

Final Report
Images and Identity: The North South Exchange

“It’s easy to see which side you are on”¹

*Perceptions and images of national identity among student art teachers from north
and south of Ireland*

Dervil Jordan, National College of Art and Design (NCAD), Dublin.

Dr Jackie Lambe, University of Ulster, Coleraine.

The research will examine perceptions of National Identity through the attitudes and images of two groups of student art teachers from the North and South of Ireland using the dual lens of Art and Citizenship. The exhibition ‘Passion and Politics’ by Sir John Lavery at the Dublin City Gallery, the Hugh Lane, serves as a catalyst to explore views and opinions of the two groups of student art teachers on their responses to the exhibition. Both groups of students visited the exhibition together and were then asked to create an image, which represented their National Identity. Using qualitative content analysis the student’s responses to each other’s perceptions of what it means to be Irish/ Northern Irish are analyzed to examine attitudinal and behavioral communications (Berelson, 1952)

The project was known as ‘Images and Identity’ the North South Exchange and aimed to pilot and develop a collaborative art and design education project within initial art teacher education North and South which would support the teaching of Citizenship Education across the whole island.

- To examine how exploring personal, national and international identities through Art and Design can change student teachers and learners perceptions of themselves and others.
- To promote cooperation in (curriculum development) across institutions responsible for Initial Teacher Education in the Visual Arts in Ireland (with a specific North South dimension).
- Our focus will be on the development, testing and implementation of innovative pedagogical materials in Art and Design, curriculum content and methods relating to the development of Citizenship Education.
- To support the development of innovative ICT based content services, pedagogies and practice for lifelong learning.
- To improve motivation for learning, and teaching and learning through the development of a range of approaches to teaching the visual arts to support transversal key competencies.

¹ (Sir Edward Carson’s comment on the paintings of Sir John Lavery)

Work to date has been in three phases: preparation, data gathering, and data processing and analysis. The researchers met in Coleraine and Dublin in advance of the project starting.

Preparation Phase 1. July / August 2010.

Three planning and development meetings took place between the PGCE coordinator at the University of Ulster and the Post Graduate Diploma in Art and Design Education (PGDip ADE) Coordinator at NCAD.

Planning for the joint visit to the exhibition *Passion and Politics, The Salon Revisited* at the Dublin City Gallery, The Hugh Lane, Dublin.

Planning for the seminar and presentation of student teachers images of National Identity in NCAD.

Planning the development of the post seminar and post exhibition questionnaire and the Citizenship seminar in Coleraine.

Data gathering-Phase 2. October 2010.

Information was gathered to establish the profile of both student groups. (Biographical details, degree type, experience, other qualification etc.)

- Both groups of students visited the exhibition of the works of Sir John Lavery at the Hugh Lane Gallery in Dublin. This was followed up by a questionnaire examining the student teachers responses to the exhibition and their perceptions about the role of the artist as a visual commentator of his times. The exhibition acted as a springboard for generating ideas and discussion around notions of National Identity. Sr John Lavery gifted his sizable collection of works to the two cities of Dublin and Belfast, the Ulster Museum and the Hugh Lane Gallery in the early part of the century.
“The exhibition is a significant and invaluable record of one of the most turbulent periods of Irish history”. From the 1916 Rising through to the War of Independence through to the birth of the Irish Free State and the State of Northern Ireland; his portraits and paintings are a non erasable and vivid account of the nascent States. (Dawson, B. 2010)
- Students examined the issues and events which formed the exhibition and looked at the role of the artist as a chronicler of his times through a guided tour and participation in Drama Workshop related to Passion and Politics exhibition.

Prior to any engagement with the project both groups of student teachers took part in a base line study where they created an image which represents their National Identity. Each student was asked to:

“Select or make an image YOU feel represents your National Identity. Write a short statement (no more than one page) explaining where the image comes from, why you chose it and why you think it expresses your National Identity”.

These images were presented to each other and discussed at the NCAD seminar on day two in October 2010.

The Citizenship element of the day was led by Mary Gannon Curriculum Development Unit (CDU) (Citizenship Curriculum North /South) Students participated in a workshop on methodologies for dealing with controversial issues in the classroom.

Data Processing and Analysis from Phase One-November-March 2010-2011.

Text data drawn from the questionnaire was analysed qualitatively and some initial findings will be presented. The images and texts created by the student art teachers on their perceptions of National Identity were also analysed qualitatively and these findings will be presented at the Re-imagining Initial Teacher Education, Perspective on Transformation conference in St Patrick College, Drumcondra on the 30th June to the 2nd July 2011.

Phase Two- January-February 2011

Citizenship Day in Coleraine.

NCAD student art teachers travelled to the Coleraine Campus for a Citizenship Day where both groups of student art teachers participated in a series of workshops on National Identity and Citizenship. Each student group made a presentation to the entire PGCE subject group on their responses to the Images and Identity project. The NCAD student art teachers presented a selection of digital video animations, which represented their concepts of National Identity. The PGCE student art teachers presented some of the pupil's artwork, which had been carried out in the classroom.

Desemination. June / July 2011

The research findings from the Images and Identity North South Exchange project were presented at the conference in St Patricks College (30th June-2nd July 2011), Re-Imagining Teacher Education: Perspectives on Transformation. The paper "*Its Easy to see which side your on*" *Perceptions and Images of National Identity among student art teachers from the north and south of Ireland* was jointly presented by Dervil Jordan and Dr Jackie Lambe. The paper explored the potential for embedding citizenship into and art and design context through the findings from the student exchange . It examined perceptions of National Identity through the attitudes and images of the two groups of student art teachers. The exhibition *Passion and Politics* by Sir John Lavery in the Hugh Lane Gallery in Dublin served as a catalyst to explore the views and opinions of the two groups of art teachers on their response to the exhibition. Both groups visited the exhibition together and were asked to create and image which represented their National Identity. They presented their images and reflections to each other in a follow up session in the National College of Art and Design.

Two papers from the North South Exchange research project have been submitted for publication in two forthcoming books. *Art Education and Contemporary Culture:*

Irish Experiences, International Perspectives edited by Gary Granville. Bristol: Intellect (in press 2011) and *Images and Identity: Exploring citizenship through visual arts* edited by Rachel Mason (in press 2011).

Potential for future collaboration.

The student art teachers developed curriculum material based on the Images and Identity project. The intention is that this material will be further developed as curriculum art projects in schools. The digital dimension will be explored through online sharing of project ideas and images through flickr / moodle discussion.

Dervil Jordan, National College of Art and Design
Dr Jackie Lambe, University of Ulster.
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