

**Foley, Kay, 2008, *The (1999) Revised Curriculum: The objectives, role and outcome of the aesthetic component in Visual Art education.***

## **ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION**

This study concentrates on the area of Visual art education and in particular on the development of aesthetic awareness and its provision in the (1999) Revised Visual Art curriculum (Ireland). The research was completed with the senior classes (years seven and eight of an eight year cycle) at primary level in the Republic of Ireland. It investigates the provision for aesthetic development in the (1999) Revised Visual art curriculum. Research was conducted using the six strands (Drawing, Paint and colour, Print, Clay, Construction and Fabric and fibre) of the curriculum as scales to assess the experience of senior primary school children in single sex and coeducational schools.

The study is conducted in the areas of art education, aesthetic awareness and the development of spirituality. It is influenced by the work of Viktor Lowenfeld, Aidan Nichols and David Hay and seeks to establish a relationship between the development of aesthetic awareness and the articulation of one's spiritual journey.

An Introduction outlines all the relevant elements of the study and is followed by a comprehensive Literature review. A consideration of the research methodologies which inform the selection of research instrument and engagement precedes the presentation *and* analysis of data. The study concludes with the formulation of relevant conclusions, recommendations and the identification of future study opportunities.

The students and principal teachers displayed strong creative urge, unconvinced by a poorly organised and unfocussed art curriculum. In particular the lack of a separate strand for the development of aesthetic awareness revealed an inadequate provision of terminology and language to discuss, to form opinion of and to conceive of design. Teachers also showed difficulties in planning for progression in their teaching and the children's experience remained in most cases at a superficial level. This was not an unexpected finding on the part of the researcher.

A significant link was established between the development of aesthetic appreciation and one's spiritual journey. The verbal and visual language of the former facilitated the development of the latter.