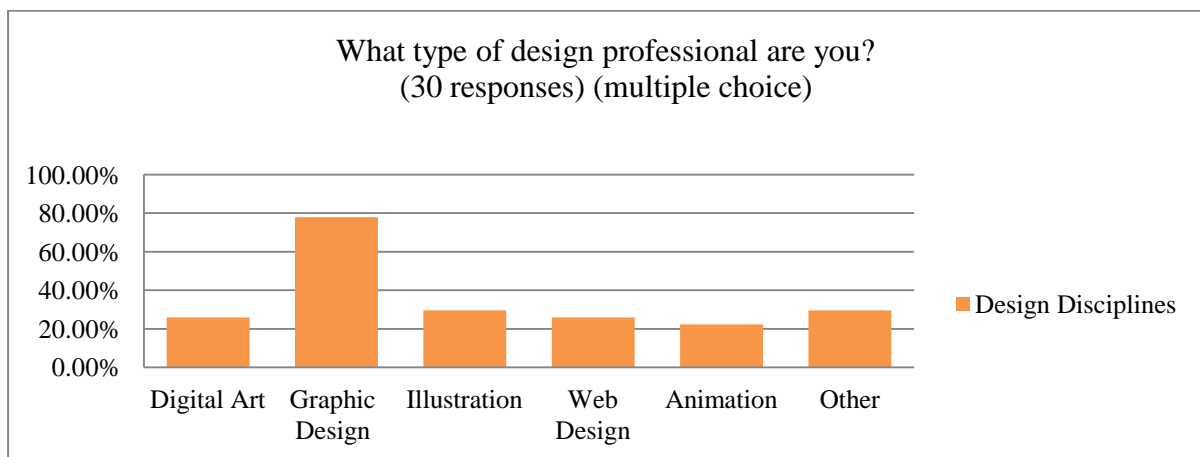


Chart 1.0: Frequency of design disciplines.

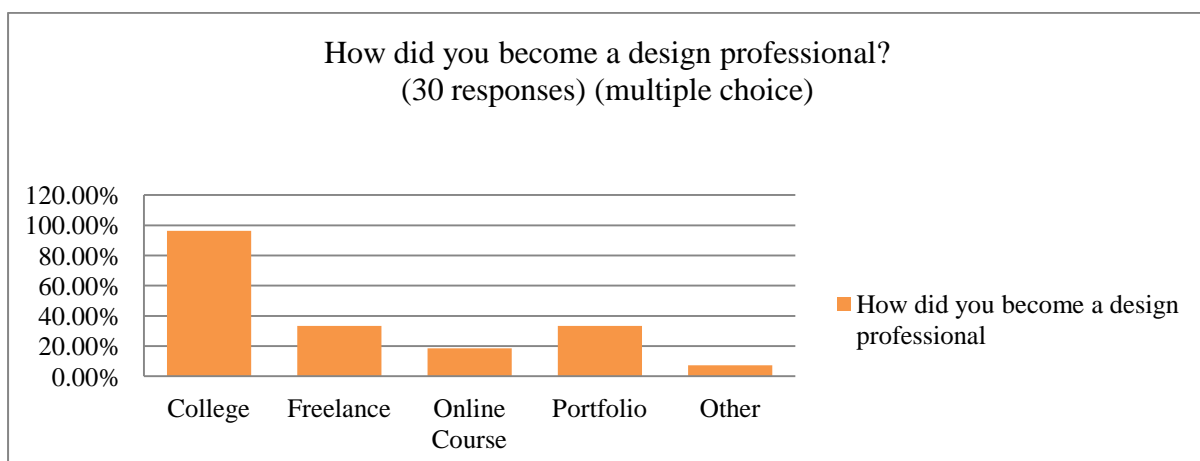


Chart 1.1: Frequency of access to becoming a design professional.

The above two chart's (Chart 1.1 & Chart 1.2) demonstrate that the desired demographic have been discovered from the research method aims. In addition, the professionals have mentioned that they have been within the creative industries for a range of 1-17 years. The most common creative skills that the contributors use throughout their daily design job roles were graphic skills, problem solving, drawing (illustration and sketching), conceptualisation and research.

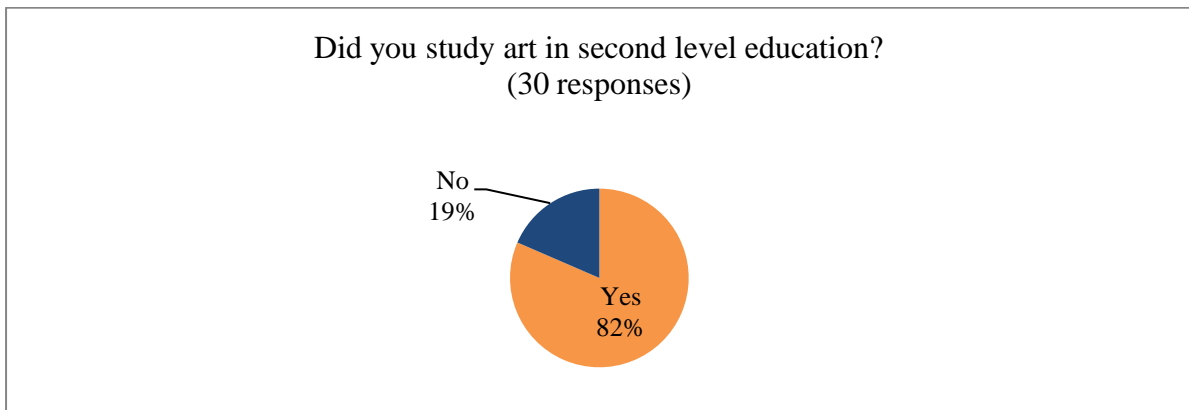


Chart 1.2: Second level art education rate of participants.

By a large margin most of the professionals studied art in second level education. There was a small percentage of separation with professionals that did and did not consider themselves to be an artist (see Chart 1.3). Even though all the survey responders acknowledged that art and/or art education has benefited their career in some way. Interestingly, other creative subjects such as biology, computing, technical graphics, construction studies and engineering have also influenced some of the responder's career, particularly those who didn't study art.

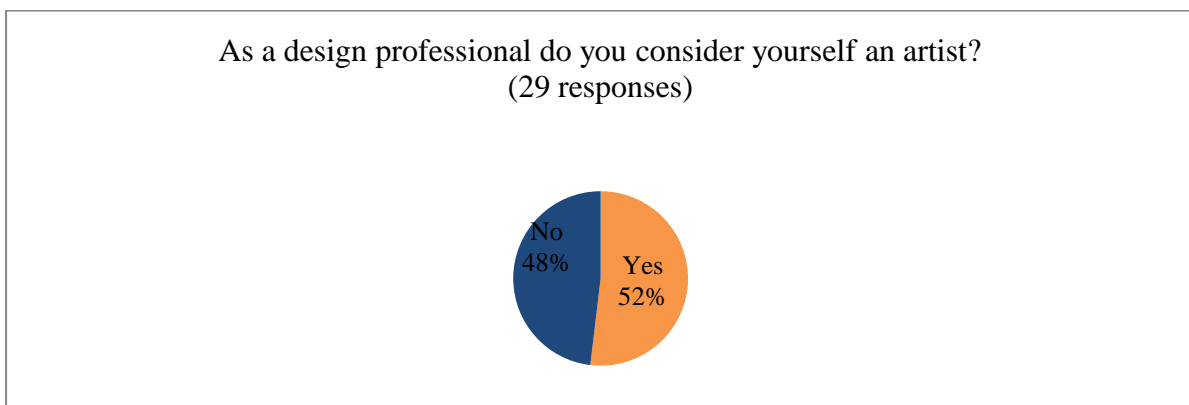


Chart 1.3: Percentages of design professional that consider themselves artists

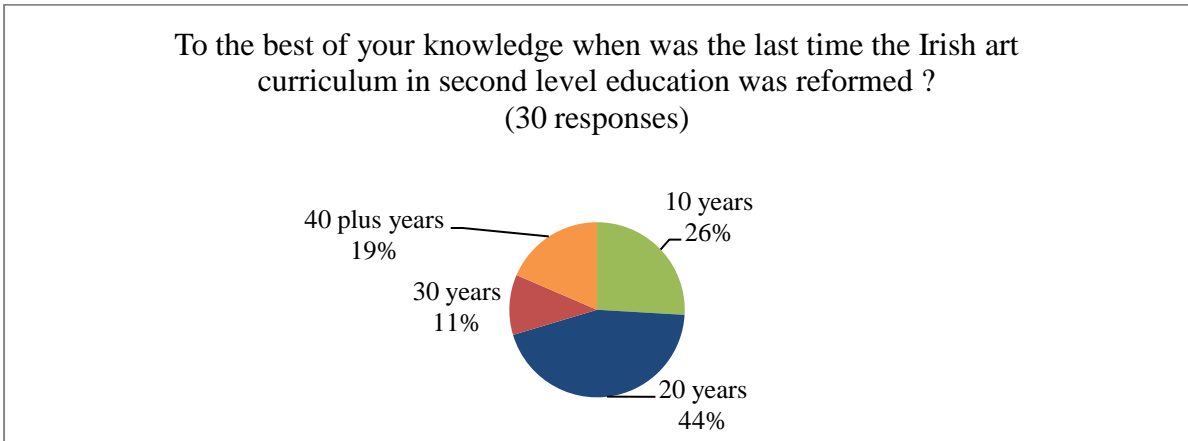


Chart 1.4: Participant answers of when the last art curriculum was reformed.

The correct answer for the above chart (Chart 1.4) was 45 years: the majority of professionals failed to answer this question correct. The general perception of art education was divided between positive and negative; as the following is a summary of both. The positive responses highlighted that art was beneficial, culturally significant and seen as an important creative outlet within Irish education. On the contrary, the negatives reported that the subject art was based on a very rigid curriculum that solely directs its learning towards further education in fine art at NCAD (*National College of Art and Design*), with this, there is too much emphasis on traditional art as various responders regarded the curriculum as weakly structured and not overly diversified. In the final open-ended question, all thirty participants answered ‘yes’ when asked should Ireland’s education system introduce learning about modern design disciplines (digital art, illustration, graphic design, animation, and web design) to work in conjunction with art.

Many commented that in a digital age industries are changing at a rapid pace with kids now learning faster and better than previous times. As they determine the current art curriculum should modernise to suit technological advancements. Nine design professionals have issued their contact details for further participation in this study.

4.0. Semi-Structured Interview's: Results and Findings with Design Professionals:

The semi-structured interview segment of this research commenced with a brief overview of each section. The interview guides were designed in a thematic structure; as there were three research themes. The duration of each interview ranged from 20 – 35 minutes. For the purpose of this section, an involvement of six design professionals was constructed; four studied art in second level education with one failing too. The last interviewee was a former industry design professional but currently teaches the discipline at undergraduate level. The entire interview is based on knowledge of art, design and second level education.

The aim of the interview phase was primarily based on the participant's creative journey from education towards becoming a design professional; to focus on their memories of education and art education with suggestions on a remodelled art syllabus; and to grasp whether design advancements can play a pivotal role on the art paradigm.

4.1. Life Story and Finding out Experiences: The Purpose of Education with Special Consideration given to the Subject Art:

From the discussion, a general perception of education was gathered from then to now. Leona's activity within second level education was deemed as art overshadowing all other subjects due to her relationship with the teacher. Leona does however notice faults that the art curriculum was not complex enough. Similarly, Elena felt that the entire educational pattern was 'easy', and considers a better structure to consume information would be preferable. This is relatable to Sinead's idea of education basing its learning on divergent thinking; Sinead specifies that students should not be taught the same way because each person is different. David had a careless approach to education considering it to be a 'waste of time', as he also states education had way to much weight on memorising facts. In comparison, Richie noticed that education was extremely important, especially at leaving certificate level; take into account Richie did not study art in second level. John's experience of second level was surrounded by nurturing a future job as a tradesman's in a technical college. Nevertheless, John shares that a greater process of learning must be devised, rather than a system completely targeted at 'rote learning'. All the design professionals specified that their opinions would be similar now, although they've become aware that it's moving swiftly

towards a project based curriculum. They all highlighted it should continue on this pattern rather than reproducing facts and figures.

There was varying beliefs on whether the design professionals consider themselves to be an artist. Leona and Sinead described an artist as a person that creates artwork that's original. Richie, hesitated on the idea of a designer to be an artist, but suggests the industry has changed and there are additional artists other than the traditional sense; coining his design's as 'extremely creative and artistic'. Leona and Sinead also felt there creative mindset when designing was very much an artistic approach. Elena expressed that to be an artist you need to be politically and socially connected, as design is about the functional message and taste. In addition, David indicated that from a design professional sentiment you might have an artistic merit but when there is a 'client and brief involved artistry fades'. John believes art is about 'ego', and design is about creating artwork for a company that's for an audience, it's a straight split between your own mentality and the production of what's required.

Through research many academics consider that there are three main motives of the purpose of education which should be applied in modern education (creativity, critical thinking and interpersonal skills). All professionals stressed the importance of the motives in question. However, they all stated school's lacked critical thinking and interpersonal skills, and that the art and technical graphic classroom was the sole creative output in education. Each designer highlights that critical thinking and interpersonal skills was only established in post-education. However, distinctive perceptions on the purpose of education were established from the participants. Leona stated that the purpose should be entirely relatable to what art can offer. Richie feels that education should foster young talents; with Elena and David saying that education should prepare young people for the next stage in life. Sinead specifies the purpose should immerse learning with a particular subjectification. John had a triangulation process to the purpose of education; understanding facts, a sense of the self, and modernise towards group dynamic exercises. John concludes section one by saying a blended version of the three step process is vital for modern education.

4.2. The Contemporary Problem: The Art curriculum; the Meaning, the Justification, and Result.

Besides Richie, each designer had a fond memory of art in second level education in the practical sense, but the theory side (art history) was somewhat not enjoyable. Just like Leona specified previously, Elena's experience with art was healthy because of the relationship she had with the art teacher; calling the environment 'relaxed and creative'. Furthermore, Elena, Leona and Sinead, related the art classroom as a time of freedom where they would focus on life drawing, perspectives of objects and reading about the history of art. To David's disappointment he only did art for leaving cert, this was down to his path changing back to creativity in transition year. Additionally, David's memory was based around learning facts about artefacts and artist's throughout history. Whereas John only did art for junior certificate, although he didn't interact with the art classes itself, the art module components were achieved from the outside; nevertheless John attained a very high grade. Richie failed to take up art in junior certificate because it overlapped with other core modules such as mental work and technical graphics. Once Richie entered the senior cycle of education he did consider to study art but couldn't because the rules stated that you had to study the subject in junior certificate; although art history turned him off regardless.

Leona, Elena, and Sinead commitments levels in art were superior to every other subject; because of their relationship with art other subjects would suffer. In art, they would be more punctual and involved, and even felt the restrictions were limitless. However, David had differing views, art for him was just a time of relaxation from other subjects (music), but does highlight if he wanted to do a portfolio art would definitely exercise this opportunity. It was a requirement for John and Leona to do a portfolio to get into undergraduate education, so spending extra time on art was a necessity; they relate the workload for an art portfolio as strenuous and time-consuming. Positively, Leona denotes her portfolio brief as inventing and exploring. Leona studied at NCAD; she underlines a successful portfolio within this art college 'needs to not be in anyway traditional'. Elena is adamant a portfolio was a 'complete waste of time', and a portfolio never entered Sinead or David's mind frame; to their delight all three went on to study in a multimedia design course in a college institute.

As the art curriculum has not been modernised in 45 years, each participant supplies insights into this. Leona condition's it as 'obvious', as even her art teachers detested the syllabus. Leona say's people in Ireland like the idea of art but not the actual ingredients. She pinpoints that there is an incentive for a government investment into art employment; but when graphic and product design are the 'big money makers' art will always be secondary. Richie, Sinead and David provide its ridiculous while living in a digitally connected world. On the contrary, David has associated the connection of art with design as strong in the omnipresent world. David's was unaware that a design career was even a choice until reaching post-education. Elena insists the problem originates from the schooling facility and the art teacher. She was surprised the limitations art could offer until researching into the complete curriculum. Elena continues by saying perhaps the curriculum should be modernised to some extent, but insisted that the schools need to adapt first. John supplies that it would have been beneficial to learn other mediums, in spite of the fact the 'particular mediums could get in the way of what art truly is'.

From the survey, three common themes (design principles, digital art such as illustrator and graphic design and more consideration into in-depth artistic thinking process) were formulated in relation the participants day to day design experience. The design professionals elaborated on whether they perceived the themes are important with a possible conjunction in the art curriculum, from this, they conceive if art could explore other avenues. Leona agrees the themes could co-exist on the art curriculum, but some schools are old-fashioned and they might not consider digital art as art. Leona has a three step process that art education could explore; writing, layouts and illustrating. She also describes the growth of animation in Ireland is an area of instant gratification, in addition Leona states that art history could be replaced with design principles. Leona concludes by saying 'I don't know a million and one designers, but I do know how to do a million and one designs, so that's what matters'. Richie notices that the art curriculum might not have the capacity to take in design principles in an accurate manner, and in order to do so a total revamp of the curriculum would be required. The days where traditional art is defined as just art is gone, Richie specifies. He continues on to say, all companies now want is people with industry software experience; if education harnessed the design discipline spectrum individuals might actually want to pursue a career in this field. Elena suggests that design and computer skills need to be introduced in some way,

but prior to learning about design skills it's vital to have a stronger basis of creative thinking. Another avenue that art could explore according to Elena was a problem solving design structure; where individuals would try and solve a design problem without designing initially. Sinead was undecided on whether art and design could work in conjunction or even co-exist together due to information overload. Although Sinead says, Colour theory, hierarchy of text and an informative workshop of dissecting design posters should be included in the art curriculum. David expresses in depth artistic thinking process is enormous, whereas design thinking should be exposed to everyone; however, he perceives art and design might work better as separate subjects. John is determined that the design principles relate to 'every article of design and art'. Introducing these principles could provide assistance to students that struggle in art, John highlighted. John also reveals that two aspects of mediums with novel ways of idea generation would be very advantageous in the art classroom. Moreover, John says how to implement the idea is a vital process; for instance this is attainable when 'art works with design or when drawing works with digital art'.

Each design expert featured the three skills they would teach to prepare young students for the workforce. Leona would teach printing, gridding, and illustration (traditional with digital). Richie would base his learning around the basic fundamentals of traditional art, creative thinking and modern design tools. Elena expressed researching designs with artist techniques, colour theory and creative procedures with a final project implementation. David also pinpointed research, in addition to problem solving and interpersonal skills such as group collaboration. Sinead indicated problem solving with group collaboration using brainstorming techniques is her three teaching methods. John finalises this section with his preferable choices, they were; showing up, basic artist skills and lateral thinking.

4.3. Reflections and Insights into Change: Relating to Art and Design with Primary Concern to a Modern Conjunction of Design Disciplines with the Subject Art:

Each designer at one stage in their lifespan had aspirations to become an artist; however it was never established in adulthood. Leona had an innate feeling that she was not 'included in the artistic route'. Leona explains in order to be a successful artist you would need to hold numerous exhibitions annually and be the 'best of the best'. For Leona remuneration was the attraction to the design sector. Richie suggests the allure to design was from the interest's he

had in education by being ‘technical minded with creativity’. Elena had a desire to learn endless amounts of knowledge in everything associated with art regardless of how bizarre it might be. Sinead and David were eager to learn about computers which veered them towards the multimedia course. David highlights that being ‘exposed to disciplines such as video, design, animation, and programming with the media course was dominant over art’. John wanted a wage consistency, and his interests were a mixture between art and engineering which equalled a career in design.

The above prompted the designers to reflect on whether art expanded or weakened their design capacity. Leona believes it’s the other way around; learning how to do in-depth designing has dampened how good she was at art. Richie and David explain that sketching is a large part of their design work; in the job environment sketching allowed them to get through ideas quickly and precisely. Elena is adamant that the greater awareness of art helps make the design judgements better. Sinead says using the basics of art helps her design career substantially. For John, the ‘appreciation of art helps expand your design capacity’; he notes taking inspiration to artist movements will work amazing with the design route.

One of this researches main arguments are that art should explore other areas such as design disciplines (graphic design, illustration, digital art, animation and web design), and their possible engagement with the purpose of art and inclusion in the subject; as the design experts provide their perceptions on the following. Leona says if art is going ‘to survive it needs to modernise and nurture each diverse talent’; although this will fail to exist unless colleges and schools start to communicate. Richie finds it unorthodox that important subjects like modern illustration and animation are not included in the Irish schooling system, especially when the creative industries are becoming so extensive. Richie is unsure about how it would be solved but feels there is a worthy argument especially if they revamped the entire educational system. Elena says to be ‘aware of your capabilities is an important life skill’; this is found from testing out multiple skills such as graphic design, drawing, painting, and illustration. Elena would include design with art in a united subject, for instance graphic design with interior design; within this finding your strengths would be accomplished. Sinead says it’s vital to keep up with technological advancements by incorporating sketching with industry software (Photoshop and Illustrator); this could pave the way for education to have three different art disciplines like Science has biology, chemistry and physics. David highly

agrees the introduction of art with design is essential, even if it's just a fraction of design, as the teacher could supply an overview of the software's. Finally John proposes the appreciation of design in schools is a necessity, this could involve a student presentation of a preferred modern day design perspective i.e. an understanding of design principles.

Conclusively each design professional had some final thoughts and suggestions for artists and designers still in education. Leona issues that the world you enter when leaving school is fast and arduous; one main aim is to be the 'best problem solver in your present environment'. Also Richie acknowledges that problem solving traits are key, he highlights that to utilize critical thinking methods with real world problems is good objective. Elena and Sinead issued that you shouldn't let schools crush your potential talents; see post-education as an opportunity to flourish within the correct form of expression. Sinead also specified that keeping up with online sources will benefit talent aspirations. Learning facts in education is ridiculous 'while living in the age of a Smartphone' David expresses', to young designer and artists he says be more critical in your surroundings. Finally, John says as artificial intelligence is beginning to replace basic jobs, 'design however will remain, as a computer cannot have a sense of taste'; thus the potential with a creative job is clear.

5.0. Evaluation/Discussion:

The impact art and design has on life experiences, society, and culture has been reflected in the previous sections. The opinions of participants have directed this research towards a discussion of whether art and design are a vital segment of second level education. An evaluation of the data collection gathered involving the body of literature and discussion will materialise within this section. As education is the fundamental core of this research the beginning will be based around the purpose of education and art education with the primary focus on the designer's judgements assisted by theoretical stances. With the problem being identified, the investigation into the contemporary art curriculum will be assessed; insights from sources and the findings have presented solutions and alternatives, which leads to a viable modern conjunction of art with design in education. The investigation of this relationship has been informed by the designers' reflection of art in second level education with a particular focus on their opinions, experiences and present career. In essence, is it a necessity for the purpose of art education to invite a new curriculum that adheres to the paramount design spectrum?

5.1. The Educational Purpose with an Understanding of the Artistic Meaning:

Each designer reminisced on their time in general education; during this period the majority of those interviewed based their account on 'rote learning' and 'memorising facts'; this proposes a failure in diversity. In the literature, Peifer (2014) presented that the educational purpose is to prepare young adults to succeed in their life potential, although, this failed to transpire for the designers. There was one prime connection within the varying opinions of the educational purpose; the complexity of the education cycle was repetitious and lacking in challenging avenues. Meyer (2012) argues that pervasive education is not meeting its prerequisite requirements which are to be creative and critical so preparations to post-education will be beneficial. The designer's acknowledged that when project based assignments are involved within education the process of learning is way more engaging which leads to additional content being absorb. King (1948), Chomsky (2014) and Meyer (2012) highlighted that creativity, critical thinking and interpersonal skills are the three most pressing imperatives that the educational paradigm needs to embrace going forward. The current model is outdated and out of touch with its inhabitants; especially when unique talents

are being disregarded due to a hierarchy of subjects (maths, english, science etc), and a group collaborating dynamic being so minuscule; within this change is essential. Each individual that attends education has an innate ability to problem solve; but the designers believe problem solving characteristics only transpire in post-education and the Creative Industries. The designers supplied that creativity remains as the sole motive found within the art classroom and/or in other practical environments; although there is no sign of critical thinking or interpersonal skills in this situation. This renders that the designer's agreed with the academic's perceptions of what modern education should instigate. Meanwhile, if Ireland's current education system embraces technological advancements this would provide assistance to the growth of art too become more contemporary so it's a suitable spectrum for all. According to the literature and the interviewed designers, a syllabus that has a broad range of diversity will benefit Ireland's entire educational system; within this surely talents would flourish in art along with other subjects (Benson, 1978; Stapleton, 2010; Maguire, 2015; ATAI, 2016).

The purpose of art education is also suffering due to various designers declining the artistic ability. Siegesmund (2015) designs three main components of the purpose of art education, these are; artistic knowledge, education about the multiple art outcomes and the appreciation of art. Many designers have perceived an artist to be someone who explores originality within the avenues of art; as the literature complies with this stance (Bahri, 2005; Siegesmund, 2015). Within the information collected, the designer's highlighted that Ireland's art education fails to exercise these avenues. In light of this, segments of the purpose of art are failing due to the bulk of participants that studied art became design professionals. It's apparent the designers declined an art pursuit because the job prospects are almost nonexistent, thus it is questionable that design is the labour market equivalent of art. Art is a vital segment in education as it remains as the primary creative output; currently it is not appealing to the outside observer as the number of students has dropped significantly in previous years (ATAI, 2016). In addition to art being an optional subject, art history plays a fundamental element in students not partaking in the subject (Stapleton, 2010; Maguire, 2015). An alternative could be devised with problem solving techniques, group collaborating activities and a widened approach to creativity; therefore for this to happen closing the gap between design and art is crucial. Evidence has demonstrated the purpose of art is slowly

deteriorating; as it must adjust to survive (ATAI, 2016). Design as an art form is ideal for the creative learning pattern as this would allow art and design education to blossom in evolution.

5.2. The Place of Art in Schools: The Problem with the Curriculum:

The understanding of a curriculum is based around learning material which is implemented into textbooks of various literatures (curriculumonline.ie, 2017). For many years art failed to enact a theory base made inside their syllabus structure, however this was remodelled to adhere to other subjects (Stapleton, 2010; Maguire, 2015). Art history was the inclusion; this immediately goes against a modernisation of a curriculum as the foundation is based on historical figures, movements and structures; which results in a negative backlash from people with a drive to be original within art education. The interior of the art syllabus is theory and practicality and has remained like this for decades (ATAI, 2016). Nevertheless the majority of the designers had pleasant memories of art in second level education. Two of the designers completed a portfolio in addition to other workloads; however art failed to foster accurate post-education assistance for them, as one designer went on to be a design lecturer and the other pursued a graphic design undergraduate course in an art college. Art has rules and regulations that entirely blocks creativity, for instance if art was not completed in junior level, undertaking it in leaving certificate was not an option. Occasionally art could clash with other creative subjects (technical graphics and metal work); this denies a conjunction of creative mediums for students. Presently, as the junior certificate is replaced with the junior cycle (Department of Education and Skills, 2012), art remains unchanged with a 45 year pattern of a repetitious course construction. In the meantime, art teachers are spearheading for change with a remodelled art curriculum, although the schooling facilities are uncompromising (Stapleton, 2010; Maguire, 2015; ATAI, 2016).

The art forms are undeniably large and inviting the entire art scope would nurture endless amounts of talents in education. One strategy is a dynamic curriculum model (Robinson, 2009); with the only commonality being creativity, the possibilities are limitless within this fertilised layout. Suggestions from certain designers explained a good introduction to change would be presented in a model of design principles with digitised art. Although there are

indecisive perspectives from the designers on whether design and art could be composed inside one entire curriculum. It is important to note that promoting traditional art to be disregarded is not the case here, rather it's to keep the components of the current curriculum with varying replacements is the optimal movement. The designers presented that the possibilities would be limitless with the incorporation of design fundamentals; meanwhile current art insults the idea of dynamism as an introduction of technological aspects is so distant. Moreover, a variety of intelligences within practical art and design would welcome diversity and originality. Skill sets such as an understanding of colour theory, critical thinking and group collaboration methods could apply new measures that are not only riveting but also a compliance of the insertion of both disciplines (art and design). One designer was adamant that art originality is lacking with the current course structure; as students are directed and constrained by a brief. Although the syllabus varies from school to school, true creative freedom and originality are restricted by a prescribed institutional curriculum. Back to the three modern day imperatives (critical thinking, creativity, and interpersonal skills) within the purpose of education, each imperative can be established under art, but only if art is broadened. The final implementation is how art education can include the change.

5.3. The Intuition of Change: An Art and Design Conjunction in Second Level Education:

In the previous sections, the data collection presented perceptions and facts of what the connection of art and design truly is; for instance the designer's perspective has stated the relationship as inconsistent; but a great deal of design benefits from art. The idea of art is for a free flow of expression; this is certain; but would the inclusion of design reduce this vision or support it? The designers wanted freedom within the art classroom environment; whereas this is not achieved in design either when a brief or client is involved. In undergraduate level, creativity was helped with the diverse mediums exposed to the designers, as we are aware in second level education art does not exercise this pattern. In the meantime, second level art stands at the core of the creative paradigm, as design remains as just one of the multiple variations of art that is unexplored in Irelands education system. The growth of the problem is with the attraction to art education; it fades due to commanding disciplines (maths, science, English etc) overshadowing natural talent. Each designer highlighted that art broadens there design capacity; as this questions that both disciplines are even separate job titles; feeling art

is a beneficial subject even though they failed to continue down the artistic route; so to include a curriculum, brief and client insults the vision of art and design. Perhaps to be a successful designer it is a necessity to take inspirations from all art forms by having exposure to art by embracing the prominence of the discipline. From the knowledge received in this research, art and design is only disconnected when a third party is involved, and perchance design has just evolved faster than art over time, and unfortunately the exploration of art education remains behind the digital age.

The main argument of this research is the modern conjunction of art with design and whether it is feasible in contemporary times. The literature features art can in fact be helped with technological advancements (Delacruz, 2009; Haeryun Choi & Joseph M. Piro, 2010); as the designers believe it's about time for remodelling to occur. Be advised that the following is a data collection overview of what a revamped curriculum would feature. Firstly, to have a broad and diverse art curriculum will help any individual with the paths they may seek; this is obvious. From this it will widen the attraction to art, directly resulting in the survival of art in schools. The idea of it being optional would be eradicated as students pick between three art relatable subjects. The subjects are combined together under the art platform, which means students would share some core modules, together with modules in a particular discipline. The modules in questions would be research art and design history that adheres to design principles (In the literature, Frayling (1993) provides that design extremely benefits from research; the majority of the design participants agreed with the vitality of research in education), illustration with sketching and layout design, and digital art with freehand and software painting; note that standardised exams would be eliminated and replaced by an end of year choice between self directed or group project. The components of the modules will be based around a three stage process; critical thinking, interpersonal skills and creativity, as each independent thinker would learn freely throughout this dynamic curriculum model.

6.0. Conclusions & Recommendations:

The designer's participation within this study has presented multiple outcomes in relation to their journey to success. Nonetheless, further investigation into the reasoning behind the distances of the professions would be valuable to the disciplines wide spectrum; therefore the inclusion of design with art in education could certainly be embraced. The body of literature proposed that art and multiple art forms can be one of the driving factors of Ireland's future educational system, and the data collection analysed that awakening innate designer capabilities in an artistic mind and vice versa is practical; but additional revision into this process would be beneficial. The primary recommendation of this research is that if art education, as a problem, is to be resolved, more support and awareness must be generated to increase mobilisation and academics such as those discussed play a pivotal part in this narrative; as it's sadly inadequate.

Ireland's design demographic believes that process of learning in art with design should have special consideration in the purpose of education and art. Thus, the reflections of the professionals have underlined that an implementation of a revamped art curriculum is required; with the collected data maintaining it's a modern-day imperative. However, the contemporary framework in Ireland's art pattern continues to neglect an educational future that is brighter for its inhabitants. Although experts and modernised system models are progressing towards alternatives (*i.e. Junior Cycle*), the current art structure is still at the core of creativity in second level.

The multitude of challenges that face creative development within education requires greater attention; modernising this paradigm will benefit Ireland's escalating creative economy substantially, although for this to happen education has to guide students within their individual creative realm. Throughout this study, an exploration of the subject of art in Ireland's second level education has occurred through the reflective accounts of Irish design professionals. The results indicate that the current structure and curriculum of art require a renewed approach, whereby art, and its inherent skills and attributes, are cultivated in conjunction with design principles and practice.

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