Action Research The 'I Can't draw syndrome'

By Jago Neal

"Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up." - Pablo Picasso

Introduction: A personal journey with drawing- Making sense of the world.

Drawing is a huge interest of mine. In fact it is a need. For as long as I can remember I have always wanted to draw to express myself. When I was quite young my mum used to go to the butchers and bring home large stacks of their thin paper for me to create endless pictures on. At this stage I didn't care what I drew or what happened to my drawings. Once they were completed, they were done with, I would just start another. I never ran out of ideas, that seemed impossible. I was exploring my imagination, learning and making sense of the new and exiting world around me.

As I got older something changed. I still considered myself a 'good drawer' because lots of people told me that I was, but often I didn't like my drawings as much as the process of making them. My pictures weren't as good as the ones I could make in my mind. I became self critical. I compared my drawings with the ones I saw in my brother's comics. I wanted them to be better: to look 'real'. I wondered what I should draw and I started lots of drawings and never finished them.

During puberty I went through a stage of drawing violent images. People wondered how a nice calm boy could make such disturbing pictures. They often wondered what went on in my head. I didn't like other people looking these drawings much. It was as though the person was looking inside of me and judging me. I kept my drawings of blood and death, evil characters and sexy girls hidden in my sketchbooks. I was working through my emotions and trying to make sense of the world again, only this time it was more confusing and I wanted to do it in private.

At university, whilst studying for my degree I was made to show my work to my peers and to discuss it in group 'crits'. Gradually I became used to this process and began to enjoy it. It felt good to have other people who were interested in art

appreciate my work and my ideas. In fact it felt like a relief. Creating art that no one ever sees had become a lonely experience. I felt like a sad musician whose music is never heard. I came to realise their was no accounting for taste. Everyone liked different things in art. Sometimes they liked or saw things in my work which I didn't. But they told me not just whether it was good or not, but why. I still drew lots of characters and faces - I call them my mind's companions, but they had mellowed. This time any anger came through in political art works. The motivations were more external again.

Then a teacher came to my university to run a series of drawing lessons with us. In a sense she 'untaught' a lot of what I thought I knew about drawing. Her focus was largely on observation and we spent long lessons at Kew (Botanical) Gardens looking at our environment in different ways, drawing empty spaces and breaking down existing images and paintings in galleries into shapes and lines. She challenged me to readdress all the safe things I did when I drew. I stopped using the same skills I had always used and relied on. My drawings began to look looser and freer again.

I have a very vivid memory from this period of a day I spent on the embankment of the River Thames. I went there to draw but spent most of the day just sitting and really looking at the world around me. It was one of those rare moments of clarity in life when everything begins to make sense. I felt an incredible sense of calm and connection to the world, which, it seemed to me, had slowed down for me to observe. When I did draw I drew slowly and purposefully. It didn't matter what I drew and I produced very few drawings, but I didn't care. The time I spent just looking was when I learnt most.

I have discovered through my research that these stages of artistic development are not uncommon. Lots of people enjoy drawing when they are young and then stop. But most of them never draw again. I wanted to explore why this happens because

of my love for drawing.

My Research Topic In Brief

To research what has been described as the 'I Can't Draw syndrome' and explore the link between students deciding that they don't want to study visual arts, and deciding they can't draw well. I aim to explore students notions of drawing 'well' and challenge their preconceptions of drawing so that they might decide they can still benefit from studying the arts.

My Rationale

When teaching art one of the most common phrases heard from students is "I can't draw'. This statement provides the basis for my Action Research. On the incredible art website (ref?) teacher Ken Rohrer has termed it the 'The I can't draw syndrome' because it is a statement so frequently used. He says it is his number one 'pet peeve' when teaching art. Artist Gareth Prichard has also heard the this self-defeating statement all too many times and comments... "if I had a penny for every time that has been said to me I would be more than a few thousand pounds better off." Prichard notes that "I don't really know what people who make these statements mean, but everybody can draw". I believe the statement can has hidden meanings and connotations. I agree with Prichard that the statement itself is nonsensical. Physically everyone with appropriate motor and muscular functioning can make marks and can therefore draw. A point that both Prichard and Rohrer make is that many people with physical disabilities - some severely physically challenged – also draw. "These people had every excuse in the world for not drawing. These people never said those nasty words, "I can't draw."(Rohrer, 2010) They both suggest highlighting the work of some disabled artists to challenge students when they say 'I can't draw'. This is one teaching tool I have discovered through my research which I can use in my teaching practice.

My research attempts to understand what students really do mean by this statement. By saying 'those nasty words' students are, consciously and subconsciously, saying a lot about their understandings of drawing and art. It is these underlying meanings that my research aims to uncover in order for me to gain insight into my subject. My research seeks to answer some of the questions raised by the statement, such as; How does this notion of being able to draw affect students' enjoyment and engagement with art? Does it impact on students' desire to continue with the subject? How can I encourage students to believe that in fact 'they can draw'? Are there any cures for the 'syndrome'?

I would like to improve my understanding of why students enjoy and engage with art so that I can make lesson plans more inclusive. I hope that I can develop students' notions of what art can involve and broaden their understanding of the visual arts and its purposes. I wanted to explore the many complex notions and debates which this simple statement raises and discover my own point of view on them whilst training to teach.

'Children of the Market'

This is an extract from my professional practice assignment *"In opposition to the prevailing liberal arts movement in education Herbert Spencer once asked the question "what knowledge is of most worth?" I would answer that the knowledge of oneself is, and that is where teaching the arts has its worth. I strongly believe that education in schools should not solely be based on gaining knowledge in order to get a job, or make money, but also to promote spiritual well being. I feel that there is far too much emphasis on the pursuit of money in our society and, in turn, in our schools. By placing most importance in schools on subjects considered 'of most worth' in terms of financial success we only encourage this false notion further; that to be happy you need a 'good job' and to earn lots of money."* As I will go on to discuss, I feel that art is often viewed as unimportant, by students, parents, schools and society because it does not guarantee financial security (as if any subject can in this day and age). So, if a student is not obviously talented in art, it is often the subject they

drop first, whether they enjoy it or not. This pressure often comes from home under a false pretext: If they cannot draw they won't achieve well in art. I would question whether achieving grades should be our main focus in education anyway but this philosophy probably wouldn't go down to well with parents or headmasters. The important thing for me is that students learn what they decide they want to learn. That should be their right. As John Holt so eloquently states, in 'How Children Fail' (1964) "Children do not need to be made to learn to be better, told what to do or shown how. If they are given access to enough of the world, they will see clearly enough what things are truly important to themselves and to others, and they will make for themselves a better path into that world than anyone else could make for them".

Another motivation for choosing this topic is to help me to find ways to persuade my students that art is in fact of great worth. Of course not everyone does want to carry on with making art, and that's fine. I am not assuming the position, that 'my subject' is 'of most worth' : that is the choice that each individual student should make. I feel, like Holt, that children know what subject is important for them and that should not be decided by the burdens of our capitalist society. My aim is to teach my students that they can continue and benefit from art if they want to, despite any perceived limitations they feel they have.

Part 1- Reading & Research

'I Can't draw = I can't draw well'
What do children really mean when they say they can't draw then? The most obvious, more conscious reading of the statement, 'I can't draw' is that it can simply be interpreted as 'I can't draw well'. This means that students have an notion of what 'drawing well' is but feel that their drawings do not match up to it. At the start of my research the main questions I wanted to determine were

- **What** this common notion of 'drawing well' is?
- **When** children lost confidence in their drawing ability?

"I'm drawing a picture of God." Surprised, the teacher said, "But nobody knows what God looks like." The Girl Said, "They will in a minute." (Robinson, P.Xi, 2009)

The quote above is used in his introduction to 'The Element' by Ken Robinson to illustrate the point that, "... young children are wonderfully confident in their own imaginations." But Robinson continues... "Most of us lose this confidence as we grow up." (2009) The freedom and fearlessness children have when they first draw or paint is not accepted as they become adult, not least by themselves! As we get older we become our own fiercest critics.

As Robert Clement says, in 'The Art Teachers handbook (2nd Ed), "Children rarely say 'I can't draw' much before the age of eight, but when they do it is clear signal that they want help and support to make 'real images' that will satisfy their need to describe and explain the complexity of the natural and made world they see about them"(1993). As I stated in my introduction I also remember this desire for my pictures to look 'real'. I can now see a direct correlation between my age and lack of self expression. In a sense children stop truly make art when they start to think of themselves as more grown up, and that therefore, they should make 'grown up' pictures. As Clement explains... "Until the age of six or seven, children are not able to analyse their response to the environment. Their drawing has little reference to formal or traditional forms of visual expression, nor are they confused by the differences between the images they make and those that they see about them. They happily kaleidoscope time, space and scale in one drawing, and it is this quality that gives the work of young children the vitality and quality of expression that begins to wane as they begin to develop the ability to handle the formal tools of communication." (1993 p.33) This means they begin to depend more on a vocal form of communication than on mark-making to 'make sense of the world' at a young age. Clement says... "As soon as they (children) are able to convey their thoughts and feelings through written, or spoken word, the emotive

drive to communicate through visual means begins to wind down, simply because it can be satisfied in other ways." (1993, p.33)

In relation to this, I think of how early man communicated through pictures, long before language was developed and this makes sense to me. "Ice age artists display a whole range of styles and techniques- abstract, naturalistic, even surreal- as well as using perspective and sophisticated composition. These are modern humans with modern human minds, just like our own. They still live by hunting and gathering, but they are interpreting their world through art." (McGregor. N, 2010) It could be argued then that drawing is a deeply evolved and inherent skill of humans, a very human way of making sense, which comes naturally to us when young. Children quickly begin to want more sophisticated drawing skills at their disposal.

Stage Theories-

"When my daughter was about seven years old, she asked me one day what I did at work. I told her I worked at the college- that my job was to teach people how to draw. She stared back at me, incredulous, and said, "You mean they forget?" ~ Howard Ikemoto

Stage theories in art development have also been developed by educational and psychological theorists. Creativity is such a complex phenomenon that I feel it would be impossible to find a framework which adequately organised it into neatly structured categories. For this reason I question the nature of all stage theories for being over simplified. But when used as a guide to what might occur rather than what is deemed 'normal' I have found these of use to my research.

Viktor Lowenfeld- 1947
Viktor Lowenfeld created arguably the most highly regarded framework in describing and categorizing children's visual art development in stages. First published in 1947 in 'Creative and Mental Growth', his five stages are based more on the characteristics found in the childrens' art instead of the age of the child

producing the piece. But an 'average' age is given when this stage might occur.

Lowenfeld's framework shows that there is a spectrum of visual-artistic development that a child can go through. The stages of most importance to my research, however, are the 'Dawning Realism' (9-11 years) stage and the 'Pseudorealistic stage' (11-13 years). The 'Dawning' stage... " is a period of self awareness to the point of being extremely self critical. The attempts at realism need to be looked at from the child's point of view. Realism is not meant to be real in the photographic sense rather than an experience with a particular object. In this regard this stage is the first time that the child becomes aware of a lack of ability to show objects the way they appear in the surrounding environment." (Lowenfeld, 1947) Clement says that the teacher's role is very important at the beginning of this stage of development because..."As they begin to compare their own work with the images that surround them, between the ages of 9-13, teachers need to begin to support the children's desire to make 'real' images."(1993) This stage will be critical to students deciding that they 'can draw' which means that often children have already made their minds up on art before reaching secondary level education. For me, as a teacher of secondary students, it might be hard to 'get back' those students have have made their mind up on their artistic ability and stubbornly stick to their assertion that they 'can't draw' because they haven't yet been able to draw in a way which is satisfactory to them. It is all very well a teacher telling a student that they can draw but the student must see it and believe it for themselves. So the big question becomes then how to teach students to draw so that they see improvement for themselves. This question is something I will look at later.

By the 'Pseudorealisic stage' when students reach secondary level... "the product becomes most important to the child. This stage is marked by two psychological differences. In the first, called Visual, the individual's art work has the appearance of looking at a stage presentation. The work is inspired by visual stimuli. The

second is based on subjective experiences. This type of Nonvisual individual's art work is based on subjective interpretations emphasizing emotional relationships to the external world as it relates to them. Visual types feel as spectators looking at their work form the outside. Nonvisually minded individuals feel involved in their work as it relates to them in a personal way." (Lowenfeld, 1947) This means that art projects set towards students at this age must relate to them on an emotional level and have relevance to them while also satisfying their desire for it to look aesthetically pleasing.

Hargreaves and Galton, 1992

Why people begin to feel they are no good at art is also considered more recently in 'Aesthetic Learning: Psychological Theory and Educational Practice' by Hargreaves and Galton. The authors begin: "The ways in which children and adults engage with the arts are diverse, individual, and extremely complex, and this poses formidable problems for psychologists who attempt to understand the underlying processes, as well as for educators who have to encourage and guide the participants." (1992, p.124)

Hargreaves & Galton explore notions of developmental theories in art and find a Piagetian style stage theory problematic for its lack of recognition of the role of external influences, believing in particular that "... the effects of specific artist training must be an integral part of any comprehensive theory". (p.192) As I said before the child's previous learning and exposure to art must be considered. A stage theory based on age is difficult because past experiences will vary greatly. When teaching in secondary school this is noticeable in the huge range of ability levels one can see in the work of children the same age. The authors go on to "extend and develop" findings and research from Howard Gardner and Dennie Wolf in relation to cognitive developments in art, and propose 'Five Phases of Artistic Development'. They are clear to distinguish the term 'phase' as opposed to 'stage' to distance their theory from those of Piaget.

Of most interest for my research and my practice, are the latter three suggested by Hargreaves and Galton: the 'Schematic' (5-8 years), the 'rule systems' (8-15years) and the 'Metacognitive' (15+years) and in particular the 'rule systems' phase because I believe it is at this phase that many children lose art in their life, feeling that they are unable to draw 'well'. "One of the major developments occurring when children's engagement with art work becomes "schematic" (roughly between the ages of five and eight years) is an increase in the level of organization of "immature" productions, so that they become increasingly congruent with cultural rules and standards." (P.132) This means that by an early age children are already aware of conventions and are beginning to follow the accepted norms in the organization of pictures. By the ages of eight to fifteen, which is labelled the phase of "rule systems" children's drawings attempt to become "visually realistic".

Often learners' enjoyment of subjects stops with embarrassment or failure if they cannot create these 'realistic' images and they say 'I can't draw'. Many therefore never reach 'the metacognitive phase' when they could understand that they are allowed to have an individual response to art, and break the conventions to find their freedom. As Wolf puts it, at the 'Metacognitive phase': "They become aware that there are no certain rules; they realize that different minds will construct different worlds and different ways of evaluating these worlds" (1992). I believe that this is the level of understanding in art that should always be taught so that this response is a constant, not a phase, by teaching students that their own ideas have as much value as the application of them. Hargreaves and Galton believe that many people will "… never achieve this mature level of artistic understanding." I would argue that it is not a 'mature level' of understanding but in fact the level we are at when we first make art. I feel it is the level I must teach adolescents to rediscover. In a sense help un-teach, as my drawing teacher at university helped un-teach me the 'rules' that we ourselves put in place.

This initial research, including my own experience of artist development suggested that the answers to my previous questions were that;

- Children lose their faith in their drawing at around eight years and above
- Children's common understanding of drawing 'well' meant drawing in a 'real' or 'realistic' way.

Art isn't meant to be easy

There is an assumption about art.... "that while 'craft' can be taught 'art' remains a magical gift bestowed only by the gods. Not so" say David Bayles and Ted Orland in 'Art and Fear'. They say that "In a large measure becoming an artist consists of learning to accept yourself, which makes your work personal, and in following your own voice, which makes your work distinctive"(1993) which is perhaps why adolescences either struggle or engage deeply with making art- depending on whether they can express their doubts and concerns, and make sense of themselves through art making, or not. Bayles and Orland believe that... "clearly these qualities can be nurtured by others" which would include teachers, but.... "Even talent is rarely distiguishable, over the long run, its perserverence and lots of hard work."(1993)

Students seem mis-informed and believe more in the myth of talent over hard work. They seem to view art in a different way to other subjects. Some don't view drawing as a skill which they can learn, believing that it is a skill that you either have or don't.
Students use this notion as an excuse for not trying to learn artistic skills, but they accept they can learn skills in other subjects. You don't often hear students say....'I can't write' as an excuse for not trying because most would except it as essential skill which they must learn. This links to what I have previously discussed and is an area which art teachers come up against; 'the hierarchy of subjects' which is evident in schools and which ultimately mirror the values of society. Students do not place as much importance on art as other subjects because most schools do not.

"Art is sometimes used as a filler activity and this detracts from its credibility as an educational subject" (Hargreaves & Galton, 1992) Students are more willing to accept defeat because they do not see art skills as important as those they learn in other subjects. This viewpoint is often endorsed by parents at home, who can see art as a subject with limited career options and, subsequently, of little value to them and their children.

Of course other art teachers and I would vehemently counter argue this. Elliot Eisner said that "the school curriculum should be aimed at the development of multiple forms of literacy, including words, numbers, sounds and visual images. Some concepts may be better understood through visual means and some children may be predisposed to learning through visual media. These are important educational reasons for taking a serious view of the role of art in the curriculum" (1992) Sadly this view is not always supported in schools, with the exception perhaps of Steiner schools. Therefore sometimes when students say...'I can't draw' they also don't care.

Of course some students do care but seem to feel that art should be easier than it is. They are left frustrated by drawing tasks because they take concentration and commitment. More and more, with a reliance on technology I now believe children have limited concentration spans. They want things to work quickly, but learning to draw takes time. Perhaps students expect art to remain more immediate, fun, and exciting as art activities often are in the classroom when students are younger. A clear reason students say 'I can't draw' is through a sense of frustration and a desire to improve but a lack of understanding that this skill is not easy or immediate. Which raises the next question how then do I teach them to believe 'They can draw'?

Part 2- Methods and actions

Action Plan 1: Surveys & Data

At the beginning of my research my main intention was to see if the theories of mine and others were accurate e.g;

- Was the link between students' enjoyment with art related to their perceived notion of their ability to draw?
- Was their notion of drawing 'well'- realistic?
- Did they believe that they had to be able to draw 'well' to continue with art?

The main focus areas for my research was primarily students and, secondarily, their art teachers. I felt that the best way to find the answers were to go direct to the source and ask student opinion by using a survey. A copy of this survey can be found in the appendix section of this report.

At each of my placements I gave the surveys out to students in class and gave them some time to fill them out. 169 students were surveyed. I told the students they were anonymous and they could say whatever they liked. I recorded the results at different levels and schools and analyzed the results as follows. I wondered if the answers changed according to school. I was also curious about whether there might be wider implications to the art teacher/s at the school which reflected their own philosophical approaches to teaching art, or possibly the socio-economic area, or cultural understandings. Many other possible contributing factors might effect the results.

It is worth noting here how well almost all students filled out the surveys and took them seriously. Of course some took the chance to vent frustrations at teachers, or make cheeky jokes aimed at myself. But even these responses told me a great deal, whether it was directly related to my research or not. I still learnt a great deal. It was important that students knew that they didn't need to include their names so that they would answer honestly and I didn't mind that some answers were not

what I was asking for. Every word or even smiley face could be seen as relevant to my research and how the student felt. On the whole they seemed pleased that their views were being asked for and, interestingly, acted more maturely and politely whilst filling them out than in other parts of the lesson. I felt thanking them was also important and gained me some respect. I believe in the importance of getting the views and opinions of students and this is something I would aim to consistently continue in my teaching practice.

Action Research- Students Responses to survey

Question: "Do you enjoy art?" Yes or No?

Of all the students surveyed 80.5% said Yes and 19.5% said no. The percentages of students who enjoy art as a subject is relatively large in all the schools surveyed. Westlake Boys had a greater percentage of students who do not enjoy the subject. Many of the reasons given when asked 'why not?' related to the teacher, proving the importance of the teacher in the students deciding about a subject.

If No, why not?

- "I can't draw that well"
- "Because I cannot draw well, so he yells at me."
- "Because I think that I can't draw so I don't really enjoy it."
- "People mock me"
- "I can't draw, i'm not creative"
- "Because I prefer doing more active, or knowledgable stuff"
- "Because I'm no good at it, it frustrates me too much"
- "Because art assignments take too long"
- "I can't draw that well"
- "Because I think that I can't draw so I don't really enjoy it.

These were common responses from students who did not enjoy art. It also shows that; students did not feel they could draw did not enjoy art, students don't like the length of art assignments, they do not see art as an active or knowledgable subject,

If Yes, Why?

- "I can do whatever I like on my page" I like this answer. Another artist once said "drawing was only limited by the page"
- "Because it doesn't require you to have natural talents, unlike other subjects"
- "Because you can be free with your art and there are no limits"
- "Because I can get my feelings and emotions onto paper"
- "no ritten work"
- "because I think it's good to increase your creativity"
- "Because it makes me think unlike any other subject"

The responses for why students enjoy art were more varied. They showed that students enjoy art for many reasons including; self-expression, lack of written tasks, creative thinking. Many simply said it was fun.

Question: Are you good at drawing?

The students who enjoy art answered fairly equally to this question, with 58% answering yes, and 42% answering no. But those who do not enjoy art not clearly felt they could not draw. Of those students who had answered that they did not enjoy art, 91% said they were not 'good' at drawing. This clearly indicates a link between students' perceived drawing ability and their enjoyment with art.

If no, Why not?

- "because some of my drawings aren't realistic"
- "my drawings are messy"
- "It is not that accuracy"
- "I can't replicate real life objects very well"
- "Because my drawing doesn't look precise and appealing"
- "because I'm not good at getting the idea in my head onto the paper."
- "Not very good but I'm good at draw comics"

- "I hold pens and stuff funny so it's hard to get accurate drawings and stuff"
- "because I have a stiff hand when I hold my pens or pencils. I can't loosen up"
- "Cos I suck"
- "I get too annoyed with myself- I'm a perfectionist"
- "My drawing is not professional"

These answers are representational of many of the answers given which largely suggest that students understanding of 'good' drawing is in realism and representational drawing. Many responses implied frustration and a desire to learn.

If yes, why?
- "Because everyone can draw in their own way"
- "Because some of my relatives are artists"
- "Everyone is, there is no marking scheme it is personal perception"
- "I'm getting better because I am being helped with it"
- "Because I believe I am"
- "Because I draw a lot at home"
- "Kinda when I don't talk"
- "Because I practice"
- "It was inherited"
- "Because I am" I like this answer. The student may have been answering sarcastically but their statement assumes that the question is straight forward. He may have been told this or believes that drawing is a skill which you either have or do not. I like the confidence in his statement.

Many of the students who feel they are 'good at drawing' understand that it takes practice and concentration to learn, like any other skill. But some seem to believe that drawing is an inherent skill which you either have or do not have and which can't be learnt.

Students words to describe what 'good' drawing is: Creative

Innovative   Original   **Realistic**

Unique   Expression

Random   Imaginative   fun

Looking exactly the same as the object

Neat

Order

Beautiful

Immaculate

Accurate

Clean   Dynamic   Precise

Moving

Detailed   Aesthetically pleasing

New   Representative   Interesting

Inspiring   Thought-invoking

Skill   outstanding   colourful

Amazing   Perfect

Steady

Talented   pretty

Textured   Awesome   Fantastic   Excellent

Time consuming

This shows that there are many interpretations of what 'good' drawing might be. By far the most common word given was 'Creative' but the next were 'Accurate' and 'Realistic'. This confirms what other theorists have said and re-affirms my original hypothesis that students understand 'good' to mean 'real'.

Interestingly one student answered "Being able to pass". This is a very black and white, straight-forward answer which could reflect some sense of annoyance at this system. It implies that the answer should be obvious and disregards the request for a list making a statement instead. It raises another debate which is valid. Is 'good' drawing' what is deemed 'good' enough for assessment in schools or by markers.

Do you have to be good at drawing to be good at art?

73% answered No and 27% said Yes. A large percentage understand that art is about more than drawing. Although a significant number still felt it was necessary. When asked why there were a large range of responses which, I felt, possibly reflected the teaching philosophy of their art teachers.

If yes why?

- "If you have a bad drawing people might not see what you see"
- "no body would want to see a stick person exhibition"
- "I think drawing is an important part of art whether it's basic outlines or full detail, if you can't draw it might be hard."
- "because you get told off or you have to draw the drawing in your own time"

The last answer suggests frustration and resentment at being made to draw as a punishment.

If No, why not?

- "Art is not limited to drawing"
- "Because drawing is something you can learn but the ability to think is something you cannot"
- "It's more of an impulse than a skill, I think"
- "You can do other elements of art."
- "no, art is free"... "you can be creative in other ways"

Many students struggled to decide either way on this question and chose to place their tick on the line between yes and no. Students gave a range of intelligent and varied answers which reflect many of the debates which revolve around the subject. I went on to discuss and debate some of these in class once students had filled out their surveys. As one student wrote 'What is good drawing anyway?'

Action Plan 2- Putting theory into practice:

Based on the results of my research and my surveys It was clear that the most common challenges to students in terms of them learning to draw was;

- Their desire to make 'realistic', 'neat' or 'tidy' drawings.

- Their fear and embarrassment of making mistakes, or even trying.

- Their self-defeating attitudes to drawing.

- Their perfectionism. They are highly self critical.

I attempted to put some of my own, and others, theories about how to address these problems into practice in the classroom.

<u>Continuous Line Project-</u>

On my second placement I began a unit of work with a Year 9 boys class which aimed to;

- Develop students notions and understandings of drawing, and art.

- Engage as many students as possible in lessons

- Give students who do not believe they are 'good' at art more confidence

During this unit I wanted to encourage students to be creative, experiment, problem solve and use a variety of media and tasks while drawing. The unit begun with a power point which introduced 'wire sculpture' and the work of Alexander Calder. Students were told they would produce wire sculptures later in the project. We then looked at 'Drawing' and how the use of continuous line drawing can relate to wire sculpture. Students were then asked to complete 'blind contour' drawings. This task is fun and quick but often produces interesting results. Often drawings have more realistic elements to them if students really observe their subject. This is an important lesson for students to learn, as observation is an essential skill in drawing (this will be discussed further later on). The task was discussed in class in relation to observational skills and how the subtleties of line can affect understandings. Students were encouraged not to be concerned about the finished 'product' but simply learn and enjoy through the process.

The notion of 'What is good drawing' was discussed using the illustrations of David Shrigley and cartoons such as 'the Simpsons'. Then students went on to produce continuous line drawings of famous people which they would develop into wire sculptures, based on the examples of Calder. Students' notions of drawing were challenged even further by seeing the work of Vic Muniz who often uses continuous line. Muniz draws with chocolate, wire, sugar, thread, clouds and creates large scale drawings which are photographed from the air. The intention was to open students minds up to different understandings of art and drawing. This resource is found at http://blog.ted.com/2007/04/20/vik_muniz_on_te/#more

Students then went on to produce a large scale group artwork inspired by Munitz using rope to create a continous line drawing of Guy Fawkes in the autorium of the school. This meant they had to work together to draw. This aimed at engaging the students while creating a sense of communal learning. I believed that some students who do not have confidence in art would benefit through a sense of working as a team so that they were not solely responsible. This was discussed with students and related to other artists who work together. This is akin to the Maori perspective of 'AKO' or shared learning. Whilst teaching I too was involved and learning as I had no idea of the outcome. This created a positive learning atmosphere and also illustrated the point that to produce art you cannot fear mistakes. Good art means risk-taking. Again the end product was not as important as the process.

"They need confidence to experiment with expressive approaches. They need to appreciate the learning that comes from mistakes and see how 'happy accidents' happen." (Bartell, 2005)

Some comments from A.T's after observing these lessons

I felt that this action plan was successful in terms of what it set out to achieve because of my own observations and reflections and the following observations from my A.T's.

Wire Drawings lessons-

What percentage students (aprox) are engaged? 100%

What do you think has been successful in this lesson?

All the boys enjoyed it, had fun and learnt that there is more to art than drawing with a pencil.

Large scale group drawing-

Do you think that the students who do not usually respond well to drawing based art lessons were engaged?

Yes, fun, different, out of the classroom drawing with rope on a large scale. They can make excuses if it doesn't look good and therefore they are more comfortable and more engaged. No pressure.

What do you think has been successful in this lesson?

Broadens the students' knowledge of what art can be.

(Note* for full observation see attachments)

Exploring drawing- Drawing lessons with year 7

During my fourth placement I taught a mixed year 7 class a series of drawing lessons called 'Exploring Drawing'. I felt it was a good opportunity to teach drawing as they might have been in the critical stages of 'rule systems' (Hargreaves and Galton) and the 'Pseudorealistic stage' (Lowenfeld) identified earlier as crucial to whether students engage in, or turn away from art. Therefore I wanted to catch them while I had the chance in order to:

- Develop students' notions and understandings of drawing
- Teach students to develop observational skills
- Give students more confidence and self belief in their drawing abilities
- Make drawing fun and engaging to all students

In my first lesson I introduced the subject of drawing and my research project. I asked students to fill out the survey which aimed to get them thinking about the topic. Once they had done this I produced my 'I can't Coffin' which is a idea I discovered on the internet from art teacher Mikel Lee. He says... "I had an I Can't Funeral. I had [the students] all write what they couldn't do from art to every other topic and then they folded their lists and we stuck them in a coffin...they didn't know what we were doing at this point. Then I gathered them all and said that we were all gathered for the funeral of our dear friend, " I Can't." He had been

a good partner and given us many years of security. (Lee, M. Cited by Rohrer, 2010) I simply asked anyone who felt that they couldn't draw to write that statement down and put it in the coffin. I explained that I believed that they could all draw and that we were going to do lots of practice, it would take hard work but also be lots of fun. I then showed them the board which listed a variety of drawing tasks and games and I explained the rules of my drawing class:

1. No making fun of other peoples drawing.
2. No erasers were allowed
3. No saying 'I can't draw'- put it in the coffin!

Each lesson I set new tasks and games aimed at eliminating students fear of mistakes and embarrassment and encouraging them to draw without worrying about the result or being self-defeating. I used formal and creative tasks which focused on Observation, Imagination and Memory and Emotions. Some tasks I created and some I found, many excellent explorative tasks were found in 'The Art Club' (2005) by Anna Marie Holm. Also in The Exploring Drawing series (2010) produced by Integrated Education. I included the following;

- **'Loosing up' tasks**
1. **Circles-** I Got students to stand up, relax their arms and draw circles using their whole upper body on large scrap paper or newspaper.
2. **Line Change-** I Got students to create a continuous line across a large page and call out words such as 'wavy', 'jagged', 'delicate' etc and asked students to change their line according to the word. Students suggested words too!
3. **Music Draw-** I asked students to draw from emotions and feelings. Play a range of music from Heavy metal to Dub and discussed their mark making.
4. **Movement-** I asked students to make quick drawings of me as I walked around the middle of the circle, stopping and posing in different positions. I talked about the importance of not worrying, just getting marks down and looking at shapes and lines.

- **'Imagination' tasks**

5. **Lucky Dip-** I Produced a bag which was full of mixed images, photos, patterns, drawings etc, I then went around and got students to chose without looking. The students stuck the image to a larger piece of paper. Using the image as a starting point they developed, interpreted and extended the image by working over it with different media. Vivid pens seems to work well.

6. **Picture the scene-** I Described an image (This might be a famous painting in a book) and asked students to draw as I verbally re-created the picture. I started off slowly and added more and more detail. When I finished I showed the students the image and compared them.

- **Observation Tasks**

7. **Changing faces-** I asked students to draw self portraits using a mirror. They drew 3 or 4 boxes on a large sheet of paper and made drawings in each box changing their expression for each drawing. They looked carefully at how the 'changes' to their expression caused the lines of the face to change.

8. **Eat and draw-** Similar to the above, this was about observing changes. I Gave each student a piece of food, e.g a mandarin or a chocolate chip cookie, and asked them to make 3 or 4 boxes. In the first one they drew the food whole (untouched) then I ask them to eat part of the food and in the next box show it in it's new form, and continue until it was all gone. Note, when using chocolate chip cookies beware of students eating all the food after their first drawing.

9. **Gambling on colour-** I set up a still life and asked students to draw. On the board I allocated a different colour for each side of the dice. During the task, I stopped and rolled the dice at different times and students changed the colour they were using according to the number rolled.

10. **Still life, pass it on-** I put an object on each table and ask the students to draw, after a certain time I asked them to pass on the object to the next table so they all get a new object. These were drawn over the top of the existing drawing, the time for each drawing speed up.

Sometimes these exercises were done on old sheets of newspaper (which students could choose to throw away) again, to learn that the process is what is important, not the finished product. This encouraged fun and freedom of expression and avoided a sense of failure. I attempted to praise any work which showed effort, imagination and inventiveness, teaching students to find value in pictures they might not consider to be drawn 'well'. I attempted to challenge students' preconceptions of drawing by using variety. Art can also offer a huge variety because the range of media available however, Robert Clement (2010) highlights the importance of 'Choice of materials'. He states that…"Before any starting any drawing with children, it is important to give very careful thought to what materials should be used". I tried to consider this carefully in my 'exploring drawing' classes and chose the correct material to to attain the desired learning outcome.

Observations from students, my A.T, and myself on the 'Exploring Drawing lessons:

The students all seemed to to enjoy the lessons and produced some great drawings. During the last 'Exploring drawing lesson' I asked the students to fill out a reflection sheet. When asked did you enjoy the 'exploring drawing' lessons over the last 3 weeks, 100% said yes.
When asked 'Do you see drawing any differently after having these lessons?' 14 out of the 19 students said either 'yes' or 'a bit'.
My A.T also said around 95% of the students were engaged and answered the following questions after observing my lessons:
Do you believe that the students are learning artistic development in this lesson?
Yes, developing confidence and skill in drawing is an important first step. A good analogy is how writers make drafts before publishing- drawings are sometimes drafts and sometimes artworks in themselves.

What do you think has been successful in this lesson?

The students were enthusiastic and were trying out new approaches.

I therefore feel the 'action plan' was successful in achieving two of its goals by;

- Developing students. notions and understandings of drawing
- Making drawing fun and engaging to all students

When asked what they had learnt from each task they gave answers which indicated that many of the tasks had achieved their learning outcomes. But their answers indicated that many of the observational tasks had not. I am therefore not as confident that I achieved

- Teaching students to develop observational skills
- Giving students more confidence and self belief in their drawing abilities

When asked 'what do you think has not been successful?' My A.T noted that "If you want them to develop careful observational skills you need to give them more time to persevere. They must feel that their drawings are improving to become more confident" I thought that this comment was very useful. I have realised that teaching drawing takes time, just as learning to draw does. That no matter how much encouragement I gave them the most important thing is that the children feel themselves that they have improved. As my A.T said, 'I made an important first step' and in the space of my placement I simply did not have enough time with these students. I look forward to when I have my own class to work with. However, I also realised that I couldn't on the one hand do quick, fun, active tasks and then ask my students to sit quietly, concentrate and observe with a 'slow, careful gaze'. Learning observational drawing requires time and I began to see that I wasn't giving students enough time for certain tasks, such as the portrait drawings in the mirror. I even worried that by not giving students adequate time I could possibly re-confirm their belief that they 'can't draw' if they find the task too challenging. I have realised that teaching drawing is about finding balance and the

teacher must think and plan very carefully for, as Clement says, "When Children draw they are responding to different kinds of experience. What they draw and how well they draw will depend in a large measure upon the questions or problems you pose them." (Clement, 1993) The importance of observational drawing is discussed further in the discussion section which follows.

(Note* for full observation and student reflections see attachments)

Part 3- Reflective discussions-

The importance of Observation in teaching and learning drawing-

"Observational drawing trains you to see- to look, select and record. It develops your visual memory and perception" (Crammer.U, 2010)

During my 'exploring drawing lessons' with year 7, I had wanted students to feel that their drawing was improving but I found that this was much more complex than simply addressing their confidence and fear of trying. Many art educators agree that one of the most important aspects when teaching people to draw is to get them to draw what they really see instead of drawing what they think they see, or know. Observation is the key to drawing as Danny Gregory says in 'Everyday Matters' "The reason why most people draw badly is because they draw symbols instead of what they see." (p.15, 2003) Danny Gregory's life was shattered when his wife fell under a subway train in New York and was paralysed. whilst coming to terms with his wife's injury, and what he initially perceived as his "horrible new life" he taught himself to draw. 'Everyday Matters' is a collection of his drawings and writing from this period which act as a memoir to his own recovery.

Drawing helped Gregory find meaning and value in life again as this lovely quote illustrates: "I caressed what I drew with my eyes, lingering over every curve and bump, gliding around contours and into shadows. No matter what I looked at in this way, I saw beauty and love. It was very weird but it happened again and again. When I slowed way down and let my mind go, I had the same incredibly sensual experience. It didn't matter what I drew. And then I discovered that it didn't matter what the drawing was like. In fact, I could simply toss it away, like the skin of a banana. What mattered was the slow, careful gaze." From this point of realisation Gregory found that his drawing became much better.

Whilst teaching drawing I discussed the importance or really looking at what you draw to students. I asked them to spend time simply observing an object before

drawing it. I set tasks which encouraged observation and concentration. Some students understood the notion whilst others found it very challenging. For example in one task I asked students to draw a series of self portraits using a mirror. They were asked to look at the changes that happened to their features when they changed their expression and draw what they saw. Some did this well but many drew the same triangle for a nose and the same circle within a circle for their eyes because these are the symbols they understand to mean a nose and two eyes.

The notion that people draw 'symbols' instead of what they see is also discussed by Daniel Pink in his book 'A whole New Mind'. After attempting to draw a self portrait Pink writes "I've drawn a symbol for lips- a symbol that comes from childhood..... In a sense I've merely written 'lips' in modern hieroglyphics instead of truly seeing my lips and recognizing how they relate to the totality of my face" (2005 p.128). According to Daniel Pink mankind is entering a new conceptional 'age' where creative thinkers and empathizers will be most valued, he argues that "… we've progressed from a society of farmers to a society of factory workers to a society of knowledge workers. And now we're progressing yet again-to a society of creators and empathizers, of pattern recognizers and meaning makers". (2005, P.134) Creators and empathizers require 'R-Directed' thinking skills and "the capacity to synthasize rather than analyse; to see relationships between seeming unrelated fields" (Pink, 2005) Pink decides to learn to draw, claiming... "I was never very good"(2005), in order to expand his capacity for symphony. He writes about the experience in 'A Whole New Mind'.

Pink takes drawing lessons from the son of Betty Edwards. Betty Edwards, first published her book, 'Drawing on the Right Side', in 1979, it has been on the New York Times best seller list with more than 2.5 million copies sold. It has been translated into 13 languages and is the world's most widely used drawing instruction book. Betty Edwards used the terms L-Mode and R-Mode to describe

two ways of knowing and seeing - the verbal, analytic mode and the visual, perceptual mode. On the website for 'Drawing on the Right Side' Edward's daughter says.. "Most activities require both modes, each contributing its special functions, but a few activities require mainly one mode, without interference from the other. Drawing is one of these activities.Learning to draw, then, turns out not to be "learning to draw." Paradoxically, "learning to draw" means learning to make a mental shift from L-mode to R-mode. That is what a person trained in drawing does, and that is what <u>you</u> can learn." (O'Fallon, H. 2011)By using Edwards techniques which focus heavily on observational skills in order to recognise the relationships between things, Pink finds that his drawing does improve remarkably. In his last drawing class he creates a final portrait which he says.. "To my amazement, what emerges on the sketchpad begins to look a little like me" (2005. p.140) I will continue to develop my teaching of drawing skills, recognising the importance of observation, so that my students will learn that, with time, they can all learn to draw too.

Discussion with students-

"There is no doubt that there is a strong correlation between the quality of childrens' work and the amount and quality of discourse that both precedes and supports the work." (Clement, 1994)

A key 'action' was to engage in dialogue my students. I learnt a lot through talking. I included discussions in class with students around my research topic. After students had filled out their surveys I would spend some time explaining my motivations and beliefs and get some responses in class. I believe that art teachers need to create an open environment and discuss issues involved with drawing skills to help students air their concerns.

Fear of trying often comes from students worrying that they will do something wrong. I therefore discussed 'Happy accidents' and serendipity. Bartel (2005) says... "The teacher might say things like, mistakes are good because I learn to see better from them - they are my practice lines. Whenever we try a new thing we

expect to make some mistakes, but with practice we get better at it." (Bartel, 2005) Another key question I asked students to think about was, 'What is 'good' drawing anyway? Below is a drawing by David Shrigley included in a power point given to students during this class discussion.

What is drawing well anyway?
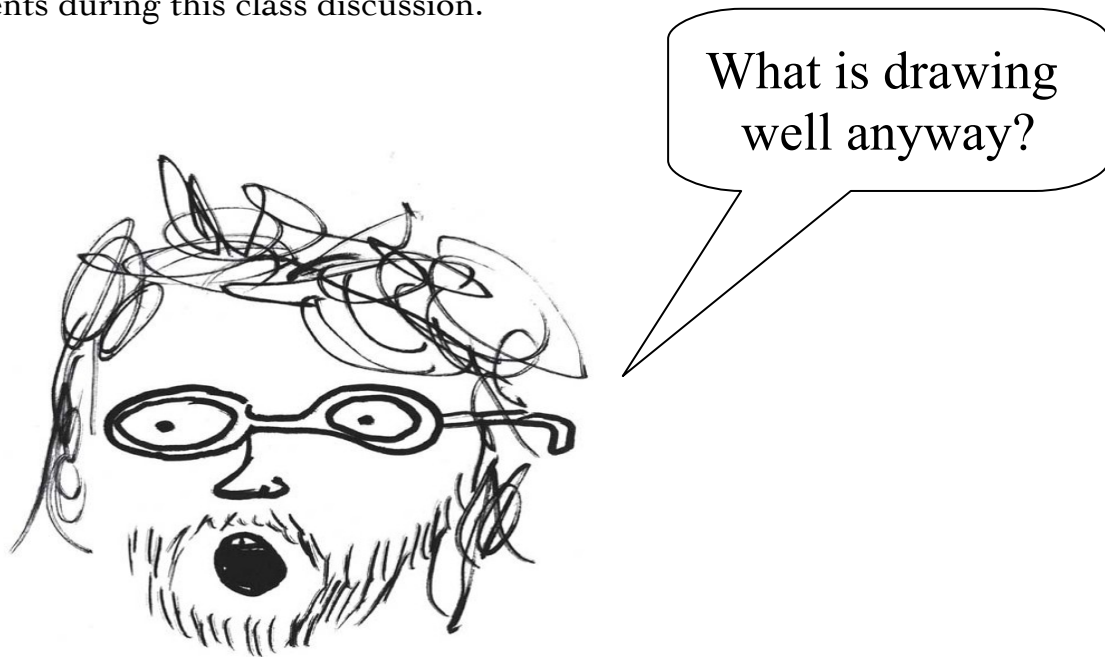
We looked at the work of David Shrigley as an example of an artist who has built a successful career using a style of drawing and illustration which has been described as 'crude' and 'childlike'. In an in response to this Shirgley says in an interview... "I like the personality of things being a bit half-finished, of basically *having* a personality. Maybe crudity is the wrong word - a certain amount of personality which is perhaps a bit quirky. I like that word very much, 'quirky.' Also, I suspect that the deformity displayed in my work is a natural curse as I am not very good at rendering beauty. It is much easier to draw creeps than it is to draw beautiful people. I am not very good drawing women, so I end up drawing a lot of deformed men." (Interview by Maxwell Williams NYC, October 2005) I wanted to challenge students' view that 'good' drawing should be 'neat' or 'tidy' and make them see that it can be about finding your strengths.

We also discussed cartoon drawings in relation to a continuous line project because I wanted my students to understand that cartooning is a valued form of drawing.

Many seemed to see it as something separate to 'good' drawing as one student illustrated when asked 'are you 'good' at drawing', he answered; "Not very good but I'm good at drawing comics". I used the story of Matt Groening as another example of a successful artist who does not draw realistically. In the 'The Element' (2009) Ken Robinson tells the story of Matt Groening. At primary school, Groening says 'I would draw constantly', as he got older realised that his drawing 'was not getting much better'. His teachers and parents tried to persuade him to do something else. But Groening 'found his inspiration in the work of other artists whose drawings lacked technical mastery but combined their distinctive art styles with inventive story telling". He went on to create the most successful cartoon ever made, 'The simpsons'. My students responded well to this story as an artist they can identify with.

Discussion with A.T's-

Just as students should be encouraged to develop their own understandings of art through discussion... "Art Educators need to realise that we all know 'art' in a variety of ways, and that problems of definition are not the sole preserve of philosophers. Art education can never be based only on one theory of art." (Chalmers.G. 2001)

I discussed my topic with teachers who had quite strong and differing opinions. This provided useful insights into the associate teachers I was working with and how their own beliefs about their subject could impact on their students, their lesson plans and the department as a whole.

A key focus for discussion to arise from examining teachers notions of drawing was, subjectivity. Discussion often came back to what is a common debate within art circles. Is art a subjective arena which cannot be judged in terms of what is 'right and wrong', 'good or bad'? And, how does this affect assessment and teaching of art? This is an area I am particularly interested in and I have examined

throughout my training because it is an area I have been debating internally. This is an extract from my own reflection, written during my assessment paper:

"To 'grade' peoples' art work contradicts my whole understanding of the subject. In response to a talk given by Ken Robinson, Howard B. Esbin said that "Part of the challenge is that cultivating and assessing imagination requires a different frame of reference, language, and tools than those used for reason. As yet, there are no widely used protocols in place to include or value imagination in assessments" (2008)

I realize however, that if I am to teach art in secondary schools I will need to learn how to do so. " You want to be respectful of student artists and their development, but you also have a responsibility to provide assessment for the educational system. The challenge is finding an assessment that balances what is best for the student artist while meeting accountability requirements." (Kennedy Centre, 2011)

Through my research during the assessment paper I did learn that there are ways to assess art fairly which make sense to me which I discussed in my reflective essay. But I wanted to continue to look at this area through discussion with my A.Ts as I feel it impacts on teaching and learning.

One A.T told me in relation to subjectivity that there is no such thing with the art produced at secondary level, that a student's work either showed skill or did not, and was therefore easy to assess. On the contrary, another A.T said that, of course there was always an element of subjectivity and therefore it would always be impossible to give completely fair assessment of students' artwork. In fact she felt strongly, as a teacher of the Cambridge system of assessment, that the markers often got the grades incorrect in her eyes.

I believe what I have discovered through my research and dialogue with each of my A.Ts is that each teacher is very different in their approach and philosophical views about how to teach art. This to be expected, as often artists are people who feel very strongly and passionately about art, as are art teachers. This passion for

their subject makes each art department I have encountered very different in the way it is run and the approaches taken by the teachers. Possibly this is more so than in subjects which could be viewed as less subjective, where clearer lines exist in terms of 'right and wrong' student outcomes.

Encourage a commitment to creativity-

Robinson (2009) values creativity as vastly important to all subjects, but says that in schools, "conformity has a higher value than diversity" (p.230) adding that the current system "systematically drains the creativity out of our children"(P.16). In the subject I aim to teach – art - I believe it is possible to eliminate traditional notions of right and wrong by encouraging and rewarding effort and inventiveness. In art, perhaps even in life in general, mistakes are where true learning occurs and inventiveness, imagination and creativity are what matter most. These cannot exist within confined boundaries where people are afraid to experiment. Therefore, I would aim to teach adolescent learners techniques they need, with the freedom to use those techniques in personal ways. I want to give students the knowledge they need to create original work and not assume correct ways for them to use that knowledge. In my mind art must be viewed as limitless space for self expression and creativity.

In "A Toolbox Approach" Hanson and Herz (2011) suggest a way to structure lessons to encourage creativity. This, they argue, is difficult but necessary when teaching art. They suggest using a 'Toolbox Approach' which can be seen as 'a set of concepts and techniques' which help facilitate students creativity. The key point that the authors make is that teachers should encourage students to make a commitment to developing their own 'point of view' and teach them how to express themselves. Hanson and Herz say that teachers committing to teaching creativity must accept that, in a sense, they are committing to being challenged by their students. They argue that, in order to truly encourage creative thinking we must allow room for anti-conformity and respond appropriately by "...helping each

student discover his or her inner artist, rebel, and thinker. Teaching individuals, and creating a space where individuals act differently - sometimes very differently, is more difficult than teaching a skill such as colour mixing, or a concept such as composition." (2011)

This may be hard to achieve, and a frightening idea for teachers to come to terms with, but if students are to make 'real' art work, they must be free to break the rules and conventions. Art teachers must allow room for this.

An example of how I demonstrated a commitment to creativity was when teaching a mask making unit on my last placement. I gave instructions on how students might make their mask but allowed them to decide for themselves. If they thought of other ways to create their mask that was fine, if they discussed it with me. Many did chose to try their individual ways to solve the problem and I believe these engaged more by having the freedom of non-conformity.

Conclusion-

This action research project has been extremely useful to me. I have learnt a great deal about my topic, and subsequently the subject I aim to teach, art. I feel that through my research I now understand more about the challenges, techniques and debates which apply to teaching students to draw. But this is not all I learnt. There were many unexpected learning outcomes unrelated to my topic. One crucial one was the importance of asking students about their learning. The questions I asked my students in surveys, self-reflection sheets and those asked in discussions opened up communication between them and myself. My students felt that their opinions mattered to me, and they do.

Throughout the course of my research the supplementary knowledge I attained from my students and from others, whether in written or verbal form demonstrated to me that sometimes the rationale and even the topic is not what matters most. What matters is engaging in the process of research and actively seeking out information and knowledge. I now see that this must remain a constant in my teaching practice. Teaching cannot be a static process. Teachers should always seek to improve their understandings about their students, their subjects and how to teach.

Much like drawing, teaching is not a skill that we can ever master. Action research, like drawing can be seen as a journey of discovery. A way of exploring and making sense of the world. The important thing is to start the journey and not be afraid to explore the unknown. Where the journey takes us is not as important as the process of learning that occurs along the way.

Recommendations For Art Teachers to address the 'I can't Draw' syndrome

Possible symptoms of the syndrome:

Students display fear and embarrassment of making mistakes, or even trying.
Students display self-defeating attitudes to drawing.
Students display perfectionism. They are highly self critical.

Possible cures for the syndrome:

Use discussion- Create an open environment and discuss issues involved with drawing skills.

Create class Rules for Drawing tasks- Such as:
No laughing at other peoples art work or drawings
No Erasers (depending on the year and task)
Music personal MP3 players or a radio will be allowed if there is a quiet and concentration.

Create class art-works- Encourage communal learning and 'AKO' to make students feel more confident and create a supportive learning environment.

Make an 'I can't Coffin'- "Students write what they couldn't do from art to every other topic and then they folded their lists and we stuck them in a coffin and all gathered for the funeral." Lee, M. Cited by Rohrer, 2010) See:

Use Variety in Media- Teach drawing in a way that will expose students to the vastness of the subject.

Use Variety in Tasks- Use formal and creative tasks which focus on Observation, Imagination and Memory and Emotions.

Set Observation Tasks-"Observational drawing trains you to see- to look, select and record. It develops your visual memory and perception" (Crammer.U, 2010) Observation tasks are key
Use Praise- Reward effort and give feed forward directed at areas where students are showing improvement.

Use examples of other artists-

Artists who do not draw 'well' or in a realistic way- Such as David Shirgley. See:
http://www.davidshrigley.com/list_drawings.html

Artists who wear their technique on their sleeves and actually show you how to do it yourself! (Barnes, 2010) View at http://davidbarneswork.posterous.com/think-you-cant-draw-here-are-6-artists-whose

Disabled artists- Rohrer (2010) suggests showing the work of disabled artists to challenge students who use their drawing ability as an excuse for not trying. View some at:
http://www.princetonol.com/groups/iad/peeves/petpeeves.html

Never- Set 'drawing tasks' as a punishment making students see drawing in a negative way.

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Some useful Resources:

Good Creative drawing site @ http://lesliepaints.wordpress.com/creative-drawing/

Great explorative art lessons and tasks in this book: 'The Art Club- A journey with experiment and enthusiam' (2005) by Ann Marie Holt, A.V Formas, Herning, Denmark.

Brilliant film about different ways to draw on T.E.D talk by Vic Muniz @ http://www.ted.com/talks/vik_muniz_makes_art_with_wire_sugar.html

Inspiring teaching resource- Exploring Drawing sieres of magazines and D.V.D's produced by Integrated Education. Auckland. @ http://www.integratededucation.com/

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