

Feeling follows function : gendered responses to the teaching of material culture

ATKINSON, Paul <<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-6633-7242>> and BENINCASA, Caterina

Available from Sheffield Hallam University Research Archive (SHURA) at:

<https://shura.shu.ac.uk/8665/>

This document is the Accepted Version [AM]

Citation:

ATKINSON, Paul and BENINCASA, Caterina (2004). Feeling follows function : gendered responses to the teaching of material culture. In: 4th International Conference on Design History & Design Studies (ICDHS), Universidade de Guadalajara, Mexico, 1-5th November 2004. (Unpublished) [Conference or Workshop Item]

Copyright and re-use policy

See <http://shura.shu.ac.uk/information.html>

FEELING FOLLOWS FUNCTION: GENDERED RESPONSES TO THE TEACHING OF MATERIAL CULTURE

Paul Atkinson
University of Huddersfield, Huddersfield, UK
p.atkinson@hud.ac.uk

Caterina Benincasa
University of Huddersfield, Huddersfield, UK
c.a.benincasa@hud.ac.uk

Abstract

In the academic year 2001/2002, the Department of Design at Huddersfield undertook a Review of its academic provision, including the delivery of Design History to support practice-based design courses. During consultation with the leaders of these courses it became apparent that some of them saw Design History as an unnecessary add-on having limited relevance to their course. Consequently, the decision was taken to move to teaching 'Material Culture' rather than 'Design History', as its focus is on understanding the user's response to designed objects. It was hoped that this would be clearly seen as more relevant to the student's design practice by the students themselves as well as by the staff running the courses.

This paper takes the experience of running a module in Material Culture to a mixed group of students over a period of three years as a case study in Design History Education. It is delivered by team teaching, so that the same staff deliver the same content to different groups of students, and from the outset a number of interesting observations became apparent. There started to be very clear differences in the responses of students to the same lectures. These responses were clearly not evident in our previous experience of teaching Design History to the same courses rather than Material Culture. There was clearly something in the subject matter of Material Culture causing students to respond in this way.

By analysing the teaching, relating our experience to published texts in pedagogy, experimenting with teaching both groups together, and by examining evaluation reports and the results of group work, this paper aims to explore the effectiveness of teaching Material Culture as opposed to Design History, and highlight the gender issues which appear to be inherent in teaching Material Culture as a contextual subject to design practitioners.

Introduction – the move to teaching Material Culture

As a result of observations made during the last Quality Assurance Agency exercise at the School of Design Technology, a decision was made to carry out a Curriculum Review - a systematic analysis of the content of courses and modules taught throughout the school.

This review had a number of aims; two main ones being to ensure a level of parity across the school with respect to the assessment requirements for equivalent modules in different courses, and to assess where efficiencies could

be made by replacing a number of similar modules covering certain subjects within different courses with new, cross-school modules which could be taught across a number of courses simultaneously.

One area shared between almost all courses was that of Design History, which at that point was being taught to individual cohorts of students by a small number of staff. Discussions were held with course leaders about the delivery of Design History, where a number of concerns were raised. Due to the increased pressure to include more delivery of subjects such as CAD, and a general reduction in teaching time and staff resource, course leaders were looking for areas that could be dropped from the curriculum with least impact. One area under consideration by course leaders for removal was Design History. Further questioning revealed that the main factor in this decision was the perception that Design History could be seen as largely irrelevant to today's practitioner in comparison with more vocational areas such as CAD skills.

Most course leaders stated a desire to maintain a high level of intellectual inquiry as evidenced through a dissertation, but struggled to find space for the preparation for such work in earlier modules such as Design History. Pressing for more detail provided a reason for the perception of Design History being a low priority. The majority of staff with this view had studied practice-based design courses at a time when the supporting theoretical framework was supplied either through art history (as opposed to Design History), or through Design History delivered using the methodologies of art history. Such delivery had been 'hero' based, placing the artist or designer as the focus of study and had promoted notions of exclusivity and connoisseurship which those staff saw as being outdated and of little use.

Despite a number of attempts to clarify the approaches taken to Design History today and explaining the general move in the field from a focus on the production of design to the consumption of design, staff clearly held preconceptions of these modules which were difficult to overcome (even to the extent that staff referred to them as 'art history' and referred to the people delivering them as 'art historians').

Partly as an attempt to overcome these preconceptions and partly in order to make genuine changes for the good of the school curriculum, a working party was convened to oversee a review of the Historical & Contextual Studies provision. It was decided to create a series of cross-school modules which could be taught across a number of different courses and which would deliver content on Material Culture for 3D courses and Visual Culture for 2D courses as an alternative to the more traditional Design History input (Atkinson & Beale-Parry 2002).

These modules were intended to focus on the role of the object in society and the role of the image in society respectively and do so from both a modernist and postmodernist standpoint. The modules aimed to explore in depth the

relationship between people and objects or images, with intention being that a better understanding of these relationships would inform the design work of the student and enable the creation of better artefacts. Such an approach was welcomed by course leaders and seen as directly relevant to their practice-based work, although in reality much of this approach had been taken in the delivery of previous Design History modules. Material Culture in this context then, is seen as one boundary of Design History as an area of study.

Module description

The remainder of this paper consists of a case study which explores the implications of the delivery of one of these cross-school modules - namely 'Introduction to Material Culture'. The module consists of twelve sessions delivered over one term covering different aspects of Material Culture:

Session 1	Introduction to module/ Explanation of Material Culture
Session 2	Historical Overview/ Post War Design History
Session 3	Post modern Culture
Session 4	Semiotics
Session 5	Status & Consumption
Session 6	Memory
Session 7	Gender
Session 8	Identity / Subculture
Session 9	Taste / Home
Session 10	Customisation / Appropriation
Session 11	Class / Race / Sexuality
Session 12	Module Review and Evaluation

This module has been delivered to students on Product Design, Transport Design, Textile Crafts and Fashion courses for the past three years. For the first two years it was delivered separately to a group consisting of product and transport students and a group consisting of textile craft and fashion students, and in the third year it was delivered to all students together. In all years the module has been delivered by two staff in alternating sessions. It is important to note at this point that the group of product and transport students was almost exclusively male whilst the group of textile crafts and fashion students was almost exclusively female. Further, one member of staff (Atkinson) was male, the other (Benincasa) female.

The effects of teaching Material Culture

From the outset there were clear and noticeable differences in the responses of the male and female groups to the material being delivered during the lectures and in the work requested from them in small workgroup sessions. Many of the sessions involved straightforward lectures to the group (either the product and transport or textile crafts and fashion students) followed by a period of small

group work where around 10 students worked together. In these small groups an aspect of the lecture was discussed and the resulting notes recorded on flip chart sheets which were then collected and discussed with the whole class.

Two of the sessions in particular highlighted gender based differences in the responses. The session on semiology, in which the small groups were each given an Alessi product and asked to note their interpretation of the signifiers contained within the design of the product; and the session on memory, in which students were asked to bring in personal items of their own which held a particular memory for them.

In the semiology session the reaction to the objects passed around was slightly different for each group, with the female group tending to take the subject more seriously than the male group (Figs. 1 and 2). Interestingly, perhaps because of their discipline, the product and transport groups made more use of sketches of the objects being analysed, but provided less textual information which took the form of short notes or bullet points. One noticeable difference was that while most of the interpretations of the form of the 'Juicy Salif' lemon squeezer were similar in referring to science fiction films and space rockets, etc., the female group suggested it signified a gynaecological instrument or speculum - an object one assumes to be outside the sphere of experience of most young males. The same group also found the form of the 'Anna G' corkscrew to be sexist, associating as it does the female with the role of the maid and servile work. Again, this was an element which was passed over or which went unnoticed by the male group.

Even stronger differences were evident in the sessions on memory (Figs. 3 and 4). Although both groups were asked to bring personal objects in for discussion, very few of the males actually did. They relied to a large extent on objects they had on them at the time, such as watches, key rings, mobile phones, CD's, CD players, concert tickets, bus passes, trainers, football boots and chains, or else they referred to their football/rugby shirts, sports trophies, cars or hi-fi equipment. In contrast, the female students almost all brought in highly personal objects ranging from cuddly toys to babies' clothing, jewellery, letters, cards, text messages and photographs. Again, the female students took the situation far more seriously than the males, with the latter even resorting to writing fictitious, rude and even offensive suggestions of memories associated with objects. It was highly evident here that the students were responding in a stereotypically expected fashion, with the males being very unwilling to expose their emotions to analysis.

Further, the objects discussed as being important to the students followed exactly the taxonomy of objects presented by Csikszentimihalyi and Rochberg-Halton in their 1981 work 'The Meaning of Things: domestic symbols and the self' (One of the recommended texts for the module). Objects based around the self and actions were expressed as important by the males, while objects based around

relationships with other people and contemplation were expressed as important by the females (Fig. 5).

Attitudes of males & females to studying

The apparent lack of seriousness of the male students is supported by other research into the gendered responses to studying. Since the 1970s, much research (primarily based in schools) has been carried out on the different classroom experiences of boys and girls. Mieke van Hootte (2004) was interested in the attitudes of boys and girls to studying and looked at third and fourth year pupils in 34 schools in Flanders (Belgium). What makes van Hootte's study useful in the context of this research into Material Culture is that she compared general schools and schools which offered vocational and technical studies.

van Hootte found that girls spend more time on homework, they display less disturbing behaviour, play truant less often and have higher expectations of themselves. The boys take life at school easier, they work less hard and are distracted more easily. She suggests that showing good study behaviour is the antithesis of being 'masculine - that is, macho behaviour, which is a condition of popularity for boys. Educational effort and achievement is typified as feminine behaviour' (van Hootte:2004:160). van Hootte identifies that in vocational schools some boys have an 'identity crisis' this results in them feeling 'threatened' and so they tend to 'overdo their masculinity'. (ibid:2004:171)

Module Evaluation

Due to the fact that Material Culture was not only a new module, but essentially a new subject, both staff felt that an in-depth evaluation of the students' feedback was of high importance. We decided to devote the final session of the module to a review of the content which had been delivered, followed by the handing out of a detailed questionnaire which the students were asked to complete there and then. The questionnaire asked students to rate the content of each session on a Lickert scale from being 'of no use or interest' to 'useful/interesting' and to make comments on the strengths and weaknesses of the module content overall. The reverse side of this form asked the students to rate the teaching and delivery of each session on a scale of 1 to 10, and then asked for comments on the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation of the module, the assignment and the facilities and resources. Finally, students were asked to rate to what extent the aims of the module had been met, going from 'not at all' to 'wholly'.

This evaluation was done along the lines of the Nominal Group Technique (Delbecq, Gostafson & Van de Ven, 1975) in which the subject was first of all presented to the group and individuals then asked to respond on the forms issued. Small groups were then formed to pool their answers and remove duplications. These small group sheets were then presented in turn to the whole

group, duplications removed and the resulting comments ranked in order of importance.

Statistical evidence

The tables below provide the ratings for all lectures in the 'Introduction to Material Culture' module. The ratings were given by the students out of a maximum of ten marks. The mean values shown below have been compiled from the scores provided by each course group where marks were available. No marks were separately available for 2001/2 and 2002/3 from Transport design because they worked on their evaluations with Product design.

As can be seen from the four tables below, there is little difference between the ratings given for lectures delivered by Atkinson and by Benincasa by students in the cohorts from 2001/2 and 2002/3.

Session	Textile Crafts	Fashion Design	Product Design	Transport Design
Postmodern Culture	7.75	8.00	7.51	With product
Status And Consumption	8.04		7.60	With product
Gender	7.84	8.00	7.73	With product
Identity / Subculture	8.45.	8.54	7.64	With product
Race and Sexuality	8.68	8.00	8.07	With product

Material Culture 2001/2 Caterina Benincasa

Session	Textile Crafts	Fashion Design	Product Design	Transport Design
Historical Overview	9.43	8.00	7.00	With product
Semiotics	7.90	7.60	7.73	With product
Memory	7.55	7.66	7.48	With product
Taste / Home	8.00	8.10	7.07	With product
Customisation /Appropriation	8.63	7.66	7.58	With product

Material Culture 2001/2 Paul Atkinson

Session	Textile Crafts	Fashion Design	Product Design	Transport Design
Postmodern Culture	7.14	7.70	7.18	8.25
Status And Consumption	7.69	7.09	7.40	8.18
Gender	7.37	9.00	7.57	8.77
Identity / Subculture	8.00	7.10	8.40	8.80
Race and Sexuality	8.00	9.30	8.00	8.00

Material Culture 2002/3 Caterina Benincasa

Session	Textile Crafts	Fashion Design	Product Design	Transport Design
Historical Overview	7.95	7.00	7.18	8.18
Semiotics	7.95	7.50	7.18	8.09
Memory	8.85	6.25	6.88	8.33
Taste / Home	8.85	7.55	7.25	8.20
Customisation /Appropriation	7.73	8.00	8.62	8.90

Material Culture 2002/3 Paul Atkinson

Moving to teaching different disciplines together

For the academic year 2003/4, the decision was made to put the 'male' and 'female' groups of Product and Transport students and Textile Crafts and Fashion students together to form one large cohort containing both genders. This was done for reasons of cost and efficiency in preventing the repeat delivery of sessions which had occurred previously. Apart from the possible differences in the willingness of students to respond or interact during lectures due to the effects of being part of a very large group, there were no problems envisaged with doing this. However, it became apparent quite quickly that students were beginning to respond in unexplained ways, and that the differences we had previously noted seemed to have become exaggerated. In particular, the same two sessions of 'Semiology' and 'Memory' highlighted the changes. Comments written on the flip chart sheets about Alessi products from the small group work contained direct sexual references, from both groups of male product/ transport students and female textile craft/ fashion students. These had not appeared in earlier years.

At the end of the module, the same evaluation process described above was carried out with the large group of students. When the ratings from the 2003/4 cohorts were examined there was one significant difference in the scoring. The marks from the Product Design students were significantly lower when compared to the other student groups from Fashion and Textile Crafts. Note that in 2003/4 there were only two Transport Design students who submitted evaluation forms, the rest of the forms were incomplete, they had deliberately left the rating boxes blank.

Session	Textile Crafts	Fashion Design	Product Design	Transport Design
Postmodern Culture	6.17	6.91	4.04	No figures
Status And Consumption	7.18	7.00	4.13	No figures
Gender	7.02	7.60	3.86	No figures
Identity / Subculture	7.12	7.80	4.30	No figures
Race and Sexuality	7.00	7.90	3.38	No figures

Material Culture 2003/4 Caterina Benincasa

Session	Textile Crafts	Fashion Design	Product Design	Transport Design
Historical Overview	6.34	6.00	5.69	No figures
Semiotics	6.16	7.17	6.52	No Figures
Memory	7.15	7.91	6.17	No Figures
Taste / Home	7.71	7.72	7.08	No Figures
Customisation /Appropriation	7.48	7.87	6.42	No Figures

Material Culture 2003/4 Paul Atkinson

In the years 2001/2 and 2002/3 the Fashion and Textile Crafts students were taught separately from the Product and Transport students. The tabulated evaluation mean from all students for Benincasa in 2001/2 ranged from 7.51 to 8.68. In 2002/3 they ranged from 7.09 to 9.30. Atkinson's mean in 2001/2 ranged from 7.00 to 9.43 and from 6.25 to 8.85 in 2002/3. It can be seen from looking at these two cohorts that the mean scores for both lecturers overall fell into the 7.09 to 9.43 range. Atkinson's mean evaluation scores were more polar than Benincasa's.

When the students were taught together the mean scores reduced for each lecturer. Benincasa's mean scores ranged from 3.38 to 7.90, Atkinson's mean scores from 5.69 to 7.91. In this year Benincasa's average scores were more polar than Atkinson's. When viewed as a graph, these changes become more obvious (Fig. 6).

When we look at these figures more closely the greatest change in evaluation scores can be seen in the Product Design students' evaluation of Benincasa's teaching. This is highlighted by comparing the scores from these students from the 2002/3 cohort with those from the 2003/4 cohort. In 2002/3 the mean range was recorded as being 7.18 to 8.4. In 2003/4 this dropped dramatically, producing a mean score range of 3.38 to 4.13.

Session	Product 2002/3	Product 2003/4
Postmodern Culture	7.18	4.04
Status and Consumption	7.40	4.13
Gender	7.57	3.86
Identity/ Subculture	8.40	4.13
Race and Sexuality	8.00	3.86

Material Culture Ratings Comparison: Caterina Benincasa

Session	Product 2002/3	Product 2003/4
Historical Overview	7.18	5.69
Semiotics	7.18	6.52
Memory	6.88	6.17
Taste/Home	7.25	7.08
Customisation/ Appropriation	8.62	6.42

Material Culture Ratings Comparison: Paul Atkinson

Problems with teaching gendered or sensitive material.

As we have seen from the evidence so far, Material Culture has elicited a more strongly gendered response from students than the more fact based Design History ever did. Material Culture often places the student at the center of the discussion of theories or case studies. This can be a difficult, challenging and a

wholly different classroom experience for the students compared to the more factual teaching that students may have encountered before.

In the 1997 Quality Assessment Report for History of Art, Architecture and Design for Goldsmiths College, University of London, it was identified that the expansion of Design History to include Material Culture as subject matter could cause some tension;

The curriculum is undergoing development. There has been a shift from survey courses with a more conventional historical approach towards a wider concern with visual culture, including feminism and queer theory, post-colonialism and minority discourse. Staff are aware of the pedagogical need to manage the tension between these approaches.
(http://www.qaa.ac.uk/revreps/subj_level/q52_98_textonly)

Goldsmiths did not offer any solutions or specific examples in the report. Although it is interesting that they choose to highlight subject areas or methodologies that concentrate on sexuality or gender. Many institutions and individuals have noted some difficulties in the pedagogy of sensitive material, particularly when the subject of study centres on discussion of sexuality and or gender.

In *Radical Teacher* (an American Journal) Spring 2003, J. Elizabeth Clark, Erica Rand and Leonard Vogt note that students often enter lecture theatres;

‘...without the ability to distinguish between the concepts of and the differences between gender and sexuality. Sometimes they hold onto prescribed roles like lifelines in class discussion. In the radical classroom we do many things, and where critiques of race, ethnicity and class can threaten our students' sense of self, throwing in what can sometimes be perceived as yet another attack may be as far as students can go. When students experience a convergence of critiques that threaten so much of their complete identity, they tend to want to hold onto something-that something is often gender and sexuality.

http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0JVP/is_2003_Spring/ai_102119708

The idea that students can feel that they are being personally attacked when discussion focuses upon gender or sexuality is well documented. Much of the supporting evidence for this comes from Women's Studies teaching. This subject seems to have parallels with Material Culture in that often the student in both these subjects has to place him or herself at the center of the discussion, which makes them question their attitudes, values, beliefs and behaviour.

In November 7th 1999, Andrea Peragine, a Women's Studies lecturer from the University of Michigan posted a request on the Women's Studies List Website (WMST-L) for other lecturers of the discipline to discuss the 'importance of Women's Studies courses and the importance of men in them'.

(<http://userpages.umbc.edu/~korenman/wmst/men3a.html>). WMST- L is a forum for lecturers, researchers and librarians in the field of women's studies to share good practice and research.

Peragine was particularly interested in responses to the question of why very small numbers of men took classes in the subject. The comments from the overwhelming majority of Women's Studies lecturers (both male and female) highlighted the excessively masculine and also often aggressive stances that male students frequently took with the subject, female colleagues and or female and male staff in the sessions, in University chat rooms and evaluations. The respondents were from America and Europe. Christopher Tower noted that he found;

'...the MEN very resistant to the ideology of the course, much more so than the women. The men's ignorance is also more apparent The men seem to have a reactionary stance against feminist thought quite often. At the very least, there is eye rolling and disrespectful posture. At the most, they post messages to our BBS that are a backlash to subjects being covered in class.

(<http://userpages.umbc.edu/~korenman/wmst/men3a.html>)

These observations were very typical of the respondents' postings to Peragine's question and is reiterated by more recent research at Sheffield. In 'Reconstructing Gender at University', Gough and Peace (2000:385-398) looked at male Psychology students perceptions of women and feminism. They did this because of the recent 'backlash' politics concerned with the 'what about the boys' debate and the idea that there is a 'crisis of masculinity'. They found that often the male students perceived themselves as victims. 'Feminism is portrayed as extreme and oppressive to men' (ibid:2000: 389). In all the transcripts of the taped sessions they held they found that '...feminism is almost universally presented as dangerous and alienating to men' (ibid:2000:391). This has been a common thread in both media and academic discussions especially since the early nineties. Backlash politics seeks to readdress the pro-feminist stance of society, portraying the adult male as victim and in school the boy as victim. It is interesting that the debate has moved out of the academe and has filtered down to the male students' perceptions of how they are treated in education and in the world at large.

Gender and Teaching Evaluation

Stephanie Riger, posted a question on the WMST-L site in February 1993 concerning teaching evaluations and whether the gender of the students or staff have an effect on the outcome of teaching evaluations. Riger acknowledges that a definitive answer is;

... a complicated one. To summarize briefly, many studies find no differences in evaluations based on the gender of the teacher, but when

differences are found, female teachers receive lower ratings'.
(http://research.umbc.edu/~korenman/wmst/teaching_eval.html)

Susan Basow replied to Riger's request, she explained that there is evidence that female lecturers are rated differently to male lecturers in that they are '*marked for gender*'. She explains that female lecturers in predominately male subjects are judged more harshly than male lecturers teaching the same discipline. Basow suggests that this may be because students in those fields have more old-fashioned notions of a woman's role. The idea that males in mainly vocational and technical education are more likely to stereotype or behave in a stereotypical manner in an educational setting was validated by Mieke Hoote's study, which was looked at earlier.
(http://research.umbc.edu/~korenman/wmst/teaching_eval.html)

Rhoda Unger joined the online debate citing her own research (*R. K. Unger (1979). Sexism in teacher evaluation: The comparability of real life to laboratory analogs. Academic Psychology Bulletin, 1, 163 – 170*). She noted that studying teaching evaluations made by students is 'complex' However, she does note that female lecturers are rated lower than male lecturers and that this is because they are judged not just by competence but inline with '*sex-role stereotypes*'. In the 2001/2 teaching evaluations, one of the strengths the Product Design students noted of the Material Culture teaching was that '*Cate [Benincasa] is good looking*'. Would female students feel comfortable writing the same comment for a male lecturer on an evaluation form? Unger notes that evaluations tend to involve '*bias in social judgments rather than biases in the measuring instrument itself and may act to limit the effectiveness of female faculty who appear to be too demanding*' (http://research.umbc.edu/~korenman/wmst/teaching_eval.html). In education, one of our jobs is to challenge and to stretch our students in critical, academic debate. Unger's research highlights that if a female member of staff is seen to challenge a group of students, they are rated lower because they are not being a stereotypical 'nurturer'.

Gendered responses to the module

In the student evaluation forms for Material Culture there is space for comments from the students. In the years when the students were taught separately there were only two comments, which were from Textile Crafts students, regarding issues surrounding gender. '*At times subjective views came through with lectures, Gender!*' and '*All the books were from a feminist point of view*'. The bibliography that Atkinson and Benincasa compiled for the Material Culture Module is methodologically broad. There are only two books with a feminist approach, which are Sparkes (1995) *As Long As It's Pink : the Sexual Politics of Taste* and Atfield and Kirkhams' (1989) *A View From The Interior*.

No comments with regards to gender were recorded from Textile Crafts or Fashion students when they were taught alongside Product Design and Transport Design students in 2003/4. There was, however, a significant number of comments with regards to gender issues from the Product Design Students. Eleven comments out of twenty received suggested that Benincasa was 'sexist' and 'offending' towards the male students. Fifteen comments out of twenty suggested that her teaching was 'irrelevant' for them and was mainly based on 'fashion, sex and race'. There were no comments directly aimed at Paul's teaching.

Conclusions

In all of these conclusions it must be stated that the authors are aware that this case study research is based on a limited number of students and teaching experiences. These conclusions, then, must be read as indicative rather than conclusive.

It is quite clear from the evidence presented so far that students on the whole tend to fulfill the anticipated or already prescribed responses to stimuli provided for discussion in Material Culture lectures. Does it show more extreme versions of this gendered response; i.e. defending their sexuality and or gender in the comments on the evaluation, the ratings and/or on the flipchart sheets from Paul's lectures? It is clear that there is a bias against the female lecturer in the 2003/4 evaluation responses from the Product Design Students. This correlates with research discussed earlier from Basow and Unger, with respect to how a lecturer's gender can affect student responses. The evidence of male students increased sensitivity, aggression and mistrust of material discussed during Women's Studies classes also corroborate an excessively gendered group response to subject matter which is politicised. As we saw, the gender of the lecturer in women's studies courses did not excessively affect the response from *male* students.

It has been noted that part of the problems recounted in this case study might be attributed to the sheer size of the combined group being taught, and that the delivery of any subject matter is potentially more difficult with the loss of rapport with students arising from the teaching of large groups. However, the fact that the same content has been delivered for three years and yet the strong reactions to module content only became evident once the female and male groups were placed together seems to provide evidence that the reaction is not to the material being taught as much as a reaction to the situation in which it is taught. In other words, it appears that it is the fact that sensitive material being delivered to groups of mixed gender that is problematic. It follows, then, that as a general rule, the sensitive nature of Material Culture content means that as a subject, it should not be delivered to groups of students containing both genders without taking into account the issues of potential resistance to that content by the students.

It is unproblematic to draw a parallel between the teaching of women's studies and of Material Culture as we have done in the analysis of this case study, as both place the student at the centre of enquiry and discussion and therefore under some scrutiny. With respect to the responses of the male students discussed here, it would appear that the 'wolf' of women's studies is now being taught under the 'sheep's clothing' of Material Culture.

Figures

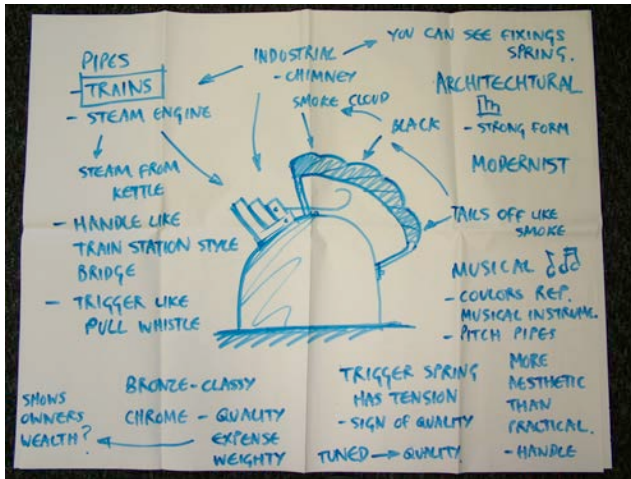


Fig 1: Product design flipchart sheet on semiology

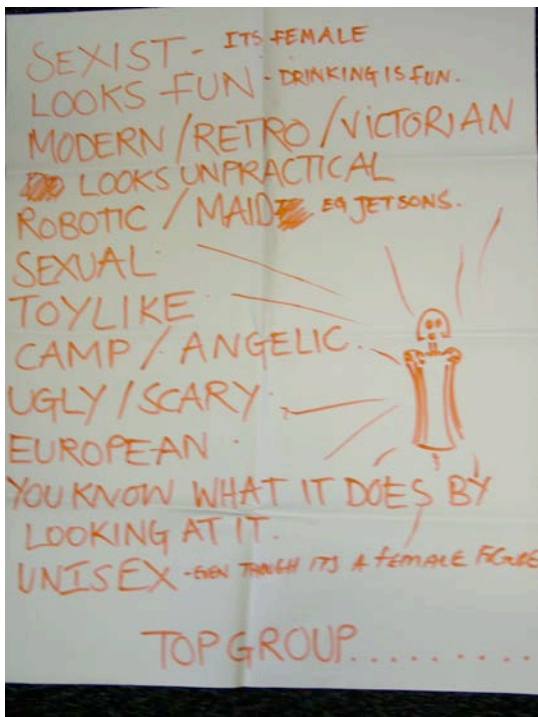


Fig. 2: Fashion Design flipchart sheet on semiology

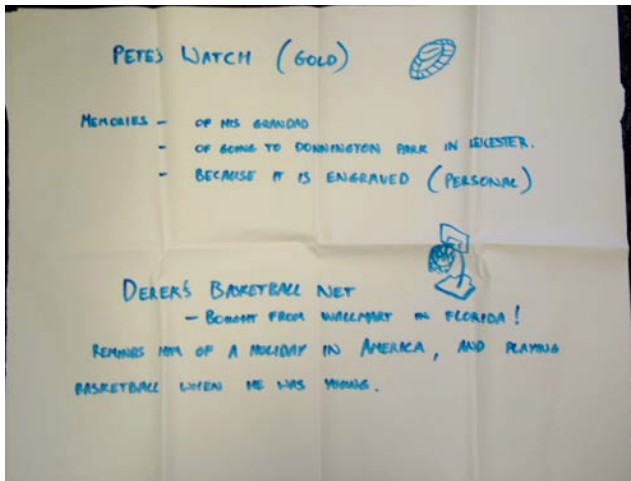


Fig. 3: Product Design flipchart sheet on memory

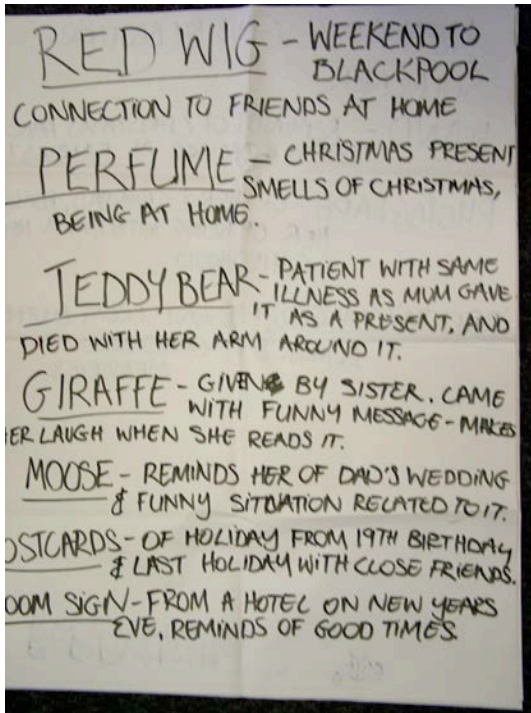


Fig. 4: Fashion Design flipchart sheet on memory

OBJECT RELATIONS - DEVELOPMENT OF THE SELF

Table 4.4. *Percentage of various objects having meanings referring to Self, Others, Experiences, and Memories*

No. ^a Self	%	Other People	%	Experiences	%	Memories	%
1. Television	34	Photos	33	Television	32	Photos	27
2. Stereos	32	Visual art	29	Stereos	28	Sculpture	18
3. Beds	25	Furniture	22	Beds	22	Visual art	16
4. Musical instr.	24	Sculpture	22	Musical instr.	22	Furniture	16
5. Books	23	Musical instr.	20	Plants	21	Collectibles	14
6. Plants	23	Beds	18	Books	19	Books	11
7. Collectibles	18	Collectibles	16	Collectibles	14	Musical instr.	10
8. Furniture	17	Stereos	13	Furniture	11	Beds	8
9. Sculpture	12	Television	13	Photos	9	Stereos	8
10. Visual art	10	Books	13	Sculptur�	9	Plants	4
11. Photos	7	Plants	11	Visual art	9	Television	0

^aIn numerical order of significance.

Fig. 5: Table reproduced from the Meaning of Things, pg. 115

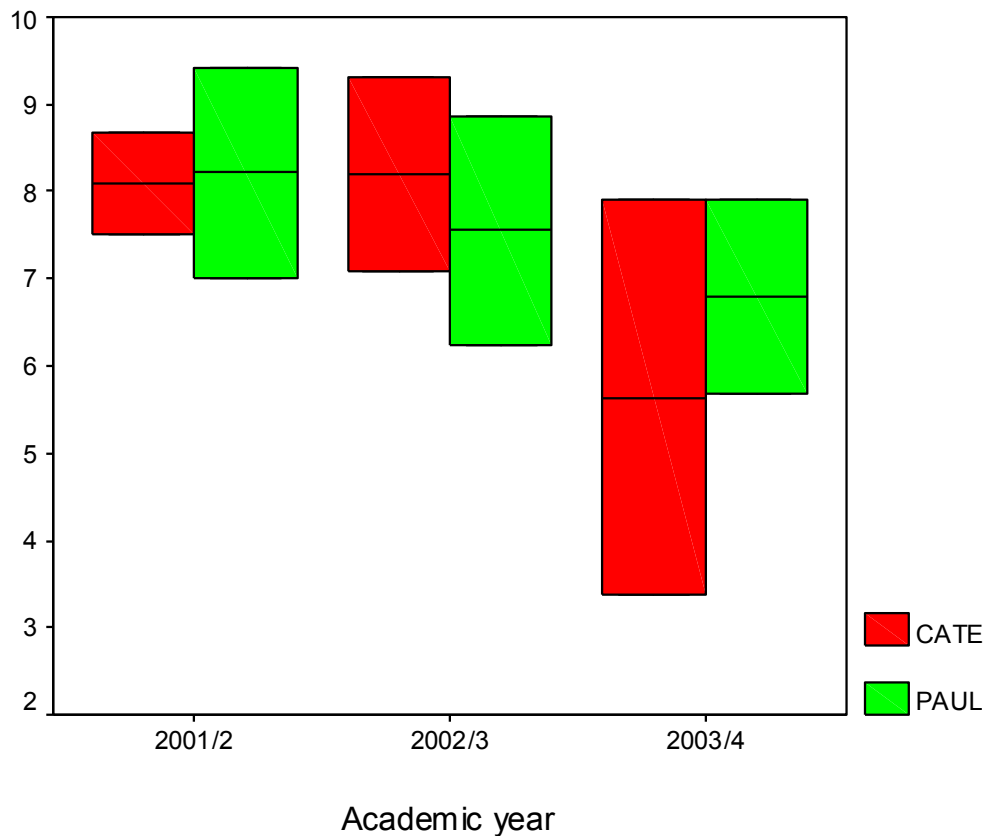


Fig. 6: Graph showing the changing responses of students to questionnaire

References

Atkinson, P. and Beale-Parry, J. (2002) 'Design History on the periphery of Design Practice Education in the UK'. Paper given at 'Mind the Map' Design History Beyond Borders, the 3rd international conference on Design History and design studies, Istanbul, July 2002.

Clark, Rand & Vogt (2003) Climate control teaching about Gender and sexuality in 2003 - Introduction - issue contents
http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0JVP/is_2003_Spring/ai_102119708

Csikszentimihalyi, M. and Rochberg-Halton, E. (1981) 'The Meaning of Things: domestic symbols and the self', Cambridge University Press

Delbecq Al, Gustafson, D. and Van de Ven, H. (Eds) (1975) 'Group techniques for program planning, a guide to nominal group and Delphi processes'. Glanview, Scott Foresman.

Gough, B. & Peace, P. (2000) 'Reconstructing Gender at University: Men as Victims' *Gender and Education*, Vol.12, no.3, pp385-395

Mills, M. (2003) 'Shaping the boys' agenda: the backlash blockbusters', *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, Vol.7, no.1, pp57-73

Peragine, A. M , 1997, Men in Women's Studies Classes, Available <http://userpages.umbc.edu/~korenman/wmst/men3a.html> [2004, June 30]

Quality Assessment Report for History of Art, Architecture and Design (November 1997) http://www.qaa.ac.uk/revreps/subj_level/q52_98_textonly [2004, May 05]

Riger, S. Gender and Teaching Evaluation. Available http://research.umbc.edu/~korenman/wmst/teaching_eval.html [2004, May 05]

Van Hoote, M. (2004) 'Why boys achieve less at school than girls: The difference between boys"and girls"academic culture" *Educational Studies*, Vol. 30, no.2, pp 159-173